

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Letters and English Language



*Thesis submitted to the department of English Language in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
doctorate in English language and literature*

**Option: English Language and Literature**

**Title:**

# “Silence Breaking”: Investigating Voice and Representation in Selected Postcolonial Novels

Submitted by

**Halima HAMED**

Supervised by

**Pr. Ramdane MEHIRI**

Jury

Pr. Mohamed Seghir HALIMI	Prof	Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla	Chair
Pr. Ramdane MEHIRI	Prof	Mohamed khider University-Biskra	Reporter
Pr.Slimane ABDELHAKEM	Prof	University of Ghardaia	Examiner
Pr. Halima BENZOUKH	Prof	Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla	Examiner
Dr. Abderrahim CHEIKH	MCA	Kasdi Merbah University-Ouargla	Examiner
Dr. Ibtissem TOUHAMI	MCA	University Center- Aflou	Examiner

2023-2024

**Title**

**“Silence Breaking”:  
Investigating Voice and Representation in  
Selected Postcolonial Novels**

Submitted and Defended Publicly by:

**Ms. Halima HAMED**



---

**Statement Of Authorship**

I hereby affirm that I am the only author of the PhD thesis entitled: “Silence Breaking”: Investigating Voice and Representation in Selected Postcolonial Novels, supervised by Pr. Ramdane MEHIRI of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria, and that the sources included in the bibliography and marked as references are the only ones I have utilized. Additionally, I attest that I have not turned in this thesis to any Other university or organization to obtain a degree.

To the best of my knowledge, every source I have cited or used has been noted and fully referenced.

Ms. Halima HAMED



---

## Dedication

To my father in Heaven,

To my best and forever friend  
To the bravest lady who shaped the person  
who I am now.

There are no words strong enough to say how  
much I love you dearest Mom and how thankful  
and blessed I am to have you in my life.

To my siblings: Mostefa, Louiza, Thoraya, Taki Eddin and Nassim



---

## Acknowledgments

All praises and gratitude are due to Allah the Almighty, who provided me with perseverance, wisdom and strength I required to accomplish this study.

My deepest appreciation is extended to my dearest supervisor Pr. **Ramdane MEHIRI** . During a time when many others doubted our potentials, he was the only one who shone brightly like a late night star to take on the responsibility of our supervision. In fact, there are no enough strong words to tell you how blessed and thankful I am to have you as a supervisor and mentor. This study could not have been accomplished without you sir, your priceless counsel, inspiring dedication, and helpful direction illuminated my path. Furthermore, the thesis heavily relies on your considerate feedback, perceptive observations, and courteous manner.

I am indebted to the late Pr. Boutarfaia Ahmed as well, who had faith in us and helped us to make our registration in English department at Kasdi Merbah University a reality. I will never and ever forget the generosity you showed us and all what you did for us sir. You were such a unique and true gentleman. May your pure soul rest in peace in God's highest garden.

I would also be grateful to the compassion, consideration and hospitality of the responsables at Kasdi Merbah University who kindly welcomed us the first day of our registration, namely the amazing Pr. **Mohamed Seghir HALIMI** , Vice-Dean of Postgraduation, Scientific Research and External Relations, Pr. **Abd Elghani DEDDENA** Vice Rector charged of Post Graduation along with Pr. **Mohamed Tahar HELILAT**, The University Rector. Thank you so much dear professors for everything.

All thanks would go to the jury members: **Pr. Mohamed Seghir HALIMI**, **Pr. Slimane ABDEHAKEM**, **Pr. Halima BENZOUKH**, **Dr. Abderrahim CHEIKH**, and **Dr. Ibtissem TOUHAMI** whose insightful comments and criticism would help in refurbishing and refining both the structure and content of this thesis.

Finally, I admit that this study would not have been able to see light without the tremendous assistance of my family, their motivating words as well as their unwavering presence over these years of research.



---

**Abstract**

Under the burgeoning pressure of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century global mobility of people, it becomes possible to understand that the world of today can no longer be viewed or read through the single lens of the hegemonic discourse Orientalism, but rather through human experiences that bring individuals of various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds together, constructing by that a fluid heterogeneous zone of contact for what were once considered monolithic blocks. The shift of bodies and cultures make the world in front of an ever increasing interconnectedness, what blurs boundaries between *East/West* as two presumably desperate entities. Therefore, the hegemonic discourse *Orientalism*, that pictured the Occident as a power that ‘spoke for’ and represented the Orient centuries ago as silent, static and exotic entity, is about to turn obsolete. With the emergence of *Transcultural Literature and Writing*, the dichotomy of *Self/ the Other*, resulted out of the discourse of Orientalism that marked polarization and restrictional boundaries, is about to fade away. Relying on Contemporary Postcolonial novels that dominated the best-selling list and awarded ManBooker Prize such as Souief’s (2000) *The Map Of Love*, Aboulela’s (1999) *The Translator*, and Mohsin Hamid’s (2017) *Exit West*, this thesis explores how exactly the postcolonial transcultural narrative intends to challenge the silence imposed by the discourse of Orientalism, by identifying the various ways of speaking and relying on personal narrative and human experiences. In following interdisciplinary approach and using Edward Said’s groundbreaking text *Orientalism*, Stuart Hall’s *Representation* theory, Spivack Shkravorty’s “*Can The Subaltern Speak?*” and most importantly Mikhail Epstein’s *Transculture* theory as a new model of seeing and being beyond radical Otherness, this thesis demonstrates that Transcultural writers are carving out a contact zone between East and West, wherein they set their differences as ground for similarity based on harmonious coexistence that breeds acceptance, empathy and tolerance.

**Keywords:** Said’s Groundbreaking Text *Orientalism*, The Representation of the Other, Epstein’s *Transculture* Theory, Transculture Fiction, Contemporary Postcolonial Novels.



---

## Table of Contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Statement of Authorship</b>	III
<b>Dedication</b>	IV
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	VIII
<b>Abstract</b>	VI
<b>Table of Contents</b>	VII
<b>General Introduction</b>	01
<b>Chapter One</b>	12
<b>The Review Of Literature</b>	
1.1 Introduction	13
1.2 Orientalism as a Postcolonial Discourse	13
1.3 The Representation of the Oriental Other	20
1.4 Conclusion	37
<b>Chapter Two</b>	38
<b>Theorizing Representation : From Orientalism to Transculturalism</b>	
2.1 Introduction	39
2.2 The Question of Representation in Postcolonial Literature	40
2.3 Said's Orientalism as Postcolonial Discourse	46
2.4 Orientalism and The False Image of "the Other"	58
2.5 Transculture Fiction: An Alternative Discourse of Being Beyond Otherness	63
2.6 Conclusion	74
<b>Chapter Three</b>	76
<b>Speaking Maps, Speaking the Imperial Past: Reinventing the World's Cartography and Bridging Mezzateera in Ahdef Souief 's<i>The Map of Love</i> (2000)</b>	
3.1 Introduction	77

3.2. The Beginning of the End: Exploring the Colonial Past and Interpreting the Present	78
3.3. The Hegemonic Discourse and the Representation of the Other	92
3.3.1 Arts and the Perception of the Other	94
3.3.2 The Role of Translation in the Representation of the Egyptian Other	96
3.4 The Nile Divides and Meets: Bridging the World through Meezaterra	102
3.5 Neither East, Nor West: Love is the World's Quest	106
3.5.1 The Transcultural Journey of Finding the Self in the Other	106
3.5.2 Mezeaters' Transcultural Dialogue: Transcending the Beyond	114
3.5.3 Anna and My Amal: Trans(re)lating the Past and the Present	117
3.6 Weaving Meezaterra's Tropes and Language	120
3.7 Conclusion	124
<b>Chapter Four</b>	126
<b>Speaking Trans(re)lation, Speaking Transition:</b>	
<b>Showing <i>Rea</i> and Heading <i>Tarig</i> in Leila Aboulela <i>The Translator</i> (1999)</b>	
4.1 Introduction	127
4.2 Transforming the Self, Transforming the World: Transcultural Bridges	128
4.2.1 The Role of Translation in Self Affirmation and Culture Representation	137
4.2.2 Translation: A New Paradigm for Transcultural Spaces and Identities	142
4.3 Exchange is Oxygen: Language Appropriation and Culture Representation	149
4.4 Islam as a Life Map: Dismantling Hierarchy and Bridging East and West Gaps	153
4.5 Transcultural Dialogue to Transcend Positionality	163
4.6 Conclusion	168

<b>Chapter Five</b>	167
<b>Speaking Magic(al) Realism: Opening Doors and Shifting Discourse in Mohsin Hamid's <i>Exit West</i> (2017)</b>	
<b>5.1 Introduction</b>	168
<b>5.2 Exit (To/Off) West: The Past is a Country We Have All Migrated from</b>	169
<b>5.3 No East, No West: We are All Migrants Through Time and the Whole World is a Refuge</b>	179
<b>5.4 Magical Doors and Porous Frontiers: New Mapping of the Self/the Other</b>	196
<b>5.5 Conclusion</b>	202
<b>General Conclusion</b>	207
<b>Works Cited</b>	220
<b>Abstract in French</b>	
<b>Abstract in Arabic</b>	
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	



---

# General Introduction

In the end of his fundamental study *Orientalism*, Said states that Orientalism failed to recognize human experience as human experience, as well as to identify with it. This indicates that Said wants to have his book serve as a contribution to a challenge to Orientalism's global hegemony. Said undoubtedly demonstrates his thesis, yet today's state of (postcolonial) transcultural literature and Said's book's premise seem very ironic.

Under the burgeoning call of Twenty First Century denationalizing wave of globalization, the world is fronting an ever-increasing interconnectedness, what makes notions such as national political fixed borders and cultural edges on the verge of turning out to be blurred. Identities and societies are in contrast to what was previously believed, as Frank Schulze-Engler contends, "have tendency to be less territorially solid, less cohesive or self-contained, more adaptable, and "less irreducibly different". Rather than seeming as monolithic blocks or mutually exclusive absolutes, they can be perceived as approximately connected or flowing streams of meanings and performances. The Twenty First Century is the age of global mobility as people across the whole planet seem on move. Hence, this shift of borders and people call for looking at the world through new eyes.

People's shift will inevitably impact everything related to them, including their identities, the way they see and represent themselves as well as the discourse governing them that will take new forms. This makes the old Self/ Other dichotomy, that governed the discourse and pictured the Westerner as the dominant representative power who 'spoke for' and represented the Orient centuries ago as a silent, exotic and static entity, about to lose its significance and turns out obsolete.

With the advent of a fresh wave of writers who are culturally mobile and have gone through cultural displacement, whether as a personal choice or forced by different life circumstances to cross the national borders of their countries, and live transnational experiences, the single story of Us/ Them, resulted out of the Western discourse of Orientalism, which marked polarization between the East/ West, creating two culturally and geographically desperate worlds is about to fade away.

In crossing different geographical and cultural territories, this contemporary generation of writers whom are called “Transcultural writers”, such as Amin Maalouf, Inez Baranay, Lahiri Jampa, Ilija Trojanov, and Khaled Hosseini, ...etc, find themselves nurturing cultural diversity and flexible identities, what makes them feel free of the restrictions imposed both by their own culture and off migration /exile/in-betweeness and loss syndrome, resulted of transnationalism, multiculturalism and diaspora. They develop flexible fluid identities and cultivate cultural diversity, what gives them new opportunities to construct a completely new world perspective of how to speak for and represent themselves.

