NARRATIVIZING MEMORY AND HISTORY:
IDENTITARIAN ISLAM AND THE
CONTEMPORARY FEMALE HYBRID IN
THE FICTION OF AHDAF SOUEIF

Ayşe ÇIRÇIR

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Atatürk Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Uygulama Esaslarının ilgili maddelerine göre hazırlamış olduğum "Narrativizing Memory and History: Identitarian Islam and the Contemporary Female Hybrid in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif" adlı tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin kâğıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

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Prof. Dr. Mehmet TÖRENEK
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Advisor: Prof. Dr. Mukadder ERKAN

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This study critically interprets the fiction of Ahdaf Soueif, contemporary Egyptian-British novelist, with a post-colonial perspective and discusses the narrativisation of history and memory, hybridity and colonial desire, and nationalism and religion in Soueif's novels, *In the Eye of the Sun* and *The Map of Love*, and short story collections, *Aisha* and *Sandpiper*. Apart from "Introduction" and "Conclusion", the study is composed of three chapters. The First Chapter has two parts: "General Background" and "Ahdaf Soueif: Life and Writings". The Second Chapter, "Post-Colonialism: A Critical Introduction" has three parts: "Definitions and Theory", "Colonial Discourse Analysis and Edward Said" and "Rethinking Post-Colonial Criticism". The Third Chapter, "A Post-Colonial Reading of Soueif's Fiction" has three parts: "The Strategic Use of Positivist Orientalism", "Hybridity and Colonial Desire" and "Vision, History and Islam". In constructing a post-colonial critique, a new concept; *strategic Orientalism*, is employed to offer an important post-colonial understanding and the deconstruction of the orientalist discourse is emphasised by Soueif's positive and strategic use of it. It is stated that the novels and the short stories of Soueif are shaped by Edward Said's colonial discourse analysis, which makes her writings an interdisciplinary fiction. This study eclectically embraces Post-Colonial Criticism and a reconsideration of the theory, and for this aim, cultural authenticity and post-colonial feminism are intensely discussed. The problem of reading history and historical rewriting for hybrid Arab Muslim female characters are emphasised and the study examines how cultural, racial and linguistic hybridity are contested in Soueif's fiction. This study also strenuously questions the racist disavowal of Islam in the discourse of the West alongside the religious visibility and representation of the Muslim Other.

Key Words: Ahdaf Soueif, British Muslim Fiction, Strategic Orientalism, Colonial Desire, Post-Colonial Feminism, Colonial Discourse Analysis, Interdisciplinary Fiction, Hybridity, Nationalism

ÖZET

DOKTORA TEZİ

TARİH VE HAFIZAYI ANLATILAŞTIRMAK: AHDAF SOUEIF'İN ESERLERİNDE KİMLİKÇİ İSLAM VE ÇAĞDAŞ KADIN MELEZ

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Bu çalışma çağdaş Mısırlı-İngiliz yazar Ahdaf Soueif'in eserlerini sömürge sonrası söylem ışığında inceler ve tarih ve hafızanın anlatılaştırılması, melezlik ve sömürgeci arzu ve milliyetçilik ve din konularını Soueif'in romanları *In the Eye of the Sun* ve *The Map of Love,* ve kısa hikâyeleri *Aisha* ve *Sandpiper*'da ele alır. Bu çalışma "Giriş" ve "Sonuç" bölümleri dışında üç ana bölümden oluşur. Birinci ana bölüm iki başlık altında incelenmiştir: "General Background" ve "Ahdaf Soueif: Life and Writings". İkinci ana bölüm, "Post-Colonialism: A Critical Introduction", üç başlık altında incelenmiştir: "Definitions and Theory", "Colonial Discourse Analysis and Edward Said" ve "Rethinking Post-Colonial Criticism". Üçüncü ana bölüm, "A Post-Colonial Reading of Soueif's Fiction", üç başlık altında incelenmiştir: "The Strategic Use of Positivist Orientalism", "Hybridity and Colonial Desire" ve "Vision, History and Islam". Sömürge sonrası eleştiri okuması yapılırken, yeni bir kavram olan *stratejik Oryantalizm* uygulanır ve Soueif'in oryantalist söylemi yıkmak için oryantalizmi pozitif ve stratejik bir şekilde kullandığı vurgulanır. Çalışmada Soueif'in roman ve kısa hikâyelerinin Edward Said'in sömürgeci söylem çözümlemesiyle şekillendiği önemle belirtilir ve böylelikle eserlerin disiplinlerarası kurguya dönüştüğü üzerinde durulur. Bu çalışma, sömürge sonrası eleştirel söylem ve bu alanın yeniden incelenmesini birlikte ele alır ve bunun için kültürel özgünlük ve sömürge sonrası kadın hareketlerini derinlemesine tartışır. Tarih okuması ve tarihsel yeniden yazım unsurlarının kadın melez Arap Müslüman roman karakterleri için önemi vurgulanır. Bu çalışma Soueif'in eserlerinde kültür, ırk ve dilbilimsel açılardan melezleğin nasıl tartışıldığını inceler. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma, Müslüman ötekinin temsili ve dini görünürlüğünü Batı söylemindeki ırkçı İslam önyargıları ile birlikte tartışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahdaf Soueif, Britanyalı Müslüman Kurgu, Stratejik Oryantalizm, Sömürgeci Arzu, Sömürge Sonrası Kadın Hareketleri, Sömürgeci Söylem Çözümlemesi, Disiplinlerarası Kurgu, Melezlik, Milliyetçilik

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I am sincerely honoured to state that this dissertation is made possible by the generous contribution of TÜBİTAK and is enriched in countless ways at St Antony's College, the University of Oxford where I spent ten months as a Visiting Graduate Student starting in April in 2015. I can proudly say that, as a University of Oxford Alumna (associate), it was a privilege and admiration to be part of the University's diversity, dynamism and deep commitment to excellence in every area of teaching and research as it rightly boasts as one of the best leading academic institutions of the world, and one of the oldest with a unique heritage.

Bu tez TÜBİTAK desteğiyle hazırlanmıştır.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Arabic words are spelled out as they are found in Western publications. Existing spellings of the quoted materials are preserved.

INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the fiction of Ahdaf Soueif, contemporary British-Egyptian novelist, with post-colonial perspectives and discusses the narrativisation of history, colonial desire and hybridity, and nationalism and religion in Soueif's novels, *In the Eye of the Sun* and *The Map of Love*, and short story collections, *Aisha* and *Sandpiper*. It is significant that, in constructing a critique, a new concept; *strategic Orientalism*, will be used to offer a new post-colonial understanding and the attention will be drawn to the deconstruction of the orientalist discourse as described in the criticism of Edward W. Said, and to a positive and a strategic use of it. It is therefore critically important to state that the novels and the short stories of Soueif are shaped by Said's colonial discourse analysis and an intense discussion of it will be offered for the purposes of analysis.

Apart from "Introduction" and "Conclusion", this study is composed of three chapters. The First Chapter has two parts: "General Background" and "Ahdaf Soueif: Life and Writings". The Second Chapter, "Post-Colonialism: A Critical Introduction" has three parts: "Definitions and Theory", "Colonial Discourse Analysis and Edward Said" and "Rethinking Post-Colonial Criticism". The Third Chapter, "A Post-Colonial Reading of Soueif's Fiction" has three parts: "The Strategic Use of Positivist Orientalism", "Hybridity and Colonial Desire" and "Vision, History and Islam".

In the First Chapter, discussions revolve around the Arabo-Islamic understanding of witnessing and testimony with *nasab* and *shahadah* as important concepts and the themes of Soueif's writings are introduced within the larger arguments of Post-Colonial Criticism. It considers at some length scholarly publications on contemporary Arab Muslim female novelists writing in English and these publications are critically connected with this study, and they inform it. It will be shown in the First Chapter that this study eclectically embraces Post-Colonial Criticism together with a reconsideration of the theory, and as will appear repeatedly in the discussions, it demonstrates in depth Soueif's writings as a powerful example of post-colonial fiction. The First Chapter comments revealingly on Soueif's life and education and, as a way of opening, explains the important points in her novels and short stories by helpfully revealing their content. This part of the study also

connects Soueif's fictional and non-fictional writing and comments on her non-fiction: *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground, Cairo: My City Our Revolution, Cairo: Memoir of a City* and *This is Not a Border*. The First Chapter also looks at the overlapping histories of Egypt and England that are retrospectively reflected in Soueif's fiction and slightly discusses Egypt's struggle for independence at the turn of the 20th century and after the 1952 Revolution.

The Second Chapter provides theoretical background to the study and is primarily engaged with Edward Said's discourse analysis as an important aspect of the Post-Colonial Critique. This section presents, as locus classicus, certain passages from *Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism* and *The World, The Text, and the Critic* and emphasises in depth Said's arguments about the imagined Islamic Orient in the discourse of the West. As shall be further considered, it also examines in the main the novel genre as an imperial institution and particularly stresses culture as imperialism. It is essential to note that the Second Chapter also addresses the limitations of Said's criticism, and the Post-Colonial Critique's in general, and carefully looks at the historical materialist critique that has developed after the publication of *Orientalism*.

The Third Chapter presents a closer reading of the novels and the short stories of Ahdaf Soueif under three headings. The first part, "The Strategic Use of Positivist Essentialism", particularly looks at the appropriation of the Orientalist discourse in *The Map of Love* and specifically addresses the politics of translation for the post-colonial subject, cultural authenticity and post-colonial feminism by stressing matrilineal genealogy that Soueif empowers in her writings. It intensely discusses the deconstruction of the West and the imagined Islamic Orient as ontological absolutes and explores the problems of reading history and historical rewriting for hybrid Arab Muslim female characters in the novel. This part is centrally concerned with the transformative power of memory for the post-colonial other and, in this context, certain post-colonial concepts such as metonymic gap, abrogation, appropriation and strategic essentialism lie at the core of discussions. In more concrete terms, this part demonstrates *The Map of Love* as a comparative novel of

contrapuntal histories and emphasises Soueif's positivist use of the orientalist discourse to make the Arab/Oriental Other a historical agent.

The second part, "Hybridity and Colonial Desire", in particular looks at post-colonial hybridity and colonial desire in *In the Eye of the Sun* and some short stories, and places in the foreground Robert Young's remarkable analyses in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. This part examines the interpellation of the post-colonial subject by the culture of the coloniser and explains how cultural, racial and linguistic hybridity are contested in Soueif's fiction. To emphasise an important continuity with "The Strategic Use of Positivist Essentialism", this section places emphasis on the problematic and hegemonic centrality of English Literature for the Arab female characters and examines ambivalence and alterity for the post-colonial other with references to sexual imperialism. This section also importantly discusses post-colonial bodies as texts and sites where History is violently embedded into the skin.

The last part, "Vision, History and Islam", further discusses the pastness of the past for the post-colonial other by addressing Soueif's appeal to an idealised memory of the past, and emphasises, from a Saidian perspective, the Arab Other's entry into history by the narrativisation of the past. This part indicates that Soueif historicises the imagined Islamic Orient of the Orientalist discourse that ceases to be an empty content, and an essentially same and threatening Other, with her fiction. Soueif writes a contrapuntal history for Egypt, the other setting and the geographical problem of the Empire, in her novels and short stories, and focuses on the fictionality of fiction and history, which is one of the central concerns of this part. Soueif's criticism of the post-colonial state is also addressed, and in this context, the racist disavowal of Islam in the discourse of the West is strenuously addressed alongside the religious visibility and the representation of the Muslim Other. Importantly, this part connects the discussions around Soueif's careful construction of a Muslim female identity and discusses her fiction as an important example of Muslim writing in English. In this regard, this study emphasises *strategic Orientalism* as a new critical concept and attempts to be a part of the nascent academic process that underlines religion as an identity signifier in the Post-Colonial Critique.

FIRST CHAPTER

1.1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

This study is concerned to emphasise Edward W. Said's critiques concerning the genealogies of Orientalism with the tradition of *nasab*[1] writing and witnessing in Arabo-Islamic culture and it is necessary to develop an insight of it before producing an interpretation of the Egyptian-British novelist Ahdaf Soueif's fiction. Interesting is the fact that the recital of *nasab* with *fakhr*[2] is the traditional opening of Arabic Literature, especially poetry, and narratives start by a rhetorical move whereby a deceased male is called as a witness to the writer before he[3] starts.[4] Mohja Kahf, Arab-American novelist, poet and critic, produces a startling reading of this tradition and, as she states in her famous article on Margot Badran's translation in 1986 of the Egyptian feminist, Huda Sha'rawi's memoir *Mudhakkirati* (1879-1924), Badran violently abridges the text and Sha'rawi's

[1] *Nasab* here means patrilineal genealogy. The Arabic naming system is different from the English/Western system which regularly follows name, middle name and family name. Most generally, traditional Arabic names consist of *ism, kunya, nasab, laqab* and *nisba. Ism* is the name given to a child at birth. *Kunya* is an honorific name and, rarely found in print, it is not a formal name. Informal way of addressing people, such as aunt and uncle is *kunya*. For example, the *umm* (mother) in the famous Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum's name is *kunya*. *Nasab* is patronymic or series of patronymics and starting with *ibn* or *bin*, or *bint*, it means respectively 'the son of' or 'the daughter of'. Any person can add the names of grandfather or great-grandfather, or more, such as (m.) Saif ibn Omar ibn Khalid, or (f.) Nawal bint Omar ibn Abdul Aziz. However, the use of *ibn* or *bin*, or *bint* differs greatly in the Arabic speaking countries. For example, in Iraq it is completely omitted as in the name of Saddam Hussein; Hussein is his name and Saddam is his father's name. Saddam Hussein therefore means Saddam, son of Hussein. *Laqab* is a religious and descriptive epithet and it follows the *ism* as in Muḥammed al-Amin (or Ameen), meaning Muḥammed the Trustworthy. *Nisba* is the Western equivalent of surname, and sometimes it is not used at all. Most generally *laqab* replaces *nisba*. Another difference from the Western naming system is that women do not take their husbands' name when they marry, but they cannot give their name to their kids. Generally, Arab people living in the West drop their *nasab* and *laqab* to conform to the Western naming system. Another important thing is the omission of the '*al-*' or '*el-;* meaning 'the' article while alphabetising the names. For example, Nawal el-Saadawi is listed either as 'al-Saadawi, Nawal' or 'Saadawi, Nawal al-' and alphabetised in the Ss. See Beth Notzon and Gayle Nesom, "The Arabic Naming System", *Science Editor*, 28 (1), 2005, 20-21, Accessed: 15-06-2017, https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v28n1p020-021.pdf; Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Islam,* The Scarecrow Press, Inc, USA 2009, 236; Adeel Mohammadi, "The Ambiguity of Maternal Filiation (*nasab*) in Early and Medieval Islam", *The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School*, 2, 2016, 52-68, 52.

[2] *Fakhr* is also tribal pride and it is necessary to add that pride is considered a sin in the *Qur'ān*, al-Baqarah: 2/34; al-A'raf: 7/13; Sād: 38/74-76. Tribal nationalism and fanaticism is known as '*asabiyah* which later meant Arab nationalism after the emergence of nation states in the Middle East. See Adamec 41, 252.

[3] "He" here is intended to be male-centred and is not generic.

[4] Lindsey Moore, *Arab, Muslim, Woman, Voice and Vision in Postcolonial Literature and Film*, Routledge, Oxford 2008, 44.

insertion of her genealogy into the memoir does not appear in the English translation, which is titled *Harem Years* to please to Anglophonic market.[5] This cultural-myopic exclusion can well explain the concern to establish ancestral roots for the Arabic writer and its absence of meaning for the Anglophone reader.[6] As Kahf more significantly shows throughout her discussion, *fakhr* and genealogy are important initiatory elements in Arabic Literature and it should be stated that there are two aspects of the idea of nobility in the Arab world in the time of *djāhiliyya*,[7] which is known as *ḥasab wa-nasab*, a paronomasia. While *nasab* means kinship and the genealogy of an individual or a tribe, the nobility that comes with *ḥasab* can be attained only through outstanding acts.[8] In the pre-Islamic Arab world, nobility and *fakhr* are exhibited with *nasab*, which is very important in claims to power, and *nasab* emerges as historiography particularly against the fragile genealogical memory of the tribe.

Indeed, as a developed genre, *nasab* is a literary and historical form of writing that emerges in the early Abbāsid Era (750-1258) and is very popular till its decline in the half of the 9th century. The popularity of *nasab* writing is definitely related to the rise in literacy and important is the fact that genealogy writing (‘*ilm al-ansāb*) is considered a branch of history under Islam. With *nasab*, patrilineal roots are celebrated and written down (and preserved), and alongside the identity of the tribe member, *nasab* further denotes political relationships including claims to religious authority and the superiority of the Arab against the non-Arab.[9] More importantly, Prophet Muḥammed (571-632) is the starting point[10] in the *nasab* histories of the second century of Islam and it can be argued that this is a remnant

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[5] *Mudhakkirati* means “my memoirs” in Arabic. See Mohja Kahf, “Packaging ‘Huda’: Sha’rawi’s Memoirs in the United States Reception Environment”, Amal Amireh, Lisa Suhair Majaj, (Ed.), *The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers*, (28-45), Garland, New York 2000. It is important to note that Huda (1879-1947) is of Turkish origin.

[6] Kahf, “Packaging ‘Huda’”, 34.

[7] Meaning (pagan) ignorance, the Arabic word *djāhiliyya* (also *jahiliyya, jahiliya*) is used pejoratively to describe the pre-Islamic era. See Adamec, 146.

[8] Ed., “*Ḥasab wa-nasab*”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, (Ed.), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2751.

[9] Majied Robinson, *Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition: A Study of Marriage and Concubinage in the Tribe of Muḥammed, 500-750 CE*, (Ph.D. Dissertation), The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh 2013, 78.

[10] It is generally argued that the genealogy of Prophet Muḥammed goes twenty-one generations back to Adnān who is considered the ancestor of the Adnānite Arabs. Adnān signifies the land of Arabia in the *Arabian Nights.*

of the *ǰāhiliyya* for these genealogically-structured texts continue and reproduce the tribal Arab tradition of seeing the individual as surrounded by circles of relatives.[11]

It should be emphasised however that Prophet Muḥammed's privilege of *umma*[12] against *nasab* is a powerful counter-*nasab* movement that promotes the Islamic prohibition against discrimination among the human beings. More positively to state, the Arabic word *umma* derives from *umm,* the word for mother in Arabic, and it is vital to recognise that Prophet Muḥammed lost all his sons in infancy and his direct descendants through Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (Ḥasanids and Ḥusaynids), i.e. *sādah*, are from his youngest daughter Fātimah who marries 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Prophet Muḥammed's cousin.[13] They are known as *ahl al-bayt al-nasab*[14] and the emphasis on *umma* against *nasab* in Islam is therefore an innovative and liberating thing for the female gender though, as aforesaid, Prophet Muḥammed's family tree and claims to *sayyid* genealogy still have religious importance among some Muslims.

These concepts do indeed form a central understanding for this study which questions History and historical writing, memory and identity and patrilineal genealogy in the Middle East and in the representations of the Orient. More important is the fact that, by way of a start, this study proposes a twist to the Arabo-Islamic *nasab* writing and ties Ahdaf Soueif's genealogical affiliation (or spiritual lineage) to Edward Said for whom filiation and affiliation –and a Foucauldian understanding of genealogy in Orientalist brotherhoods, are important concepts. It will be convenient in many other ways because Said theorised

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[11] Robinson 75.

[12] *Umma* also *ummah* means, as Ahdaf Soueif glosses in *The Map of Love,* is "nation, hence Ammama: to nationalise Amma: to lead the prayers, hence Imam: religious leader". Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, Bloomsbury, London 1999, 164. For discussions of *dar al-Islam* "house of Islam" (territorial) and *ummah* (universal) see Adamec 79, 317. In-text citation will be used for references to Soueif's fictional and non-fictional writing in this study.

[13] *Sādah*, singular *sayyid*, also *syed*. *Sayyid* is the title of a tribal chief in pre-Islamic times and is now equivalent to Mister. See Adamec, 279. Prophet Muḥammed's kinfolk is also called by localised honorific titles such as *sharīf, ḥabīb, salip* or *mīr*. See Kazuo Morimoto, "The Prophet's Family as the Perennial Source of Saintly Scholars: Al-Samhūdī on '*ilm* and *nasab*", Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Alexandre Papas, (Ed.), *Family Portraits with Saints: Hagiography, Sanctity, and Family in the Muslim World*, (106-124), Klaus Schwarz Verlag GmbH, Berlin 2014; see "Introduction", Kazuo Morimoto, *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The living links to the Prophet*, Routledge, Oxford 2012. For references to *sayyid* in the *Qur'ān* see Balil Abd al-Karim, *Qur'ānic Terminology, A Linguistic and Semantic Analysis,* (2017), (Trans.: Nancy Roberts), The International Institute of Islamic Thought, London 2017, 50.

[14] *Ahl al bayt al nasab* means "people of the house with blood relation".

extensively about the imagined Orient in all of his works and Ahdaf Soueif was one of his best friends who witnessed his life-long political struggle. In this complex interpretation of *nasab*, History, genealogy and witnessing, the principal focus will fall specifically on the Arab tradition of calling a deceased male as a witness to the speaker/writer, and more than that, on the idea of witnessing as it is contested in Soueif's fiction.[15]

As will later be shown, this study will point to an alternative Muslim Arab female voice about the production of knowledge on the Islamic Orient by exploring the extraordinary relationship between the Arabic *nasab,* witnessing, death and the acts of Empire and particularly significant will be the fact that the amazingly creative relationship between Said and Soueif will provide a theoretical space to do so. In constructing such a suggestion of *nasab* for Soueif, the initiatory assumption is that she will be a *shahida* (f. witness) within this Arabo-Islamic framework that defies death with dead but speaking subjects and her position will be to stand before Said's *shahid* (tombstone) in awe and gratitude.[16] Before explaining the concept of witnessing within Arabo-Islamic culture and the interesting bond between *nasab* writing and memory, it is necessary to return to Kahf's seminal discussion which expands, in another context, the act of standing for the Arabic writer. Kahf explains that memory is a site for the classical Arab poet as he establishes his genealogy and stands before the memory site. This classical opening is a conceit known as *waqf 'ala al-atlal* in Classical Arabic Literature and it means "standing at the deserted site".[17] Kahf indicates that remembering is standing before and the poet always figuratively stands before the campsite in order to start speaking. In a related way of understanding, it will be argued that Soueif stands before Said's tombstone (*shahid*) in order to start writing

[15] It should be noted parenthetically that Jacques Derrida suggests a similar framework of mourning and friendship and builds it on body positioning and enunciation with the concept of speaking on the edge of a tomb. The implication is that "death always underpins friendship as friendship cannot exist without the recognition that one or the other will die first". Especially and explicitly, Derrida says, "I live in the present of myself in the mouths of my friends, I already hear them speaking on the edge of my tomb". See Celia Barnes Rasmussen, "Speaking on the Edge of My Tomb: The Epistolary Life and the Death of Catherine Talbot", *Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 8 (2), 2010, 255-275, Project MUSE, DOI:10.1353/pan.0.0179, 257.

[16] The Arabic word *shahid* is also transliterated as *shahed* in some Western texts, including Soueif's *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed.*

[17] Kahf, "Packaging 'Huda'", 35.

her novels and it is by intervening Kahf's argument that further clarifications on the idea of standing in Islam will be provided.

Inevitably then, it is important to provide an etymology of the Arabic *shahid* which Soueif glosses in *In the Eye of the Sun* as "witness, also tombstone".[18] The interesting thing is that the Arabic word *shaheed* (m. martyr) originates from *shahid* which, as stated before, means also tombstone in Arabic. In her speech (in English) on the street art of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, Soueif indicates that she refuses to use the English word martyr for the Arabic *shaheed* and says that it has problematic overtones for the (Arabic-speaker and) Muslims –and more than that, it is a metonymic gap for the non-Arabic speaker.[19] Instead, she says that she uses *shaheed* (pl. *shuhada*) for the people who died during the Tahrir Revolution and emphasises that those people died for a cause and thus bare witness. As she notes in her updated memoir of the Revolution, *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*: "the root *sh/h/d* is 'to see' and 'to bear witness.' A witness, for example in a court case, is a *shahed* [*shahid*]. Being a *shahed* is only a part – a temporary part – of a person's identity or function." More importantly, she says "A *shaheed* is someone who bears ultimate witness; someone whose sole function now is to bear witness".[20]

It should be noted that Soueif examines the etymology and the Islamic understanding of *shahada* (martyrdom) in almost all of her writings and indicates that the word *shaheed* cannot be translated into other languages. As she often insists, the English word martyr is not an equivalent of *shaheed* and therefore she code-switches between Arabic and other languages while always maintaining the significance of translation for the Arabic-speaking post-colonial Muslim subject. It is precisely from this edge of meaning that she writes and it can be argued that writing is a form of witnessing for Soueif whose fiction provides a historical frame of reference for the *shuhada* that fought against colonialism in the history of Egypt.

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[18] Ahdaf Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun,* Bloomsbury, London 1999, 790.
[19] Ahdaf Soueif, "The Effects of the Arab Spring on Writers and Artists", Keynote Speaker at the Perth Writers Festival in Australia, 21 February 2013, www.abc.net.au, Accessed: 27-06-2014, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/21st-february-2013/4530766.
[20] Ahdaf Soueif, *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*, Bloomsbury, London 2014, 239.

As it appears in Soueif's fiction, martyrdom, together with jihad, is undoubtedly a very contested issue in the Age of Terror and it is therefore necessary to make some clarifying attempts about the legal and extra-legal dimension of witness bearing in Islam. It can be stated that witnessing is particularly significant in Islam and there is a bond between conscious awareness and faith –and the performative aspects of faith. Dominika Bennacer's insightful discussion on activism and the performances of witnessing in Islamic orthopraxy will be extremely insightful in developing an understanding. To begin with the popularly known aspect, it should be particularly noted that in Islamic understanding of *istishhad* (the act of martyrdom), *shaheed* is someone who heroically dies for the expansion of Islam – basically jihad– and bears witness. A more detailed look shows that *shuhada* are not considered dead in Islam and there are some instances in the *Qur'ān* where the status of a *shaheed* after death is discussed. In surah al-Baqarah, it is said, "Do not say that those who are killed in God's cause are dead; they are alive, but you are not aware of it".[21] Again, in surah al-'Imran, it is said, "Do not think of those who have been killed in God's cause as dead. They are alive, and well provided by their Lord".[22]

The immediate thing to be noted is that, as Bennacer demonstrates, there are various and embodied forms of religious witnessing and the linguistic performance in the form of "I testify" is essential to both legal and religious testimony in Islam.[23] In making this argument, Bennacer begins with the definition of *shahada*; the testimony of faith and the daily recitation of Islamic belief, which is interestingly the same word for martyrdom in Arabic. *Shahada* is one of the five pillars of Islam and it is the first and the most important. The act of s*hahada* is the performative utterance in Arabic, "I testify that there is no god but Allāh and I testify that Muḥammed is the Messenger of Allāh" which makes one a Muslim.[24] The person who performs *shahada* is known as *shahid* and the recitation of

[21] *The Quran*, Farida Khanam (Ed.), (Trans.: Maulana Wahidudddun Khan), Goodword Books, India 2013, al-Baqarah: 2/156. It should be noted that the transliteration of the Arabic word *Qur'ān* differentiates in Western texts and *Qur'ān* will be employed in this study though the transliteration may vary in the quoted material.
[22] *The Quran*, al-'Imran: 3/169.
[23] Dominica Bennacer, "Bearing Witness to the (In)visible: Activism and the performance of witness in Islamic orthopraxy", *Performance Research*, 13 (3), 2008, 64-76, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/13528160902819331, 65. "I testify" is '*ash hadu* in Arabic.
[24] This formula is known as *kalima* "word" in Islam, see Adamec 154. Allāh is the God in Islam.

shahada before two witnesses is required when someone converts to Islam.[25] As Bennacer shows, *shahada* is the first word that an infant hears for it is the duty of the father to recite *adhan* (the call to prayer) to the right ear of the child immediately upon birth. It is also the last word said by a Muslim before dying, or if the person cannot speak, the *shahada* is again recited into the ear. In this sense, *shahada* is not only a belief that one holds but also the testimony of a reality that one has seen –the act of seeing, Bennacer states, is both literal as in legal witnessing and metaphorical as more an act of recognition and perception.[26] More significantly though, this linguistic and bodily expression of awareness becomes the embodiment of God-consciousness, which is known as *taqwa* in Islam. Relatedly, it is seen that there are a lot of practices associated with consciousness in Islam including *shahada* such as *adhan*, *salat* (daily prayers), *dhikr* (repetitious recitations of invocations) and Bennacer stresses that these praxes act as living memorial and memorialising practices.[27] It can be stated that these performances are reminders of faith and they culminate in the Islamic practice of *dhikr* which centres upon the remembrance of Allāh. In an important sense, an engaging discussion emerges on the Islamic concepts of *ihsan* and *mushahada* from this understanding.

Parenthetically to note, it is important to point out that there is an incident of a universal and primordial covenant[28] that is mentioned in surah al-A'raf where the spirits of human beings bear witness to God before creation and it is fundamentally related to giving testimony as a memorialising practice: "When your Lord brought forth offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied, 'We bear witness that You are'" and the verse continues, "This He did, lest you should say on the day of Resurrection 'We had no knowledge of that'".[29] The understanding in Islam is that Allāh gathers all human beings (or their spirits),

[25] Some Muslim theologians prefer the verb 'to revert' instead of 'to convert' because of the belief that all children are born with an innate belief of and submission to Allāh. This is known as *fitra*.
[26] Bennacer 66.
[27] Bennacer 67.
[28] This covenant is known as *mithaq* or *mithāq*. See Adamec 75.
[29] *The Quran*, al-A'raf: 7/172. See Joseph E. B. Lumbard, "Covenant and Covenants in the Qur'an", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Edinburgh University Press, 17 (2), 2015, 1-23, DOI: 10.3366/jqs.2015.0193. It is interesting to note that this verse (*ayāh*) in the *Qur'ān* is traditionally recited with two stops in Arabic. The first stop is after the phrase "bear witness" that follows "made them". "[B]ear witness" is recited twice

gives them the faculty of speech and enters into an agreement with them in which they will be witnessing against themselves (while standing). There is a literature analysing this verse with literal and allegorical meanings and it should be noted that *hajj*[30] rituals are intricately interlaced with a similar understanding of witnessing and standing. On the second day of the *hajj*, Muslims assemble on Mount Arafat and stand in vigil till the sunrise of the third day, which is the first day of the Feast of Sacrifice (‘*Id al-Adha*). This day is known as the Day of Arafah in Islam and it can be suggested that Muslims’ standing in vigil and performing *dhikr* and *salat* are memorialising practices of the covenant that is stated in the *ayāh* quoted above. Here, Kahf’s explanation of *waqf ‘ala al-atlal* receives added emphasis, for as examined before, standing is very important in Islamic praxes of faith and relatedly this performance at the Mount Arafah is known as *wuquf* meaning in Arabic station and standing before Allāh without which the pilgrimage would be invalid.[31]

As decisively demonstrated, *wuquf* is a very powerful memorialising practice in Islam and interestingly, there are a lot of instances in the *Qur’ān* about covenants where the forgetfulness of human beings is discussed with similar scenes when human beings are assembled and standing. Similarly, it should be noted that *insān*, the Arabic word for human being, comes from the word *nisyān* which means forgetting.[32] Another interesting example that focuses on witnessing and the forgetfulness of human beings is in surah Ya-Sin where the testimony of the body parts after the Day of Resurrection is discussed: “Today We shall seal up their mouths and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to their misdeeds”.[33] Here again, human beings are assembled and standing

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because of the break and the second break is after “‘We bear witness that You are’”. The verse is therefore traditionally recited in Arabic as, “When your Lord brought forth offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness [stop] [“bear witness” repeated] about themselves, He said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They replied, ‘We bear witness that You are [stop]’.” It might be suggested that bearing witness is emphasised in the verse and the stress is supported with this repetition that follows the present tense conjugation of the verb to witness for the generic third person we as “*wa ‘ash hadahum*”.

[30] *Hajj*, meaning pilgrimage, is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is an obligation of every Muslim of either sex to visit Mecca at least once in lifetime provided the person can manage to do so economically and physically. This pilgrimage occurs on the 8th to 12th (or 13th) day of the last month of the Islamic calendar, *Dhu l-hijjah* (one of the four sacred months from the time of Abraham). Adamec 157, 271-72.

[31] See Adamec 332.

[32] Ziad Elmarsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2012, 73.

[33] *The Quran*, Ya-Sin: 36/65. For the Day of Judgment in Islam see Adamec 80.

and in this context, it can be argued that the linguistic performance of testimony as touched upon in many places in the *Qur'ān* is both an attestation and a way of remembrance.

These associations in consequence will now be explored with the concept of *ihsan* (perfection of faith) in Islam for it is decidedly relevant to memory and testimony. Bennacer indicates that, as Muslim scholars agree on, there are three spiritual stations on the path of *ihsan*; the first is the acceptance of worship, the second is the execution of the first and the third is both beholding Allāh and knowing that one is seen by Allāh.[34] As seen clearly, the very definition of *ihsan* is premised upon seeing and being seen and this final stage of direct knowledge is the experience known as *mushahada* (witnessing) in Arabic, which is available only to the elect. It is important to note that *mushahada* is not the ultimate form of witnessing in Islam and the final and the unique form of seeing is for Allāh only, one of whose ninety-nine names is *al-Shahid*; the omniscient witness, "the One who nothing is absent from Him".[35]

Parenthetically to note and of particular concern here can be the French Romantic François-René de Chateubriand's vision of the Orient in *Oeuvres Romanesques et Voyages* which interestingly reflects a similar understanding of witnessing as *mushahada*. While commenting on Chateubriand's travels in Palestine, Edward Said suggests that the Judean Desert stands forth like an illuminated text before the Orientalist (Chateaubriand) and this silent and supine Orient presents itself to the examination of his very strong ego. In the desert, Chateaubriand somewhat transcends the wretched and frightening contemporary Orient, but to stand in an original relationship to it. He is no longer a modern man, but a visionary seer contemporary with God. Following this incisive analysis, Said says that Chateaubriand's travel is "now turned into a prayer, which exercises his memory, soul, and heart more than it does his eyes, mind, or spirit."[36] As Said emphatically shows, Chateaubriand's energetic dramatisation of his pilgrimage is very crucial and revealing as he darkly reflects on a unique experience of terror with open tombs and godly omnipotence through witnessing. It is worth recalling also that Said offers another similar penetrating

[34] Bennacer 68.
[35] Bennacer 68.
[36] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York 2003, 173-178.

criticism of the testimonial and beholding self of the Orientalist who representatively shows what needs to be seen to a European audience in his discussion of T. E. Lawrence and H. A. R. Gibb, which will be specifically emphasised in the second chapter of this study. In like fashion, and most definitive perhaps, Said comments revealingly on Louis Massignon's deep attachment to the decapitated Persian Sufi poet Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj and speaks fascinatingly on another form of Orientalist transcendence and, albeit indirectly, *mushahada*. For Massignon, al-Hallaj's achievement is to have attained a mystical union with God which, Massignon suggests, is against the grain of Islam. The intention of Islam, Massignon defines, is to understand God's transcendental unity which can be understood through testifying or a mystic love. Mainly for Massignon, God presents himself as a kind of absence and a refusal to be present and he describes the devout Muslim believer's submission without seeing Him as testimonial fervour.[37] Most important though, and extraordinarily relevant here, Massignon describes al-Hallaj as a martyr in his *The Passion of al-Hallaj*.

After this line of explanations, it will be easy to understand martyrdom as witnessing within an Islamic context and it is now necessary to re-examine the etymology of the Arabic word *shahid* for it is extremely important in understanding Soueif's fiction. It should first be stated that although Soueif repeatedly indicates that the word *shaheed* ties witnessing to martyrdom only in Arabic, Bennacer argues quite the opposite. She reveals that witnessing is also present in the etymology of the English word that goes back, with the Latin *martyr*, to the Greek *martis* and signifies witnessing. She expresses that the development of the word *shaheed* to the meaning of the martyr might have developed under the Arab Christian influence in the Middle East and she points to the Syriac word *sahda*. At the same time however, Bennacer notes that the meaning of *shaheed* meaning martyr is not found in the *Qur'ān*.[38] Interestingly, it seems that the word *shaheed* develops a new meaning with witnessing, though it is not clear how, and it can be argued that the connection between martyrdom and witnessing has been firmly established in Islam.

[37] See Said, *Orientalism*, 104, 268-269. Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (857-922) was executed as a heretic after his utterance *ana al-Ḥaqq* "I am the Truth", *al-Haqq* "Truth" being God. Adamec 116.
[38] Bennacer 69.

Understandably, it is on these grounds that Ahdaf Soueif makes extensive references to witnessing in an Islamic/Sufi context and it is suggested that Soueif's insistent focus on witnessing and memory will be very important for this study.

As a point of connection, it is important to note that tombs and graves –*shahid* means also tombstone in Arabic– emerge repeatedly as contested places throughout Soueif's fiction. In regard to this point about witnessing and tombs, equally noteworthy is that fact that tombs were favourite places of Edward William Lane (1801-1876), the famous British Orientalist, when he was in Egypt. Jason Thompson states that Lane used to stay in tombs while he was gathering information for his publications on Egypt and was actually living inside a tomb in Giza, as he says, "In this tomb I took my abode for a fortnight; & never did I spend a more happy time".[39] It is clearly seen that Soueif touches on certain Orientalist issues with Lane who appears in most of her writings and his love of the tombs in Giza will bear on a new context in this study with an emphasis on translation, death, witnessing and the acts of the Empire. In general terms, it will be suggested that Soueif stresses post-colonial body politics through Edward William Lane as the detached imperial observer and this study will emphasise an alternative female voice with body positioning by discussions of Arabic and English speaking colonised bodies, unburiable corpses and graves.

Related to suggestions with body positioning will be the insight, after Mohja Kahf's discussion, that standing, *wuquf*, as a physical position is a strategy in Islam and Arabic Literature.[40] It is important to point out also that the second pillar of Islam, *salat* (daily prayers), means standing before Allāh as if in the presence of Him (seeing Him and being seen by Him) and in obedience. Interestingly and correspondingly, *Orientalism*'s first (Pantheon) and the 25th Anniversary Edition (Vintage) portray a naked standing boy. The

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[39] qtd. in Jason Thompson, "Edward William Lane in Egypt", *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 34, 1997, 243-261, JSTOR, Accessed: 06-05-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40000808, 250; see Jason Thompson, "Edward William Lane's *Description of Egypt*", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28 (4), 1996, 565-583, JSTOR, Accessed: 22-12-2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/176153, 570.

[40] Assia Djebar, Arab novelist and film director, also maintains the centrality of body positioning and her "sitting […] in the dust" remains very much within the parameters of enunciation and listening; see Marta Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (313-338), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 313.

cover painting in both editions is *The Snake Charmer* (1879) of Jean-Leon Gérôme,[41] which depicts a classical Orientalist scene with apparently gibberish Arabic calligraphy of a verse from the *Qur'ān*. It can be plausibly argued that body positioning is tied to standing and witnessing in the cover for, as Alessandra Marino indicates, painters are "ambassadors of the colonizers' rationality" and they become "*witnesses* of a radically different culture".[42] As a correlative way of interpreting this, it needs to be noted that Ahdaf Soueif intervenes in the discussions of the exotic Orientalist paintings in her novels and problematises the authoritarian and moral gaze of the European painter while drawing particular attention to *his* detached body. It is important also to note parenthetically that, as Lacan asserts, self-identity is constituted within the gaze of another individual and this offers post-colonial theorists an important insight in understanding the colonial's construction of self-identity as Other.[43] This understanding is also highly relevant for Soueif's critique of the moralising Western gaze of Orientalist painters. Within this complex framework, this study will suggest a female and post-colonial rethinking with (matrilineal) genealogies, Islamic concepts and Orientalist discourse and will knit Arabo-Islamic literary forms with Western narrative traditions alongside a Saidian critique of culture, imperialism, colonialism and nationalism. After introducing important critical concepts, it will make strong claims affirming the position of Ahdaf Soueif in the British Novel and will focus on the recent publications on the literary productions of the Anglo-Arab Muslim female novelists.

Ahdaf Soueif is an Egyptian-British novelist, short story writer, translator, and Palestinian rights activist. She was born in Cairo and attended schools in both Egypt and England. Her first language of reading is English and she later relearns Arabic in Egypt.

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[41]Jean-Leon Gérôme (1824-1904) is an Orientalist French painter, sculptor and teacher. His particular style is known as Academicism. Sibel Bozdoğan describes him as "the most remarkable artist of this paradoxical juxtaposition of the realistic representational technique with most imaginative, haunting, shocking yet ultimately fascinating thematic content –like violence, hidden sexuality, the harem, the slave market or the call to prayer as the stereotypical images of an Orientalized Orient". Sibel Bozdoğan, "Journeys to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation", *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, 41 (4), 1988, 38-45, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/14250122, 42.

[42] Alessandro Marino, "The Tomb of Orientalism: Europe after the Lure of the East", *Third Text*, 27 (6), 2013, 762-773, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/09528822.2013.857900, 764, emphasis added.

[43] Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, Migrant Metaphors* [E-book], Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, 21.

She holds a BA and MA in English Literature (Egypt) and a Ph.D. in Linguistics (UK). Soueif started writing fiction in the late 1980s and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize 1999. Soueif holds numerous literary awards and her fiction has been translated into many languages; she also translates fiction and non-fiction from Arabic into English. In general terms, her fictional writing contributes positively to criticism surrounding Post-Colonial Studies and the revolutionary insight of her oeuvre is its semantic, historical and critical thickness.[44]

As her hybridity indicates and as suggested at the start, Soueif interweaves Arabo-Islamic narrative forms with traditional English/European genres and her novels and short stories, which are products of a specific historical and cultural conditioning, critically examine historiography and History, language and translation and revisionist writing and rereading with a post-colonial awareness. It can be suggested that as the works of a novelist with a Ph.D. in Linguistics, Soueif's literary and non-fictional writings are products of intensive historical and cultural research and it can be powerfully argued that Soueif's fiction is a literary continuation of Edward Said's critique of Orientalism and cultural imperialism. It is important to note that, like Edward Said, Soueif is from a previously colonised and a still decolonising country and studied in an imperial centre, the UK, besides her schooling at the slowly decolonising institutions at home after the military coup of 1952.[45] It can be suggested that her themes emerge from Said's critiques and more important is the fact that her fiction can be considered a female and a literary echo of especially *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. It is appropriate to argue that Soueif gives new and literary dimensions to Said's theoretical assumptions in her fiction – especially his critique of the colonialist construction of an essential Arab/Muslim[46]

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[44] It is important to note that while discussing Orientalism's worldliness, Edward Said points to Gertrude Bell's Orientalist perspective and says that her essential Arab "accumulates no existential or even semantical thickness". Said, *Orientalism*, 230.

[45] Soueif and Said have at times been criticised as upper-bourgeois Arabs. The word decolonising will be employed in this study and it is important to note that Edward Said defines colonised people as "not a historical group of people that has won national sovereignty and was therefore disbanded, but a category that included the inhabitants of newly independent states as well as peoples in adjacent territories still settled by Europeans". Edward W. Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (2), 1989, 205-225, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343582, 206.

[46] Arab and Muslim are sometimes used interchangeably in this study.

subjectivity. It is seen that Soueif develops Said's arguments with questions concerning the narrativisation of history and memory, and the issue of narrative in general; religion and nationalism; the acts of the Empire and local agency, and new forms of imperialism. Most important of all, this study will show that Soueif's fiction is preoccupied with Islam in its diversity[47] as foregrounded in Said's critique of the (imagined) Islamic Orient and will foreground it as one of its strengths as suggested in the brief introduction to the Islamic concepts. As is well known, Edward Said is importantly associated with anti-essentialism about Islam[48] and in that respect, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* will allow this study to draw satisfying comparisons and generate intensive discussions because Soueif's fiction centres upon an interlacing thematic and consistently reaffirms the key points in Said's writings.

In her struggle to ally her fiction with *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* as decisive authorities, Soueif makes strong arguments criticising History writing and colonialist historiography and critically investigates the concept of intellectual genealogy, Said's powerful and persistent recognition in *Orientalism*. Soueif writes historical narratives with a counter-*nasab* emphasis on matrilineal genealogies and her fiction is very rich as the result of the archival research that she, as a post-colonial novelist, and her female narrators, as professional translators, graduate students and readers of fiction, make. It can be argued that Soueif constructs her critique of intellectual genealogy around what Said calls Orientalist brotherhood[49] and addresses many other issues concerning travel writing and oriental romances presumably in response to Orientalist forms of writing. Further than that, she questions geography and climate as key post-colonial issues and it should be noted parenthetically that Edward Said frequently returns to the same stress on geography and acknowledges that what he is really doing later in his career is rethinking

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[47] See Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual, The 1993 Reith Lectures* [E-book], First Vintage Books Edition, New York and Canada 1996, 59; Seàn McLoughlin, "Islam(s) in Context: Orientalism and the anthropology of Muslim societies and cultures", *Journal of Believes & Values: Studies in Religion & Education*, 28 (3), 2007, 273-296, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/13617670701712539, 273; see also Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, Routledge, London and New York 1996, 9.

[48] Irfan Khawaja, "Essentialism, Consistency and Islam: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism", *Israel Affairs*, 13 (4), 2007, 689-713, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/1353712070144496, 690.

[49] Or "colonialist lineage", see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 44; for homo-social bonds in colonialist action, 61.

geography.[50] Unsurprisingly, Said's notions in *Orientalism* will occupy a significant part of discussions for, as Timothy Brennan, a former student of Said, suggests, "this book produced that field"; Post-Colonialism though Said himself was critical of all such theoretical fields.[51]

As the chapters unfold, it will be pointed out that Said's notions about Orientalist editing and translation receive a substantial amount of attention in Soueif's fiction where translation is constituted as a recurrent theme with bi-lingual or polyglot characters who are either professional translators or graduate students of English trying to translate Arabic songs and poetry into English, and feel that they fail in their attempts. In addition to foreignising and violent translations will be a focus on Soueif's illustration and subversion of, in Said's words, the paradigms of Orientalist research, some of which include categorisation and disciplinary order upon material. It is important to note that Said's insistent focus on the paradigms of Orientalist research strengthens the idea of Orientalism as both a discourse and an institution[52] and, to support this argument, Soueif includes Orientalist fragments from Gérard de Nerval and Gustave Flaubert in her fiction –in French, without English translations. This way, she raises Said's concern that these creative writers show the influences of Orientalism as a discourse. So it follows, Said also examines the writings of Edward William Lane and Silvestre de Sacy, who occupy a significant part of criticism in *Orientalism*, to illustrate the scope of Orientalism as a discourse, and Soueif ironically takes Sacy's theory of fragments[53] and reinforces a subverted reading of Lane's fragmented narratives. It can be suggested that she complicates her writing as Edward

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[50] Stephen Howe, "Edward Said and Marxism: Anxieties of Influence", *Cultural Critique*, 67, 2007, 50-87, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/cul.2007.0028, 69.

[51] Timothy Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory, *Critical Inquiry*, 26 (3), 2000, 558-583, JSTOR, Accessed: 28-11-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344294, 559; see also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 34; John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York 2010, 26; Moustafa Bayoumi and يموبيد يفطصم, "Reconciliation without Duress: Said, Adorno, and the Autonomous Intellectual, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 25 (Edward Said and Critical Decolonization), 2005, 46-64, JSTOR, Accessed: 04-05-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4047451, 46.

[52] Said, *Orientalism*, 88. Timothy Brennan argues that the central construct of *Orientalism* is institution, not discourse. See Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 582.

[53] See Said, *Orientalism*, 128; for the notion of the mediated Orient and Sacy's self-justified eligibility to select appropriate Arab poems and prose for students see Phrae Chittiphalangsri, "On the Virtuality of Translation in Orientalism", *Translation Studies*, 7 (5), 2014, 50-65, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/14781700.2013.843356, 56

William Lane does to prevent smooth transitions especially when her narrators disrupt the novelistic narrations to remind themselves as editors and to become Lane (the editor, the translator, the Orientalist), most notably in *The Map of Love*.

As suggested before, Edward William Lane is a very important historical figure for both Edward Said and Ahdaf Soueif, and to note parenthetically, Lane's *Description of Egypt*[54] was unfortunately not published before his death despite numerous alterations, cuts, editing and repeated visits to Egypt which is interestingly relevant to this study. After futile attempts to publish his encyclopaedic narrative on Egypt, Lane sadly agrees to print the book partly at least, but cannot succeed at it, too. Desperately, he proposes John Murray, his publisher, to publish certain parts of the book after his sister Sophia Lane-Poole selects some passages and rewrites them into impressions of an English woman living in Egypt.[55] As planned, Sophia rewrites *Description* in Egypt, but her narrative turns out to be completely independent although Lane edits it. Ironically, but unsurprisingly, the book becomes a popular female travel narrative in Victorian England. After Sophia's success, Lane finally accepts that he will never publish *Description*, and it possibly provides a ground for Soueif's fiction which rigorously interrogates the concepts of editing, rewriting and lost texts through female characters.[56] It can be suggested that Soueif continues Said's extended critique of Lane and Sacy in *Orientalism* and delves deep into questions about the

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[54] Edward William Lane titled *Description of Egypt* echoing *Description de l'Égypte*, which will therefore appear in the French title in this study.

[55] Thompson, "Edward William Lane in Egypt", 258; "Edward William Lane's *Description of Egypt*", 573. For further information see "Editor's Introduction" in Edward William Lane, *Description of Egypt*, Jason Thompson (Ed.), The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo 2000.

[56] Soueif's fiction intersects with Edward William Lane's writings, especially on the issues of gaze and visibility. As will later be shown, Lane engagingly captures Egypt, and *Description of Egypt* and *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* read like a novel. However, as stated earlier, Lane always prevents smooths transitions and it can be argued that Soueif situates her fiction within Lane's appearance of objectivity and descriptive breaks. To give an illustration, Soueif's fiction rarely speaks of female circumcision and is criticised to portray lower class life in Egypt naively. This can be partially explained by the omission to Lane's descriptions of female circumcision at the request of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and it justifies the connecting thread between Lane and Soueif. Soueif's ironical undertaking of Lane resonates with Said for he presents his argument of the defeat of vision by narrative through Lane and Soueif forces this recognition by exhibiting narrative awareness. See also Daniel Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction* [E-book], State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 2003, 150-151; Said, *Orientalism*, 159.

representation and the interpretation of the (Islamic) Orient with creative writers and Orientalist scholars.

On the other hand, central to Soueif is Said's insistent emphasis on Egypt's special place in Orientalism as the gateway to the Orient, especially India, the Jewel in the Crown. On this basis, it is seen that the Bombardment of Alexandria (1882) and *al-Nahda*; the Arab Renaissance (late 19th century), are persistently mentioned by them and Soueif narrativises these historical events in her fiction and points to the significance of *al-Nahda* as resistance against the Occupation of Egypt. Like Said, she illustrates the shared mediums and results of French, British and American imperialism in her fiction and puts particular emphasis on Egypt's fight for independence, self-representation and self-government. In doing that, she powerfully draws attention to the agency of the local Egyptians, but it should be stressed that the regional and the local are not privileged in her writings and Soueif has been criticised on these ground.

After considering redefinitions suggested in *Orientalism* and, as seen in the novels' and short stories' repetitive insistences, Soueif's fiction endeavours to examine and describe the textual and the administrative attitude of the West to the Islamic Orient as she asserts that Egypt is historicised through Orientalist institutions and discourse as highly stylised simulacra. She is engaged with Egypt's history in throwbacks and puts particular emphasis on depicting what Said describes as Orientalism's ideological myths. But, Soueif addresses larger issues and her writing is not restricted to the theoretical parallels in *Orientalism*. It is at this point of redefinition that she articulates more clearly about "the palimpsest that is Egypt" (*The Map of Love* 64). Her fiction extends to cover and narrativises Egypt's history from Mameluke and Ottoman administrations to modern days as she inserts breaks with the French and British colonial occupations and American imperialism.[57] Most definitive perhaps, she structures her fiction with history starting from

[57] The Mameluke Sultanate of Egypt lasted from 1250 with the overthrow of the Ayyubid Dynasty to the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in 1571. After the Ottoman-Mameluke War of 1516-1517, Egypt became an *eyalet* (province) and was administered by the Ottoman Empire until 1867. However, Napoleon I invaded Egypt in 1798 and his French Campaign lasted till 1801. In 1805, Muḥammed 'Ali Pasha, an Albanian-Ottoman commander expelled the French and administered Egypt as an Ottoman province –though Ottoman only in name. In 1867, Egypt was declared a Khedivate and was a semi-independent state till the British

Egypt's rule under the Ottomans, especially after the Urabi Revolt (1879-1881) and the Bombardment of Alexandria which opened way to the invasion of the country. This allows her to critically consider Arab nationalism and the *al-Nahda* movement as a post-colonial novelist. Soueif also reflects widely on contemporary forms of Orientalism and the continuing influence of colonisation after direct rule. It is appropriate to observe that this is the reason she prefers to write in temporal shifts which questions colonialist historiography and this way she shows the challenges of History and historical writing for decolonising nations.

Soueif's fiction also enters the debate about the pan-Islamism in the Hamidian Period of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909) which continues another investigation of Islam with the Ottoman administration of Egypt. As suggested before, Soueif emphasises the heterogeneity of Islam especially in her later work and points to the diversities and differences in Islam within a distinct Saidian recognition. In that respect, it can be suggested that the Orientalist discussions concerning Islam, modernity, gender and *shari'a*[58] are fairly built in her writings, and relatedly, Soueif questions identitarian, i.e. nationalist, and patriarchal forms of Islam in contemporary Egypt; a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, formerly colonised and decolonising country –and in (diasporic) spaces like England.

The critical questions raised in Soueif's novels through her affiliation with Edward Said also call for a focus on post-structural identity politics and it should be noted that Said is fiercely critical of Post-structuralism and Postmodernism because of their lack of worldliness –he repeatedly expresses concern for allegedly pure and unpolitical criticism, especially in *Culture and Imperialism.*[59] The wider context of the novels show that Soueif

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Occupation in 1882. The Khedivate of Egypt remained under Ottoman suzerainty till 1914 when Egypt was declared a British protectorate. The country was the Sultanate of Egypt from 1914 to 1922 and the Kingdom of Egypt from 1922 to 1953. Egypt became a Republic in 1953 after the Free Officers' Coup in 1952 and is officially the Arab Republic of Egypt since 1953. It is necessary to add that Ottoman provinces were known as *eyalet* from 1362 to 1864 and as *vilayet* from 1864 to 1922.

[58] Also *shari'ah,* Islamic law, see Adamec 157-159.

[59] Benita Parry, "Edward Said and Third World Marxism", *College Literature*, 40 (4), 2013, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/lit.2013.0040, 107; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 14-15, 67; for "identitarian rhetorics" see Howe, 64, 75; for Said's criticism of "poststructuralist science" see Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: "Orientalism" as Travelling Theory", 562.

focuses on the construction of the colonised other's identity with compelling post-structuralist arguments and also discusses hybrid subjectivities in a post-colonial understanding. In a related sense, by involving discussions about cultural imperialism and nationalism, Soueif points to the hysterical border protection of the Empire and, as aforesaid, critically explores post-colonial body politics. To develop her suggestions about narrative and national borders, Soueif examines hybridity especially by tracing a legacy to classical Arab writing and with European canonical literature and describes the bond between desire and narrative with a throwback to the ransom-tales in the *Arabian Nights*.[60] In most general terms, she enables her fiction to be read across generic and narrative borders, or limits, and more than that, it is seen that the questioning of borders receives its most direct treatment in the novels' and short stories' overlapping, intertwined or rewritten scenes across time and space. These doubled narratives haunt Soueif's fiction, and constitute an assertive move to questions of authenticity, mimicry and agency.

Also important is the fact that Soueif's novels and short stories haunt Western canonical literature as the Arab double –or Other. On a more complex level, it can be stated that Soueif's fiction inherits a novelistic tradition and mimics *Middlemarch, Anna Karenina, Madam Bovary* and *The Mill on the Floss* while at the same time haunting the canonical novel as its post-colonial and Arab Other with Dickensian scenes and references to "Kubla Khan". It can also be suggested that Soueif strategically follows Said's formulation of novelistic inheritance as suggested in *Culture and Imperialism* and her haunting novels illustrate his insightful analyses of Orientalist inheritance and the novel as an imperial genre.[61] Similar to Said's notion of inheritance, Elleke Boehmer states that writers in England were part of an unflinchingly imperial society and "wrote in the imperial shadow of the colonial and exotic fictions", which she describes as textual environment created through inherited tropes.[62] In that respect, it can be suggested that Soueif's achievement is her beautiful combination of the Arabo-Islamic narrative practices with

[60] Susan Muaddi Darraj, "Narrating Egypt and England: The Hybrid Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif", *Studies in the Humanities*, 3 (1-2) 2003, 91-114, Accessed: 06-05-2015, http://vlex.com/vid/narrating-egypt-fiction-ahdaf-soueif-56590262, 92.
[61] See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, London 1994, 83-87.
[62] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 43.

Western genres and her questioning of the authenticity of the Orientalist writer while demonstrating the hybridity of the post-colonial subject –and the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised, also and importantly after direct colonialism ended.

In Soueif's fiction, doubling and hybridity are also concretely produced in paratextual refinements with glossing and code-switching. In a very elaborate way, Soueif demonstrates that the design of the books' covers, especially *The Map of Love*, the deliberate insertion of blank, or *white* pages inside the texts and the Arabic-English glossaries as parts of the novels are questionings of narrative borders and generic hybridity. More in tune with border is the increasing vigour with which Soueif deals place and space in her fiction. With the colours of her characters' diaries that narrate key historical events in symbolic sceneries, she suggests an awareness of ecological imperialism, dislocation and environmentalism for the post-colonial Other and strengthens this idea with frequent references to gardening and transplantation as post-colonial issues. Also, Soueif's institutional and colonialist places,[63] for example the British Embassy and the British Council, underwrite her attempts to convey this idea.

But, in larger terms, Soueif deals with bordering definitely focusing on the Islamic/Arab concepts of *fitna*[64] and *hudud*,[65] which regulate her questions of sexual imperialism and the post-colonial body.[66] In Arabic, *fitna* means transgression of borders and *hudud* means borders. Underwriting this suggestion will be the autobiographical narrative of Fatima Mernissi, the famous Moraccon sociologist, who is engaged in a rich discussion of *fitna* in *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*.[67] Mernissi relates *fitna* to the transgression of Arab female sexuality and more importantly to the hysterical border protection of the Empire. It will be demonstrated that Soueif similarly questions the concepts of *fitna* and *hudud* through female sexuality and language and examines the

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[63] Also, "colonial spaces", see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 52.
[64] Also *fitnah*. For *fitna* as trial and revolt see Adamec 101.
[65] Sing. *hadd* meaning obstruction. *Hudud* is also mandatory punishments in classical Islamic law (*sharia'*) in cases of adultery, fornication, false accusations of adultery, theft, apostasy, highway robbery and drunkenness. See Adamec 112; see also Edward W. Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1983, 37-38.
[66] For women's bodies as sites of national borders see Moore 12, 57, 117.
[67] See Amin Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2005, 17.

linguistic hybridity of the post-colonial subject in that sense. Surprising is the point that Soueif ties the concepts of *fitna* and *hudud* to adultery and civilisation and this will be emphasised through Robert Young's famous discussion of colonial desire. Young's brilliant arguments on adultery and miscegenation will provide critical lens to examine imperialism and sexuality together with Mernissi's explorations of *hudud* and *fitna* and it is important to note that Edward Said provides a fascinating dimension to *hadd* in *The World, The Text, and The Critic* that will be explored in discussions of textuality.

As suggested earlier, in constructing her understanding of narrative/national borders, language and female sexuality, Soueif recognises a common thread across Post-structuralism and Said's colonial discourse analysis. It is at this point that this study invites a reconsideration of bordering with questions of "the inability of the post"[68] that Soueif immensely sophisticates in her writings. As appearing in Nasar Meer's discussions, "the appellation 'post' can be misleading" because of the continuing dialogue between the colonial and the post-colonial periods and especially because Post-Colonialism questions the imposed cultural and political relations in the aftermath of decolonisation.[69] In relation to this, Mary Louise Pratt states more strongly that the term post-colonial locates the whole planet with respect to Eurocentric historical narrative,[70] and it is in this sense that Soueif investigates narrative borders and historical narratives. It is important to note that there has been a continuing concern over the semantic basis of the word post-colonial and the hyphenated term post-colonial will be employed in this study. The hyphenated term, as suggested in the ground-breaking book, *The Empire Writes Back, Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures,* will be used to identify all forms of culture that are affected from the idea of Empire starting with colonisation to the present day.[71] As will be stated in

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[68] Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffits, Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back, Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* [E-book], Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004, 195.

[69] Meer aptly demonstrates that fences are very low between colonial and post-colonial history. See Nasar Meer, "Islamophobia and Postcolonialism: Continuity, Orientalism and Muslim Consciousness", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48 (5), 2014, 500-515, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2014.966960, 505.

[70] Pratt's sharp critique further explores borders with colonialist history. See Mary Louise Pratt, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism:* A Symposium", Bruce Robbins, Jonathan Arac, R. Radhakrishnan and Edward Said, *Social Text*, 50, 1994, 1-24, JSTOR, Accessed: 14-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/466793, 9.

[71] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 1.

Chapter Two, though dense and rich, this field is highly contested and the disagreements are also reflected on the very use of the term.[72] In that respect, this study will not offer a historically linear understanding of colonialism as moving through stages of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial and will resist the oppressive idea of a linear history with a teleological development and an end.

Such a resistance is seen in the critique of Edward Said as well, especially when he contrasts linear and subsuming narrative with what he calls contrapuntal and often nomadic narrative. In his writings, Said attests to the undoubtable relevance of narrative and resistance for the post-colonial writer[73] and it can be suggested that Soueif extends it widely in her writings and cultural activism especially when she emphasises the tyranny of chronology and questions the linear History of the West that textually constructs the post-colonial subject. Against this allegedly objective History, Soueif writes oppositional and alternative histories and contests the notion of "historifiable"[74] peoples in her narrative constructions. It is significant that she comments on the violence of History with concerns about the acts of the Empire, imperial language, borders and the issue of narrativisation. It is also important to remind that Soueif draws on Said's exclusive focus on the danger and power of philology[75] in his discussions of Orientalism and it should be stated as a significant note that Radhakrishnan describes Said as "the literary theorist interpellated by Western humanism".[76] It can be argued that one of the most important aspects of Soueif's fiction is its engagement with the interpellative effects of reading Western Literature as canonical literature on post-colonial subjects and this study will consider a powerful reformulation of this as *strategic Orientalism*, or more clearly after following Spivak's foregrounding, the strategic use of positivist Orientalism. In constructing this critique, it

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[72] See Peter Childs and Roger Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Routledge, Oxford 2006, 183-185; David Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Penguin Books, England 2001, 304.

[73] Jonathan Arac, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism:* A Symposium", Bruce Robbins, Mary Louise Pratt, R. Radhakrishnan and Edward Said, *Social Text*, 50, 1994, 1-24, JSTOR, Accessed: 14-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/466793, 12.

[74] Moore 6.

[75] Timothy Brennan, "Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic: Modernism and Empire", *College Literature*, 40 (4), 2013, 14-32, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/lit.2013.0046, 17.

[76] R. Radhakrishnan, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism:* A Symposium", Bruce Robbins, Mary Louise Pratt, Jonathan Arac and Edward Said, *Social Text*, 50, 1994, 1-24, JSTOR, Accessed: 14-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/466793, 16.

will be suggested that Soueif strategically writes within the paradigms of Orientalist discourse while criticising and correcting them and thereby provide a space for narrative resistance.

Closely related with narrative scrutiny will be Soueif's handling of the issues of untranslation, unlearning and rereading that are developed in her counter-narratives which are constructed around the Arab/Muslim women's writing and reading practices. It is noticeable that Soueif's fiction permeates a vast range of narrative forms and rests on an interesting fusion of the English and the Arab. For instance, she develops the traditionally feminine practice of *halawa* as a narrative form and focuses on the Islamic *'awra* to demonstrate unnarration. *Halawa* means the removal of hair from body in Arabic and it can be suggested that it is tied to narrative spinning in Soueif's fiction –like and unlike with the mythological Penelope who is a weaver of narrative in Homer's *The Odyssey*. *Halawa* is a female practice and Soueif presents a complex view on post-colonial and feminist body politics with *halawa*. It is worthwhile to examine that *halawa* offers death as a ghostly trace on desire and, in Soueif's fiction, numb female characters unnarrate memories after ritually and violently performed *halawa*, through which she questions female desire. Like many other female Arab novelists, Soueif sees body as a memory site and constructs an alternative female voice with the discussion of *halawa*. Similarly, with the Islamic '*awra*,[77] "the voice of woman is a *'awra*" (*In the Eye of the Sun* 754), Soueif questions the limitations of narration and discusses the issues of speech, gaze and narrative power for the Arab female subject. She develops a similar suggestion of narrative spinning with embroidery and tapestry weaving which are also traditionally known as female activities – and these again tie her narrative to Penelope and to Western canon. It can be argued that testimonial literature and narratives of war are also forcefully stressed in Soueif's Arab/Muslim female context. Similarly, it is clear that Soueif's fiction is intensely serious about women's travel writing (mostly Victorian) and sustains a creative interrogation of it as an Orientalist genre. As will be suggested later, there is a critical edge to travel with the

[77] *'Awra* "literally means a private body part not to be revealed". See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 135.