The first seeds of interest in investigating the crisis of voice and representation in this thesis are nurtured out of reading about the experience of the Saudi Arabian author Rajaa Essenai. When she has published her novel *Banat El Ryaad* “Girls of Ryaad” in 2005. Essenai declares that she did not expect that her novel will grab readers and critics’ attention outside the Arab speaking world/ realm. Opposing to her expectations, Essenai has achieved a great success as she turned out a bestseller and the the sole Arab chick-lit author, by capturing a large audience and becoming a spokesperson for Saudi women in the 21st century. The question that poses itself in this case is whether twenty first century globalization and the increasing mobility of people from the East have not altered Western representations of the Other?

In tracing a huge number of recent studies and doctorate projects submitted and defended in literature, the library research has demonstrated that much ink has been spilled on investigating intercultural narratives, relying on diaspora fiction, transnational fiction, Arab, Indian or Pakistaani Anglophone fictions, illustrating East /West relations or Islam versus West, while delving into identity crisis, representation crisis and speaking voices in postcolonial fiction. However, these studies have either concentrated on analyzing cultural incompatibilities, as suggested by Samuel Huntington's "Calsh of Civilizations," or they have embraced the "compatibility" narrative, which goes along with Homi Bhabha's contact zone theory, which fosters the idea of cultural assimilation,

and supports the possibility of "coexistence" between cultures. Unlike the previous studies, this thesis speaks the not yet told story that attempts to end the single story of Us/Them resulted out of Western discourse. It analyses paradigm narratives that somewhat concur with the existing transnational diasporic narrative, yet they endorse the idea that cultural frontiers are not stable or fixed and the genuine authentic and pure culture is radically transformed into transcultural space that sets differences as ground for similarity, unity and coexistence for the best of humanity future. Hence, the study is an attempt to provide a possible route to the crisis of representation.

In the publishing business today, publishers descended from the East, particularly (India, Pakistan, Lebanon and Egypt) are referred to as the major publishing "feeding frenzy". One of the main contributing factors to this "feeding-frenzy" is that the Contemporary Postcolonial Transcultural novel, nowadays, appears to be dominating to best-sellers's list and the ManBooker prize list particularly. In 1981, the ManBooker award was granted to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. The latter had been labeled the *Booker of Bookers* in 1993, meaning it was the top novel winning the prize in the first 25 years of the award. In 2008, it was named "*The Best of the Booker*" and regarded as the best book to win in the award's 40-year history. Upon this great success, a number of Indian authors have been designated to win the prize such as Anita Desai's daughter Kiran Desai, who had previously had two of her own pieces nominated, won the coveted award in 2006. Lahiri Jumpa, whose novel *The Namesake* also won award and produced as a movie that won great viewer coverage.

In a similar vein, the specimen under examination are solely chosen due to their domination of the best-selling list and have been short listed to won several prizes and ManBooker prize in particular. For example, *The Map of Love* by the British-Egyptian author Ahdaf Souief is a 2000 Booker Prize Finalist. *The Translator* of the Irish-Sudanese writer Leila Aboulela was listed for the Orange Prize and won the Scottish Book Award. Additionally, it was listed as one of the year's 100 outstanding novels by the *New York Times*. Furthermore, Aboulela's literary works have been translated into fifteen different languages. The third book is Hamid' *Exit West* (2017). The novel has received numerous

overwhelmingly good reviews, many of which compliment both the writing quality and the timeliness of the content. The novel is also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, the LA Times Book Prize for fiction, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the New York Times Best Book of the Year. Even the former US President Barak Obama has expressed interest in *Exit West*, alluding to as one among the twelve books he claimed to have 'enjoyed the most' in 2017. (qtd. In Wood 2018). The question that should be posed: what differences such novels hold and make them dominate the bestselling list, to the extent they awarded the internationally Man Booker Prize, though the writers are descendants of the East and postcolonial countries?

In order to delve into voice and representation question, this study attempts at responding to the posed questions:

1. Does the voice have the same authority as the one the Westerner used to speak for the Orient?
2. Are readers of these voices receiving an accurate and truthful representation of the postcolonial voices?
3. Does the voice reflect Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's concept of "colonization of the mind"? Or is it the final attempt to decolonization?
4. What are the different strategies postcolonial transcultural novels rely on to give a true narrative voice to do counter the silence Orientalism discourse imposed to speak for and represent the East?

This study hypothesizes that based on this proliferation of the publishing business and the great success of such contemporary transcultural novels to the extent to be awarded prizes, translated to several languages and made into films, it appears that the West is actually expecting to see a quite different thing from the East instead of silence. Rather than silence, the Orient is keen to represent and speak for itself, and even the West desires speaking. Yet, what is exactly meant by this speaking?

This thesis investigates the contemporary (Transcultural) postcolonial novels that do counter Orientalism through narrative to challenge the East/West dichotomy and its false assumptions about the East. In contrast to Orientalism that silenced the Oriental Other and failed to identify with the human experience, the contemporary postcolonial novel has transcended boundaries to represent personal narratives challenging the hegemony imposed by Orientalism, and transcending East/ West dichotomy, to give voice to the different human experiences of the postcolonial people, saying that we are all selves in front of the changes global mobility brought. Furthermore, the transcultural viewpoint suggests a possibility for globalization, not of homogeneity but of difference; wherein the diversity between individuals and the difference between cultures complement each Other. The transcultural individuals, in a space of diversity, will liberate themselves from their dependence and silence, transcending the polarization imposed by the collision of civilization in the pursuit of enduring peace based on empathy, tolerance and acceptance.

Unlike the previous studies that investigated issues related to the Other, in Other word East/West relations, in intercultural stories portraying the connection of Islam to the West as narratives that either demonstrate “incompatibility” between cultures, espousing by that Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations”, or narrative of similarity, certifying the possibility of “coexistence” between cultures under the slogan of acculturation, following Homi Bhabha’s contact zone and inbetweenness, this study intends to go beyond the already told story of compatibility and incompatibility between East/ West as it holds in its folds misrepresentation and breeds by that Otherness. This study intends to investigate the third category of possible narrative which is in fact “a paradigm narrative” that attempts to present “a not yet told story”, as Cohen puts it (7). Such emerging paradigm narratives of “a not yet told story” is also labelled the Transcultural narrative, resembled in a novel that refuses categorization. Eventhough it somewhat concurs with the narratives that are already in place, it supports the premise saying that there is neither fixed cultural frontiers nor cultural authenticity which drastically transformed into transcultural fluid space. In this space, all cultural, ethnic and religious

differences are set as ground for similarity, wherein no room is left for dealing with one culture over the Other. Hence, they provide a possible route to the crisis of representation, suggesting by that an end to the single story of Us/Them, bridging the chasm between dichotomous worlds and cultures East/West and setting a ground based on tolerance, empathy and coexistence.

Following an interdisciplinary approach, wherein different disciplines such as postcolonial thought, language, translation, culture, literature, politics, history and religion take part in dismantling hierarchies and blurring East/West boundaries, and in altering Orientalism hegemonic discourse as well as its fabricated representations of the Other. The thesis also relies on Said's seminal work *Orientalism*, Stuart Hall's *Representation* theory, Spivack Shkravorty's "*Can The Subaltern Speak?*" and most importantly Mikhail Epstein's *Transculture* theory as a new model of seeing and being. This study pinpoints how the contemporary transcultural postcolonial novel intends to challenge the silence imposed by the discourse of Orientalism, identifying the different ways of speaking and relying on personal narratives and human experiences. Besides, the thesis follows MLA Citation Style 8<sup>th</sup> Edition for its Lay out and the citation of sources.

The thesis entitles "*Silence Breaking*": *Investigating Voice and Representation in Selected Postcolonial Novels* is divided into five chapters, which are as follows:

The first chapter entitles *The Review of Literaure*; it aims at presenting the corpus of contemporary studies that focused mainly on investigating Orientalism as a postcolonial discourse and the image of the Other in the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism. The chapter has revealed that Orietalism is more or less a romantic discourse that is far from being objective, because it served at legitimizing Western imperialism and aims at subordination. This imperial power has been discussed by Said who relates it to language and culture; because, domination mainly functions through language. Thus language is used as a medium to construct hierarchical powers superior vs inferior, or the occident and the Oriental Other. This Other has been marginalized and silenced, due to the fact that the colonizers are the superiors and, therefore are power holders who speak for and represent it. On the Other hand,

representation is regarded as a critical notion in structuring Orientalists' discourse. Based on this idea, which turned into dogma and a basis for how the West emerged as a dominating power in exchanging power with the Orient, and, therefore, worked his passage up to construct the dominated Oriental "Other".

Although most of the exposed literature has discussed the problem of Orientalism as a discourse to dominate and represent the East/Other, very few studies have interested in studying and investigating the Contemporary postcolonial novel and the different ways of representation it identifies to speak voice. This fact has encouraged the researcher to investigate the issue of voice and representation in selected postcolonial novels in an attempt to exit off the idea of Western representation and domination, and to show that the Oriental Other is keen to speak for and represent himself.

The second chapter entitles: *Theorizing Representation from Orientalism to Transculturalism*; it is devoted for exposing the study's theoretical framework. The chapter critically analyses the different theories subject to this study starting with Stuart Hall Representation Theory that provides us with a profound understanding to the question of representation. Then the chapter critically analyses Said's groundbreaking text *Orientalism* that speaks the representation of the Other in Western Discourse, following of course Foucault theory *Knowledge and Power*, Gramsci's *Power of Hegemony* and Shkravorty Spivak's *Can "The Subaltern Speak?"*, to understand crux of Otherness discourse that creates East/West as two culturally and geographically dichotomous entities. The chapter ends with Mikhail Epstein's theory *Transculture* as a new model of seeing and being beyond Otherness. The thesis relies on three practical chapters, wherein each chapter is devoted to critically analyse one of the selected specimen and provide the strategy adopted to dismantle Orientalist discourse and give voice and representation beyond radical Otherness.

The Third Chapter is entitled: *Speaking Maps, Speaking Imperial Past. Reinventing the Cartography of the world and Bridging Meezaterra in Souief's The Map of Love*. This chapter analyses the different strategies Ahdaf Souief follows to provide personal narrative that do counter Orientalism discourse

and speak the inspeakable through a love story that transcends boundaries of time, space, and culture to construct the meezaterra bridge between East and West. By considering *Maps of Love* a transcultural novel that intends to represent 'voice of love' in place of 'voice of conflicts' in an attempt to bridge the world's discontent through mutual dialogue between East and West, the chapter focuses on how Ahdaf Souief constructs a transcultural encounter, weaving a network of the personal and political, by straddling two historical periods: the pre-millennial period of globalisation and late nineteenth-early twentieth century period of British colonization to Egypt.

The Fourth chapter analyses the second specimen of the study; it is entitled *Speaking Trans(re)lation, Speaking Transition: Showing Rea and Heading Tarig in The Translator(1999)*. It demonstrates how essential the role both translation and translator play in creating a transcultural dialogue between East to West. Translation is used in this novel as an empowering linguistic instrument as well as a metaphor of cultural transposition and modulation. Outstandingly, Aboulela's novel depicts the inversed process of translation. In this novel, instead of translating the dominating element in order to assimilate its culture, the dominated element, however, decodes its own culture, so that the dominant can understand it.

Interestingly, the novel's protagonist has relied on Q'uran as a source text, considering it the holy book and the foundational rock of Muslims Religion. Furthermore, the chapter centers attention on the zone of contact; wherein the meaning of a place is shaped through the intersection of migration studies, translation and postcolonial thought. This means that place, as a concept, can also be transformed into a place of transrelation or a fluid translated space; as such, it resembles a transition, which aligns with Epstein's Transculture.

The Fifth chapter is the last one in the study; it analyses Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) and it is entitled *Speaking Magic(al) Realism. Opening Doors and Shifting Discourse in Hamid's Exit West*. It aims at exploring Hamid's *Exit West* (2017), a fresh mesmerizing narrative that sheds light on world's

population flows and refugees' crisis in the aftermath of civil wars in several countries in the Orient. It is a narrative voice with an optimistic vision for a world with porous borders, as an attempt to deconstruct East/West dichotomy that places the West as a representative force over the stagnant Orient.

By considering the deployed magical realism of Hamid as a postcolonial narrative strategy that bridges the political/ideological discontentment between the Orient/ the Occident, this chapter looks at the expression magical doors as a metaphor for Globalization and transculturalism, pointing out to the idea of shifting borders that would probably induce a shift in discourse, what obliterates the old cliché of Orientalism and the depiction of the silent Other. Upon the rise of worldwide displacement, people and cultures become interconnected like never before. This inescapable interconnectedness has largely reorganized people's cultural and social life in the world, and re-examines the different ways wherein people, nations and cultures can coexist away from the polarized discourse of difference that promotes ethnic and racial division.



---

# **Chapter One: The Review of Literature**

"Single stories lead to stereotypes, and the issue with stereotypes isn't that they're false—rather, they're incomplete. They turn one story into the only one".

Chimamanda N.A” *The Danger of the Single Story*,2009

## **1.1.Introduction**

The delving into the crux of voice and representation crisis in postcolonial Literature imposes an attentive tracing of the body of the previous critical studies investigated the issue from different angles and perspectives. In this respect, this chapter is devoted to trace recent critical studies digging within representation crisis to critically approach it in Contemporary (Transcultural) Postcolonial novels to provide ample comprehensive input to the roots of the crisis, and hence be able to suggest a model way to exit off the idea of the West, as a dominating power and discourse that “spoke for” and represented the Oriental *Other* for centuries. A variety of critical works are analyzed in the review of literature in order to emphasize the theoretical framework and give the researcher a range of markers that define the boundaries of the inquiry. For this reason, the review of literature is classified under two main captions: the first traces the different studies that investigated Orientalism as a postcolonial discourse, whereas the second digs within the recent articles and critical studies discussed and analyzed the representation of the *Other* in postcolonial fiction.

## **1.2.Orientalism as a Postcolonial Discourse**

In his influential text *Orientalism* (1978), Said studied Western discourses on the Orient in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century after Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt as a semi-mythical fabrication that has been created and recreated innumerable times. Said demonstrates that in spite of the fact that Orientalists were romanticizing the Orient in their travel accounts, the Orient was negatively painted in mysterious hues, and it is mainly described as static, exotic and uncivilized vis a vis a bright image given to the

civilized West. Said's study has demonstrated that the alluring image of the Orient was mainly employed to legitimize Western imperialism in taking control over the East. Significantly, the discourse of Orientalism is thereby built upon binary oppositions, painting the East and West as two desperate entities; in this binary opposition discourse, the West appears as rational, civilized and more progressive, whereas the Orient is represented as static, silent and deprived. This means that the fantasized image of the silent Orient was constructed based on Western fear when they once come to term with the Orient. Yet, whether intentionally or unintentionally, Orientalism as a discourse fabricated the image of the Orient rather than presenting it as it is in reality, while nurturing and serving Westerners' imperial desires in putting control over the Orient to speak for and represent it centuries ago. This thesis has, in this regard, relied upon a number of recent critical studies in addition to Said's *Orientalism*, which is considered the cornerstone of this study, to afford ample theoretical input to the crisis's crux.

The first study is "Redefining Orientalism in the Modern World," written by Eshwar Swamy. An Examination of Classical Greek Antiquity Examples of Orientalism and How It Changed in the Modern Era is considered as an important and inspiring source to conduct this study and understanding the theory of Orientalism. In Swamy's study, Said's Orientalism which distinguishes between East and West is defined and analyzed. Swamy drawn on several works by classical Greek authors regarding the Orient in order to redefine the theory of Orientalism, which distinguished between the two desperate worlds and presented each in relation to the Other.

Their views had framed Said's *Orientalism*, and encouraged him to claim that the Orient is not merely close to Europe; it is one of its most persistent and profound representations of the Other (1). In doing so, the first part of Swamy's thesis has discussed the evolution of Orientalism by exposing the major literary and historical views that framed the term in the classical era. Whereas, the second part interests in exposing Orientalism in present time, beginning with the culmination of the cold war onwards. After having finished the comparative study, Swamy noticed that the classical antiquity

writers, poets, philosophers, and historiographers have defined Orientalism in terms of geographic differences per se. Whereas, modern time definition has surpassed geographical dimensions to show evolution. It has depicted the “Other” in media, wherein, he was shown as different in terms of religion. In spite of the divergence between Swamy’s study and the current study, both in approach and purposes; it resembles a fertile soil for understanding the evolution of Orientalism as a hegemonic discourse as well as the nature of East/West everlasting conflict.

Gyan Parakash’s article “Orientalism Now”, published in (1995), is another essential study that will lay the ground toward conducting this research. In this article, Parakash questioned the legitimacy of Orientalist knowledge as well as the status of Orientalism as a political theory. By examining the ramifications of his proof that the antagonism between East and West is due to externalizing an inner splitting up in modern Europe, Parakash aimed to go beyond Orientalism, which created oppositions between the Orient and the Occident. According to Parakash, as it was lowered from its Olympian heights to reveal its connection to Western power, it appears that a certain “indeterminacy emerged in the authority of Western knowledge. It also encouraged academics to reconsider the modern West and contributed in the thriving of the postcolonial “writing Back”. Although, Parakash’s study is one hundred per cent political in nature, his discussion of the opposition between East and West is a source of inspiration that shaped the first thoughts towards tackling such intricate issue.

Moreover, Kerstein Shands’ paper: “Neither East, Nor West: From Orientalism to Postcoloniality”, published in a conference proceeding about literature, culture, and religion in Sweden (2008). In this study, Kerstein questioned the impact of Globalization and post-colonial theory on Orientalist world views after the unexpected great success achieved by the Saudi Arabian author Raja Alsanea in 2007, for her novel *Banat El Ryadh* (Girls of Ryadh) outside the Arab speaking countries.

In order to discuss this problem, Kerstein asked the subsequent queries. Are Alsanea and a number of Other Saudi correct when they argue that 21st-century Orientalist clichés and stereotypes still exist? Have decades of globalization, migration, and postcolonial theory not affected Orientalist

worldviews in any way? In this post-colonial era, are latent and explicit aspects of Orientalism still present, supporting and legitimizing new imperialist endeavors that result in the creation of new "us" and "them" identities? (5). Similarly, this thesis explores the question of voice and representation in selected contemporary postcolonial novels winners of Man Booker Prize. In this regard, it aims at looking for whether these voices can be seen as genuine, authentic voices capable of mending the gap between the simingly desperate worlds to end the one single story of "Us/Them" or they are merely a new kind of colonization.

Furthermore; the paper of Ingrida Klinhofa titled: Eclectic Identity as a Battlefield of Ideologies is an Other pertinent source. In this article Klinhofa examined how Edward Said's *Orientalism* contrapunts Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Klinhofa puts a historical incident called *The Indian Rebellion and Spoy Mutiny* of 1857 as a sample for studying the conflict between India and Britain that was controlled by hostile discourses. She showed that the underlying ideologies that governed the conflict have shaped, therefore, the relations between the two nations until the very recent times.

In order to deepen her investigation, Klinhofa has chosen three narrative works that each offer a different perspective on the war: *Gora* 1906, *The Home and the World* 1916 by Rabindranath Tagore, and *Kim* 1901 by Rudyard Kipling. She also applied contrapuntal reading as a method in analyzing the data collected and the specimen; contrapuntality is proposed by Edward Said for analyzing how conflicting are portrayed in Literature. She chose such works in particular to show the irrationality of both colonial and nationalistic ideologies and to demonstrate in which manner people expose themselves to such ideologies and develop an eclectic or hybrid identity that gives them immunity against prejudice and propaganda. As Klinhofa noted, Colonial discourse theory and its extension, post-colonial theory, are frequently used in easthetic works to analyze conflicting discourses' representations (57). She relied on the colonial discourse in interpreting the chosen works of arts. This theory has been discussed at length in Said's *Orientalism*; it speaks of the analysis and interpretation of specific colonial texts, and draws attention to the profound ambiguities of that

discourse along with the way of producing dominating and dominated peoples (qtd. in Klinhofa 58). In contrast, the "ideological position" of the researcher or critic planning for analysis is referred to as postcolonial theory.

Klinhofa's astute, in conducting this study, appears in the idea of using these same theories not only to expose the colonial discourse, but for picturing any sort of ideology that divides humans into superiors and inferior Others, too. Furthermore, the two warring ideologies have produced "Colonial" and "imperial" as two ostensibly synonymous terms, but they have contradictory practices. For imperialism refers to the ideological adjunct of the empire; it is the power that persuades imperials to rule the world; rather than an economic exploitation. Hence, one can understand that imperialism as an ideological and political term is what subjugates people and divides them into superiors and inferiors, sub-humans or Others. However, the idea of the superior West, has been sustained by the natives themselves. In this sense, and as Kolihofa noted, indegenious who profit from British institutes or receive education in their schools frequently supported the idea of Western superiority. (49)

Consequently, the need for education and technological development has asserted the power of the West and made him appear superior.

This imperial power has been discussed by Said who relates it to language and culture; for, domination mainly functions through language. In order to impose its linguistic order on the world, discourse, in Foucault's words, always involves a form of violence. Besides, knowledge must conform to its patterns so as to be acknowledged authentic. Therefore, it seems that the Western oppressor has used language, knowledge and educations as paradigms of power to legitimize its conquest. Literature, in this sense, can be considered as a powerful way to produce such norms, for; the works of art do not discuss such ideas explicitly. Rather, they crawl in tacitly to the minds of readers, while focusing on the apparent words of the literary text. As Said puts it, literature serves as

implicit, unquestionable and incontestable reciprocal knowledge that is upheld by the tacit consent of a large number of people, both the colonizers and colonized ones. (Klinhofa56)

Focusing on the two warring ideologies and comparing the situations described in Kipling and Tagore's novels and the contemporary realities, it appears to Klinhofa that many are torn between opposing ideologies as a result of multicultural marriages or immigration as it mentioned in *Kim* and *Gora*. Moreover, travel and unrestricted access to global knowledge expose people to a wide range of radical viewpoints and mentalities. This means that the multicultural exchange has given the Other immunity to avoid falling in the trap of ideologies and old prejudice. Besides, it has altered both his mentality and his vision towards himself. It seems that the Other is no longer a static, exotic, or silent creature; rather, he is keen to speak for himself. This view is confirmed in the conclusion of Klinhofa's study, in which the Other is no longer some far-off exotic creature; rather, it is frequently one's own alter ego, having internal arguments. Despite the difference in method and ideology between Klinhofa's study and the current one, the outcomes she comes up with are good source of inspiration for tackling the crisis of voice and representation in post-colonial novels.