Qur'ānic *safar*[78] (travel) and Soueif responds to Orientalist genres and interestingly complicates the moral superiority and the detachedness of the Western gaze with the concept of *safar*. It will be argued that she intricately weaves *'awra*, *safar* and veiling to contest the epistemic violence of the Empire and imperial gaze and these will be meticulously contextualised in this study.

By and large, Soueif's fiction can be seen to progress from a Saidian discourse analysis to contemporary post-colonial identity, body and culture politics. More significantly, her writing joins the discussions that resituate Post-Colonial Studies by adding religion as an identity signifier. Unsurprisingly, as Waïl S. Hassan states, post-colonial discourse analysis began with Said and his concern with the Islamic Orient, but literary productions of the Arabic speaking world, for example novels written in Arabic about the colonial occupation, have been studied "with little attention to colonial history".[79] Similarly, Amin Malak asserts that there is a lacuna in the heterogeneous discourse of the Post-Colonial Studies and that its dissemination under the hegemony of the Euro-American academy betrays its very notion of diversity and difference.[80] Malak points that the representation of religion indicates a site of neo-colonial conflict in Post-Colonialism. Said's *Orientalism*, he argues, is the seminal text of Post-Colonial Studies and it challenges West's misrepresentations of the Arab/Muslim people, however, religion as a "powerful identifier" is rarely recognised with the potency of an analytic reading.[81] Malak's thoroughgoing analyses stress that Muslims are "unrepresented, underrepresented, or misrepresented" in British Literature.[82] By historically examining the Muslim narrative discourse in British Literature, Malak attempts to reconstruct Post-Colonial Studies and

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[78] For Orientalist notions on the Arabian traveller see Said, *Orientalism*, 237.

[79] The issue of language is very important for Hassan. See Waïl S. Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 33 (1), 2002, 45-64, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-03-2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4183446, 45; see also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 14; McLeod 23.

[80] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* 17.

[81] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* 17; Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 75.

[82] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* 12; See McLoughlin, 277. It is important to remind here Said's Foucauldian recognition that what differs representation from misrepresentation is a degree of proportion. Said indicates that representation itself should be addressed by the intellectual and the critic. Foucault also remarks that every representation reveals a representer and a false representation cannot be replaced with a true one.

draws attention to the Muslim novelists writing in English. His historical reading shows that the Muslim as a "primary identity"[83] has a long and established existence in English novelistic writing and Hassan and Malak's positions will establish the parameters of discussions in this study.

This study will also be contextualised by publications on Arab/Muslim female novelists writing in English and it should be stated that the female gender forms a kind of a centre for this study, mostly because of its contested place in the Post-Colonial Studies after the publication of *Orientalism*. Edward Said has been deeply challenged and criticised for portraying a totalised image for both genders with the argument that Orientalism, colonialism and imperialism were described in most of his writings as affecting the male and the female subject equally or similarly.[84] For instance, Susan Fraiman challenges the masculinity of Said's anti-imperialist project, especially *Culture and Imperialism*, and points to the "paucity of women and feminist criticism in Said's work".[85] Fraiman argues that even Gayatri Spivak is totally absent from *Culture and Imperialism*. Indeed, Spivak's name passes within a group of scholars (Said's exact phrase is "other friends") on whose indulgence, hospitality and criticism Said says he depended.[86] Unsurprisingly, Said finds himself in the thick of the argument that his writings are essentialist. Undoubtedly though, it can be claimed that he mounts a post-colonial challenge with his critique of the orientalised Oriental (subject race) who is sensual and represented and spoken for, but it is true that his texts have blind spots.[87] On the other hand, it can be stated that, although he is not intensely serious about the gender dynamic in *Orientalism*, Said offers a slight awareness of gender balance especially in and after the publication of *Culture and Imperialism*.

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[83] Miriam Cooke, "Deploying the Muslimwoman", Fawzia Ahmed, Margot Badran, Mino Muallem, Jasmin Zine, "Roundtable Discussion: Religion, Gender and the Muslimwoman", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 24 (1) 2008, 91-119, JSTOR, Accessed: 18-05-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20487917, 92.
[84] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 80-81.
[85] Susan Fraiman, "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture and Imperialism", *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (4), 1995, 805-821, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2010, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344068, 816-818.
[86] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xxxii.
[87] Howe 63.

In *Orientalism* Said remarks that Orientalism is a patriarchal discourse and the Orientalist scholar grounds and authenticates the imperial Truth through "its paradigms of research, its own learned societies and its own Establishment".[88] He argues that the Arab and the Muslim societies are harshly attacked because of the "abrogation of women's rights" and indicates that "the relation between the Middle East and the West is really defined as sexual".[89] This criticism remains a consistent feature throughout Said's writings and the quote below apparently demonstrates his powerful perception: "the association between the Orient and sex is remarkably persistent. The Middle East is resistant, as any virgin would be, but the male scholar wins the prize by bursting open, penetrating through the Gordion knot despite the taxing task".[90] Said's criticism of Orientalism continues another long debate of Islam and gender and he describes the negative generalisations of the West while *he* penetrates the Orient. In extending his critique, Said shows that Orientalism is "an exclusively male province" and says that the Oriental women are created out of the "power-fantasy" of travel writers and novelists – "They", Said indicates, "express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing".[91] He then points to the pornographic novels on the Orient and names this essentialist attitude as static male Orientalism.[92]

In that respect, it is possible to remark that Said is centrally concerned with the orientalised Muslim and Arab Oriental with a gender awareness that discusses the reinterpreted, rebuilt and orientalised sexuality of the Oriental female and the feminised sexuality of the orientalised Oriental male. He traces the repeated, reproduced and copied textual attitude in the West to the sexualised, emasculated[93] and imagined Orient and demonstrates that the Orientalist edits, translates and comments on an unchanging, lustful, willing and always female, or feminised/demasculinised/emasculated Orient.[94] More importantly, Said shows that genealogy and citation are crucial elements in the construction

[88] Said, *Orientalism*, 43.
[89] Said, *Orientalism*, xix, 9
[90] Said, *Orientalism*, 309.
[91] Said, *Orientalism*, 207.
[92] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 22.
[93] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 168.
[94] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 216.

of this static male Orientalism and points to its patriarchal formation especially with genealogy as teleology: "as a form of growing knowledge Orientalism resorted mainly to citations of predecessor scholars in the field for its nutriment."[95] His understanding is that Orientalism implicitly copies itself in patriarchally reproductive forms while it accumulates in a genealogical and citationary way. In more clear terms, Said accentuates that the Oriental subject is orientalised, therefore produced and reproduced in sexually valorised terms as the feminised,[96] or demasculinised orientalised Oriental in the texts and the philological laboratory of the Orientalist. It can be argued that he discusses production and re-production as gender issues and, to note parenthetically, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also state that the production of Orientalist knowledge becomes a reproduction.[97] As it appears in Said's critiques, sexuality and gender are at times emphasised in *Orientalism* and it can be suggested that he correctively builds a more gender-nuanced critique in *Culture and Imperialism*, though it is also gender-ignorant. Interestingly, Said mostly criticises totalisation and essentialism in his writings;[98] distinctly feminist concerns, yet he has been fiercely criticised on the ground that his arguments are essentialist.

As aforesaid, post-colonial discussions of gender and the critique of essentialism have particular relevance to this study and these issues will be explored with a considerable density with the critical scholarship on the Arab and the Muslim female subject. It can be stated that, in respect of essentialism, contemporary criticism is particularly grounded in the experiencing subject and the new perspective brought to the discussions of the Oriental female powerfully challenges the homogeneity in the representations of Oriental women as an essential category. Relatedly, miriam cooke foregrounds concerns about the hypersexualised Oriental woman and prompts a redefinition with her contention of *Muslimwoman*. Opening with a nod to Spivak's strategic use of positivist essentialism, cooke points to a new category with new details and breaks the repetitive reproduction of Orientalist essentialism and Islamic extremism. She strategically uses *Muslimwoman* as a

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[95] Said, *Orientalism*, 177.
[96] See McLeod 42.
[97] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 51.
[98] Conor McCarthy, "Said, Lukács and Gramsci: Beginnings, Geography, and Insurrection", *College Literature*, 40 (4), 2013, 74-104, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/lit.2013.0038, 80; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 55.

heterogeneous identity construction and her criticism provides a liberating framework for the Oriental female subject. The diversities in Islam are crucially important for her formation and cooke redefines religion as a "historical maker of belonging" that is engaged with memory, culture, body politics and mobility (travel).[99] She questions and focuses on pan-Islamism and the concept of *umma* and describes *Muslimwoman* out of *fitna*, borders (*hudud*), hybridity and matrilineal genealogy (counter-*nasab*). In doing this, cooke clearly complicates the "pure and empty past of the Arab women" and gives history, agency and enunciative power to the orientalised female subject.[100] cooke's overt emphasis on the *Muslimwoman* as a clearly complicated and heterogeneous identity is undoubtedly significant in changing the terms of the debate over the Oriental Muslim women and will offer a critical lens to examine Soueif's fiction in its relation to *nasab* and matrilineal genealogy.

Similarly, Lindsey Moore also discusses the works of Arab Muslim female novelists. Like miriam cooke, she observes the link between patriarchy and Orientalism and connects Muslim and Arab female novelists from different geographies in their fictional and artistic responses. Moore places great emphasis on historical contexts and points to the importance of rewriting for the post-colonial female subject –especially with the layer upon layer structure of the female Muslim novelists' writings. Her critique calls attention to what she terms feminist genealogy as she comments on memory and the transmission of women's histories. Moore expands debates on History and reflects widely on the testimonial writing of the Arab Muslim female. She also examines oral traditions, and more importantly, she is preoccupied with the limited translations of post-colonial texts by female authors. Her critique emphasises notions of transnational postmodernity, and in a related set of perspectives, Moore offers a way forward to understand Ahdaf Soueif's fiction.

Anastasia Valassopoulos's *Contemporary Arab Women Writers: Cultural Expression in Context* also continues a long debate on the orientalised Oriental female subject. A

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[99] Cooke 97.

[100] Margot Badran, "Between Muslim Women and the Muslimwoman", Miriam Cooke, Fawzia Ahmed, Mino Muallem, Jasmin Zine, "Roundtable Discussion: Religion, Gender and the Muslimwoman", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 24 (1), 2008, 91-119, JSTOR, Accessed: 18-05-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20487917, 103.

sentiment of religion appears in the book, but Valassopoulos rejects to see religion as inextricably interwoven in the Arab female novelists' writing. Her careful refusal demonstrates that she is intensely serious about neo-Orientalist paradigms and she argues that religion is a contested site and might reiterate an enmeshing of reproduced Orientalism.[101] Valassopoulos looks beyond religion in order to engage with the fact that Arab women's writing merits consideration in many respects. She also necessitates attention to Muslim and Arab popular culture and discusses modes of cultural translation. By linking translation to resistance, she offers perspectives on the challenges of Arab women's international reception. Her understanding is fully immersed within questions of national identity, sexuality, diasporic writing and colonial discourse. She also provides an illuminating account on war representations and testimonial writing. Interestingly, Valassopoulos reflects on the different significance of food and, related to this study, points to the deep significance of reunion with the mother through the memory of the mother's body. On the other hand, disembodiment, displacement and deterritorialization underlay her assertions as post-colonial issues and her criticism remains preoccupied with cartography and nationhood. In respect of these, Valassopoulos produces fruitful discussions and creates a rich critical space in which to consider Soueif's fiction.

Layla al Maleh's discussion of the Arab Muslim female novelists also lay equal stress to the post-colonial issues raised in Ahdaf Soueif's fiction. Like Amin Malak, al Maleh claims an Anglo-Arab perspective to English and American literatures and reconstructs them with her interest in the Arab writers who have received little critical attention. She intersects with Amin Malak in her intent to establish a historical legitimacy for the Arab Muslim author and her *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* creates a broader base for literary investigations of the Arab writers who write in English. In foregrounding these arguments, Claire Chambers' interest in literary representations of British Muslims will also initiate an important rethinking. With her *British Muslim Fictions: Interviews with Contemporary Writers* and *Britain through Muslim Eyes, Literary Representations 1780-1988*, Chambers provides a rethinking of a

[101] Anastasia Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Cultural Expression in Context* [E-book]. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008, 126.

Muslim Fiction in English and challenges the essential and homogeneous image of Islam in modern day England. Chambers explores the literary techniques and legacies of contemporary Muslim novelists and it is clear that these publications on the Arab Muslim female writers will provide illuminating associations with Soueif's fiction.

On the other hand, Lila Abu-Lughod's cultural anthropology research will also describe the content of it. Lughod specifically addresses Egypt and merits consideration with her research on the politics of representation and nationhood. She has had a lasting influence allows this study to make important discussions. It is also important to note that anthropology offers a further opportunity and ties this study to Edward Said, who indicates that anthropology is built out of racialist dictations and is "historically most closely tied to colonialism" and "based upon an unequal power between two cultures" which in turn consolidates Western power.[102] Interestingly however, Daniel Martin Varisco remarks that Edward Said is the literary critic most cited by American anthropologists.[103] In that respect, anthropology compromises a related set of perspectives for this study and it will definitely prove interesting to set a discipline deeply contaminated by Orientalism and imperialism against anti-colonialism.[104] Relatedly, Saba Mahmood offers another anthropological way of confronting the issues raised by Ahdaf Soueif and offers empowerment to write on questions of religious difference that remains "relatively unexplored"[105] in feminist theory, which incorporates more background to Amin Malak and Wail Hassan's interweaving critique of Post-Colonial Studies.

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[102] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 183-184; Said, *Orientalism*, 232; Edward Said and James Paul, "Orientalism Reconsidered: An Interview with Edward Said", *MERIP Middle East Report*, 150 (Human Rights and the Palestine Conflict), 1988, 32-36, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011969, 33; Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 211; See also Pal Ahluwalia, "The Evolution of Orientalism and Africanist Political Science", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (127-143), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 131.

[103] Daniel Martin Varisco, "Reading against Culture in Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*", *Culture, Theory & Critique*, 45 (2), 2004, 93-112, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/1473578042000283817, 93-94.

[104] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "World Systems & the Creole", *Narrative*, 14 (1), 2006, 112-112, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/nar.2005.0030, 102-112, 102.

[105] Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival", *Cultural Anthropology*, 12 (2), 2001, 202-236, JSTOR, Accessed: 09-12-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/656537, 202.

With all these in mind, it will be argued that Ahdaf Soueif's fiction articulates, through a post-colonial reasoning, arguments on how history and memory are narrativised. Reading history remains an emphasised issue throughout Soueif's fiction, and as will be explored, her characters establish a strong dialogue with past as editors, professional translators and graduate students of English Literature –and more exactly as Muslim/Arab cultural hybrids. Soueif also offers important insights on the issue of post-colonial translation with her counter and resistant narratives and reflects widely on the importance of revisionary rewriting for the female gender. More importantly, she focuses on historiography and History and her fiction constitutes a nuanced critique of colonialist linear and violent history. Her oppositional, female and alternative histories address the issues of unnarration and colonialist over-writing and dismantle historiography and literature as the institutions of the Empire.

As aforesaid, she allows an English and Arab/Muslim blend of generic forms and writing practices in her hybrid texts and critically questions orality, memory, travel writing and canonicity as post-colonial issues. With her novels, Soueif enters into Saidian debates about Orientalist paradigms and discusses the representation and reception of the post-colonial and Arab other. Consciously and strategically, she is engaged with the quixotic madness of the post-colonial subject that arises from reading English Literature and shows that literature, especially the novel genre, and culture are imperial institutions that operate hegemonically for the colonised and post-colonial subject. Interestingly, like in Said's critical works, Soueif's cultural referents are canonical works of English and Western Literature and she argues that literature instigates an ambivalence for the Oriental subject that conditions or contaminates his/her identity. Soueif's fiction can best be understood in these senses and a fine-grained analysis will provide the context in which the prominent themes of her fiction will be introduced and analysed. As already anticipated, this study will foreground the implications of Post-Colonial Studies together with Saidian colonial discourse analysis and will be structured with and will speak through these critical strands.

1.2. AHDAF SOUEIF: LIFE AND WRITINGS

1.2.1. Familial Roots: *Nasab*

This chapter introduces the life and the writings of Ahdaf Soueif and the tradition of *nasab* writing in the history of Arab world will now be explored with her familial background and education. It is noted at the start that *nasab* will not be understood in the traditional sense and matrilineal genealogy will be stressed to provide gender awareness.[106] Soueif was born in Cairo in 1950 to academic parents. Her mother is Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud, a professor of English. As will be stated later, fictional echoes of Soueif's mother often appear in her novels which fruitfully explore mother figures and it is important to state that Soueif studied English Literature like her mother did. Moussa-Mahmoud had her Ph.D. from Westfield College (University of London) in 1957 on the oriental tale in English fiction and published on Anglo-Egyptian and contemporary Arab Literature and the 18th century Orientalist writers. Her publications include the influence of the *Arabian Nights* on Western Literature and the translations of the novels of Naguib Mahfouz into English and *King Lear* into Arabic. Interestingly relevant for this study is that Moussa-Mahmoud was appointed to the English Department at Cairo University when the British left in 1952 after the Free Officers' Coup and this comes within the context of *In the Eye of the Sun* when the Egyptians proudly but ironically claim the English Department from the British, "the department her mother and the Professor had so triumphantly seized from the British in 1952" (451).

Another important thing for Soueif is that, in 1972, Moussa-Mahmoud went to Saudi Arabia and worked in the establishment of higher education for women. Soueif turns her work into dialogue with this and emphasises it as, "it was always us Egyptians who educated all those Arabs and civilised them; us and the Levantines" (*In the Eye of the Sun* 731). Parenthetically to note, Heba Handaussa says that migration as labour export to

[106] See Footnote 1.

neighbouring oil-rich countries in 1970s was a way to boost incomes[107] and it should be stated that Leila Ahmed, influential Arab scholar, also went to Abu Dhabi and is appointed to a commission to plan women's education.[108] As will later be stated, like Ahmed and her mother, Soueif also taught in Saudi Arabia and started writing her first novel there. Ahdaf Soueif's father, M. I. Soueif, was a professor of psychology and held in prison for a year because of anti-British activities when he was eighteen. It is often indicated that he translated Aristotle's *Poetics* into Arabic while in jail.

Important here is that fact that 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were tumultuous years in Egypt's history. In 1952, General Gamal 'Abd el-Nasser (1918-1970) made a military coup with the Free Officers and became president in 1954 as the leader of the Egyptian revolution against King Farouk (1920-1965).[109] As noted in her writings, Soueif's family carefully supported this anti-colonial movement and named her as Ahdaf (pl.) meaning goals, objectives and targets in Arabic –it is seen that Soueif portrays Nasser very sympathetically in her fiction. As his first anti-colonial move, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956 which created the Suez Crisis and a succession of wars to follow. With Nasser's revolution, an era of pan-Arab nationalism began when the British and the French withdrew from the region and Nasser started a socialist policy that sought to break the ties with Egypt's Islamic and colonial past.[110]

During Nasser's presidency, a long-term dispute between Israel and Arab countries began when Israel invaded for the second time the Sinai Peninsula in 1967 to weaken Egypt's control of the Canal. Unfortunately, the Six-Day War outbroke and resulted in a huge loss for Egypt. Israel gained Sinai, West Bank, Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and

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[107] Heba Handaussa, "Egypt's Social Contract for Growth with Equity", Noel Brehony and Ayman El-Desouky (Ed.) *British Egyptian Relations from Suez to the Present Day*, (121-133), Saqi & London Middle East Institute, Beirut 2007, 122.

[108] Waïl S. Hassan and لناو قيدص وبأ نسحلا, "Arab-American Autobiography and the Reinvention of Identity: Two Negotiations", *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 22 (The Language of the Self: Autobiographies and Testimonies), 2002, 7-35, JSTOR, Accessed: 06-05-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1350048, 12.

[109] The tenth king of Egypt, King Farouk died in exile in Italy and was buried in Egypt.

[110] Yasser Elsheshtawy, "City interrupted: modernity and architecture in Nasser's post-1952 Cairo", *Planning Perspectives*, 28 (3), 2013, 347-371, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/02665433.2013.739827, 347, 369.

increased three times of its territory.[111] After the failure of the Six-Day War, Nasser lost popularity and Anwar Sadat, his confidant and a member of the Free Officers, became president in 1970 after Nasser's death. As widely known, Nasser tried to be on friendly terms with USSR and Sadat started a new policy known as *Infitah* (Open Door),[112] which meant the break of ties with USSR, Nasser's long-term ally, while dangerously replacing it with the United States. Sadat also welcomed a controversial peace process in 1979 with Israel[113] which resulted in his assassination in 1981. As will be shown later, Soueif was born when Egypt was in political turmoil as a decolonising country and experienced the Six-Day War as a teenager. Unsurprisingly, her fiction demonstrates the sheer density and the continuing influence of war in many respects.

As stated before, Soueif attended schools in both Egypt and England and spent four years of her childhood between four and eight in London when her mother was a graduate student at the Westfield College. For that reason, her first language of reading is English – back in Egypt though, Nasserism sweept the country and Arabic was restored as the official language of education.[114] As Edward Said says, "After the Revolution of 1952 in Egypt, a

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[111] Mustapha Marrouchi, "Cry No More For Me, Palestine–Mahmoud Darwish", *College Literature*, 38 (4), 2011, 1-43, JSTOR, Accessed: 07-06-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41302886, 1.

[112] *Infitah* can be described as the economic liberalisation policies that contributed to moral laxity, opportunistic capitalism, consumerism and materialism. It is argued that the rise of political Islam in Egypt during 1980s and 90s developed as a response to *Infitah*. See Mervat F. Hatem, "The History of the Discourses on Gender and Islamism", Amila al-Azhary Sonbol (Ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies*, (307-321), The American University in Cairo Press, Egypt 2006, 312.

[113] For Camp David Accords, Richard C. Martin, (Ed.), see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World Vol 1(A-L), Vol 2 (M-Z)* [E-Book], Thomson Gale, 2004, 69, 290, 605. "In early September 1981, Anwar al-Sadat angered by the Egyptian intelligentsia's consistent refusal to support his agreement at Camp David or to cooperate in 'normalising' relations with Israel, frustrated by the militancy and the anti-Western ideology of the Muslim groups he had initially nurtured as a buffer against the left, and fearful of the disappointment of the masses with his much promised 'Egypt of prosperity', launched what was in his words a 'purge'. He ordered the arrest of 1,500 people and slammed them into 'precautionary detention': others found themselves moved from their jobs or simply ordered to stay home". Soueif, *Mezzaterra*, 204.

[114] It is important to note that although Egypt was Arab in culture and ethnicity, the official language of the country became Turkish after the arrival of Mamelukes and the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, a new word emerged to designate the local Arabic-speaking public, *'awlad Arab* or *evlad-i 'Arab*, meaning "Arab children". By the 18th century Egypt became more independent-minded and in 1836, a council for public instruction was formed and the first French-medium schools were established. French gradually became the lingua franca among and between foreigners and some legal documents began to be issued in French. It can be argued that English never became a dominant foreign language of the country during British colonisation – and never became the language of education or court like French. See Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798*, Routledge, London and New York 2005, 30. See also Ibrahim Abu-Lughod,

great deal of emphasis was placed on the Arabization of the curriculum, the Arabization of intellectual norms, the Arabization of values to be inculcated in schools and universities".[115] Interestingly, Soueif often says that she forgot Arabic in England and later relearned it when she was back in Egypt. It is important to remind that when Edward Said returned to Egypt in 1970s after graduate study, he reacquainted with Arabic as an adult. Said studied Arabic etymology when he was back and Timothy Brennan suggests that *Orientalism* would not have been written without this "personal retooling".[116] More interesting is the fact that Soueif's fiction is dense with Arabic etymology and word games.

When Soueif was thirteen, she left Egypt the second time and went to Mayfield Comprehensive in Putney in London, and returned after a year. She had her BA in English Literature from Cairo University in 1971 and her MA in English Literature in 1973 from the American University in Cairo. She returned to England in 1974 as a graduate student at Lancaster University and completed her degree in 1978 on Linguistics. Although she was offered a place at the University of Oxford to study Comparative Literatures (DPhil), Soueif went to Lancaster to study Linguistics and spent four unhappy years there which receives weighty treatment mostly in her short fiction and *In the Eye of the Sun*. After getting a Ph.D. in Linguistics, Soueif taught at Cairo University and King Saud University in Riyad. As aforementioned, she worked at an oil-rich Arab country like her mother and Leila Ahmed. She now divides her time between Cairo and London, and regularly writes for *The Guardian* and has a weekly column in *al-Shorouk* in Arabic. Soueif was active during the Revolution in 2011 and most of her recent writing emphasises Palestinian political rights and the Tahrir Revolution, and the afterwards to it. It can be argued that her non-fictional writing also examines contemporary history within the larger context of a historical re-reading. As a parenthetical note, Soueif married Ian Hamilton, British critic and editor, and had two sons in her marriage to him, Omar Robert and Ismail Richard

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"The Transformation of the Egyptian Élite: Prelude to the 'Urābī Revolt", *Middle East Journal*, 21 (3), 1967, 325-344, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4324162, 334, 336-339.

[115] Edward Said, "Identity, Authority, and Freedom: The Potentate and the Traveller", *Transition*, 54, 1991, 4-18, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-03-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934899, 8.

[116] Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 575-576.

Hamilton. Apart from that, Soueif appeared in a short film “Maydoum” which she wrote together with her son, Omar Robert.

1.2.2. Writings

This part of the study attempts to give a short introduction to Soueif’s fictional and non-fictional writing and briefly explains the structures and themes of her works. Soueif has published fiction and non-fiction since the 1980s and her writings include *Aisha* (1983), *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992), *Sandpiper* (1996) and *The Map of Love* (1999), which is shortlisted for the Booker Prize 1999. In 2000, Soueif translated Mourid Barghouti’s memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*, and published *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground* in 2004 which includes literary essays, politics, her childhood in Cairo, her visit to Palestine for *The Guardian* when the Second Intifada (2000) began and post 9/11 commentary. She edited *Reflections on Islamic Art* in 2011, and in 2012, *Cairo: My City Our Revolution* emerged that gives a first-hand account of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. An updated edition of *Cairo* appeared with new material in 2014, titled *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*. In 2017, she co-edited *This is Not a Border* with her son Omar Robert Hamilton that celebrates the tenth anniversary of Palestine Festival of Literature (PalFest) with essays, poems and sketches.

Soueif is renowned as one of the best cultural and political commentators and she has been largely concerned with the Palestinian struggle for the last twenty years. In 2007, she founded Engaged Events, a UK based charity, whose first project was the PalFest that supports and showcases the cultural and literary life of Palestinians under Israeli military occupation. The festival promotes cultural exchange and reaffirms cultural resistance in Edward Said’s words that became its motto, “to confront the power of culture over the culture of power”. It is a mobile and travelling festival and takes prominent writers to the occupied lands in historic Palestine for readings and dialogues. It is a travelling festival essentially because the Palestinian audience have problems travelling through check points, and with PalFest, prominent artists and writers can experience first-hand the situation at occupied Palestine. It is worth reminding that Palestine and Palestinians represent “the

denial of linear history"[117] for Edward Said and it would be appropriate to claim that Soueif repeatedly returns to the Palestinian struggle in her fiction, non-fiction and cultural activism with a similar emphasis.

Soueif holds numerous literary awards for both her fiction in English and its Arabic translations: *Sandpiper* is awarded the Best Collection of Short Stories in 1996 Cairo International Book Fair, and Soueif received the Inaugural Mahmud Darwish Award in 2010 and the Cawafy Award in 2011. Her name appears on *The Guardian* and *Observer*'s Books Power 100 list and on *Harper's Magazine* as one of Britain's most talented writers.

1.2.2.1. Fiction: An Introduction

1.2.2.1.1. *Aisha*

Soueif published her first writings in 1983 under *Aisha*, a collection of short stories. Her Cairo memories and life in England are reflected in the collection, and interestingly, some stories reveal, to put it mildly, what can be considered exotic elements that a European reader might capture dangerously as oriental and feels uncannily familiar with. Unsurprisingly, the collection was a great hit for the English-speaking reader and Soueif got a lot of international attention. But she acknowledges that she feels very distant to some of the stories now. *Aisha* includes eight short stories: "Returning", "1964", "The Suitor", "Knowing", "The Wedding of Zeina", "Her Man", "The Apprentice" and "The Nativity". Autobiographical in taste, the stories demonstrate and comment on identity as a hybridised process and reveal a keen awareness of Egyptian rural and urban life. On the other hand, Soueif challenges the linear violence of Western canonical literature with her contrapuntal narratives in the collection. It should be noted that, in discussing Edward Said's affiliations, E. San. Juan Jr. states that in-between spaces produce hybridisation of identities[118] and

[117] McCarthy 98. Interestingly Said often notes that he wanted to see a Palestinian state so that he can be one of its major critics, see Fazal Rizvi and Bob Lingard, "Edward Said and the Cultural Politics of Education", *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27 (3), 2006, 293-308, DOI: 10.1080/01596300600838744, 294; see also Edward W. Said, "Reflections on Twenty Years of Palestinian History", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 20 (4), 1991, 5-22, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2537432, 13-18.

[118] E. San Juan, Jr., "Edward Said's affiliations", *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents*, 3 (1), 2006, 43-61, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/14788810500525481, 44.

relatedly Soueif weaves her stories of in-between spaces with nostalgia, co-extensivity of cultural forms and a sense of belonging, also and dangerously to the other side.

In relation to hybridity and doubling, it can be argued that the stories in *Aisha* are dyadically structured as pairs and are presented as fragments reminding Edward William Lane and Silvestre de Sacy in strategic Orientalist echoes. The stories divide each other and, in doing that, point to a sense of fragmentation and repetition by their resistance to teleological development. It is seen that Soueif deliberately conjures up cyclical narration in her intertwined stories and defies linear storylines. She demonstrates that the stories refuse to be closed and this is immediately noticeable when she redoubles them with rewritings. Relatedly, "Returning" is the first story of the collection and it can be argued that all of the stories rigorously interrogate the problem of returning – to past, home, roots and desire.

Soueif replicates this conscious move with the last story, "The Nativity" that delves deep into birth and death with a Joycean play of consciousnesses. "Returning" tells the story of Aisha's coming home to Cairo from England after graduate study. She is on the point of breaking with her husband, who is absent in the story, and is haunted by literary figures (mostly European) and childhood memories at what used to be her home. Unfortunately though, homecoming does not present a happy return for Aisha and Soueif points to it mostly with sartorial decay. Particularly, she offers a remarkable reframing with Emma's burning of the dried wedding bouquet in *Madame Bovary* and rewrites a similar scene. The idea of decay is also seen in spatial terms when Aisha poignantly recognises that her memories of the city are destroyed with new concrete buildings that replace parks.

"The Nativity" also relates the story of Aisha –this time as a childless wife with a distant husband who, most of the time, appears as an annoying, criticising and scientific voice. The story is tied to multiple narrators, one of whom is a *jinn* (spirit), and is poly-vocal to the degree of unintelligibility, especially for the European reader who might not understand the identity of the spirit-narrator. More specifically, it accounts an Egyptian *zār*, a semi-religious ritual by which an illness caused by a type of a spirit (*jinn*) is relieved by using Islamic recitations. Janice Boddy's research on *zār* will be especially relevant for this

story. Boddy suggests that *zār* creates a space for a subordinate discourse where Islam's official ideology is controlled and dominated by man.[119] More to the point, she states that *zār* appears as "a feminine response to hegemonic praxis".[120] Boddy's insight will be central to our investigation of alternative and heterotopic feminine and female spaces in the story with an equal emphasis by the famous anthropologist Saba Mahmood. Added to *zār* is Soueif's demonstration of a traumatic rape at a cemetery which uncannily involves a conceptual link to the idea of witnessing as previously explained with the Arabic word *shahid*. In this story, Soueif also raises questions of cultural belonging, epistemology and reading and writing in the imperial language. It should be noted that Boehmer describes this process of reading and writing as paradigmatic power and indicates that "colonialist writers […] intertextually inspired one another with images".[121] Similarly and strategically, Soueif presents Aisha as the textual child[122] of the Empire when she stands reciting "Kubla Khan" in the midst of an Egyptian *zār* that she, as an Arab woman, cannot identify with.

"1964" and "Knowing" are divided with "The Suitor" and present a child and a teenager Aisha in England. The stories place the problem of language and again suggest a line of inquiry with reading classics –Arab, or World/European. Soueif intelligently criticises canonicity and reminds the reader of the challenges arising from learning and reading in the coloniser's language. It can be argued that she offers an important insight with these stories about the entry into the Lacanian Symbolic Order and elaborates on pleasures of reading by referring to the *Arabian Nights* and *The Perfumed Garden.* On the other hand, "The Wedding of Zeina" and "Her Man" take as their central concern marriage in rural Egypt with virginity tests and co-wives and it can be stated that they are primarily alluring as exotic stories. In an interview, Soueif acknowledges that she feels very distant to these stories now.[123] In "The Wedding of Zeina" and "Her Man", she places much

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[119] Mahmood 206.
[120] Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits, Women, Men and the Zār Cult in Northern Sudan*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin 1989, 5.
[121] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature,* 45.
[122] See Said, *Orientalism*, 88.
[123] Joseph Massad and Ahdaf Soueif, "The Politics of Desire in the Writings of Ahdaf Soueif", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 28 (4), 1999, 74-90, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-03-2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538394, 86.

emphasis on storytelling and/as desire and investigates desire outside the binary of homosexual and heterosexual.[124] Relatedly, "The Suitor" and "The Apprentice" expand on aggressive forms of desire. "The Suitor" examines patriarchal structures within Coptic communities in Egypt and Soueif proposes a critical reading of patriarchy by showing that it hegemonically operates for Coptic women in Egypt as same as the Muslim women in the Middle East. "The Apprentice" explores male homosexual desire and is concerned, like "The Nativity", with rape. In concise terms, Soueif puts different experiences of desire into her mix and makes her stories performative of hybrid forms of identity and language.

1.2.2.1.2. *Sandpiper*

The second collection of short stories, *Sandpiper* (1996), opens with an epigraph from Elizabeth Bishop's poem "Sandpiper" and immediately shifts the focus of attention to the sandpiper bird which lives on coasts; in-between water and land. In this collection, she weaves together the stories of displaced, deterritorialised and reterritorialised women of different nationalities and points to an understanding of identity as a fluid and ongoing process. Soueif also deeply interrogates the edges of nations (with *hudud*) and offers her stories as seamless continuations or doubles –of *In the Eye of the Sun* and European classics most notably. It is intriguing to see that the multiple consciousnesses of the stories are women of different national, cultural and historical backgrounds and Soueif engages with the issues of belonging, hybridities and the ontology of the post-colonial subject. More centrally, she explores miscegenation with Europeans married to Egyptian man and woman and constantly measures all of the stories against motherhood and hybrid identities. The collection has seven short stories: "Melody", "Sandpiper", "Chez Milou", "The Water Heater", "Mandy", "Satan" and "I Think of You".

"Melody" is a nuanced study of a Turkish woman living in a Gulf Arab country and is tied to the consciousness of a Canadian woman who also lives there. In this story, Soueif creates an international set of characters and discusses post-colonial body politics. Ingie, the Turkish woman, losses her baby girl, Melody, to a traffic accident, and from then on, the story moves to the point of aggressive patriarchy which reveals that all of the couples in

[124] Massad and Soueif 77.

the story are violently shaped by but blind to their oppression. Rich vasectomises himself so that his wife, the unnamed narrator of the story, will not play a trick on him and Ingie is secretly on contraceptive pills, but her husband wants another baby. The violence of patriarchy is depicted especially when Ingie's husband repeatedly forces her to watch Melody's funeral preparations recorded on a video tape. It can be stated that Soueif invites further considerations about blindness to patriarchal oppression by focusing on the moralising male gaze. She also emphasises religious faith as an identity category in the story and criticises the racialized assumptions about Muslims by non-Muslims. Soueif leads to another deep interrogation with problematic corpses in a further attempt to situate body as a national site. Melody, Ingie's daughter, has to wait in the morgue for a week when the family gets exit visa to Turkey and Ingie symbolically losses her voice after the funeral. As will be discussed later, there are some unburied or unburiable bodies in Soueif's fiction and she strikingly questions national borders and the violence of foreignising translation through these bodies.

"Sandpiper" further reinforces the idea of motherhood by focusing on the life of an English woman married to an Egyptian man. The story opens on seaside in Alexandria which allows for an exploration of cultural and national borders. The multinational couple of the story returns to live in Egypt with the extended family and the story is narrated through the inner monologues of the English woman who feels displaced as the mother of a hybridised child. The strikingly different intention of Soueif is that the story depicts and places the problem of the acculturation and inter-culturation of a European woman. The displacement of a white female is described equally well in the story and it is noticeable that the narrative of the English woman silences Egyptian characters. It is also worth pointing out that the narrator wants to write a story of her visit to Africa, but only has fragments and notes that she keeps in a cupboard. By focusing on narrative power, Soueif preserves the textual attitude of the European character while depicting at the same time her liminal and fragmented identity through the unwritten Africa Story. The narrative ends on seaside in Alexandria and Soueif questions foreignness, cultural crossing and borders of nations.

"Chez Milou" tells the story of Milou, a Greek-French woman living in Egypt, and is narrated through her painful memories. The broad international context of Egypt is immediately noticeable in the story that retells a parallel account of *In the Eye of the Sun*. In this story, Soueif gives the two characters of *In the Eye of the Sun* a different destiny and intentionally doubles her own narrative. The reader sees a deconstructive shift when the principal characters of the novel are cast aside and replaced by Milou's story, a minor character in the novel. Similarly, as familiar to readers of Soueif, Aisha or Asya of other stories and novels, reappears with another name, this time as Farah, and with a different destiny in "Chez Milou". To note parenthetically, it can be argued that the cross-connections between Soueif's stories can as well be explained through Rudyard Kipling's web of cross-references in which the characters were carried from one story to another and narrators point to similar incidents in other tales.[125] It can also be claimed that Soueif writes in the Victorian racialized tradition and gives sex a national character in this story.[126] The French appears as the sexually immoral race[127] and Soueif posits questions of marriage as an economic institution. On the other hand, the characters are either culturally or ethnically hybrid like in all of the stories in the collection. Milou's mother, a beautiful dancer, is French and elopes with a Turkish soldier. After that, Milou never sees her mother and is now an older unmarried woman living with her father. The story continues to give an account of a brief, painful and untold love story that connects Milou, Philippe and Farah. Soueif also examines the significance of food and home and it is nowhere more apparent than restaurant as a setting and an amnesiac father who owns it. The father's hysterical hold on Milou, their traditional food and the past offers a thorough view for Soueif's handling of memory and bodies and she continues questioning the idea of borders when Milou's family moves out of Alexandria, a seaside city, to Cairo.

"The Water Heater" reveals a trace of Soueif's exotic and oriental themes. It is true that she rarely creates lower class Egyptian settings and "The Water Heater" is one of those

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[125] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature,* 46.

[126] Sharon Marcus, "Same Difference? Transnationalism, Comparative Literature, Victorian Studies", *Victorian Studies*, 5 (4), 2003, 677-686, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/vic.2004.0029, 678.

[127] For the battles contrasting Englishness with the French in the Victorian novels see Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 100-102.

stories. In this story, Soueif is preoccupied with gender bias through patriarchal nationalism and identitarian Islam and demonstrates how incestuous desire victimises a young Arab girl. It can be stated that the story depicts the fear of epistemological mutation for the post-colonial subject and clusters around French, to use Lacanian vocabulary, as the language of the Male Symbolic. Soueif's critique also focuses on religious faith as she shows how patriarchy is violently validated under seemingly Islamic deeds.

"Mandy" changes the setting to England and is narrated through letters, diary entries and third person narration. Like "Chez Milou", it is a parallel story to *In the Eye of the Sun* and gives voice to a silenced American character in the novel. The epistolary shift enables Soueif to consciously feminise the narration and the diary entry further affirms this idea. In engaging forms, Soueif points to poetry and photography as fragmented, blurred and divided narrative forms, and emphasises women's uncelebrated art through them. It is necessary to note that, as Alessandra Marino states, images as well as texts "are equally significant in the formation of a discourse on the oriental difference" and Soueif offers a similar insight by focusing either on tapestry weaving as a cultural artefact, or orientalist painting and photography.[128] In "Mandy", Soueif also constitutes mother-daughter dialogue as a constant theme with letters written to a mother. Further, it is noticeable that the interestingly methodical diary entry of the American character divides the epistolary narrative of the Arab woman and blurs the line between consciousnesses of different subjectivities. It can be argued that Soueif restructures her discussion of closure and linearity this way.

"Satan" is another parallel story to *In the Eye of the Sun* and focuses on diaspora, hybridity and motherhood. The concept of food is reinvoked and an unnarrated scene in the novel is set which demonstrates Egyptian family relations and domestic life. Soueif again gives voice and body to the muted and absent characters of her earlier works. Likewise, the last story in the collection, "I Think of You", is set in a hospital and is written as a sequel to *In the Eye of the Sun*. Memories in fragments of a distant past torment a pregnant woman and Soueif reverses the ethnicities of the "Sandpiper" couple; this time an Egyptian woman

[128] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 131; Marino 763; see also Moore 23, 33-36.

is married to an English man. It can be argued that the story is again tied to the consciousness of a spirit who act as a witness and the narration seamlessly veers between different characters. With her narrative techniques, Soueif approaches liminality and ambivalence and presents an entangled problematic of memory, identity and narrative hierarchy.

In most general terms, Soueif's short fiction is inextricably fused with social criticism and defies language as a hegemonic category with the stories' lexical fidelity. She constantly uses Arabic words and never glosses them. To note parenthetically, the stories are also clearly complicated with graphic medical detail and it can be argued that Soueif posits them as an important reminder of Gustave Flaubert's dissection room descriptions in Kasr el-'Aini Hospital. As Edward Said states, Flaubert loves dissection[129] and in a way Soueif suggests a reinterpretation of the Orientalist discourse with her fragmented writing. Likewise, the stories are filled with references to Flaubert's novels, English, Egyptian and Arabic Literature and dangerously yet productively coincide with Orientalist writing which, as suggested before, will be examined as *strategic Orientalism* in this study.

In this collection, Soueif also criticises Egypt as both an insider and an outsider, and reflects on patriarchal nationalism in a still-decolonising nation. Her stories are cross-culturally plural with international characters and suggest critical ideas about different forms of hybridity and territorial displacement. Soueif also noticeably shows the intrusion of the irrational, especially in her description of *zār* in "The Nativity", deconstructs the Empire as the rational and the objective centre this way. Her short fiction is linked to and interweaved with her novelistic writings and imposes a collective understanding because of the fact that some of the stories are written either as a prequel or a sequel to her earlier writings. First and foremost, this is the reason why this study is undertaken as a critical reading of Soueif's novels and short stories although a study of short stories might require different disciplinary tools.

[129] See Said, *Orientalism*, 186.

1.2.2.1.3. *In the Eye of the Sun*

As Susan Darraj describes, Soueif's fiction consists of two short books; *Aisha* and *Sandpiper*, and two remarkably long books; *In the Eye of the Sun* and *The Map of Love*.[130] Hind Wassef says that Soueif feels very proud after a word count of *In the Eye of the Sun* which is 313.000 words long, the same as *Middlemarch*.[131] Indeed, it is known as the Arab *Middlemarch*. The novel tells the story of Asya al-Ulama, a major of English Literature, and is set after the Suez Crisis. The plot covers thirteen years (1967-1980) in the life of Asya, the eldest daughter of an intellectual Egyptian couple; the mother is professor of English at Cairo University and the father is a psychologist. As a coming of age novel, *In the Eye of the Sun* tells the academic, emotional and sexual journey of Asya in the traditional form of Bildungsroman and Soueif explores Asya's unconsummated and tormenting marriage to her distant husband Saif Madi and her poor and unhappy life in Lancaster, England, while she is doing Ph.D. in Linguistics. Asya loves Colette's novels and identifies with Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, Catherine Earnshaw, Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary, and like most of Soueif's fiction, the novel is heavily autobiographical and thick in historical details with journalistic intrusions.

As stated in the "General Background", travel is a key issue for Soueif and in *In the Eye of the Sun* demonstrates Asya's journey to England that shapes her understanding of language, home, female desire and identity. But, Soueif does not construct the novel as a traditional return story and it can be argued that she articulates a clear post-colonial adjustment to the totalisation and closure in the Western understanding of linear narrative and history with the cyclical structure of the novel. *In the Eye of the Sun* is constructed in poly-temporal narration and opens in July 1979. It goes back to May 1967 and ends in 1980. As Mariadele Boccardi puts it, it places "the problem of continuity in time, and between times in history".[132] With this novel, Soueif touches on Egypt's colonial history and liberation and offers a historical picture of it as a decolonising country since the Urabi

[130] Darraj 91.
[131] Hind Wassef, "The Unblushing Bourgeoise", *Cairo Times*, 2 (5), 1998, Cairotimes.com, Accessed: 12-06-2014, http://www.cairotimes.com/content/culture/suef.html.
[132] Mariadele Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 15 (2), 2004, 192-203, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/0957404042000234042, 192.

Revolt. In this novel, she also discusses neo-colonisation under Sadat's *Infitah* policy and comments sharply on the United States' new role as the new imperial power.

On the other hand, Soueif provides a historical perspective for the rising political Islam in Egypt in early 1970s and historicises the Six-Day War and the Arab-Israeli War of 1973. It is therefore not surprising that Asya falls in love with a history major, Saif Madi. The novel is dense in contemporary history and Soueif brilliantly builds the themes of love and desire in the midst of historical turmoil. Indeed, the novel begins as a love story and is structured with Asya and Saif as shifting narrators. It can be argued that Soueif strengthens the destructive power of love and desire with alternating narrative voices that divide each. Sometimes the same scene is twice narrated, or Saif's narration, italicised, interrupts or breaks Asya's narration.

Asya's master thesis, "Romeo as the Embodiment of Courtly Love Ideals", also relocates the significance of love for the novel and informs the reader of the tragic romance ending. It might be argued that Soueif uses the theme of love as an ironic device to reflect on her exploration of *strategic Orientalism* by reminding the "oriental framework" of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and with the bleak and tragic ending.[133] At some point in the novel, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish love from death in Saif and Asya's story, as in Juliet's words, "My grave is like to be my wedding bed".[134] It should be emphasised that Soueif strikingly correlates love to death with statues, numb bodies (with *halawa*), tombs and graveyards. Interestingly, she concentrates on love also in the framework of adultery and problematises desire for the post-colonial Muslim female subject. As suggested before, the novel considers sexual transgression and adultery under Fatima Mernissi's understanding of *fitna* and *hudud* while contrasting it with adultery as the "mixture of self and other" that Robert Young elaborates *Colonial Desire*.[135]

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[133] Abdullah al-Dabbagh, "The Oriental Framework of Romeo and Juliet", *The Comparatist*, 24, 2000, 64-82, Project MUSE, Accessed: 28-07-2015, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/415303, 65.
[134] William Shakespeare, G. Blackmore Evans (Ed.), *Romeo and Juliet*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, 1.5.135, 101.
[135] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* [E-book], Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 98.

As a graduate student in England, Asya has a brief but tormenting relationship with Gerald, an opportunist English man who studies marketing –utterly symbolic for the novel. At this point, Soueif explores the fear of miscegenation and extends its implications to death, civilisation and decay. The striking moment is when Asya cannot pronounce the Arabic word *khiyana* (treachery, betrayal) in a language class and it can be argued that Soueif reflects on the Victorian fear of the mixing of races at this point. The Arabic word *khiyana* has a layered meaning in Arabo-Islamic context with regard to adultery and treason, but interesting is the fact that the Islamic concept of *zinā* (fornication)[136] is lost to the non-Arabic/Muslim reader when Soueif strengthens a nationalist link with *khiyana*. In that scene, Asya also cannot pronounce her name which makes her a metonymic gap; she is not and cannot be translated –she is a textual hybrid. It can also be suggested that, the novel again positions *Romeo and Juliet* as a significant literary referent at that point; "What's in a name […] were he not Romeo called",[137] and Soueif again returns to canonical literature by referring to *Romeo and Juliet* and by developing love as a tension (between races). In this novel, it is also Soueif's rethinking of the English domestic novel that complicates notions of hybridity and race, and as will be shown, she extends this understanding with *The Map of Love*.

It is clear that *In the Eye of the Sun*'s literary referents are works of European Literature and Soueif reflects on the ontology of the post-colonial subject with the study of literature. In this novel, Asya cannot reconcile with England in spatial terms for she surprisingly sees it more as a novelistic setting than a real place. As suggested before, literature and reading literary works are important issues for Soueif –as for Edward Said– and Asya is warned many times that life is not a novel by both Arab and English characters. Similarly, Gérard de Nerval states in *Voyage en Orient* that he wants to lead his life like a novel[138] which is an imperial genre. As a significant parallel to Aisha of "The Returning" and "The Nativity", Asya is depicted as the textual child of the Empire and Soueif similarly intends to reflect on the interpellative effects of studying literature under imperial licence in

[136] For the mandatory punishment for *zinā* see Adamec 103.
[137] Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2.44, 107.
[138] See Said, *Orientalism*, 182.

this novel. It can be stated that Soueif incisively demonstrates the violence of colonisation through literature and illustrates, to use Marxist vocabulary, the material results of cultural imperialism. More to the point, Asya is a Ph.D. student in England under the scholarship of the British Council and the Egyptian government and cannot write her dissertation only until she is self-funded –she also does not accept her husband's money.

Novel reading is a very contested issue for Soueif but she reconciles Arabo-Islamic Literature with traditional European genres that creates rich, alternative and hybrid texts. It can thus be argued that although *In the Eye of the Sun* is informed by European generic forms, it maintains a powerful link to the *Arabian Nights.* This undoubtedly pushes the implication that Orientalist ideas are reproduced and inherited through texts. It can also be argued that Soueif explores mimicry with a post-colonial awareness and points to connections with canonical literature through her uncanny double narratives. In *In the Eye of the Sun,* she portrays the post-colonial subject as a cultural hybrid and carefully constructs hybridity as heterogeneous, because there are many forms of hybridity and displacement in her fiction and she avoids totalisation and homogenisation of any kind.

Hybridity is also clearly reflected in the structure and language of the novel. There are some editorial intrusions and Soueif glosses Arabic vocabulary at the end of the novel which is structured as a part of the novel. She also inserts dialogues in Italian and epigraphs in French, but as aforementioned, never translates them. It is clear that Soueif demonstrates an awareness of post-colonial translation and points to the untranslation of forms of culture, especially with Arabic songs (in English) that are put arbitrarily in the text. It is necessary to add that songs, especially music-hall songs, in the Victorian and Edwardian England strengthened the image of the Empire and it can be argued that Soueif knowingly inserts songs in her writings to point to the imaginative acts of the Empire.[139] One of the most influential results of textual hybridity in the novel is the insertion of contemporary history in journalistic form. Written on *white* paper, History interrupts the narrative and is given with minute detail from multiple locations; Sinai, Cairo, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and New York. Historical intrusions come out as the blank/*white* spaces between and inside chapters

[139] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature,* 31-34.

with which Soueif reflects more widely on historical reconstruction. It can be suggested that the physicality with the blank space also alludes to the deserts in the Arabia into which she jams symbolism.

History is another contested issue for Soueif and it can be argued that *In the Eye of the Sun* stands between history and fiction and comments on the textuality and fictionality of history. Memory is undoubtedly significant in writing about history and Soueif maintains this idea with body as the memory site. In her writings, the post-colonial body carries the burden of history and is maimed and wounded, or most strikingly, unburied and unburiable. This understanding is apparent at the very start when the novel opens in England in 1980s with Asya's *khalu* (maternal uncle) who goes under operation in England. The reader later learns that, more than a decade ago, the trucks of the Free Officers nearly killed and left him maimed for good. This alludes to the fact that History is violently written on the body of the post-colonial subject who carries it as a scar. It is at this point that Flaubertian medical descriptions receive added emphasis. Relatedly, the novel is full of medical details –Asya translates medical leaflets for a campaign in Egypt and the most striking scene is when a lower-class Egyptian woman mistakes Asya for a medical doctor and Soueif inserts an interior monologue of Asya on (the futility of) studying English Literature. Interestingly though, Asya is involved with a contraception campaign and her unconsummated marriage is destroyed not only after adultery but also after her husband's rape. It is seen that Soueif presents questions considering love, desire, violence and death in this novel and *The Map of Love* continues her explorations of female desire.

1.2.2.1.4. *The Map of Love*

As its title suggests, *The Map of Love* places much emphasis on love and geography, and Soueif weaves post-colonial perspectives on history, memory and hybridity in a very elaborate and careful way. On the other hand, she provides a reconciliation with Islam in this novel and it is seen that she revises her previous writings by adding the agency and the voice of the local. As suggested earlier, Soueif has often been criticised for being an upper-class bourgeois because her fiction never or rarely touches on popular Middle Eastern issues, that she herself lists as "the fundamentalists, the veil, the cold peace, polygamy,

women's status in Islam, female genital mutilation" (*The Map of Love* 6). Unlike her early works, *The Map of Love* constitutes a space for the Egyptian fellah and colloquial Arabic ('amiya). Soueif also suggestively links matrilineal genealogies and oral literature and introduces and discusses the diversities of Islam in this novel. This way, she is arguing and effectively confirming that her novel is heterogeneous, multi-vocal and hybridised.

In the Eye of the Sun ends at a point in early 1980s when political Islam has been troubling Egypt for more than a decade and hijab becomes common among Egyptian women.[140] This is well explained physically at the end of the novel when Asya's inner monologue is repeatedly cut with Qur'ānic recital of surah Ya-Sin. *The Map of Love*, on the other hand, is designated as a work of reconciliation with Islam and Islamic past and Soueif introduces the aesthetic value of a layered and palimpsestual history for Islam and Egypt. It was first published in 1999 and shortlisted for the Booker Prize the same year, and was a great hi. But Soueif was not awarded the prize and it can be argued that it was because of the political contextualisation that the jury found over-emphasised in a work of romance.[141] It is at times defined as a Harlequin romance, but as will be demonstrated, this novel gives historical density to a neglected period in Anglo-Egyptian history and creates a powerful post-colonial frame for representation and translation.

It should be noted that romance is widely recognised as a genre that represents the empire,[142] and as suggested before, Soueif similarly works on the theme of love within a framework of *strategic Orientalism* to subvert Orientalist paradigms. In like fashion, Soueif relates two cross-cultural love stories in this novel that are set in different centuries and structures them as doubles. The story of Anna Winterbourne and Sharif al-Baroudi is set in

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[140] Mervat F. Hatem describes the appropriation of Islamic dress in the 1980s and 90s as "new veiling", 312. It is important to note that there is a great deal of variability in women's veiling. If a woman consciously wears the *hijab* to signify religiosity, she is known as *muhajaba* in Arabic, meaning "she who wears *hijab*". On the other hand, if a woman's head covering is for respect only she is *mu'adaba* meaning polite and modest woman. See Mamoun Fandy, "Political Science Without Clothes: The Politics of Dress; or Contesting the Spatiality of the Dress in Egypt", Amila al-Azhary Sonbol (Ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies*, (381-398), The American University in Cairo Press, Egypt 2006, 390.

[141] See Emily S. Davis, "Romance as Political Aesthetic in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*", *Gender*, 45, 2007.

[142] Michael Murrin, "Book Review: Culture and Imperialism, Edward Said: A Critical Reader", *Modernism/Modernity*, 1 (3), 1994, 259-263, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/mod.1994.0051, 260; Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 15; for adventure romances, 30; McLeod 40.

England and colonial Egypt after the Omdurman War (1898) and continues until 1913. The story of Isabel Parkman and Omar Ghamrawi on the other hand takes place in contemporary Egypt and USA in 1997. Amal Ghamrawi, sister of Omar, integrates the stories and acts as the "authorized character".[143] Important is the fact that, a professional translator of fiction and a writer, and previously wedded to an English man, Amal has two British-Egyptian sons and is living alone in Cairo after getting divorced.

Echoing the *Arabian Nights,* the story starts with Isabel finding an old trunk in her mother's house, who is symbolically amnesiac, and later learns that the trunk belongs to Anna Winterbourne, her English great-grandmother. It includes some notebooks written in English and Arabic and Isabel brings it to Egypt for the English translations of the Arabic papers where she also embarks on a project about "millennial views and theories" (7). On Omar's request, Amal helps Isabel translating the Arabic texts into English and she finds out that that they are great-grand cousins of Isabel. As the narrator of the stories and the editor of the texts, Amal translates Layla's Arabic testimony and weaves together Anna and Layla's writings. The result is a personal account of a historical period which reveals a keen political awareness. As the readers will learn in the course of the novel, the diaries of Anna and the testimony of Layla engage the Urabi Revolt in Egypt (1882), the Mahdist Revolt in Sudan (1891) and the Omdurman War (1898), and gives a fictional account of the *al-Nahda* movement. Unsurprisingly, Lord Cromer and Abdul Hamid II[144] emerge as characters together with many other historical figures. Soueif also exhibits the echoes of Egypt's colonised past in contemporary world with the Luxor Massacre (1997) and the assassination attempt of Hasan al-Alfi by the Islamists which kills Mansur, a car-park attendant.[145] The novel also highlights important statements about Arab nationalism, Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and the decolonisation of Egypt after the Free Officers'

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[143] Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, "Historical Fictions: Woman (Re)reading and (Re)writing History", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 15 (2), 2004, 137-152, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/0957404042000234006, 138.

[144] Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918) is the 34th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He adopted an ideological principle known as Pan-Islamism and emphasised his title as the Ottoman Caliphate. Evelyn Baring, First Earl of Cromer (1841-1917) is a British diplomat and colonial administrator. He was the consul-general of Egypt during 1883-1907. He also stayed in India during 1872-76.

[145] Hasan al-Alfi is the then Minister of Interior. The car park attendant Mansur becomes a city icon in *The Map of Love.*

Revolution. Very much like her first novel, Soueif provides a political reading of Egypt's history during *Infitah* and examines the continuing and new forms of colonialism and Western imperialism within a large historical context.

In her political romance, Soueif expands the limits of novelistic narration and demonstrates oscillations between history and fiction. She questions the historical layer of fiction with the fictional layer of history and looks into the post-colonial subject's memory while reflecting on orality and over-writing of histories –by the coloniser. In doing that, she inserts journals, letters and testimonies of female characters into the novel and presents them as powerful historical texts. This way, she creates a shift of understanding with fragile and traditionally feminine forms of writing[146] and questions the borders of the novel; an imperial genre. While exploring novelistic borders with her trans-generic text, she renders hybridity physically apparent in the novel with newspaper cuttings, epigraphs, quotations from popular Orientalist texts, Arabic songs and dictionary entries.

In addition, hybridity is physically visible in the novel especially when Soueif inserts Anna's journal (italicised) and Layla's testimony (written in a different typeface font) into the text. The surprising fact is that Layla's writing is originally in Arabic, but is translated into English by Amal who categorises, rearranges, selects and edits texts like a classical Orientalist. She also forces a normative and linear history upon them. Furthermore, Layla's original text is absent and only appears as translated fragments in the novel which enables Soueif to engage with the Orientalist method of fragmentation and foreignising translation. As Edward Said suggests, the learned Orientalist presents a mediated knowledge in carefully selected fragments to the European reader, and Timothy Brennan states that "Orientalism is about the apparatus of knowledges that intellectuals create as well as the effects they have through various levels of mediation".[147]

Parenthetically to note, Edward William Lane translates and publishes the *Qur'ān* as *Selections from Kur'án* and dissects his *Description of Egypt* so that it can be published. Similarly, and as is well-known, the *Arabian Nights* was translated first as extracts in

[146] See Moore 148.
[147] Timothy Brennan, "Edward Said and Comparative Literature", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 33 (3), 2004, 23-37, JSTOR, Accessed: 13-11-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps2004.33.3.023, 29.

Victorian Britain before Richard Burton produced an uncensored version.[148] Fragmentation is also apparent in Soueif's non-fictional writing; *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground*. With these in mind, it can be argued that in *The Map of Love* Soueif effectively juxtaposes fragmentation with academic Orientalism and makes Amal a reader, a translator and finally a writer of her Anna story. Likewise, Amal disrupts Anna's and Layla's narrative at many times and always reminds the reader herself and the fictionality of fiction with her reading, translation and writing process –and also with her memories in England that also interrupt the narration. She, somehow violently, fills in the gaps of the texts thereby allowing Soueif to place emphasis on imperial licence, rightness and self-validation with her character's European education.

With Amal, Soueif also focuses on pleasures of reading and connects narrative to desire. Surprisingly, the story begins with a trunk and Soueif maintains a reference to the *Arabian Nights*, "A story can start from the oddest things: a magic lamp" (6). It can be stated that, like Scheherazade, Amal retells a story.[149] This way Soueif touches on the debate that Scheherazade's stories are not original but a retelling and it is seen that Amal retells Layla and Anna's story. In the novel, Soueif also links retelling to translation which enables her to engage with the translation of the *Arabian Nights* into English by Edward William Lane and Richard Burton, most important of all, the hyper-sexualisation of the Arab subject after the translations.[150] It is clear that Soueif wilfully locates her novel in dialogue with the *Arabian Nights* and questions foreignising Orientalist translations.

Over the course of the novel, the reader learns that Amal is a professional translator of novels, "or does her best to translate them" (515). More than that, she is educated in England. It is seen that Soueif has many Europe-educated female characters in her fiction and rigorously discusses education at imperial centres for it has a definite function in the narrative to examine hybridity. Unsurprisingly, Amal is bicultural-bilingual and has schooled knowledge on the Orientalist discourse. She perfectly knows that she will, like an

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[148] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature,* 43. Burton's unexpurgated translation also presents a case in point about the moralising Western gaze.
[149] Darraj 99.
[150] John Wallen, "Sexual Anthropology: Burton and Said's Gendered Axis", *The Victorian*, 3 (2), 2015, 1-31, Accessed: 27-10-2016, http://journals.sfu.ca/vict/index.php/vict/article/view/171, 1-8.

Orientalist, translate Layla's testimony and edit Anna's diaries and letters in her philological laboratory. It is particularly interesting because Soueif delves deep into history with her contemporary hybrid female character who interrogates her hybridity and post-colonial subjectivity. She consciously positions Amal like an Orientalist scholar of Humanities to create an insistent subtext for archival research. Amal has a textual attitude toward her material and codifies, arranges and comments on it; she also ransacks the English and Arabic archives like Sacy. This way, it can be argued that Soueif creates a critical space of *strategic Orientalism* in her fiction.

More important is the fact that Soueif's fictional Orientalist is female and Arabic is her mother tongue which also makes the novel semantically thick. She possibly emphasises the same understanding with Anna, the Victorian female traveller. Anna's writings provide a sober contrast to the Victorian male travellers' representations of the Orient and are more aligned with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lady Anne Blunt and Lady Duff Gordon's writings.[151] It is true that these Victorian female travellers offer a less racist picture and have access to female-only spaces which are denied to male travellers but form the representation of the Oriental subject as lustful in Orientalist texts.[152] In that respect, white women travellers' writings can be described as transgression or counter-discourse because these women wandered in the colonies sometimes all alone and deployed a "sentimental rhetoric" by which their narratives recounted a relationship "much more involved with and sympathetic to the natives".[153] It can be stated that Soueif implicitly questions the narratives

[151] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) is an English aristocrat and poet. She published her letters as the wife of the British Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire. Said says, "In the writings of British residents abroad, from Lady Wortley Montagu to the Webbs, one finds a language of casual observation". See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 118. Lady Duff Gordon (1821-1869) is an English author and translator. She settled in Egypt and learned Arabic, published *Letters from Egypt* (1865). Lady Anne Blunt (1837-1917), traveller and artist, wife of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and co-founder of the Arabian stud at Crabbet Park, a horse-breeding farm. See Jennifer Speake, (Ed.), *Literature of Travel and Exploration, An Encyclopedia, Volume One A to F*, Routledge, London and New York, 2003, 350, 112-114, 805; see also Gerald M. Maclean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel, English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, 163.

[152] Shao-Pin Luo, "Rewriting Travel: Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* and Bharati Mukherjee's *The Holder of the World*", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 38, 2003, 77-104, SAGE Journals, DOI: 10.1177/00219894030382006, 87, 77. See also, Catherine Wynne, "Elizabeth Butler's Literary and Artistic Landscapes", *Prose Studies*, 31 (2), 126-140, DOI: 10.1080/01440350903, 323553, 127.

[153] Ali Rattansi, "Postcolonialism and its discontents", *Economy and Society*, 26 (4), 1997, 480-500, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/03085149700000025, 488-489.

of the Victorian women travellers and interestingly adds a space for the Victorian servants' narratives, which are absent in these texts.