The fourth research is Barbara Gardner's thesis titled "Speaking Voices in Postcolonial Indian Novels from Orientalism to Outsourcing" defended in 2012 at Georgia State University. In her thesis, Barbara describes how a number of postcolonial Indian writers use diverse "speaking voices" of narratives depicting the Indian life to confront Orientalism hegemonic silence while struggling against Western authority. In *The God of Small Things*, Barbara exposes Arundhati Roy as "speaking abjection" through the prism of Julia Kristeva's abjection theory. In using the newly created term (dis)assimilation, Barbara has examined the writings of Jhumpa Lahiri and Smith, acknowledging the decisions and negotiations of immigrant life. Lahiri's works are assessed as Indian immigrants' (dis)assimilation voice in the United States, whereas Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* "speaks (dis)assimilation" by giving voice to different ethnic groups experiencing immigration life in the United Kingdom. Collectively, these different "speaking voices" demonstrate the ability of Indian

authors to use narrative to break the silence of Orientalism. In the end of her study, Barbara finds out that both assimilation of the mainstream culture or the isolation that leads to preserve one's culture are two significant strategies in giving voice to the silent Orient. The only meeting point between Barbara study and the present one lies in the discussion of how Orientalism as a discourse has silenced the Orient to speak for and represent it. Although Barbara's study has narrowed the scope of her study by shedding light on Postcolonial India writing in particular, this study is somewhat broad in its scope that it intends to take into embrace different writers descendent on the Orient to study the different ways they used to speak their voices and represent the East. It also attempts to suggest a solution to the crisis of representation away from culture assimilation and isolation. Gardner's study is in fact a very inspirational source, particularly in its theoretical part that exposes the history of Orientalism as an imperial discourse.

In his study: "A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism as a Source Text for Postcolonial Approaches to Literature", published in 2016, Dr. Mohammed Ahmad Ameen Al-shamiri examines and evaluates Edward Said's Orientalism, published in 1978. Orientalism is a seminal text for understanding postcolonial approaches to literature. Many major theorists and critics have acknowledged the importance of Said's work in shaping and defining the postcolonial field. For instance, Homi Bhaba argues that, Orientalism 'inaugurated the postcolonial field'. Gayatri Spivak views Orientalism as the 'source book in our discipline'.

Keeping the centrality of the text in mind, Al-Shamiri first tries to understand Said's Orientalism and then analyze the arguments and methodology of Said both with reference to the criticisms forwarded by Other critics as well as his own ideas. In this sense, "Orientalism" functions as a discourse with an internal logic and coherence; a discourse in which the production/structuration of knowledge are interlinked with the project of actual control. This idea act like a filter through which the real Orient is appropriated by the West for the purpose of domination. Hence, stereotypical categories and characteristics are used for first de-wording the Orient and then re-wording it. In the end of his study,

Al-Shamiri contends that Said's *Orientalism* is a compelling piece of work which has the power to significantly alter every reader's mind.

Apart from its theoretical and academic significance, it is a very interesting text based on exhaustive scholarship, even though it has been received a considerable amount of criticism. There may be shortcomings in his work, but the concepts he has dealt with certainly have opened up new debates in the entire academia. Digging within *Orientalism* both as a discourse and concept will open up ways to understand the fabricated strategies of misrepresentation of the Orient/Oriental Other, and therefore suggest new ways of seeing and being beyond Otherness.

### **1.3. The Representation of the Oriental “Other”**

Within the framework of Orientalist discourse, representation is a crucial topic. On the basis of this idea, which became dogma, the West emerged as the dominant force able to put control over the East, what created the dominated Oriental *Other*. One of the important studies that tackled the problem of the represented silent Other was Diplomova Pràcé's thesis, "Giving Voice to the Other: Said's theory of Anti-Colonial Resistance," which was published in 2010. In this study, Diplomova has suggested that the anti-colonial resistance has approached inadequately in comparison with the colonial discourse.

Drawing on Said's *Orientalism* and Michel Foucault's paradigms of Knowledge/Power, a comparison between Conrad's imperialism and Yeats' resistance poetry has been made. The investigator has observed that Said's postcolonial theory and Colonial discourse analysis have been problematically placed into frameworks that are based on French critical theory. She believes that Said's *Orientalism* is firmly rooted in Foucault theory. It, on the one hand, drew on *Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Order of Things*. On the Other hand, it ignores proof of indigenous agency generally, and indigenous resistance specifically (7). As Said himself acknowledged, this indicates that his *Orientalism* appears to be primarily concerned with Western, Orientalist, and imperial discourses. What *Orientalism* failed to include was the Third World's tremendous decolonization movements as

a result of resistance to Western domination. Although, Diplomova study differs completely from this study, both in approach and purpose; her criticism of Orientalism as a project and theory can be considered as a stone on the road of tackling such theme. She also dealt with Said's Orientalism as a discourse, what allows the analysis in this thesis take the form of a discourse, while moving on from one idea to the Other in an attempt to answer the posed questions.

*Written/Reading the Subaltern Woman: Subaltern Agency and Narrative Voice in Upamanyu Chatterjee's English*, published in 2014 is another important study. In this article, Krupa reviewed Shakravorty Spivak's 1988 groundbreaking text "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to provide an alternative vision to the Subaltern's agency through the close reading of narrative voice. The death of the Subaltern has had a huge impact on different fields such as politics and literature.

In literature, for instance, subalternity is considered one of the central themes in postcolonial research studies. Scholars have afforded the term different definitions in an attempt to give her voice. Krupa claims that subalternity narrative is always already subsumed by the discursive power of patriarchy, nationalism, and imperialism, which purport to represent the subaltern subject in terms of political representation and re-present it in terms of artistic rendition. She observed that in the activity of subalternity, there is a type of darkness that obscures the relationship between the subaltern as a political being and the person who represents her.

These kinds of works have mostly concentrated on the subaltern's representation alone, without considering the narrative voice that structures subalternity. In fact, one can notice that these works relied much on historical records, what hindered them from analyzing the subaltern voice. To go on her study, Shandilya has chosen Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August* (1988) as a specimen. The novel unfolds the story of the hybrid Indian protagonist Agastya who desires to be English; later on, he has acquired the nickname August.

This signifies that the novel is dialectical in nature; it demonstrates the clash between the Indian and the English. The language of the narrative is a blend of Hindi with English, showing the

protagonists of the novel as hybrid subjects; or, as Chatterjee described them, “a new generation of urban, upper-class Indians, “with no special aptitude for anything, not even wondering how to manage, not even really thinking” (qtd. In Kapura<sup>3</sup>). Critics have read the hybridity and the inability of the protagonist to cope with the tedium life in a small town in India as “symptomatic of the English-speaking Indian novelist’s own alienation from India” (Krupa<sup>3</sup>). For structuring her study, she has relied on both the postcolonial theory and The feminist approach, mainly Spivak’s theory of subalternity, Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray’s theories.

Krupa noticed that the works of fiction, in particular, are the appropriate material for studying narrative. For, different voices can be structured in the same novel and through different forms. In this sense, she has claimed that through literature, we can discern subaltern agency inside the gaps created by narrative voices that claim to represent or re-present them. To put it another way, we can exercise subaltern agency in the voids, silences, and caesuras found in the elite narrative of subalternity (2). Despite the difference between the current study and Krupa’s study, which more centred on examining subaltern agency based on a feminist perspective, and the current study, they have similar goals. Both studies intend to break silence in order to speak the unspeakable and, therefore, giving voice to the voiceless or the subaltern. Furthermore, the discussion of subalternity can be considered as important as the discussion of Orientalism since the former is the result of the latter.

The problem of subalternity was interestingly addressed from a different angle in Israt Jahan Nimni's article "The God of Small Things: Speaking Subalterns," which was published in February 2016. Nimni referred to the term subaltern using Guha Ranjit’s definition "the silent ostracized person who originally belongs to society’s sidelines or the periphery" (21). In conducting her study, Nimni analysed Arundati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997); the novel is a Booker Prize winner and published in 1997, the year India celebrated its 50th anniversary of independence. Arundati Roy is a modern Indo-Anglian writer who works to give voice to the voiceless by speaking out against acts of

injustice and undervaluation that aim to erase people from existence. In what ways does post-independent India provide individual liberty and freedom? What does independence actually entail? are among the central questions the authoress aims to address in this novel.

The novel depicts the traditions in KarLite society as a God which decides the fate of every individual who intends to violate the customs through death and silence. A woman's social and economic agency is not respected or accepted under patriarchal systems, according to Nimni. Additionally, according to Nimni's annotation, the book portrays the postcolonial world and its social status that controls individuals using precolonial norms and customs, rules and regulations." Here, the victims are acting as Other victims' agents. (24)

The most interesting point in this study is not studying subaltern's agency per se. Rather, it lies, on the one hand, in showing the different forms used for silencing her. In fact, the study of silence itself will be discussed in this thesis. On the Other hand, the problem of religion, when it used in a wrong way to silence individuals, has been raised both in the novel and in Nimni's criticism, and part of this thesis intends to tackle religion, too. In addition, Nimni relied on the Booker Prize winner Arundati Roy in her study, and this thesis focuses on studying the Booker Prize winners in particular for showing whether they are true weapons used to give voice to the silenced Orient or they are new colonial tools.

Writing in the same vein, Tirzah Zubeidah Zachariah's thesis "*Silence and Representation in Selected Postcolonial Texts*", defended on April 2016, is another significant source of inspiration. In her thesis, Zachariah examined four postcolonial novels by Asian women writers with a diasporic background which are Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Roma Tearne's *Brixton Beach* and Shanai Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*. These novels have common objective as they address issues of female representation, voice, and silence. By doing this, the author aimed to examine the various approaches taken by these writers to illustrate the various kinds of silence and to provide a window through which to examine Other subjects that are thought to be essential to postcolonial studies, such as multiculturalism, migration, the diaspora, and women's concerns.

In order to set an accurate methodology and structure to her study and investigation, Doctor Zachariah relied on both the postcolonial approach and diasporic studies as well as the feminist thought represented mainly in the theoretical works of Spivak, Olsen, and Showalter.

Instead of analyzing the theme of silence exclusively, the thesis has analyzed the narratives that represent several forms scenes, moments of silence in the chosen novels. By using silence as a narrative device, it also addressed the ambiguity between speaking and remaining silent. Silence, in this sense, is related either to the writer's use of certain literary devices to convey a message to his reader rather than speaking his idea directly, or to the different concepts that can be considered as problems that hinder characters from speaking deliberately. In this sense the writer refers to three problems such as shame, secrets, and gossip. These problems are generally related to female characters who refrain to speak for not causing family problems, or because they are traumatized to silence. In the end, it has shown the case of women who resembles a patriarchal structure to oppress Other women and put control over/ In short, it discussed the Other who can be the victim of the Other. Interestingly, the discussion of silence; trauma can be considered as stones on the road towards discussing the theme of voice and representation. For, the latter are tools to silence people, however, this study will look at them positively by considering them tools for giving voice.

Mantera Roy's (2018) thesis: "*Speaking Subalterns: A Comparative Study of African American and Dalit/ Indian Literature*," is without doubt noteworthy for providing valuable insights into how researchers approach the subject. In this study, Roy discussed the body of literature related to two marginalized groups mainly the African Americans in USA and the Dalits of India. In doing so, the researcher attempted at examining how two different structures in tow completely different societies India and USA which are constructed upon the same hegemonies of oppression. In these nations, the Subaltern is defined and confined by means of structures primarily grounded in socio-economic, cultural, and political patterns of oppression such as race in USA and Caste in India; The identities of those who are marginalized due to their gender, class, or family structure are informed, distorted,

and complicated by the application of these two frameworks. This signifies that the two forms of oppression are used to create a sort of confusion among the persons of the same community and breed trauma, hence, it marginalizes them. Furthermore, Roy observed that these forms of oppression are a type of local colonization, carried out by the elitists of each country, who use it to silence and manipulate marginalized women and men. Thus, the two forms are used to silence the subalterns of both USA and India. Yet, The African Americans found ways to negotiate their national identities; whereas, Dalit Indians attempt to realize their own national identities.

After having observed that the resistance to oppression has heavily influenced the literature written by those marginalized people, Roy believed that the literature produced by Dalit Indians and African Americans served as a vehicle for giving voice to the oppressed subaltern. Thus, being aware of the ongoing silence that takes place simultaneously is crucial, and we must have serious doubts about the subalterns' purported authority in defending their legal rights. Furthermore, she asserts that while some subaltern women express agency via representation, Others are grossly distorted by elitists, and their narratives may not be protected from hegemonic domination (4). Interestingly, though Roy's study is comparative in nature, it was able to shed light on different issues such as marginalization, religion, silence, voice and representation. The last three issues are the focal points that will structure the analysis in this thesis.

Additionally, Lea Strobel's thesis is an extremely interesting study that adds to this study. Strobel's research endeavor sought to examine how domestic workers are portrayed in novels written during the mid-1900s that focus on the development of women. The novels of the Mexican writer Rosarios Castellanos, the Caribbean author Jean Rhys, and the Brazilian Clarice Lispector. These three postcolonial writers have treated the problem of hegemonic structures in their writings to confront the privilege of modern writing subject to deconstruct and revise the silence imposed upon colonized characters. Their writings are, as Strobel regarded them, efforts that intend to rewrite history and provide subalterns with voice.

While acknowledging their role in the system that operates via exclusion, these writers, according to Strobel, “carve out a space to create within a masculine-centered literary tradition that favors certain voices over Others” (4). In a patriarchal culture, the home female servant is a victim of both the system that suppressed her and the texts that do not properly represent her. Furthermore, Strobel sees minor characters in novels as a sign that the narrative is failing to do a good job of representing them. For this reason, Strobel’s study has challenged the shared oppression model of solidarity that women's and postcolonial works typically adopt, taking into account new ways that communities could adopt or ought to imagine in order to perpetuate disparities amongst women. In the end of her research, Strobel discerned, “people view silence as a place they are condemned to, when they are marginalized, excluded from political discourse, and deprived of political solidarity. Thus, silence turns into an alternative political sphere that constructed upon resistance and hegemonic discourse. For answering the question can silence speak/subaltern speak? Strobel has claimed that marginalized characters in their silence can powerfully speak and represent themselves more than the written text could do, because affluent characters are perplexing. Such conclusion confirms her research hypothesis that religion, silence and trauma can also be regarded as ways for giving voice to the silenced subaltern, because they are able to speak louder than the written words as the researcher states.

In the same stratum, *Orientalism and Post-Orientalism: Ten Years Without Edward Said*, a book published in 2020 by Patricia Amacegui is another excellent source for this research study. She is writer and comparative literature lecturer, who studied in the United States after living in the British colonies of Egypt and Palestine, aims to reinterpret the various definitions of the East that Westerners have used to make it seem like a fixed, homogenous region. This revision comes in a critical time after ten years of Said’s death, especially when many Arab countries still sink in what’s called the “Arabs’ Spring”. The book intends to review Orientalism based on the changed it has taken in comparative literature, cultural studies and politics. He has observed that Orientalism has compelled

binary thinking, or the presumption that Westernism was likewise true. Thus, the West was seen as a monolithic entity devoid of diversity. Almarcegui has viewed Said as extremely Westernized scholar, because the latter has mainly relied on European texts for structuring his what made the Orient appear as a static entity. In Other words, Said made a big fault when he relied only on European texts that viewed the Orient negatively. In this regard, Patricia's study demonstrated that omitted hybridism and heterogeneity found within colonial power, and applied the essentialist reading he had denounced.

Remarkably, Patricia noticed that Orientalism has relied on travel literature, which means the vision of the East was built upon the works of travelers, rather than specialized scholars, who have seen the East through their own experiences. Thus, travelers were able to cross frontiers to show the geographical heterogeneity, the heterogeneity that might "create hybrid and polymorphic discourses..." (139). At the end of his study, Patricia mentions that the criticism of Orientalism should continue, because it has built upon a paradox. He asserted that, in light of the most recent political, social, and cultural developments and, most importantly, in light of the Arab Uprisings Orientalism must be re-read, reformulated, and inserted. Although Patricia study is a revision to Orientalism and its status in political events, literature and cultural studies, the way he criticized the weaknesses in Said's study, particularly in showing the East as a hybrid rather than a static entity, represents a huge source of inspiration.

AnOther interesting critical work that can add new insights to this study is Jukka Jouhki's article "Orientalism and India", published in 2006. In her introduction to this study, jouhki drawn on Rudyard Kipling's poem of *East and West*, focusing on his line: "Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twins shall meet" (qtd. In Jouhki 1). Once Jouhki read Kipling's poetry, she discovered a great deal about the long-standing legacy of Orientalist philosophy, what created an exaggerated image full of stereotypes and prejudices about the Orient as an exotic place. Exploring the East had, as Jouhki asserted, a profound impact on the West's self image, yielding identities that range from degenerate European modernity to racial, cultural and moral conception of supremacy.

Jouhki's research study has hegemonically employed Said Orientalism to the Western Anglo-Saxonian discourse regarding India. In doing so, she focused on the Indo-Orientalist essentialism of being an Indian and the notion of time as an essential element in discourse's representations that divides Indian time into two periods: the deteriorating contemporary time of the Indian civilization and the Golden age of India. It is crucial to discuss the fractured Indian society in order to comprehend the discursive formations of the Indian Hinduism and how the Anglo-Saxonian Orientalism against India approved by native Indians to be used in nationalist discourse (1). In the Hegemonic Discourse of Orientalism and despite criticizing it for being monolithic, Said's Orientalism identified numerous methods by which Europeans constructed the Orient. In fact, Said has distinguished between three forms of Orientalism which are. the academic, the general and corporate Orientalism. These three divisions can be considered as focal points in discussing the theme of voice and representation. For one needs to understand Orientalism both as a theory and doctrine to answer the posed questions.

Moreover, Jouhki observed that East/West relations has a long tradition, what denies the idea of rendering the Orient to an imaginary space with no significant geographical boundaries. Rather, the Orient is a reality that no one can deny. In this way, Jouhki views the Orient as more than a mere imagination or fabricated construct, rather, the region known as the Orient is home to various individuals, states, and cultural backgrounds. This claim, in particular, resembles a deliberate proof about the true existence of the Orient which was "Orientalized" by Westerners, and its high time to give him voice. Besides, power and hegemony, which manifest in varying intricate ways, are essential in understanding the dynamics of East/West relations. This means that the Orient was neither static nor found Orient by nature but; it is a European made quality because all the conditions were favorable to make him Orientalized. This point, in particular, can be considered the corner stone in constructing my future study.

In this study, Jouhki noticed that though Said's Orientalism has mainly focused on Arab Middle East, it seems that his approach to Orientalist discourse and his theories can be expanded to study

Other parts such as India. The latter Orientalization differs completely from that of Arab and Islamic countries. Unlike the Islamic East, as Said points out. India was not as dangerous as the Islamic Orient; it never considered a menace to Europe, because it was more open to European invasion. “The Indo-Orient could therefore be managed with such exclusive arrogance” (Jouhki 5). In fact, the discussion of both Indian and Islamic societies will be tackled in this thesis throughout the analysis of Mouhcine Shahid’s novel *Exit West* that speaks the problems of Pakistani Muslims in United States and Arundati Roy’s *The Name Sake* that speaks the social position of Indians in United Kingdom.

In the end of her critical study, Jouhki found out that most of the representations reinforce binaries between India and Europe, hence, the problem is not the fantasy of India that appeared in scientific and popular discourse, but rather the apparent lack of consciousness of it. In order to draw scholars’ attentions towards changing the gloomy vision of the Orient, it seems the important task is not so much to create a comprehensive and accurate map of India as it is to thoroughly examine the various forms of ideology and power dynamics that have influenced how we have portrayed them, as the researcher recommended (15). This recommendation is also interesting to construct the future study; because, the discussion of voice and representation attempts at challenging the silence of the Orient, for showing the different ways of giving voice to the voiceless.

Significantly, in her PhD thesis entitled “Voices of the subaltern. themes and techniques in regional Indian writings”, which was accepted and published by comparative studies center in Calicut University and Mercy college in 2015, Nisha. M. demonstrates that the re-reading of literature and past history, particularly of India, has revealed that the Western discourse has looked at the surrounding world through limited frames and myopic eyes. The study traces the voices of Dalits in analyzing their literary writing, themes and techniques. The researcher focused on the varied experiences According to Dr. Nisha “One of the words whose meaning and intention has been challenged from different angles is that of representation. The Western representation of the East, the educated postcolonial subject’s representation of the nation, the elitist representation of the margins,

and men's representation of women have all been scrutinized, attacked and confronted with. A natural consequence of this was the extrication or reconstruction of heretofore unsaid and unwritten histories which has emerged as "voices" (1). In the last decade, India has witnessed the emergence of different voices that resemble the writing from the margin such as women's writing, Dalit writing, globalization and diaspora writing, and the writings of the stolen generation. All these forms of writings are marginal narratives that do counter the existing discourses and history. In spite of the fact that Dr. Nisha focused her study and analysis on tackling Dalits' writings as marginalized literature and case study that differs completely from the current study, the idea of rereading literature and history is very inspirational and mesmerizing in itself, as it nurtures the revision of certain postcolonial notions as the Other, us/them, inferior and superior which are in fact outcomes of the imperial discourse and its false representations.

Naifa El Matiri has moreover examined Said's ideology in her article: *Edward Said and the impact of Postcolonial Discourse on Literature*, which tackles literary works that examines colonial history using post-colonial lens. According to El Matiri, Said viewed the body of literature that followed this period as a byproduct of the challenging social and economic relationships. Postcolonial critics ought to take into account these relationships and their influence on postcolonial literature, which is essentially the outcome of the European canon and represents the experiences of their respective nations. El Matiri's research has also demonstrated how the postcolonial theory creates a new path for literature by emphasizing the colonizer's distortion of the colonized, a path that encourages a fresh interpretation of the imperialist ideology. In the opening lines of her article, El Matiri has distinguished between the two interconnected notions of *colonial* and *colonialism*. The first concept related to exercising military and political authority over the colony. Whereas, the second denotes the ideological dogma used to impose control on the occupied country in terms of linguistic, cultural and literary portrayal. In this respect, the latter can be classified as a colonial discourse. Besides, El Matiri's study discussed the impact of imperialism; wherein, she suggests that its influence in the

beliefs of colonized people persists even after the end of colonization to disrupt the ways of living, thinking and particularly culture.

El Matiri considers Said the icon of the postcolonial discourse, because his ideology has affected many fields of study and most significantly literature. In literature, Said's *Orientalism* draws new ways to approach and read it. It has marked the beginning of the postcolonial theory that has been drawn chiefly on Foucauldian discourse of knowledge and power. In so doing, Said has changed the focus of non-Western literary and cultural studies to align with postcolonial theory's actual understanding. *Orientalism*, according to El Matiri, is centered upon Western texts' representations of the East. Before he was able to construct his hegemonic discourse, Said scrutinized several French and British texts in different fields relying on Foucauldian discourse in methodology. Said noticed that these texts had constructed imaginative pictures about the history and the culture of the Orient to serve imperial aims.

Additionally, El Matiri has unveiled Said's post-colonial theory. According to him, discourse is a medium for ideology and has power in relation to social institutions. The social reality in discourse controls the human determination. This reality should first guarantee society's importance at first and then the human will. Although the Western discourse or Orientalism seems interested in spreading knowledge, Said believes it is nothing more than a damaging discourse. According to him, Western discourse "operates for hegemonic purposes"; it aims "consciously for subordination" (4). Therefore, one can say that the discourse of Orientalism/ Western discourse has legitimized imperialism, when it put the West in the center and the east in the periphery as an inferior Other. It allows it to appear as the dominant power to oppress the natives, control and direct their culture, and, therefore, represent them universally under the slogan of spreading knowledge and civilization. Said's analysis has given rise to a thought-provoking theory and a fresh viewpoint for Western literature on the East.