Soueif questions the imperial distance and authority of the Orientalist writer with the texts of white women travellers and demonstrates that the (male) Orientalist is a detached and impartial observer that has the moral gaze.[154] In that respect, the writings of the Victorian women travellers partly act as a corrective narrative, but it is clear that the voices of the servants and maids are muted in their texts. Undoubtedly, when European travellers visited the overseas colonies, they took their maids and servants with them, but there are only a few texts they wrote that survived. Soueif is particularly interested in these silenced narratives and discusses their absence in *The Map of Love*. As will be shown in the discussion of *Culture and Imperialism,* Edward Said argues that empire has a codified but marginally visible presence in the 19th century European fiction like the rarely studied and recognised place of the servants in grand households and novels.[155] It can be suggested that Soueif draws on this context to explore travel writing by the Victorian female traveller and questions the visibility and the voice of both the English and Arab servants.

It is important also to note that Soueif creates a space for the Egyptian fellah and servants and focuses on a questioning of History with them. It can be stated that she merges the voices of the Egyptian *fallaheen* and the *effendiyya*[156] and English aristocrats and Orientalists in Egypt in an attempt to capture the emergence of Arab nationalism, especially

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[154] Said, *Orientalism,* 103; see also David Bate, "Photography and the colonial vision", *Third Text,* 7 (22), 1993, 81-91, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/09528829308576403, 85.

[155] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 75.

[156] *Fallaheen* (also *fellahin,* sing. fellah) means "peasants" in Arabic. *Effendiyya* (also afandiyyah, sing. *effendi*), a popular term with a blurred meaning depending on the social context. It means landowner, ruling elite or the Ottoman bureaucrats who adopted Western dress and ideas after the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876). See Michael Eppel, "Note about the Term Effendiyya in the History of the Middle East", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 41 (3), 2009, 535-539, JSTOR, Accessed: 20-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/403892888; Paul Amar, "Working out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870-1940", *Social History*, 36 (4), 2011, 498-501, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/03071022.2011.620236. A Western-style dress distribution outlet, Omar Effendi, uses the word *effendi* for the brand and Mamoun Fendy indicates that this is a conscious move for the word signifies state bureaucrats and thus power, 393. Lisa Pollard describes *effendiyya* as "bourgeois Egyptians" in "Learning Gendered Modernity: The Home, the Family and the Schoolroom in the Construction of Egyptian National Identity", Amila al-Azhary Sonbol (Ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies*, (249-269), The American University in Cairo Press, Egypt 2006, 249. Also see Said, *Orientalism,* 306. This term will further be elaborated.

the Urabi Revolt. This way she also gives an additional insight to Ottoman-Egyptian relations after the Bombardment of Alexandria, but what Soueif is particularly interested in is the results of colonial history in contemporary Egypt and new forms of colonisation that continues after formal independence and direct colonialism.[157] For this, she provides a comprehensive assessment of Israeli aggression on Palestinian lands and situates political Islam within colonialism. Soueif does this most strikingly through developing a fictional and Muslim Edward Said with Omar Ghamrawi; an Egyptian-Palestinian-American musician who has "no problem with identity" (50).

It is interesting to note that Soueif strengthens gender awareness with the voice of the servants, the Egyptian fellah and Palestinian characters and continues to emphasise it with her explorations of intellectual genealogy. *The Map of Love* stresses matrilineal genealogy and seeks to demonstrate how history is transmitted between women. On the other hand, Soueif poses a cyclical and double history presumably in response to patriarchal linear history and describes and considers Egypt's history as a palimpsest. Her handling of history is revealed in the pharaonic, Ottoman and colonial histories of Egypt which are carefully contextualised. It is also apparent in the "double time structure" of the novel with a Victorian and a contemporary setting.[158]

Victorian literature provides a context for Soueif's key intentions and allows her to enter into a discussion of Egypt's history under occupation, especially when she depicts the Victorian obsession with Egyptology. It should be noted that *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-26) initiated the rise of certain imperial sciences and transformed academic Orientalism more into the Western representations of an imagined Orient.[159] Relatedly, as Alessandro Marina states, Napoleon's French Campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798-1801) resulted in the figurative trend Egyptomania.[160] It can be argued that Soueif explicitly

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[157] See Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 207 for indirect colonialism.
[158] Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 197.
[159] *Description de l'Égypte* was edited by Edme-François Jomard and published in Paris. See Stefano A. E. Leoni, "Western Middle-East Music Imagery in the Face of Napoleon's Enterprise in Egypt: From Mere Eurocentric Exoticism, To Very Organized Orientalistic Ears", *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 38 (2), 2007, 171-196, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25487524, 172.
[160] Alessandra Marino, 765; see also Thompson, "Edward William Lane's *Description of Egypt*", 565.

connects her writing with the Western canon and reminds that after the Bombardment of Alexandria, Egypt haunts Victorian England with mummy stories.[161] With Egyptian mummies, the focus is again on graves and burying and she contrasts the Victorian obsession of Egypt with the neo-Victorian obsession of the post-colonial subject. This frame especially recalls Asya's Western-education and her problematic identification with Victorian fictional characters as an Arab woman in *In the Eye of the Sun*. It is important also to recognise that Soueif interweaves this interpretation of Egyptology and Egyptomania with Said's vigorous debate about the African roots of Greek civilisation. Referring in *Culture and Imperialism* to Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, Said says that the Greek civilisation was known originally to have roots in Egyptian, Semitic or other Eastern or Southern cultures. But it was redesigned to be Aryan in 19th century and the Semitic or the African roots were therefore cleaned.[162] To subvert this cultural cleaning/*whitening*, Soueif reinforces a parallel Oedipus story with Egyptian Akhen Atun and recreates a fictional Arab Antigone. Interestingly, there are unburied (unburiable) corpses in the novel which evocatively suggests Antigone's effort to find a burial ground for his brother and *The Map of Love* poignantly relates the stories of two sisters and the bond with their brothers. Unsurprisingly, Sharif studies law, "an occupation with symbolic significance for the history of Orientalism",[163] and this strengthens the connections with Antigone, who contrasts the laws of the land with the laws of the State.

It is clear that Soueif's fiction blossoms into a fruitful dialogue with Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* as she relates her discussions to contemporary identity and cultural politics. It can be indicated that, in general terms, Soueif's fiction describes how the Islamic Orient is (mis)represented through Orientalist scholarship which produces and reproduces distorted knowledge about the Muslims and Arabs as orientalised Orientals. Equally important is the fact that she stresses this point in novelistic form to challenge this dominantly European genre and to point to ambivalence and appropriation at

[161] Ailise Bulfin, "The Fiction of Gothic Egypt and the British Imperial Paranoia: The Curse of the Suez Canal", *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, 54 (4), 2011, 411-443, Project MUSE, Accessed: 03-09-2015, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/445326, 413.
[162] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 15.
[163] Said, *Orientalism*, 78.

a textual-historical level. Clearly, her fiction carries a theoretical burden and Soueif returns to *Orientalism* to create an intense retelling of Said's criticism. Her writing thus takes the form of an impressive blend of history and literature and her romance is deeply determined by politics. In respect of this, it is seen that rereading (historically) and rewriting of history[164] provide a post-colonial adjustment and a female antidote to her novel writing and enables Soueif to intertwine Arabo-Islamic narrative practices with European generic forms. This way, she explores and calls into question the idea of hybridity and her fiction marks a structure that brings uncanny post-colonial doubles into a sharper focus. With doubling and ambivalence, Soueif enters post-colonial the debate about authenticity and translation that she also investigates in her non-fiction.

1.2.2.2. Non-Fiction: An Introduction

1.2.2.2.1. *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground*

Ahdaf Soueif's non-fictional writing is important in understanding her fiction and it obviously shows the influence of her cross-cultural hybridity. For that reason, it will receive weighty treatment in this study to establish a link to and carefully consider her fictional writing. Likewise, *Mezzaterra* (2004) intersects with Soueif's fiction and includes political, literary and cultural essays. The first part, "Political Essays", contains reprints of some of the essays she wrote for *The Guardian* between the years 2000 and 2004, and the second part "Literature, Culture and Politics" includes her book reviews and articles on certain issues.

Soueif dedicates the book to his two sons from her marriage to the English critic Ian Hamilton, Omar Robert and Ismail Richard, and the other inhabitants of the common grounds, and points to the co-existence of forms of culture with her son's hybrid names at the very start. The collection opens with a verse from the *Qur'ān* and it can be suggested that Soueif situates national identity and knowing the Other as key nerves of the book with the *āyah*: "'O Mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you into Nations and Tribes that you may get to know one another. The one that God honours most

[164] See Heilmann and Llewellyn 139.

among you is the one that fears him most. And God is knowing of all things. Qur'ān al-Hujurat, 13". Apart from that, with the subtitle *Fragments*, Soueif again stresses her familiar theme of fragmentation and ironically clashes her writing with the 19th century Orientalist scholars whose fragments and selections created a climate of opinion for generations of politicians, critics and novel writers to follow.

In this book, Soueif develops the idea of Mezzaterra as the common ground, "the only home that she and those whom [she] loves can inhabit".[165] Her pieces as she wants to call them, start by going back to 1984, when she marries Ian and moves from Cairo to London. After this spatial recognition, Soueif presents *Mezzaterra* as "the interaction between [her] self and the condition of living in the UK"; "the country that had become her other home" (2). She sadly emphasises that she is coming face to face with distortions of her reality in England in the 1980s when the British media supports Israeli aggression and occupation. In the face of this, she says she feels alien and cannot recognise herself in the representations of the West as part of the world that she comes from and as the interest to that part of the world is growing with subsequent violence. Lebanon suffers from the Israeli occupation and civil war and becomes home to Palestinian refugees –and sadly still is. Thousands of mainly young Arab men fight against USSR in Afghanistan; the Soviet Union breaks and the Gulf War results in sanctions on Iraq. A New World Order begins with a new imperial power as the world applauds to Oslo Peace Talks[166] when, Soueif argues, only a handful of people see the coming disaster that the plan lays down.

In this political turmoil, *Mezzaterra,* like in her writing and cultural activism, she intensely questions the concept of representation (of the Other) and shows that the media of the West misrepresents the region and the people. More than that, it is complicit in the imposition of the control of the Arab and the Muslim worlds as a powerful hegemonic tool. However, Soueif poignantly remarks that this misrepresentation is not reciprocal because the Arab media is only interested in what the West produces –policies, technology, art and especially the things that connect to the Arab world. It has access to English and other

[165] Ahdaf Soueif, *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common* Ground, Bloomsbury, London, 2004, 9.
[166] The Oslo Accords, officially the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self Government Arrangements, were signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, DC in 1993.

European languages and the West is interpreted and analysed by the people who lived there. Soueif points to the fact that, unlike in Western representations of the (Islamic) imagined Orient, The Arab public is informed and sees the West as a heterogeneous entity.

However, living in London forces Soueif to see herself, like many other people with an Arab/Muslim background, reflected on a Western mirror, and at this point she asks, "who was us". The answer is celebrated heterogeneity: "Growing up Egyptian in the Sixties meant growing up Muslim/ Christian/ Egyptian/ Arab/ African/ Mediterranean/ Non-aligned/ Socialist but happy with small-scale capitalism." She continues more strikingly, "On top of that, if you were urban/ professional the chances were that you spoke of English and/ or French and danced to the Stones as readily as to Abd el-Haleem" (5). Soueif posits Mezzaterra, "the meeting point for many cultures and traditions", not as an imaginary category but as the world that she and many others were born into (6). Interestingly, she uses slashes not hyphens in her definition of the common ground and highlights precisely the contrapuntal existence of different identities. At this point, she notes that she comes across *huwiyyah*,[167] the Arabic word for identity, when she is no longer living in Egypt and says that the inhabitants of the common ground territory do not see identity as something to be defined and defended (6).

Soueif argues that Mezzaterra is imagined and created by the first students sent to West by Muḥammed ʻAli Pasha in the 19th century and when they came back inspired with what they saw good to offer. Surprisingly, for Soeuif, it includes some Westerners too like Lucy Duff Gordon and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.[168] She indicates that the West means something to be admired for the generation of her mother and father for its discipline, thought, literature and music, and she again tells the story of her mother's appointment to

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[167] Referring to Assia Djebar's autobiography, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, Spivak notes that *Ta'arif* (capitalised in her text) means "identity" in Arabic. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Acting Bits/Identity Talk", *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (4), 1992, 770-803, JSTOR, Accessed: 28-12-2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343830, 770. Ian Campbell indicates that the word *al-ta'rīf* has multiple glosses and its primary meaning is "introduction" and *waraqat al-ta'rīf* means "identity card". See Ian Campbell, *Labyrinths, Intellectuals and the Revolution, The Arabic Language Moroccan Novel 1957-72*, Brill, Leiden, Boston 2013, 72.

[168] Wilfred Scawen Blunt is an English poet and writer. He travelled extensively in the Middle East with his wife Lady Anne Blunt and published political essays against British imperialism. See Said, *Orientalism,* 237; *Culture and Imperialism*, 128-129, 235-236, 291.

the English Department when the British left in 1952. This generation, Soueif states, "did not consider that rejecting British Imperialism involved rejecting English literature" and she remarks that English Literature can only truly be understood and loved if the native subject is no longer under British colonialism and has the privilege to "engage with the culture on an equal footing" (6). As aforementioned, Soueif questions the Englishness of English Literature with her hybrid fiction that deeply considers the interpellative effects of European Literature, but like Edward Said, she never rejects that she loves it. In that respect, it is clearly seen that Soueif surprisingly returns in *Mezzaterra* to Matthew Arnold and says that the generation of her parents see and appreciate the affinity "between the best of Western and the best of Arab culture" and that notions of social justice, public service and equality that are synonymous with what is Western can also be found in the *Qur'ān* and in the traditions of Prophet (7). Her reference to Arnold is strikingly powerful because Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) is a work of a definite racialist and Orientalist positioning.[169]

Soueif notes that generations of Arab Mezzaterrans also believed, like the West, that their culture was good, its ideals were universal and democratic. The common ground they inhabited was "a fertile land, an area of overlap, where one culture shaded into the other, where echoes and reflections added depth and perspective, where differences were interesting rather than threatening" (7-8). In Soueif's Mezzaterra, language, people, food and space reflect and affect each other and identity is a fluid process in which each cultural element enriches the other and there is no space for a hierarchy of values. More importantly, it provides a safe territory in which the individual is both inside and outside of language and one's cultural stand is both critical and empathetic. At this point, Soueif proudly indicates that her stories and articles flourished out of this secure territory.

In *Mezzaterra*, Soueif rightfully emphasises safety and security because the political direction in the 1980s and 1990s undermined different aspects of identity and this hospitable Mezzaterra went under attack. She notes that the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s saw the USA approved and supported sanctions on Iraq and the violently

[169] See Young, *Colonial Desire.*

increasing occupation of Palestinian lands that radicalised the Arab opinion. Soueif points to the fact that the weak Arab leaders were complicit in this, like in Egypt which had been ruled by emergency law since the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981.[170] Soueif notes that the situation was most bitter when the Second Intifada began after the elections in the USA that brought George W. Bush to power and when the peace deals between Palestine and Israel broke off –though she acknowledges that Clinton's administration created a brief moment of solution. She then states that Western media reports one-sidedly and simple-mindedly on Islam and the Arabs, and it is at this point that Soueif begins to write for *The Guardian* and embarks on a journey to the occupied lands in Palestine –with her British passport as she ironically states. Her aim when visiting Palestine is to "establish a direct and authentic channel between the reader of English and the perceptions, feelings and ideas of the people whose countries – whose lives in fact – are the main theatre in which the dramas of the last several years have been played out" (10). She hopes that her representation will demythologise the Arab Muslim as a homogenous category and restore the conflict to where it should be: politics and economy. She also hopefully indicates that her voice will be added to that of Edward Said and other (Arab) critical thinkers, novelists and artists that she names as Mezzaterran.

Soueif states that the New World Order and the War on Terror claimed to bring democracy to the Arabs, but she sadly points to the corruption of language in US and British media that Giambattista Vico declared to be the first symptom of the barbarisation of thought three centuries ago.[171] Relatedly, as Soueif contends in *Mezzaterra*, the words

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[170] Egypt was declared state of emergency first in 1958, and during the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, emergency law was reimposed and lasted till 1980. After the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, state of emergency was imposed again and extended every three year till 2012. When Soueif published *Mezzaterra* in 2004, Hosni Mubarak had been administering the country under a continuous state of emergency for 23 years. When Mubarak was deposed, Egypt's state of emergency was finally lifted in 2012 after 31 years. See Maha Abdel Rahman, "Policing neoliberalism in Egypt: the continuing rise of the 'securocratic' state", *Third World Quarterly*, 38, 2017, 185-202, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2015.1133246, 189-193.

[171] It is worth noting parenthetically that Edward Said and Ahdaf Soueif often refer to Giambattista Vico in their discussions of language and he is a crucial critical thinker for Said. Timothy Brennan states that Giambattista Vico affected Edward Said's strategy of indirection and gave him a decidedly secular authority. Stephen Howe also suggests that Said sees the secular as exemplified in Vico. More specifically, Vico's description of language as rewriting of history anticipates Edward Said and is in fundamentally informs Ahdaf Soueif's fiction. See McCarthy, 80; Brennan; "Edward Said and Comparative Literature", 34; Howe, 58; see also Bayoumi and يموبد يفطصم ى 48.

democracy, freedom, sovereignty, peace, terrorism and stability that Bush and Blair export as commodities to the Arab region do not agree with definitions in OED and the Arabic words that the Western media uses very frequently for the last three decades like jihad, *fatwa* and *shaheed* are more layered than their resonance for the English reader (15-16). More importantly, Soueif reveals that Richard Nixon's visit to Egypt and US AID during Sadat's *Infitah* were very important in strengthening the dependency theory and that the complicity of the political leaders of the Arab countries silenced oppositions. Therefore, Soueif trenchantly criticises late Anwar Sadat regime that finds echoes in the novels and indicates that Egypt is suffering from an unprecedented level of poverty and a huge disparity between the rich and the poor. She sees it as the reason behind the migration to oil-rich Gulf countries, an effect "that can be seen in every Third World country" (15). It should again be reminded here that she and her mother taught in oil-rich countries for a while too, as in Latifa's words in *In the Eye of the Sun*, to civilise the Arabs.

It is clearly visible that Soueif's criticism in *Mezzaterra* lends itself to Saidian vocabulary especially when she says that the Arabs are portrayed in the Western media as essentially passive, primitive and are denied agency of action. However, she points to the fact that representation (of the Arabs and Muslims in Western media) is not an urgent concern of Arabs living in Egypt and other Arab countries –and it should not be. She indicates that the distortion of realities is much more troubling for the Arabs living in the West and that some Arab intellectuals demean their cultures, history and people living on the land. She emphasises that this providing the "ideological justification to 'save [Arab] people from themselves'" (19) and says that these Arab intellectuals are sadly involved in the practice of domination and complicit in the oppression of the Arab/Muslim. Relatedly, Soueif reads the construction and identification of USSR, the Evil Empire, and Islam as enemies and says that the Evil Empire is an original creation, but with Islam, West tells a familiar story –thereby repeats and reproduces the old Orientalist ideas. In Western media, Muslims are described as fanatical and represented as rejecting modernity and democracy, and indeed, she argues that these fears and hatred go back to the Crusades. Against all this, Soueif posits a conceptual rethinking with Mezzaterra as the common ground and says that every responsible person should migrate to it, and strategically inhabit it.

After describing and historically contextualising Mezzaterra, *Mezzaterra* continues to relate Soueif's Palestine journey under the guns: "Under the Gun: A Palestinian Journey". She first visits Palestine's occupied lands shortly after the Second Intifada begins, and writes down an account of it as diary entries which *The Guardian* later publishes in shorter form. Her aim is to give a first-hand account of the situation for the English-speaking reader and the irony is apparent from the start. She has longed to visit Palestine since childhood, and as she indicates, her life and that of every Egyptian of her generation are shadowed by Israel and she is now going to Israel which used to be Palestine. At least, she feels that she is doing something useful with her journey; reporting and writing from the contested space.

As she aptly observes, the names on shops on the Palestinian streets reveal the familiar mix of Christian and Muslim Arabs, the French and the Armenian. She feels at home here; this is an uncrowded, smaller and cleaner Cairo (32). She also wants to meet some Israelis and, with her guide, visits Hebron, a city in West Bank that carries the name of Abraham –Ibrahim al-Khalil, whose son Ishmael is the father of the Arabs and Isaac, the father of Jews. It is important to note that Soueif provides a useful glossary about Arabic names for the English-speaking reader and hinges on the shared history of the Palestinians and the Jews. She then visits al-Shuhada Street, now King David Street, and witnesses Israeli soldiers shooting at civilians. As noted before, *shuhada* is the plural of *shaheed* and the underlying assumption might be that Soueif is a *shahida* at al-Shuhada Street.

Unsurprisingly, her British passport allows Soueif to enter the old city easily and she visits Hajj al-Ja'bari, a local whose house sees the pink walls of Ibrahim's Sanctuary. It is closed, like the fifteen mosques in the city and Soueif sadly reports that forty thousand people live under Israeli curfew and children cannot go to school because of that. During a couple of days, she visits Ramallah, al-Quds (Jerusalem), the West Bank and ends the account with the *zaghrouda*[172] of the Palestinian mothers. As she painfully notes, it is not wedding *zaghrouda* anymore, but is tilled out in the face of death (62). With mothers' *zaghrouda,* Soueif creates a space for the Palestinian female and relates her untranslatable

[172] *Zagharid* is "ululations, joy-cries, celebrating a happy event. Made exclusively by women. Singular: *zaghruda*". Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 528.

and untold story. Like her ululation, her pain is not and cannot be translated and is preserved within the confines of the Arabic word.

After the painful, insightful and novelistic reportage on Palestine, *Mezzaterra* focuses on criticism and commentary on the War on Terror and Bush's regime –interestingly, the very space of the book includes journalistic entries like *In the Eye of the Sun*. Soueif returns to Palestine three years later in 2003, this time with his son, and witnesses the biggest dispossession of the land and the construction of the Wall of Shame. She symbolically starts the story on Allenby Bridge and painfully states that everywhere they go, they see that the names of Arab villages are *whited* out from the road signs. She spends another Ramadan there and visits Jayyus, Ramallah, Jerusalem al-Quds, Bethlehem and al-Khalil. She visits universities and talks to local people who cannot harvest their olives and lose their sheep to death because of the occupation and Israeli aggression. Before going back to her commentary on the War on Terror, Soueif asks, "How many stories can I tell, how many can you read?" (158). She ends her report with the passivity and weakness of the Arab governments in the face of occupation and validates the physicality of the pain with her fragmented narrative that expands horizontally within three years' time. But it falls apart. The tonality resembles the civil defence sirens and the reportage is twice cut with angry political commentary only to come back again.

The second part of the book, "Literature, Culture and Politics" brings together family planning and US AID in Egypt, literary criticism, commentary on Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir*, veiling and Palestinian literary and artistic productions under occupation. The most interesting article in the book discusses William Golding's *An Egyptian Journal* and in what circumstances Golding possibly wrote the book.[173] The immediately noticeable thing in the account is that Soueif is critical of the Nobel and Booker winner on many grounds. She remarks that Golding visits Egypt twice and, on his second visit, he plans to hire a boat and stop at several places down the Nile to mingle with the Egyptians, especially the peasants, but the boat, the Nile, the places and the Egyptians all fail his expectations (186). Interestingly, Soueif's brother Ala, happens to be Golding's boat

[173] Titled as "Passing Through", this article was published in the *London Review of Books* on 3 October 1985.

minder and she notes that Golding transliterates Ala's family name wrongly on his text as Swafe. Soueif sadly says that the sense mounting in William's writing is that the Orient/Egypt is too good to be left to Orientals. She further describes Golding's Orientalist attitude along the journey and indicates that Golding's Egypt of archaeology and history, which is a textual Egypt that he read about, is strikingly different from what he sees. Golding, as she writes, "is blind to what is right there before his eyes" and "ignores what must have been his best opportunity to meet the Egyptians" (192). Soueif illustrates the blindness of Golding in a perfect political commentary that is worthy of quoting: "[…] Golding, seeing a face wordlessly opening and shutting its mouth on a TV screen, 'thinks' it is Mubarak." She acerbically continues, "The observant eye of the traveller journalist has somehow failed to notice the posters and portraits of the President plastered on every wall, so that, coming across him on TV he cannot quite – oh yes, it's probably Mubarak!" (190).

Ironically, Soueif says that Golding is blind to the reality and points to Golding's orientalist feeling that Egyptians stare at him. It is clearly seen that Golding's Western attitude as the detached and elevated observer with the moral and authoritarian gaze is troubling for Soueif and his brother, and a further consideration can be expressed here with Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt*. In the part "Egypt at the Exhibition", Mitchell indicates that Egyptian Orientalists[174] were invited to the Eighth International Congress of Orientalists in Stockholm in 1889, and later in their accounts, they describe Europeans as very curious "with an uncontainable eagerness to stand and stare".[175] The interesting point is that these visitors found themselves as Oriental exhibits alongside realistic replicas of Cairo streets that even showcase donkeys, dirt and dust. Also, as stated by Elleke Boehmer, towards the end of the 19th century, colonial exhibitions put entire native villages on show and it is essential to note that there were exhibitionary realm of sites in Victorian London where Western consumers tasted an experience of otherworldliness such as the Oriental and Turkish Museum displayed at St George's Gallery at Hyde Park Corner (1854) and, as

[174] The word Orientalist here signifies the humanistic and archaeological study of oriental languages, cultures and history. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said says, "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient–and this applies to whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist–either in specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism", *Orientalism*, 2.
[175] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, University of Caroline Press, London 1991, 2.

Mitchell argues, the world was seen as exhibition in this commodity system.[176] Unfortunately, the exhibition turns into a display of Oriental people as oriental things and it is possible to claim that Golding's attitude mirrors the Western Orientalists who put the non-European Orientalists on an exhibition though he claims he himself was constantly stared by Oriental people. Another important thing is that Soueif's brother Ala reads Golding's manuscript before publication and Soueif notes that Golding was kind enough to remove some obviously offensive parts from his text. But she indicates that, although Ala withdraws his photographs, his name appears on the text, though misspelled, and makes him vulnerable because of easing the ways of a wrong-headed Westerner through Egypt during Mubarak's dictatorship. Soueif complains further about the attitude of Golding during his visit and constantly measures *The Egyptian Journal* against Orientalism.

In *Mezzaterra*, Soueif introduces an ideal and imagined world and sadly notes that it was a reality three decades ago. She emphasises that it should be restored with a sense of urgency and it can be argued that the idea of a common ground is visibly clear in the structure of the narrative as she writes about diverse forms of culture and cultural co-extensivity with references to the prominent works of both Arab and Western literatures. In this hybrid text, Soueif explores and draws on both contexts and safely states that she is both inside and outside of these realms. As explained well in the body of the book, Soueif is critical of but empathetic to the part of the world that she is from and her other home, the West. In general terms, she calls for an epistemological shift in Western media's covering of Islam and the Arabs in *Mezzaterra* and celebrates and significantly demonstrates Mezzaterra's liberating potential for both the post-colonial subject and the European.

1.2.2.2.2. *Cairo: My City Our Revolution*

Soueif penned her novels and short stories before 9/11 and she has written particularly on the Palestinian struggle and the representations of Arab/Muslim subject for

[176] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 69; see also Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 144, John Potvin, "Vapour and Steam: The Victorian Turkish Bath, Homosocial Health, and Male Bodies on Display", *Journal of Design History*, 18 (4), 2005, 319-333, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3527239, 325.

the last twenty years. In her media appearances, she says that it is a choice; she cannot write when the West and Israel continue to oppress the Arab/Muslim subject, especially the Palestinians. For that reason, it can be stated that she forges journalism as a medium not to represent but to criticise the (mis)representation of the Arab/Muslim Other in the Western media and it is possible to remark that her non-fictional writing encapsulates many of the qualities of her novel writing. It can be suggested that her non-fictional works definitively follow a literary rhythm and fall across the broad division between fiction and non-fiction. This is most apparent in *Cairo: My City Our Revolution* (2011) and, although Soueif writes it as a testimony to the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, it turns into an autobiography that includes her early Cairo memories.

Important is the fact that, in *Cairo,* Soueif narrates this iconic moment all the while sadly becoming witness (*shahida*) to the martyrs (*shuhada*) of the Revolution and constructs the book as a testimony. A reader of the Arab Humanities can easily recognise that testimony, autobiography and memoir are complex narrative forms for the Arab female writer because of the fact that the development of organised feminism in the Middle East can be traced in women's biographical publications, like the memoir of the Egyptian feminist Huda Sha'rawi, *Mudhakkirati*, that is mentioned at the start. Marilyn Booth states that in early 20th century, autobiography was an emergent genre for the Arab female subject and women began to take control of their lives and stories.[177] It established a link with the female audience and shaped the construction of Arab women's past and future. Booth notes that autobiography should also be seen as a didactic genre and political intervention and she argues that it "is grounded in the context of emergent feminism and the ferment around 'the woman question' in Egypt".[178] In a number of respects, it can be argued that Soueif situates *Cairo* in this early 20th century feminist rhetoric and effectively juxtaposes the private and the public in her narrative. It should also be noted that Soueif's fiction is always attentive to autobiography and life writing and she critically questions the imperialist attitude to such forms of writing that were considered feminine and historically fragile. It is not surprising

[177] Marilyn Booth, "Biography and Feminist Rhetoric in Early Twentieth-Century Egypt: Mayy Ziyada's Studies of Three Women Lives", *Journal of Women's History*, 3 (1), 1991, 38-64, Project MUSE, DOI: 10.1353/jowh.2010.0118, 38.
[178] Booth, "Biography and Feminist Rhetoric in Early Twentieth-Century Egypt", 39.

then that Soueif frequently returns to this stress also in her non-fictional writing and meticulously historicises the Revolution through her personal history and with an emphatic insistence on autobiography for the Arab women.

Soueif begins her testimony saying that she signed a contract to write a book about Cairo, *her Cairo*, many years ago but cannot do it for it feels like an elegy. In February 2011, when she is in Tahrir and taking active part in the Revolution, she realises that this is the perfect moment to write her Cairo book, but she feels that she fights for it, and she does. *Cairo* is informed with journalism and, alongside her memories of the city, Soueif carefully gives an account of the Revolution with a historical back-up from Khedive Ismail's reign (1863-1879) to Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship (1981-2012). She explores and strengthens the connections between her personal history and History which undercuts her lovely memories of Cairo and her testimony emerges out of this fragmentation and disintegration.

At one point in the book, she says that the streets of Cairo are filled with tanks and soldiers during the Revolution, and she recalls, while looking at a restaurant blocked from view by the tanks, how Ian followed him from London to Cairo and kissed her hand in that restaurant under the gaze of the Egyptian waiters. At another instance, she says that they drive up along the Suez Canal for their honeymoon and happen to take the military road by mistake. Then a Colonel comes and they are released after telling their story and showing their marriage certificate. Four months later, she and Ian celebrate their London wedding and it is quite by chance on the same day of the anniversary of Nasser's 1952 Revolution. Her life increasingly becomes Cairo/London and she bitterly recalls that every time she comes home, Cairo gets much smaller while London is exciting and blossoming.

The first part of Soueif's memoir, "The Eighteen Days" is coloured with the undoubtable relevance of the personal and the picture gets darker with the second part, "An Interruption". Soueif remarks that her book is not record of the events that happened and that her memoir expands the limits of a book, or the exercise of writing a book. The reality is that while she writes *Cairo*, people "are working, fighting, dying in order to shape" and

she invites the reader to be a part of a story that Egyptians are still living.[179] It can be suggested that the subtext recalls Biblical Moses who writes his story while at the same time living it –God dictates, and Moses writes his own death, with tears. "[I]t is hard to write", Soueif says, "because things keep happening, pushing my way this way and that, or making me lay it down as I stare out of the window and contemplate" (64). It is definitely for that reason that she gives history in her chosen order and interrupts the record of the Revolution with her Cairo memories.

She then recalls a moment when she was in the house in Zamalek where she grew up and was studying for the university exams. It is 1967 and she sadly hears that her *khalu* (maternal uncle) was crushed by the trucks of the Free Officers. She then thinks of Sally, her best friend in the university, whose fiancé, Issam, was captured by the Israelis during the Six-Day War and never came back. As aforementioned, she sadly narrates these two memories also in *In the Eye of the Sun*. After pages of her past, Soueif resumes her record of the events and provides a space for the stories of people on Tahrir, who were not heard. The ending clearly reflects her aim, as his son Omar says, "Our story continues…" (194) and Soueif is at pains to show it with a funny account:

> 'This is the hospital that you were born' my mother would say whenever we drove past it. And I'd be mildly annoyed. 'I know. You have been telling me since I was born'. As I grow older I would make a joke of it. Sometimes I'd get in first: 'Mama, mama what's this building?' She'd peer over her glasses, then frown at me 'It's the hospital where you were born. And you're being silly. […] Well, now she is no longer here to say it, I think it. Always. At this junction. Always, always, always. This is the hospital where I was born. Soon, I might start saying it to my children. Maybe I already do. Now, I say it to Sherif Boraire, the friend with whom driving in the pursuit of the march: 'This is the hospital where I was born.' (74-75)

[179] Ahdaf Soueif, *Cairo, My City Our Revolution*. Bloomsbury, London 2012, 64.

The repeated “Always, always, always” feels like heart beats as in the famous lines of Sylvia Plath, “I am, I am, I am” in *The Bell Jar* and the account has an amusing layer though it feels like an elegy for Soueif’s mother who died in 2008. The Revolution is happening and she passes by the hospital that she was born. Memory and immediate history collide and Soueif tells his friend that this is the hospital that she was born. In a way, she transmits her personal history to progeny and it can be suggested that the Revolution and what happened during the eighteen days on Tahrir will also be passed to future generations thanks to *Cairo*. Therefore, her book is part of that very process and demonstrates that the weight and burden of History is on the shoulders of the human subject who sometimes carries it as a humiliating wound.

Like her fiction which recognises, articulates, physically shows and interrogates the borders of fictional narratives, Soueif’s non-fiction, especially *Cairo*, is focused on identity as a fluid process. Her memoir threads itself through the fabric of fiction and historical writing and is concerned to break down the barrier between the two. With her interruptions, Soueif perfectly illustrates the epistemic violence of Western teleological and linear thinking on the post-colonial subject and provides a fictional space to reconstruct a liberating basis.

1.2.2.2.3. *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*

Soueif presents in *Mezzaterra* an emotional reportage of her visits to Palestine which she penned as a testimony to the oppression of the Palestinians, and with *Cairo: My City Our Revolution* and *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*, she similarly writes a first-hand account of a longed-for moment in the history of Egypt when Egyptians rose against the oppression and the degeneration of Mubarak’s regime that lasted thirty years. As noted before, *Cairo: My City Our Revolution* is rewritten in 2014 as *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed* and includes a bleak after-Revolution commentary which might be the reason Soueif rewrote her memoir because the Revolution did not bring the anticipated democratic results. In this updated memoir, Soueif speaks on the failures of the Revolution especially during and after the presidential election of 2012 and Abdel Fatah al-Sisi’s coup d’état in 2013.

In both memoirs, as in all of her writings, she repeatedly expresses a spatial concern and it can be argued that *Memoir of a City* can best be read as a city memoir, as she says, "it's […] a story about me and my city, the city I so love and have so sorrowed for these twenty years and more. I am not unique, but Cairo is" (6). Soueif sadly demonstrates how a previously colonised city witnesses a chain of revolutions and is transformed afterwards and this is immediately noticeable with the sections of the book titled "Revolution I", "Revolution II" and "Revolution III". More importantly, in *Memoir of a City,* Soueif expands on her celebration of Mezzaterra as the common ground and positively describes the Tahrir Square and Downtown Cairo[180] as a heterotopic place that she and other revolutionaries safely and peacefully, but for a short while, inhabited during the Revolution. However, it is important to note that Soueif dedicates her book to the young people of Egypt, "the *shuhada* who died for the revolution and the s*habab* who live for it".[181] It is clearly seen that she emphasises witnessing as a memorial and memory practice for the deathly reality of the Revolution during which more than 800 civilians were reportedly killed.

Interestingly, Cairo appears in Edward Said's memoir, *Out of Place,* as a gradually foreign-hating city following the Free Officers' Coup, especially after the Fire of 1952,[182] and the exodus of the Greek, Armenian, French and English citizens. In stark contrast, Soueif depicts Cairo, especially the Tahrir, as a multi-cultural and heterogeneous place that was a safe home to Egyptians and people living in Egypt from different religions and races. This alternative place creates a polyphonic narrative of resistance that arises from plurality and heterogeneity and Soueif's memoir is filled with the voices of the revolutionaries to

[180] Known as *West el-Balad* in Arabic, Downtown has been the heart of urban Cairo since the 19th century with its Parisian boulevards and geometric symmetry. It was designed and built by French architects modelling European high classical style during the reign of Khedive Ismail (1863-1879). Talaat Harb Statue, Groppi and Café Riche are the landmarks of Downtown which was badly damaged during the Great Fire of Cairo.

[181] *Shabab* means "the youth" in Arabic.

[182] Also known as Black Saturday, Cairo Fire took place on 26th January 1952 and nearly 750 buildings owned and associated by Europeans such as nightclubs, theatres, cafés, hotels and operas were burnt in Downtown Cairo. Shepheard's Hotel was badly damaged and it is reported that more twenty people died including Britons. In *Out of Place: A Memoir,* Edward Said touches upon the riots and the following anti-British sentiment in Cairo. Said says that his father, a very prominent Christian merchant and founder of the Standard Stationery, was also deeply affected by the fire and kept a string of photographs that show the ruins hung behind the cashier's desk and in his office.

testify to this. In the very space of the book, she therefore inserts interruptions in the form of personal history, revolutionary songs, female sagas, smuggled out letters from prisons, a testimony of a father in colloquial Arabic (translated into English by her), blog entries, court records, maps, e-mails, TV addresses and an international love story between Ian and herself and these as a whole produce her Cairo and Tahrir as celebrated Mezzaterra. It is clearly seen that the blurring and mixing of narrative genres attest to the polyvocality of Tahrir and allows the voice of the long unrepresented in Egypt to be heard. Another important thing is that Soueif adds a note on spelling Arabic letters in Latin script and mostly emphasises the adoption of a new system by Arab bloggers that she also uses in her text. It appears that she will be using the language of the revolutionary *shabab* who were actively engaged on social media and were organising gatherings for the Revolution through a Facebook page dedicated to one of the *shaheed.*

As stated before, *Memoir of a City* is a city memoir and Soueif multiplies the histories of Cairo and Egypt by describing a succession of national revolutions against colonial Western empires and native collaborators. It might be stated that the Tahrir Revolution becomes the last stage in a chain of nationalist revolutions in Egypt starting with the Urabi Revolt (1882) and Saad Zaghloul's 1919 Revolution and the Free Officers' Revolt (1952). The close link between the revolutions is the special place Downtown, especially Tahrir, holds in the cultural memory of the Egyptians. Downtown symbolises the independence from the Sublime Port, not to says a mimicry of the West. As Said says in *Culture and Imperialism*, "The more Khedive Ismail wished to appear independent, the more his effrontery cost Egypt, the more the Ottomans resented his shows of independence, the more his European creditors resolved to keep a closer hand on him".[183] *Cairo* is therefore the memoir of Cairo, a previously colonised city, that was transformed after nationalist grassroots and military revolutions that were ironically nurtured by the Egyptian mission to Europe and important is the fact that Soueif's memoir is a testimony of this transformation.

[183] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 153, see also 154 for Europeanisation of space in Cairo.

It should be noted that Tahrir was modelled on Étoile in Paris with six main roads leading out of the centre and a further six out of the larger space surrounding it. The square was originally Midan Ismailliyya, as it appears in Said's *Out of Place*, and was renamed as Tahrir Square after the Revolution of 1919, though it was not officially named as such till the Revolution of 1952. It is important to note that the Arabic word *midan* means town-centre and Soueif prefers the Arabic word over the English word square because she says that *midan* does not have a shape as square or circle and has a sense of an open urban place of gathering in a city (7).[184] Midan el-Tahrir has been the Holy Grail of Egyptians for forty years and though it holds symbols of military and political power, it is home to the civic spirit of Egypt. Therefore, Soueif describes the control of Tahrir as central to controlling the country, so undoubtedly the legitimacy comes from Tahrir: "*El-shar3eyya m'nel-Tahrir*" (10).

There are two identical Cairos that Soueif portrays in this memoir and it is seen that these two heterogeneous Cairos are torn between wars, emergency rules, poverty, indirect colonialism and imperialism. Cairo is sometimes a distant place of Soueif's childhood and early adulthood that she nostalgically remembers and this is the place that she positively depicts in *Mezzaterra* as the common ground. Similarly, Samia Mehrez comments on the cosmopolitan legacy of Cairo and says that the city has always attracted multiple ethno-religious communities that produced a unique literary output in several languages historicising the multi-cultural lives in the city.[185] In *Memoir of a City,* Soueif also pens a nostalgia for this sentiment of cosmopolitanism and depicts a romanticised picture of living together. The other Cairo is seen in the heterotopic and iconic Tahrir that she and the other revolutionaries peacefully yet temporarily inhabited during the Revolution. Unfortunately though, Tahrir is a forbidden place for the revolutionaries and the memoir depicts the fight to physically be on the very place to reclaim it, "and this time our project was to save and to reclaim our country" and to produce it as a non-hegemonic space: "each person was in one place, totally and fully committed to that place […] knowing that they had to do everything

[184] See Jon Nixon, *Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Friendship,* Bloomsbury, London, New York 2015, 185.
[185] Samia Mehrez, *The Literary Life of Cairo: One Hundred Years in the Heart of the City,* The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, New York 2011, 57.

they could for it and trusting that other people were in other places were doing the same" (4). It might be argued that Tahrir becomes the regime's fear of heterotopia and is surrounded by police officers and *baltagis* (thugs) that protect it as the centre of authoritarian power. In her memoir, Soueif brilliantly describes how space is non-hegemonically re-built in the Tahrir and shows that people protect it with body cordons from the regime. As stated before, bodies in Soueif's fiction become memory sites unto which History is written and Soueif shows a marked sensitivity to the bodies of the revolutionaries that protect Tahrir from the regime. Interestingly, her sense is of "being in a film […] one of those urban apocalypse movies" (21) and that "there is something of Dante about the spectacle" (16) as she sees her younger self in the *shabab*.

As suggested before, the memoir intensely questions the concept of space and Soueif sadly notes that the regime turns historical places into car parks while at the same time creating Beverly Hills-like districts which turn Egypt into a mock European city. In a disheartening contrast, poor children are living on the streets and her Cairo is made into a clown; it is degraded and bruised, slapped and mocked. Against this, the revolutionary Tahrir stands clearly as the peaceful and non-hegemonic alternative space. However, Soueif also talks about locked out mosques or mosques turned into hospitals, or some government hospitals that have only three drawers in the morgues and stresses that the revolutionary *shuhada* sadly outnumber the drawers. Most strikingly, the Egyptian Museum becomes a detention centre for the regime and is plundered.[186] Sadly, Soueif notes that the revolutionaries do not want to be treated in hospitals because they know they will be reported and taken away. Soueif also reflects the fact that the regime does not allow for proper autopsies of the *shuhada* which points to her complex considerations of unburiable corpses in her fiction. Against all these, Tahrir emerges as the carnivalesque space where the homeless is offered food and shelter; women say they never felt safer; people watch summer cinema; Salafis and Coptic Christians resist together though they live behind their litters, illiterate children are taught to read and write, *iftar* is broken and Christian Mass is

[186] Tahrir Square is surrounded by several government buildings, like the famous Mugamma, and the Egyptian Museum. The British and American embassies are also very close to Tahrir.

carried out following *Jumu'ah* (Friday) prayers.[187] Soueif indicates that this is the first time she was moved by a Friday Sermon when the young imam addressed his sermon to "Egyptians" and spoke of Christ's example saying, "Bear witness that we love Egypt and hold the dust of this land dear" (126), and the community unite in a roll of amens.

It is interesting to note that Soueif describes the Christian revolutionaries who died during the Revolution also as *shuhada* and notes that she once prayed at a church during the Revolution. It is clear that Tahrir brings together Egyptians from all over the world and is a safe place also for the *khagawa*; expatriates, mostly European, living in Egypt. At one point in the memoir, Soueif feels uncomfortable and alien in her own flat and heads toward Tahrir because it is their space and everything is possible there now; the Nile is their river and the Midan is their Midan. At this point, she quotes Ahmed Urabi, "We are slaves to no one and will be inherited no longer" though it was 120 years ago and the revolutionary *shabab* is saying it again (128).[188]

Aside from hospitals as authoritarian places where Egyptians are ironically hurt, Soueif also frequently talks about jails and describes a family gathering and a tea gathering on a visiting day of her nephew Alaa, whose court decision is announced to an empty room that even Alaa himself cannot hear it. It is clearly seen that the focus of *Memoir of a City* is the Tahrir Revolution, but Soueif's writing veers between personal history and the attempt of the Egyptian people to make history. Therefore, personal history is situated right at the heart of the narrative as she talks about doing laundry or picking fruit from the garden or visiting the family *madfan*[189] alongside the deathly Revolution. Similarly, Soueif's emphatic insistence on history is brilliantly reflected on the last section of the book titled "A Brief and Necessary History" which builds up background to the Revolution for the international reader. Starting on 1517, this piece gives a short history of Egypt till 2011 and it can be argued that this part complicates reader's understanding of history. As in the

[187] Performed only in major mosques where the preacher gives a sermon, Friday Prayer is a congregational prayer held on Fridays after the noon prayer. *Iftar* is the breaking of fast at sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. See Adamec 146, 251-2.

[188] Ahmet Urabi (1841-1911) is Egyptian national revolutionary of fellah origin. His uprising ended with the British Bombardment of Alexandria in 1882.

[189] "Burial site" in Arabic. As suggested before, tombs are contested sites in Soueif's fiction and *In the Eye of the Sun* ends after a family gathering in *madfan.*

novels under consideration, Soueif (re)writes a formal history of Egypt in her own chosen order and points of emphasis that intersects with her testimony of the Revolution and personal history. Distinctly political, her formal History ends the narrative and contains the main axe around which her memoir is centred. For Soueif, History is situated within memory, so she writes a formal history out of her memory –and reading and writing history thus become memorialising practices. She proceeds to show this with the revolutionary slogan written on the streets of Egypt and ends her memoir with it, "And glory to our martyrs forever" (226).

1.2.2.2.4. *This Is Not A Border*

This is Not a Border: Reportage and Reflection from the Palestine Festival of Literature (2017) is Soueif's latest publication that she co-edited with her son, Omar Robert Hamilton. It celebrates the tenth anniversary of PalFest with a collection of essays, sketches and poems by the world's renowned artists that attended this unique travelling festival in the occupied lands of Palestine. This festival crosses checkpoints like Palestinians have to do on a daily basis and does not use fast roads designated for the Israeli settlers, but sticks to the roads that Palestinians are allowed to use. The underlying idea is a questioning of borders, thresholds and separation, and to strengthen this idea, Soueif wrote an essay for the collection titled "Jerusalem" which reads the borders and gates of the Sacred Sanctuary of al-Aqsa with extensive references to Islamic history and Arabic etymology.

As aforesaid, Soueif goes to Palestine for *The Guardian* and visits al-Aqsa in 2000. The first thing that startles her is that the north and the west walls of al-Aqsa are not walls at all, but more a porous urban border housing people, schools, libraries and archives. She indicates that these institutions were charities supported by a *waqf* system which sadly fell into the Israeli control after 1948 though the administration was later assumed by Jordan after the Six-Day War in 1967.[190] Soueif remarks that settler families[191] slowly arrived the

[190] *Waqf* (pl. *awkaf*) means detention in Arabic. Pious foundation, real estate or property given in perpetuity to support religious and charitable institutions, usually administered by a member of the *ulama* (doctor of Islamic sciences), Adamec 325.

neighbourhood which she describes as violation and occupation through the Arabic words *iḥlal* and *iḥtilal*: "The Arabic root, 7/ll, is to arrive at a place with the intention of staying. It can lead to i7tilal: 'occupation' and i7lal: 'substitution'. The Palestinians say that the Israelis in East Jerusalem have moved from the face of i7tilal to that of i7lal".[192] As seen in the definition, Soueif states that Israeli settlers refuse to live together with Palestinians, but want to stay there instead of them and to substitute them –and to erase their history.

After this crucial definition, Soueif points to the word al-Aqsa and observes that the Arabic root "q/s/a" means to become far and from this root comes the word *qassa* meaning "to narrate" but also "to cut": "A story that can cut the distance between us and what is far" (24).[193] She then interrupts/cuts her narrative, as she usually does in "Jerusalem", and integrates a *qissa* (story) of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi who liberated Jerusalem after eighty-eight years of the Crusader rule. Soueif indicates that Salah al-Din re-establishes the pact that Omar ibn Khattab[194] had made when he first conquered the city: "everyone had the right to live the city, or remain under the new rule, their safety, possessions, churches and crosses guaranteed" (24). She shows that Salah al-Din animates the city's link with the past this way, and later on, the state establishes a *waqf* at al-Aqsa starting with the al-Buraq

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[191] Zionist settler colonialism started as early as 1897 and in 1914 it turned into reality with the struggle of Theodor Herzl, David Ben Gurion and Chaim Weizmann. David Lloyd states that it emerged among the mostly assimilated and predominantly secular Jewish communities of Central Europe though it was imbued with traditions of Messianism. Lloyd also indicates that Israel settler's colonialism put Palestine and Palestinian citizens into "present absentee situation". See David Lloyd, "Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception: The Example of Palestine/Israel", *Settler Colonial Studies*, 2 (1), 2012, 59-80, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648826, 61. See also Rachel Busbridge, "Israel-Palestine: Settler Colonial 'Turn': From Interpretation to Decolonisation", *Theory, Culture and Society*, (35) 1, 2017, 91-115, SAGE Journals, DOI: 10.1177/0263276416688544; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 4.

[192] Ahdaf Soueif and Omar Robert Hamilton, *This Is Not A Border, Reportage and Reflection From the Palestive Festival of Literature*, Bloomsbury, London 2017, 23. In *This is Not a Border*, like in *Memoir of a City*, Soueif transliterates Arabic words with the Latin script using the blogger's language and ḥ appears as 7.

[193] Al-Masjid al-Aqsa means "the Farthest Mosque" in Arabic.

[194] Omar ibn Khattab (584-644) is the second caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate (the first four major successive caliphs after the death of Prophet Muḥammed in 632). The Rashidun army besieges Jerusalem in 637 and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, surrenders in 638 and Jerusalem remains under Arab-Muslim control till the 11th century. It is said that Omar enters the city on foot and it is important to remind that after the Battle of Jerusalem in 1917, General Allenby also enters the city on foot. See Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 53-54; see also Norman Davies, *A History of Europe*, Pimlico, London 1996, 659; Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume I The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Cambridge University Press, USA 1995, 3-4. It is significant to note that François-René de Chateaubriand, who is regarded as the founder figure of French Romanticism, sees the Crusades as a Christian counterpart to Omar's arrival in Europe. See Said, *Orientalism*, 172.

Wall (also The Wall of Weeping) in the place which is today known as the Moroccan Quarter. In "Jerusalem", Soueif's focus is mainly on the gates of the Sacred Sanctuary of al-Aqsa and the al-Buraq Wall for her piece indeed tells the story of a failed entry to the al-Aqsa through the Moroccan Gate and the Cotton Merchant's Gate (Bab al-Qattaneen), which is considered one of the most beautiful gates of the Sanctuary.[195]

At the first Palestine Festival of Literature in 2008, Soueif wants her friends to see the Sanctuary and takes them to the Bab al-Qattaneen, but the Israeli soldiers do not give them entry claiming that Muslims will not permit non-Muslims (some of the visitors in the group are non-Muslim), though she notes this is not the case. The soldiers direct them to the Moroccan Gate and when they finally arrive at the Gate, they are not allowed again, this time by the Palestinian caretakers because, they say, this gate is used by Israeli settlers to enter the Sanctuary and they come with soldiers and subsequent trouble. No matter what they do, and although the Sanctuary is so close to them, they are denied. Here the focus is on the Arabic root "q/s/a" in an effect to speak out the paradoxical remoteness and the absence of the Sanctuary. At this moment, Soueif says that she weeps and again interrupts her narrative to narrate the *qissa* of the Prophet Muḥammed's Nocturnal Journey from al-Aqsa on *buraq*.[196] It is not difficult to connect, for this incident is very important in the history of Islam and makes al-Masjid al-Aqsa the third most important mosque in the history of Islam. On the other hand, through this story, Soueif explains that the two Arabic roots "b/r/q" and "b/k/a" are interestingly relevant to the history of the Wall of Weeping. Al-Buraq Wall is known in Islam as the special place from where Prophet Muḥammed made his miraculous journey to the Heaven and saw Allāh (*mushahada*) and Soueif states that the Arabic root "b/r/q" means "to appear for an instant, bright and shining" and "b/k/a" means "to weep" (29), and she weeps.

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[195] *Bab* means "door" or "gate" (also "gateway") in Arabic. There are sixteen gates to the Sacred Sanctuary of al-Aqsa, eleven of which are open today: Bab al-Asbat (The Tribe's Gate), Bab al-Hittah (The Gate of Remission), Bab al-Atim (The Gate of Darkness), Bab Ghawanimah (The Gate of Banu Ghanim), Bab al-Nadhir (The Inspector's Gate), Bab al-Hadid (The Iron Gate), Bab al-Matarah (The Ablution Gate), Bab al-Salaam (Tranquillity Gate), Bab al-Silsilah (The Chain Gate), Bab al-Magharibah (The Moroccan Gate) and Bab al-Qattaneen (Cotton Merchant's Gate). The closed gates are The Single Gate, The Triple/Huldah Gate, The Double Gate, The Funeral's Gate and The Golden Gate.

[196] Prophet Muḥammed's Nocturnal Journey is known as *mi'raj* in Islam; with the company of the archangel Gabriel and on *buraq*, he travels from Mecca to Jerusalem and then to the Seventh Heaven. Adamec 163.

It is important to note that, in his discussion of the interwar Islamic Orientalism, Edward Said indicates that Louis Massignon presents Islam, which he describes as the religion of Ishmael, as a religion of resistance to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and Judaism, which keeps within it the sadness that began in Hagar's tears. Curiously then, he describes the Arabic as the very language of tears.[197] What this signifies is strikingly demonstrated by Soueif when she carefully ties the two Arabic roots and shows how al-Buraq Wall becomes the Wall of Weeping. Soueif goes on to remark that the Moroccan Quarter in Jerusalem becomes home to the Muslim and Jewish refugees after the Fall of Granada in 1492 and Jewish residents grow a practice of praying and mourning by al-Buraq Wall which then takes the additional meaning with the Wall of Weeping. In 1535, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent[198] restores the walls of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa and gives order to his architects to clean al-Buraq Wall after learning that Jewish subjects pray at this wall believing it to be the remains of their temple destroyed in 70 by Titus.

The wall along with other buildings belongs to a *waqf*, but the Jewish people's right to pray there is protected in law. However, Israel bulldozes everything in 1967 that belong to the *waqf* and builds on the ruins a Wailing Wall Plaza where only Jews could weep. Soueif indicates that this substitution is *iḥlal* and she returns to Omar's triumphant entry to Jerusalem and inserts another *qissa* into the narrative. Omar enters Jerusalem al-Quds on foot and the Patriarch of the city, Sophronius, invites him to pray at the beautiful Church of the Sepulcher, but he kindly declines the invitation. He cleans a space at the ruined wall where Prophet Muḥammed left al-Buraq seventeen years ago and kneels and prays. Briefly summarised though, after Omar's prayer, this sacred place becomes al-Masjid al-Aqsa. On the other hand, Omar's respectful entry obviously and sadly shows that Israel denies the multiple narratives of Jerusalem and destroys Palestinian lives, history and demography.

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[197] Said, *Orientalism*, 268. Hagar (Hajar) in Islam is the Egyptian and slave wife (or concubine) of the Islamic prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) and the mother of his son Ishmael (Ismā'īl), ancestor to the Prophet Muḥammed. See Adamec, 114, 279. As narrated in the *Qur'ān*, Abraham abandons Hagar and Ishmael in the desert and they discover *zamzam* (sacred well in Ka'aba). Hagar runs between hills in search for water which constitutes a part of *hajj* rituals. The story of Hagar and Abraham is very important in the Islamic understanding of devotion to God.

[198] Also Kanunî (The Lawmaker) Sultan Suleyman (1494-1566), the 10th and the longest-reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

By implication, Soueif ends the narrative with another Arabic root "r/b/t" meaning "to tie" and thus "*rabata nafsahu"*: "to tie oneself to a place and a pledge", and "*murabitoun*"*:* the Palestinian caretakers who live on the porous walls of the Sanctuary and pledged themselves to protect al-Aqsa (32). These people are both inside and outside the place like Soueif and her friends who are denied entry on the threshold to the Sanctuary. The reader can find an immediate analogy; Edward Said, the exiled Palestinian who says that violence, fanaticism and the killing of the Jews are synonymous with Palestinians,[199] is out of place everywhere he goes and Soueif witnesses a deadly struggle for independence inside the very place.[200] Perhaps they are both out of and inside the place, and the subsequent chapter follows an introduction to Edward Said's colonial discourse analysis to better understand Ahdaf Soueif's fictional and non-fictional writing.

[199] Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 11.
[200] Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir* impinges upon questions related to home, identity and the pleasures of exile.

SECOND CHAPTER

POST-COLONIALISM: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

2.1. DEFINITIONS AND THEORY

Post-Colonialism discusses the writings of and against the idea of the Empire and looks historically at the imaginative acts and material legacies of Western colonialism and imperialism, more specifically, the cultural, administrative, economic, geographic and the imperialist attitude of the Western empires to non-European people.[201] As it is known, colonialism has had deep economic, psychological and political effects on the lives of more than three quarters of the people in the world and it emerged from and has its roots in political, ethical and psychological concerns.[202] The Post-Colonial Critique addresses with due attention the history of colonialism and the anti-colonial liberation struggles which appear repeatedly in the cultural and artistic productions of the colonised and decolonising people and migrants though it is now a critical truism that there can never be an after or post to colonialism. Post-Colonialism is also specifically concerned with the cultural productions of the Empire and it is clarifying to make a distinction between the colonial, colonialist and post-colonial literatures following the insightful discussions of Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures, Migrant Metaphors*. On the other hand, it is also significant to note that the discursive practices of imperialism and colonialism are vast and global and this critical introduction is restricted to the British Empire.

In its loosest form, colonial literature can be described as the writings of colonised people and is largely concerned with the idea and the image of the Empire. However, metropolitan writings about home, the domestic novels of Jane Austen for example, or *Dombey and Son* and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, can also be classified as

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[201] See McLeod 15.

[202] See Amal Treacher, "Edward Said: Identity, politics and history", *Psychodynamic Practice*, 11 (4), 2005, 373-388, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/14753630500387265, 376. Edward Said states that European powers controlled fifteen per cent of the earth's surface in 1914 and in the period between 1878 to 1914 the outlying territories and the people were included within direct European domination at an annual rate of 240,000 square miles. See Edward Said, "Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World", *Salmagundi*, 70 (71), 1986, 44-64, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40547786, 44.

colonial literature. There might not be a direct reference to imperialist acts in these novels, but as Edward Said observes, they are not about colonialism, but *of* it.[203] The colonialist writing, on the other hand, includes emphasised notions about colonialism, imperial domination and expansion.[204] It strengthens, values and maintains the connection and the satellite relationship of the imperial centre with the distant colonised Other and is deeply informed by the essential superiority and rightness of the West. As will be seen, it is challenging to define Post-Colonial Literatures and, geographically limited though, the cultural productions in English of Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Malta, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and South Pacific Island countries among others are known as Post-Colonial Literatures and South Africa, Australia and Canada are also included in this category as white or settler colonies.[205] On the other hand, it is important to recognise that the place of Ireland in Post-Colonial Literatures is deeply controversial. The imaginative perceptions of the colonised and decolonising nations have effectively been elaborated and contested in what is known to be Post-Colonial Literatures and, though put simplistically, the most vigorous debates of the formerly colonised people centre on the departure of the Empire, formal independence and liberation which, as Frantz Fanon forthrightly reflects in his writings, does not come naturally and easily after independence because a cultural shift is necessary from nationalist independence to "the theoretical domain of liberation".[206] It is important to note that independence and liberation are distinct and different conditions and they cannot be used interchangeably in the Post-Colonial Critique.

Post-Colonial Literatures have been known and named also as new or transcultural writing, world fiction and Commonwealth Literature, and as the naming itself displays,

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[203] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 89; Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 11.
[204] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 2-3.
[205] Linda Hutcheon states that settler-invader colonies have a different kind of historical narrative (of witnessing) than subjugated colonies, mostly because of the fact that they had no experience of a specific traumatic cultural break with the imposition of the Empire. See Linda Hutcheon, "*Orientalism* as Post-Imperial Witnessing", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (91-106), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 93.
[206] Pal Ahluwalia, "On Late Style, Edward Said's Humanism", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (150-163), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 152.

they point to a reorientation of English Literature as literatures in English.[207] Unquestionably, Post-Colonial Literatures are directly concerned with the problem of writing in the imperial language, and sometimes under imperial licence, and explore the appropriation and abrogation of English.[208] In an engaged way, a new understanding of the imperial language emerges with significant reformulations such as english, pidgin English, or Hinglish among others. It is important to note that the control of language was very important for domination especially during high imperialism (1870-1914) when the English of the south-east England was affirmed and reinforced as the standard language.[209] Similarly, the canonised cultural products of the Empire were imposed as the standard of value and taste and the idea of an alleged universality was maintained through the literature and the culture of the Empire with its Eurocentric misinterpretations and hierarchized representations. Also, it should be noted that, although written in the imperial language, early post-colonial writings were infinitesimally reduced by the West as local, subordinate, national and peripheral.

On the basis of what has been discussed up till now, it should not be understood that the colonial, colonialist and post-colonial writings merely emerged following one another. On the contrary, it is important to see that they overlapped because resistance against imperialism and colonialism was nearly everywhere after the imperial encounter.[210] Relatedly, as pointed out earlier, it will be the understanding of this study that the hyphenated term post-colonial refuses the idealistic understanding of colonialism moving through the linear stage of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. However, as underlined before, it is helpful to see that there has been disagreement over the use of the term and its hyphenation,[211] and it is safe to suggest that there is not one Post-Colonialism

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[207] See McLeod 19-22; see also Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffits, Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, Routledge, Oxford 2013, 58-61.

[208] Abrogation is the rejection of a normative concept of a standard English and appropriation describes the processes of the adaptation of the standard English. Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 3-4, 19; for catachresis see 41. See also Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 38.

[209] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 7.

[210] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xii.

[211] See Patrick Williams, "Nothing in the Post? – Said and the Problem of Post-Colonial Intellectuals", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (31-56), Nova Science Publishers,

and that it should not be homogenised for, as John McLeod demonstrates, the term has a history.[212]

After Boehmer's illuminating explanations considering colonial, colonialist and post-colonial literatures, it will now be easy to look more intensely into the Post-Colonial Critique. As a theoretical practice, Post-Colonialism is a critical tool that deconstructs the European imperial discourse which maintains an image of the West as the metropolitan and moral centre and it criticises the never or very rarely questioned rightness of the Empire, its unchallenged coherence and the projected inferiority of the non-European Other. As aforesaid and related to this, Post-Colonialism also forcefully discusses nationalist literatures of the Empire as institutions of power and their discursive consistency and coherence –basically the "semiotic field" which stands for discourses and texts.[213] In most general terms, the Post-Colonial Critique is precisely concerned with the representations and classifications of the racial Other; questions about colonialism that began with the occupation of the land and imperialism that has continued after formal independence; the self-confirming, self-deluding, paternalistic and patriarchal arrogance of European nations; static, essential and pure notions about identity; the legitimising, narrative and fictional histories of the West and historical writing and historiography; the stability of established canons and canonical exclusions; and more distinctly with *Orientalism*, the paraphrasable imperial content that is repeated, maintained, consolidated and copied in and through learned discourses and the interpellation of culture by the Empire.

In an attempt to recognise and challenge this, Post-Colonialism questions the enormously complex category of European Literature and analyses how language and literature are politically and culturally informed and "called into the service of a profound

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Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 35; see also Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 144; John Erickson, *Islam and Postcolonial Narrative*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, 4-6.

[212] McLeod 15; see also Young 156-157; Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 207.