In this article, El Matiri has also discussed the relation between culture and empire as it is developed in Said's *Culture and Imperialism*. After he has finished examining different Western narrative works

of Conrad and Austin, Said discovered bare knowledge that through resistant reading can be compared to an Other knowledge. For this reason, he came up with the reality that the West thinks that he differs completely from “us”, then, he deserves to rule the world. The fact that Said found no alternative knowledge through resistance readings has given room to Western narratives to legitimize the Western culture, hence, they endeavored to show the difference between “them” and “us”. Yet Said noticed that these narratives can be used as a beginning to commence resistance and seek national identity. Consequently, one can say that Said’s counter discourse for resistance and constructing a national identity stems from the Western dominating discourse of imperialism itself.

In spite of the assault Said received from the part of Western critics for his neglecting of any positive hints for Orientalism, he is considered the father of the postcolonial thought. The latter has allowed postcolonial writers to write texts representing the world as it is in reality. In this sense El Matiri’s study displayed the impact of Said’s Orientalism on literature and criticism. Taking Said’s critique of knowledge, imperialism and postcolonial as a ground for structuring new studies, many critics start analyzing nineteenth century Western fiction based on the idea that knowledge is what unites the empire and not military power” (7). Hence, these recent studies moved away from the Foucauldian paradigm of knowledge and power. These texts resemble, as El Matiri claimed, “the reversal power” that have weakened the colonizer’s strength to show way towards resistance. She claims that Said’s focus has been on the relationship between literature and the foundation of colonial issues.

Critics discerned the filthy complicity between nineteenth century literary texts and the political authority of the West behind this connection. Subsequently, literary texts of nineteenth century are read through Homi Bhabha’s lens that pictures the meeting between the dominating and the dominated. El Matiri claims that These readings have shed light on how both of the “centre” and “the Other” identities have built within the sphere of colonial conditions.

Said’s *Orientalism* is also taken as a source of inspiration for many studies such as feminist literary studies. Although Orientalism’s disregard for gender question, many writers have viewed

nineteenth century women writing such as Bronte's Jane Eyre as fundamental issue to connect postcolonial thought with feminism discourse. The feminist history of the novel has, as El Materi contends, collaborated with the strategy of imperialism. In addition, Spivak's theory can the subaltern speak illustrates how such writers veiled imperial indications through their writings.

Gayatri Chacravorty Spivak's theory has focused on examining the "voice of difference", because she believes that literature plays a primordial role in representing culture, and the feminist thought is essential for culture construction. In this theory spivak tried to speak for the subaltern which represent the weakest and the lowest level in a postcolonial society. From a feminist perspective, the subaltern is a female who is not allowed to speak in her society, and this drives her to live in shadow or confinement and submits her to misrepresentation. For this reason, Spivak intends to protect and defend the subaltern female against misrepresentation. In so doing, Spivack has given rise to many issues that considered for years as taboos and, therefore, she achieved success in exposing the issues that Said ignored or forget to tackle from a feminist standpoint. Speaking about the importance of *Orientalism* in reshaping the feminist thought and Spivak's theory in particular is important to conduct this new study, because both Said's and Spivak's theories will be analyzed in the theoretical chapter.

Upon concluding her research, El Matiri argued that Said's analysis and the postcolonial theory have opened up new avenues for literary interpretation and offered new reading techniques defying imperialists' ideology, by focusing on how the colonialist distorts the image of the controlled one, have drawn new lines for literature and suggest a strategy of reading that resists imperialist ideologies.

In his article *Representation and misrepresentation in Postcolonial Literature and theory*

Pr. Eugene Holland, from Ohio University, analysed two important books of: *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* written by Celia Britton in 1999, and *Nationalists and Nomads: Essays on Francophone African Literature and Culture*, by Christopher. L. Miller published in 1998. Where Britton is able to move almost effortlessly between close examination

of Glissant's novels and discussion of the theoretical issues he and Other postcolonial writers raise, Miller in effect divides his collection into two. Interestingly, the four first essays of his collection contribute in shaping our understanding about the dynamics of the colonial history and culture.

Miller's first essay "*African Paris in the 1920's*" is the most important one in her study as it focused attention on literary material that corroborate that "the challenge posed to French colonialism by francophone African writing starts not with the Negritude movement of the 1930s, as much literary historiography to date has assumed or stated, but with a far more radical group of writers in the 1920s" (160). The chapter five, however, proposes a predictable call for incorporating African Literature into the curriculum in order to study it as intercultural literacy.

The whole collection raises an important question: what are the relative merits of binary opposition and multiplicity or complexity as modes of thought for addressing colonial-ism and postcolonial? Although there is no apparent link between this interdisciplinary study and the archival study of Holland, the question that the entire work addresses can be used as ground for starting this study that intends to dismantle hierarchies and refute the discourse of Orientalism that already constructed upon binary opposition between East and West because our objective is one.

Interestingly, in his article "Post-imperialism, Postcolonialism and Beyond: Towards a Periodisation of Cultural Discourse about Colonial Legacies," published in 2017, Dirk Göttsche puts the German history and culture as a ground for suggesting a historical approach to reconceptualising different forms of literary engagement with colonial discourse, colonial legacies and (post-) colonial memory in the context of Comparative Postcolonial Studies.

Significantly, with his deliberate blending of a historical, a conceptual and a political understanding of the 'postcolonial' in postcolonial scholarship, he probes issues of periodisation and historical terminology when, for example, anti-colonial discourse from the colonial period or colonialist discourse are also labeled postcolonial when it is also classified as post-imperial period. In probing the colonial legacy through British, French and European literatures and cultures after 1945, the researcher

intends to move on beyond defining features of postcolonial discourse but to discuss the validity of the post-colonial today. This study though it focused on movements as colonialism and postcolonialism but it helps in understanding the representation of the Other and the roots of binary opposition discourse and it helps in drawing guidelines towards moving on beyond Otherness and postcoloniality.

Arif Dirlik's article, *the Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* is also of a great importance. The aim of this study is twofold: On the one hand, it reviews the term postcolonial, and the various intellectual and cultural positions associated with it, in the context of contemporary transformations in global relationships. On the Other hand, it examines the reconsiderations of problems of domination and hegemony as well as the received critical practices that these transformations require. In the end of his study, Dirlik reveals that the postcolonial repudiation of the Third World is intimately linked with the repudiation of capitalism's structuring of the modern world. Once again, essentialism serves as a straw man, diverting attention from radical conceptualizations of the Third World that are not essentialist but relational, as in world-system approaches.

In the study entitles: *Postcolonial literature in the global marketplace: a few thoughts on political and aesthetic value in the field*, Erik Falk proposes that with the rise of globalization studies, world literature, and the spread of postcolonial literature, postcolonial literary studies have come under increased scrutiny as a discipline. One of the key themes in this scrutiny is the relationship between aesthetic and political value. This paper examines two relatively recent critical assessments of this relationship in postcolonial literary studies, Graham Huggan's *The Postcolonial Exotic* and Sarah Brouillette's *Postcolonial Writers in the Marketplace*, and suggests, drawing on Isobel Armstrong's notion of the "radical aesthetic," that literary aesthetics may be fruitfully conceived, not as immediately political but "anterior" to (cultural) politics.

Furthermore in her thesis entitles: "Women's voices: the presentation of women in the contemporary fiction of south Asian women", defended in 2021, Lau Liza Ee Jia conducted a detailed study on

contemporary South Asian Women writings in English focusing on the body of fiction produced from 1980's onward. The study takes into consideration the postcolonial legacy of a culturally, racially and religiously diverse South Asia as well as the current social changes. It also includes the works of the writers who both write from within and off South Asia focusing on the social patterns that shaped their writing out of the geographical location of the writers.

The study shed light on different issues such as: women writers, South Asian writers, South Asian women writers, and South Asian women writers writing in English. One of the main issue the study investigated is the negotiation by these writers between the English language and the South Asian reality. In so doing, the study intends to distinguish between literature written by the women of a traditionally proudly patriarchal society where the position of women has mostly been one of subservience (silent/ marginalized), another form of negotiation in the literature is that between the Centre and the periphery, i.e (the Self and the Other). In the end of her study, the researcher demonstrates that "South Asian women writers have carved out a space for themselves on the literary scene, and staked an intellectual, literary and emotional territory of their own"(1).

In spite of the fact that Ee Jia's study differs completely from what the current study hypothesizes, yet examining how crossing borders would shape the writing of South Asian women who write in English will help the researcher to learn about the strategies they adopt for silence breaking and subversion. Moreover, the thesis has focused on the representation of women, within the genre as well as in Other contexts; it examined how their writing create identities and images of and for the South Asia, South Asian in general and the South Asian woman in particular. This would also help us to check how transnational writers play a primordial role in changing the misrepresentations and the silent image of the Other that Orientalism discourse imposed. It will provide us with valid information about readers' and the publishing market response to this literature as well.

#### **1.4. Conclusion**

The review of literature has revealed that Orientalism is more or less a romantic discourse that is far from being objective, because it served at legitimizing Western imperialism and aims at subordination. This imperial power has been discussed by Said who relates it to language and culture; because, domination mainly functions through language. Thus language is used as a medium to construct hierarchical powers superior vs inferior, or the occident and the Oriental Other. This Other has been marginalized and silenced, due to the fact that the colonizers are the superiors and, therefore are power holders who speak for and represent it. On the Other hand, representation considered a crucial idea in developing Orientalism as a discourse. Based on this idea, which eventually became dogma, the occident emerged as the dominant force in a power struggle with the Orient and so worked his way up to create the dominated Oriental "Other."

Although most of the exposed literature has discussed the problem of Orientalism as a discourse to dominate and represent the East/Other, very few studies have interested in studying and investigating the Contemporary (Transcultural)postcolonial novel and the different ways of representation it identifies to speak voice. This fact has encouraged the researcher to investigate the issue of voice and representation in selected postcolonial novels in an attempt to exit off the idea of Western representation and domination, and to show that the Oriental Other is keen to speak for and represent himself.



---

**Chapter Two: Theorizing Representation  
From Orientalism to Transculturalism**

"Oh, I come from a land...from a faraway place, where the caravan camels roam. Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face, it's barbaric, but hey, its home. When the wind's from the east and the sun's from the West, and the sand in the glass is right " (*Arabian Nights*)

## 2.1 Introduction

In the opening credits of Walt Disney's 1992 rendition of *Arabian Nights Alladdin*, the aforementioned lines appear. These lines resemble a deliberate example of the picture of the *Orient* in the eyes of the Occident. The Orient appears as a "faraway" land which is still enigmatic and inaccessible. The expression "roam", for instance, implicitly portrays it as a mysterious "place" full of anarchy, barbarism and terror; it is a chaotic world as the expression "when the wind's from the east" indicates, signaling both cultural and social inferiority vis-a-vis the bright image of the civilized West as it is expressed in "the sun's from the West".

These lines underpin every important issue Said presents in his groundbreaking text *Orientalism*, a foundational text in the discussion of post-coloniality, while investigating the Orient as an eroticized "Other". In this text, Said describes how the West epitomized the Orient and spoke for it centuries ago, when the Orient kept silent allowing the Westerner to exert authority over it. Said concludes his analysis stating that Orientalism could neither categorize with human experience, nor to view it as human experience" (328). Hence, one understands that Said aspires to use his book as a means to contribute to the global hegemony of Orientalism.