[213] Meer 506. It should be parenthetically noted that the study of national literatures is also the concern of Western Marxism. Influential Marxist critic Terry Eagleton argues that capitalist states directly fund Humanities departments, and departments of higher education are ideological state apparatuses. He remarks that canonicity and "the unquestioned 'great tradition' of national literature [have] to be recognised as a construct, fashioned by particular people for particular reasons at a certain time". Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2008, 23, 187; see also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 53.

and embracing nationalism".[214] As aforesaid, imperial education instils standard English as the norm and accordingly Post-Colonial Literatures and colonial variants of English are underestimated as impure, contaminated, marginal and lesser. Post-Colonialism therefore proposes the assumption that language carries, signifies and preserves the power of the Empire and that it should be (and has been) appropriated or abrogated. As brilliantly demonstrated in *The Empire Writes Back*, the Post-Colonial Critique attempts to show that English, the standard code, is countered with e*nglish*, the linguistic code and this way the isolation of English from its marginal variants of e*nglish* can then be questioned.[215] The distinction between English and *english* effectively deconstructs the language of the Empire, the homogeneous, powerful and pure centre, and therefore it is easy to see that language is unsurprisingly a contested issue for the post-colonial writer and the critic. However and interestingly, it has to be recognised that some early post-colonial writers might be more English than English (like Henry James) and that Post-Colonial Literatures are not always diametrically opposed to the Empire.[216]

Mainly, Post-Colonial Studies show that the Empire constitutes itself in opposing cultural pairs and affirms its domination through cultural hegemony which is hysterically concerned with imagined purities and has an untouchable positivity. In an important way, Post-Colonial Studies proposes critical readings of Western imperialism as a discursively constituted and maintained grand narrative and points to the imprint (and the taint) of the Empire on the formerly colonised people, decolonising nations, migrants in the West and the coloniser and his culture. Similarly, the Post-Colonial Critique illuminatingly discusses overlapping and intertwined histories and the contradictory memories of the coloniser and the colonised and expresses a powerful refusal of the idea that the colonised Other does not have a history. Importantly, Post-Colonialism reflects that the colonised Other is a historical agent and points to the significance of revisionist history writing and historical rereading for the colonised nations. In a similar way, it is seen that displacement, occupation and the inevitable effects of the physical and cultural dislocation of the

[214] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 3.
[215] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 8.
[216] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 4.

colonised people after the imperial encounter are seriously confronted in Post-Colonial Literatures and continue to be important and growing issues of concern in Post-Colonial Criticism which emphasises the importance of space and geography. In that respect, the Post-Colonial Critique demonstrates that dislocation, forced migration and transportation erase the sense of agency of the colonised self and it further shows that the discursive power of the Empire minimises and oppresses native cultures to maintain its unchallenged superiority and purity also through what Edward Said calls geographical appetite.[217]

In brief, it is important to see that Post-Colonial Theory discusses a number of ways to engage with Western imperialism and introduces new critical and liberating models of analyses. This is reflected also in its investigation not only of consciously produced colonialist literary works, but also journalistic writing, anthropological theories, law reports, historiography, foreign policy, media representations, critical theory and travel writing that might reveal an unequivocal and clear colonialist and imperial voice.[218] It is thus crucial to perceive that Post-Colonial Literary and Cultural Theory emerges as an effective way of criticising the unquestioned superiority and universality of the dominating and imperialist culture of the West. Post-Colonialism opens up a space for alternative voices and epistemologies and stresses a powerful discourse analysis that reveals and uncovers the ambivalences at European imperialism's monocentric construction of itself. It is also explicitly engaged with the philosophies of Empire and the Enlightenment – especially the "imperial sciences" that affirm "the superlative values of the white (i.e., English) civilization" and its complex structures of knowledge and power.[219] It is important to note however that, as Elleke Boehmer emphasises in an article on Post-Colonialism as neo-Orientalism, post-colonial forms of criticism appear to have inherited unexamined categories of the past and reiterate, "certainly in their journalistic manifestations", its

[217] See Ahluwalia, "The Evolution of Orientalism and Africanist Political Science", 133 for European planetary consciousness in the theory of Marie Louise Pratt.
[218] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 5.
[219] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 121; David Gilmartin, "Scientific Empire and Imperial Science: Colonialism and Irrigation Technology in Indus Basin", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 54 (4), 1994, 1127-1149, JSTOR, Accessed: 03-09-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2059236, 1127; See Young, *Colonial Desire*.

objectifications of otherness despite its anti-colonial agenda and intersection with other liberating theories such as Feminism and minority discourses.[220]

There is more to be noted, but another substantial amount of criticism will now be considered with Edward Said. Although it bears repeating, it is no exaggeration to interpret that the Post-Colonial Critique has developed after the thoroughgoing analyses of Edward Said, especially after the publication of *Orientalism* and, in this context, his discussions of colonialism, Orientalism and the post-imperial culture will establish the parameters of this study. It is more exact to say that the writings of Edward Said have had paradigmatic power in every post-colonial critique and it is important too that the limitations of his suggestions also enriched Post-Colonialism. For that reason, this study also involves a consideration of it and looks into the contested issues of gender, essentialism and Marxism in Said's critique while interpreting Soueif's fiction.

The writings of Edward Said have had a lasting influence on the Post-Colonial Critique and extensively widened the implications of theory, and it should be stated that this study is also deeply informed by the concept of colonial desire of Robert Young and Homi Bhabha's understanding of hybridity. It also looks at the brilliant formulations of Gayatri Spivak, especially the strategic use of positivist essentialism. As suggested before, Post-Colonial Critique emphasises and celebrates multi-vocality with its diverse applications and particularly demonstrates this through self-criticism. With this in mind, the discussions in this chapter will centre on the Islamic Orient stressing what Amin Malak calls the discursive lacunae of Post-Colonialism, which is powerfully contested with the scholarly publications on Arab Muslim novelists. Primarily, criticism will be directed to analysing the discursive practices of British imperialism mostly and especially in the Arab Near East and it is important to note that considering the limits of this research this critical introduction is narrowed down for the purposes of this study.

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[220] Elleke Boehmer, "Post-Colonialism as Neo-Orientalism: Sarojini Naidu and Arundhati Roy", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (145-157), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 148.

2.2. COLONIAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND EDWARD SAID

An important intellectual and spiritual continuity with *nasab* and genealogy is established between Edward Said and Ahdaf Soueif at the start of this study and this section will offer a deepened insight into Said's critical ideas to comment on Ahdaf Soueif's fiction. Undoubtedly, Said's critique of colonialism and imperialism as the textual and administrative attitude of the West to non-European nations and his powerful statement of Western culture as imperialism have made him one of the most widely known and controversial public intellectuals of the 20th and 21st centuries.[221] Interestingly, Leslie G. Roman describes Said as "a relatively privileged diasporic exile" and remarks that his understandings of critical humanism and worldliness as "being both in the world and of the world" generated intensive discussions that are highly important in understanding post-Cold War and 9/11 discourses.[222] As Ashcroft and Ahluwalia state, the crucial fact about Edward Said is that "[t]o historians he is unhistorical; to social scientists he conflates theories; to scholars he is unscholarly; to literary theorists he is unreflective and indiscriminate", and much more interestingly, "to Foucaultians [sic] he misuses Foucault; to professional Marxists he is anti-revolutionary; to professional conservatives he is a terrorist. Twenty years of responses to Orientalism have tended to reveal what lies in wait for the 'amateur' public intellectual".[223]

It should first be stated that as a celebrity intellectual and a professor of English and comparative literatures, Said fiercely criticises in all of his writings the legacies of Western

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[221] It is predictable that Said became such an important and famous scholar also because of his Palestine activism and severe criticism of the US foreign policy regarding the Middle East. See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 1; Paul B. Armstrong, "Being "Out of Place": Edward Said and the Contradictions of Cultural Differences", *Modern Language Quarterly*, 64 (1), 2003, 97-121, Project MUSE, Accessed: 03-09-2015, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/39486, 97.

[222] Leslie G. Roman, "This Earthly World: Edward Said, the praxis of secular humanisms and situated cosmopolitanisms", *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 27 (3), 2006, 357-368, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/01596300600838827, 357-360.

[223] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 70. Bart Moore-Gilbert indicates that after the publication of *Culture and Imperialism*, Said's amateurism was fiercely criticised by Ernest Gellner, professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. The argument was that "Said was straying into academic fields not proper to the literary critic and claiming competence on issues which were, in fact, beyond his jurisdiction". Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory, Context, Practices, Politics*, Verso, London, New York 2000, 13.

imperialism in contemporary history, culture, literature and politics and consistently questions the unending effects of colonialism in all areas of imaginative production. First of all, it is important to recognise that Said departs from the early Marxist critique of colonialism and imperialism as material practices and instead emphasises discourse analysis. As this might suggest, he proposes a powerful criticism of Orientalism as a learned and overdetermined discourse[224] in the West and about the West and points to another highly important critique with culture as imperialism. In that respect, it can be argued that Said's criticism offers correctives to early anti-colonial criticism, though it has limitations of its own.[225]

It is interesting to note that Waïl Hassan comments on Said's characteristic point of departure from earlier critics such as Frantz Fanon and Aijaz Ahmad, with Said's phrases, as the "methodological privilege of textuality", and after examining the links between post-colonial Marxist critics and Said, he contends that unlike them Said is engaged with discourse analysis and a persistent concern with textuality remains crucial in his overall understanding.[226] It should be stressed that the world, the text and the critic is the secular trinity that Said embraces and textuality is the exact anti-thesis of history because, as Ashcroft indicates, it takes place, although it does not take place anywhere or anytime in particular.[227] It should be emphasised that the word text is not limited to book and that literature is not an inert structure; it is an act located in the world.[228] As Ashcroft more

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[224] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 53.
[225] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 2.
[226] Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 48. As Ashcroft and Ahluwalia indicate, Said occasionally questions criticism's retreat into "the labyrinth of textuality". Similarly, Rebecca Saunders points to "Said's categorical denunciation of what he termed 'textuality'" and indicates that Said turns away from "the hermetic and disembedded form of criticism practised by certain deconstructive critics". Hassan and Saunders' views are grounded in an awareness of Said's worldliness and affiliation and it can be argued that Said significantly recognises the power of discursive practices and thickly sets his arguments around discussions of affiliation and textuality. See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 30; McCarthy 94; Rebecca Saunders, "Risky Business: Edward Said as a Literary Critic", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25 (3), 2005, 522-532, Project MUSE, Accessed: 21-11-2015, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/193160, 522; McLeod 27; Karlis Racevskis, "Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances", *Research in African Literatures*, 36 (3, Edward Said, Africa and Cultural Criticism), 2005, 83-97, JSTOR, Accessed: 04-05-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3821365, 85.
[227] Bill Ashcroft, "Worldliness", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (73-89), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 76.
[228] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 15-18.

clearly states, "to treat the text merely as a structure of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic, say, is to divorce the text, which is a cultural production, a cultural *act*, from the relations of power within which it is produced" and by the text he means speech and pictures and all forms of text.[229] It can be argued that Said offers a theory dependent on textuality, political actualities and worldliness and it is possible to advance the argument that he questions Post-structuralist and Deconstructive Criticism mostly because of the lack of resistance in their analyses, which he sees as the obvious outcome of an insistence on textuality but not worldliness, or on the text's formal operations. In an important sense, Pal Ahluwalia states that Said's insistence on the worldliness of the text is extraordinarily prescient "in what has often been termed a post-poststructuralist generation".[230]

Said's insistence on textuality is critically important to understand worldliness and he says that there are two meanings inherent in worldliness. The first is the idea of being in the secular world as opposed to being otherworldly and the second is "the quality of a practiced, slightly jaded savoir faire, worldly wise and street smart".[231] It is important to note that, as Bill Ashcroft stresses, worldliness underlines the overall idea in *Orientalism* and "represents a view of the text, of the material situation of writing, of the *location* of literature, which will outlast the poststructuralist anxiety which often haunts contemporary critical practice".[232] As Ashcroft sees it, worldliness is Said's most post-colonial contribution to textual analysis and the worldliness of the critic is as fundamental as the worldliness of the text and it extensively informs Said's understanding of contrapuntal reading and of the role of the secular intellectual speaking truth to power. Examining textuality, Said consistently criticises Post-structuralism and other critical fields because, he suggests, they ignore worldliness while at the same time passionately emphasising specialised knowledge (academic professionalism) which for him is not liberating and extremely restrictive.[233] On the other hand, there is a good deal of supporting citation that Said criticises Western Marxism, Deconstruction and what he calls poststructuralist science

[229] Ashcroft 74-79. Emphasis in the original.
[230] Ahluwalia, "The Evolution of Orientalism and Africanist Political Science", 129.
[231] Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 212.
[232] Ashcroft 74. Emphasis in the original.
[233] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 7; see also Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 102.

though, roughly speaking, he greatly experiments with them. It is clearly seen that Said reconstructs an alternative criticism drawing on yet differing from especially Post-structuralism and similar strands of thought.[234]

It can be argued that Said's criticism functions both inside and outside Post-structuralism and, unlike in deconstructive theory, his readers increasingly recognise the ease with which he can be read. It is true that his writings have a quality of readerliness compared to Spivak and Bhabha and this is definitely affirmed in his celebration of the amateur intellectual.[235] But particularly interesting is the fact that Said's criticism is full of, for example, Foucauldian vocabulary like archaeology, genealogy, archive, epistemic difference, regularity and discourse;[236] it is discursive and his worldliness reveals an elite Western education or over Westernisation[237] that can also be seen in his love of classical music. Born in Jerusalem, spending most of his childhood and adolescence in Zamalek, a rich district of Cairo, holidaying in Palestine and Lebanon, and studying in prominent US universities, Said definitely had a privileged life[238] and the same can be argued for Soueif.

However, Said criticises the critical, literary, philosophical and scientific scholarships of Europe, mostly France and England and the United States and interprets their colonial, imperial and post-imperial histories with a textual emphasis. It is further true that his references are mostly Gramsci and Foucault, and interestingly, as deftly demonstrated by many critics, while criticising Western Humanities, Said draws on the intellectual discourse of the West.[239] In this sense, as has been intensely discussed by post-colonial critics, it should be stated that the Holy Trinity of colonial discourse analysis, Said, Bhabha and

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[234] See Ahluwalia 151.
[235] See McLeod 39.
[236] See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory, Classes, Nations, Literatures*, Verso, London 2000, 164.
[237] See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 6, 38; see also Rubén Chuaqui and نيبور يحوش, "Notes on Edward Said's View of Michel Foucault", *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 25 (Edward Said and Critical Decolonization), 2005, 89-119, JSTOR, Accessed: 04-05-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4047453, 98-105; Farris 276.
[238] See Treacher 378.
[239] For a critique of humanities and neutrality see Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, 19-20. A key thing to remember here is that, as Stephen Howe suggests, Foucault and Gramsci were two major inspirations for Said, though they were incompatible critical figures. See Howe 65. Timothy Brennan notes that Gramsci and Raymond Williams moved Said elsewhere, "further toward the more deliberately materialist categories of *Culture and Imperialism*". Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 564.

Spivak, rely heavily on the anti-humanist critique of metaphysics in Western thought and firmly anchor their criticism in the works of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida among others.[240] However, it is possible to argue that their writings appear largely as what Ali Rattansi describes "reverse-Eurocentrism", although they ironically and involuntarily became part of the process that they criticised and analysed.[241]

In most general terms, Said's criticism demonstrates the dangerously totalising attitude in Western thinking, especially the Orientalist discourse in late 18th, 19th and 20th century Europe. While considering the cultural slaughter of imperialism and colonialism in a textual environment, Said also sadly points to the virtual absence of a criticism of Empire in the very modern critical and philosophical works that question Western notions of universality and power. In an unrelenting attempt, he insightfully shows that cultural imperialism is inevitably everywhere in the intellectual thought of West (though this is heavily essentialist) and also in the supposedly liberating discourse of post-Enlightenment thinking, and sometimes even in the counter-discourse against the West. He therefore indicates that critical and theoretical praxes mostly ignore "the determining, political horizon of modern Western culture, namely imperialism".[242]

He also describes rather exactly how the discourse of imperialism maintained a form of continuity between generations of European academics, creative writers and officers, that he at times describes as textual children, and achieved another destructive impact on the non-European Other. At its core, Saidian critique demonstrates that narrative and

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[240] Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 562. See Ahmad, 164.

[241] Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 51; Rattansi 495; for "Orientalism in reverse" see Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 80. Timothy Brennan argues that Said is paradoxically drawn to "the effete literary appreciation of the aristocratic amateur" which might indicate that his writings merge the intellectual's confident ease with the popular instinct in a style that is associated with "the turn of the clerical Latin to the vernaculars in traditional European philology". It should be noted that Timothy Brennan is especially interested in the shift of the locational (filiation) to the positional (affiliation) in Said's writings and his point of reference is *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), Said's first critical work. Here Brennan also underlines Said's in-betweenness and exteriority as an intellectual and it will be a central focus in discussions of Soueif's fiction. It can thus be clearly acknowledged that Said's writings are performative of what he himself calls worldliness especially when he expands on the worldliness of Orientalist texts. Also, with amateurism, he undoubtedly changes the terms of being an intellectual. Brennan, "Edward Said and Comparative Literature", 26. Also see Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 6, 18, 22, 38, 48, 64, 76, 84.

[242] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 70.

textuality play an important part in the imperial quest and domination and he describes this complex relationship through a new understanding with interesting concepts such as filiation and affiliation, manifest and latent Orientalism, imagined geographies, consolidated vision and worldliness. Said closely and carefully contextualises the discourse of the West on the imagined (Islamic) Orient and this study now intends to reflect on his nuanced engagement with the acts of the Empire in *Orientalism*.

2.2.1. The Imagined Islamic Orient: Said's *Orientalism*

"… the Orient is an idea that has a history…"
Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 5

Orientalism (1978) occupies a core position in the Post-Colonial Critique and has opened up a fruitful field of analysis, though with sometimes contradicting concerns.[243] It generated fierce criticism on first publication and made Edward Said a controversial figure. Interestingly, after this excellent book, Said was put outside the mainstream, but it can be argued that this is his characteristic position as a secular intellectual.[244] Accordingly, in *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said talks about the intellectual as outsider, amateur and the disturber of the status quo who is of his time and says that he rationalises the virtues of outsiderhood.[245] It is important to note also that *Orientalism* was written nearly ten years after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War (1954-1975),

[243] See Greg Dimitriadis, "On the Production of Expert Knowledge: Revisiting Edward Said's Works on the Intellectual", *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27 (3), 2006, 369-382, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/01596300600838835, 372.
[244] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 75.
[245] Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 10, 40, 132. The fact that Mustapha Marrouchi indicates about Said's milieu is extraordinarily relevant here. Marrouchi emphasises that it suited Said, as a rebel, to mediate between his two environments, at home and the outside world; one rough but supportive and the other civilised, mind-sharpening but callous. In this context, it is significant that "as with dissonant *milieux*, so it was with individuals; here, too, Said, when he writes, portrays himself as brokering an armistice between two parties who could never in reality get on". It is important to remember that Said's father, Wadie Ibrahim, had a Victorian design for his son and Marrouchi depicts his family as "a closed-off private corporation", "a foothold in several cultures, and an abiding home in none". See Mustapha Marrouchi, "The Site of Memory", "Edward Said and/versus Raymond Williams", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (159-186), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 162-167. Emphasis in the original. See also Edward W. Said, *Out of Place*: *A Memoir*, Granta Books, London 2000, 74, 179; Linda Anderson, "Autobiography and Exile: Edward Said's *Out of Place*", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (165-175), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 171.

which is very important in understanding Said's arguments.[246] Other than that, Said reveals and repeats his worldliness as a Western educated Arab-American in *Orientalism* and as he often states, there is a personal tinge in the composition of the book.[247] The idea behind *Orientalism* is to show that there is an unbridgeable gap between the existential experience of being an Arab and the literary and artistic representations of Arabness that have disseminated through Western culture and literature, which is discussed at some length in discussions of Soueif's *Mezzaterra*.[248] Undoubtedly, it is the construction of the Arab in late 1970s especially in the United States that stimulated Said's critique (and estranged him) together with the rising conflicts in the part of the world that he is from.[249]

In this work, Said questions the production and reproduction of Orientalist knowledge and texts by looking at imperialist sciences, and more importantly, emphasises the textuality and fictionality of history. Mainly, Said demonstrates that the Oriental is orientalised and the Orient is imagined by texts which give comparative ease and legitimation to the domination and administration of distant geographies and Oriental people, which Said describes as the operational successes of Orientalism. He states that Orientalist texts signify, carry and legitimise the imperial power of the West and are produced and reproduced, in a filiative and affiliative bond, by humanist scholars in

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[246] The Iranian Revolution in 1979 clearly affected the reception of the book. Pal Ahluwalia makes a connecting remark in his analysis of the generalisations in the representation of Islam and states that the Shah of Iran was seen as modernising and Westernising his people whereas the Revolution became a radiant symbol of Islam's fundamentalism. Ahluwalia, "The Evolution of Orientalism and Africanist Political Science", 139.

[247] Said, a Palestinian-American, was born in Mandatory Palestine (1920-1948) in 1935 and attended British schools in Jerusalem and Egypt before going to Mount Hermon in Massachusetts in 1951. In *Out of Place: A Memoir*, he states that his father became an American citizen after living in the US for a time and serving in the American Army during World War I. Said inherits citizenship from his father, but it is compulsory for him to spend at least five years in the States before turning twenty-one to become a citizen. Therefore, he is sent to America to attend Mount Hermon in the spring of 1951. See Said, *Out of Place*, 4-5, 166-167. See also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 2, 29; Ahmad, 161.

[248] See Said and Paul 32.

[249] Marino 762. It is important to note that the feeling of estrangement is known as *gurba* in Arabic which Said uses frequently in his writings. It should also be pointed out that, as Uzomo Esonwanne interestingly observes following Said's famous distinction between the Edward and Said binary of his life, "Edward" writes *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*, Said's doctoral project at Harvard, and another identity, possibly "Said" authors *Beginnings*, *The Question of Palestine*, *Culture and Imperialism* and *Orientalism*. Uzomo Esonwanne, "Critique and Extension: Said and Freud", *Research in African Literatures*, 36 (3: Edward Said, Africa, and Cultural Criticism), 2005, 98-111, JSTOR, Accessed: 04-05-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3821366, 107.

philological laboratories, by imaginative writers in fictional works and by scientists, anthropologists, philologists and colonial governors. These texts create and represent an imagined, created and orientalised Orient and the knowledge they present is transmitted, repeated and copied in a genealogical and citationary way through orientalist brotherhoods.[250] As Said shows, the textual attitude of the scholar creates generations of textual children and learned societies that speak for and represent the Orient because, as Karl Marx says and as Said cites in the opening of the book, they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.[251] It is clearly seen that, in his criticism of high imperialism and Orientalism, Said interweaves representation, citation and classification as the discursive tools of Western empires whose standards of value are imposed on Orientals and colonised people.[252] In *Orientalism*, Said intensely discusses the racialised, essential and negative images of Muslims and Islam in the West, which will henceforth be considered in this study, as he says in the *Representations of the Intellectual*, "American and British academic intellectuals speak reductively and […] irresponsibly of something called 'Islam'".[253]

It is important to emphasise that, when he interprets the orientalisation of the Orient, Said has an intelligently expressed concern for methodology in *Orientalism* and explains and problematises canonicity, textuality and the dissemination of knowledge through

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[250] For "white colonial brotherhood" see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 33.

[251] It should be noted that Marx originally made this comment about French peasants. See Howe 63; see also Ross Abbinnett, "Fellow Travellers and Homeless Souls, Said's Critical Marxism", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (91-102), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 91. It is important to note also that there is a slippage in Said's interpretation of representation in Marx's writing and Nicholas Harrison's commentary is helpful here. Harrison states that considering the French people, Marx says in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented", which in German is "Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werten" (20-21). Harrison notes that representation in the quotation is primarily in the political sense; representative democracy, but Said refers to it in other senses. Harrison also indicates that many of the uses of the verb "to represent" would not call for "vertreten", but for "darstellen", and he significantly emphasises that this slippage, and Said's "exploitation" of it, stem from Said's hesitation over the possibility of misrepresentation, a notion he inherits from Foucault. See Nicholas Harrison, "'A Roomy Place Full of Possibility' Said's *Orientalism* and the Literary", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (3-18), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 4. On the other hand, Aijaz Ahmad suggests that this is a Nietzschean, not a Foucauldian position. See also Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 335; Ahmad 185, 193-194.

[252] For imperial perceptions of race and imperial classifications of difference see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 77.

[253] Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 50.

power. It is important to remind however that Said does not have an overall theory and at times repeats his arguments with a dazzling plurality of subjects that make his style eclectic.[254] *Orientalism* might therefore appear confusing at first reading and Graham Huggan indicates that it has often been seen "flawed" and as one of Said's weakest efforts even though it is the most influential among his publications.[255] The most important thing to state about Said's differing methodology is that although his focus is on essentialism in Western thinking, he has been found essentialist, especially about gender and class dynamics.[256] This returns us to the fact that *Orientalism* has stimulated a lot of criticism and opened up new ways in its occlusions.

Another interesting thing is that, as seen in the context of the book, the publication of *Orientalism* attests that the centuries long turmoil in the part of the world that Said is from called for, in his words, urgent worldly references and he indicates that the supreme fictions which constructed the Orient, Arabs, Islam and the West with a collective fashion and ontological stability had never become more evident when he started writing his book. Still, Said asserts that the situation is better in Europe than the United States, for as he shows, Washington often speaks about changing the map of the Orient. This is indeed what has happened with the Orient, the semi-mythical construct, that is made and re-made.[257] Said indicates that the histories, languages and cultures of Oriental people are put aside and ignored, to use Foucauldian vocabulary, as subjugated knowledges[258] and history is made by the human subject with silences, elisions and disfigurements just as it can be unmade or rewritten.

Undoubtedly, Said's immediate concern is Foucault's notion of discourse and it is necessary to examine his understanding of the will to power and the will to know to talk

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[254] See Rizvi and Lingard 294.
[255] Aijaz Ahmad states that *Orientalism* is a deeply flawed book. Ahmad 161. See Graham Huggan, "(Not) Reading "Orientalism"", *Research in African Literatures*, 36 (3, Edward Said, Africa and Cultural Criticism), 2005, 124-136, JSTOR, Accessed: 03-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3821368, 124. See also Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 48.
[256] See Rizvi and Lingard 297; Susanne Zantop, "Europe's Occidentialisms", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (107-126), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 109.
[257] Marino 766.
[258] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 293.

about the imagined Orient.[259] Said emphasises that there is a difference between knowledge which is produced as the outcome of a careful study and understanding, the products of the will to understand, and the knowledge which carries self-affirmation of power and hostility toward other peoples, that is generated by the will to power. It should be noted that Said mainly discusses Western colonial and imperial discourse and its representations of the Orient and his aim is not to comment on the Orient as a real entity. He also does not construct an alternative real Orient opposed to the imagined Orient (of the orientalist discourse), and a real Islamic world.[260] At some point in the book, Said says, "it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality",[261] but he often states that his criticism is directed to the Western empires and not to the Orient itself.

Said's insight is that the will to understand greatly differs from the will to dominate and it is the will to dominate that constructs the Orient. As a construct, the Orient is imagined and created and therefore not real.[262] Relatedly, as Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also indicate, the discourse of Orientalism constructs and dominates the Orient and the Oriental people in the process of knowing them.[263] So for Said, it is doubtless significant that the imagined Orient is made and re-made and therefore it is not a real entity. A closer reading will show that Said's focus is the imagined Orient and the representations of it in Western imperial discourse, but not the questioning of a real Orient. It should be added however that some critics find a tension between the materiality of experience and the constructedness of identity in Said's writings. Denis Porter criticises Edward Said because of his assumptions about an implied real Orient whereas Aijaz Ahmad indicates that Said is not invoking an

[259] It should be noted that Said's amateur intellectual speaks truth to power. See Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 16; see also Ashcroft 83-84.
[260] See Said and Paul 33.
[261] Said, *Orientalism*, 5. Emphasis in the original.
[262] Said, *Orientalism*, xix.
[263] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 54.

Orient that is real enough.[264] Robert Young suggests that this is the most disputed aspect of Said's thesis and is the most difficult to accept for critics.[265]

Said's statements about textuality and the will to power present a breaking point from early anti-colonial critique and he contends in *Orientalism* that *Description de l'Égypte* and the textual attitude of Napoleon with his army of Orientalist scholars, have decisively transformed the Western understanding of the Orient.[266] It can be argued that this is the reason Said begins questionings the orientalist discourse with Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1798, which also recurs with intensity in Soueif's fiction. Said emphasises that imperialism never ended since the French Campaign and an epistemological mutation is necessary to understand what imperialism and Orientalism have done and continue to do to lesser people generations after generations. For this, Said's aim is to use humanistic critique to create fields of struggle and to introduce a new critical and secular thought, as he indicates, "to use one's mind historically for the purposes of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure".[267] But Said's general point goes beyond that and he says that "the archival dignity, institutional authority, and patriarchal longevity of Orientalism should be taken seriously because in the aggregate these traits function as a world view with considerable political force not easily brushed away as so much epistemology".[268]

With his emphasis on textuality and worldliness, Said shows that nothing can be pure and unaffected in the world and there can be no such thing as an isolated humanist because one cannot be free of ideologies, pre-occupations and preconceptions.[269] As Said reflects elsewhere "there is no discipline, no structure of knowledge, no institution, or epistemology that can or has ever stood free of the various socio-cultural, historical, and political formations that gave epochs their particular individuality" which he describes as an

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[264] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 76; see Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 580; Brennan, "Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic: Modernism and Empire", 18.
[265] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 152.
[266] Ahluwalia and Ashcroft argue that the unparalleled productive capacity and power of *Orientalism* comes from its emphasis on textuality which invites the critical reader to reconsider Said's differing methodology. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 62.
[267] Said, *Orientalism*, xxii-xxiii.
[268] Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 210.
[269] See Treacher 377; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 21; Ahluwalia, "On Late Style, Edward Said's Humanism", 157.

"embroiling actuality".[270] It is therefore the moral responsibility of the scholars and intellectuals to diversify reductive assumptions that impose informed views on them and keep them away from concrete human history and experience. Said significantly states that imaginative structures, Orientalism for example, are "imaginative violence"[271] and ideological fictions and myths are retained and reproduced in them, for instance in the Orientalist archives of information, and circulated and maintained as truth. For Said, ideological fictions are the a priori of Orientalism and it is important to note that his appraisal of worldly humanism is important in understanding his theories.[272] It is clearly seen that Said underlines a critical secular position by examining the role of the intellectual which is a concept of significance across his writings and with secular criticism he means "a criticism freed from restraints of intellectual specialisation".[273] It is also important to note that the concern for worldliness underlines Said's identification with secular criticism and not Post-Colonialism.[274]

Said indicates that Europe always has a passion for the Orient which has always been a special place for it. It is an imagined place full of romance and haunting memories. It is adjacent to Europe and holds its greatest, richest and oldest colonies; it is the source of civilisations and languages, but it is also the cultural contestant of the imperial West and one of its most repeated images of Other. Over and above that, it defines the West for the West which Ross Abbinnett describes as the "exclusive conditions of cultural self-identification".[275] However, the Orient is not merely an envisaged construct and it is

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[270] Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 211.
[271] Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 561.
[272] It can be suggested that Said's insistence on humanism is similar to Sartre and Noam Chomsky's stance, and is antagonistic to the identity politics of nationalism. See Chuaqui and نيبور يحوش 93; R. Radhakrishnan, "Edward Said's Literary Humanism", *Cultural Critique*, 67 (Edward Said and After: Toward a New Humanism), 2005, 13-42, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2017 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4539818, 19. Pal Ahluwalia suggests that Said's humanism is the absolute division between the secular and the sacred. Ahluwalia, "On Late Style, Edward Said's Humanism", 155.
[273] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 15, see also 30-34, 40; Ashcroft 75.
[274] See Aamir R. Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism and the Question of Minority Culture", *Critical Inquiry*, 25 (1), 1998, 95-125, JSTOR, Accessed: 05-04-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344135, 95. It is important to add that Said was not alone in his disavowal of Post-Colonialism and Gayatri Spivak shared a similar hesitation, see Williams 32. On the other hand, Pal Ahluwalia suggests that Said moved from colonial discourse analysis to Post-Colonial Theory, see Ahluwalia, "The Evolution of Orientalism and Africanist Political Science", 140.
[275] Abbinnett, 100.

necessary for the civilisation, culture and economy of Europe, which connects Said's criticism to the operational successes of Orientalism and its materiality. As he shows historically, there is a recognisable link between the material civilisation of the West and Orientalism which he describes as a mode of discourse with its knowledge, supporting institutions, critical vocabulary, imagery, doctrines and humanistic scholarship legitimising and supported by imperial acts and culturally and ideologically expressing and representing the West for the West. But it is important to note that imperialism has had a long history and it is necessary to make distinctions between Franco-British and American and other forms of imperialisms. Here, Said's important insight is that American imperialism replicates European high imperialism and this continuity is very significant because the Orientalist discourse emerges out of it as an interdependent and generational narrative.[276]

By Orientalism, Said means an imperial and colonialist style of thought that forces an ontological distinction between an imagined Orient and the Occident. He demonstrates that many poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and administrators easily accepted and internalised this essential distinction and produced elaborate theories, social and cultural descriptions, classifications and political accounts about Oriental people, customs, destiny and minds.[277] Most importantly, Said argues that the late 18th century is the starting point of the Orientalist discourse both as an academic field and a corporate institution and its radical achievement is describing the Orient and teaching it to the European reader first and then ruling it afterwards. Orientalism, as he indicates, is a Western imperial form of domination, construction, restructure and having authority upon the Orient and is produced logically, militarily, ideologically, sociologically and imaginatively as a systematic discipline after the post-Enlightenment era.[278] Because of Orientalism, the Orient has not been and cannot be a free subject of thought and action.

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[276] For the important lack of German Orientalism in *Orientalism* see Sara R. Farris, "An 'Ideal Type' Called Orientalism", *Interventions*, 12 (2), 2010, 265-284, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2010.489701, 270.

[277] Radhakrishnan indicates that after the publication of *Orientalism*, Said was called by a government official in Washington D.C. and was asked for his help to understand the Arab mind and interesting is the fact that the request came from someone who had read the book the immediate concern of which is a sharp critique of statements such as the Arab mind. Radhakrishnan, "Edward Said's Literary Humanism", 14.

[278] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

But, Said is suggesting that Orientalism is not the unilateral form of knowledge to describe what can and cannot be said about the Orient. He rather demonstrates that European culture consciously replicates Orientalism and sets the Orient, in a network of interests, as its underground, or surrogate, unconscious, reverse and hidden self with "stereotyped images of threat and allure"; it is a repository of stereotypes.[279] In that respect, Orientalism appears to do two things; it defines the Orient for the West, but in doing this, it actually defines the West for the West[280] and legitimises its power and authority which comes through representation and knowledge, thus power, because as Sibel Bozdoğan points out, representation is an "affirmative project, its goal being to show rather than to let one see, to explain rather than to let one understand".[281]

Historically speaking, Said observes that France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism from the early 18th century till the end of World War II and the United States controlled and approached the Orient the same way since World War II. He shows that there emerges out of the imperial encounter and domination an extremely large and repetitive body of Orientalist texts and it is the different methodology of the Orientalist writings that makes Orientalism a discourse and a structure of thought. However, it is important to note that, as Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also suggest, Orientalism is an overdetermined discourse and its "tributaries of influence" change from country to country.[282] Britain had industrial dominance of overseas colonies and France had a post-revolutionary sense of national destiny. Also, there was a deep concern with the Teutonic community of blood in Germany that contributed to the ideological construction of Orientalism.[283] For that reason, Said suggests that although its tributaries of influence

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[279] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 22, 26, 78; Govand Khalid Azeez, "Beyond Edward Said: An Outlook on Postcolonialism and Middle Eastern Studies", *Social Epistemology*, 30 (5-6), 2016, 710-727, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/02691728.2016.1172360, 711. It is worthwhile to state that for Said every society has its Other and the Arabs had the Persians. See Said, "Identity, Authority, and Freedom: The Potentate and the Traveller", 12.
[280] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 65; see Zantop 108.
[281] Bozdoğan 39.
[282] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 52-53.
[283] See Farris 268.

change from country to country, Orientalism has been produced and reproduced the same way with historical generalisations and that "the Orient is an idea that has a history".[284]

In this regard, it is vividly seen that the Orientalist discourse produces the Orient as an imagined place and entity beyond any correspondence with and essentially without a real Orient. Relatedly, Bozdoğan describes Orientalist constructs as "institutionalized prestructure of perception, a discursive formation above and beyond individuals and to which Orientals are as much prone as Westerners" which makes Orientalist representations instrumental.[285] For example, as Said shows with Benjamin Disraeli, East is a career for the Europeans and the most significant thing about Orientalism as a created consistency is that the Orientalist does not perceive it as a thing-in-itself. Therefore, Said indicates that the Orient is orientalised, but it is not found to be oriental. It is orientalised because it can be made oriental.[286]

Said shows that Orientalism has unchallenged centrality and remains unchanged as teachable wisdom in Western academe, especially in the human sciences, from Ernest Renan (1823-1892) in the late 1840s until present time with the United States. He suggests that it is "a created body of theory and practice" and a "material investment" of generations after generations that repeats, copies and multiplies itself and grows to be the general culture and the idea of Europe.[287] Said's assertion is that European culture operates as imperialism and Orientalism defines the West and the Orient in hegemonic terms.[288] Orientalist discourse strengthens the image of a superior Europe and an Orient backward in economic and civilisational terms. More importantly, Said emphasises the racial characteristic of European civilisation while talking about the positional superiority of the West and remarks that Orientalism defines the Orient not simply by allegedly empirical reality but by repressions, investments and projections.[289] In a Foucauldian understanding,

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[284] Said, *Orientalism*, 5; McLeod 40.
[285] Bozdoğan 44.
[286] Said, *Orientalism*, 5-6. Said cites Benjamin Disraeli at the opening of *Orientalism.* In *Tancred; or, The New Crusade* Benjamin Disraeli says, "The East is a career".
[287] Said, *Orientalism*, 6-7.
[288] Interestingly, R. Radhakrishnan states that "Orientalist knowledges are dominant not hegemonic", see Radhakrishnan, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism:* A Symposium", 17.
[289] See Young, *Colonial Desire*, 29-34.

he shows that the knowledge of the Orient in the late 18th century created a complex Orient for academic study, "for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, historical theses about mankind and the universe", for economic and sociological theories of development, for revolution and national and religious character and cultural personality.[290] This imagined Orient is built out of a complex but related set of productions based on a sovereign Western consciousness and its unchallenged centrality.

As suggested before, Said's criticism of Orientalism is refined through a strategy of methodological concern and he underlines three aspects of his worldliness which are primarily important for his research and writing. The first is the distinction between pure and political knowledge (his first actuality), by which he means the determining impingement on most of the knowledge produced in the West, definitely the United States, to be non-political. He argues that the humanistic and scholarly knowledge of the West are founded on conceptions of impartiality, objectivity and non-partisan belief and the word political is used as an adjective to discredit works of literature. Similarly, he indicates that there is a dangerous consensus in United States academies for true knowledge to be non-political. Said considers how distinctions such as economics and literary history create a hierarchy and a sense of political contamination in institutions of knowledge and he argues that all knowledge produced in the human sciences inevitably bear the imprint of its author as a human subject that is situated in history, economy and culture which he describes as worldliness.[291] As his arguments underline, to be a European or an American reveals an inert situatedness and a long involvement in the Orient since Homer[292] and Said also notes

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[290] Said, *Orientalism*, 7-8; for colonial exhibitions see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 69. See also Julie Mullaney, *Postcolonial Literatures in Context*, Continuum, London, New York 2010, 22-23.

[291] Said, *Orientalism*, 9. Said indicates that Post-structuralism is not interested in the sheer worldly thickness of a text which can be made evident by studying the affiliations of the writer and his inevitable involvement in immediate history, culture and politics. Brennan, "Edward Said and Comparative Literature", 33; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 25-26.

[292] See Phiroze Vasunia, "Hellenism and Empire: Reading Edward Said", *Parallax*, 9 (4), 2003, 88-97, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/1353464032000142390, 89. Aijaz Ahmad states that Erich Auerbach is Said's absent anti-hero in his great counter-classic, *Orientalism*. Therefore, Auerbach starts with Homer, so does Said begin with the Greek tragedy. See Ahmad 162-166.

that political actualities work as big dominating facts and there cannot be a distance between every day life and literary and scholarly productions. [293]

Similarly, Said foregrounds that Orientalism, is not only an academic field of study and an archive of texts, or an imperial projection. It is rather a mix of different actualities reinforced and produced simultaneously. It is a "distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts"; it is an elaboration of geographical distinction between unequal territories and a series of scholarly, philological and psychological interests created by the European imperial culture. It imagines, creates and maintains. It simply *is*. Therefore, as Said emphasises, *Orientalism* is an "adversarial critique not only of the field's perspective and political economy, but also of the socio-cultural situation that makes its discourse both so possible and so sustainable".[294] For Said, Orientalism is both a will to understand and a will to power. Its relationship with power is diverse and it is a combination of power political (colonial administration of distant lands), power intellectual (imperial sciences), power cultural (canonicity, standards of value) and power moral (philosophical and historical superiority).[295] Said indicates that what Orientalism has done and continues to do to the Orient is simply visible. Orientalism more *is* than simply represents a modern political and intellectual culture and it addresses not the Orient but the Western world. More than that, it is a material actuality and it does not reside in archival isolation.

While reflecting on the distinction between pure and political knowledge, Said criticises contemporary scholarship and specialist arguments that supposedly keep themselves pure and refuse to see connections between the doctrines of classical writers and philosophers, racialist theories and legitimising assumptions about slavery, colonialist exploitation, domination. He specifically states that literary studies generally do not have a concern for the significance of textuality and that literature is somewhat mystical and disinfected, and "explicitly accepts the principle of noninterference".[296] For Said, this

[293] Said, *Orientalism*, 11.
[294] Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 210.
[295] Said, *Orientalism*, 12.
[296] Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, 3.

concretely produced distance between "the superstructural and base levels in textual, historical scholarship" shows that the study of imperialism and culture has been put outside the limits of human sciences.[297] Furthermore, Said asserts that political imperialism controls and regulates humanistic scholarship, imagination and fields of study and it is fundamentally and historically impossible to escape and avoid it.[298] As Said rightly articulates, culture is a saturating hegemonic system[299] and has productive actuality on writers and thinkers. It can be argued that Said aligns himself squarely with Gramsci, Foucault and Raymond Williams in his understanding of cultural strength.[300]

Said refuses to accept the distinction between pure and political knowledge and crosses interesting questions with each other: what sorts of institutional and cultural energies created an imperialist tradition like Orientalism; how novel writing, especially the realist novel and science went into the service of an imperialist Orientalism (the central concern of *Culture and Imperialism*); what can be the meaning of originality and individuality and what sustains continuity between different epochs? Most importantly, how Orientalism transmits and reproduces itself from one historical period to another? It is seen that his questions constantly overlap, interweave and persist in his writings and he elaborates a new humanistic and secular critical scholarship that sees and explores

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[297] Said, *Orientalism*, 13.

[298] Said indicates that especially American Marxist theorists establish their scholarship by expelling politics from the field. It is significant also to state that Said never admits the claim that the imprint and the taint of imperialism demean and denigrate culture. For the machinery of cultural domination see Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 54.

[299] See Patrick Brantlinger, "Edward Said and/versus Raymond Williams", Bill Ashcroft and Hussein Kadhim (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Post-Colonial*, (57-72), Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Huntington New York, 2001, 59; Ashcroft 86.

[300] Said indicates that his critique differs substantially from Foucauldian discourse analysis although he remains very much within its parameters. As Stephen Howe indicates, Said criticises Derrida and Foucault's antihumanism and insists on an anti-Foucault form of knowledge and discourse in *Orientalism*. Howe suggests that unlike Foucault, Said believes "in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism", and his problem with Foucauldian understanding of discourse lies in its retreat from politics. Said, *Orientalism*, 23; Howe, 55. Relatedly, Brennan often argues that *Orientalism* is not Foucauldian. Said uses the term intellectual genealogy, that has a Foucaldian hint, to exert the lasting influence of Orientalism and to show the strict and material filiative and affiliative bond between and among Orientalist scholars and poets. See Meer, 507-508; Brennan, "The Illusion of a Future: *Orientalism* as a Travelling Theory", 566, 579.

Orientalism as a historical, cultural and political phenomenon that introduces the problem of it as a "willed human work".[301]

As briefly suggested, the distinction between pure and political knowledge is Said's first actuality and he connects it to his second actuality, the methodological question. Said proposes the methodological importance in sciences as a problematic of beginnings, which is a central concern of Soueif, and as suggested before, because the history of Orientalism is full of lengthy and encyclopaedic narratives, he limits his questions to British, French and American imperialist (and colonialist) attitude to the Orient, especially to the Arabs. As he states elsewhere, Franco-British colonialism and American imperialism had authority over the Islamic Orient especially after Napoleon's Campaign and Orientalism developed into a style of expertise that disseminated through Western culture and institutions. Orientalism, Said suggests, is produced out of an interplay of instrumental ideas, standards of value, canons of taste, claims and judgments to truth, transmitted knowledge, informed perceptions and established personal and historical authorities and while questioning the overlapping and integrated forms of Orientalist scholarship, Said's methodological devices are strategic location and formation. With strategic location, he points to the author's situatedness in the material that he writes about and strategic formation is analysing the interesting relationship between various texts and the way types or groups of texts and textual genres attain what Said defines referential power among themselves and in the culture in general.[302] Therefore, he asserts that there is an oriental precedent and the (always male) Orientalist writer, who has previous schooled knowledge of the Orient, refers to and relies on it as truth. In this framework, a discernible relationship can be seen between works and audiences and Said indicates that every single work on the Orient affiliates itself with other works, audiences and institutions –and with the imagined Orient. Said indicates that Orientalism reproduces itself this way and the ensemble of relationships[303] creates an

[301] Said, *Orientalism*, 15.
[302] See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 35.
[303] For cultural identities as contrapuntal ensembles see Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 26.

analysable formation that is presented in selected fragments of orientalist literature, in travel books and fantasies whose presence in time and discourse give it authority.[304]

Said establishes a certain anatomy of Orientalism with strategic location and strategic formation and discusses the exteriority of Orientalism from this inception. He states that Orientalism is premised upon exteriority by which he means that the Orientalist writer or scholar represents, describes, speaks for and uncovers the Orient and its mysteries for the West relying on an Orient that is imagined. Therefore, he emphasises that the Orientalist is outside the Orient and his representations are paradoxically the products of this exteriority. More clearly to state, it is Said's assertion that the natural depictions of the Orient are indeed representations and these circulated and repeated depictions cannot be claims to truth. His significant argument is that presence can only be in the form of "*re-presence* or a representation" in written language and the written statements about the Orient exclude, displace and rely very little on the Orient as a thing-in-self or as a real thing.[305] Orientalism's position is therefore to stand forth and away from the Orient in the process of knowing it and it defines more the West than the Orient for it depends more on the West than on the Orient as its putative subject matter. The representations of the Orient therefore depend on institutions of knowledge, traditions and conventions, thereby on exteriority, but not on the distant Orient that is represented as threateningly formless.

As seen in Said's explanations, the Orient provokes a writer but rarely guides his vision. Said points to the fact that Western culture informs and strengthens Orientalism's authority over its object of inquiry and that there were and are many forms of the Orient such as linguistic or Freudian, Darwinian and racist Orient. Said shows that there has never been a pure and unconditional Orient and a non-material form of Orientalism. Indeed, it is the material effectiveness of the discourse that saves Orientalism from being a mere idea, which also decisively transforms Said's choice of texts to study, therefore his second actuality. Said explains that the complete absence of a non-material form of Orientalism informs his departure from earlier critiques and that he maintains a hybrid perspective that

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[304] Said, *Orientalism*, 20.
[305] Said, *Orientalism*, 21, emphasis in the original; see also Ashcroft 78-79.

is a curious mix of history and anthropology. Therefore, not only does he examine works of literature or scholarly publications, but also journalistic texts, political and travel writings and works of religious and philological studies.[306]

More specifically, Said warns that Orientalism is often mistaken as only decorative or superstructural and he emphasises that his aim is to incite several audiences to develop an understanding of it as a powerful structure of cultural domination and to point to the danger and temptation lying in its internalisation by the formerly colonised and decolonising peoples. This relates him to his third actuality; the personal dimension. As suggested before, Said's awareness of being an Oriental is central to his criticism and he accordingly says that *Orientalism* is an attempt to list the traces of imperialism and colonialism upon himself as an Oriental subject, whose education in Palestine and Egypt, the two former colonies of the British Empire, and the United States has been Western.[307] Said clearly sees that though he has always been aware of it even in his early years, the dominant Western culture made Islamic Orient his centre of attention and ironically helped him employ its instruments of research that he considered himself to be a fortunate beneficiary. It is noteworthy to observe that Said shapes a critical consciousness with the very instruments of Orientalism that his Western education, or "orientalised experience" taught him[308] though he sadly notes that he never forgot the cultural reality and the "personal involvement in having been constituted as, 'an Oriental'".[309] By observing his worldliness, Said describes the complex historical circumstances which make his study possible.[310]

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[306] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also note that for Said, "criticism crosses the boundaries between academic and journalistic texts, between professional and public forums, and between professional specialisations, for at base its character and purpose are urgent and immediate". Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 38; Ashcroft 84.

[307] See Said and Paul, 32. Aijaz Ahmad notoriously talks about Said's self-deception as the Oriental subject. Ahmad 171.

[308] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 55, 71, 78.

[309] Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

[310] It is important to note that Said examines US imperialism and foreign policy as an Arab Oriental. As he patiently details, Orientalism becomes Area Studies in the US academies and the humanistic and the scholarly study of the Orient becomes a national policy in the United States, which also stimulates his criticism. See Pal Ahluwalia, "Afterlives of post-colonialism: reflections on theory post-9/11", *Postcolonial Studies,* 10, 2007, 257-270, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/13688790701488148, 260.

Said emphasises that two things stand as principal in the demarcation between the East and the West more than the discoveries and contacts with trade and war: Orientalism which is a growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient and Europe's essential position of strength and domination. He suggests that Orientalism is supported and exploited by developing imperial sciences such as ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology and to this knowledge is added a large body of literature, translation, novels and travel writing. He shows that the up-front alliance between texts that prove the strength of the West and the rationalisation of occupation by them eventually resulted in an essentially hierarchised relationship between the East and the West.[311] Likewise, this taken for granted relationship is explicit in the vocabulary with which the Empire prefers to define the Oriental: irrational, childlike, unusual, fallen and depraved. Quite the contrary, The European is rational, virtuous, mature and normal which reduces the complexity of the Orient with the opposing concept pairs.[312]

Indeed, Said emphasises that although Orientalism describes the Orient with an identity of its own making, it is stressed everywhere in the Orientalist discourse that the Oriental lives in a different but completely organised world with its own national, cultural and epistemological boundaries.[313] In this regard, what makes the oriental world intelligible is a series of knowledgeable manipulations by which it is described by the West and this allows Europeans to understand it as having certain characteristics, mentality and genealogy. Said mainly says that, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the assumption in the West is that the Orient definitely needs a corrective study by the West even if it is not visibly inferior to it, but it is. Correspondingly, as seen in the language of Lord Cromer and Arthur Balfour, the Orient is represented as "something one judges (as in a court or law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison)" and "something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual)".[314] Orientalism, as an exercise of cultural strength, then can be described as the knowledge of

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[311] Said, *Orientalism*, 40.
[312] See Bozdoğan 39. For colonialist characterisations of the diligent colonial officer see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 37-38.
[313] For the unreadability of the Other see Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 89.
[314] Said, *Orientalism*, 40

the Orient that puts oriental things in classes, courts, prisons, manuals and travel guides for study, judgment, discipline and administration and Said's very debate is that the Oriental and the Orient are contained and preserved by these dominating frameworks; thingified and objectified.[315] As an intellectual power, Orientalism imposes on the Oriental a mentality, genealogy and atmosphere and, as Said shows, it influences both the people known as Orientals and Occidentals. It is more constraints upon and limitations of thought than a positive doctrine, and in its wider corpus, it discusses, hardens and intensifies the deep-rooted and ineffaceable distinction between Western superiority and oriental inferiority.

As Said demonstrates, the Near Orient, i.e., the Arab Near East, where Islam supposedly defines racial and cultural characteristics, is specifically important for the West because the British and the French encountered each other and the Orient there more intensely, though with familiarity.[316] This is also very important in Soueif's fiction which beautifully captures Franco-British colonialism in Egypt. The encounter of the two empires was familiar because, as a library and archive of information, Orientalism supplies the Orientalist with a vocabulary, imagery, rhetoric and figures with which to explain the behaviours and minds of Oriental people.[317] As it is said throughout, Said indicates that Orientalism is a centuries-long repetitive knowledge produced about the Orient, though Orientalist ideas took different forms in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Said states that the understanding in the late 18th and 19th centuries was that the interpretations and translations of Sanskrit, Zend and Arabic texts initiated, in Edgar Quinet's words, an oriental Renaissance, but he suggests that a keynote relationship was set for the Near East and the West after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the French Campaign which transformed Orientalism completely and put the Arab Near East on the Orientalist stage. As he relatedly shows, Napoleon's invasion was modelled on "a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another, apparently stronger one" and it initiated a

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[315] See Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, 14; Bozdoğan 38; see also Azeez 711-719, for "subaltern thingified Middle Eastern subject", 721. Aijaz Ahmad emphasises the representation of the Orient through "aggressive objectification of the Other". See Ahmad 182.

[316] See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 66.

[317] Said, *Orientalism*, 41-42. Said's insistent focus on "family of ideas" gives hints about his understanding of filiation and affiliation.

process between the Orient and the West that continues to shape contemporary cultural and political views. Said correlates that its monumental erudition, the enormous twenty-three-volume *Description de l'Égypte*, apparently made Egypt and other Islamic lands "the live province, the laboratory, the theater of effective knowledge about the Orient" and modernised the body of knowledge about it.[318] Said's point is that Napoleon's expedition and *Description de l'Égypte* introduced the second form in which the Orientalism in the 19th and 20th centuries disseminated and he shows that in this period Orientalists began to ambitiously refine and formulate their discoveries, experiences, insights and judgments with rising modern studies to draw their ideas about the Orient close to modern realities.

But Said suggests on the other hand that it made Orientalism vulnerable before powerful currents of thought like imperialism, utopianism, historicism, racism, Darwinism, Freudianism, and Marxism among others. However, as aforesaid, Said points out that Orientalism has its own paradigms of research, learned societies and its own establishment like many of the natural and social sciences and it gained a great amount of prestige during the 19th century with societies and professorships. Interestingly though, Said argues that few of the Orientalist institutions existed freely because Orientalism puts limits on the thought about the Orient. He demonstrates this also with the imaginative writers of the age, like Flaubert, Nerval and Scott whom, he argues, were restrained in their experience and writings. Said's consistent argument is that the oriental reality of the Orientalist discourse is antihuman and persistent and the scope and institutions of Orientalism, a learned study, have saturating influence that can even be recognised at the present time. It is interesting to note here that, as Ashcroft and Ahluwalia argue, Said cannot dismiss his own saturation to the European literary culture.[319]

There is a never-ending concern for geography in *Orientalism* and Said underlines Orientalism's non-material forms as a scholarly specialisation of a geographical field with a considerable geographical ambition and an almost total geographical position towards oriental things. This recognition unsurprisingly brings Napoleon's expedition and

[318] Said, *Orientalism*, 42-43.
[319] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 43.

Description de l'Égypte into focus, because as Said emphasises very strongly elsewhere, the Orient that Orientalism studies is a textual universe until the late 18th century with the exception of Napoleon's Institut d'Égypte.[320] Within a wider optic, Said examines that there is an interesting relationship between knowledge and geography and while pointing forward to imaginative geographies, he looks into Claude Lévi-Straus' "science of the concrete" and Gaston Bachelard's "poetics of space". His luminous argument is that "geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic and cultural ones in expected ways" and he emphasises that "imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and the difference between what is close to it and what is far away".[321] Said indicates that there are such things as positive history and positive geography, but what is known about time and space, certainly history and geography, is imaginative. More importantly, Said suggests that positive knowledge dispels imaginative geographical and historical knowledge and pretends that it is positive. As this might reveal, Said's understanding is that imaginative knowledge infuses history and geography, or prevails over them.

It is significant to expand on imaginative geographies because this concept is particularly interesting for Said and can be described as the representations of other peoples, places, cultures and natures which reveal the fantasies, desires and the fears of the authors and the networks of power between them and their Others. Derek et al. emphasise that Said's understanding of imaginative geographies underscore the non-innocence of representation and this formulation anticipates the idea of situated knowledge.[322] It is important to note that Said's focus is textual and he argues that images, as cultural constructs, carry comparative valorisations through which places gain figurative values. For Said, these values fundamentally take part in the identity formation of the speaking-viewing subject in a complex dialectic with the production of otherness. Therefore, imaginative

[320] It can be argued that Said constructs a critique with geography particularly after considering the centrality and the rise of Area Studies in the US academies that he distressingly sees as a national policy. Especially with H. A. R. Gibb, he demonstrates that Area Studies and Orientalism become geographically interchangeable.
[321] Said, *Orientalism*, 54-55.
[322] Derek Gregory, Jon Rohnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael Watts, Sarah Whatmore, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Wiley-Blackwell, United Kingdom 2009, 369-370.

geographies produce images of home and abroad and an understanding of our space and their space, and for that reason they are fictions. Curiously though, they are indeed reality because they have material forms in novels, photographs, collections, exhibitions, films and travel writing. In time, they are formed into an internally structured and self-reinforcing archive supplying a citationary structure that subsequent accounts consult and therefore they shape and legitimise structures of feeling and attitude.[323]

With this understanding, Said re-examines the imagined Orient, which is more than what is empirically known about it, and pressing this further, he points to the demarcation between the Orient and the West which is visibly clear even by the time of the *Iliad*. Said observes that imaginative geography appears repeatedly in Aeschylus' *The Persians* and *The Bacchae* of Euripides and he expresses that the Orient of the classical Greece and Rome, whose geographers, historians and public figures knew it with taxonomic lore separating races, minds and regions from each other, is sub-divided into intra-Oriental spaces with Christianity.[324] It is particularly important to see that Said's debates about imaginative geography is principally directed to the European encounter with Islam and for the purposes of this study it will be discussed at length.

It is important to note that after the publication of *Orientalism* in the West, Said has always been accused of defending Islam, with which terrorism is permanently associated in public discourses.[325] However, as he powerfully indicates, it is impossible to study the Orient "without dealing with Islam" because "central to Orientalism in the Middle Eastern instance is Islam".[326] Said indicates that, symbolising terror and devastation, Islam is the lasting trauma of Europe and the response to it, when it appeared in Europe in the Middle Ages, was conservative and defensive though its novelty was brought under control through representations; it is handled. More particularly, Said suggests that it was the Ottoman peril that represented a constant danger until the end of the 17th century and he shows that

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[323] See Derek et al., 371.
[324] Orientalism has a structural and taxonomic base. See Bozdoğan 40. Said discusses Hellenism and the Empire in his works and it can be argued that, together with Spivak and Bhabha, he influenced classical studies.
[325] See Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors", 218.
[326] Said and Paul 35.

European civilisation is saturated in that fear.[327] Said looks in particular at the Ottoman peril while discussing Auerbach's exile in Istanbul in *The World, The Text, and The Critic* which is worth quoting at length:

> Istanbul does not simply connote a place outside Europe. Istanbul represents the terrible Turk, as well as Islam, the scourge of Christendom, the great Oriental apostasy incarnate. Throughout the classical period of European culture Turkey was the Orient, Islam its most redoubtable and aggressive representation. This was not all though. The Orient and Islam also stood for the ultimate alienation from and opposition to Europe, the European tradition of Christian Latinity, as well as the putative authority of ecclesia, humanistic learning, and cultural community. For centuries Turkey and Islam hung over Europe like a gigantic composite monster, seeming to threaten Europe with destruction.[328]

Said's argument is that a lessened version of this great threatening force is inherent in today's representations of Islam, and pointing to the vocabulary and imagery that define Islam, he maintains that the reception of Islam in the West is a perfect illustration of the operations of Orientalism.[329] Interweaving the descriptions of Christian thinkers who tried to understand Islam, Said reveals that the neologism Mohemmadanism replaces Islam out of an understanding in Christianity in which Christ is the basis of faith, and with this polemical word, Said shows that Prophet Muḥammed is defined in the Orientalist discourse in a negative way.[330] In this strict interpretation, Islam becomes an image and Said indicates that Orientalism represents Islam, not in itself, but for the medieval Christian.

With this, Said returns to an argument that he occasionally explores in his writings; the Orient becoming a stage. He suggests that from Bede to Luther there was a

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[327] See Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 55.
[328] Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, 6.
[329] For homo islamicus, see Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism Between Islam and the Nation State*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London 1997, 225; Azeez 721. See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 185.
[330] See Weegmann, 391; Ahmad 190.

sophisticated European attempt "to put a representative Orient in front of Europe, to *stage* the Orient and the Europe together in some coherent way", and encapsulated in it was an idea for Christians "to make it clear to Muslims that Islam was just a misguided version of Christianity."[331] Vitally implicated here is the understanding that Orientalism as a discourse, Said observes, acquires concreteness and the idea of representation becomes a theatrical one in which the Orient becomes a stage. Equally important is the fact that stage is an enclosed space and the Orient subsequently becomes, not an unlimited, threatening and formless extension to Europe, but a closed field. Said indicates that learned imagery and dramatic form unite in the orientalist theatre in which the Orientalist confirms the Orient in his readers' eyes while the Orient is systematically made knowable and controllable with the didactic quality of Orientalist representation.[332] Similarly, Rana Kabbani says that "The Orient becomes a pretext for self-dramatization and differentness: it is the malleable theatrical space in which can be played out the egocentric fantasies of Romanticism".[333]

With the Orientalist stage, which becomes a system of moral and epistemological power, Said points to the fact that the Orient is orientalised, which makes the Orient not the sole possession of the Orientalist and introduces it to a Western consumer of Orientalism. Said shows that Orientalism reinforces the Western reader to accept its categorisations as the true Orient, and in turn, making truth a function of learned judgment that consequently rests for its existence on the Orientalist who validates the morality and epistemological superiority of the West.[334] As he shows, Orientalism presents an enormous size of institutionalised Western knowledge of the Orient which exercises its power on the Orient, the Orientalist and the Western consumer of Orientalism. Said also indicates that

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[331] Said, *Orientalism*, 61. Emphasis in the original.
[332] Said, *Orientalism*, 63-66.
[333] Kabbani qtd. in Arthur J. Weitzman, "Voyeurism and Aesthetics in the Turkish Bath: Lady Mary's School of Female Beauty", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 39 (4), 2002, 347-359, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40247364, 351.
[334] Nahla Abdo, "Eurocentism, Orientalism and Essentialism: Some Reflections on September 11 and Beyond", Susan Hawthorne and Bronwyn Winter (Ed.), *September 11, 2011: Feminist Perspectives*, (372-392), Spinifex Press, Australia 2002, 384; see also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 51.

Orientalism divides and describes oriental things into controllable parts; it is anatomical and enumerative and, as he conspicuously emphasises, it is a form of paranoia.

More specifically to note, Said examines how the Orientalised results of imaginative geography are transmuted in the modern world as the operational successes of Orientalism and describes the material form of Orientalism, especially in the Islamic Orient with Napoleon and Ferdinand de Lesseps. As this might immediately reveal, he is concerned intensely with the special place of Egypt in Orientalism and his suggestions will be specifically relevant to this study. Said contends that Western dominance was unchallenged in the Orient –in India, East Indies, China, Japan and other various regions– and only the Arab and the Islamic Orient meant an unsolved political, intellectual and economic challenge for Europe. It is undisputable therefore that Orientalism carries a problematic essential and ahistorical attitude towards Islam and Said suggests that there are many reasons for it. First of all, as he indicates, the very term Orient was applied only to the Islamic Orient until the Oriental Renaissance, and more tellingly, Said emphasises that Islam is seen threateningly close to Christianity in the Orientalist discourse.

As mentioned above, the Islamic Orient has a special place in Orientalism and Said reminds that Britain and French had to cross the Islamic provinces (indeed Egypt) to reach India. He specifically notes that this is the reason behind Napoleon's occupation of Egypt when he undoubtedly annoyed the British Empire by dominating its Islamic route.[335] As stated earlier in the discussion of Egyptomania with *The Map of Love*, Napoleon's Expedition resulted in a deep change for the history of Orientalism and its interesting significance reveals that, before Napoleon, the Orientalist projects did little preparations and the Orientalists learned what to do about the Orient when they got there. Said demonstrates that it was particularly different with Napoleon for he wanted to take all of

[335] Said, *Orientalism*, 76; *Culture and Imperialism*, 142. It is interesting to note that Florence Nightingale says, "No one ever talks about the beauty of Cairo ever gives you the least idea of this surprising city. I thought it was a place to buy stores at and pass through one's own way to India". Florence Nightingale qtd. in Derek Gregory, "Between the Book and the Lamp: Imaginative Geographies of Egypt 1849-1850", *Transactions of the Institutes of British Geographers*, 20 (1), 1995, 29-57, JSTOR, Accessed: 24-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/622723, 37.

Egypt[336] and made advanced preparations for his project which Said describes as fanatically schematic and textual.[337] Said offers a blend of reasons for Napoleon's attraction to the Orient and indicates that Napoleon imagined Egypt as a project because he knew it, before setting out for the Campaign, strategically, textually and historically as something that he read about in the texts of early and recent European authorities. Said illuminatingly shows that, as a project, Egypt acquires reality for Napoleon through texts, not empirical realities, and therefore for the first time in the history of the European encounter with the Orient, specialised expertise is put to colonial and functional rule. Said interestingly notes that Napoleon substitutes classical texts and orientalist knowledge with an actual encounter with the Orient and his aim in the Expedition is to build a living archive of knowledge, importantly of all topics, with Institut d'Égypte.[338]

Said's important recognition is that Orientalism acquires another density with Napoleon, and although he failed in his military occupation, the Orient begins to be interpreted within the universe of discourse that dominated it and disseminated through *Description de l'Égypte* and the Institut. After Napoleon, the language of Orientalism changes altogether and it becomes not a style of representation, but a means of (textual) creation.[339] With *Description de l'Égypte,* the Orient is brought closer to the West and its obscurity and strangeness, and with Islam its hostility, are minimised. This recognition unsurprisingly brings Said to his interpretation of textual children, or Orientalist brotherhoods, which is significantly relevant to this study. Said suggests that Napoleonic expedition in Egypt created a series of textual children from Chateaubriand to Lamartine, Nerval, Flaubert, Edward William Lane and Richard Burton who inherited learned knowledge of the Orient and whose creations, he argues, turn out to be highly stylised

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[336] See Jack Crabbs, Jr., "Politics, History, and Culture in Nasser's Egypt", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 6 (4), 1975, 386-420, Accessed: 08-02-2017, JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/162751, 400.
[337] Said, *Orientalism*, 80. It is interesting to note that the size of the large paintings of the Orientalist painter Delacroix is Napoleonic scale. See Martin Weegmann, "Edward Said (1935 – 2003): His relevance to psychotherapy", *Psychodynamic Practice*, 11 (4), 389-404, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/14753630500387299, 393. The Orientalist's page as printed object is of great concern for Said as he talks about the gigantic leaves of *Description de l'Égypte*. See, *Orientalism*, 283.
[338] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 16; for colonialist reliance on texts, 47.
[339] Said, *Orientalism*, 87; Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 57, 65.

simulacra.[340] Said also notes that the Expedition is not restricted to the artistic and textual works and there are, and also more influential, scientific projects of Ferdinand de Lesseps and the philological laboratory of Ernest Renan. Lesseps is of particular importance for Said because he regards that after Lesseps no one could speak of the Orient as another world. Said emphatically indicates that Lesseps destroys the geographical identity of the Orient by dragging it to the West with the Suez Canal and exterminates the threat of Islam.[341]

Said discussions of the secular Orientalist, or the Orientalist's view of himself, and intellectual genealogy are also of great importance to this study. It can be suggested that the notion of the secular Orientalist emerges from the wider context of Said's writing for, as is well known, Said always demonstrates a strict insistence on the secular intellectual.[342] In this context, he notes that the Orientalist moves the Orient to modernity by rescuing it from strangeness and obscurity and this act reveals the traces of power because the Orientalist indeed creates the Orient with the advanced techniques of philology and anthropology. Said notes that there is a secular tradition of continuity and a lay order of disciplined methodologists behind the Orientalist, the secular creator, and he emphatically notes that Orientalist brotherhood is based upon a common discourse and a set of received ideas. He importantly describes this as intellectual genealogy which will be an integral part of discussions in this study.

Said suggests that the Expedition of Napoleon is the first experience of modern Orientalism and its inaugural heroes, in Islamic studies, are Silvestre de Sacy, Ernest Renan and Edward William Lane. He defines these iconic figures as the progenitors of Orientalist brotherhood and says that they made Orientalism "a scientific terminology", they "established the figure of the Orientalist as a central authority *for* the Orient", and "legimized a special kind of specifically coherent Orientalist work", more importantly, they "put into circulation a form of discursive currency by whose presence the Orient henceforth

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[340] For Burton see Wallen 5-6.
[341] Said, *Orientalism*, 92. See also Bulfin 411.
[342] Said defines himself as "a perhaps stupidly stubborn intellectual" in *Representations of the Intellectual*, 132.

would be *spoken for*".[343] The secular Orientalists of the modern stage become copyists like Bouvard and Pécuchet of Flaubert, and fittingly, Romantic reconstruction and avowed repetition define the mode of modern Orientalism which, as Said observes, "fatally tends towards the systematic accumulation of human beings and territories."[344] With this recognition, Said concretely presents Sacy, Renan and Lane as secular Orientalists and his understanding of Orientalist brotherhood acquires a great density with these three figures to whom Soueif especially concentrates in her fiction.

In *Orientalism*, Said is also intensely preoccupied with manifest and latent Orientalism, commercial geography, the inter-war Islamic Orientalism and the representations of the Arab Oriental in American social sciences which are informative in understanding Soueif's fiction. It should first be underlined that Said makes a distinction between manifest and latent Orientalism and describes the former as "an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity" whereas the latter is "the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology and so forth".[345] As he explains further, latent Orientalism is almost always stable and the changes in the knowledge of the Orient is immediately found in manifest Orientalism. In this regard, the manifestation of an imagined Orient with the disseminative capacities of Orientalist knowledge is what Said describes as latent Orientalism and he suggests that it supplies the Orientalist with an enunciative capacity that turns into a sensible discourse.[346] Again, Said points to the Western understanding of Islam and it is important to recognise that, as interpreted throughout his writings, the static (male) Orientalism exhibits manifest differences in its methods, especially in its discussions of Islam, whereas Islam's latent inferiority remains constant.[347]

For all kinds of reasons, Said specifically suggests that all the latent characteristics of the Orient stem from its geography and, as he demonstrates in more depth, imperial

[343] Said, *Orientalism*, 122. Emphases in the original.
[344] Said, *Orientalism*, 123; see also Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 6.
[345] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.
[346] Said, *Orientalism*, 222; see also Young 153.
[347] McLeod describes latent Orientalism as a blueprint, 41.

occupation is dignified and legitimised with rationalising ideas about civilisation.[348] Said particularly draws attention to the fact that geographical appetite transforms scientific geography into commercial geography and it is seen that self-production is easily equated with colonisation. This way, the essential Orient that the Orientalist imagines and creates becomes an actual administrative obligation because, as Boehmer indicates, Britain had a destiny to rule it[349] and Said more distinctly shows that the union between manifest and latent Orientalism is dramatically visible after the World War I when the Ottoman Empire, the sick man of Europe, is dismembered and the Orientalist plays a fateful part in it.[350] As is clear from Said's foregoing description, this bears looking into Gertrude Bell and T. E. Lawrence as Oriental experts and imperial agents and he stresses the difference between France and Britain in their handling of the Islamic Orient, for as he says there are no French Lawrences and Bells. Historically speaking, Said's discussion of Lawrence is connected directly with Arab nationalism and will be insightful for this study in an important sense. Said emphatically notes that the Orient starts to constitute a challenge after the Arab Revolt and the claims for self-government following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Undoubtedly, the West responds to these crises of modernity with issues of outright occupation, mandated territories, dealing with the native elites which culminate in the reconsideration of the Western knowledge of the Orient.

The other important thing intensely discussed by Said is the inter-war Islamic Orientalism of Louis Massignon and H. A. R. Gibb and the will to power in Orientalism that has fundamentally misrepresented Islam in the West. Before putting out his arguments, Said suggests that all representations, "because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambience of the representer", and it can then be suggested that any representation is thereby implicated and interlaced with many other things besides the truth, which is itself another representation.[351] Similarly, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia posits the view that "Knowledge is always a matter of

[348] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 37, 77.
[349] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 29.
[350] Said, *Orientalism*, 223; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 318.
[351] Said, *Orientalism*, 272. Emphasis in the original.

representation".[352] Said indicates that the distinction between misrepresentation and representation is a matter of degree and representations dwell in a field of play defined for them by common history, tradition and universe of discourse. The representations of Orientalism therefore contribute to and are products of discursive consistency, but with material form and presence.

Said describes Orientalism as a discourse but it should be reminded that the contribution of the individual researcher is of high importance for him as seen in his discussions of such towering Orientalist figures as Sacy, Renan, Lane and Lawrence and it can be argued that he breaks away from Foucault at this point.[353] One last thing to be underlined about the role of individual figures in the history of Orientalism is that the inter-war Orientalism, which is seen in the careers of H. A. R. Gibb and Louis Massignon from World War I to the early 1960s, profoundly changes the three basic forms of Orientalist writing that Said specifies as the encyclopaedia, the anthology and the personal record.[354] It is replaced with essay, scholarly book and short article where the traditional Orientalist dogmas are maintained with the "*ecumenical* authority of European Orientalism".[355]

It very important to lastly emphasise that Said relentlessly discusses the representation of the Arab Muslim after the World War II in American social sciences and it will be considered briefly because of its extraordinary relevance to this study. Said states that after the Arab-Israeli wars, the Arab Muslim becomes a figure in American popular culture appearing more menacing especially after the 1973 War. Said shows that the Arab caricatures in the United States release the same anti-Semitic feeling and portray Semites essentially the same, which also brings to mind his criticism of Renan. More importantly,

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[352] Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 65-66, 75-76.

[353] See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 69; Bayoumi and فطصم يمويبد56 regniltnarB ;74 ى

[354] Bozdoğan describes hypothetic encyclopaedia as an orientalist model of writing from which nothing can escape, see Bozdoğan 40.

[355] Said, *Orientalism*, 284. Emphasis in the original. The essay form is very important for Said and parenthetically to note, Mustapha Marrouchi states that Edward Said consciously chooses the essay form to express the pain of exile, and as an anti-genre, Saidian essay is personal and fragmentary that "goes to the extreme of destroying its own discursive category". Mustapha Marrouchi, "The Critic as Dis/Placed Intelligence: The Case of Edward Said", *Diacritics*, 21 (1), 1991, 63-74, JSTOR, Accessed: 04-05-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/465211, 63-64. In *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, Said says, "all of what I mean by criticism and critical consciousness is directly reflected in not only the subjects of these essays [in the book] but in the essay form itself". Said, *The World, The Text, and The Critic*, 26; see also 50

Said indicates that the representation of the Arab Oriental creates an Arab Muslim that does not have a history, or if he has any, it is only part of the history that the West gave to him. In like fashion, the Arab Muslim is always shown in large numbers in news, which displays the menace of jihad and a constant elimination of his experiences, characteristics and personality. He is represented as oversexed, degenerate, essentially sadistic and treacherous.[356] Relatedly, Said argues that the American understanding of the Islamic Orient is to conceptually emasculate the region and the people and to reduce them to statistics, attitudes and trends and the absence of literature (and philology) is the most distinct characteristic of the American studies of the Near East.[357] Said emphasises that unlike in European Orientalism, the trained American social scientist applies his science to the region, which Said describes as the specific American contribution to Orientalism.

In concise terms, *Orientalism* is the study of how the power and knowledge of a two centuries old tradition in Europe specifically viewed the Near East, the Arab Orientals and Islam and Said's aim in *Orientalism* is to show that with Orientalism Europe defines itself while it aims to define its Others, especially the imagined Islamic Orient.[358] In *Orientalism* Said discusses mind-provoking issues about culture, representation and the role of the intellectual and, according with the consistent tendency in his work, he emphasises the fact that an oppositional and secular critical consciousness is necessary and important. However, it should be noted that Said mainly omits the response and the resistance of the colonised and the orientalised Oriental to colonialism and imperialism in *Orientalism* and is more concerned with resistance in *Culture and Imperialism*. *Orientalism* is certainly the product of a refined learning and Said expands his discussions of culture, civilisation and colonisation in *Culture and Imperialism* that this study now returns to.

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[356] See Said and Paul 35; for the homogenising propensity of Orientalism see McLeod 42.

[357] Nicholas Harrison indicates that Said's literary politics is a complex matter. It is true that Said pays attention to the politics of a literary text and the aesthetics of a political text. For Harrison, Said's reading of Lane, Massignon and Marx is problematic because these writers are outside the institution of literature and reading them literarily is not the same as reading literary texts literarily. See Harrison 12.

[358] It is important to note that Said's ending remarks involve criticism about his book, especially the way it is read as the systematic support and defence of Islam and Islamism and he remarks that, with subsequent translations, *Orientalism* becomes several different books and he observes that it is a collective book that supersedes its author. See "Afterword" to *Orientalism*.

2.2.2. Culture as Imperialism and Contrapuntal Reading

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said's prominent insight is that Orientalism in an idea that has a history and geographical greed and *Culture and Imperialism* starts with the same premise.[359] Said is concerned intensely with the imperial imagination in this discursive book and it can be argued that he stresses two points: the general worldwide pattern of imperial culture (or culture as imperialism) and the historical experience of resistance against imperialism and colonialism.[360] It is important to underline that Said's fundamental thesis in *Culture and Imperialism* makes it not just a sequel to *Orientalism*, but as he says, also something else and there are two reasons for this. First of all, *Culture and Imperialism* includes non-Middle Eastern materials that illustrate the relationship between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories and it is not geographically limited like *Orientalism*. More importantly, unlike in *Orientalism*, Said has a wider awareness of the cultural resistance in the non-European world with which he reflects on nationalism, independence, liberation and identity making and of particular concern for Said is culture in general. Culture for Said is first of all the aesthetic forms whose principal aim is pleasure and the second, and for him the imperceptible, understanding of culture is its being a concept that includes refining and elevating elements and, as with Matthew Arnold, every society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought. As this plurality might reveal and as suggestively seen in the title of the book, Said is preoccupied with culture and imperialism that highlights an exclusive focus on resistance culture, which it is the main impulse of his criticism.

Said has a broader perspective in *Culture and Imperialism* and regarding the limitations of this study, this section will include commentary on selected points. In fact, Said specifically concentrates on connected issues and, though they have a shattered presentment, his great topics are the structure of attitude and reference, the consolidation of vision, the strange bond between narrative fiction and imperial attitudes, the voyage in and contrapuntal reading with which he interprets nationalism, geography and resistance among

[359] Said starts his book with an epigraph from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* emphasising that what redeems the conquest of the earth is an idea only.
[360] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 5.

other immensely important issues. As suggested before, Said's analyses offer perspectives for understanding Soueif's fiction and, for the purposes of this study, the stress will be more on Middle Eastern material in its relation to identitarian Islam and the resistances in the Arab world against imperialism and colonialism. It is also important to note that an awareness of gender criticism can be detected in *Culture and Imperialism*, but it never becomes operative in Said's analyses for he talks about gender only in plain passing remarks.

Said's immediate concern is the pastness and the presence of the past and the appeals to past, and he explores this problem with T. S. Eliot's essay on tradition in which he talks about the universality of literature with the assumption that the historical sense is the simultaneous existence of the timeless and the temporal. Said's understanding is that past and present inform each other and neither the past nor the present, and neither the poet nor the artist, has a complete meaning without it. It is mostly because of the fact that the representation and the formulation of the past shapes understandings and views of the present. Said's fundamental idea is that the meaning of imperialism can be discerned with the relationship between past and present because imperialism and colonialism cast a shadow on the present, and as suggested before, there can never be a pure after to them.[361] As Said articulates, "We are at a point in our work when we can no longer ignore empires and the imperial context in our studies" and his important point is that great colonial structures might have ended after the World War II, but especially the period of high imperialism continues to exercise cultural influence in the present.[362]

Beginning from this premise, Said says that no one is free from the struggle over geography and he shows that notions about culture are clarified and strengthened out of imperial experiences. His fundamental idea is that the practice and the idea of the Empire gain consistency and density by a set of cultural forms and structures of feeling that he describes as structures of attitude and reference, by the constant circulation and recirculation of which Empire consolidates the vision of its almost metaphysical obligation

[361] There is a particular emphasis in the writings of Spivak and Bhabha as well that no simple retreat from colonialism is possible. See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 175.
[362] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 5.

to rule and to dominate the subordinate and inferior Other. Specifically important for Said is that culture nurtures the sentiment and the imagination of the Empire which in turn becomes totally embedded in it especially at the end of the 19th century. Said argues that imperialism exercises its power beyond economic laws and political decisions to a degree that it becomes recognisable in cultural formations and is consolidated by education, literature and the visual and musical arts.

In simple terms, Said argues that the imagination of the Empire is manifested in the national culture which is assumed to be free of worldly affiliations. As he explains, literature cannot be cut off from history and society, which resonates in his formulation of the structures of feeling and attitude, and his point of reference here is Raymond Williams. Said maintains the idea that literature constantly makes references to itself as somehow being part of an overseas expansion and creates structures of feeling that consolidate, support and magnify the idea of the Empire. However, he strongly indicates that the imperial past is not contained within itself for it is a shared experience that exercises an incredible force in the contemporary world. Most important though is his understanding that all cultural forms are radically and quintessentially hybrid, mixed and impure because "the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings"[363] and cultural analysis therefore should take into consideration actualities, which in more concrete terms becomes his famous formulation of contrapuntal reading.

As suggested before, Said demonstrates a strong aversion of specialised knowledge in his writings and accordingly, in *Culture and Imperialism*, he recommends that imperial experience should not be analysed in compartmentalised terms. It can be seen that this intention shapes his understanding of the pastness of the past (or not the past) alongside his methodology, for Said suggests that the effect of the past on the cultural attitudes in the present is more important than the past itself and by looking at the different historical experiences of imperialism simultaneously, one can connect Empire and its overseas territories, and imperialism and resistance. Said's emphasis is that there is no pure past and this can be discerned by writing intertwined and overlapping histories and by contrapuntal

[363] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 261.

reading. For instance, by looking at Joseph Conrad Said, perceives that Conrad's Eurocentric ways eliminate the resistance and the response to the Empire, but it is important to recognise that there is confrontation, crossing over and reciprocal borrowings between imperialism and resistant native cultures. In this regard, what emerge between high imperialism and the resistance to it are the important discussions of the post-colonial writers who "bear their past within them–as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a new future […] in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire".[364]

Said interprets this as contrapuntal perspective and in particular stresses the overlapping and interconnected experiences. For Said, contrapuntality is to read texts from the metropolitan centre and the peripheries at the same time and "according neither privilege of 'objectivity' to 'our side' nor the encumbrance of 'subjectivity' to 'theirs'", the question is therefore knowing how to read and not dissociating this from what to read, because, Said argues, texts are not finished objects.[365] He offers a particularly bracing example of this standpoint with two early 19th century texts that both date from the 1820s: *Description de l'Égypte*, which as stated before initiated modern Orientalism, and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti's history of Egypt, *'Aja'ib al-Athar fil Tarajim wal Akhbar*.[366] Said notes that al-Jabarti witnesses the Expedition and this experience produces a deep-seated anti-Westernism in him which is a persistent theme in the colonised geographies. In this alternative narrative, there are also the seeds of Islamic reformism developed later by Muhammad 'Abdu, a character in *The Map of Love*, and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in late 19th century, which also culminated in Nasserite theory and practice in late 1950s and in contemporary movements defined as Islamic fundamentalism.[367]

Said stresses that Western cultural forms should be stripped off the autonomous enclosures within which they are protected and instead be placed in the dynamic global

[364] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 34, see also 256.
[365] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 312, see also Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 63-64.
[366] *The Most Wondrous Achievements: Biographies and Reports of Events*.
[367] For fundamentalism see Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 124.

environment that imperialism created as a contest between the metropolis and the periphery. For this Said offers a model of rereading contrapuntally with an awareness of both the metropolitan history and other histories and emphasises that no overarching theoretical principle controls the whole imperial ensemble. Said believes that with contrapuntal reading the engagement of the English novels with distant overseas territories can be recognised as it almost goes without saying that they are shaped and even determined by colonisation and the resistance to it. As Elleke Boehmer similarly suggests, the novelists of the 19th century were heirs to the long-established traditions of imaginative interpretation and especially the Victorians were the most active and disseminators of the idea of the Empire by manipulating the novelistic inheritance and building on the genealogy of the past. Boehmer importantly indicates that the novel of domestic realism played a great part in giving support to the imperial vision and especially 19th century novelists and writers responded to imperial visions in essays, journalism and novels. [368]

Contrapuntal reading is crucially relevant to identity making for Said and he suggests that Englishness and Frenchness should be analysed as the results of the collaboration between other cultures. It follows then that the formation of cultural identities should not be understood as essentialisations, but as cultural ensembles, because identities do not exist by themselves, or without the opposites, negatives and oppositions. Said states that a distinctive cultural topography is visible in major metropolitan cultures and structures of location and geographical reference appear in the languages of literature and sciences sometimes intentionally and sometimes allusively. Along with these structures come attitudes about domination and profit and Said indicates that these structures are interestingly relevant to the development of the cultural identity of the British Empire because, he suggests, this identity imagines itself in a geographically perceived world.

As Said endlessly reminds, Empire is and was maintained with these structures of attitude and reference, but interpreting and reading metropolitan cultures are impossible without the resistance movements. He calls this new mode of interpretation secular and affiliated criticism and crudely put it is, in his words, “reading the canon as a polyphonic

[368] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 19, 24.

accompaniment to expansion of Europe, giving a revised direction and valence to such writers as Conrad and Kipling, who has always been read as a sport", and he continues, but "not as writers whose manifestly imperialist subject matter has a long subterranean or implicit and proleptic life in the earlier work of writers, say Austen or Chateaubriand".[369] Particularly suggestive in Said's debate is that the secular and affiliated criticism should try to inventory the interpellation of culture by Empire and extend its criticism into mass media, popular culture and micro-politics because the modes of power and hegemony grow stronger every day.

Said argues that an almost philosophical sense of imperial obligation can be seen in Britain and the Empire as a place of travel, wealth and service, functions as a codified and perhaps marginally visible presence in 19th century English novel. The colonial territories in the novels imply possession, money-making, sexual adventure as realms of possibilities and are filled with eccentric people without history. These people as imperial possessions are only usefully there and they are anonymously and collectively profitable. Said stresses that imperial competition becomes a domestic topic in England and the centrality of the imperial vision is registered and supported by culture that produces it, and also disguises and transforms it. To reflect more critically upon, Said indicates that easy passing references to Australia in *David Copperfield* and India in *Jane Eyre* for example are made, because, he says, they can be made although Empire is not the manifest subject of these works. Contrapuntal model of interpretation therefore recognises that a colonial sugar plantation, in *Mansfield Park* for example, is necessary to maintain a particular lifestyle in England and it takes into consideration both imperialism and the resistance to it and what is included in the narrative together with what is excluded, because "culture is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive".[370] From this perspective, it is important that *Mansfield Park* is about England and Antigua, and is of imperial domination although it is not about it.[371]

An integral part of Said's discussion is that the structures of a narrative can be connected to the ideas, concepts and experiences that it draws support from and Empire is

[369] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 71.
[370] Brantlinger 68.
[371] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 24.

so vast and all-inclusive that there is no European novel without it. Said says that if the impulses that give rise to the novel are studied, "we shall see the far from accidental convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel on the one hand, and, on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism".[372] However, Said is not saying that the novel form, or the culture in general, caused imperialism. On the other hand, his understanding is that, as a cultural product of bourgeois society, novel is unthinkable without imperialism.

Hence, Said notes that it is not simply coincidental that Britain has a novelistic institution with no European competitor or equivalent, and by 1840s, the undisputed dominance of the British novel as an aesthetic form and intellectual voice had achieved greatness. Following Raymond Williams, Said emphasises that novelists –a knowable community of Englishmen and women–[373] shaped the vision of England, gave it an identity, existence and referable articulation; and novels became novels in a line of novels. It is also that the relationship of the Empire between its overseas possessions is a part of the Empire's identity. The novelistic tradition in England is unique for Said because he indicates that the power of the Empire is expanded and expressed in the novel form which importantly contributes to feelings, attitudes and references and is the basic element of the consolidated vision of the world. Like the Orientalist brotherhoods, novels inherit realities from other novels and continuously stress the eternity of England in such a way that the maintenance of the British imperial policy goes along with the novelistic process. These overlapping affirmations maintain the consolidated vision of the Empire and accept a globalised world-view. Said defines this as the structure of attitude and reference but it is important to stress that the structure that connects novels to one another does not have existence outside the novels themselves.

Said points out that especially the 19th century European novel becomes a specific cultural form that consolidates, refines and articulates the authority of the Empire and he gives theoretical backing to his ideas of the novel as an institutionalised mode of writing

[372] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 85.
[373] Patrick Brantlinger indicates that Said's ideas of filiation and affiliation are closely akin to Raymond Williams' knowable community, see Brantlinger 60.

with Georg Lukacs. Emphasising that novel is "a concretely historical narrative shaped by the real history of real nations",[374] he more intensely observes that the appropriation of history, the historicisation of the past and the narrativisation of the society gave the novel its force on the one hand and the accumulation and differentiation of social space and the idea of space in general to be used for social purposes were also included in it. As pointed out earlier, the primacy of geography and the ideas about the control of territory are very important for Said in understanding imperial and cultural contests and he argues that narrative affirms a spatial moral order. It can be seen that French and English spaces have export value and good and bad things about these places are shipped out, for example to Australia as in *David Copperfield*. Most definitive perhaps, Said suggests that everything in European and American culture consolidates the ostentatious idea and vision of Empire with positive notions about home, nation, language, order, moral values and standards of taste and he argues that these ideas invest in geographical distinctions between real places.[375]

Said's focus in *Culture and Imperialism* is directed also towards resistance and opposition and he speaks about the interacting experience linking imperialist with the imperialised. He crucially notes that resistance had an immense effect on white policies and attitudes and is an organic part of the imperial experience. To emphasise another important point, Said observes that imperialist misrepresentations see the fight against colonial rule as effected by the Western idea and tradition of freedom and paradoxically explain it as a major triumph of imperialism. They however ignore that, Said stresses, Indian or Arab culture for example always resisted imperialism. In the main, there are two forms of resistance for Said which he describes as primary and ideological resistance. Primary resistance is literally fighting against imperial intrusion and is followed by the secondary form of resistance; ideological.[376] Citing Basil Davidson, Said defines the later as "when efforts are made to reconstitute a 'shattered community, to save or restore the sense and fact

[374] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 92.
[375] Space, geography and location are repeatedly emphasised in *Culture and Imperialism* and Said makes closely connected remarks with *Orientalism* by focusing on filiation, affiliation and disaffiliation.
[376] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 94-106.

of community against all the pressures of the colonial system'".[377] Said believes that the rediscovery and reconstruction of what had been suppressed in the impure past of the native can be found in the urgent ideological basis that stimulates ideological resistance. For this, Said underlines Frantz Fanon's rereading of the Hegel's master-slave dialectic and emphasises that by using Hegel and the Marxist dialectic of subject and object, Fanon integrates Western ideas and tools in his resistance which Said describes as the partial tragedy of resistance.[378]

The immediate question for Said is how a culture aspiring to be independent of imperialism can imagine its own past. This naturally brings his discussion to nationalism that acquires a great density in his writings. Following Fanon, Said persistently argues that nationalist consciousness can easily turn into rigidity and might replicate imperialism, as in Africa where the dangers of chauvinism and xenophobia are concrete realities. He perceptively observes that three topics emerge in decolonising cultural resistance. The first is an understanding of history as an integral whole to which the concept of national language is central. Said regards that language remains inert without national culture which sustains the communal memory, re-inhabits the occupied landscape and invents expressions for pride. Second is the idea that resistance is an alternative way of perceiving human history by which the imperialised writes back to the Empire with forgotten histories that breaks down the barriers between cultures, and this is Said's larger argument of the voyage in. The third topic is a retreat from separatist nationalism into a more holistic view of human community and liberation. On the basis of the foregoing, Said indicates that anti-

[377] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 253.

[378] Peter Gran says that, "since the nineteenth century, the dominant metanarrative in the university has been the one constructed from Hegel's notion of the rise of the West, complete with a stagnant Orient and a people without history". Peter Gran, "*Orientalism*'s Contribution to World History and Middle Eastern History 35 Years Later", Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard and David Attwell (Ed.), *Debating Orientalism* [E-book], (18-37), Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 18. Susanne Zantop similarly argues that in Hegel's philosophy of history, the north has all the potential and the south is ruined in the present after losing all its past glory. This is evident in physical terms as well, the north forming the head and the upper parts and the south the lower parts of a global body; north being reason and south sexuality and emotions. See Zantop 119. In this context, it is significant to remind that Gramsci rewrites Hegel's master-slave dialectic for the colonial situation nearly two decades before Fanon though his emphasis is on internal colonialism within the borders of the nation-state. Shaobo Xie, "'The Southern Question' and Said's Geographical Critical Consciousness", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (77-89), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 79.

imperialist resistance began with unsuccessful revolts until after the World War I and it grew in different forms with parties, movements and personalities everywhere in the Empire. More particularly, almost thirty years after the World War II, Said indicates that resistance became militantly independence-minded and indispensably changed the internal affairs of the Western powers where there are both opponents and supporters of the imperial policies.

Out of this suggestion, Said looks at particular decolonising attempts and intensely discusses nationalism which he defines as a mobilising force that blends into resistance against an alien and occupying empire on the side of the peoples who possess a common history, religion and language. On the other hand, Said especially singles out the geographical element in his interpretation of anti-imperialist resistance and his founding insight is that a restored and searched for geographical identity is central to the anti-imperialist imagination, because land is recoverable only through imagination.[379] Said explains that the culture of resistance renames, reclaims and reinhabits the land and it is accompanied with a search for authenticity that resonates in the endeavour for the re-development of the native language.[380] Said's great topic emerges here and he beckons questions concerning the nativist phenomenon with W. B. Yeats, négritude, the Rastafarian movement, the back-to-Africa project, literary nationalism and glorifications of pre-colonial Islam. It is clear for Said that to accept nativism is to accept the devastating consequences of imperialism and its essential religious, racial and political divisions, as Julia Mullaney states, "the project of decolonization and nation-building has been erratic and traumatic".[381]

Said sees these early anti-imperialist resistance movements as the abandonment of history and the secular world in favour of essentialisations and emphasises that there is a possibility to understand the world not constructed out of opposing pairs, and that nativism

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[379] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 271.
[380] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 75.
[381] Mullaney 13. Benita Parry asserts that strategies such as nativism cannot "be dismissed as a retrograde and impossible attempt to retirieve an irrecoverable past". See Benita Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 27 (The Politics of Postcolonial Criticism), 1997, 3-21, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3509129, 17.

is not the only alternative –and nationalism is not an interesting and enduring one. For this, Fanon remains influential on Said as he suggests that liberation demands a great cultural shift from nationalist independence.[382] To state again, Said's chief suggestion in the face of nativism and nationalism is the voyage in which creates a variety of hybrid cultural work.[383] It should also be stated that Aijaz Ahmad criticises Said's concept of the voyage in and argues that actually few people do oppositional work that Said describes as the voyage in.[384]

An important debate at the heart of *Culture and Imperialism* about resistances to modern forms of imperialism is about Arab Muslim nations and the orientalised Orient and for the purposes of this study it will be discussed at some length. Said talks about the Arab Renaissance in vivid and engaging detail while speaking about George Antonius's *The Arab Awakening* (1939) and argues that al-Tahtawi, one of the first students sent to Europe by Muḥammed 'Ali Pasha, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abdu continuously emphasised the significance of a revitalised and independent culture to fight against the West and the most important thing in their resistance movement was to develop a reasonably indigenous Arab-Islamic identity. Another thing to be noticed about Said's discussion of the Arab Oriental is that he proposes a severe critique of identitarian consciousness after an attentive reading of Fanon because he says that the efforts to homogenise and isolate populations with nationalism –not liberation– has had disastrous results. Said underlines that the nationalist appeals to a pure and authentic Islam, or Afrocentrism, négritude, and Arabism failed in their attempts and decolonisation has been weakened because of untutored nationalist and religious consciousness.

After all, it seems to Said that the border and identity wars; "Identity, always identity, over and above knowing the others",[385] are expressions of essentialisations: Africanising the Africa, orientalising the Orient, Westernising the Western, Americanising the American

[382] See Ahluwalia, "On Late Style, Edward Said's Humanism", 152; see also Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 55, 143-144.
[383] See Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 164.
[384] For Ahmad's critique of adversarial internalisation see 207-208.
[385] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 362.

eternally and without alternatives, and the threat is possessive insiderism.[386] Identity for Said does not come to mean an "ontologically given and eternally determined stability, or uniqueness, or irreducible character, or privileged status as something total and complete in and of itself".[387] It is more an unavoidable mixing in with one another that, for Said, most national systems of education have not dreamt of because "No one today is purely one thing".[388] Similarly, reading and writing texts are never neutral activities, not to say culture which has a rich worldliness and complicity with imperial conquest and liberation. Against all these, the quiet theme running through *Culture and Imperialism* is an insistence on the pleasures of exile and Said accordingly ends his criticism with the role of the intellectual. As aforesaid, *Culture and Imperialism* follows the rhythms of *Orientalism* and enlarges and refines its themes, and corrects it.

2.3. RETHINKING POST-COLONIAL CRITICISM

It is important to state that the critical studies of colonised societies began in the late 1970s and, especially after *Orientalism*, what came to be known as colonial discourse analysis developed with the writings of Said, Bhabha and Spivak. As aforesaid, known as the Holy Trinity of colonial discourse theory, these critics do not identify with Post-Colonialism openly in their criticism and the term post-colonial was never applied in these early studies although the effects of colonialism on societies and cultures are these critics' central concern. It is seen that the term post-colonial has been a site of disciplinary and interpretative contestation from the beginning and this is also apparent in the use of the signifying hyphen for, as Ashcroft et al. state, many critics insisted on the use of the hyphen to distinguish it from colonial discourse analysis, which is an aspect of it, because "the interweaving of the two approaches is considerable".[389] Generally speaking therefore, Post-

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[386] A note of questioning concerning possessive insiderism is present in Spivak, as she says the understanding that "only the marginal can speak for the margin" legimitimises the arrogance of conscience. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Theory in the Margin: Coetzee's Foe Reading Defoe's Crusoe/Roxana", *English in Africa*, 17 (2), 1990, 1-23, JSTOR, Accessed: 28-12-2011, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40238659, 1.
[387] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 382.
[388] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 407.
[389] Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 204. Benita Parry describes Post-Colonial Criticism as the younger relative of colonial discourse theory. See Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", 8. See also Mullaney, 5-6.

Colonialism can be defined as analysing the processes and effects of European colonialism together with resistances to it from the 16th century up to the present day.

On the other hand, it is important to recognise that location is very important in the Post-Colonial Critique because every colonial encounter is different and, as stated before, the term post-colonial should not be homogenised. The crucial fact is that the materiality and locality of the experiences have enriched post-colonial approaches, mostly with disputes and differences, that oscillate between a method based on materialist and historical thinking, as exemplified in the writings of Benita Parry, Aijaz Ahmad and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and colonial discourse analysis. A useful way of getting a better hold of this analytically and theoretically is to recognise, as Robert Young states, the existence and the general pattern of colonialism as a discourse.[390] For all reasons, Post-colonial Criticism is tremendously rich because of the archival work done on all aspects of culture and it is clearly seen that Post-Colonial Theory intersects significantly with other European modes of criticism such as Postmodernism, Post-structuralism, Feminism and Marxist ideological criticism. In this context, this study now returns to a post-colonial reading of Ahdaf Soueif's fiction with the important recognitions of prominent post-colonial theorists alongside Edward Said.

[390] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 207.

THIRD CHAPTER

A POST-COLONIAL READING OF AHDAF SOUEIF'S FICTION

Ahdaf Soueif's fictional works trace efforts to define the contemporary Arab/Muslim female in a variety of surroundings in Egypt and England and invite the reader to consider the relationship between the colonial past and the post-colonial present, and colonised/decolonising Egypt and modern metropolitan England. These works are interrelated with characters and cross-references and reflect, with an auto-biographical inclination,[391] the emotional, sexual and intellectual growth of upper-middle class Arab women, Asya, Aisha or Amal, who speak English, study English Literature and are educated (and temporarily live) in the imperial centre. However, *The Map of Love* is situated outside this exchange of fictional characters and episodes, and autobiographical content, and discusses larger post-colonial issues from different perspectives with more complex characters. It should be indicated that the interconnectedness of these fictional works informs readings in this study that investigates key post-colonial issues.

This chapter presents a post-colonial reading of Soueif's fiction under three headings. Titled as "The Strategic Use of Positivist Orientalism", the first part considers Soueif's historical-novelistic challenge under the neologism *strategic Orientalism* and mainly discusses the appropriation of the Orientalist discourse in *The Map of Love*. The second part, "Hybridity and Colonial Desire", explores the issues of post-colonial hybridity, ambivalence, alterity and colonial desire especially in *In the Eye of the Sun* and discusses the interpellation of the post-colonial subject by the culture of the coloniser. The third part, "Vision, History and Islam", discusses the processes of historical interpretation and novelisation for the post-colonial subject and addresses the issues of historical rewriting and rereading for the post-colonial female. This part also generates a reading of Soueif's writing as a powerful example of post-colonial fiction in English and presents an interpretation of nationalist and political Islam by looking into identitarian politics around Islam.

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[391] See Massad and Soueif 75.

3.1. THE STRATEGIC USE OF POSITIVIST ORIENTALISM

Ahdaf Soueif differently presents the difficult task of facing the Orientalist discourse of the West in her tour de force *The Map of Love* and structures the novel on a strategic use of Orientalism which produces an interesting novelistic outcome. Soueif subverts this violent discourse with a formative attention to, in Said's words, its paradigms of research and explores the ills of colonialism and imperialism through *strategic Orientalism*. Paradoxically, academic Orientalism becomes an important source of linguistic, historical and cultural transmission in *The Map of Love* and Soueif articulates a heightened concern for history with this critical concept with which she can explore European colonialism, transnational circuits of power and female empowerment. Soueif's positive use of Orientalism reiterates visions of inclusivity and ambivalence as the defining characteristic of her contemporary hybrid females as she upholds travels between languages, continents and centuries. Her hybrid characters produce and process histories which become both national epics and oriental romances in retellings and she complicates the issues of representation, authenticity and translation with overt political concerns. As a post-colonial alteration to the novel form, an imperial European genre, Soueif creates a space for historical confrontation that can be interpreted through post-colonial concepts such as abrogation, appropriation, cultural authenticity, catachresis and strategic essentialism.

Appropriation, importantly related to ambivalence and hybridity, is used to describe the (strategic) use of imperial cultural forms, languages and modes of thought by post-colonial societies to resist political and cultural control. Appropriation is most explicit in the areas of language and textuality and the very debate is on the use of the imperial language. It is notable that by the appropriation of the imperial language, the post-colonial writer can describe the acts of the Empire to a wider audience and it is important to note that abrogation is appropriation's twin concept that means, with an engaged understanding, the rejection of a standard, correct and normative form of English which suggests that "the denial of the privilege of 'English' involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the

means of communication".[392] As observed in *The Empire Writes Back*, "The appropriation of the english language is the first of a range of appropriations which establish a discourse announcing its difference from Europe".[393]

Abrogation can be interpreted as a political stance whereas appropriation is a cultural and linguistic process. Bill Ashcroft indicates that appropriation of the dominant language creates an installation of difference that "occurs perhaps more strategically in the use of code-switching which specifically illuminates the political and cultural gap installed through language".[394] Similarly, as Ashcroft et al. state, the understanding is not that the English language is inherently incapable of describing post-colonial experience, but that it needs to develop an appropriate usage to do so and that language is a material practice.[395] It can then be stated that the three features of all post-colonial writing is first the silencing and the marginalising of the post-colonial voice by the imperial centre, secondly the abrogation of the imperial centre by the post-colonial text and lastly the active appropriation of the language and culture of the imperial centre.[396] Used by Spivak, catachresis is in close meaning with appropriation. Originally meaning grammatical misuse, catachresis is a process in which the colonised subject reshapes a traditional feature of imperial culture, for example parliamentary democracy or the idea of nation. Catachresis is empowering because it includes the adaptation of a European concept into the culture of the post-colonial society. It is important to stress that, as Benita Parry specifically suggests, Spivak's understanding of agency is related to catachresis, because "it is the catachrestic rearticulation of dominant texts that will force a re-thinking and refracturing of forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorised by Western modernity".[397]

It is important also to note that the engagements of the local with the global culture can be understood with appropriation because local cultures are not passive recipients of the global culture and the appropriation of global forms operates in the construction of

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[392] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 37.
[393] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 77.
[394] Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, 76.
[395] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 10-11, see also 40.
[396] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 82.
[397] Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", 10.

identity. On the other hand, as Benita Parry perceptively puts, appropriation is a definitely problematic process because "whereas the peripheries can readily be shown to appropriate and redeploy materials from the centre, what emerges is that the centre is unable to recognize the materials from the periphery as constituting Knowledge".[398] More significantly, appropriation demonstrates the very complex interaction between the coloniser and the colonised in the consumption of colonial literature, which emerges as an important theme in Soueif's fiction, and it is important to remember that colonisation as an imperial act is considered an appropriation of land.[399]

Intersecting in an important way with appropriation and strategic essentialism, cultural authenticity has been intensely debated in Post-Colonial Criticism. It is seen that, in the process of decolonisation, certain cultural and artistic forms were regarded as inauthentic and a return to a pre-colonial past and native language were celebrated. It is significant to note that the fixity with an authentic culture can be problematic because this political stance is often essentialist and it ignores the fact that all cultures are hybrid, as Robert Young indicates, "culture is always a dialectical process, inscribing and expelling its own alterity".[400] Ashcroft et al. offer a similar perspective and argue that glossing and inserting untranslated words into the post-colonial text are engaged with the concept of cultural authenticity and more importantly "The gradual discarding of glossing in the post-colonial text has, more than anything, released language from the myth of cultural authenticity".[401]

On the other hand, a strategic cultural essentialist stance might be powerful in the struggle against the Empire, as observed by Spivak. It is important to assert that strategic essentialism is immediately related to the post-structuralist understanding of subjectivity

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[398] Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", 15.
[399] See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation* [E-book], Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008, 36-37. It is important to note that there are three main types of linguistic groups in the post-colonial discourse: monoglossic, diglossic and polyglossic. Monoglossic groups correspond to settled colonies that use english as a native language. In diglossic societies, the majority of the people speak more than two languages like in India, Africa, the South Pacific and Canada and the language of the government and commerce is english. In the Caribbean, polyglossic communities occur where a multitude dialects create a comprehensible linguistic continuum. See Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 38. See also Mullaney 37.
[400] Young 28.
[401] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 65.

which reveals that essentialist cultural constructions are inherently flawed. Paradoxically though, the subversion of the essentialist modes of identity in the decolonising process became essentialist, especially the national liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s and Said's suggestions about the dangers of nationalism therefore deserve to be considered. From a post-structuralist perspective, Spivak argues that it is not simple and easy for the subaltern to speak and have agency because of the essential subjectivity that discursively constructs the subaltern as subaltern. In her famous article "Can the Subaltern Spivak", though tremendously misinterpreted, Spivak warns that the subaltern cannot be free and isolated from the play of discourses and institutional practices.[402] However, she later talks about a strategic need to embrace essentialism in the struggle for liberation.[403] It should be stressed that essentialism is a contested issue in Post-Colonialism and the inevitableness of hybridity shows the impossibility of essentialism. As Benita Parry observes, Spivak has a firm contention that "the over-determinations in Europe's construction of its Others obliterated their subjectivity, leaving no space from which the subaltern can speak" which for Parry "appears to conflate the intentionality of a dominant discourse with its effects, thereby overestimating social constraint while occluding the ways in which multiply constituted subjects refuse a position as pliant objects of another's representations".[404] With supporting critique Parry perspicaciously indicates that dialogue is not possible between the coloniser and the colonised because it "suggests an equal and asymmetrical association" and because "the native was sometimes an informant, always a topic, but rarely, and only in very special circumstances, an interlocutor".[405]

Introduced above, Spivak's careful embrace of essentialism informs readings of Soueif's fiction, and with these consideration, it can be argued that a strategic use of positivist Orientalism initiates a different scripting of beginnings in *The Map of Love*.

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[402] See Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 49. See Richard E. Hishmeh, "Strategic Genius, Disidentification, and the Burden of *The Prophet* in Arab-American Poetry", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (93-119), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 94-95.
[403] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 97; see also 175.
[404] Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", 9.
[405] Parry, "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?", 15; Parry, *Postcolonial Studies, A Materialist Critique*, 8.

Strategic Orientalism can be considered as an alternative approach to examine the boundary between fiction and history in Soueif's novels which problematises the Arab Oriental's entry into history. This recognition shows that *The Map of Love* as a novel in English turns into a theoretical debate about novel and history writing for the post-colonial subject and its subversive element is the abrogation of Orientalism and the appropriation of this learned discourse. To consider the dynamic relationship between Orientalism and the strategic use of it in Soueif's writing, it is necessary to look at the debate about academic Orientalism with Edward Said. As stated before, Napoleon fundamentally changes Orientalism and Said proposes a questioning of the Orientalist discourse starting with the Expedition. For Said, Napoleon's textual attitude to the Orient creates textual children and it is important to indicate that the styles of towering Orientalist figures like Sacy, Renan and Lane will help generate a reading of *strategic Orientalism* in this study.

The Map of Love begins with a Dickensian tone, "To begin my life with the beginnings of my life",[406] with chapters titled "A Beginning", "An End of a Beginning", "A Beginning of an End" and "An End", beginning itself becoming a potent metaphor for colonialism because as John Erickson emphasises "Every beginning has its roots elsewhere".[407] In a way, Soueif articulates the monstrous side of colonialism that makes an after to it impossible though aspired and this recognition comes to signal a nuanced understanding of teleology in the novel.[408] The reader will see that "A Beginning" and "The End" are deceptive and the end is constantly deferred with the double-time structure that symmetrically puts the colonial past and the post-colonial present in a showcase as Amal says, "And yet, why should I expect the story to be complete" (104) after all "Texts are not finished objects".[409] The (Arabic-English) glossary placed at the end of the novel as an accumulation of metonymic gaps also serves this idea; glossary is there as part of the novel, but is not a part of the novel. The trace of the deferral as the result of colonialism marks the novel's insistent repetition on genealogy and, unlike in Dickens, "I record that I was born

[406] Charles Dickens, *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience & Observation of David Copperfield, The Younger of Blunderstone Rookery (Which He never meant to be Published on any Account)* [e-Book], Signet Classics, New York 2006, 18.
[407] See Erickson 6.
[408] See Heilmann and Llewellyn 141.
[409] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 312.

(as I have been informed and believe)",[410] the story begins not with birth but with death, "But she cannot – or will not – understand, and give up hope. She waits for him constantly" (4). The novel indeed starts with a family map the members of which, the reader later learns, carry the names, not to say the fates of their ancestors. As the insertion of genealogy shows, the structuring action of the novel is reading and writing history and because *nasab* is considered a form of history writing in the Arab East, "The Beginning" begins with the past; a colonial past that "even God cannot change" and the present turns into an uncanny double of the past. It should be reminded that "The Beginning" starts with an aphorism, "Even God cannot change the past. Agathon (447-401 BC)" (3).

The ambivalence towards the past and the present in the novel emerges from the post-colonial subject's confrontation with history and Soueif reflects this in the production and processing of history in a novel that is about the fictionality of fiction.[411] *The Map of Love* is a work of fiction about fiction and History, which is considered a fiction. The dialectical bond between past and present is contrasted and destroyed with the chronological and narrative development of a story and the production of history in the novel becomes a criticism of colonial superstructures and their violent forces. This friction between the smooth narrative prose and the fictionality of history and fiction that disturbs the serenity of the novel is based on the catalysis of two narratives from two women and an authorial figure who copies and translates texts and fills in the gaps in and between them. After all, for the Arab Oriental a story "can start from the oddest things: a magic lamp, a conversation overheard, a shadow moving on a wall", and Amal's story starts with a trunk that Isabel, "the American", brought from New York (6).

There are a lot of things in it; newspaper cuttings from *al-Ahram*, *al-Liwa*, *The Times* and the *Daily News*, a string of thirty-three prayer beads (certainly of a man), books of Arabic calligraphy practice, a locket, a sachet of lavender, a baby's frock, a shawl and another shawl which can be a casual reference to the periphery of the Empire as Lady Bertram says in *Mansfield Park*, "I wish he may go to the East Indies, that I may have my

[410] Dickens, 18.
[411] Also the essential sameness of history and literature. See Heilmann and Llewellyn 138, 141.

shawl. I think I will have two shawls, Fanny".[412] The trunk is a treasure chest, perhaps "Pandora's box" (7), and it includes a woven tapestry which will become a symbol of cultural transmission in the novel showing a pharaonic image and an Arabic inscription, a verse from the *Qur'ān*, "It is He who brings forth the dead" and "from the dead come the living".[413] A concern of hybridity is consolidated with the hybrid tapestry that is woven by an English woman with Egyptian cotton depicting Egypt's pharaonic history and Islamic heritage. Tapestry itself is the overlapping of the histories of the metropolitan West and the colonial periphery and inscribes the histories of Egypt: "six thousand years of recorded history" (19).

The *Arabian Nights* beginning slowly disappears, but will come back again, "And so it is that our three heroines" (164),[414] and the novel unfolds the diary entries and letters of Lady Anna Winterbourne and the testament of Layla al-Baroudi (al-Ghamrawi) at the start of the 20th century in England and Egypt and connects them to Amal al-Ghamrawi and Isabel's stories that take place at the end of the 20th century in Egypt and the United States. This cross-century story between generations of women that presents minute historical details is narrated through a hegemonic European discourse: Orientalism. Soueif's novelistic alteration is two-fold: the story is transmitted between women[415] and it dismantles Orientalist brotherhoods with a sisterhood and the patriarchal genealogies with a maternal genealogy. Soueif shows that it is not a dangerous internalisation of the discourse that provides the novel's condition of formation as a novel in English, but a subversion and a questioning of the discourse, and more than that, a strategic and positivist use of it.

The Map of Love opens in 1997 when Amal returns to Egypt after twenty years of living in England and settles in Cairo. She is a translator of fiction, or does her best to translate. She is divorced from her English husband and her two sons are in England. Amal

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[412] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, Claudia L. Johnson, (Ed.), W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London 1997, 208. See also Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 111.
[413] See Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 491, 516. "He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. He gives life to the earth after its death, and you shall be raised to life in the same way", *The Quran*, al-Rum: 30/19.
[414] Massad thinks that this is a traditional *hakawati* (Arab storyteller) style. Massad and Soueif 81.
[415] Heilmann and Llewellyn 147; Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 195.

is living in the family home in Cairo, an aloof, passive and secular intellectual, and her brother, a prominent musician, is in New York. Her Palestinian mother is long dead and the reader will later hear her miscarriage after the Nakba. The family home in Tawasi, Upper Egypt is empty and after Nasser's abolition of the titles, his father is no longer a Basha. Family relations are set, and in its opening, the novel escapes the fixity of a single (and regulating) consciousness and the narrative is built also with the voice of a female predecessor that suddenly appears on the first page in italics: "*The child sleeps. Nur al-Hayah: light of my life*" (4). This is the voice of an Englishwoman, Lady Anna Winterbourne, and later Haram Sharif Basha al-Baroudi (350), and her voice does not marginalise the voice of the colonised. On the other hand, it becomes a necessary impulse for a historical and chronological overlap that the novel needs. As Boccardi emphasises female solidarity overcomes difference[416] and Nash similarly argues that "Soueif's concern is to unfold the solidarity of sisterhood, East and West, not to patronise the Arab Muslim women".[417]

However, the tension in the act of writing itself is apparent, Amal "reads and lets Anna's words flow into her, probing gently at dreams". The troubling exercise of reading is obvious, "she had sorted out, labelled and put away" papers by type and size of paper and colour of ink (4). They are in English and French, some are in envelopes, there is a green and a brown journal among other things; a purse and two wedding rings. Amal also finds another writing book which includes sixty-four pages of Arabic ruq'a script and immediately recognises her grandmother Layla's handwriting. At this point in the novel, the fundamental issue for Soueif is the very existence of these archival material, as Amal says, "I smoothed out her papers, I touched the objects she had touched and treasured" (43-44), and Amal's reading of it. This attests to the basic tension for the post-colonial subject because what the novel shows is a coming together (of women) in the communal act of bearing witness and this is troubling. Amal's encounter with history[418] and the colonial past of Egypt turns into a testimony and Soueif problematises the encounter through Amal's

[416] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 113.
[417] Nash, "Re-siting Religion and Creating Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif and Leila Aboulela", 29.
[418] Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 201.

ongoing hybridisation or "metropolitan hybridity".[419] She is an Arab/Muslim woman educated in the imperial centre and she fluently speaks the imperial language. Amal has schooled knowledge of Orientalism, she is "critically aware of the consequences of colonialism",[420] and it emerges at unexpected places in the novel. Layla al Maleh describes this as "cultural colonialism"[421] and it is seen that Amal is well-read into the Anglo-Arab history and politics. Soueif emphasises and celebrates the plurality of voices (also of the individual), but her primary concern in this distinctly political novel is the asymmetrical power relations concerning representation and she explores this with Amal.

On the other hand, it is not only Amal, but Isabel also "knew some of her own history must be there [in the trunk], but she also thought there might be a story" (7). There are many papers and documents in Arabic and she cannot read them and this is how an interesting exchange starts. Amal will translate the Arabic papers for Isabel, a journalist doing a project on millennial views in Egypt.[422] It makes sense because as Soueif says in *Mezzaterra*, "Egypt more than most countries, tends to be regarded as a free-for-all; its heritage common to all comers, and every season brings a crop of new books about it, written by American women" and "Egyptians have long been used to foreigners poking around in their lives" (248). In this cross-cultural web of relations, Amal's act of historical witnessing turns out to be what Mohja Kahf describes as *waqf 'ala al-atlal*. She is standing at the deserted family home, alone with the trunk, and remembering her ancestors. Through translation, Amal starts reading history which becomes a memorial practice and turns into a writing of it. The story coming out of the trunk, the 'Anna story' as she names it, ultimately becomes a novel in the imperial language that is contaminated with the voices of both the *efendiyya* and the *fallaheen* in Arabic.

Although Amal says this is not her story, it becomes her story and this way ambivalence as a theme is explored in the novel. She starts unpacking, unwrapping and

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[419] See Layla Al Maleh "Anglophone Arab Literature: An Overview", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (1-63), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 4. For metropolitan versions of hybridity see R. Radhakrishnan, *Diasporic Mediations, Between Home and Location*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London 1996, 159.
[420] D'Alessandro 34.
[421] al Maleh 6.
[422] For millenarianism see Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 276

unravelling Anna's story (11), like an Orientalist scholar, and reads and reads Anna's words and says that she almost knows them by heart.

Amal, as a reader of English novels, is now in the English Autumn of 1897 and the narrative starts to shuttle between past and present with diary entries and first-person narration. Amal imagines herself as Anna, "Put football instead of cricket and she could have been me". The emphasis on cricket is a painful recognition for the post-colonial subject[423] and interestingly an Egyptian Arab woman identifies with a Victorian English lady. Amal's identification is problematic and her position is complicated because the reader knows that she is writing the 'Anna story', but she is also, as an educated reader of novels, reading Anna's story. Anna becomes, "as real to [her] as Dorothea Brooke" (26). This is a question mark that this post-colonial text poses: how can a literary character be real and how can a post-colonial subject identify with the culture of the coloniser? Isabel is somehow aware of this and says, "You like telling stories" and Amal says, "I do like piecing things together" (132). The reader slowly recognises that English Literature becomes a site of alterity and ambivalence and Amal too is aware of its shaping and distorting influence. Sabina Alessandro interestingly describes this as "the awkward identity crisis".[424]

Relatedly, Amal starts to see that the journal moves from its "girlish beginnings" as Anna is chronicling a "happy married life – beginnings touching in their assumption of order, of a predicted, unfolding pattern" (12). Perhaps, the diary will become a domestic novel that consolidates the image of the Empire, but quite the contrary, Anna's diary illustrates the difficulty of historical witnessing. It is a testimony of moments of fracture for the post-colonial subject, it is filled with "talk of India and of Ireland, of the Queen and the Canal, of Egypt", it is about "The question of whether savage nations had a right to exist" and "Darwin and the survival of the fittest". Anna is under a distinct form of stress and confusion, perhaps estrangement from the racialist English society, and her diary becomes a site of public and personal history, as Amal says, "'The personal is political,' I quote"

[423] See Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 18.
[424] Sabina D'Alessandro, *Politics of Representation in Ahdaf Soueif's The Map of Love*, CHE: Peter Lang, Bern, 2011, 12.

(338), and desire. Interestingly, Anna hopelessly writes about a son who is sent "up the Nile to 'learn Arabic, keep a diary and acquire habits of observation and self-reliance and not to imbibe Jingo principles'"".[425] How she wishes, though "too wicked a wish", that she were that son (13). At this moment, Soueif gives the reader hints about a possible oriental adventure and slowly and strategically manipulates the course of the narrative. The reader will see that the novel turns into a parody of the Orientalist discourse, a mock narrative, as Soueif subverts oriental captivity stories and romances.

While she is unravelling Anna's story, Amal learns about Isabel, who gives "bits of her story" which is a "dry, edited version" (16). *The Map of Love* is a mobile novel, in terms of history and place, and the setting smoothly changes to New York as the first-person narrator, indeed Amal, starts to relate the love story between Isabel and Omar al-Ghamrawi, Amal's brother, "the 'Molotov Maestro' they call him, the "Kalashnikov Conductor"" (17). The reader immediately recognises a loosely portrayed Edward Said with Omar,[426] who was labelled the Professor of Terror by *Commentary*, a right-wing magazine founded by the American Jewish Committee in 1945. Omar is a pianist, a conductor and writer of books: "*The Politics of Culture* 1992, *A State of Terror* 1994, *Borders and Refuge* 1996" (21). It is seen that the novel is constructed with archives of selves, and as a result, texts replicate texts and characters replicate characters; texts also travel, not to say characters.[427] Languages are appropriated, stories are produced, history is reproduced and there is a continual process of repetition (and displacement) which, as suggested before, is the result of witnessing trauma. What ties this archive of selves is a distinct Arabo-Islamic understanding of witnessing that is established with genealogy. Anna and Sharif are the Victorian mirror couple of Isabel and Omar and Amal is the grand-daughter of Layla, Sharif's sister. What surprises (and shocks the European) reader is the issue of cousin marriage as Soueif reveals that Isabel, Omar and Amal are cousins and

[425] It is also the case that "Disgraced younger sons are sent off to the colonies". See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 75.
[426] See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 145; Moore 148; Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 32; King 453; Mariedele Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, Palgrave Macmillan, Great Britain 2009, 108.
[427] See Moore 153.

Sharif is the grand-uncle of Omar and Amal. The importance of the tapestry is reasserted here with genealogy as the ties that continue to bind the lives of people separated by centuries are resurrected because "from the dead come the living" (516). As Boccardi indicates, "genealogical relations extend horizontally in the present as well as vertically with the past" in *The Map of Love*.[428]

Soueif sets a symmetrical historical pattern and a cross-century transnational story begins. The reader will first hear about the Scramble for Africa and learn in the course of the novel that Anna loses her husband, Edward, after he witnesses the atrocities of the Empire in the Omdurman War. Symbolically, Edward goes silent and dies. In mourning, Anna regularly visits the South Kensington Museum and finds consolation in Frederick Lewis paintings. After a couple of months, she decides to go to Egypt with a company of English aristocrats and her adventure begins. Cross-dressed as an Englishman, Anna decides to secretly go to the Sinai with an Arab manservant, Sabir, but is mistakenly abducted by Arab nationalists on the road. They cannot release her fearing that it might cause more trouble because she is an aristocrat Englishwoman and Egypt is occupied, so Anna is brought to the house of an Egyptian basha, Sharif al-Baroudi, a man of law. There she meets Sharif's sister Layla and as a sign of hospitality Sharif Basha accompanies Anna in her desert journey till she is safely restored to her English life in the symbolic Shepheard's Hotel from the balconies of which she can panoptically see the Orient.[429]

During the journey, Anna cross-dresses as an Egyptian woman and a Frenchman, because it is dangerous to cross-dress as an Englishman and the journey becomes a rare life changing experience for Anna with a domestic resolution that will be broken.[430] Anna and Sharif get married when a turbulent political climate shatters the country and Sharif is assassinated at the end of the novel. On the surface, the story is oriental and exotic, and very familiar to the European reader except for the bleak ending that Moore describes as "sentimental *dénouement*",[431] and the concerns of this section is Soueif's construction of an

[428] Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 199.
[429] See D'Alessandro 54.
[430] See *Culture and Imperialism*, 242.
[431] Moore 151.

oriental romance and the way how history is transmitted between women. *The Map of Love* draws the reader's attention to Soueif's appropriation, or Arabisation, of distinct European cultural forms, such as the novel genre, and the deconstruction of Orientalism by replacing it with *strategic Orientalism*. The focus will be mainly on epistemology and ontology; on how Anna knows the Orient, and herself, and on the representation of the Orient by the Orientalists and the Arabs. In the second place, Amal's ambivalent relationship to the archival material and history will be examined with Soueif's concern for creating and novelising a real Orient that is absent in Edward Said's criticism. Boccardi similarly states that *The Map of Love* "re-imagines the situation posited by Said but redefines, at least in part, his pessimistic outlook on the very possibility of a meaningful interaction between the West and the Orient in two ways".[432]

Appropriation is the subversive use of imperial cultural forms and languages, and Soueif uses and subverts the novel genre as a post-colonial novelist. It is seen that her novel resists political and cultural hegemony in its treatment of language and *The Map of Love* as a post-colonial text is an English-Arabic novel, the Arabic becomes a veil.[433] Claire Chambers indicates that "Soueif's use of English is like a translation in the sense of forcibly moulding the dominant language to reflect the cadences of Arabic".[434] Similarly Soueif indicates that *The Map of Love* has an authentic Arab voice in its English expression which culminates in the Arabic word *wigdan* meaning inner soul, passion and sensibility.[435] The handling of imperial language is very important and Soueif dismantles the centrality of English by appropriating it, as Amal says, "We speak as we always have: Arabic inlaid with French and English phrases" (200). D'Alessandro similarly argues that none of the characters speaks his or her native language in the novel, but always a mix of languages, and she describes this as a search for one's identity.[436] It is important too that, as Dalal

[432] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 107.
[433] See Massad and Soueif 89.
[434] Claire Chambers, *British Muslim Fictions, Interviews with Contemporary Writers*, Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom 2011, 248.
[435] Massad and Soueif 89.
[436] D'Alessandro 33.

Sarnou emphasises, Souief has "no personal history of opposition or rejection of English" and she is conscious of the depth of Arabic.[437]

More interestingly, Amal as the narrator of the novel, does not report in standard English and the novel doubly problematises alterity in stressing that language and identity are interdependent.[438] As will be explored later, Soueif italicises Arabic vocabularies in *In the Eye of the Sun*, but quite the contrary there are untranslated dialogues in transliterated Arabic in *The Map of Love* and though Soueif provides a glossary in the form of cultural, literary and historical commentary, the novel presents Arabic as a metonymic gap and many of the Arabic vocabularies in the novel do not appear in the glossary, which can be described as selective lexical fidelity in post-colonial terms. It is seen that Soueif signifies the difference between cultures this way and also "illustrates the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts".[439] To underline, the metonymic gap might be interpreted as a refined form of abrogation. It is described as a cultural gap when unglossed words, phrases or passages from a first language are inserted into the text of the colonised and post-colonial subject and the important point is that the reader might be unfamiliar to them as this gap creates a sense of distance. Especially interesting is the fact that the inserted language stands for the culture of the colonial subject in a metonymic way and it constructs a symbolic gap between the two cultures. In that respect, although the colonised subject writes in the imperial language, differences can be emphasised by the metonymic gap.[440]

For Soueif's case, the novelty is not the insertion of Arabic into a work of fiction in English, but her attention to the variations of language while she is code-switching. Albakry and Hancock emphasise that "Soueif uses language and specifically code switching as a potential means to convey […] themes in her novels".[441] She brilliantly captures the Victorian diction of Anna and the American English of Isabel, and the reader

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[437] Dalal Sarnou, "Narratives of Arab Anglophone Women and the Articulation of a Major Discourse in a Minor Literature", *Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, 16 (1), 2004, 65-81, DOI: 10.24/ipcj-2004-0005, 72.
[438] See Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 71, see also 53.
[439] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 63.
[440] See Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, 75, 115; Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 152-153; Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 62.
[441] Muhammed Albakry and Patsy Hunter Hancock, "Code switching in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*", *Language and Literature*, 17 (3), 2008, 221-234, SAGE Journals, DOI: 10.1177/0963937008092502, 223.

sees that the colloquial Arabic, especially of women, finds a place in the text. Moore says that Soueif carefully inscribes different pronunciations of English, elementary standard Arabic, idiomatic Egyptian Arabic and even body language in the novel[442] and Albakry and Hancock indicate that there is a "dichotomy between *al-fusha* and *al-ammiyya*"; the high and low varieties of Arabic in the novel.[443] Interestingly though, at some points in the novel, the metonymic gaps are further emphasised. This is especially with the Arabic word *zagharid*, the untranslatable joy-cries, of the women in the desert for example, that cannot be translated and always appear in the Arabic.[444] On the other hand, there are some scenes in *In the Eye of the Sun* which depict *zagharid* as exotic and oriental. *Tarab* is also a difficult word/concept to translate, as Amal says, "Take that concept 'tarab', for example; a paragraph of explanation for something as simple as a breath" (515). Relatedly, in another scene Amal says, "How do I translate 'tarab' How do I, without sounding weird and exotic, describe to Isabel that particular, emotional, spiritual and even physical condition into which one enters when the soul is penetrated by good Oriental music?" (332). Hassan indicates that Amal here "suggests that the risks of foreignizing translation range from undue estrangement to (self-)exoticism".[445] On the other hand, Ashcroft al. all describe such writing as "interpretative space" and indicate that it is "an ethnography of the writer's own culture": "The post-colonial writer whose gaze is turned two directions, stands already in that position which will come to be occupied by an interpretation for he/she is not the object of an interpretation, but the first interpreter".[446] In that sense, editorial intrusions, footnotes, glossary, explanatory prefaces, if made by the author are an example of this, and situated outside the text, they represent a post-colonial reading rather than writing and the post-colonial Other becomes the Other as reader.