This theoretical chapter aims at critically exploring the contemporary postcolonial writing that falls under the category of what is called Transcultural Literature, following Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the cornerstone of postcolonial thought, so as to sift through the false assumptions and representations fabricated a corpus of racial and cultural awareness distinct from any actual reality. The chapter will also rely on Stuart Hall's *Representation* theory 1997 and Epstein Mikhail's *Transculture* 1999/2009. It attempts to hypothesise that Transcultural literature resemble a narrative voice that do counter the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism.

Through its underlying representations, the Transcultural novel represents a personal narrative that transcends all the boundaries and hierarchies to challenge the silence of Orientalism, and thus giving voice to postcolonial individuals, viewing them as a human experience. Globalization—not of homogeneity, but of difference—is made possible by the transcultural perspective, wherein individual diversity and cultural diversity are complementary. The transcultural individuals, in a space of diversity, will liberate themselves from their dependence and silence, transcending the polarization imposed by civilizational conflict in an effort to bring about durable peace based on empathy, tolerance and acceptance.

## **2.2 The Question of Representation in Postcolonial Literature**

Recently, there has been a good deal of debate about whether literary works can contribute to knowledge of the world. Many of the literary critics and writers have defended the traditional view that works of literature assert truths. Other critics, however, have focused on the concept of meaning, by considering literature a source of truth and meaning. Yet any attempt to demonstrate that literature is the source that provides knowledge of the world has to consider the concept of representation.

Although the term "representation" has many different meanings and interpretations, it is essential to the study of culture. Referring to the etymology of the term, "representation" refers to "a presentation made up not by portraying the thing as it is but by re-presenting or creating it in a new shape and/or

surroundings" (Salazar 172). This means that representation acts as a vehicle that connects language to culture. Besides, people can only approach and comprehend the world they live in through language and representation. Since antiquity, representation has been central to the study and comprehension of semiotics, aesthetics, and literature. However, none of these representation forms produced in texts, painting, pictures, and literature are objective or unbiased; rather, they seem inextricably linked to the community as well as the culture that produced them; hence, it is quite difficult to separate them from. As a result, it is impossible to give the term representation a precise definition because there will always be a difference between intention and implementation, original and replica.

Representation is defined in Stuart Hall<sup>1</sup> 's *Cultural Representations and Signifying practices*, published in 1997, as employing language as a means of producing and exchanging meaning among members of a culture. It is a means of communicating ideas and representations of the world to Other people. It does entail the use of words, symbols, and pictures that denote or symbolize things (21). In this sense, Hall contends that culture is the processes through which individuals, things, and occasions are given meaning. Different groups within a society derive their sense of identity or meaning from culture, and these groups communicate meaning through social interactions. They create and consume meanings among themselves using language as a medium. The close connection that tie politics and representation as well as the mechanisms that exemplify them is explored in the book's opening essay *The Work of Representation*. Hall views representation a channel or method by which members of the common culture collectively construct meanings, connections, and values. It requires an understanding the mechanisms of language and knowledge interaction in creating and disseminating meanings. Hence, it is through their representations, individuals give things significance. To put it another way, cultural representations aid in the construction of people's perceptions of Others.; if such images internalized by Others, they also contribute to the formation of people's self-images as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Hall Stuart** : is a Sociology Professor at the Open University. He is a prolific writer on racial, political, and cultural topics. Among his most recent works are *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1999), *Modernity and its Futures* (1992), and *Formations of Modernity* (1992).

Furthermore, the politics of cultural representation are constructed through the embodiment of cultural representation in behaviors and policies. In certain situations, like as the colonial encounters in Africa, Asia, and India, the politics of cultural representation gave way to ideological supremacy.

Concerning the ideology of domination is not openly noticeable, rather it can only comprehend through experience, as Robert Ferguson (1998) noticed. In fact, the observable is the wide spectrum of social and symbolic forms based on authority and subservience connections (43). Following the process of “naturalization” or “normalization” of things, the power of ideology tends to fade away from the view by making things seem for granted. For this reason, race and racism discourse become one of the most deeply embedded existing ideology. In this context, Hall contends in 2003 that “through common beliefs, that distinguish between the things that form the “standard”, and that constructing the “Other” in relation to everything else, ideology operates. All that is outside the “norm” is “Othered” in the ideological discourse/ rhetoric of normality. (qtd. In Share & Kellner 22). Thus, representation’s politics orbits around the question of authority and dominance. In the politics of representation, it is the discourse of difference/ dissimilarity that creates binary oppositions, wherein one pole appears superior and tends to dominate within this dichotomous relationship.

There are many similarities between the long-lasting colonial dominance techniques and the process of depicting the Other. The prominence of cultural politics in postcolonial studies academics has expanded due to a greater understanding of the problems and power imbalances that the colonial politics of representation reinforced. Postcolonial studies focus on the issue of culture and representation helps in comprehending the colonial processes which form a significant part of the political reality of the postcolonial struggle.

Among the different postcolonial scholars who delved into the politics representations and demystifies how the Other is represented, Edward Said (1935–2003) is considered the most influential scholar through his groundbreaking text *Orientalism*. Said explores colonialism experience and the diverse ways the Occident followed to represent the Orient as the “Other” from ancient times till today.

The east was "almost a European invention," according to Said, and it had long been a realm of romance, strange creatures, eerie memories, and breathtaking scenery. At this point, it was vanishing; its time had come to an end, as it were (1). Accordingly, the Orient's image as an exotic place did not come out of nothing; rather, it was a European constructed image for legitimizing their conquest and domination.

Before the Westerners could take control of the East, as Said asserted, they had to demonstrate that it was nothing more than an "Other." This stereotype image of the "Other" has allowed the Westerner to construct a body of knowledge based primarily on political and ideological concerns. Based on this European-created topos, the Orient has been represented for centuries as barbaric, exotic, and devoid of geographical significance in order to satisfy the desires and fantasies of the West. It has enabled them to turn East as a whole into constant, homogenous body of knowledge devoid of wisdom and experience.

Furthermore, Said argued that Orientals were often overlooked or viewed as problems to be solved or confined, rather than as citizens or people. In short, Orientalism is a Western approach to conquering, reconstructing, and exercising dominance over the Orient. The political portrayal of the Orient as the Other is seen as a politically Oriented discourse that aims to legitimize Western dominance, because Orientalism as a system of knowledge was never innocent and was biased by imperial and ideological interests to establish control over the Orient. The imperial discourse of Orientalism was mainly based upon the paradigm of knowledge/power, what makes the Occident superior and gave him voice to speak for the inferior East and represent it. The colonial discourse, as a result; has constructed the Orient as a silent, static entity with one single story for centuries.

Using Orientalist's artistic and historical tradition as a foundation for his investigation, Edward Wadie Said was able to produce his groundbreaking text *Orientalism* in 1987, in the book of the same name, transforming it into a genuine theory and postcolonial discourse of oppression. Orientalism and Said's Other later writings demonstrate his unwavering dedication to speaking truth to power. The

main objective behind the book is to expose the profound deception, injustice, and ignorance that imperialism and the colonial discourse perpetrated against the Orient and the colonized people centuries ago. Said's *Orientalism* had a huge impact not only on cultural studies and the field of comparative literature; rather, it also affected the interpretation of the Orient. Hence, the theory attempted at redefining/reframing the Orient, by providing ample comprehension of historical facts.

As a theory, Said's *Orientalism* sparked a debate by criticizing Western imperialism for its distorted view of the East as well as the misrepresentation of non-Western cultures. Orientalism is considered by many critics, including Lockman, to be one of the most significant academic works produced in English and human sciences in the end of the 20th century. Said describes Orientalism as "a collection of fallacies, misunderstandings, preconceived notions, and imaginative constructs imposed by the Occident (the West) with the intention of exerting dominance over the East." (Shabanirad 1). In this sense, the book investigates the various ways in which the Occident has "Orientalized" the Orient in order to build knowledge about it and use that knowledge as dogma to serve imperial interests.

Despite criticism that his interpretation of Orientalism is rigid, Said has identified various ways that Europeans have built the Orient in their discourse. He differentiates between corporate, general, and academic Orientalisms in his largest classification:

It is the academic title that is the most widely acknowledged for Orientalism, and in fact, the name is still used by a number of academic institutions. Any individual who teaches, writes about, or does research on the Orient—and this is true regardless of whether the individual is an anthropological, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its particular or its broad aspect is considered an Orientalist, and what they do is referred to as Orientalism. (Said 2)

In this first definition, Said recognized the vague term Orientalism, as well as the variety of the negative meanings that might be drawn. Jukka Juhki, in her book *Imagining the Other: Orientalism and Occidentalism in Tamil-European Relations in India*, claims: "I would dare to question whether,

thirty-seven years after the publication of *Orientalism*, "the Oriental" is the subject of any thesis". She goes on saying that, "Said feels that academic Orientalism still exists because conferences are organized and publications are written with the Orient as their emphasis and the Orientalists as their authority". Prejudices, however, continue to exist in both popular culture and scientific discourse (Said 23).

In his second definition, Said closely explained Orientalism as a mode of thinking.

Orientalism is a conceptual framework that rests on an ontological and epistemic distinction between

“ The Orient” and (often) “ The Occident”. Thus, a vast majority of writers, including poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have come to accept the basic differences between the East and the West as the basis for intricate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts about the East, its people, customs, mind, destiny, and Other topics. Novelists like Aeschylus, Dante, Victor Hugo, and Karl Marks may all be accepted under this Orientalism. (2)

This definition demonstrates that Orientalism is merely a byproduct of stereotype collections, myths, and fantasies that Europeans adopted as a foundation for their interactions with the Orient. Said suggests a disciplined or even regulated exchange in both academic and general Orientalism.

Comparing his third definition to the previous two, it seems to be more physically and historically defined.

Orientalism has a greater historical and material definition than the Other two combined. Orientalism as corporate institution for handling the Orient, beginning in the late eighteenth century, may be examined and evaluated. It involves handling the Orient by approving perspectives on it, characterizing it, educating it, settling it, and reigning over it. To put it simply, Orientalism is the Western strategy of controlling, transforming, and imposing authority on the Orient. (3)

According to Said, corporate Orientalism has served to maintain Western power and hegemony over the East. It is how the West dominated the East. It demonstrates the way through which the Orient was perceived and taught institutionally too. In this regard, Amalie Due Svendsen contends, in her paper, “Representations of the East: Orientalism in Emily Eden’s Travel Writing” published in (2018), that Europe was ‘constantly the position of strength. The latter endorsed by viewing Orientals as ‘irrational, corrupt, childlike, and “different’ vis a vis the ‘rational, upright, advanced, “normal” Europeans. Such characteristics construct the picture of the uncivilized East, and fabricated knowledge of the Orient that has contributed to the legitimacy of Western dominance. Said's three definitions demonstrate that Orientalism is not an innocent mode of thought, but is full of prejudiced stereotypical views of the Orient. These viewpoints are always eurocentric, negative, and antagonistic. Orientalism is regarded as a long-established Western endeavor that is heavily reliant on standardizing Western values by defining such values as objective. This point of view, in particular, serves as the foundation for the critique of Orientalism.

### **2.3 Said’s Orientalism as Postcolonial Discourse**

Before delving into postcolonial discourse, it is worth revisiting the concept of colonialism. Colonialism appears as “ a colonial creed of authority that operates to impose control colonized nation using language as well as cultural and artistic representations” (Elmatiri 1). Although the concepts of colonialism and imperialism are closely related, because both imply power and dominance, the impact of imperialism does not cease when colonial dominance ends. Rather, it lasts forever, influencing colonized people's culture and way of thinking. Imperialism influences relations between the colonized country and the dominant empire and the followed discourse.