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[442] Moore 153.
[443] Albakry and Hancock 228. See also Waïl S. Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", *PMLA*, 123 (3), 2006, 753-768, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-03-2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486352, 757-758.
[444] See Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 763.
[445] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 758.
[446] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 60.

Glosssing can be described as the "most primitive form of metonymy"[447] and the following examples reconfirm the importance of metonymic gaps for Soueif. It is important too that the interesting glossary extends to a dispute about genre definitions and borders in the novel. Soueif also has a socio-historical concern and pays attention to the palimpsestual history of Egypt and the modalities of gender in the Arabic language.[448] For example, she defines *abeih* as "title of respect for an older brother or male relative", the respect appearing with continued emphasis in the novel, and although it does not appear in the text, Soueif passes a note about the Arabic word *abla* (f.) indicating that the word is "Turkish" (519). It can be argued that this Arabic word is defined in terms of Egypt's history under the Ottomans. On the other hand, for the word *afandiyyah*, Soueif emphasises imperial history with the education in the imperial centre: "(also effendis); plural of afandi (effendi or efendi): an urban (Western–) educated man (see Basha)" (519). She does not address *afandiyyah*'s Ottoman connotation, but later on indicates another important consideration with *basha*: "Ottoman title, roughly equivalent to 'Lord'. […] The titles in use in Egypt – and all countries subject to Turkish Ottoman rule – were 'Effendi' (an urban person with a secular education and wearing Western dress – although not Western himself)", and "(Turkish: Pasha)" (520). This detail is very important because the title for Sharif appears as *Pasha* in Anna's writing and as *Basha* in Amal's rewriting. The focus on Western dress in the definition is also important because, as Joseph Massad indicates, sartorial change produces an epistemological change in Soueif's writing,[449] and interestingly when Anna and Sharif see each other for the first time, Sharif is in Western dress as an *effendi* and Anna is cross-dressed as an Englishman.

There are a lot of heightened scenes in the novel about sartorial epistemology: Anna sees Sharif in Egyptian dress, Sharif sees Anna for the first time in a Victorian gown after asking for her hand in marriage, Anna wears veil during the journey to the Sinai (in the train), she also wears one of the gowns of Sharif before the Sinai journey and Soueif

[447] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 60.
[448] The masculinist infrastructure of the Arabic language is a contested issue and is often discussed in the writings of the Arab/Muslim female novelists. See Diya M. Abdo, "How to be a Successful Double Agent: (Dis)placement as Strategy in Fadia Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (237-269), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 239.
[449] Massad and Soueif 82.

presents Anna's nervousness about the dress code for the Khedive's ball at the 'Abdin Palace: "but as I knew that Moslem notables were to be present I thought it would provide me with adequate covering and would not cause offence. We are after all in their country". But Anna also has an imperial obligation, "But I did wear Lady Winterbourne's tiara and my mother's amethyst necklace and I believe I did not disgrace the Empire!" (94). Soueif's attention to dresses is one of the defining concerns of the novel and is presented in the glossary very intricately.[450]

In the glossary, Soueif also defines every day Islamic phrases like *al-hamdu-l-illah, la hawla wala quwwata ill b-Illah* and *Allahu Akbar* and her characters use Islamised English: "May He lengthen your life, insha' Allah" (421) or as "May her arrival bring you good fortune, insha' Allah" (451). There are also Arabic exclamation/swearings such as, "ya *kalb* ya ibn el-*kalb*" meaning you dog, you son-of-a-dog. English translations of proverbs in Arabic also reappear with intensity in the text, such as "her thirst for adventure was watered" (243) "the monkey, in his mother's eyes, is a gazelle" (281), "A bean does not have time to get wet in your mouths" (284), "if Anna had asked for bird's milk he would have brought it to her" (392).[451] In an important sense, Waïl S. Hassan describes *The Map of Love* as an Anglophone Arabic novel and a "translational text", and emphasises that Soueif "enacts a poetics of translation" in the novel which, like other translational texts, "draws attention to the 'invisible' agency of the translators and to the 'fluency' and 'transparency' of their translations".[452] For Hassan, this lies beneath the Arabisation of English in the novel and the stylistic elements maintain the theme of translation.

On the other hand, the prevailing political tone of the novel is prevalent in the glossary as Soueif defines the Balfour Declaration, only with a quote, "Arthur Balfour, British foreign minister in 1917: 'His Majesty's Government looks with favour upon the creation of a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine …'" (520). Her attempt can be considered a politics of translation.[453] In a similar way, she glosses Jama'at Islamiyyah:

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[450] For Orientalist fashion that swept through Europe, see D'Alessandro 82. See also Bulfin 427.
[451] See Albakry and Hancock 229.
[452] Waïl S. Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", *PMLA*, 123 (3), 2006, 753-768, JSTOR, Accessed: 27-03-2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486352, 754.
[453] See Moore 146.

"(Islamist) groups. General name for several factions of Islamist activities in Egypt who believe in armed opposition to the state" (523). Soueif also touches on the definitions of slogans and emphasises the cultural memory of the Egyptians, like *Sallim silahak ya 'Urabi*, meaning "surrender your arms 'Urabi. Used for when an opponent is in an impossible position – as 'Urabi was in Tel el-Kebir" (525).[454] As stated before, the Victorian storyline of *The Map of Love* chronicles the aftermath of the 'Urabi Revolt till the Saad Zaghloul's 1919 Revolution and a gloss for the slogan draws the reader's attention to the novel's political content.[455]

Soueif is also sensitive to the Coptic cultural memory and adds a note about the Coptic calendar, "the most extreme persecution of Christians in Egypt took place in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diclidianus. The Coptic Church adopted the year of his ascension, AD 284, as the beginning of a new calendar: the Time of the Martyrs" (521).[456] She clearly demonstrates a political impetus and the glossary becomes a historical reminder of imperial acts (not limiting itself to European imperialism) as emphasised with the word martyr. Likewise, Soueif defines "Tokar, I'll have to send you" which she describes as "a common expression of threat. Tokar was a distant province in the Sudan known for its harsh climate and conditions". The story is that "when the Sudan was under Egyptian/Turkish rule, an officer or civil servant who incurred the displeasure of authorities was posted to Tokar – there to live a miserable life and die an early death" (527). Similar to "Tokar, I'll have to send you" is an emphasis on *corvée*, meaning "forced labour – employed for large national projects like digging the Suez Canal, but also for work on the Pasha's or the Khedive's lands" (521). As a French word, *corvée* describes for the Egyptian people the painful act of remembering the death toll over the Canal, during its digging and because of the wars over it. Suez-erainty becomes Suez-cide[457] and there are hints of *corvée*

[454] Abdulhamid II describes 'Urabists as "vermin". Selim Deringil, "The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881-82", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 24 (1), 1988, 3-24, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org.stable/4283219, 9.
[455] Ibrahim Abu-Lughod indicates that modern Egypt experienced three major revolutions within three generations: in 1879-1882, 1919-1921 and in 1952. Abu-Lughod, "The Transformation of the Egyptian Élite: Prelude to the 'Urābī Revolt" 325. See also Bulfin 426.
[456] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 186.
[457] Bulfin 438.

also in *In the Eye of the* Sun. Fuad el-Sinnari works as an engineer in the Suez and he proudly says that he has touched the wall of missiles there, haughtily saying, "It's a practically war out there. The figures for the first four months of this year say that four thousand of our construction workers were killed. If we go on like this we'll match the twenty thousand killed in the original excavation of the Canal" (204). As *corvée* shows, the definitions in the novel are not restricted to the Arabic words and, though not an appropriation and not appearing in the glossary, the reader is presented with a gloss on names, "It was her father who had explained to her her name. Isa Bella: Isis the Beautiful" (22). With Isabel's name, Soueif points to cultural crossings and shows once again the emphasis on Egyptian mythology in the novel. On the other hand, Amal slowly gives up categorising Isabel as 'the American' and addresses her with her name.[458] Together with Osiris, Isis appears in the hybrid tapestry of Anna and Maggie Adawalla emphasises that the story of Isis parallels Amal's as Isis "gathers the pieces of Osiris' dismembered body scattered all over Egypt to give him eternal life".[459]

The interpretation of space is also a tension in the glossary and Soueif demonstrates a resistance to the word harem[460] as a Western designation and offers an alternative understanding of space with *haramlek* defined as "the area in a house reserved for women" (522) and *salamlek* as "part of the house where men can move freely (as opposed to the haramlek, where they can go by the permission of the women)" (525). Unsurprisingly, harem is absent in the glossary, only appearing under *harem*, and Soueif glosses other conjugations: *haraam, haram 'aleik, haram* and *hareem.*[461] Malek Alloula significantly notes that "a single allusion to [harem] is enough to open wide the floodgate of hallucination just as it is about to run dry".[462] Similarly, Reina Lewis says that harem "is the most fertile space of the Orientalist imagination".[463] Despite its orientalist connotations,

[458] Moore 147.
[459] Adawalla 449.
[460] See Shao 87.
[461] For *ḥarîm, ḥarâm, ḥurum* and *ḥîjâb* see Moore 11.
[462] Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem,* (1981), (Trans.: Mryna Godzich and Wlad Godzich), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London 1986, 3.
[463] Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, I. B. Tauris, New York, London, 2004, 4. See also D'Alessandro 89.

Catherine Wynne argues that Soueif represents "harem as desirable domestic place". She argues that Soueif achieves this by aligning her writing with 19th century (English) women travellers.[464]

At the same time, language becomes as a signifier of place in the novel and Anna writes in her diary that she cannot recognise that she is in Egypt and it is only until she sees the Arabic script that she knows that she is in Cairo, "I fancy I am not really in Africa yet, for certainly this place, from what I have seen so far, seems to have more of the Europe of the Mediterranean in it than anything else" and she continuous more interestingly, "were it not for the costume of the native Arabs and the signs in their language, you might fancy yourself in some Greek and Italian town" (58).

In *Orientalism*, Said argues that the actual encounter with the Orient changes the perception of the Orientalist as he feels betrayed and Anna's disappointment perfectly illustrates this. On the other hand, Anna thinks that the Orient that she sees is not the Orient as it is represented by the West and it can be argued that Soueif hints at the discussions about the implied real Orient. In another scene, the reader is informed that Anna starts learning Arabic and Amal meditates on the beauty of the "signs in their language". She says, "It was Anna's brush that, dipped in aquamarine ink, traced the cunning, curving letters: gliding with the stem of an 'alef' bursting into flower, following the tail of 'ya' as it erupts into a spray of fireworks that scatter the text with diacritics", but Anna cannot read Arabic, "She knew enough by then to make out the characters, but she could not yet readily tell where one word ended and another began" (80-81). Interestingly, the Arabic language becomes the metonymic gaps of English, but as Soueif indicates, all the letters of the Arabic script are connected in writing and there are not any gaps. Language itself then becomes a metaphor of ambivalence and similarly Soueif emphasises that it is hard to know where one culture ends or the other begins (in the archive of the self), and by extension, where the past ends and the present begins (in the memory of the individual). For that reason, this abrogative strategy puts Arabic words abruptly in an English text and a

[464] Catherine Wynn, "Navigating the Mezzaterra: Home, Harem and the Hybrid Family in Ahdaf Soueif's "The Map of Love"", *Critical Survey*, 18 (2: Friends and Family Figures in Contemporary Fiction), 2006, 56-66, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-06-2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41556166, 56.

mediator, like in the Orientalist discourse, is necessary to read the text and to fill in the gaps. Relatedly, Valassopoulos indicates that "several incidents throughout the book as well as the structure of this novel lend themselves readily to post-colonial criticism" and "the novel employs varying identifiable strands in post-colonial theory and criticism".[465]

In another instance, Amal imagines Anna wearing a peignoir and says, "it is a peignoir? I like the word: tasting of the nineteenth century, of fashion and a certain type of a woman, or Europe and the novel. Anna Karenina might have worn a peignoir as she prepared for bed" (65), then she meditates on the colour of the peignoir with a colour card. Her internal monologue repeats a similar sense of ambivalence arising from language, "You can say with certainty 'this is blue, and this is green' but these cards show you the fade, the dissolve, the transformation – the impossibility of fixing a finger and claiming, 'At this point blue stops and green begins'". As a cultural hybrid, she thinks about fusion, "And you? You are in between; in the area of transformations" (66). Peignoir as an English word becomes a cultural signifier and a reminder of ambivalence and alterity for Amal. As stated above, sartorial change brings epistemological change and she realises that she can only imagine Sharif Basha in European dress because that is how Anna and Layla describe him. On the other hand, it is interesting, she says, that she has never seen her father and her brother "in the old costume of an Egyptian gentleman" (254).

The most creative preoccupation with language is seen in the emphasis on Arabic conjugations in the novel and the very text of *The Map of Love* includes etymological explanations for Arabic words and conjugations, making it a site of linguistic control for the post-colonial subject. It also strengthens the cross-cultural correspondence between non-Egyptian and Egyptian characters.[466] Similarly Boccardi emphasises that "linguistic mediation in the novel is an important dimension of productive cultural understanding".[467] Amal teaches Isabel Arabic and explains the structure of the language (at the same time Layla teaches Anna Arabic), and she says "Everything stems from a root. And the root is

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[465] Anastasia Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", *Critical Survey*, 16 (2), 2004, 28-44, JSTOR, Accessed: 02-10-2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41557270, 29-30.
[466] Moore 151.
[467] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 113.

mostly made up of three consonants – or two. And then the word takes different forms". Her example is *qalb*, "Take the root q-l-b, qalb", and she defines it as, "Qalb: the heart that beats, the heart at the heart of things". The different forms of q-l-b will show that the words 'coup' and 'heart' come from the same root in Arabic, "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 dumb. "Maqloub": upside down; "mutaqallib": changeable; and "inqilab": a coup" (81-82). *Qalb* becomes *inqilab* and the conjugation shows that the concern in the novel is not only the appropriation of the English language, but more a political and historical questioning through language. As a mono-lingual English-speaker, Isabel is astonished and Soueif points to her understanding of the language in textual terms as she asks for a book, "Is there a book that tells you all this?" and Amal replies that she "kind of worked it out". However, Isabel, "the good Westerner",[468] surprisingly defines the structure of the Arabic with fertilisation, "like ovae; the queen in the centre, and all the other eggs, big and little" (82) and her recognition can be interpreted as a signal of her unlearning and recovering (from the Empire). Relatedly, Moore says that the use of Arabic competency can be an "index to character sympathy" in the novel[469] and Hassan indicates that "Arabic-language competency of Western travellers and residents in Egypt is an index to their politics, so that no provision is made for orientalists with superb language skills who serve as the agents of imperialism (although good orientalists are prominent in the novel)". [470]

A couple of pages later another root is explained to support this when Anna writes in her journal about an incident. She speaks of her desire to learn the language to Dean Butcher who says, "Ah! You want to read the Mu'allaqat" and Anna explains that *Mu'allaqat* is the name given to the Seven Odes that are the most famous in Arabic poetry from the days before Islam (90). The growing sense in this scene is that Anna slowly understands the formation of Arabic and recognises that *Mu'allaqat* and *Mu'allaqah*, her

[468] Maggie Adawalla, "Generational Differences in Three Egyptian Women Writers: Finding a Common Ground", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 47 (4), 2011, 440-453, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/17449855.2011.590324, 448.
[469] Moore 156.
[470] See Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 757.

famous church in Cairo, share the same root. Albakry and Hancock emphasise that the "interspersing of Arabic is a linguistic technique that might signal the main western characters' growing intimate relationship with the country".[471] It is not surprising because Anna is now writing in a new journal in Cairo, as if to write about her new self, and it is symbolically a dark green one compared to the previous brown one. But it is Amal who explains the meaning of the root, cutting through Anna's narrative, and saying, "'A, l, q: to become attached, to cling, also to become pregnant, to conceive; and in its emphatic form 'a, ll, q: to hang, to suspend, but also to comment" (90). In Islam, surah al-'Alaq is believed to be the first revelation to the Prophet Muḥammed and *al-'alaq* means "the clot". This conjugation is very important because the first word that comes as a revelation and command to the Prophet Muḥammed is to "read" and by extension it can be stated that the post-colonial Muslim subject has the linguistic control in the novel because only she can explain the root. It is important to state also that Anna's tapestry is later divided into three parts and functions as kind of a Mu'allaqat, a hanging poem.[472]

Soueif points to another interesting Arabisation of English with the names of the colonial officers. Lord Cromer is known as "el-Lord" among the locals and Mr Harry Boyle, the Oriental Secretary, earns the nickname of "Enoch" (eunuch) because he is walking with the Lord.[473] Anna defines Harry Boyle as "most interesting as a character" and talks about "the eccentric untidiness and even shabbiness of dress and unruliness of moustache". Mr Boyle, she is informed by Mr Barrington, another sympathetic character, "has a very sound understanding of the native character and he does speak the language" although only of the vernacular. Because he speaks Arabic, Boyle makes himself useful to Lord Cromer. Hassan emphasises that Boyle is the translator-forger in the novel; he is the author of a letter "allegedly written in Arabic about a planned uprising, intercepted by the British […] and sent to the Foreign Office in London in a last-ditch effort to support

[471] Albakry and Hancock 226.
[472] See Moore 151.
[473] Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) is also known as Over-Baring, see Claire Chambers, "An Interview with Leila Aboulela", Contemporary Women's Writing, Oxford University Press, 86-102, 2009, DOI: 10.1093/cww/vpp003, 86-87.

Cromer's unsuccessful bid for military reinforcements in Egypt".[474] It is true that, as Said indicates, few of the colonial administrators "really bothered to learn language of the people they ruled with any fluency, and they were heavily dependent on their native clerks, who had taken the trouble to learn the language of their conquerors".[475] The letter of Boyle is composed in an absurd English and talks about the Oriental mind in an orientalist way. It is translated into French by Anna and into Arabic by Ya'qub Artin and it is found to be absurd in all the three languages. It is interesting that Harry Boyle invents a translation for an imaginary Arabic letter; the letter is translated without an original.

Anna indicates that Cromer himself speaks no Arabic at all except for *imshi* which means go away (71). Lord Cromer remains as a ghostly trace on the consciousness of the Arab post-colonial subject, the West is "personified in Egypt then by Cromer" (*Mezzaterra* 269), and there are frequent references to his administration in Egypt. Anna relates another instance about the Lord's nickname, Mina. Nina Baring, his wife, tells in the Agency that "the Earl used as, as a child, to pick up any object he could carry and cry 'mine-a, mine-a' till that became his childhood name". Upon learning this, Anna sarcastically says that it "accounts for his attitude to Egypt, then" (66). As this example shows, Soueif presents a complex view on the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised throughout the novel and points to it with another instance.

When Anna is mistakenly abducted by the young nationalists, the only word she can recognise in the stream of Arabic is "el-Lord" and she is astonished when one of the abductors addresses her in "perfect French". Anna describes the scene as "the first time I have ever been spoken to by one of the 'effendis'" and indicates that she cannot understand why, because it is the talk in the Agency, "they should be considered less Egyptian for that" (106). Similarly, Harry Boyle says that "the Effendis are not real Egyptians and their opinions can therefore be safely neglected" (98). Paradoxically, French as the language of the previous coloniser (Layla's house is furnished in the French-style and Anna does not like it), is the medium of linguistic equality; "a neutral means of communication between

[474] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 763.
[475] Michael Edwardes qtd. in Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 183.

Anna and her husband".[476] Said indicates that all empires were not the same and France's empire "was energised by prestige"[477] and Moore argues that Soueif's treatment of the French language is "a slightly odd elision of France's colonial ambitions".[478] Albakry and Hancock also emphasise that French as a "rivaling colonial language is used to erase the boundaries and the class distinction between the Empire and the other".[479] Sharif and Anna conduct their speech in French, because Sharif says that he cannot speak English, but Anna knows that he understands English, as she says, "His French would pass that of a Frenchman. I cannot believe he has no knowledge of English, but he seems a man who would not do a thing at all in preference to doing it less than perfectly – and perhaps his English is not perfect" (207). Amal imagines a scene,

> 'Does it trouble you', she asks, 'that we have to speak in French?'
>
> 'I like French.'
>
> 'But does it trouble you that you cannot speak to me in Arabic?'
>
> 'No. It makes foreigners of us both.' (157)[480]

A lot of problems cluster around languages and at one point in the novel to speak in the language of the previous coloniser becomes a central problem for Sharif, as he says "Could she ever know him? Could he ever know her". Isma'il Sabri, a lawyer and patriotic poet, consoles Sharif, "Sometimes I think, because we use the same words, we assume me mean the same things" (272). Earlier in the novel, Amal focuses on the processes of language as a significatory system and says, "What woman will at that moment think about signs and significations? Wonder do we – by the same words – mean the same things?" (219). Soueif treats the mobility of language not only with English-speaking characters who learn Arabic, but also with Arab characters who speak broken or "real life" English.[481] This is brilliantly captured in a scene where the reader hears the voice of an Arab servant. Anna

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[476] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 113.
[477] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 204.
[478] Moore 151.
[479] Albakry and Hancock 230.
[480] Shao indicates that this scene creates a Brechtian alienation effect. See Shao 82.
[481] For grammar mistakes in post-colonial texts see Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 66, see also 53.

is in the Sinai in the company of Sharif Basha and the loyal manservant Sabir is with her. Amal imagines another scene, "'They no English,' he says, then again: 'You happy now?' 'Yes,' says Anna, 'very happy.' 'Sahara,' he says. 'Tents, camels, fire'…" (190). Sabir, like Boyle who can speak Arabic, will later be of use because of his English and will work in Sharif Basha's employ, as Anna says "he is being taught to read and write and some use is being made of his knowledge of English" (396).

As these examples show, language is mobile, hybrid and appropriated in *The Map of Love*, but it sometimes cannot be spoken and completely suppressed. Likewise, Sharif Basha's father only speaks with quotations from the *Qur'ān* besides hadith and daily Islamic phrases like *alaykumu's-salam wa rahmatu Allahi wa barakatuh* or *al-hamdu-l-llah* and this complicates the reader's understanding of language. Sharif describes him with the Arabic word *magzub* and Amal integrates a personal story, a trauma, which forced him to be a *magzub*. After 'Urabi Basha's revolution fails, 'Urabi, Mahmoud Sami (Sharif's paternal uncle also a prominent poet) and another six men were exiled and Sharif's father locks himself in the house and holds fast to his shrine. Khedive Tewfiq summons Sharif and says that "As long as [his father] stays silent, no harm will befall him" (268). With this incident, Soueif shows that language becomes a problem in itself and Sharif's father denies himself the right to speak. He only echoes the sacred word of the *Qur'ān* or hadith and Soueif glosses *magzub* as "one drawn to (God) by religious fervour to the extent that he separates himself from all worldly matters – and (the worldly) part of his mind. From g/z/b: to pull" (524). It is as if like the Arabic *magzub*, he disappears in the English text.

The silence of Sharif's father is close to the silence of Edward and will be the silence of Anna. Hassan remarkably argues that, unlike Joseph Conrad's Kurtz, Edward does not "seek redemption through story-telling", he is led "by disillusionment and guilt to withdrawal into silence", and his silence becomes his death.[482] Likewise, Anna's diary ends after the assassination of Sharif and she only writes, after returning to England, brief letters to Layla, that only mention Nur al-Hayah, her daughter, that the reader will not see. Indeed, Anna's silence is confined in the English "no", the only word she utters when Sharif is

[482] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 760.

killed. Layla describes the scene in her testimony, "'No,' she cried – and it was an English 'no'. I looked up and she had burst out of the house – she was running along the court yard, stumbling. 'No . . . No . . .'" (501). And Anna's story returns to where it begins, "But she cannot – or will not – understand, and give up hope. She waits for him constantly" (510) and she disappears from the narrative. Amal means hope in Arabic and at one point in the novel Anna hopefully gains linguistic control and defines the ways of love in Arabic which becomes a map of love, because "love is always determined by the other"[483]

> 'Hubb' is love, 'isq' 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.

Hassan indicates that there are multiple forms of love in the novel, "romantic, sisterly, brotherly, maternal, paternal, philanthropic, patriotic and even incestuous" and the novel "articulates both formally and thematically the relation among ethics, love and translation" at the same time drawing attention to the "epistemological limits of translation".[484] The mounting sense in the end is that it is *gharam* that defines Anna's love to Sharif and the novel ends sadly and silently with "'Hush, my precious,' she whispers, 'hush. . .'" (516).

In *The Map of Love,* Soueif also provides a guide to food and plants and it seen that she explores complex and loaded words making the glossary attached to memory, history and belonging. The result is an interesting ambivalence in the novel as Soueif challenges the centrality of the imperial language and presents a debate about language itself. As stated before, appropriation can also be examined in the context of the consumption of colonial literature, but such a relationship with the culture of the Empire through education is the concern of *In the Eye of the Sun* and *The Map of Love* concentrates more on the appropriation of the imperial language. On the other hand, as stated before, catachresis can

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[483] Moore 154.
[484] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 756

also be examined in the context of appropriation, especially concerning democracy and self-government, and it should be noted that independence and liberation will be discussed in relation to Anglo-Arab history under the heading "Vision, History and Islam".

Soueif, in *The Map of Love*, tempers visions of inclusivity and hybridity with the appropriation of language and offers another similar vision with the appropriation of the orientalist discourse. In this sense, Orientalism itself becomes a theme to explore colonialism and imperialism, and as stated before, the immediately noticeable thing is the emphasis on the access to knowledge and the production of it in the novel. It can be powerfully argued that Anna's first encounter with the Orient is what Edward Said would describe as textual and Soueif contextualises Anna's worldliness to create a sympathetic character. It is through her father-in-law that Anna hears about the Occupation and before sailing to Egypt, she makes preparations, like Napoleon, and reads the letters of Lady Duff Gordon: "I used to sit and listen to Sir Charles tell the story of Bombardment and the Occupation".

Upon returning from Egypt, Sir Charles brings her a coffee-cup holder, a wooden lattice work and a soft velvet shawl that Amal finds in the trunk, and Anna says that she "would read the account of travellers; the letters of Lady Duff Gordon lay by [her] bed for several months"[485] and her feet led her to the South Kensington Museum where she found "those wonderful paintings by Frederick Lewis" (101). D'Alessandro states that orientalist iconography led to a mania for the Orient and it is important to indicate that the English orientalist painting is different from the French that depicts explicitly sexual fantasies. Lewis, on the other hand, produces sensual images without offending the Victorians and "he goes beyond the mere stereotype".[486] While looking at the paintings, Anna thinks if this is a world that "truly exists" (46). On the other hand, it is very convenient that Anna is reading the accounts of Victorian women travellers as Reina Lewis says, "Western women had for two centuries been doing their best to sate the appetite of a Western readership curious about harem life" and their ability was due to "have actually seen the space

[485] Lucy Duff Gordon is an avid reader of travel books. See D'Alessandro 71.
[486] D'Alessandro 85-86, 90, 95. See also Ahdaf Soueif, "Visions of Harem", *The Guardian*, July 5, 2008, Accessed: 03-11-2015, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jul/05/art.exhibition.

forbidden to Western men" which made them best-sellers in their countries.[487] It is interesting to note that Valassopoulos describes *The Map of Love* as "a mixture of post-colonial criticism and a fantasy harem tale rolled into one; a critique and a copy of the ongoing postcolonial paradigm between coloniser and colonised".[488]

Anna's knowledge of the Orient is textual to the degree that while sitting in her room at the Shepheard's Hotel she "is possessed by the strangest feeling that still [she is] not in Egypt". The violent legacy of the Orientalist discourse is more clear when she feels that something eludes, an intimation of which she "felt in the paintings" and "the conversations in England". The formless, ungraspable, massively incomprehensible, and even threatening, and mysterious Orient "seems far, far from [her] grasp" (102). This sense is apparent from the start as Anna and her English company arrive in a tea-house in Alexandria, "rather more in the Viennese style, I'm afraid, than the Oriental", settle themselves at a windows table, order tea and English cake (56). However, as Said shows, the periphery of the Empire "is not a tea party" although "colonial space must be transformed sufficiently so as no longer to appear foreign to the imperial eye".[489] In that respect, the diary entry shows that there is an asymmetry between the representations of the Orient in the West and the real Orient, but for the time being Anna is unaware of this and she is hopelessly looking for the Orient of the Orientalist discourse. Similarly, Said notes that when Alphonse Daudet's Tartarin arrives in Algeria in 1872, he "sees few traces of 'the Orient' that had been promised him, and finds himself instead in an overseas copy of his native Tarascon".[490]

Although Anna does not realise that the knowledge she has of the Orient is what Flaubert describes as received ideas, she decides to "venture into the desert" to get a glimpse of the Orient, to live "the romance of the desert" like Lawrence, or looking for a "Quixotic seclusion",[491] without knowing that she will be abducted. No matter what she does, Anna will be averted either by the Arabs or the English and she tells about an

[487] Lewis 12.
[488] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 40.
[489] "India 'is not a tea-party', says Ronny Heaslop". Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 243, 273.
[490] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 222.
[491] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 133, 198.

incident of how Lord Cromer sends a party of coast-guards on camel to pursue an English lady who wants to ride across the desert to the Suez (107), the spinal cord of the Empire.[492] On the other hand, Anna ironically looks for the Orient in an imperial understanding of *terra nullius,* in a blank/*white* space, but it is a special place where she will be released from the oppression of the English society at the Agency. Anna's fearless mobility can also be interpreted as a search for roots through routes and it can be argued that her journey changes not only herself but also others.[493] Her motivation reminds the reader of Chateaubriand before whom the Judean Desert stands forth like an illuminated text and, as Said indicates, this silent and supine Orient presents itself to the examination of the Orientalist's very strong ego. Perhaps, Anna unknowingly wishes to be an Orientalist pilgrim[494] like Chateaubriand and although she refuses to internalise the orientalist discourse, her attitude to the Orient is textual as she makes references to Lady Duff Gordon and Lady Anna Blunt again and again in the diary, "I cannot help feeling that the letters of Lady Duff Gordon gave a truer glimpse into the Native mind than do all the speeches of the gentlemen of Chancery".

Anna's recognition brings us to the European female travellers in the Arab East and Reina Lewis' discussions are helpful here. Mainly focusing on the reception and production of the harem, she suggests that "Western women's accounts were heterogeneous and contradictory" and that "they offered clashing commentaries based on differing amounts of excess and expertise". She emphasises that although "marketed on the 'truth factor of having actually been in a harem'", these accounts should not be read as

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[492] Bulfin 413, 416.

[493] See Moore 153; Shao 84.

[494] For sacralised *hegira* see Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 255. It is important to note that *hajj* has strategic importance in confirming Ottoman legitimacy in the Hamidian Era. In 23 November 1895, a memorandum was prepared by the Council of State that discussed the issue of new passport regulations. The Ottoman government charged fees for *hajj* and kept the requirement of visas to ensure that the pilgrims come into contact with the officials of the Exalted Caliphate. See Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1976-1909)", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1991, 2 (23), 345-359, JSTOR, Accessed: 20-02-2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/164486, 351-352.

simply realistic and unmediated because, as all textual productions are, they were historically contingent,[495] or, in Said's words, worldly.

In time, Anna hears a lot of stories in the Agency about Englishwomen who make similar adventures like Lady Duff Gordon, though some end up badly, but after all "Lady Anne Blunt does it and other ladies besides" (107). It should be indicated that Lady Anne Blunt and Lady Duff Gordon break dominant models and appear as sympathetic figures in the novel[496] though Anna's attitude towards them is textual for as D'Alessandro indicates she too is influenced by the orientalist baggage.[497] Boccardi also emphasises that Anna's "decision to travel to Egypt is typically Orientalist".[498] While reading this entry, Amal thinks that "Anna must have secretly wanted something out of the ordinary to happen to her. And now it had" (109), because it is her understanding that the letters and diary are part of the adventure and Anna might publish a book when she is back in England:

> And so Anna arrives in Egypt and this, it seems, is her first letter: a little self-conscious perhaps, a little aware of the genre – *Letters from Egypt*, *A Nile Voyage*, *More Letters from Egypt*. I assume that what I have is a copy of the letter she sent to Caroline. Perhaps she was thinking of a future publication. In any case, I forgive her the mannered approach as she feels her way into my home. What else does she know – yet? (58)

As the above quote testifies, Sabina D'Alessandro indicates that Soueif consciously uses travel writing of the Western tradition to deconstruct stereotypes that depict Eastern women exotically. She further argues that Soueif subverts "the semantics of the English literary canon" with travel writing which is a genre of transition that smoothly passes from the

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[495] Lewis 13. See also Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 109.
[496] See Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 760.
[497] It is hard to distinguish complicity from resistance in Gordon and Blunt's writings and D'Alessandro indicates that these women are often labelled as rebels and non-conformists. See D'Alessandro 17, 58, 70, 99.
[498] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 108.

private to the public.[499] Valassopoulos underlines that "Soueif uses the travel writing genre in order to deliberately change its function and turn it into [a] cultural critique".[500]

The act of travelling has a material result in *The Map of Love* and the reader will see in the course of the novel that Anna's dependence on the Orientalist discourse as a form of knowledge will slowly cease and she will start a new journal, leaving the first one blank: "I am glad that she has broken away – that the brown journal is put gently aside. She did not draw a thick line under the last entry. She did not tear out and use any of the remaining pages". Amal flicks through the pages to find a note on "that early grief" but "the is nothing" (58). Hassan emphasises that "the abandonment of the notebook allows orientalism simply to trail off into silence" and it is interesting to note that, unlike Edward, whose silence is death, Anna's silence is symbolic because her new journal constructs "an alternative discourse".[501] The transition from one journal to the other is definitely a sign of a coming epistemological change and, at this point in the novel, Amal mediates on the possibility of knowing the Other, "I find myself curious, as I would have been with a foreign friend coming to visit: wandering what she will make of Egypt, how much she will see – *really* see". She wishes to be there to welcome her and to show her around. With an uncontrollable urge, Amal wants to be a cultural mediator, though she is the Orientalist mediator, and she interestingly ignores her bi-culturalism while thinking about the limits of knowing the Other. Boccardi indicates that she is a "suitable mediator because she has experienced cultural difference".[502] Amal acts as a cultural mediator for Isabel and directs, or perhaps controls, Isabel's experience of the Orient. At this moment in the novel, another cultural mediator enters the narrative and Amal starts translating into English the testimony of Layla. At a deeper level, the Arabic testimony appears as an English text, perhaps as a selected fragment, and unsettles the reader's understanding of language through translation.

Though she is decidedly venturing into the desert, Anna finds herself in the harem of a wicked Pasha, as Sharif will later mockingly describe it, "Weren't you afraid of me? The

[499] D'Alessandro 15, see also 30, 68.
[500] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 40.
[501] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 761.
[502] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 113.

wicked Pasha who would lock you up in his harem and do terrible things to you?" (153). Relatedly, Boccardi describes this scene as "the parodic articulation of the Orientalist view"[503] and King indicates that the novel is modelled after and is a critique of the oriental tale.[504] Anna is now in the *haramlek* of Zeinab Hanim, Layla and Sharif Basha's mother, a Palestinian, and as Hassan emphasises, this women's quarter "evokes the well-known discourse on the harem – from Montesquieu to Ingres".[505] After that, both Layla and Anna start simultaneously to write their personal histories, which will become a contrapuntal history of Egypt. Amal's relationship to the text is to execute the Empire on a textual basis, but also to subvert its image, and playing the stereotypical Orientalist, she starts ransacking the archives like Sacy, "I go through the archives of *al-Ahram*, cranking the blurred micro-film through the reader while three women in bonnets with crochet trimmings watch me from behind the desk" (59).[506] She is especially "obsessed with Anna Winterbourne's brown journal", and says that she needs to "fill in the gaps, to know who the people are of whom she speaks, to paint in the backdrop against which she is living her life here, on the page in front of me". Like Napoleon and his Orientalist savants, she wants to know all of Anna and Layla's lives to "piece a story together": "I go to the British Council Library, to Dar al-Kutub, to the second-hand book stalls even though they have been moved from Sur el-Azbakiyya up to Darrasa and browsing among them is no longer so pleasant" and she writes to her son in London and "asks for cuttings from old issues of *The Times*".

Going to the archives is not only a resonant historical experience, but also a reshaping of the space in memory. With the archive's transformative potential, Amal is reunited with her sons and recovers from her "house arrest" (59) and starts discovering Cairo. She says that "longing for a place can take you over so that you can do nothing except return" which she does, "to return and pick at the city, scraping together bits of the place you once knew".

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[503] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 110.
[504] King 453.
[505] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 761.
[506] It is interesting to note that Leila Ahmed cannot decipher her father's handwritten Arabic papers after his death and it can be argued that, unlike Amal, Ahmed cannot inherit the archive. See Geoffrey P. Nash, "From Harem to Harvard: Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (351-370), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 361.

But it is a painful experience, because in any case you might not be able to return, and "what do you do if you can never return?" (119). Amal tells the reader that her mother could not return to Palestine though she "had wanted to go home" and embarrassed her once "by suddenly breaking out in sobs with a bar of Nabulsi soap pressed to her nose at the grocer's", and she realises that "she was homesick" (118). On the other hand, Isabel's mother, Jasmine, the grand-daughter of Anna, has Alzheimer's and is liberated from the pangs of memory, but not from language and history, "Jasmine had been lucid, coherent, but in another time and another language: she would only speak French" (341); Jasmine's father was French. Amal sadly thinks about the "parchmentlike" (53) skin of her grandmother, a Palestinian, and all those women bring to the surface for her the troubling questions about memory as the Nabulsi soap becomes a symbol of the dispersal that forced migration violently generates. Amal reads through Layla and Anna about a Cairo that she does not know and she starts to "piece together what [she] could of the Cairo where [she] had grown up" (119) and says to Isabel, "let's see if we can find bits of my Cairo for you" (120). Reading history mobilises the post-colonial subject and the setting accordingly changes to Tawasi, Upper Egypt as Amal carries the archive with her to wherever she goes. It is interesting to state that D'Alessandro describes the trunk as "colonial archive".[507]

The archive also introduces desire to the novel and transforms it. It is but a dangerously oriental desire and the act of reading itself turns into a platform to experience desire. There are hints of it everywhere in the text and Amal says that she wants the story (104) and "willing Anna to write more: to write to her again" (510). After the brief and interrupted sensual scene with Tareq Atiyya, Amal's childhood friend whom she fancies, Amal sees Sharif Basha in her dream, "I dream I am holding on to Sharif Basha al-Baroudi. I kiss his face, his eyes, his shoulders. I lie by him on the great bed in my grandmother's room […] He holds me and lets me kiss him, slightly amused at my passion". The dream is resonant with licentious desire that is often mentioned in the oriental tales, and Amal says, "'Thank you God you are not my father,' I say over and over" (446). The emphasis on incestuous desire is the continuation of an ambivalence. Isabel is pregnant and Omar

[507] D'Alessandro 115.

suddenly learns that Jasmine is the woman who helped him when he was badly injured in the head during a protest in New York. Jasmine was married back then and she and Omar had a brief and tormenting affair. It is hinted at the novel that Isabel might be Omar's daughter, "Father and grandfather in one – like Rameses and Akhenatun or any of the great pharaohs. He would not appreciate that. He is a modern man: an Arab/American" (433). Upon learning this, Amal has a very interesting dream in which Omar, or Tareq, is displaced with Sharif Basha. After all, Tareq is married which introduces another problem about desire and the question hinges in her head, "So I steal a man from his hareem? I destroy her life?" *Hareem* is defined as "(also harem): women, from h/r/m: sacred" (522).

At this point, the pleasure of reading reminds the reader of Scheherazade whose stories refuse to be closed and it can be suggested that Amal cannot break with the inherited script, which is the translation of the *Arabian Nights*, not Lane's but Burton's. In the problematisation of desire through the hyper-sexualisation of the orientalised Oriental, filiation (Sharif Basha) is replaced with affiliation (*Arabian Nights*) and misconceptions arise in dreams, in the unconscious of the post-colonial subject, when genealogy is also problematised. Another similar instance happens in "Knowing", a short story in *Aisha*. In London, little Aisha reads and reads stories, she is finishing her books too quickly and "demanding more". There is no end to her reading and she picks out "a heavy red and gold volume of the *Arabian Nights*". Her mother reassures her father, "It is only the Lane edition", and Aisha enters another world, "A world of Oriental souks and magic and Djinnis" (79). What is not articulated by the mother is that Aisha is not reading Burton's translation.[508] It should be indicated that "Knowing" specifically depicts how little Aisha starts to read English and Wisam Kh. Abdul-Jabbar emphasises that "Englishness becomes an even more overriding aspect of her life"[509] because she reads English translations of Arabic canonical literature. Relatedly, desire and reading are problematised in another story of the collection, "1964", as a stubborn Aisha refuses to go to the school in England and discovers at home "a secret cache of books hidden". These are *Fanny Hill, The Perfumed*

[508] See D'Alessandro 61-62.
[509] Wisam Kh. Abdul-Jabbar, "Fictionalizing Hospitality in Ahdaf Soueif's Short Story 'Knowing'", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 25 (2), 2014, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/09574042.2014.944414, 155.

Garden of Sheikh Nefzawi and *Kama Sutra* and Aisha describes this experience as spending her "fifteenth year in a lotus dream, sunk in an armchair, throbbing to the beat of the Stones, reading erotica" (39). Interestingly, only by reading Arabic erotica in English translations, Aisha passes her Egyptian Preparation certificate. The story also addresses Aisha's familiarity with and the internalisation of the Orientalist discourse in another scene when she bathes herself as a "concubine" for a date with an English boy (28). The internalisation of the discourse is damaging for the post-colonial subject and the problematic act of reading literature strengthens Said's criticism of culture as imperialism.

As stated before, Anna's access to knowledge is also textual and her worldliness reveals a trace of Orientalism as a discourse which appears most visibly in her depiction of the *haramlek* and the people in it. Anna is dressed in the clothes of a man and is sleeping in the room.[510] Moore and Valassopoulos indicate that this scene resembles Frederick Lewis' *The Siesta*.[511] Layla is surprised to see an Englishman in her mother's *haramlek* and Sabir says that his "*Ingelisi*" (Mr Barrington) holds her very dear and he is charged to "look after her like [his] eyes". His use of proverbs in Arabic appear smooth in English and Sabir says that Anna wants to hear stories and songs in Arabic, bandages her hair and wanders in the streets of Cairo as an Englishman pretending that *he* lost speech, "and she knows –you'll excuse me – two words" (112), perhaps, like Lord Cromer, only *baksheesh* and *imshi*,[512] and perhaps because of its loaded history, *baksheesh* does not appear in the glossary.[513] Anna's abduction is certainly exotic and oriental for the European reader and unsurprisingly Isabel aspires to make a film of Anna's life, but Amal wants to keep Anna for herself, stubbornly saying, "I don't want her taken over by some actress" (65). It is perhaps because "Amal finds solace in the past", as Boccardi states.[514] It can also be suggested that Amal has an uneasy sense of seeing Isabel, the American, as the Western observer here, and for her "no one has the epistemological privilege of somehow judging,

[510] It is important to note that in *Aida* Verdi converts some of the priests into priestesses and Said says that he follows "the conventional European practice of making Oriental women to any exotic practice". Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 146.
[511] Moore 150; Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 34.
[512] See Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 763.
[513] See Bulfin 426.
[514] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 114.

evaluating, and interpreting the world free from the encumbering interests and engagement of the ongoing relationships themselves".[515] In that sense, she does not want Anna's life turn into a useful past for a Hollywood drama, and in any case, Layla might be excised from the narrative and the 'Anna story' might lose its contrapuntal perspective. In that respect, perhaps Isabel "too is susceptible to unhelpful stereotyping".[516]

On the other hand, Amal's quixotic tendency is replicated by Anna as well and she describes the *haramlek* more or like as the harem in the Orientalist paintings: "my first thought on waking was that I had slipped into one of those paintings the contemplation of which had given me such rare moments of serenity during the illness of my dear Edward", and she sees an Egyptian woman there, "the first I had seen without the black cloak and the veil". The index of her description reveals more Orientalist vocabulary, "I had been abducted as a man and in the oriental tales I have read it has happened that a Houri or a princess has ordered the abduction of a young man to whom she has taken fancy. She would have him brought to her castle and there she would offer him marriage" (134). It is because, as Boccardi indicates, the novel's "dialogue with Said's seminal text is extensive".[517] Valassopoulos similarly emphasises that Soueif "integrates post-colonial theory into her writing but also manages to expose the tensions that lie within post-colonial theory".[518]

After Anna, Layla narrates the incident and the two women start conversing in French and Soueif explores the encounter as an ambivalent imperial encounter, as Layla says, "I found myself quite forgetting that she was a stranger. And what a stranger: the British Army of Occupation was in the streets and in Qasr el-Nil Barracks and the Lord was breakfasting in Qasr el-Dubara" (136). In this scene, the narratives of Anna and Layla are integrated and Anna's image of the Orient starts to unsettle as she says, "it seemed so odd just to sit there – in one of my beloved paintings, as it were, or one of the Nights of Edward

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[515] Said addresses the image of Arabs in Western media in almost all of his writings and says, "Americans watched the war [the Gulf War of 1991] on TV with a relatively unquestioned certainty that they were seeing the reality, whereas what they saw was the most covered and the least reported war in history". See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 65, 366.
[516] Moore 147.
[517] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 108.
[518] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 29.

Lane" and the "tale" that Layla tells to her is "not out of the medieval East but very much of our times" (137). The description of the harem, not the *haramlek,* shows that "Anna has immersed herself in orientalist culture",[519] but Layla's "tale" is a familiar "tale" and the Orient ceases to be an absent content for Anna and starts to speak for itself and about itself.

To attest to this, Anna learns that what she thought to be a celebration when she was heading to the 'Abdin Palace for the Khedive's ball is in reality a demonstration against the Occupation and some of the demonstrators, including Layla's husband Husni, are arrested.[520] Though mistaken for an English gentleman, Anna is abducted by young nationalist Arabs for the release of the demonstrators. In the course of the novel, Anna is integrated into the upper class Egyptian society after her marriage to Sharif and she is actively engaged in the independence and liberation struggle of Egypt.[521] She translates articles and lectures on art in the newly founded university to women students. This epistemological shift is also seen in her appropriation of the Orientalist paintings and she starts to weave a tapestry, a magical tapestry as Layla calls it (436), and paints realistic scenes of the Orient, some of which are in the house in Tawasi. Boccardi describes this as the "transition from a mediated to an actual experience of the Orient, from preconceptions to understanding". [522] Relatedly, Hassan states that Anna experiences a gradual shift from a Eurocentric to an ideal(ized) Western observer of, and participant in, Egypt's struggle for independence.[523] Anna is enjoying the Egyptian domestic life and furnishing her new house drawing "on [her] beloved Frederick Lewis for inspiration" (324) very much like she finds solace in the "exotic interiors in Lewis's paintings" after the death of Edward.[524] But the reader understands through the analeptic trajectory that the Empire, and what Edward Said would call an untutored nationalism, will shatter this dream-like integration and happiness. Similarly, in "The End", as the executer of the Empire and the Orientalist scholar, or the

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[519] D'Alessandro 110.
[520] See Zachary Lockman, "British Policy toward Egyptian Labor Activisim, 1882-1936", *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20 (3), 1988, 265-285, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/163233, 266-268.
[521] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 139; D'Alessandro 118.
[522] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 111.
[523] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 759.
[524] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 112.

"critical postcolonial eye", as D'Alessandro describes,[525] Amal "smooths down each sheet of each letter and cutting and arranges them neatly in files" (510). Boccardi emphasises that Amal "provides the Orientalist materials of the nineteenth-century story with a dialogical dimension."[526] However, the paradigmatic power of Orientalism does not consolidate the vision of Empire in *The Map of Love* and it generates a contrapuntal history of Egypt.

Valassopoulos interestingly argues that *The Map of Love* "is sometimes buried under theoretical references and allusions, an accusation that has been hurled at post-colonial theorists themselves" and she describes it as an "interdisciplinary novel".[527] More to the point, Bruce King indicates that it can be read as literary criticism.[528] In that respect, it is seen that, like the modern secular Orientalists, but also unlike them, Amal rescues the Orient from the archive and strangeness, especially for the non-Arabic speaker, and the Orient gains the power for representation. She does this especially with philology, like Renan, and polishes the English text with Arabic conjugations. Although Amal is speaking philologically and about philology, and although her texts are processed in her philological laboratory, she does not create or imagine an Orient like Renan and many other Orientalist scholars did. In Said's word, Amal doctors texts, annotates them; arranges, codifies and comments on them like Sacy, but her texts do not turn into explicated fragments for use in the classroom, labelled and sealed. Quite the contrary, she "has not the heart to bury them in the trunk. They remain in her bedroom, on the table by the window. Her brother will want to see them" (510). Nonetheless, they remain as fragments and, as Valassopoulos emphasises, "*The Map of Love* performs the piecing together of fragments, unable to come together in a cohesive whole, thus revealing the internal conflict of post-colonialism and its unresolved relationship to other disciplines".[529]

On the other hand, although there is a problematisation of desire in the novel, Amal, like Lane, rarely talks about sensual enjoyments, and she reminds herself in a Lane-esque

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[525] D'Alessandro 104.
[526] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 108.
[527] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 29, 31.
[528] Bruce King, "Review: Ahdaf Soueif. The Map of Love", *World Literature Today*, 74 (2), 2000, 453, JSTOR, Accessed: 01-12-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40155793,
[529] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 33.

manner to prevent smooth transitions in the novel. Said argues that Lane's self-excision as the detached observer is to strengthen objectivity, but on the other hand, Amal does not excise herself from the text and it is only through her presence that she can investigate fictionality, of history and fiction. She is not the invisible scribe of the Empire. Soueif's "interpretative change of perspective", in Said's words, allows her to challenge the unquestioned authority of the detached Western observer, as Amal looks back at the archive, begins to read and write it contrapuntally with a "simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and those other histories which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts".[530] *The Map of Love* integrates reproduced copies of women's writing, that have been considered historically fragile for centuries, but there is a built-in resistance in the construction of the novel and it becomes a subverting historical text that deconstructs discursive structures like Orientalism with a strategic and positivist use of it.

3.2. HYBRIDITY AND COLONIAL DESIRE

Ahdaf Soueif's fiction shows that no one can describe with certainty who s/he is, as Said says, "No one today is purely *one* thing", because imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities and its paradoxical gift is to make people believe in deceptive purities and assume that they are "only, mainly, exclusively" one thing.[531] As stated in the previous section, Soueif's fiction is an intersection of different concerns and writing practices and she connects with Muslim female novelists writing in English around the globe and with the Arab feminists and novelists writing mainly in Arabic such as Nawal al-Saadawi, Hanan al-Shaykh and Salwa Bakr. On the other hand, Soueif's fictional writing is thematically connected to European canonical writing, especially the novels featuring female protagonists, such as *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Madame Bovary* and the novels of Collette.[532] Valassopoulos emphasises that Soueif writes literature that offers a blend of sociology, history and political science and "weaves elements that are

[530] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 59, see also 203.
[531] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 407-408. Emphasis in the original.
[532] See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 127.

directly of interest to post-colonial critics".[533] As these intersections exemplify, the concern of this section is to address different forms of hybridity in Soueif's fiction and to point to the problematic and hegemonic centrality of English Literature for the Arab female characters that will extend into discussions of cultural authenticity and ambivalence.

The processes of decolonisation essentially include claims to cultural authenticity and renewal, but they also involve revisiting the imperialist and colonialist ideologies alongside a resistance to them.[534] It can be easily recognised that, as a post-colonial novelist, Ahdaf Soueif explores racial and cultural hybridity and emphasises hybridisation as a fundamental part of the identity and culture of both the coloniser and the post-colonial subject. Cultural hybridity is celebrated in Soueif's fiction; however, it is not a happy hybridity that underlies her assumptions, but the understanding that all cultures are inherently and inescapably hybrid, as Said says in *Culture and Imperialism*, "Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic".[535] As stated before, the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrrowings and the questions around the experience of hybridity are multi-layered in Soueif's writings. For example, she posits *mezzaterra* as a form of hybridity, a spatial mixedness but not fusion, which she glamorises in her memoirs in the Romantic and heterogeneous Cairo of her childhood and in the heterotopic Tahrir of the 2011 Revolution. In her fictional writings, on the other hand, hybridity is consolidated as a theme and is expressed either peacefully as the condition of bilingual/bicultural writing and violently as the result of colonialism.

It is observed in the previous section that the consumption of literature can be addressed as appropriation in post-colonial texts and *In the Eye of the Sun* intensely emphasises hybridity, ambivalence and alterity through a questioning of the interpellation of culture (by the Empire).[536] With these in mind, this section suggests ways of understanding how cultural, racial and linguistic hybridity are contested in Soueif's fiction

[533] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 30-31.
[534] See Mullaney 16.
[535] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xxix.
[536] See Nash, "From Harem to Harvard: Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*", 357.

and looks at the issues of cultural interchange, colonial desire, ambivalence and alterity in the novels and short stories at hand. On this basis, it is useful to provide basics definitions for some key post-colonial concepts.

Ambivalence is transferred from psychoanalysis and is adapted by Homi Bhabha into colonial discourse theory. Bhabha argues that a pattern of repulsion and attraction characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised and the irony is that the colonised is not simply opposed to the coloniser because he suggests that the colonial discourse may be both nurturing and exploitative and his understanding of ambivalence unsettles the binary relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Bhabha develops this interesting connection further with mimicry and mockery and indicates that ambivalence disturbs the authority of the colonial discourse. It should be noted however that Bhabha's understanding of ambivalence is controversial for it suggests that colonial discourse carries seeds of destruction, which problematises the struggle for liberation. On the other hand, it is important to recognise that colonial discourse is ambivalent because, as Bhabha argues, it does not want the colonised subject to be the exact replica of the coloniser, for it would be threatening for the coloniser. Bhabha's main contention is that the subjectivities of both the coloniser and the colonised are constructed by the ambivalent colonial discourse and this ambivalence decentres the power of the authority, thus making it connected to the concept of hybridity.[537]

Young indicates that Bhabha is concerned with "constitutive ambivalence" that is at the heart of colonial discourse, "an ambivalence that its appearance in a non-European context only accentuated".[538] Also related to ambivalence and hybridity is mimicry. It is true that colonial discourse encourages the colonial subject to mimic the coloniser and accept his standards, values, assumptions, opinions, morals and habits. The result, Bhabha argues, is a blurred copy that can be threatening for the coloniser.[539] Mimicry is not far

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[537] See Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* [E-book], Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2000, 187; see also Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 102.
[538] Young 153.
[539] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", *October*, 28 (A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis), 1984, 125-133, JSTOR, Accessed: 02-12-2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/778467, 127

from mockery and Bhabha indicates that it points to a crack in the certainty of the colonial discourse; it is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other; *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*".[540] It is important that post-colonial cultural and artistic works emerge from this uncertainty in the colonial power; "mimicry *repeats* other than *re-presents*".[541] It should also be stated that colonial mimicry is indisputably related to power because it is a mimicry of the original and the true that exists at the source of power.[542] On the other hand, it can be argued that, as Benita Parry suggests hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence have transformed Post-Colonialism from a critical anti-colonialism to a more reconciliatory mode of criticism,[543] or in other words, from a materialist to a textual critique.[544]

Liminality is also central in understanding ambivalence.[545] In the Post-Colonial Theory, liminality denotes an in-between space where cultures meet and cultural change occurs. It is the transcultural Third Space and it can be argued that the colonised subject lives in the liminal space that is between the colonial discourse and the assumptions about a non-colonial identity. It should be reminded that liminality creates a process of engagement, contestation and appropriation and demonstrates a very complex interaction. But, an identification with liminality does not suggest a movement between identities. For Bhabha, liminality is central to hybridity and he describes this symbolic liminal space of interaction as a stairwell where there are no polarising assumptions, hierarchy and binaries. Another crucial thing for Bhabha is that Post-Colonialism, postmodernism and post-feminism represent liminal spaces because of the appellation post.[546]

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[540] Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", 126. Emphasis in the original.
[541] See Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, 3, 52, 142; Young 153; Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", 128. It is interesting to note that Aijaz Ahmad censoriously describes Asian and African literatures as mimicries. See Ahmad 216.
[542] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 88, see also 101.
[543] Parry, *Postcolonial Studies, A Materialist Critique*, 4.
[544] See Hassan, "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature: Horizons of Application", 50.
[545] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 170.
[546] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 145-146; see also Susan Basnett and Hanish Trivadi, "Introduction", *Post-Colonial Translation, Theory and Practice* [E-book], Susan Basnett and Hanish Trivadi (Ed.), Taylor & Francis e-Library 2002, 5-6.

Amin Malak describes Soueif's fiction as a hybrid of numerous forms, East and West, urban and rural and classical and modern[547] that reveals an inescapable post-coloniality, and in her semi-autobiographical bildungsroman, *In the Eye of the Sun*, Soueif explores many polemical issues that she often discusses in her writings such as nationalism, identitarian Islam, gender politics and female sexuality.[548] The result is a dense epic-length novel that expands into eight hundred pages, and as stated before, the novel depicts the emotional, sexual and intellectual journey of Asya in Egypt and England. Soueif portrays her as a contemporary hybrid, an Arabic speaking woman who speaks English as though "she'd 'just come from Oxford'" (97), a Muslim woman in a slowly secularising Egypt, an Arab woman who identifies with Victorian female novel characters, and the list goes on. Asya's name also attests to her hybridity. As explained in the short story "Mandy" in *Sandpiper*, Asya means Asia in Arabic and it also means "the Cruel One" (93). Asya is an Arab/Egyptian woman, though she has doubts that Egyptians are African, and she carries the name of another continent. More interestingly, she is Muslim and, as Malak notes, Asya is the name of the pharaoh's barren wife in Islam who finds baby Moses adrift in Nile, and saves and adopts him. Asya is therefore a name that unites the pharaonic history of Egypt with its Islamic heritage.[549] However, as will be explored, Asya is never called by her name in the novel, she is either a pussycat, or babe, man, princess, or sweetie[550] and she cannot pronounce her name in a language class which perpetuates a problematic hybridity.

Within the larger pattern of Asya's life, *In the Eye of the Sun* chronicles the history of Egypt between the years 1967 and 1980 and the history of the country intersects with the personal history of Asya and her family. The novel starts with the catastrophic and humiliating defeat of the Egyptian Army in the Six-Day War in 1967, and gives a historical (and ideological) depth to the repressive political climate of the country for the following two decades. Although the novel is intensely historical, the political content of the novel is somehow situated outside the life of Asya, and to support this, it appears as intrusions that

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[547] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 127.
[548] Lindsey Moore sees autobiographical writing of Arab women as a counter-strategy for the veiling of experience. See Moore 14.
[549] See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 130.
[550] See Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 319.

intersect and interfuse with the narrative only to create a stage for the action to take place. Relatedly, Valassapoulos says that "political contexts disappear in the face of internal psychological struggles" in the novel.[551] Soueif describes *In the Eye of the Sun* as a classical novel of education and says that "history and politics come into it only insofar as they affect our protagonist and those around her".[552] After all, *In the Eye of the Sun* is a heavily political novel like *The Map of Love* and it draws attention to a lot of post-colonial issues such as the centrality of language, the legacies of Empire in contemporary politics and economy in the post-colonial states, forced migration, exile, miscegenation and civilisation; it is a novel about decolonisation and it generates a reading of a post-independence society.

The novel's central concern is the post-colonial subject's ambivalent relationship with the culture of the coloniser and it critically looks at literature, especially the novel genre, as an institution of the Empire and problematises the act of reading for the post-colonial female subject. In *The Map of Love*, a later publication, the act of reading is reconciliatory and reconstructive, but in *In the Eye of the Sun*, reading creates ambivalence, alterity and a problematic hybridity. Reading mobilises the post-colonial subject in *The Map of Love*, but in *In the Eye of the Sun*, it paralyses Asya and makes beginnings and endings problematic for her. On the other hand, although the novel follows the trajectory of a linear storyline with its bildungsroman structure, there is a deferral of ending and Soueif does not create a familiar return story, which she strengthens with the cross-references in the short stories.

Like *The Map Of Love*, beginning is a problem in *In the Eye of the Sun* and the narrative starts in media res with a letter that the protagonist Asya writes in London to her friend, Chrissie, in Cairo, "it's only been five years, and while that's very long for you and me it isn't long at all in the history of a country" (3). Nada Ayad indicates that the opening of the novel "articulates one of the projects of the novel: to chronicle the effects of [the]

[551] Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Cultural Expression in Context*, 124.
[552] Massad and Soueif 83.

shifts on the daily lives of ordinary Egyptians".[553] History, or time, is established as a dilemma from the start and the opening invites the reader to think that the long history of Egypt will shape the worldliness of Asya who will carry it as a burden, though the novel shows that some carry it as a scar of a humiliating wound and painfully remember/wear it; Asya's witness is the body.[554] The ending reasserts the same struggle and following a Qur'ānic recitation, "This is but Remembrance and a clear Recitation", the novel turns to the anguished inner speech of Asya, "To see the end in the beginning. But in life you can only see the end when you come to it. And do you then have time to look back at the beginning. To look back at all the frozen moments and see the completed pattern. To think, ah! So this is what it all amounted to" (765). The reader sees the end in the beginning, because this is a novel and it is possible, and Asya is often angrily reminded that life is not a novel. For many interesting reasons, *In the Eye of the Sun* begins with its ending in 1979, the pastness of the past being its central problem, and ends with a questioning of beginnings. This is not surprising, because it is a mobile novel of histories, hybridities, departures and arrivals, and in this novel, returns are traumatic, ambivalent and inseparable from memories making it a questioning, within the syncretic post-colonial realities, of the returning itself.

Beginning and returning become powerful metaphors for colonialism in Soueif's fiction and the presence of the unending colonial past in the present creates the ambivalence that this novel portrays. Its very tension is authenticity and *In the Eye of the Sun* is haunted by English canonical novels, and it haunts in reverse. Marilyn Booth states that *In the Eye of the Sun* is also "a postmodern rewrite of two landmark midcentury works of Egyptian fiction": Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy* and Latifa al-Zayyat's *The Open Door*[555] and this Arab double of *Middlemarch* creates a suffering textual child (of the Empire), Asya, whose fundamental problem is to live a "real life" (729) without the imposition of the others. But her beginning is very novelistic in an imperial sense and it hinders her attempts

[553] Nada Ayad, "The Politics of Foreignizing and Domesticating English in Ahdaf Soueif's In the Eye of the Sun", *Translation Review*, 95 (1), 2016, 55-66, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/07374836.2016.1182831, 57.
[554] Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 337.
[555] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 204.

to liberation. On the other hand, it can be argued that liberation is not the necessary telos in Asya's story.[556] The principal character in the novel mistakes the words on an English novel's page for the realities in Egypt and England and *In the Eye of the Sun* becomes a novel questioning the novel institution as an imperial genre. Amin Malak similarly argues, "This dislocation between the realm of Western literature and the reality of the Middle Eastern world constitutes a leitmotif feature that runs throughout Soueif's fiction".[557]

Asya's beginning is determined by her mother, and colonial history, like her mother's is. In the course of the novel, she is sent to England for her Ph.D. like her mother and becomes a professor of English at Cairo University. The only difference is that her mother had her and her sister Deena when she wass writing her dissertation and Asya's lot is a miscarriage and adultery. As an upper middle-class Arab/Muslim woman, Asya is married to Saif, her university sweetheart, but the marriage is unconsummated and troubling. Boccardi indicates that consummation "is the means to imprinting the romance onto reality" and she stresses that Anna's first marriage is also "defined by sexual frusration" in *The Map of Love*.[558] Asya is obsessively concerned with her sexuality and intellectual identity throughout the novel, seeing romance and sex as the opposites of a binary, and it is seen that desire and (imperial) culture doubly problematise her hybridity, which is contested by the activity of reading (novels) in the novel. Unlike *The Map of Love*, reading does not bring resolution to the narrative,[559] and more than that, it heightens the ambivalence that the post-colonial subject feels. In this novel, Soueif comments on hybridity as one of the violent and inescapable results of colonialism and this is apparent from the start.

In the Eye of the Sun follows the serene trajectory of a bildungsroman, paradoxically becoming a war narrative at times, and it starts in the turmoil of 1967 Six-Day War when the teenager Asya is studying for the Thanawiyya 'Ama, the General Certificate of

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[556] See Massad and Soueif 75; Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Cultural Expression in Context*, 125-126. See also al Maleh 16.
[557] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 134.
[558] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 111.
[559] Marta Cariello argues that Soueif works on a desired and romanticised idea of belonging in the novel. See Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 315.

Secondary Education. On the other hand, there are the official celebrations of the 1952 Revolution; it is the fifteenth anniversary, and sadly, but unsurprisingly, the Army trucks smash Asya's *khalu*, Hamid, crumpling his car like a piece of a chocolate paper and the witnesses, thinking that he is dead, utter "Shahada on his behalf". No one comes near, because "they were army" (37). Like the car-park attendant Mansur in *The Map of Love* who carries the burden of history with his body, Hamid carries history as a scar on his body. The reader later learns that he loses one arm and his brain is also affected, symbolically in the areas of memory and concentration. As a parallel to this, the novel begins in 1979 at a hospital in London when Hamid undergoes an operation for what the Army of Egypt did to him in 1967: "a self-injurious army that damages the same people it is supposed to defend".[560] But, for Asya, "All this is almost entertainment. It is certainly a break from studying" (38).

Asya memorises the "Socialist Laws of July" (44); she is a child of the 1952 Revolution that smashed Hamid in its fifteenth anniversary. Her schedule taped on the wall says that she should study History, but Asya is secretly reading a novel taken from her mother's collection, *Robinson Crusoe*, "It's always 'just one more page: just till the end of this chapter then I'll stop I promise I'll stop.' And she still reads" because "even *Robinson Crusoe* is preferable, it seems, to the details of Sykes/Picot agreement" (45). The history of Egypt (and the Arab Near East) is disturbingly there for both the reader and Asya and the dilemma of the novel is established with the actual practice of novel reading. Asya lives in the Arab East that the Sykes/Picot divided for the West and she is reading an English novel in the midst of the Six-Day War. More interestingly, this novel is considered to be the first novel of English Literature; a novel about the institution of the novel genre; a novel about imperialism and colonialism. On the other hand, "If there really is no war", the exams will finish and maybe she will learn how to dress wounds and "Maybe even learn to shoot and never ever again Geography or History or Sociology but only fiction and drama, fiction and drama, and poetry for ever and ever and ever" (48).

[560] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 131.

But the war is a material reality and her mother says to Asya, "This isn't a game, this isn't theatre. This is a *war*" (55). Dada Zeina, the servant/nurse, "had to go and join the queues that were farming to stock up with sugar and tea and oil and flour" and the reader hears patriotic war songs popping abruptly from the pages of the novel, "Oh War! It's been a long ti-i-i-ime" (52) and the words of Nasser is there. Asya cannot watch the American soap-opera *Peyton Place* anymore because television is showing footages of past military parades. An angry voice from an Egyptian woman is heard, "If I were a man. If only I were a man. You wouldn't see me here today. By the grave of my mother I'd be at the Canal if I had to go there on foot" (54). However, the Egyptian army has to withdraw "in the eye of the sun" (59), Thanawiyya is postponed and they lose the War; "Even novels are no good any more: Asya opens *Madame Bovary*, *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, and closes them again. Out there, there is the world of action and history taking shape. And in here: waiting, helplessness – paralysis" (61).[561] It is such a war that there is not any family in Egypt "who hasn't lost a son or a brother" that summer (65). To his luck, Ismail Mursi, Asya's grandfather, the self-exiled Palestinian, has not lost a son, but his son, Hamid, has lost his memory.

Soueif sets the historical stage and the novel starts to explore the effects of reading the literature of the coloniser for the post-colonial subject. As the beginning suggests, Asya repeatedly questions her preferences throughout the novel and feels that the life that she is living is imposed on her because her academic parents always wanted her to teach at the academy, "The only question was what you would teach". It is a big question mark and she is too late to think about it, but she can't resist thinking, "If the whole world were open to her, if she could be anything at all she wanted, would she choose to teach English Literature at Cairo University" (449). Asya never feels self-sufficient as a professor of English, and although she sees culture as key to transformation, she has doubts close to the end of the novel. Nonetheless, the reader sees that in the opening of the novel Asya desperately wants to study Literature and writes "'Dept. of English, Faculty of Arts, Cairo U.' sixteen times in the sixteen slots […] on her university application form" and invalidates it. She gets

[561] In Nasser's presidency, Russian literature, classics of Marxism and communist propaganda flooded the bookshops in Egypt which can be described as the Sovietization of Egyptian life. See Crabbs 408, 412.

another form and mockingly writes “Dept. of Trees”; it seems inevitable that “she should read Literature” (93). Maybe it all starts when she was reading the *Arabian Nights* in England, as she describes, “from that day back in 1956, when her mother, desperate to keep her quiet while they listened to the news, had put into her six-year-old hands an enormous red and gold volume of Lane’s *Arabian Nights*”. As stated in the previous section, it is only the Lane edition with “engravings of beautiful long-haired ladies languishing on tasselled cushions,” and then “the answer had seemed clear” (450); she should read Literature.

At this moment in the novel, Soueif looks at the class of English Literature at Cairo University in 1967, it is a curious mix of Egypt: “made up of presentable upwardly mobile girls who want to ‘improve their English’ so that they can get jobs in translation, newspapers, banks, indiscriminately”, and “there is the closed-rank contingent from the few foreign schools that remain in Cairo who are here to get a classy degree from a chic department while they wait to get married. Chrissie belongs to these” (93). As for Asya, she wants to join the department, and by studying Literature, the world “takes on a new pattern” for her and she starts to see that “the supreme achievement of life is to create an object of beauty; to create the designed effect, to see the end in the beginning” (94). Asya embraces English Literature, she “has a crush on the professor of Poetry”, a controversial figure because of “the Britishness of his English”. The “first Egyptian head of an Egyptian Department of English” (92) a nationalist who says, “Now, more than ever, at this crucial point of our history, of our national struggle, intellectuals and artists alike should be committed to the single cause of our nation”. For this first Egyptian head of an Egyptian Department of English, “Art is – and *should* be – at the service of Society. Art is at the service of the Revolution. Will there be no end to British imperialism?” (94-95). It should be stated that after the issuance of the National Charter in 1962, professors were invited to participate in society and to instil a socialist mentality in the universities.[562] Asya organises poem and music nights and one day meets Saif on the steps of the library of the Department of English, though he insistently lies to his friends that they met at an anti-government demonstration. Her beginning is the beginning of a new phase in the history of Egypt and

[562] Crabbs 387.

the ambivalence is visible. This novel tells the emotional, intellectual and sexual journey of Asya al-Ulama that starts at the English Literature Department in Cairo University when the country is battling war after war and struggling to get rid of the legacies of the Empire.

Asya is a character of paradoxes; she is an interesting hybrid. She is often described as superficial. Saif describes her as, "She liked Joan Baez and Bob Dylan and Sayyid Darwish and Simon and Garfunkel and the old songs of Abd el-Wahab" (153). She enjoys the privileges of an upper-middle class life in Zamalek, she goes to operas, but also espouses Western Marxism. Asya criticises the repressive politics in Egypt, but admires Nasser,[563] saying "What shall we do without you" (62). Booth indicates that "privileges shackle those who enjoy it"[564] and the tension of impartiality is repeatedly emphasised in the novel when people around her question Asya's irritating impartiality and theoretical stance on polemical issues.[565] While discussing polygamy with a group of international friends in England, Asya says, "I don't believe in polygamy", "but I don't condemn it out of hand", and a girl from the group angrily asks her to choose a side, "You're always sitting on the face, saying "from *her* point of view" and "in *his* terms". What about your point of view? You'll have to come down on one side some time" (401). Malak defines Asya's stance as "inherently polyglot": "her hybridized discourse rejects the principle of monologue and composes itself by selecting from competing discourses".[566]

There are similar moments in the novel when Asya questions the received ideas, or the received value systems, as Booth describes,[567] that shape her tastes and identity. At one point in the novel, she cannot decide where "her notions of vulgar" come, maybe "From her father and Saif" (482). She fears that she is "little more than an object in the male consciousness" as Faten in the "The Water Heater".[568] To make the matters worse, the voice of Saif is always in her mind as a chorus dictating her what to think and his control of

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[563] See Ayad 58.
[564] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 204.
[565] In an interview, Soueif underlines that "we have no option but to NOT choose sides". See Jamal Mahjoub, "A Correspondence with Ahdaf Soueif", *Wasafiri*, 24 (3), 2010, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080026900509030198 22, 59.
[566] See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 131.
[567] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 205.
[568] Nash Geoffrey, "Re-siting Religion and Creating Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif and Leila Aboulela", *Wasafiri*, 17 (35), 2008, 28-31, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/02690050208589768, 29.

language gives structure to the novel. Saif narrates certain passages which create an ambivalent sense of doubling because some scenes are narrated first by Saif and then by Asya at certain places in the novel. However, Saif tells lies throughout the novel and the result is a curious ambivalence because the reader questions the authenticity of his narrative. In imperial terms, the structure of the novel can be described as the construction of opposites and it is apparent from the start. Saif and Asya meet at the library steps, in his narration Saif tells Asya that she is Asya, "My name is Saif Madi. And you are Asya" (97), and he will never call her by her name after that. Asya narrates the same scene and the voice of Said circumscribes her sentences and subverts the normal rules of narrative, "and his hands were warm in winter and cool in summer. He was proud of that inbuilt thermostat. Just as he was proud of his perfect feet and his smooth, muscled, brown back. '*So what the hell did you feel when you touched the bastard*'".[569] The multiplicity of perspectives decentres the consciousness in the novel and the reader shockingly learns in the opening of the novel that Asya will betray Saif. As Booth emphasises, the first-person musings of Saif "cut across our intimate knowledge of Asya".[570] As a correlative way of interpreting, it can be stated that Asya's narrative stands as a testimony and after-narrative because it is clear from the narration that she knows Saif as if they had met long ago.

To return to the prior point, Asya joins the Literary Society when she is a student at Cairo University and wearily says that all it teaches her is "huge discussions and pointless debates and people showing off", and she quits. At another time, while criticising how Sadat encourages the Islamist student groups with Deena, who is involved in the Egyptian left with Muhsin, her boyfriend, Asya says that she theoretically wants to be part of changing the world, but she hesitates, "You've to be part of *something*, but" (472). F. Maloul indicates that it might be because Asya is ignorant of the changes that are taking place in Egypt.[571] Asya speaks of "theoretical sadness" and cannot confront divorce because Saif "hasn't told her categorically that it's over between them" (591). She draws

[569] Boccardi describes the encounter as epidermic. See Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 316.
[570] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 204.
[571] Linda F. Maloul, "Political Islam, Islam as faith and modernity in 1970s Egypt: a socio-political reading of Soueif's In the Eye of the Sun", *Contemporary Levant*, 2 (2), 2017, 77-88, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/20581831.2017.1365448, 81.

flowcharts about her emotions, “All right: what is it that life consists of? She writes down two headings” (454) and does not like when Saif wants her to describe her betrayal in a flowchart, “‘Draw me a flowchart, he says’” (637). She theoretically and coldly defines the components of life, “Love: a quarterly visit to a husband who treats her like a pet; to be indulged and given treats as long as she behaves – a husband who turns his back on her every night” (353). On the other hand, she criticises Saif because he likes naming feelings, “It’s glancing at things and naming them and then living blindly on with the name: this is “love”, fine that’s settled” (573). Similarly, Asya names her black eye, Saif hits her once; she makes a list of what Saif does not like in her, and surprisingly, she likes exams, “They are defined. They are finite. They last three hours and then they are over” (241). Similarly, when she writes her dissertation, only one category is not troubling her, “one thousand seven hundred and fifty metaphors. One category is easy: Time. They divide into that by themselves” (430). More interestingly, the novel’s conclusion reasserts Asya’s contradictions and does not solve them. Similarly, D’Alessandro emphasises that Soueif’s female characters cannot manage to see themselves as “integrated subjects”.[572] Ambivalence is at the centre of the novel and hybridity and alterity keep this centre at the centre.

Asya is a post-colonial hybrid, and her self-discovery is filled with self-doubt, self-contradiction and sometimes self-destruction. Her life is the execution of European colonialism through culture; she imagines it and the Empire executes it. The difficulty lies in the fact that she inherits ambivalence from her mother, Lateefa, who “at twelve, had fallen in love with her English teacher”, a “Miss Sage, in whom her mother had seen embodied the escape from *her* mother’s drudgery”, and “a whole freer way of life and thought than that which prevailed in Ismail Mursi’s house” (458-459). Interestingly, Asya’s ambivalence is based on another ambivalence and it can be suggested that Soueif points to the repetitious displacement of the post-colonial subject this way, because the past is not past. Sadly, the violent contradictions in the life of the post-colonial subject create fragmentations of identity and estrangement, and European culture becomes a signifier of

[572] D’Alessandro 44.

positivity through its literature and language which are inherently problematic for the post-colonial subject. Booth emphasises that there is an undercurrent in the novel, an ambivalence and a self-questioning of the postcolonial intellectual vis-à-vis Western societies.[573]

As stated above, Soueif relates this problem mostly to the acts of reading and indicates that Lateefa never tells her mother that she reads novels. In the 1930s Cairo, an Arab/Muslim girl wants to be like the British girls, "I want to be like those British girls driving Army trucks" (676) in the streets of Egypt. Forty years later, Asya is hopelessly thinking about the Empire in the Embankment in London. Unhappy, alone, disillusioned and unsettled by the lure of fixity and roots, she looks at Thames, "It seems every bit as important, as mighty, as the Nile". Thames and the Nile interlace in her memories of the Empire which become the collective memories of the Egyptians and other colonised nations, "Built of course on Egyptian cotton and debt, on the wealth of India, on the sugar of the West Indies, on the centuries of adventure and exploitation ending in the division of the Arab world and the creation of the state of Israel" (511-12). She sees an Englishman and her inner response is filled with ambivalence, "because of your Empire, sir, a middle-aged spinster from Manchester came out to Cairo in the 1930s to teach English". However, the reader never hears the story of Miss Sage or what happens to her after the 1952 Revolution when her mother and the Professor so triumphantly seized the English Department from the British in 1952 and the British (and the other *khawaga/ya*) left the country. Her mother, "A small untidy twelve-year-old girl fell in love with" Miss Sage and "lived and breathed English Literature from that day on". That girl is Lateefa, and Asya painfully says, "here, now, I am" (512). Asya loves the scene at the Thames and doubts that it might be "a sinister insidious colonialism implanted in her very soul: a form of colonialism that no rebellion can mitigate and no treaty bring to an end". She is in England and the Empire is responsible for this, "You cannot disclaim responsibility for my existence – beside your river – today", and she says that she has not come empty handed, "I haven't come to you only to take, I haven't come to you empty-handed: I bring you poetry as great

[573] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 205.

as yours but in another tongue, I bring you black eyes and golden skin and curly hair". She continues, "I bring you Islam and Luxor and Alexandria and lutes and tambourines and date palms and silk rugs and sun-shine and incense and voluptuous ways" (512). Egypt, as the other setting, becomes a referent and measure by which the Empire is evaluated[574] and Asya's remarkable and touching description of the imperial encounter becomes the central scene of the novel. Soueif powerfully shows that the Empire bears the traces of the Other.

In a similar way, Asya constantly meditates on what can be the use of getting a Ph.D. in English and teaching metaphors and linguistics to the students in Cairo, "And supposing she gave two or three courses as well on poetry – or even the novel – would that make any difference". It is important to note that, as Booth emphasises, Asya's dissertation "with appropriate irony" is on metaphors.[575] Interestingly, Asya wants to know how many people in her class would "shed one tear if the library across the garden had burnt down to the ground" and she cannot understand "Why should English Literature matter to them" and "Why should they have to struggle through Swift and Smollet and Pope and Henry James when what they wanted was a BA that would get them a job in a bank" (451). Knowingly ironic and subversive, this is a deliberate attempt in the novel to understand the effect of an attachment to the culture of the Empire that distorts realities, challenges belongings and limits the life of the post-colonial subject. At this moment, Asya paradoxically quotes a poem (which she often does), "Piano" of D. H. Lawrence, "Down in the flood of remembrance, I wept like a child for The past". She then articulates her fears eloquently:

> "What? What then? You'll have missed an opportunity to recognise the power of memory, to see how for every one of us there is no escape from our past, to be conscious of the terrible tenderness that can beset you for things or people lost to you for every – why should they not learn about that in Arabic? At least then they wouldn't have to look in the dictionary every two minutes, at least they would recognise for themselves the references t the Qur'an or to Imru' al-Qais, at least they'll know that when a character refers to 1882 he's talking about 'Orabi and the

[574] See Massad and Soueif 76.
[575] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 205.

> occupation and when he refers to 1919 he's talking about Sa'd Zaghloul's revolution – they will know how the words *sound,* for heaven's sake. What is English Literature to them or they to English literature that everyone must live in torment over it" (452)

Remembrance is a feminist issue[576] and Asya thinks about Miss Sage, her mother, herself and a Madame Zeinab, "Childless, Madame Zeinab", who lost her husband in the middle of her Ph.D. in England. Zeinab returns to Egypt with the dead body of her husband and never completes her studies. She stays as an instructor "in the limbo of language instructorship" and Asya realises that she does not want to have a career in the academy. Maybe, she can be a journalist, but people will think that she is "mad, or completely phoney" (435). She thinks that she "should have studied Arabic Literature", but, "she's not in Egypt" and "the damage was already done" (458-459).

As a child, Asya listens to the stories of Dada Zeina who introduces her to Egypt and its people and she describes herself as "all the books I've read and the songs I've heard and the stories Dada Zeina's told me". She wants to grow up quickly and asks, "How long does one have to wait to grow up", and the epistemic control of the Empire enters the narrative, "Juliet was only fourteen". *Romeo and Juliet* is Asya's standard and it is reinforced by a quotation from the play, "'What satisfaction can'st thou have tonight?' Olivia Hussey had been so beautiful" (124). The triumphant effect of the Empire is such that it reproduces itself and interestingly "The Wedding of Zeina" starts as "'I was fifteen,' Zeina began" (85). The text significantly emphasises this and repeatedly positions the imperial culture that holds the control of events. Like Juliet, Asya secretly meets Saif in Beirut and "is listening to the languages of the world flowing around her". Saif looks "so French" (122), she smiles at the world because "This is Life. More than just Life: this is Collette come true" (133). As for Beirut, it is "the capital of a country with a history of hospitality to fugitives, to the oppressed" (130). This is a point of fracture for Asya, she loves Beirut because it is 'real' like a Collette novel and the Same Beirut hosts Palestinian

[576] Heilmann and Llewellyn 142.

refugees and displacement is a reality for those people. It is important also to note that, in an interview, Soueif indicates that she really feels close to Collette.[577]

Likewise, little Aisha in "1964", an interlinked story to *In the Eye of the Sun*, privileges literature over reality, "I loved Maggie Tulliver, Anna Karenina, Emma Bovary and understood them as I understood none of the people around me. In my own mind I was a heroine" (23). To make the matters worse, Aisha becomes "more and more a heroine" as she borrows Harlequin books, "Mills and Boon romances", from the library after her first kiss with an English boy (28).[578] Aisha is an inhabitant of the margins and school is "a disaster" for her, "The white girls lived in a world of glamour and boyfriends to which I had no entrée. The black girls lived in a ghetto of whispers and regarded me with suspicious dislike. I was too middle of the road for them" (32). Soueif more disastrously examines the dilemma of being a post-colonial subject and liminality through the education system and Aisha, "the Egyptian", as her teacher calls her, chooses the unluckiest subject to excel: English, "The Egyptian gets it every time. It takes someone from Africa, a foreigner, to teach you about your native language. You should be ashamed" (33). Feeling an unwanted wallflower, Aisha communes with Catherine Earnshaw, imagines herself as a seductress and quits school.

Similarly and paradoxically, real life is a Collette novel for Asya and she feels displaced in real life. While studying for a poetry exam with her friends, Mimi, Noora, Bassam and Chrissie, Asya thinks on the nature of literature and its power to move the self beyond reality and she says that never understands "how can people read it and just go on as though they'd been reading the newspaper or some geography lesson that they had to memorise" (231). On the other hand, Asya is ignorant of her post-coloniality because her ideas about literature derives from English Literature and she is not cognizant of the fact that she is somehow annihilated because of colonial culture. The destructive reality of colonial discourse is exemplified sarcastically with Noora, who will later marry Bassam, a

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[577] See Massad 88.

[578] Valassapoulos argues that *The Map of Love* is a Harlequin romance without its political agenda and historical content. Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 39. Bruce King also indicates that it is a "Harlequin Romance for the anti-Western intelligentsia". King 453.

Palestinian. Noora "possesses eight different editions of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and has read *Arabia Desertia* through" (232). It might be that Noora unknowingly disseminates the discourse of Orientalism with the reproduced copies of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and the reader is to assume that she is a revolutionary type of person because she wears trousers all the time (which is rare then). However, they are always "going-into-the-desert-type" (232) and Noora marries a Palestinian which shocks her family and they disown her. Noora, an Oriental who internalises her orientalisation, a mock Wispy and a fake Lawrence, can well be described as a displaced post-colonial female. As a telling case in point, Noora, a student of the English humanities, is one of the textual children of the Empire like Asya who feels displaced in real life. This might be the reason that the displacement of Bassam disturbs her. She wonders, "what was it *really* like to be him? To be so displaced? He was born in 1949; one year after the partition and the war. […] Actual physical occupation. What would that be like" (233). The real world is filled with bruised people; Palestinians, uncle Hamid, and as she sits there people are tortured. Asya is lucky, "You are not a Palestinian woman living in a camp in south Lebanon, nor are you a Polish Jewess in 1939" (324), but "apart from poetry – what? What did you actually *do*?", she asks herself, "Campaign? Where and how and who would permit it". People suffer and Asya meditates on words, "how odd it is, this word. 'Suffer'" (234).

The sense of displacement is emphasised once again in the novel when Sidki al-Tarabulsi arrives to collect Chrissie, her daughter, and Bassam has to hide in another room. He forgets his notes on the table and Sidki picks up one of his copy-books that bears his name, and asks who he is. Asya says that Bassam al-Husseini is one of the students. Sidki's reply leaves the reader at unease, "But he is Palestinian. This is a Palestinian name" (238). Earlier in the novel, when Asya tells her aunt, Tante Muneera, about Bassam and Noora, she is baffled quite the same, saying "'Palestinian?' Muneera claps her hand to her mouth. *'Palestinian?*" (115). The reader will learn that Bassam will be thrown out of Egypt during Camp David. Interestingly, Sidki recognises the Palestinian background of Bassam with his name which turns into a metonymy, and problematises this, but he does not recognise the ambiguity with Chrissie's name when people repeatedly ask, "Chrissie. Chrissie. That is not an Arabic Name. Is she not Arab" (156). Names remain a tissue of disorder in the

novel, "'Chrissie' is not Chrissie's real name of course. Her real name is 'Carima' – but she was born in England and lived there for the first five years of her life and that is how she came to be called 'Chrissie'". Particularly important is the fact that Chrissie "does not recognise 'Carima', will never answer to it, and even talks – occasionally – of having it officially changed" (78). Chrissie is one of the symbols of hybridity with her European name. Similarly, Bassam becomes a metonymic gap for the absence of Palestine through his name, and as the emblem of her hybridity, Asya becomes a metonymic gap in the novel. Similarly, names become aggregations of opposites in a cultural sense in *In the Eye of the Sun*, and as stated before, they are problematised, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, "What's in a name […] were he not Romeo called".

Romeo and Juliet is alluded several times in the novel and Asya's master thesis, as if to attest to her unconsummated marriage, is "Romeo as the Embodiment of the Platonic Ideals of Courtly Love" (268). Later in the novel, Asya visits the family *madfan* and thinks that the tombs are "dim and cavernous like the tombs of the Capulets in the film" and Sheikh Zayid, her grand-father's friend, stands holding a light above his hand "instead of Friar Lawrence" (751).[579] Sheikh Zayid is an interesting figure in the novel. He falls "in love with this half-Moroccan woman who's incredibly beautiful in a barbaric sort of way", but the reader learns that she would not have him because he does not wear European clothes, so Sheikh Zayed takes off his Sa'idi clothes and puts on a suit for this barbarian beauty's sake (200). The novel shows that wearing European clothes slowly becomes the standard for ordinary Egyptians roughly around 1920s, "The fez has gone now" (198), and forced sartorial change brings happiness to Sheikh Zayed who earns "the title 'Sheikh' instead of the secular "Am that Ismail Mursi goes by" (66). However, as a sheikh in European clothes, he carries his *zebiba*, the prayer-spot in the middle of his forehead, as an emblem of his hybridity; he cannot erase it and his body becomes the site of memory and hybridity.

[579] Ailise Bulfin indicates that the Egyptian tomb appears as an unsettling place in the Egyptian-themed gothic fiction in Victorian England as the English trespass into an ancient Egyptian tomb, removes a mummy or brings the artifacts into England and is cursed by a supernatural invader that comes to the metropolitan centre for revenge. See Bulfin 413-414.

The half-Moroccan women marries Sheikh Zayed provided that he wears European clothes and Saif and Asya quarrel over George Eliot and Asya leaves home. It is Ismail Mursi's funeral and Lateefa is trying to understand what might have happened between them. This is a pivotal moment in the novel, Saif argues that George Eliot is not worth reading, though he has not read her, and Asya bursts out, "If it's not Sartre or the Spanish Civil War or Camus or someone he already knows then it's worth nothing" (298). More interestingly, she describes Saif as Mr Casaubon, "I thought he was – he was – *available* to – to *life*. But he's got a closed mind. He actually makes me think of that passage where she says Mr Casaubon's mind is like a – an enclosed basin". Asya cannot reconcile with the fact that Saif is so sure of himself and that he wants "facts". Asya is also angry at her mother who cannot see a point in fighting over George Eliot. Her cultural syncreticity reveals a radical otherness and she cries, "I thought you were supposed to care about literature" (298). Although Asya spills out hatred against Sartre and Camus, she loves Saif because he meant freedom for her. Her understanding is problematically textual, "I thought I was walking out to freedom – you read Jean Genet and Strindberg (424) and she states that Saif "has always regretted that he was born too late to go and fight side by side with Orwell and Hemingway and march to the notes of the Internationale" (526). On the other hand, as a devout reader of novels, Saif wants facts and he does not believe in telepathy, because of which they quarrel once at a restaurant. In the end however, his self is a palimpsest of the books he has read and this is the reason he means freedom for Asya.

Literature and the act of reading interestingly turn into an insurmountable obstacle in their relationship and Asya thinks that Saif wants her to be like the women in the books he has read. There is an archive of women there and she thinks that they are not real, "all the women in the books you like – Sartre and Camus and all that – they don't really exist. Not as people. They're only there to wait for the men. To love them and be loved back or not – mostly not; to be beaten up or killed". The reader will later learn that Asya is an aggregation of all those women who "appear as a face on the wall of Mersault's cell" (345). The interesting thing is that, as an Arab post-colonial subject, Asya is blind to the silenced Arab in the narrative of Camus and is instead obsessed with intellectual identity and standards of value that are imposed by the Empire. As this instance suggests, Asya's

hybridity creates an unbridgeable distance with other hybrid people, like Lateefa and Saif, whose ideas are also shaped by European cultural and literary traditions and her experience of hybridity will inordinately be consolidated and more problematised when she goes to England. It is important to note that, as Booth indicates, the Cairo-to-Europe trajectory partly defines the Egyptian intelligentsia's experience in the 20th century.[580]

Asya is repeatedly reminded in the novel that life is not a novel and after the quarrel over George Eliot, Chrissie tells Asya that "Well then, surely you know about life – or at least you've read enough novels to know that people never turn out *exactly* the way you expect" (312) and Asya paradoxically thinks that "she feels more comfortable with art than with life" (494). Interestingly, Asya is concerned with art and life at a time of national insecurity for Egypt and her hybridity turns into an intergenerational conflict with her mother, whose alterity feeds Asya's alterity. When Asya breaks up with Saif and talks to her mother, she mimics the words of Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, "My love for Saif is like the eternal rocks beneath […] Mummy: "I am Saif –" he's always, always in my mind", and Lateefa warns her, "Asya stop it. This is not a novel: this is your life" (568). At another instance, Lateefa warns her again saying that "This is life, not a novel: you can't sit around being in a dilemma. Things move, people change" (578). This time Asya retorts, "You keep saying, "This is life, not a novel" […] as though somehow life were more serious" (579). Asya's confusion seems to be a sign of perpetual displacement from reality.

Asya hears the same warning after learning that she is pregnant. She thinks that it is not the right time to have a baby and Chrissie says, "It's never the "right time". This is life not a novel; you can't time things in life. This is how things happen" (263). The reader knows that Asya has waited for four years to marry Saif, because her parents did not allow them to get married until after she finishes her studies, and she thinks that pregnancy is another imposition on her life like the delayed marriage. At one point in the novel, she is unhappy that the doctor does not put her on contraception, "He didn't even want to put me *on* the pill. Gave me this sermon about how it was best to have a baby right away, for God's sake" (227) and she cannot have an IUD until after her first delivery. After all, Asya

[580] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", *World Literature Today*, 68 (1), 1994, JSTOR, Accessed: 25-06-2013, http://ww.jstor.org/stable/40150073, 204.

does not want to be childless like the childless language instructor Madame Zeinab, but she does not want to have a baby four months after marriage. Asya is in the limbo of romance and sex, sex and desire, desire and marriage, and marriage and pregnancy, and later marriage and divorce, and fittingly describes herself as "more or less a virgin" (538). Massad indicates that the motor of the story is Asya's attempt to combine love and desire,[581] and interestingly, Saif Madi means "the piercing sword" in Arabic.[582] Asya's body becomes a site of alterity and she inhabits the liminal space between the words. On the other hand, the handling of pregnancy in the novel is stunning in many respects. Although the novel explicitly depicts sensual scenes between Gerald and Asya, it represses sexual encounters between Saif and Asya, perhaps because they do not see each other as desiring bodies,[583] and towards the end, only Saif, the untrusted narrator, talks about such incidents. Most important though, sex is not discussed, or mentioned only in the form of unconsummated sex, but pregnancy is considered at length in the relationship between Asya and Saif. This can be a Flaubertian contribution to the novel because Flaubert never describes sex in *Madame Bovary* between Emma and her husband, and Emma suddenly appears as a pregnant woman in the next chapter. In an interview, Soueif indicates that the obvious influences to her novel writing are the nineteenth century novelists, especially Tolstoy, George Eliot and Flaubert.[584] It is not surprising then that one chapter ends with unconsummated sex and the next chapter begins as "Asya is pregnant" in *In the Eye of the Sun* (261). It should also be noted that Amin Malak considers characters' discussions of sex as "breaking taboo terrains",[585] but what is compelling in the novel is Soueif's treatment of sexual politics, not the discussion of it. It is significant to note also that Marilyn Booth unites the struggle over gender politics in the novel to the struggle of the upper and middle-class Egyptian women at the turn of the 20th century.[586] Geoffrey Nash also importantly

[581] Massad and Soueif 76.
[582] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 133.
[583] Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Cultural Expression in Context*, 126.
[584] See Massad and Soueif 88.
[585] See Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 133. See also Moore 152; Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 315. Valassopoulos strongly criticises Malak on this point. She emphasises the extraordinary cost of its expression in the novel. See Valassopoulos, *Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Cultural Expression in Context*, 126.
[586] Marilyn Booth, "In the Eye of the Sun by Ahdaf Soueif", 204.

indicates that Soueif's women "move in isolation, between the boundaries of […] inimical discourses, implicitly questioning stereotyping of women's role, at the same time as negotiating their way around contemporary Western norms".[587]

Interestingly, the ignorant Gerald also tells Asya that she knows nothing about life. Whenever they quarrel, Asya does not respond to Gerald and he gets angry. More than that, Asya does not want to hear any word and stays in complete silence. Gerald thinks that she is very cold, "'So cold, so cold,' he mutters, and turns out to walk out of the room", and "Asya thinks of Miss Havisham as she follows him down to the stairs. To me, to me-e-e" (536). They quarrel again and this time Asya retorts, "If you're planning to do a Jimmy Porter it's been done". However, like the English girls in Aisha's class, Gerald does not know who Jimmy Porter is and Asya explains that he is a character in a play. At this point, she paradoxically embodies linguistic and cultural control in front of an Englishman and Gerald points to the brutal colonial discourse that divides Asya, "That's the trouble with you, you see. Your ideas all come from books. You don't know a thing about real life. *Not one thing*. You're not equipped to *handle* real life" (555). After all, no matter what Gerald says, Asya pays attention only to Gerald's grammar mistakes and it is a moment of post-colonial unsettlement, "Why 'per' Asya wonders, what's the function of the 'per' in there" (556). 'The Egyptian' has the linguistic control, but again, as an Egyptian, Asya fails to recognise that Porter is angry because the Empire loses its powerful grid on the Suez Canal[588] and she confusingly uses him as the post-colonial subject's claim to English Literature.

This scene suggests that Asya, as a cultural and linguistic hybrid, pays attention to the intersections in language. At one point in the novel, Gerald frantically controls Asya and her epistemology and forces her to translate the letters from Cairo, if in Arabic. There are three letters, one from Chrissie in Arabic that Asya mistranslates, one from her father with an unlucky English sentence settling in the middle and one from a distant friend in South

[587] Nash, "Re-siting Religion and Creating Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif and Leila Aboulela", 28.
[588] In 1882, William Gladstone talks about the Sublime Porte's Suzerainty and says that the main concern of England is "Suez-erainty". See Bulfin 414.

Africa. Upon hearing that Asya is about to break with Saif and is having an affair with Gerald, her father writers to her. Though the letter is in Arabic, his father says "'You're making a mess of your life'" in English. Asya wonders, "Why would Daddy write that in English". She tries to find an Arabic equivalent, "Couldn't he have written it in Arabic?", "but she can only come up with one Arabic approximation: 'You're destroying your life' – that would not be the same. 'You're making a mess of your life' can't be said in classical Arabic. Of course in colloquial Egyptian he could have said". At another moment, Asya mocks her mother's English and says, "You said "bloody", Mummy" and she gets very angry and repeats the motto of the novel, "What do you think is this? A novel? A game?" (695).

When Asya is thinking about the English sentence dangling in her father's letter, Gerald distracts her and wants to hear the translation. However, this selfish English opportunist that Massad describes as "overbearing uncouth English hippie"[589] does not want to know what Asya thinks, but to always speak for himself and for her. As stated above, people question Asya about her impartiality earlier in the novel, but Gerald wants Asya to excise herself completely and to survive, as a subaltern female, on the negativity of annihilation. As a result, he wants her to be his self-reflection, "I have to see it from *your* point of view, from your husband's point of view, for Christ's sake, and from your whole *family's* point of view – what about *my* point of view" (606). Quite the contrary, Gerald twice indicates that Asya imposes limits in her imagination earlier in the novel (502, 523), though her mother argues the opposite, "She's always imagining things: she lets her imagination run away with her" (581). It is interesting to see that later in the novel, Gerald, like an Orientalist, thinks that he knows Asya better than she knows herself, "I told you I know you better than you know yourself" (657). Clearly, Gerald inherits knowledge and executes it.

It is significant that Asya's assumption of Gerald when he comes to her house is very novelistic and textual, "He looks so fresh, as if he's just come out from a shower and gone for a long run over the moors – what moors? There are no moors here and this is no

[589] Massad and Soueif 76.

Heathcliff" (528). Similarly, when Asya confesses about the betrayal, Saif hits her and later at night, he wants to enter her room saying, "'Will you let me in?' he asks, his voice is uncertain. 'Sweetie, will you let me in.'" (631). Later in the novel, Asya cannot recognise whether it is Catherine or Saif's voice and she finishes her doctoral project with echoes in her head, "a dark shape swaying on her doorway – '*Will you let me in?*' – a loved familiar figure in an armchair – '*I did a bad thing today?*' – or huddled on a rainy pier – '*How can you say that?*' – or softly, very softly, – '*Did you sleep with him, Princess?*' –" (704). The scene changes to New York and Asya has the linguistic power against the sexual imperialist Gerald, "I *am* being myself" (721) and, speaking in his words, she leaves Gerald, "I'm *taking a powder* as you'd say. I'm finished. It's over". The scene is resonant with colonial desire and will be closely examined later.

It is seen that Asya's relationship with Gerald consolidates her hybridity and strengthens her textual trauma. When she commits adultery, Asya describes the scene in a novelistic way. She identifies with fictional characters, mostly Victorian, and says, "You've committed adultery, you've done it, you've joined Anna and Emma and parted company for ever with Dorothea and Maggie – although Dorothea would have understood – would she?" (540). After all, she thinks that "This isn't mirror mirror on the wall – this isn't a fairy tale" and she describes what she is doing as "dallying with a man in your husband's house" (531). This complex experience of desire and pain is addressed in another scene with literary characters and Soueif shows that Asya's cultural memory is saturated in European literature as she regrets her betrayal and suffers like Ophelia. It is a disturbing suicidal scene, "Then she closes her nose with two fingers and falls back under the water. If she could stay – if she could stay there; drawn like Ophelia – only Ophelia was chaste" (634). It might be the case that Asya is having an Ophelia complex because she connects impositions on her life by male characters and Ophelia in a stimulating scene. Likewise, when she is on her own in Italy, she feels free for the first time in her entire life, "for now how wonderful to think her own thoughts – not to have her mother's or father's or Saif's superimposed over her own so that she cannot truly tell which is which" (174). Asya wants to be (or die as) Ophelia and is unhappy that she is not chaste like Ophelia. On the other hand, Saif describes Asya as Desdemona when they first meet in Beirut after a very long

separation, and before the adultery, and his descriptions are very textual, “I looked at her kneeling there in her long white nightdress as innocent and absolute and unseeing as Desdemona – and I wanted her. But more, I wanted to protect her” (344). Unknowingly, Saif points to the betrayal and describes Asya as an unseeing Desdemona. Later, Asya describes herself as an unseen entity before Saif’s eyes, and says, “He only sees her when he sees other people seeing her – not for himself – not any more” (416).

Impositions on her life are troubling Asya. As a cultural hybrid, she cannot tolerate ambiguity (and this might be the reason that she likes exams), and in one scene, her father says that she is intolerant of ambiguity, “Why should she be ‘intolerant of ambiguity’, as her father would say?”. In that scene, she stops writing her dissertation because there is no use of it and starts thinking on the situation of Egypt and the dilemma between life and art, “Because, she thinks, because this is life, not art. Ah, but there you are, you fall back on the distinction you despised your teachers for making; they discuss Heathcliff and Othello and Majnoun in the morning and go home to their tidy little lives in the afternoon”. Interestingly, these teachers insist “that their daughters be home by seven p.m.” and “push their sons into medicine and engineering, joining the party of government”. But Asya thinks that her life “is not a book [his father or Saif is] writing”, this is her life, and “they’re not writing it together” (525). However, she will later sadly accept this saying “he is the imagination and I am the execution: he is the author and the director of our drama and I am just the cast” (593).

Another definitive hybridity occurs when Asya controls her sexual impulse towards Mario, Saif’s friend, by the help of *Anna Karenina* and she says that she is “safely in bed with her hot-water bottle” and “even then she read some more of *Anna Karenina* until she fell asleep” (433). On the other hand, it is particularly important that when Gerald starts to live with Asya, she recognises a spatial change in her room, “the reading-light has been removed along with *Anna Karenina, Middlemarch, My Life as a Man,* and their place taken by a candle and an incense-burner” (546). Similarly, earlier in the novel Asya removes books from her room to concentrate on her project, “She has banished fiction from her room because she knows she will not withstand the temptation and she isn’t here to read

novels" (355). The removal of *Anna Karenina* and *Middlemarch* from the bedroom might suggest a disillusionment for Asya because, although she can identify with Anna as an adulteress, she still wants to see the books on her table. It is important too that she can control her impulse towards Mario only through the act of reading (about desire).

Another instance occurs between Asya and Mario that strengthens her hybridity and it should be indicated that Mario is South African and white. In the course of the novel, Saif leaves his UN job and starts working for "Syria's Intelligence computer – although he tells everyone it's army" (442). Saif is most of the time busy and Asya spends a lot of time with Mario, in the end describing him as Saif's stand-in. In time, Asya recognises that she likes Mario and she interestingly describes this interesting situation with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "Mario was his stand-in. But how far was he prepared to let him be his stand-in? Or was it some Sir Gawain and the Green Knight deal" (455). In another instance, Asya similarly imagines herself as a seductress, but this is in Cairo. Chrissie's brother, Taha, sees her with a man on the street and makes a scene.[590] Asya enters Taha's bedroom to make explanations, but she hesitates because this is inconvenient in the Egyptian context. She then mischievously thinks that she can save Chrissie by offering her body, "If this were a story she would now offer herself to him – as ransom for Chrissie" (117), and imagines a sensual scene. It can be suggested that, as a post-colonial female subject, Asya's reality is distorted; she either becomes Anna, or she reads *Anna Karenina*, or imagines herself in a medieval duel, or she becomes a seductress; her exact word is "*femme de plaisir*" (543). Similarly, Asya describes Muhsin, Deena's husband, as "somewhat quixotic", "a Don Quixote, however, with no Sancho and in place of Rosinante he now has a Lada" (28). It is not surprising then that Asya's master thesis is the courtly love tradition in Europe. As these instances show, Asya cannot reconcile with England, and Egypt, because her traumatic memories ossify and turn into a textual archive which in turn feed her alterity. These memories remind themselves not in dreams, like Amal's in *The Map of Love*, but in daydreams.

[590] For women as the burden of family honour, see Moore 14.

It is worth also examining Asya's ambivalent understanding of space more closely because spatial change presents interesting questions in the novel. As reflected in the imagery of moors, Asya cannot reconcile with England on physical terms and sees it as a novelistic setting. When she first visits her supervisor at the university, she is unhappy to see that his office is very modern, "She opens the room. A room with modern furniture. Teak effect. But then, she was silly to expect anything else here. To expect deep leather armchairs, an enormous nineteenth-century desk, books piled up on the floor, a silver tray with drinks and biscuits" (329). Significantly in this context, it is clear that Asya imagines a novelistic scene and expects to find it. Later, she is again disappointed at a café on the pier in England, "Can't it be warm and cosy with embroidered antimacassars on faded red armchairs, a smell of baking coming from the kitchen and *David Copperfield* lying open on the coffee-table in front of the fire" (394).[591] By implication, it can be argued that Asya imagines an England, like the Orientalists that imagine the Orient, and her knowledge of it is textual although she spends a few years of her childhood in England, as she says "but that isn't England – I mean, I suppose it is really, but I only knew London and Oxford and I guess that was what I liked" (361).

The actual encounter with England is very disappointing for her and unsurprisingly she decides to live in a Victorian cottage and create an England out of her textual knowledge. In a way, Asya Anglicises herself through space after she starts to live in the cottage, "She has learnt about the fresh cold smell of the fields and the smell of the wood fire she lights every day. She enjoys, no, she *loves* the cottage. It is such fun living on two floors like someone in a story-book" (435). Likewise, Asya wants to see the Castle in the city that she read about, and upon going there, she disappointingly learns that it is in reality a prison, "This is a prison, love" (333). Nevertheless, she slowly gets to know about geography, "there are no hedgerows in Egypt, Asya reminds herself" (27) and the reader sees that her understanding of space is eventually to be anchored in place and land, and to

[591] Janet Floyd argues that Anglo-American post-colonial analysis pictures the kitchen as the arena for the domestication of for the colonised and the exploited female other. Janet Floyd, "Coming out of the kitchen: texts, contexts and debates" *Cultural Geographies*, 2004, 11 (61), SAGE Journals, DOI: 10.1191/1474474003eu293oa, 62. See also Marta Cariello, "Searching for Room to Move: Producing and Negotiating Space in Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (339-350), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 345.

attest to this, she sees a newly-found stone idol that is buried in sand in rural Egypt at the end of the novel, and identifies with her.[592]

Although the ending is hopeful, it is seen that Asya has a metropolitan understanding of the nature of literature throughout the novel and this contradiction stems from her internalisation of the culture of the West as the standard. At a point in the novel, she objectifies herself and examines her feelings (which she often does). She and Saif are in Paris and she remembers him saying that he only danced in Paris. Asya quickly imagines a scene, "she is jealous only of the past" (181), with a Daniella, Saif's Parisian ex-girlfriend. Asya always thinks of her "in period clothes, in costume: something pert and nostalgic and elegant: something out of Collette, or Katherine Mansfield" (399). As Saif earlier told her, Danielle, the sad Parisian, comforts herself with Saif after her Algerian boyfriend illtreats her. Interestingly, all the ex-girlfriends of Saif are European or *khawagaya*. There is a Didi Hashim who has to leave Cairo after the War and settles in Canada. Similarly, after Saif learns Asya's betrayal, he creates a "modern harem" in London with American and Scottish women:

> A scene from a modern harem, Asya thinks, except that here women ignore each other; there's none of that mutual grooming and gazing you find in the classical stuff. If this had been a Delacroix, now, you would have had Clara leaning over to Mandy's toenails, while Mandy lay back, eyes dreamy, lips half parted, one hand lazily extended to toy with the red tresses that flowed over Clara's smooth, creamy shoulders – she shouldn't stare, Asya thinks" (726)

Later, Asya sees herself as Mandy, "Asya thinks Mandy looks more like herself (even though she remembers that she doesn't know what her 'self' is like)" (735). On the other hand, all the girlfriends of Gerald are from the developing countries, Trinidad, Vietnam or Egypt, and Asya asks him, "You've never had a white girl-friend, why". For her, the reason is obvious, because he "can feel superior" and be "the big white boss". Asya cries out in the streets of New York, "you are a sexual imperialist" (723). Her post-colonial voice stems

[592] Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 320-321.

from the web of filaments that maintain her connection to Egypt and this way she recognises that she cannot reconcile with England or Egypt, but with her hybridity and the ending shows that she can do it. As Said says, "Soueif does not in the end fall for the East versus West, or Arab versus European, formulas. Instead, she works them out patiently, and then goes with Asya, who is neither fully one thing nor another, at least so far as ideologies of that sort are concerned".[593]

On their last encounter, Saif mockingly wants Asya to describe their marriage as a novel, "honestly, even if this were a novel, what kind of a novel would it be? It would be pretty crappy, wouldn't it, if it had us standing here now agreeing to meet in twenty years' time? You could have a sequel then: *The Flame of Friendship: Part Two*" (734). As two cultural hybrids, Asya and Saif, shatter under the struggle for endings and beginnings and the novel closes on the assumptions about the burdens of hybridity. There is another model of hybridity that this remarkable novel contests and the discussions now turn to colonial desire as explored in the novel.

Employed by Robert Young, colonial desire is an interesting concept by which he argues that colonial discourse is saturated in sexuality. As he shows with Gobineau, colonisation is guaranteed at the expense of rape and inter-racial breeding, which is necessary for civilisation, but is threatening because it destroys civilisation.[594] Young indicates that the relationship between the coloniser (male) and the colonised (female) is seemingly heterosexual and is based on racialised sexual hierarchy, domination, violence and power. It is seen that Young is concerned with alterity and colonial desire in racial theories and culture and his aim is to trace the emergence and genealogy of desire in history and its refusal in culture and in what he calls racialised science.

Young intensely discusses the adulteration of blood in Gobineau's racial and sexualised theory of civilisation and it is crucial for understanding Soueif's fiction which is concerned with miscegenation and adultery. Young asserts that the principle of life and death (the inner poison or plague) is the result of the continual adulteration of blood

[593] Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, Granta 2012, 410.
[594] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 50-52.

because of racial mixing and he interestingly notes the word adulteration combines sexual transgression and adultery with alterity in its root; "ad" and "alter", "the mixture of self and other".[595] As will be seen with *In the Eye of the Sun*, Young's interesting commentary on adulteration provides an important background to another connected understanding of sexual transgression with *fitna*, *zinā* (fornication) and *khiyana* (treachery, betrayal). On the other hand, it is important to note that, as Young indicates, the fear of miscegenation is embedded in the writings of Gobineau though he postulates it as the basis for the civilisation of nations. Of particular concern for this study is septicaemia, because Gobineau argues that adulteration of blood is the reason of the fall of nations and that if any civilisation ever existed, it is because of the Aryan elements within it.[596]

Young's concern with colonial desire and the genealogy of hybridity is very important in understanding Soueif's fiction and two post-colonial concepts, alterity and ambivalence, are especially instructive in the present context. Alterity in its simplest form, means being different. The Post-Colonial Critique shifts the centre of analysis from the epistemic (philosophical) other to the moral other located and situated in material realities, or in Said's terms, actualities. Important is the fact that the identity of the coloniser cannot be separated from the identity of the colonised other and alterity is determined by the process of Othering,[597] thereby through dialogue between the two. This important aspect distinguishes it from the concept of otherness and it should be noted that Robert Young's emphasis on alterity while discussing adulteration is significant in this context.

In that respect, it is interesting and significant that *In the Eye of the Sun* problematises desire for the post-colonial subject. As Joseph Massad indicates, desire "in Soueif's work, always exists in a context of politics, history and geography all of which are intermeshed and cannot be disentangled".[598] In this regard, Robert Young's explanations will be crucial in understanding colonial desire and hybridity because Soueif addresses the importance of hybridisation in identity-making and makes alterity the novel's central concern. As

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[595] Young 98.
[596] Gobineau further indicates that it is only through the interbreeding of a weak race by a strong race that a race can be transformed, and colonial occupation, missionary work and education are all equally useless.
[597] See Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 96.
[598] Massad and Soueif 74.

suggested above, she intensely discusses the ambivalence generated by the culture of the coloniser that is imposed on the (post-)colonial subject and this novel articulates a fragile post-coloniality, alongside the absurdity of dividedness and the ambivalence which derive from the consumption of the imperial culture.

There are four interesting scenes in the novel that disrupt the power of the coloniser with assumptions about colonial desire and hybridity. Immediately concerned with desire, these four scenes are interrelated and they offer a shared understanding of hybridity. The first scene is in the university when Asya is invited to a language class to make a demonstration for some Arabic sounds and she cannot pronounce some of them. In the other scene Asya betrays Saif and sleeps with Gerald, followed by another scene when Gerald imagines Asya as an odalisque and forces her to a role-play. The last one is the rape scene and buried inside these scenes is a disturbing address of the adulteration of blood in the context of adultery and alterity.

Asya arrives in the North of England in the Autumn of 1973 as a Ph.D. student of Stylistics and her first feeling is that she is "a shadowy silhouette – an obstruction – in the foreground" (323). It is not the England that she knows from the books and this part of England is sadly different from Oxford and London. To her unhappiness, her pigeonhole is empty and, as an Arab woman she checks, in vain, both the Us and As because she is Asya al-Ulama, and Ms because she is Asya Madi, but Arab women do not take their husbands' surname and there are no letters. It is seen that her experiences in England start with a problem about her name, and after that, Soueif lists several instances of displacements; she is lost in the student hall and drinks water directly from the tap thinking that English people might despise her, "let her think I'm a barbarian then, I don't care" (327). After a couple of days, the phonetics lecturer invites Asya to class and asks her to pronounce some Arabic sounds. In the class, the lecturer describes a specific sound and Asya demonstrates it through an Arabic word that she chooses (she is at first suspicious about the word demonstration). Interestingly, the first word Asya demonstrates is *haraam* and Soueif glosses it as "adjective denoting something which is sinful or taboo. It is also used as an adjuration, e.g. to stop someone harming someone, and as an expression of pity" (788). It

should be noted that the word has an Islamic sense, for example, adultery is *haraam*. The second word is *khiyana* which means "treachery and betrayal" (789). For example, treason is *khiyana*. The third word is *antar*, an Arab name, also the name of an important pre-Islamic poet.[599] The fourth word is "Qur'an", "but the word won't come", and the lecturer lastly wants Asya to pronounce her name and she simply cannot do it, "But that's the most difficult of all. She knows it will be impossible. She shakes her head". After her ridiculous exhibition, Asya quickly leaves the classroom and thinks, "Everything is absurd" (354).

It can be suggested that Soueif specifically chooses these Arabic words to demonstrate more clearly Asya's dilemma of romance and sex, or marriage and sex and the list goes on. Particularly important here is the fact that although Soueif glosses *khiyana* in a political sense, it is *zinā* (fornication) that describes her act, and it is lost to the non-Arabic speaking (or non-Muslim) reader. On the other hand, Saif sees Asya's act of *zinā* more as *khiyana* because she sleeps with an Englishman. As suggested by Asya's silence on "Qur'an" and "Asya", the thing to be noticed is that Asya becomes the metonymic gap of the text and as *zinā* becomes a gap of the text. The scene with Gerald expands on this and Asya, without uttering the word, thinks on *zinā*. She can reconcile with herself in terms of religion because, as she says, the door to repentance is always open, but she cannot erase the fact from her body that Gerald is an Englishman, which makes her act a *khiyana* for Saif.

In the second scene, Gerald sits, his legs crossed under him and Asya interestingly thinks "as though he were about to start reciting the Qur'an" and her immediate feeling is that "He would be nice to make love to" (538). The interesting thing about this scene is that Asya enters a theoretical debate inside her head about desire and (the moral European) gaze and her inner speech is interesting, "you're the great expert, are you? 'He would be nice to make love to' – sitting behind your table *surveying* him as though you were Collette or Piaf or even *Kushuk Hanim*" (538, emphasis added). As stated before, sex and romance (or the unity of the two) constitute a problem for Asya and the dilemma is that desire is surrounded and blocked by colonial domination, though she cannot recognise it. At this point, Soueif

[599] Antar is a figure endowed with heroic deeds in the Arabic folklore. See Albakry and Hancock 226.

posits Asya as the Kuchuk Hanem and Gerald as the potent European (Flaubert). Interestingly, Asya has experienced sex almost always textually though she is married, and at one point in the novel, she patiently details her feelings in a flowchart with headings like romance, sex and married love. As a devout reader of novels, she says, "if 'Sex' was alright 'Romance' would follow" (460).

It can be argued that Asya thinks about adultery also in textual terms and keeps reading *Anna Karenina* after Mario hugs her, whispers her name to her ear and leaves her. Marriage and sex painfully remind her the miscarriage she had before coming to England, "never mind the lost baby", and the useless birth control, "the laughably pointless IUD" (538), and the plastic penis that the English doctor gave to her, Saif's "surrogate" (510), which she frantically keeps hidden in a fuchsia fabric brought from Egypt. The fabric is ironically a wedding gift that Tante Adeela, her in-law, gave her, "Asya pulls out the prosthetic and looks at it. She ought really to throw it away. It's so completely useless and horrible, and she'll just keep forgetting where she left it and then panicking in case someone might find it" (494).

This peculiar scene establishes Asya as the single central consciousness and it is important to recognise that Soueif questions colonial domination with oriental female sexuality and the moralising Western gaze in the relationship between Gerald and Asya. Carefully watching him, Asya asks Gerald to spend the night and says to herself, "you can't look a man coolly in the eye and say, would you like to spend the night" (539-540). This attempt to reverse the gaze, "postcolonial writing often answers the gaze",[600] indeed fails because of the ultimate insolubility of desire for the subaltern female and Gerald returns the gaze in a later scene by making Asya an odalisque and forcing her to look at herself in the mirror. Before exploring that pivotal moment, it is helpful to look at Edward Said's discussion of Flaubert and Kuchuk Hanem (Little Madame) in *Orientalism*.

It is important to state that Said's discussions of Europeans and sex in the Orient are most of the time in the context of Flaubert's writings where the European can have sexual

[600] Moore 14.

adventures that are rare at home and these also deeply shape the image of the Orient.[601] In that respect, Asya's initiation into sex (or desire) in a scene that writes about Kuchuk Hanem is very important, because this apparently de-Orientalising insight shows that Asya, the Arab/Muslim Oriental, has a sexual adventure in the imperial centre with the potent European and deconstructs her orientalisation. Said says that Flaubert describes Egyptian women and speaks for and represents Kuchuk Hanem, a dancer-cum-prostitute, who never talks and represents herself, her emotions, or history. On the other hand, he says that this is not a specific instance with Flaubert, for it is more a typically Orientalist pattern of relative strength and hierarchised power between East and West that gives Flaubert the power to represent the Oriental. [602] Unsurprisingly and similarly, Gerald often says Asya that he knows her better than she knows herself and thinks that he owns her, "You're mine. You'll always *be* mine" (657).

It is seen that Kuchuk's muteness is subverted in Asya's act of speaking for herself for it is Asya who invites Gerald and although the novel repeatedly depicts the suppression of talking about desire which, though legitimised under the marriage bond, is unconsummated, not sublimated and always textualised. On the other hand, as the aggregation of opposites, desire is liberated in the periphery of the colonial world, Egypt, though it is also entirely textualised. The scene when Asya and Chrissie find an eclectic collection of pornography of Sidki al-Tarabulsi, Chrissie's father, proposes a similar interrogation. Interestingly, Asya wants to be left alone with the magazines, because she cannot look at them when Chrissie is looking at her, and she says that "the features are always abstracted, decorous, like the faces of Pharaonic statues […] the men mostly have no faces" (80). Desire, though liberated because it is freely discussed especially with Dada

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[601] Wallen 1-2, 13; see also Anastasia Valassapoulos, "'Secrets' and 'Closed off Areas': The Concept of Tarab or 'Enchantment' in Arab Popular Culture", *Popular Music and Society*, 30 (3), 2007, 329-341, Taylor and Francis, DOI: 10.1080/03007760600834788; for sexual tourism in the Orient see Weegmann, 393.

[602] It is important to note also that Said's treatment of Flaubert has produced a great deal of criticism. Robert Irwin argues that Said has no basis on Flaubert's appeal to Lane as an indispensable reference point and that the Orient cannot be an alternative sexual ground for Flaubert, because he writes in detail about his adventures in the brothels of France and Normandy in many of his writings which, for Irwin, attests to the fact that Flaubert's encounter with the prostitutes in Egypt is not exceptional. See Robert Irwin, "Flaubert's Camel: Said's Animus", Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard and David Attwell (Ed.), *Debating Orientalism* [E-book], (38-54), Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Zeina, is considered under the pressure of surveillance in this scene and is problematised (with statues).

In depicting an encounter with desire, this early scene underlines the boundaries of desire with race. There are Italian, French and Danish people engaged in sexual activities that Asya describes interestingly as real, though her experience is textual, and as an Oriental, or Arab, she contrasts them with Indian and Japanese drawings and paintings and *The Perfumed Garden* of Sheikh Nefzawi that she read as a child. In novel's diverse locations, there are references to *The Perfumed Garden*, the most interesting of which is about the Arabic word for vulva. Lady Hamdonna, a character in this book, says "On every vulva there is written the name of the man who is destined to enter it" and Asya thinks that "it is odd how you never see the word 'vulva' except in translations of Arabic erotica" (580).[603] Knowingly ironic and subversive, Soueif's central concern here hinges on the fact that colonial desire and translation intersect, as seen in Burton's translation of the *Arabian Nights*, and Asya forgets the collection and starts thinking about language and desire.

Ambiguity concerning desire and race is apparent in the scene when Asya invites Gerald for the night and this moment reiterates language as an index of desire and fear for the post-colonial hybrid. Asya ridicules and jokes about her unconsummated marriage fantasising about her "vast experiences" and as a shock that this post-colonial text produces, Asya, Gerald's Kuchuk Hanem, turns into Flaubert, the potent European in her inner monologue, and Soueif presents a parodic address of desire and race, "Such a variety of man you've tasted, you've ensnared and bedded: fair ones and dark ones, middle-aged Herculeses and willowy Ganymedes, African warriors and California tycoons, Leons and Rudolphs and love-lorn swains and doublecrossing treacherous bastards" (538). Asya's initiation into sex only in the form of adultery points to Young's understanding of colonial desire and to attest to this she fantasises about a mix of man from different races and ethnicities; it is a mix that replicates Sidki's pornography collection. However, the narrative abruptly returns to an excerpt from Asya's doctoral thesis which possible points to the

[603] *'Awra* can also be translated as female genitalia. See Moore 13.

insolubility of desire for Asya, the female subaltern who experiences sex either as adultery or rape.

Asya commits adultery and it is seen that only through negativity can desire be transformed from the textual and the imagined into the real. The reader knows that Asya reads about desire (and adultery) in books and she says that the physical "pain doesn't go as the books said it would" (540). As an adulteress, or as confined to the untranslated Arabic word *muhasanah* in the text, Asya consolidates her hybridity through colonial desire in the form of adultery. Soueif signals a profoundly important debate at the heart of the novel and explores the perpetuating dominance of religion for Asya. In the context of English Literature, betrayal is the peripheral moment in the Victorian fiction and as Said says the heroine "is surprised, not to say shocked, by the sudden revelation of a lover's betrayal: Dorothea sees Will Ladislaw apparently flirting with Rosamond Vincy […] Then the women awake to a new awareness of themselves and the world".[604] In that sense, betrayal becomes more problematic because although Asya is the Kuchuk Hanem, she subversively becomes Flaubert, and although she identifies with Dorothea throughout the novel, she turns into Will Ladislaw, or as Said says, "although in many ways Asya is her own Casaubon".[605]

There is however another and more important point about adultery in the novel and Asya is not only an adulteress but also a *muhasanah* that Soueif glosses as "from *hasanah,* to fortify. A woman who is fortified (through having her desires satisfied in marriage) from the sin of adultery" (789). After the height of the act, Asya thinks about being a *muhasanah* and her cultural syncretism is implicit, "Dorothea was after all, Victorian", the emphasis is on constrained Victorian sexuality, "and you, what are you, a modern woman? You're an Arab, a Muslim, if the law of your people were applied you would be stoned to death – but would she?" (541). The imagery with stones is remarkable because Soueif problematises desire with death, numb bodies and sculptures in the novel.[606]

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[604] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 173.
[605] Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 409.
[606] See Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 317-318.

In this scene, Asya's religious background is unmasked and Soueif presents desire as a problem with diverse ramifications for the female subaltern. On the other hand, Asya thinks that she is not a *muhasanah* because there has to be four witnesses who see the act, "You're only stoned to death if you're a *muhasanah*, is she truly a *muhasanah*?". She continues, "and anyway, where are the four witnesses […] And besides, the door of repentance is always open" (541). At this point in the novel, colonial desire is problematised with the door metaphor because by committing *zinā*, Asya breaks her *hudud* (borders), and to demonstrate this, she thinks about "the fort that protects her within its walls", the fort being her husband who is obliged to make her secure (541). There is another continued emphasis on the walls with Asya's Victorian cottage, as she says, "Gerald this is my husband's house" (561). Borders point to another problem because Asya commits *zinā* in Saif's house and her body that Saif has to protect is violated. It is interesting to note that, as Linda F. Maloul emphasises, "Asya's family's Islam seems to be an urban and secular Islam",[607] but she sadly thinks about *zinā*, which becomes *khiyana* and the third scene strengthens this. On the other hand, desire becomes, together with language, a threshold and an opening of the self to the other in the novel.[608]

After the Jimmy Porter quarrel, Gerald and Asya perform an interesting sensual role-play which is resonant with colonial domination where the reader recognises the "'exoticising effects' of colonial stereotypes in the western male's gaze".[609] Strange is the fact that, as Young emphasises, the desiring and civilising white male is sexually attracted to the yellow and black races[610] who repulse (this is the axis of attraction and repulsion) and it is important that the execution of civilisation is based on colonial desire, thereby on hierarchical power and violence. Gerald takes off Asya's clothes and wants her to look at herself in the mirror. Commandingly he says, "Open your eyes. I want you to see yourself". Asya wants to switch off the lights and Gerald says that he always wants to see her "babe"

[607] Maloul 77.
[608] See Moore 157.
[609] D'Alessandro 92.
[610] Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) puts forward a theory of race with three major races as the yellow, black and the white. See Young 66, 97; Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 220, see also 27. It is important to note that, as Mullaney states, colonial constructions of race are pigmentocratic in nature and the dangerous practice of skin bleaching among some African and Afro-Caribbean communities (especially women) attests to this. See Mullaney 52.

"naked and perfumed", her hair falling over the shoulders and wearing only her jewels. The irony is that it is Saif who bought the jewels and Asya asks, "An odalisque you want". The other irony is that this opportunist Englishman does not know what odalisque is although it is an odalisque that he wants.[611] Asya translates, "A concubine. A female slave" (563). Stupidly, Gerald says that he is Asya's slave and addresses her as "my beautiful, Eastern butterfly". Asya's thoughts slip into great seascapes and "empty scenes", into frames from *Death in Venice* (564) and it is interesting to note that the plague in *Death in Venice* is of Asiatic in origin: "In Mann's great fable of the alliance between creativity and disease – *Death in Venice*– the plague that infects Europe is Asiatic in origin: the combination of dread and promise, of degeneration and desire".[612] Relatedly, degeneration and desire unite in the relationship of Asya and Gerald and Asya dreams of the tiles of her house; the tiles in her "real life" that "was going to be in the house by the pyramids with the fountain in the courtyard" (729) and she sleeps.

After all, Asya can experience sex only as adultery in the form of colonial desire and after the violation of *hudud*.[613] The contradiction of her position is stressed in linguistic terms and the only word that Gerald speaks out at that moment is her name, "he had thrown his head back and cried, no, roared out her name". Interestingly, Asya becomes "her name" and the text annihilates her. However, "She had been touched" (541) at that moment; she is not the sweetie, pussycat, or princess of Saif anymore. Nonetheless, as explored previously in the scene where Asya cannot pronounce her name, she again becomes a metonymic gap; a *muhasanah*, because although Gerald roars out her name, he will always address her either as babe, or baby and man and this scene ensures the complete annihilation of Asya as an Oriental woman through what she calls sexual imperialism.[614] For Asya, desire is an index of fears, violations, numbness, death, adultery and rape, and no matter what, it is textual.

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[611] See Moore 28.
[612] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 227-228. In Guy Boothby's *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), a virulent plague kills millions of people in Europe. This oriental disease is spread from Port Said where the Suez Canal facilitates not only the transportation of imperial goods to Britain, but also an epidemic disease. See Bulfin 425.
[613] For a discussion of *fitna* see Maloul 85.
[614] See Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 319.

Young's discussion on homo-eroticism in racial mixing also explains the uncertain nature of desire for the female subaltern. Relatedly, Massad emphasises that Soueif "explores desire not as a Western binary as hetero- and homosexual desire, but rather as a fluid set of possibilities existing on a continuum".[615] Young highlights the exclusive importance of homo-eroticism in the theses of racial mixing and concludes with the important point that if all black or yellow races are female or feminised –there is a distinction between female/feminised and masculine races– it comes to mean that the white male is attracted to both sexes. Young argues convincingly that civilisation begins to merge with interracial homo-eroticism because sexual difference is translated into the sexual division of races as Gobineau forthrightly speaks about a paradoxical preference for the feminised black races.[616] This is particularly apparent in the scene when Saif learns Asya's betrayal and says, "You can invite him back and he can fuck me too" (633). On the other hand, unlike in the Victorian novelistic tradition, it is Saif who is awakened and he sees Asya's betrayal as *khiyana*: "An Englishman. You fucked an Englishman". Asya definitely sees the point and asks, "Would it have been better […] if he'd been Egyptian? Or Iraqi? Or Palestinian?" In this post-colonial text, desire oscillates between *zinā* and *khiyanah* and Saif's leaves Asya with ambiguity, "You can't have known him. You fucked an Englishman you didn't know." (630). There is cultural separatism and hierarchical essentialism in Saif's agony: Gerald can know the Oriental, and he ensures that he does, and Asya can never know an Englishman.

Lastly to state, Asya's hysterical fear for the lifeless plastic penis can be interpreted also in the context of oriental sexuality with Flaubert. Orhan Pamuk interestingly observes in his *Istanbul: Memories and the City* an important deliberate omission in Said's handling of Flaubert, which for him points to the fact that Said reads texts selectively. Pamuk indicates that Said ignores evidence that does not point to Orientalism as a discursive tool for colonial power and he narrates a story of Flaubert and his failed and embarrassing sexual encounter with an Istanbulite seventeen-year-old girl. The story is that Flaubert visits the filthy brothels of the city with a dragoman, where the women are ugly, and wants

[615] Massad and Soueif 77.
[616] See Young 104.

to leave at once. But the madam offers him her own daughter and the girl wants to inspect his penis for syphilis, but as he still has induration and fearing that she might see this, Flaubert gets out of the bed and says that she is insulting him. This is definitely a disempowering moment for the European and Flaubert cannot expose his body to the oriental female gaze like the syphilitic patients in Cairo who pull down their trousers and "display their chancres for the benefit of visiting Western physicians".[617] As is well known, Pamuk emphasises that Flaubert studied them carefully and took notes about them in an attitude of seeing another filthy oriental custom and oddity. For Pamuk, such a scene of emasculation does not suit within the narrative of Orientalist mastery and domination that Said is talking about and he argues that Said selectively omits it.[618]

Similarly, Asya is very nervous about the plastic penis and fears that people will see it. Coincidentally, there is a scene in rural Egypt where local women giggle over an erect penis that Asya uses for the contraception campaign she is working for. After all her problems with sex and marriage, desire and marriage and marriage and romance and so on, it is ridiculously paradoxical that she is working for a contraception campaign as a professor of English. The laughing women assure her that "there is no embarrassment in knowledge" (756) and at that moment a young woman asks Asya about her delayed period. Asya advises her to go to a clinic, but the woman insists to tell her what to do. Asya says that she is not a doctor and the women shockingly asks, "Then why do they call you a doctor". Asya briefly explains her Ph.D. in Literature and the woman cannot see a point in having a degree in poetry and stories, "What use is a degree in that" (757). On the other hand, Asya describes these women in novelistic terms and says that "they are worthy of romance" (758). This striking moment summarises her dilemma, consolidates her hybridity and the novel ends.

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[617] Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* [E-book], (2003), (Trans.: Maureen Freely), Vintage Books, 2006, 367-368.

[618] Kate Teltscher, "Reading Orientalism in Istanbul, Edward Said and Orhan Pamuk", Ranjan Ghosh (Ed.), *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* [E-book], (137-150), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, 138.

3.3. VISION, HISTORY AND ISLAM

Ahdaf Soueif indicates that Edward Said's only resource when writing *Out of Place* is memory and upon being diagnosed with a chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, he returns to his past, Palestine and Cairo after many years (*Mezzaterra* 251). Correspondingly, Said says that "Appeals to past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present", and that "What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past is really past".[619] In Said's understanding, past informs and implies the present, and neither the past nor the present can be understood alone. He argues that European imperialism is a shadow in contemporary history and the imperial past is not contained within itself, because it entered, almost always violently, into the reality of hundreds of millions of people who shared it as a memory. Imperialism still exercises power and there is no after to colonialism.

Likewise, Soueif's *The Map of Love* travels between past and present and it is considered a "tour de force of revisionist metahistory of Egypt in the twentieth century".[620] Past is not over and ended in this novel and it continues to have a shaping influence in the present. With its inquisitive approach to the past, this novel shows that the problems in the past deeply influence present actualities and, in Said's words, "there can be no escapes from history", and as stated before, many post-colonial writers carry the past within them as scars of humiliating wounds.[621]

As argued emphatically in the previous sections, *The Map of Love* fictionalises theoretical debates and novelises Edward Said's insistent focus on the "overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals" and "the interdependence of cultural terrains in which the colonizer and colonized co-existed and battled each other through projections as well as rival geographies, narratives, and histories".[622] The reconstruction of history in the novel is based on a contrapuntal reading and writing practice that deconstructs the privilege

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[619] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1, see also 230.
[620] Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*, 128.
[621] Said, Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 23, 34.
[622] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xxii.

of the West as the sole historical agent, and more than that, Soueif supersedes the dangerous distinction between the centre and the margin and creates an interweaved, complex and contrapuntal narrative that is tied to multiple consciousnesses. The embrace of intersections, of voices, narratives and memories, importantly unsettles genre borders in *The Map of Love* and it characteristically depicts post-colonial views of language, history and identity. This novel emerges as a remarkable historico-political text out of the transformative power of memory and it strongly emphasises the post-colonial subject's powerful interpretations over written records that was considered a metropolitan and imperial right and act. It can thus be argued that, although hybridity is strengthened and celebrated as a theme in the novel, contrapuntality describes its central argument and informs its historical understanding. In that respect, it is emphasised in this study that this post-colonial text's importance is its appropriation of the orientalist discourse and the deconstruction of its essentialism and ahistoricity, and to attest to this, *Orientalism* appears on the book's suggested further reading page. Similarly, Mariedele Boccardi indicates that Said's work is "especially resonant with the political and narrative project of *The Map of Love*" because of "his insistence on the discursive nature of Orientalism, whose textual production accounts for a significant part of the imperial archive".[623]

In the Eye of the Sun, introduces an entirely different understanding of history and post-coloniality and it is observable in its bildungsroman trajectory. The novel does not shuttle between past and present like *The Map of Love*, and even so, it does not follow a traditional and linear storyline. History and politics in *The Map of Love* are central to the life of the characters, but in *In the Eye of the Sun*, history is somehow outside the lives of the characters, and to confirm this, it is presented as an external structure, though intrusive. Relatedly, D'Alessandro argues that "Asya's participation in political events, in spite of her strong interest, remains on the abstract level.[624] On the other hand, Valassopolous argues that "The insertion of historical facts that do not merge into the story, or indeed remain memorable, as they seem like appendages, begs closer inspection" in *The Map of Love*.[625]

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[623] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 107.
[624] D'Alessandro 122.
[625] Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 36.

As an archive of resistance to the Occupation, *The Map of Love* develops into what Said might have called a comparative novel of imperialism with its contrapuntal histories that "destabilise the homogeneity of the archive" as Boccardi stresses.[626] It is the Empire writing back; it is the voyage in. *The Map of Love* is also a difficult novel to grasp because of its historically dense portrayal of Arab nationalism and Egypt's struggle for self-government that is Egyptian in character, but not distinctly Arab. The effect of this contrast is to show the special place of Egypt for the British Empire and a consideration of it is necessary to understand Soueif's fiction. The same stress is implicit in Said's criticism as well and this section is informed by Said's discussions of Arthur James Balfour, Lord Cromer and T. E. Lawrence, who haunt Soueif's novels, to suggest a wider understanding of her fictionalisation of history and gives a glimpse of the imperialist rhetoric that orientalises the Egyptian Arabs.

The Map of Love novelises Egypt as a palimpsest with key moments in the history of the nation and Soueif gives a truly and densely depicted account of the Omdurman War, the Occupation of Egypt, the Mahdist Revolt in Sudan and the *al-Nahda* movement. The private and the public intersect in the novel and it is therefore fitting within the structure of a post-colonial novel that history is transmitted through fragile and personal narratives like diaries, letters and testimonies which turn into a strikingly powerful historical archive. Hassan emphasises that "Anna's diary and letters quickly become a historical record of bitter struggle against colonial policies and of dynamic social change".[627] On the other hand, as discussed in the previous sections, history is rewritten by the appropriation of the orientalist discourse. One of the most important purposes of the novel is to critically consider the presence of the past in contemporary history,[628] and to show this, Soueif creates a dual narrative which makes the text contrapuntal and the history that it rewrites, a palimpsest.[629]

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[626] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 110.
[627] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 762.
[628] D'Alessandro 31.
[629] Boccardi argues that the double time structure of the novel deconstructs its causality. See Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 198.

Palimpsest is originally a term for a piece of parchment on which several inscriptions had been made before earlier ones had been erased. Therefore, the traces of earlier inscriptions are there despite erasures and overwritings and it is crucial to perceive that texts are dense and layered. Palimpsest more importantly suggests a historical understanding because the aspects of a pre-colonial culture and the experience of colonisation affect the developing cultural identity of post-colonial societies.[630] As Ashcroft et al. also indicate, "The creative development of post-colonial societies is often determined by the influence of this pre-colonial indigenous culture and the degree to which it is still active".[631] Palimpsest also shows how space is transformed into place, as Bill Ashcroft states, "The concept of palimpsest begins to undermine the spatiality of place and the priority of the boundary by re-embedding time and space, history and location, through the agency of language".[632] Robert Young describes the process of palimpsestual inscription and reinscription as "an historical paradigm that will acknowledge the extent to which cultures were not simply destroyed, but rather layered on top of each other, giving rise to struggles that themselves only increased the imbrication of each one with the other" which makes their translation "into increasingly uncertain patchwork identities".[633] It is crucial to perceive that for Young the British Empire did not erase or destroy a culture, but tried to graft a colonial superstructure on it, which is different from deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation.

The Map of Love can be described as a fictional discussion of history and it weaves, as Anna weaves her magical tapestry, the past and the present into a complex novel. On the one hand, historical characters are fictionalised and fictional characters converse with other fictional characters, like Dorothea Brooke. On the other hand, the echoes of a troubling past are heard in contemporary Egypt and the turmoil in the Middle East is remarkably captured in the novel's contemporary setting that concentrates on US imperialism. The act of bearing witness, *shahadah*, as a memorial practice, is at the heart of the novel and it begins with an epigraph from "The Charter" of 1962, the socialist manifesto of the 1952 Revolution. The

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[630] See Ashcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies, The Key Concepts*, 190-192.
[631] Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, 115.
[632] Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, 155.
[633] Young 164.

quotation remarkably encapsulates Soueif's purposes and introduces the historical scope of the novel to the reader:

> "It is strange that this period [1900-1914] when the Colonialists and their collaborators thought everything was quiet – was one of the most fertile in Egypt's history. A great examination of the self took place, and a great recharging of energy in preparation for a new Renaissance". Gamal 'Abd el-Nasser, *The Covenant*, 1962"

By opening the novel with Gamal 'Abd el-Nasser, Soueif shows that the "'people without History', people on whom the economy and polity sustained by empire depend, but whose reality has not historically and culturally required attention"[634] resisted the Empire from the beginning and the novel historically shows that the resistance of the Egyptians, the subject races of Cromer and the Orientals of Balfour, was very powerful, as Mustafa Kamel says in the novel in 1898, "I believe that the fruit of this defence, if not harvested by the first defender, or the second, will be harvested by an Egyptian somewhere down the years" (431). As Said reminds us, resistance to the Empire always prevails, but it is very difficult to carry the project further for the post-colonial subject. It can therefore be stated that *The Map of Love*, in its dual narrative, fictionalises the struggle for independence with its Victorian setting and its contemporary setting shows the failure of the post-colonial subject in the path to liberation. This duality also creates the political tension of the novel[635] and relatedly Heilmann and Llewellyn indicate that historical fiction has a strong political resonance for women and ethnic writers.[636] Similarly, Layla al Maleh indicates that the Anglophone Arab discourse in Britain in the past thirty years is heavily female, feminist, politically engaged and diasporic in awareness.[637] On the other hand, Bruce King argues that Soueif sacrifices her characters and story to politics and that the novel's focus is too

[634] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 75.
[635] Soueif says that some readers of *The Map of Love* "were unconfortable with its treatment of colonialism and Zionism". See Mahjoub 60.
[636] Heilmann and Llewellyn 142.
[637] al Maleh 13.

didactic for, as Valassopoulos emphasises, Soueif thinks that she corrects history as a revisionist historian.[638]

The Map of Love shows that culture is a battleground for the resistance against the Empire and the static Orient, the geographical problem of the Empire (and the English novel), is not supine, unresisting, silent and homogeneous as it was imagined and created to be. Although Oriental people have a narrow space in the genealogically useful past of the Empire, *The Map of Love* shows that the histories of the Oriental and the coloniser overlap and Soueif historicises this overlap with Egypt that ceases to be the silent Orient. As a post-colonial novel, the main concern of *The Map of Love* is history writing and the epigraph from Agathon, "Even God cannot change the past", confirms this. Particularly suggestive here is the fact that the imperialist writes the history of the periphery out of imagination and, as the reader will see, almost always violently on the body of the post-colonial subject. On the other hand, *The Map of Love* presents a sustained criticism of the post-colonial state and shows that it extends the hegemony and builds up another system of exploitation. In this novel, post-colonial subjects carry both histories as scars, of humiliating wounds, and liberation becomes a much more contested issue than independence. Similarly, Mariadele Boccardi indicates that History in Soueif's fiction may be thought of not as a space "upon which migrant individuals move as in the way migrants themselves, their very skin, bodies, humours and expressions, constitute a history that is not so much narrated as assembled, possibly suspended, present, not representable, and non-authoritative".[639]

In its contrapuntal and overlapping histories, *The Map of Love* draws together Egyptian nationalists, British imperialists, British anti-imperialists and the *fallaheen*, basically who had "the Maxim gun" and who had not (25), as Hilaire Belloc says in the novel, and the most definitive moment in its opening is the death of Edward, who, as stated above, witnesses the violence in the Omdurman War and dies a silent death. Edward becomes an emblem of the aggression of the Empire and he pays the debt with his body together with the Sudanese dervishes at Khartoum whose bodies are dismembered by the army of General Kitchener. Like his father Sir Charles, Edward fights for the Empire and

[638] King 453; Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 35.
[639] Boccardi, "History as Genealogy: A.S. Byatt, Tracy Chevalier, Ahdaf Soueif", 315.

perhaps thinks that it is a noble thing, not to say a burden. As Boccardi emphasises, Edward's "ideals of honour, duty and manliness are defeated when confronted with the reality of the imperial enterprise in all its indiscriminate violence".[640] However, the interesting thing is that Soueif creates Sir Charles, a strongly anti-imperialist figure, as a very sympathetic character who becomes a metropolitan informant[641] for Anna and provides a healthily mediated knowledge for her that also makes her another sympathetic character. Anna writes letters to Sir Charles from Egypt and the information he gives back flows into the historical current of the novel.

Edward leaves the massacre back in Sudan and comes home with General Kitchener, but Anna realises that his homecoming is different from Sir Charles' who had given an account of how "they beat Urabi and took Tel el-Kebir" when she, a ten-year-old, was "studying the map of Egypt". Sir Charles later regrets and feels anger "at the job he had been made to" (30-31) and D'Alessandro and Valassopoulos indicate that Edward's death is presented as colonial guilt in the novel.[642] With this scene, Soueif points to the steadily mounting sense of genealogy as history in the novel and shows that the Empire replicates itself, not to say its history. The Omdurman War results with the Sudan Convention, which means that Egypt pays the cost and labour of the War, and Anna learns that Kitchener's men desecrate the body of the Mahdi (Muḥammed Ahmad) and Charles George Gordon cuts off his head so that Kitchener might use it as an inkwell.[643] All means are good for the British Empire to 'civilise' Africa for her interests and the skull of the Mahdi becomes an inkwell out of which the imperialist writes a history. Hassan reminds the reader that the desecration of the tomb of the Mahdi and the use of his skull as an

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[640] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 111.
[641] See Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 30.
[642] D'Alessandro 105; Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 35.
[643] It is interesting to note that although Gordon is depicted as a Victorian war hero, English tourism companies such as the Thomas Cook & Son profit from tours on the Nile and arranges tours to the war sites. See F. Robert Hunter, "Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868-1914", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2004, 40 (5), 28-54, JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4289940, 40. Anna also travels to Egypt with a copy of the Cook's guide. See Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 109.

inkwell are "reminiscent of the severed African heads adoring Kurtz's hut".[644] Gordon, an icon of the Empire, is killed by Mahdi's men and Mahdi's plan to exchange him for the freedom of the exiled 'Urabi Pasha fails.[645] At this moment, another anti-imperialist historical figure is introduced into the novel and the reader learns that Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a fierce supporter of the 'Urabi Revolt, sets up a fund "to defray the expenses for the defence of 'Urabi" (34). D'Alessandro indicates that the Blunts were committed to the nationalist movement in Egypt and they were considered the enemies of the Empire.[646] Soueif not only portrays historical characters but also returns to the archives to give a careful historical depiction: "the papers are full of" the massacre; "Winston Churchill promises to publish a book that tells how Kitchener ordered all the wounded killed and […] let the British and Egyptian soldiers loose upon the town for three days of rape and pillage" (34).

The Omdurman War is a painful memory for the contemporary Arabs and the references to it repeatedly appear in the novel. It is a moment of collective mourning for both the Egyptians and the Sudanese and after looking at the historical archives and reading Anna's account of Edward's death, Amal thinks that she has "never found out how the English mourn" in the twenty-odd years that she lived in England (38). *The Map of Love* is a novel about death; and thinking about death, and in the Egyptian context, this is understandable. This might be the reason of the novel's problematisation of endings and beginnings and, as a post-colonial subject who witnesses the atrocities of the post-colonial state, Amal says that "we hold on to grief, fearing that its lifting will be the final betrayal" (40). Grief and mourning become memorial practices in the novel and the motor of the story is mourning. Similarly, Geoffrey P. Nash indicates that Arab women writers seek out strategies to enter into the narrative and some women poets had recourse to mourning dead husbands and brothers to create a space from which to raise their voices.[647] Anna travels to Italy and then to Egypt in mourning; Amal says that after finishing the 'Anna story', she will settle in Tawasi, in mourning for Sharif Basha, because she has a responsibility "to her

[644] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 760.
[645] Bulfin 435.
[646] D'Alessandro 77.
[647] Nash, "From Harem to Harvard: Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*", 351.

land and to the people on it" (297). She will accomplish his plans for the country; the unfulfilled past will be the future. As suggested before, reading history mobilises the post-colonial subject and Amal says that she will record children songs and learn to make fresh peasant bread; she will find an old man who has Aragoz and Sanduq el-Dunya. Interestingly, Jack Crabbs, Jr indicates that there was an increased attention in Nasser's Egypt to the study of folklore which describes Amal's reconciliation with her culture[648] and Boccardi argues that "the remote country province comes to epitomise the nation within a specifically romantic typology of national narrative, which places the people, rather than their political representatives, as both agents and subjects" in the novel.[649] Amal will find a story-teller and she will hold on to this because, as Asya states in *In the Eye of the Sun*, Amal also says, "What's twenty years, fifty years in the life of Egypt? As long as some of us hold on and do what we can […] She can learn the land and tell its stories" (298). At that point in the novel, the scene changes to Sharif Basha's house, which is now a museum, and reader hears the call to prayer and a Sheikh 'Isa recites surah el-Asr (The Time). In this metafictional moment, the surah el-Asr; The Time turns into the interpellation of the post-colonial subject by history and Amal starts to narrate more fiercely the struggle for independence in early 1900.[650]

Amal's focus on the land and its stories is important and vigorously debated in the novel. Mobilised by history, the post-colonial subject remembers memories about certain places in the city and Soueif shows that cultures and histories meet and clash in those spaces. The narrator's standing at the deserted place, *waqf 'ala al-atlal*, confirms this. For Amal, history is reading the death of the ancestors, and perhaps the possible death of Omar in Sharif Basha's story, and the reading of history turns into an act of mourning for the post-colonial subject because she knows the end (in the beginning). Interestingly, in this novel, history at some point unites the coloniser and the colonised in the empty space of

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[648] Crabbs 405. Amal's Diya M. Abdo argues that Soueif romanticises the landscape, local people and the native customs. See Diya M. Abdo 307.

[649] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 114.

[650] Similarly, in Diana Abu Jaber's *Crescent*, the call to prayer helps Sirine, the principal character, "to maintain spiritual and cultural ethos of her of her Arab ancestors". Brinda J. Mehta, "The Semiosis of Food in Diana Abu Jaber's *Crescent*", Layla Al Maleh (Ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora, Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* [E-book], (203-235), Rodopi, Amsterdam 2009, 206. See also D'Alessandro 65.

mourning: “the silent house, and the emptiness; the absence of him who had been absent for so long. But this is a different absence. A definitive absence” (41). Amal describes the mourning of Anna with absence and she starts mourning for her city that she defines with absence: “There used to be gardens on the roofs here in Cairo” (42). She is angry with the city because the post-colonial state does not claim the past, and worse, destroys it: “In this city tress are torn up, not planted […] Trees that soared up to sixty metres, reached to the sky, planted by Muḥammed ‘Ali close to two hundred years ago, torn up by the roots to make a wider road” (75). Muḥammed ‘Ali is an iconic figure in the history of Egypt and he encourages the emergence of the modern Egyptian state. He sends students to European centres and ordains the translation of European works into Arabic which starts the Arab Renaissance, the *al-Nahda*. In this city, history sadly reminds itself wherever Amal goes and her personal history intersects with the history of the nation. While travelling with Isabel, she passes by a restaurant and remembers that her husband kissed her hand there and she pretended not to notice the stares of the waiters, “it’s brave of me to come even here”. After a U-turn with the car, they see the television building, “still barricaded with sandbags since ‘67” which reminds Amal the humiliating defeat of the country (83). Sometimes, the city brings back a happy hybridity. When Anna mentions Mu‘allaqah in her diary, they go to this Coptic church and find a series of wavy lines at the baptismal, “the hieroglyph for water”, and look at each other in delight because this is “another layer” (120) in the palimpsest that is Egypt.

Consistently, Anna writes that the religion of the Ancient Egyptians has similarities with Christianity and Amal narrates, as a storyteller, the story of Akhen Atun that is similar to Antigone’s story: “when he [Akhen Atun] died the priests of Amun-Ra staged their comeback and forbade the burial of his body, so that his sister stole out at night and anointed him and buried him, and for this she was condemned to a dark cell to die of hunger and thirst” (89). The story of Akhen Atun is carefully placed in the novel and the personal history of the post-colonial subject integrates with the history of the country in this young king’s tragic ending. In *The Map of Love*, there are sisters who mourn the death of

brothers,[651] Isabel and Layla, and Amal is haunted by the colonial past and dreads that Omar might be killed. She carries this layered and palimpsestual history as a burden and mourn for the country and the city.

On the other hand, Amal's mourning rises beyond Egypt into another space, and as a story-teller, she writes her memories of England: "Once upon a time I lived with a family. A husband and children. That was in England. In a house out of a Victorian novel" (45). England, the other setting of *The Map of Love*, has a disrupting presence in the novel because it introduces another history and tries to violently regulate Egypt. The reader slowly learns that Anna's England arouses troubling memories in Amal and problematises her reading. As a post-colonial subject, she misses her 'out of a Victorian novel house' and perhaps this is the "sinister insidious colonialism implanted in her very soul" that contaminates Asya in *In the Eye of the Sun*.

Amal wants to unite with her two sons in England but she even does not leave her flat. Paralysis is a defining feature of her post-coloniality in the opening of the novel, and ironically, she imagines a scene where Isabel asks Omar about returning, "Do you ever go back […] Do you think of yourself as Egyptian". Omar will not go back and he is Egyptian "And American. And Palestinian"; he has no problem with identity (50), and has an official history of 'and American'. As for Amal, she is angry "with the city – with the country" to which she "had returned to find so much had changed" (59). But, as stated before, roots are routes, and by reading history, she will unite with her ancestors and her sons in the empty family house in Tawasi. One of them will come to stay with her, and after listening "to his stories", "she can show him Anna's story" (298). For Amal, history unites her with the past and she reconciles with future through her act of reading history.

History also introduces an absence to Amal. As she reads the diaries of Anna, she thinks about Emily, Anna's maid, who travel with her to Egypt: "And what of Emily?". Cole indicates that the Europeans who live in Egypt "were themselves stratified along class

[651] See Nash, "From Harem to Harvard: Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*", 357.

lines, though in general they were the most privileged section of the population".[652] As stated before, lost texts are a central concern of Soueif and Amal is sad because Anna's papers give her no clue. She imagines Emily as a distanced English girl first, "she distances herself from the spectacle of the parade in Alexandria: she is fearful in the Bazaar […] How old is she? What does she want for herself?" Amal's imagination moves from the domestic restriction into the extremes of the threatening Orient, "Can she yet do what Hester Stanhope's maid did, who in Palmyra caught the fancy of a sheikh but was denied the permission to marry him", and there is another lady's maid story, "Would she do what Lucy Duff Gordon's Sally did and melt into the backstreets of Alexandria, pregnant with the child of her mistress' favourite servant, Omar al-Halawani" (68). Anna rarely talks about Emily and Amal creates a fictional Emily in 'the Anna story', who has a voice and says that she wants to go back to England when Anna marries Sharif. Anna also informs the reader that Mr Barrington, the Third Secretary, an anti-imperialist character in Egypt, finds secure positions for his servants in British households before leaving for England and Sabir, the loyal manservant, is one of them. He rises from *fallah* origins up to the office of Sharif Basha because of his knowledge of English and Sabir has a voice in the novel.

There is another absence in history, and a far more important one, that the novel addresses. The denial of Palestine in history is an important debate in *The Map of Love* and Soueif historicises the plight of the Palestinians in the novel which, as Boccardi describes, "punctuates Amal's own life".[653] As stated before, Amal's mother, Maryam, has two miscarriages which is clearly meant to be understood as the violence of history inscribed on the female body in the novel.[654] Amal's father, Ahmad al-Ghamrawi, marries Maryam in Palestine and Omar is born in a house in Jerusalem that Amal has "only ever seen in photographs". After the Nakba, families and communities disperse across the globe, and al-Ghamrawis lose their family home. They move to Egypt; Amal is born in Tawasi "in the year of Nasser's revolution" (117) and Maryam has two miscarriages. It is here that the

[652] Juan Ricardo Cole, "Feminism, Class, and Islam in Turn-Of-The-Century Egypt", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13 (4), 1981, 387-407, JSTOR, Accessed: 08-05-2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/162906, 389. See also D'Alessandro 64.
[653] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 115.
[654] See Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", 314.

reader first hears the official story of 'and the American' part of Omar's identity. He is sent to "Eisenhower's America in '56": "They might have sent him to Russia, for the music there was just good – maybe better. But he spoke English, and America had just stopped Britain, France and Israel bombing Suez and Port Said, and they sent him to America", and Amal sadly states, "and he stayed". Like the Palestinians whose lives are anchored in distant territories outside Palestine, Omar's "life is firmly anchored there: in New York" (118). Here is how the post-colonial subject makes stories out of histories and Omar, maybe more than any other character in the novel, shows that history structures the life of the individual. As for Amal, "her life becomes the story of deflated national aspirations and grubby compromise".[655] As Maggie Adawalla indicates, Amal is stuck between *al nakba* and *al naksa*; the disaster of the Palestinians in 1948 and the defeat of the Six-Day-War in 1967.[656]

On the one hand is the story of Omar and on the other is the story of Am Abu el-Ma'ati, the old blue-eyed chief of the farm in Tawasi; the local native informant.[657] His blue eyes are a legacy of a Turkish seigneur and he loses one of his sons in 1967. The other son migrates to Iraq but comes back after the Gulf War. Another is in Bahrain and one of the daughters of Am Abu el-Ma'ati is widowed by the Islamists. This old man witnesses the dispersal of his family during *Infitah*[658] and brings the news to Amal that the school that her great-grandfather had built in 1906 is closed because of the political affiliations of the volunteer teachers. Furthermore, the sugar cane field is burned by the government because "the terrorists hid in it" (124) and the clinic is closed down too. Am Abu el-Ma'ati brings real life issues to Amal and he speaks of the "problems between the people and between the people and the government" and the government's heavy hand, and the new land laws, and the countryside that is boiling (124-125). When Amal asks about the teachers, "Are they Islamists or communists, these teachers", Am Abu el-Ma'ati cannot reply, "They speak of justice", he says (125). After all, as he yearns, "the fallah tills his land and the government talks in Cairo" (126).

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[655] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 115.
[656] Adawalla 442.
[657] See Valassopoulos, "Fictionalising Post-colonial Theory: The Creative Native Informant?", 31.
[658] See Ayad 58.

Am Abu el-Ma‘ati is a crucial figure in the novel and the reader later learns that he and seventeen *fallaheen* in the village are arrested by the police because “Everybody is a suspect” (439). Everybody is a suspect because of the terrorist attack in Luxor which kills sixty tourists, and earlier in the novel, Amal is nervous when she is heading to Tawasi with Isabel because the road leads “into the heartland of the terrorists. Or at least that was what it said in the papers” and the soldiers, when they stop them, say “Look after her. We don’t want foreign blood spilled here” (166-167). Another officer stops them on the road and he similarly warns Amal, “You know what will happen if an American is harmed” (171).

While going to the police station to ask for the release of the villagers, Amal paradoxically takes her British passport and the local women who come with her are not allowed inside because the police officer says, “No natives” (438). Tareq Atiyya helps her and the men are released. Soueif connects the plight of the contemporary *fallaheen* to the Denshwai incident and shows that history, perhaps because of untutored nationalism and Islamism, repeats itself and the post-colonial state that is supposed to protect its people hurt them the most. Disillusioned, unhappy and desperate, Amal walks through the empty house in Tawasi and looks at the portrait of Sharif Basha that is hanging on the wall, and talks to him: “and his dark eyes look back at me and behind them lie el-Tel el-Kebir and Umm Durman and Denshwai” (442). The Denshwai incident remains a painful memory in the history of Egypt and the personal histories of Am Abu el-Ma‘ati and other seventeen men show that past is not past and the law of the state does not serve its citizens; they become the muted subalterns of the unaddressed past.[659] This recognition so interestingly describes the plight of the young nationalists who abducted Anna as one of them says, “the law serves the English” (138).

Unsurprisingly, Anna’s journal writes about the Denshwai incident: “This is what has happened in Denshwai”. In 1906, a British military force camp near Tantah. Some of the officers wish to shoot pigeons, as they did the year before, and send a message to the

[659] Heilmann and Llewellyn 142.

‘*Umdah* (headman of the village)[660] and do not wait for reply “as they are supposed by law to do” (424). They settle for the expedition and head towards Denshwai knowing that there are large numbers of pigeons, which constitute people’s livelihood. When they approach the village, an old man asks them to shoot far from the villagers’ home, but the officers pay no attention and shoot within 150 metres of the village. Unfortunately, a fire starts in one of the storerooms where wheat is kept and the owner of the house and his wife run out and beat the officers closest to their house and try to disarm them. The gun of one of the soldiers goes off and the women falls. Thinking that she is dead, the villagers beat the officers with sticks and two other officers hear the noise and come for help. They shoot low into people, five of them fall, a police officer among them, so the police join in beating the officers. When the villagers learn that the woman is not dead, they calm down and some elder people intervene and they return the officers and their guns to the encampment.

In the meantime, two officers go ask for help from the encampment and one faints by the roadside because of the June heat. A villager, Sayyid Ahmad Sa‘d, finds him and with the help of other villagers, carries him to shade and gives him water. When they see the English force approaching, the villagers hide. The soldiers find Sayyid Ahmad Sa‘d and kill him. The English soldier dies later the same day because of sunstroke and the villagers are tried for murder. Sharif Basha volunteers to defend the case, but is turned down. Four of the villagers are to be hanged, two gets Life with hard labour, one gets fifteen years with hard labour, six other get seven years with hard labour, and they are hanged in Denshwai. “There is silence”, Amal says (427), “not a sound was heard save for the melodious of the Qur’anic message of hope for both the living and the dead” (430). After this barbaric imperial act, Boutros Ghali, a member of the Special Court for Denshwai and Minister of Justice by proxy, is assassinated by Ibrahim al-Wardani who calls him a traitor.[661] It is

[660] Under Muhammed ‘Ali *‘umdahs* were given increasing responsibility for tax collecting instead of the Turko-Circassian agents. Cole 388. See also Abu-Lughod, “The Transformation of the Egyptian Élite: Prelude to the ‘Urābī Revolt”, 336.

[661] It is important to note that the word “assassin” comes from Arabic. The killing of Boutros Ghali is the first public assassination of a political figure in Egypt. Ibrahim al-Wardani is a twenty-three years old pharmacist who belonged to late Mustafa Kamel’s Watani party. See Donald M. Reid, “Political Assasination in Egypt, 1910-1954”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1982, 15 (4), 625-651, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/217848, 627, 637.

important to note that Boutros Ghali signs the Sudan Convention after the Omdurman War and his presence in the Special Court for Denshwai makes him vulnerable. Towards the end of 1907, Denshwai prisoners are pardoned, but the widows and the orphaned children, and Egyptians, never forget this English barbarity. As Reid indicates, Anwar Sadat "was among those who grew up with the name of the martyred "hero of Dinshaway" on their lips".[662]

These people have, what Said might have called, accumulating history; they enter history, but their history is a troubling one. They do not claim to know the past, but a version of the past.[663] In the same way, D'Alessandro emphasises that Soueif gives voice to the figures who "never had a place in the transmission of history."[664] Boccardi also indicates that "the history whose narration had been appropriated by the West ought to be retold from the prespective of the subjects of that history".[665] One of the victims of colonialism, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi, also suffers under the weight of colonial history. Before he and Anna get married, he marries an Egyptian woman and returns the bride after six months, which creates a scandal. As Layla states, it all happens because their lives are shadowed "by the Revolution and then the Occupation, the banishment of my uncle and 'Urabi Basha and their friends" (150). As a French-educated *effendi*, Sharif nobly struggles for the independence of the country, to end the Occupation and to have an elected Parliament and a constitution like the English, but he is assassinated and no one knows who did this violent act. Layla mourns for her brother, "They say it could be Coptic fanatics in retaliation for Boutros Basha's assassination", or "it could be Muslim fanatics for my brother's position on women's rights and because he married Anna and was known to wear her image on a chain round his neck – and so that the Copts would be blamed".[666] Maybe it is "the British agents to get the Copts blamed and increase the divisions in the country and rid themselves of a national leader", or perhaps it is the Khedive "out of spite – and not fearful of the consequences, since Lord Kitchener would be glad to see my brother dead" (506). Sharif Basha becomes a *shahid* of the resistance against Empire and his death leaves

[662] Reid 627.
[663] See Heilmann and Llewellyn 142.
[664] D'Alessandro 48.
[665] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 112.
[666] Hasan Tawfiq, a young extemist, shot Amin 'Uthman, the main link between Nahhas and the British Embassy. It is important to state that 'Uthman was married to an Englishwoman. See Reid 634.

the reader with questions about the challenges surrounding independence and liberation for the post-colonial subject.

Layla's emphasis on women's rights is significant in understanding *The Map of Love* and it is seen that the novel reasserts the importance of women in resistance against colonial domination in Egypt. In *The Map of Love*, Soueif carefully unearths and pieces together the stories of women in the early 20th century Egypt and, as stated before, she domesticates and historicises harem to question the discourses on Oriental and Muslim women. Boccardi similarly indicates that *The Map of Love* presents knowledge not of but from the harem.[667] This recognition, interestingly enough, appears in Anna's diary and she is unwilling to talk about her life in Egypt in her letters to Caroline, a friend in London, after getting married to Sharif Basha. Anna says that Caroline expresses curiosity about her life but she finds in herself "a strange unwillingness to provide a detailed picture of 'life in the Harem'" (354). She tells the reader pointedly that Caroline would gain a true picture of her life only if she were to visit Cairo and Hassan states that harem "is revealed to be a space in which educated women live more or less independent lives" in the novel.[668]

It is significant that Soueif partly sets the novel especially at the end of the 19th century and this way, she points to the fact that a great social transformation occurs in the Middle East at that time. Relatedly, Leila Ahmed states that Egypt is a prime crucible of this transformation and she emphasises that "crucial moments in the rearticulation and further elaboration of issues of women and gender in Middle Eastern Muslim societies occurred under the impact of colonialism and in the socio-political turmoil that followed".[669] Importantly for women, the effects of the European political, economic and cultural encroachment are complicated and mostly negative and the outcome of this process of transformation is also positive because it gradually changes the seclusion of women and their exclusion from important domains of activity. It is interesting to note that women become a central subject for national debate in Egypt at the end of the 19th century and the

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[667] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 110.
[668] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 762.
[669] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1992, 127, 3.

subject of women emerges as a topic in the writings of Muslim male intellectuals in Egypt and Turkey. Interestingly, the issues of nationalism, national advancement, political, social and cultural reform are intertwined with the Question of Women and Soueif accordingly historicises the beginnings of women's movement in the Arab world interlinked with the resistance against the Empire. It is important to note that earlier debates about the improvement of the status of women dangerously advocated to replace the misogynistic practices of the native culture with the values of another culture; the European, and the link between the Question of Women and nationalism was established in this context. Unsurprisingly, the debate about the status of women is charged with other issues and Ahmed remarkably argues that another history is inscribed in the discourse on women in the Arab East, basically "the history of colonial domination and the struggle against it and the class divisions around that struggle".[670]

As briefly suggested before, the policies of Muhammed 'Ali are important in accelerating the social transformation in Egypt and his initiatives give impetus to economic, intellectual, cultural and educational developments that are crucially important for women.[671] However, the thrust towards educational expenses slows down after the British Occupation as the British administration spends less on education for economic and political reasons. At this time in the history of Egypt, nationalist intellectuals like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his student, the Azhari sheikh Muhammed 'Abdu, urge the importance of education for both girls and boys, but the colonial administrators, especially Lord Cromer, introduce interesting measurements to prevent it. Muhammed 'Abdu, like his teacher Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, is a committed religious thinker and he is an important historical figure in *The Map of Love*. 'Abdu vigorously works for the modernisation of Egypt that can be described as a "means of elite resistance",[672] and the elevation of women's status through intellectual and social reforms and he especially emphasises the necessity to get rid of the misinterpretations of Islam concerning polygamy, slavery and

[670] Ahmed 130.
[671] Cole 388.
[672] AbdelAzis EzzelArab, "The Experiment of Sharif Pasha's Cabinet (1879): An Inquiry into the Histiography of Egypt's Elite Movement", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (4), 2004, 561-589, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3880006, 563.

divorce. It is important too that ‘Abdu is the first person to argue that Islam, not the West, is the first to recognise the equal humanity of women. The discussions of ‘Abdu importantly enrich women’s struggle in Egypt and he stresses the plurality of Islam when astutely arguing for modernisation and reform for the country. Correspondingly, Soueif creates a fictional ‘Abdu and describes the conditions under which the Egyptians resisted the Empire. It should be indicated that although ‘Abdu is disillusioned by the Ottoman order, he feels that “the Ottoman Empire was what was left of the political independence of the *umma*, and if it vanished Muslims would lose everything”.[673]

It is remarkable to note that ‘Abdu strongly opposes the simple imitation of the Western culture[674] and it is seen that, by 1890s, Egyptian women start to speak for themselves in magazines and newspapers, and they publish a magazine for women, edited by a woman. Similarly, *The Map of Love* historicises women’s struggle against colonisation and Soueif emphasises it with the newly emerging ladies’ magazine that will not confine itself to the Question of Women and will show that women are historical agents and they can talk about other issues as well. Anna says in her diary that the magazine is the idea of Zeinab Fawwaz and Malak Hifni Nasif[675] and they plan both Arabic and French editions to attract writers from as many communities as possible, “it is not to confine itself to the ‘Question of Women’ but to enter into matters of more general concern and so demonstrate that women are ready to enter a wider arena than that to which they have hitherto been confined” (355).[676] In another scene in the novel, Sharif Basha invites the noted leaders of the Egyptian public opinion to an *iftar*; Sheik Muhammed ‘Abdu, Mustafa Bey Kamel, Qasim Bey Amin, Tal‘at Basha Harb, Ahmet Lutfi al-Sayyid, Anton al-Jmayyil and they discuss Qasim Amin’s new book, *‘Al-Mar’ah al-Jadidah*, “The New Woman”. Soueif

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[673] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2013, 269. Selim Deringil indicates that the Ottoman Empire was the only sovereign Muslim state to survive into the height of the era of colonialism in the late nineteenth century and was recognised, though grudgingly, as member of the Great Powers. Selim Deringil, “‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45 (2), 2003, 311-342, JSTOR, Accessed: 23-02-2015, http://www.jstor.org.stable/3879318, 315-316. See also Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1976-1909)”, 355.
[674] Cole 404.
[675] See Soueif, *Mezzaterra*, 269; Cole 392; See D’Alessandro 119.
[676] See Ahmed 141-143.

gives an insight into the political stances of the leaders and demonstrates that the Question of Women is an integral part of the resistance: "*Al-Liwa* is against the book: Mustafa Kamel is for education, but wants to keep the veil. Tal'at Harb wants everything to stay as it is. They are both down there now, and the author and Sheikh Muhammed 'Abdu", and Anna asks, "What do women think" (376). The reader learns that they are divided too.

The group talk about industrialisation, the Renaissance for Egypt, the Occupation and the education of girls and Anna argues emphatically that the British presence in the country divide the national movement that was united under 'Urabi Basha. Soueif explains that everyone in Egypt, Copts and Muslims, nationalists and pro-Ottomans, is united in their desire to get rid of the British and many people believe that it can only be done through national institutions. She also indicates that some Egyptians oppose the establishment of secular education and the gradual disappearance of the veil because to support these changes might mean to be in league with the British.[677] As these might suggest, the Question of Women is central to the struggle for independence in Egypt and Soueif describes the efforts of the nationalist intellectuals to open a university in Cairo. Layla informs the reader that the University is started in 1326/1908 and it holds special classes for ladies on Fridays. Nabawiyya Musa, Malak Hifni Nasif and Labiba Hashim conduct the classes and Anna talks about art and Madame Hussein Rushdi talks about European history. This way, Soueif domesticates the *harem* of the Orientalist discourse and Anna mockingly states that the *hareem* makes a working woman of her. She writes for the magazine and translates from and into English for Sharif Basha.

Egypt becomes a mobile image of varied histories but the presence of the British officers makes the history of Egypt a shared and a painful story in the novel. Anna writes in her diary that Lady Cromer turns "suffragette in opposition to the Lord" (449) and it is interesting to note that Lord Cromer combats feminism in his society but attacks Islam and the Egyptian culture for degrading women. As Leila Ahmed states, Cromer uses women's movement in Egypt for the Empire and he inherits his views on Islam, women in Islam and the veil. More importantly, Cromer believes that the Islamic religion is inferior and it

[677] The feminist debate in Egypt was definitely an issue of Westernisation. Cole 387.

breeds inferior people. Ahmed indicates that the Victorian colonial paternalistic establishment appropriates the liberating language of feminism to attack the religion and culture of other people, specifically Islam, to give moral justification to the assault while combating feminism within its own society:

> The activities of Lord Cromer are particularly illuminating on the subject, perfectly exemplifying how, when it came to the cultures of other men, white supremacist views, androcentric and paternalistic views, and feminism came together in harmonious and entirely logical accord in the service of the imperial idea.[678]

Cromer later writes a book about Egypt which becomes an imperial exercise of the extension of the Empire and Soueif depicts his presence in the country as a disrupting influence that hinders the attempts to self-government.

The central question in *The Map of Love* is the liberation of the marginal Other and for this Soueif reconstructs a contrapuntal history. She investigates the distinction between the centre and the margin and the metropolitan and the peripheral and the appropriation of the centre shows that there is no centre and hierarchy in the novel. Interestingly, Egypt, the other setting, gains historical weight and England becomes the other side. This way, *The Map of Love* turns into a masterful demonstration of the ability to read, write and rewrite history and the metropolitan imperial histories cease to be the sources of legitimation in the novel. As a powerful historical narrative, *The Map of Love* turns into an aggregation of histories and memories and, as Anna asks, there is no personal space outside politics and colonial past, “How much is our life governed by the lives and past actions of others?” (466). The troubling question in the novel is the pastness of the past for the post-colonial subject and there are signs of repeating rather than recovering from the damaging past. Time is not a straight line and there is the inescapability of the past in the contemporary. Perhaps, past is the repressed aspect of the present.[679]

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[678] Ahmed 154.
[679] Heilmann and Llewellyn 138.

In this historically dense novel, Soueif also posits questions about the nationalist movements. Nationalism is a contested issue for the post-colonial subject and Soueif creates an interpretative space to talk about independence and the unfulfilled Arab nationalism in her writings. She continually underlines the contradictions inherent in the nationalist struggle and shows that nationalism creates ambivalent, complex and sometimes traumatic results for the post-colonial subject. Her questions of nationalism mostly appear in the criticism of the post-colonial state and she describes the liberation of the post-colonial subject as a palimpsest of competing claims and histories, and painful dismemberments that cannot be separated from painful memories like the Omdurman War or the Denshwai incident, or the Luxor bombings. For that reason, her writing moves between the colonial past and the post-colonial present and she emphasises national insecurities and new forms of colonialism in considering the peculiar challenges concerning nationalism. It can be argued that Soueif sees religion as threatened by the denigration and the onslaught of the Empire and religion, nationalism and culture are fused in the resistance to the Occupation.[680]

Soueif documents the legacies of the past and their transformative potential in the present and, as a Muslim novelist writing in English, she traces the corrosive effects of political Islam in her writings and emphasises post-colonial unsettlement through misinterpretations of Islam. She therefore angrily debates the service companies sold off to foreign investors, the Iraqi children dying, Palestinian homes demolished, fresh news of gun battles in Upper Egypt, the names of urban intellectuals added to Jama‘at’s hit lists (101) and Sadat’s encouraging fundamentalists to destroy the leftist movements (226). Political Islam haunts the lives of the characters in the novel, but as stated before, Soueif also talks about Islam, Islamic culture and heritage in all her writings outside the context of political Islam and complicates the discussions around Islam.

In her review of Fatima Mernissi’s *The Forgotten Queens of Islam* in *Mezzaterra*, Soueif notes that when Prophet Muḥammed settles in Madinah in the first year of the Hijrah, he builds a mosque, teaches his followers the new religion, holds political meetings

[680] See Nash, “From Harem to Harvard: Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed’s *A Border Passage*”, 358.

in times of war and all of these activities take place in the company of women in a mosque (236). She remarkably argues that there is a democratic practice at the heart of Islam and that a parliament could have been created out of this practice of the Prophet. In another article, she historicises veil in Egypt and indicates that there is no word in Arabic equivalent to the veil. She interestingly states that it was not easy to tell whether an Egyptian woman was Christian or Muslim by her dress in the 1970s, and for her, Egyptians are multiple and varied. Similarly, in *The Map of Love*, Anna cross-dresses as an Egyptian woman on the train and she thinks that veil is liberating because it returns the authoritarian gaze of the colonialist: "Still, it is a most liberating thing, this veil. While I was wearing it, I could look wherever I wanted and nobody could look back at me. Nobody could find out who I was" (195). As Boccardi indicates, Anna here identifies "with the reverse point of view" and Hassan states that veil becomes a "guarantor of freedom of movement".[681] In another scene, Isabel wears a long skirt, a loose long-sleeved top and a scarf tied casually over her hair and she thinks that they are much more comfortable under the Egyptian sun. Nash indicates that the difference "between women is expressed in dress and personal habits" in Soueif's writing,[682] but it can be argued that Soueif discusses the vicissitudes of belonging with sartorial change and mimicry and de-politicises women's dress, especially the veil, which is both sensual and puritanical and is feared by the West.[683] Relatedly, it is interesting to note that Selim Deringil describes the Occupation as "Veiled Protectorate".[684]

As stated before, Soueif Islamises English in her writings and she portrays characters that experience Islam and are influenced by the teachings of Islam. For example, Asya articulates her fear of being a *muhasanah* and feels guilty as a traitor. There are scattered references to Friday prayers, Ramadan, *iftars*, Eid, shrine visits and Islamic mourning rituals; for example, the Thursday Night and the Fortieth, in the novels and short stories, and there are some characters for whom religion is a key component of their identities, such

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[681] Boccardi, *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*, 109; Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature: Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'", 762. See also Chambers, *British Muslim Fictions, Interviews with Contemporary Writers*, 248.
[682] Nash, "Re-siting Religion and Creating Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif and Leila Aboulela", 29.
[683] Soueif, *Mezzaterra*, 266.
[684] Deringil, "The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881-82", 20.

as Sharif Basha's father. On the other hand, Soueif remarkably depicts alternative religious spaces for women, such as the *zār* in "The Nativity", and shows that Egyptian women challenge patriarchy in the heterotopic space of *zār* and recover using Islamic recitations and songs.[685] It should also be emphasised that Soueif extends the muslimisation of English to another level and inserts passages from the *Qur'ān* in *In the Eye of the Sun* and shows that the Qur'ānic recital integrates with the inner monologue of the principal character who unites with her Islamic past after returning from England. As these might suggest, Soueif's writings become a remarkable example of post-colonial fiction as she makes the English language more complex and the English novel multi-dimensional.

[685] See Claire Chambers, *Britain through Muslim Eyes, Literary Representations 1980-1988*, Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom 2015, 209.

CONCLUSION

This study examines Ahdaf Soueif's fictional works that explore the interesting relationship between Egypt, the periphery, and England, the metropolitan centre, and emphasises that Soueif's writings give reality and history to the imagined Islamic Orient that the orientalist discourse created as an essential, silent and unresisting Other. The analyses at the start are concerned with Edward Said's critique of the genealogies of Orientalism and expand the Arabo-Islamic understanding of *nasab* as history and *shahadah* as testimony. It is seen in this context that Soueif powerfully constructs her novels and short stories with a post-colonial awareness of resistance and liberation and, as it appears in Soueif's fiction, this study suggests a female and post-colonial rethinking with matrilineal genealogies that replace orientalist brotherhoods. This study significantly emphasises certain Islamic concepts, especially the extra-legal dimensions of witness bearing, to explain the content of the novels. In that sense, it is importantly stated that Soueif knits Arabo-Islamic literary forms with Western narrative traditions alongside a Saidian critique of culture, imperialism and nationalism and her novels and short stories are examined as remarkable examples of post-colonial fiction in English.

It is importantly stated that Soueif extraordinarily interweaves Arabo-Islamic narrative forms with traditional European genres, especially the novel genre that Edward Said describes as an imperial institution, and her novels and short stories critically examine the acts of reading and rewriting history, the appropriation of the imperial language and the politics of translation with a post-colonial awareness. In this context, it is suggested in this study that Soueif's themes emerge mainly from Said's critique of the orientalist discourse and, more than that, it is underlined that her fiction gives new and literary dimensions to Said's theoretical assumptions, especially the representation of the Oriental Other in the West. To support this, this study shows that Soueif's fiction underlines the diversity of Islam and deconstructs the essentialism and ahistoricity of the orientalist discourse that essentialises and demonises Islam. In the light of this understanding, it is argued that Soueif's fiction crucially questions the representation, misrepresentation and the underrepresentation of the Oriental/Muslim Other.

It is also argued that Soueif emphasises Egypt's special place for the Empire as the gateway to the Orient, especially to India, and it is stated that she comments on French and British colonialisms and American imperialism in her fiction and historicises Egypt's fight for independence, self-representation and self-government after the Occupation. It is indicated that she retrospectively portrays key historical moments in the history of Egypt such as the Bombardment of Alexandria, The Omdurman War, the Mahdist Revolt and the *al-Nahda* movement at the turn of the 20th century and, by implication, offers a penetrating criticism of the effects of the colonial past in the post-colonial present with Arab-Israeli wars and new forms of colonialism and imperialism. Attention is also paid to the fact that, as various instances in the novels and the short stories suggest, the post-colonial state fails in the way to liberation and hurts its citizens, and it is seen that Soueif emphasises a critique of the post-colonial state in her writing.

It is also demonstrated in this study that Soueif powerfully draws attention to the agency and language of the local Egyptians, especially in her later writings, and merges the voices of the *fallaheen* and *effendiyya* in vivid contrast with British aristocrats and colonial historical figures that makes her narrative voice multiple and heterogenous. On the other hand, it is importantly pointed out that translation is constituted as a recurrent theme in her writings and discussed with foreignising and violent translations. Another important thing is that Soueif's novels and short stories haunt Western canonical literature as the Arab Other and it is suggested that she strategically follows Said's understanding of novelistic inheritance as suggested in *Culture and Imperialism*. In that respect, it is stated that Soueif's fiction inherits the European novelistic tradition and mimics *Middlemarch, Anna Karenina* and *Madam Bovary* while haunting the canonical novel as its Arab Other. On the other hand, Soueif's fictional works powerfully show that the Empire bears the traces of the Other and it is emphasised that Soueif questions the alterity and ambivalence for the post-colonial subject and the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised after the imperial encounter. It is importantly stated that Soueif interestingly explains the imperial encounter in the Arab Near East with Arabo-Islamic concepts such as *fitna* and *hudud* and investigates colonial desire and sexual imperialism with notions about linguistic, cultural

and racial hybridity. For that reason, it is exemplified that her novels and short stories offer a significant reconsideration of genre borders and generic hybridity as rich post-colonial texts. On the other hand, it is significantly indicated that Soueif's fiction progresses from a fictional consideration of Said's discourse analysis to post-colonial discussions, and more importantly, it is argued that her writing joins the discussions that reconsider Post-Colonial Studies by emphasising religion as an identity signifier.

It is further stated that the post-colonial discussions of gender and the critique of essentialism inform this study and these issues are explored with considerable density with the critical scholarship on the colonised and post-colonial Arab Muslim female subject. With these in mind, it is argued that Soueif's fiction explores, through a post-colonial awareness, how history and memory are narrativised, and in doing this, it is seen that Soueif draws attention to the fictionality of fiction and history. Relatedly, it is brought into focus in this study that Soueif's oppositional, female and contrapuntal histories remarkably address the issues of unnarration and colonialist over-writing and reveal and question historiography and literature as the institutions of the Empire. Similarly, it is importantly emphasised that Soueif is engaged with the interpellation of the post-colonial subject through what this study formulates as the strategic use of positivist Orientalism and it is argued that the literature and the culture of the coloniser instigate ambivalence for the Oriental subject and condition and contaminate his/her identity. It is interesting though that some of Soueif's chararacters are aware of this alterity and hybridity and suffer under the shaping and distorting influence of them. It is also stated that some characters reconcile with hybridity through the act of history reading that turns into a memorial practice.

First and foremost, it is seen that Soueif's fictional works put the contemporary Arab/Muslim female in a variety of surroundings in Egypt and England and emphasise the relationship between the colonial past and the post-colonial present and the slowly decolonising Egypt and the modern metropolitan England. Her works are interrelated and share characters, and most generally discuss, with an auto-biographical tinge, the emotional, sexual and intellectual growth of upper-middle class Arab women who fluently speak the imperial language, study English Literature and are educated in the imperial

centre, and live there. It is also significant that these characters return to their home country and Soueif connects their problematic return in important ways. On the other hand, it is recognised that *The Map of Love* is less autobiographical, it has more complex characters and Soueif has a decidedly political concern in this novel.

It is intensely discussed in this study that Soueif subverts the orientalist discourse in *The Map of Love* and explores the unending effects of colonialism and imperialism through *strategic Orientalism* by which academic Orientalism becomes an important source of linguistic, historical and cultural transmission in the novel. It is stated that Soueif's positive use of Orientalism underlines ambivalence as the defining characteristic of her contemporary hybrids and she celebrates the travels between languages, continents and centuries. It is emphasised that her hybrid characters read and produce histories that turn into both national epics and oriental romances in retellings. Soueif has a heightened concern for historical reading and writing and comments on the issues of representation, authenticity and translation for the postcolonial subject. It is strikingly illustrated that Soueif creates a space for historical confrontation in the novel and novelises the Oriental's entry into history. This understanding shows that *The Map of Love* as a post-colonial novel in English is enriched with debates about the novel genre and the act of history writing for the post-colonial subject, and it is underlined that the power of this novel is the abrogation of Orientalism and the appropriation of this learned discourse.

It is importantly assessed that beginning itself is a problematic in the novel that depicts how the colonial past haunts the post-colonial present. It is rightly stressed that *The Map of Love* is a work of fiction about textuality and History, which is also considered a fiction in a post-colonial sense and it is explained that the very production of history in the novel becomes a criticism of colonial superstructures and their violent forces. In this novel, history is transmitted between women that strengthens a sisterhood and a matriarchal genealogy. It is also shown that the novel's contrapuntality is asserted through a subversion and a questioning of the Orientalist discourse, and more importantly, a strategic and positivist use of it.

It is argued that one of the important issues in the novel is the inheritance of archival material and the contemporary post-colonial hybrid's confrontation with history through the act of reading and translation. It is very important to state that Soueif celebrates the plurality of narrative voices in *The Map of Love* and her primary concern in this distinctly political novel is the asymmetrical power relations concerning the contested issue of representation. To strengthen this, the novel becomes a parody of the Orientalist discourse, it turns into a mock narrative, and it is seen that Soueif subverts oriental captivity stories and romances that portray abducted females, licentious sex and adventures in the Arabia. In this transgeneric work of fiction, languages are appropriated, characters imitate other characters, history is reproduced and there is a continual process of repetition and displacement. It is therefore underlined that the novel is oriental and exotic on the surface, and the European reader easily recognises a familiar pattern except for the bleak ending.

It is emphasised that the handling of imperial language is very important in the novel and Soueif deconstructs the centrality of English by appropriating it. As Soueif herself indicates, *The Map of Love* has an authentic Arab voice in its English expression and the Arabic becomes a veil laid over English. Soueif attaches a glossary as a cultural, literary and historical commentary and the novel presents Arabic as a metonymic gap. It is seen that Soueif pays attention to different pronunciations of English, colloquial and idiomatic Egyptian Arabic and body language in the novel and it is argued that her interesting glossary questions genre definitions and borders of the post-colonial novel. Most importantly, it is emphasised that the interpretation of space is a tension in the novel and it is significantly noted that Soueif demonstrates an important resistance to the word harem. The most creative preoccupation with language is seen in the Arabic conjugations in the novel and it is indicated that the very text of *The Map of Love* includes etymological explanations for Arabic words and conjugations which make the novel a site of linguistic control for the post-colonial subject.

It is underlined that language is mobile, hybrid and appropriated in *The Map of Love*, but it is emphasised that the act of speaking is sometimes completely suppressed, as illustrated with two characters: Anna's husband Edward and Sharif Basha's father, who

only speaks through quotations from the *Qur'ān* besides hadith and daily Islamic phrases and otherwise is in complete silence. It is also argued that the actual encounter with the imagined Islamic Orient is a tension in this interesting novel and it is seen that Soueif comments on the Orientalist heritage of knowing the Oriental. The emphasis is on the access to knowledge and the production of it in the novel and it is stated that Soueif problematises her characters' textual knowledge about the Orient. In that respect, it is indicated that the act of reading the archive is important because returning to the archives is not a simple historical experience, but also a reshaping of the space in memory.

It is underlined that Soueif's fiction is an intersection of diverse post-colonial concerns and writing practices and she connects with Muslim female novelists writing in English and the Arab feminists and novelists writing mainly in Arabic. As these intersections attest, Soueif addresses different forms of hybridity in her writing and points to the problematic and hegemonic centrality of English Literature for the Arab female characters that extends into discussions of cultural authenticity and ambivalence. It is seen that the questions around the experience of hybridity is multi-layered in her writings and hybridity is emphasised as a theme and a fundamental part of the identity and culture of both the coloniser and the post-colonial subject. It is also expressed either happily as the condition of bilingual/bicultural writing and violently as the result of a colonial history. It is observed in this study that the consumption of literature is addressed as appropriation in post-colonial texts and it is stated that *In the Eye of the Sun* intensely emphasises hybridity, ambivalence and alterity through the interpellation of culture (by the Empire). It is explained that Soueif often discusses nationalism, identitarian Islam, gender politics and female sexuality in her writings which made her a controversial novelist in her country. It is importantly indicated that the novel remarkably chronicles the history of Egypt that intersects with the personal history of the principal character and her family. It is emphasised that Soueif does not create a familiar return story in the novel and strengthens this with the cross-references in the short stories.

It is underlined that *In the Eye of the Sun* is a classical novel of education and it is a heavily political novel like *The Map of Love*. It draws attention to a lot of post-colonial

issues such as the centrality of language, the legacies of Empire in contemporary politics and economy in the post-colonial states, forced migration, exile, colonial desire and civilisation. It is emphasised that *In the Eye of the Sun* is a novel about the decolonisation of Egypt and it generates a reading of a post-independence society. It is significantly noted that the novel's central concern is the post-colonial subject's ambivalent relationship with the culture of the coloniser and it critically looks at the culture of the coloniser, especially the novel genre, as an institution of the Empire and problematises the act of reading for the post-colonial female subject. It is importantly noted that the act of reading is reconciliatory and reconstructive in *The Map of Love*, but in *In the Eye of the Sun*, reading creates ambivalence, alterity and a problematic hybridity. It is stressed that ambivalence is at the centre of the novel and hybridity and alterity keep this centre at the centre. Relatedly, *In the Eye of the Sun* shows that the violent contradictions in the life of the post-colonial subject create fragmentation of identity, and European culture becomes a signifier of positivity through its literature and language which is problematic for the post-colonial subject.

It is stated that the post-colonial hybrid carries history as a burden, or as a scar of a humiliating wound, and painfully remember/wear it; her/his witness is the body. It is emphasised that desire and (imperial) culture doubly problematise the post-colonial female's hybridity, which is contested by the activity of reading (novels) in the novel. It is seen that unlike *The Map of Love*, reading does not bring resolution to the narrative and it is strongly suggested that Soueif's female characters in the novel cannot see themselves as integrated subjects because of the colonial past of the country. It is also emphasised that the post-colonial hybrid's her self-discovery is filled with self-doubt, self-contradiction and sometimes self-harm because her life is the execution of European colonialism through culture; she imagines it and the Empire executes it. It is seen that the epistemic control of the Empire enters the narrative with canonical literature and the destructive reality of the colonial discourse is exemplified through Egyptian students of English Literature that Soueif depicts as the textual children of the Empire. It is also importantly noted that coloniser's literature and the act of reading turn into an insurmountable obstacle in the life of the post-colonial Other.

It is also strongly emphasised that the post-colonial subject cannot reconcile with England on physical terms and sees it as a novelistic setting because s/he has a metropolitan understanding of the nature of literature and this contradiction stems from the internalisation of the culture of the West as the standard. It is also argued that the female subaltern experiences sex either as adultery or rape and only through negativity can desire be transformed from the textual and the imagined into the real. It is suggested Soueif presents desire as a problem with diverse ramifications for the female subaltern which becomes, together with language, a threshold and an opening of the self to the other in the novel.

It is important to lastly state that Soueif's handling of history is discussed in her depictions of the pharaonic, Ottoman and colonial histories of Egypt and it is significant for this study that she historicises the Ottoman-Egyptian past by creating Ottoman characters, such as Abdulhamid II and Ghazi Mukhtar Pasha among others. It is also stated that Soueif draws attention to the Turkish linguistic heritage in her use of Arabic in the novels and hints at the Ottoman past of the country with the use of *effendi*, *abeih* and the Turkish word *pasha* against the Arabisation of it as *basha*. It is seen that she also discusses the pan-Islamism of the Hamidian Era and portrays both pro-Ottoman characters like Mustafa Kamel and Egyptian nationalists that seek to break ties with the Ottoman Empire. In basic terms, this study reads the fiction of Ahdaf Soueif in the light of Post-Colonial Studies together with Saidian colonial discourse analysis and is informed with these critical strands.

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