In *Orientalism*, Said sheds light on nineteenth-century French and British Orientalism, as well as early twentieth-century American Orientalism, using academic and non-academic materials. His theory influenced many scholars who have continued to investigate and develop theories about the Orientalist phenomenon. In fact, Said was “a part of an increasingly critical advancement in 1980’s,

where the Enlightenment issue of subject-formation success was possible through post-structuralism, neo-Marxism, deconstruction and feminism growth” ( Bhatnagar 3).

As a discourse, Orientalism serves as an example of both Asians and Westerners' postcolonial predicament. Whether overtly or implicitly, Western intellectuals have presented the West as superior to the rest of the world in their writings. These intellectuals “fashioned a discourse that grew into a sort of fabricated dualistic ontology" in an attempt to elevate and humanize the occident” (Juhki 12). Despite all of the reasons that might make the two parts less distinguishable, this binary ontology is still surprisingly strong.

In his groundbreaking text, Said draws a picture on the colonial discourse and its implications. He shows how the colonial hegemony is implied within texts and discourses. His work is described as a contrapuntality against the imperial discourse about the non-Western Other. It implies that Western intellectuals were serving the hegemonic culture. For this reason, Said acquired worldwide appreciation as the innovator of the postcolonial discourse. His ideology has influenced different fields of study such as social studies, history, anthropology, history and literature.

With the publication of Said's Orientalism, postcolonial theory—which critiques colonial dominance ideas like Eurocentrism—emerged in literary criticism. Postcolonial theory interests in decentralizing European culture and its ideals. By assuring "the link between "the cultural products of the former colonies and the culture of the metropolis", it paved the way towards many critics such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Césaire Aimé and Homi Bhabha to pioneer the area of cultural studies (Bertens 200). The ultimate objective of those critics is fighting against the dominant Western ideologies, values, modes of thoughts and perceptions. These ideologies enabled Westerners to impose their values, language, and culture on the Orient and Orientals, creating a false image of the Orient and Orientals. Such values and perspectives had polarized the world, dividing it into a civilized, humanized West and an exotic, barbarian East. Postcolonial scholars are also interested in cultural displacements and how they affect displaced migrant people's identities. In borrowing Bertens's words, postcolonial

theory highlights displacements, and hybrid cultural forms as vantage points to expose the internal doubts and resistance suppressed by the West in its globalizing course and to criticize the whole facade imperialism and capitalism endeavored to present (200). In this perspective, one understands that postcolonial theory interests in studying colonizer and colonized connections. It examines colonial coercion, resistance strategies, postcolonial movement towards Europe and the West in general, as well as cultural hybridity resulted out of the encounter of the two cultures.

In examining established colonial discourse over the Orient, Said relied on conclusive British and French scholarly texts, travelogues, official reports written by colonial officers, poetry and fictional narrative, to arrive at one conclusion that such texts were able to construct an imaginative image about the Orient, and use it politically, sociologically, culturally, ideologically, and scientifically during the era of post-enlightenment as well. This specific method is useful because it demonstrates the coherence of the Orientalist discourse. Over many centuries, the Orient was continuously and linearly constructed as the "Other," which served to both legitimize and justify colonial oppression and fortify the identity of Western civilization. Orientalism, in Said's words has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world as it is not a mere representation of the modern political-intellectual culture with its significant aspect (12). In developing his theory, Said recognized his obligation to Marxist Antonio Gramsci and Post-structuralist Michel Foucault in the development of his thought. One may argue that Said's blending of two apparently unrelated disciplines of study is one of the main causes of the phenomena of Orientalism, despite the fact that it is challenging and risky. The core of Said's analysis is Michel Foucault's examination of power and knowledge paradigms. In using Foucault<sup>2</sup>'s notion of discourse as a methodology for his research, Said views that it is possible to study and interpret Orientalism as a shared entity by producing view about the Orient to instructing it, colonizing it,

---

<sup>2</sup> **Michel Foucault:** was a French social theorist , philosopher , historian, intellectual as well as public speaker, who was intellectually and publically active until his death in 1984 . He is known for employing his research in history to unlock changes in discourse throughout time. In addition his researches have also examined the link between power, knowledge and institutions His work knowledge and power affected many critics in different fields such as sociology , sociology of education, gender studies, queer studies; literary criticism and crime theory. *Discipline and Punish*, *History of Sexuality* and *Archeology of Knowledge* are among his famous books.

portraying it and dominate it. To put it briefly, it is the way the Westerner rules, restructures and asserts its dominance of the Orient .

Michel Foucault refers to discourse as being: an assembling of thoughts and knowledge about a shared issue using parallel methodology and current relations of power in addition to how it is discussed and disseminated (32). This means that power and knowledge are contained through discursive elements; hence Foucault's notion is vital in constructing Said's theory. According to Said, without embracing Foucault discourse of Power/ Knowledge, the examination of the systematic discipline of Orientalism would never be possible.

It is impossible to comprehend the incredibly systematic discipline that allowed European culture to control and produce the Orient politically, without analysing the discourse of Orientalism— and even produce the Orient in post-enlightenment era in terms of politics, sociologically, militarism, ideology, science, and imagination. Furthermore, Orientalism held such a powerful position, that in my opinion, no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without considering the restrictions Orientalism placed on thought and action. (116)

On Said's behalf, studying the present without taking the past into account and how colonialist shaped the present would be very irrational, because the present is a mirror to the past. Furthermore, he asserts that is a mirror to the past, and it would be extremely foolish to study it without considering the role of colonialists in shaping it. He also claims that it is impossible to examine colonizer's and colonized histories relying on one single view since they are intricately linked" (qtd. In Hamadi 41)

Said believes that the Orientalists' discourse of difference hides the true East/West divergence. In its representations, Orientalists discourse remolds the exotic and unusual Orient into a controlled and manageable phenomenon able to be classified, theorized, and defined, as Juhki mentioned. She adds that created the fabricated misleading image of the East. The Orient is subordinated through constructing a body of knowledge about it. Orientalism was forced to condense the infinitely complex

reality of the East into a limited number of characteristics, constitution, and kinds. Orientalists rhetoric of contrast allows the West to become dichotomous to the rest; hence, it produced two contrasted entities such as the Civilized; rational West against the exotic, irrational East. Thus, one understands that Said examined Orientalism as the Orient's Orientalizing rhetoric due to imperial reasons.

In fact, the nature of the past and present relations between the West and the East, as Said contends, can never be understood without studying the discourse of Orientalism. Besides, Orientalism as a discourse opens doors for discovering the different systematic ways of oppression the colonizer had been implemented to give him authority over the East, and legitimize its superiority not only over the Orient, but allows him to dominate the whole world also. In analysing the discourse of Orientalism, Said tracked a humanist stance in his analysis of Orientalist discourses, because he believes that a better understanding of the conflict within Orientalism necessitates bringing all domains of research together. In this regard, he asserts that the injustices and distress in its broader historical, cultural and socio-economic reality have to be recognized and unveiled to go beyond mental constraints hindering a rational historical analysis.

Although, he has been widely criticized and blamed for his reliance on Foucault discourse by considering his work as a simple replication of the former's endeavor to prompt Western individuals to be thoroughly self aware of the extreme limits of his discourse, Said's primary goal in examining Orientalist narrative texts is neither to discover "the real Orient" behind Orientalist descriptions, nor the one that existed prior to colonialism, but rather to focus on the Orient constructed as a Western discourse.

Foucault's discourse encompasses social communicative activities and is impacted by society. His criticism of discourse aims at providing a more accurate portrayal of the human condition in Western society. For this same reason, Said is also criticised as being one of the post-structuralist who is against any quest for reality. In this sense, one understands that both Foucault and Said's initiatives are considered as essentialists. For him, Western writing had created a formal picture of the Western

individual past as well as his identity. For this reason, Said claims that Western identity is artificially constructed to appear unified and lucid; hence he is considered the center of the world and the origin of the ultimate authority of all knowledge, that referred to as humanism.

In clarifying his view, Said asserts that Foucault's discourse differs from structural and deconstructive approaches as it embraces positive, firm, energetic findings. Actually, Foucault declares that the discourse Orientalism is mainly constructed upon paradigms of power and knowledge. The rhetoric of power within Orientalism stands on the use of knowledge to dominate. In Said's words domination and discriminations of strength and fortune are perpetual and perennial facts of human society. (19)

In examining Orientalists' texts and discourse, Said has focused attention on the description of "the Other". He suggests that when humans are confronted with something threatening and, particularly, distant, they rely on their previous experiences that resemble their actual situation. According to Said, books may always represent people, experiences, places, and events to an extent that a book gains more authority and utility than the reality it represents.

In this regard, travelogues and literary texts descriptions of the exotic Orient do not necessarily correspond to its real image, but it holds a kind of authority. It has been used to demonstrate dominance in the lead up to colonize the East or to rationalize underlying anxieties that went along with it. Hence, it presents to readers a false and fantasized image about the Orient.

Furthermore, the colonizer imposed a language and culture full of power and rationality in order to dominate the Orient. In doing so, the imperialist has ignored and even distorted the language, history, and cultural values of the Oriental people to manipulate them under the slogan of civilizing and edifying them. Said's primary goal behind examining Orientalism lies in demonstrating the ability to impose Western domination has taken on language of reason, truth, knowledge and values. The naturalness, power, proficiency, insistence as well as the directness of the language make it appear the more powerful, as Said contends. (216)

In this perspective, Said presented Napoleon's conquest of Egypt as a rhetoric of power. The consequences of exercising power and knowledge over Egyptians led to cultural exploitation. Despite the conflict between Egyptians and the French, the knowledge the French imperial constructed from its expedition to Egypt had not only allowed them to distort the history of Egyptians, but also to dominate them. After establishing the Western dominance, according to Donze Magnier, this knowledge was turned out dogma, and diffused among generations creating an enduring dominance of culture. (14)

Furthermore, Foucault believes that discourse allows individuals to have some degree of strength, particularly when discourse how productive those individuals are. In this regard, Bahtargnar claims:

Foucault's analysis of power is based on its origins in the oppressed, focusing on specific forms of resistance. Valorizing the perceptions of resisting groups is a combative and subversive position against power, as seen in nineteenth-century philology. Said challenges the prestige of this philology by revealing hidden power relations. He can only describe colonial power's tyranny by analyzing its temporally-spatial manifestation into technology and institution, rather than analyzing its political language. (qtd. In Juhki35)

Thus, discourse is not a simple term used to exchange communication, rather, it has a powerful material effect to the extent that discursive elements underlie power and knowledge. Besides, struggle ought to go hand in hand with power as power cannot exist without it. As a result, this counter discourse may result in the creation of new information and ways of thinking. In a word, resistance is where power first established is instigated. Thereof, resistance can only be constructed through discourse. At this level, one understands that the same discourse that produces power, it undermines through resistance.

Additionally, Said acknowledges the contribution of Foucault's thought to the materialist understanding of discourse. He believes that certain social structures are connected to the power of discourse. The latter serves as an ideological vehicle; hence, it seems appropriate for the erection of

Orientalism discourse. In Orientalism, the practice of infinite self reference was ultimately brought about by the growth of institutional location.

Relying on Foucault discourse, Said also contends that language plays a primordial role in bringing opposites together as natural: "In a particular culture, language grants permission; it legislates and maintains discrimination of Otherness and sameness (126). In discussing the distinction between the Orient/ the Occident, Said expands on this concept of difference.

Although, the Western texts that Said has examined are part of Foucauldian discourse because they include views and statements about how the knowledge of the Orient is constructed, Said indicates that in spite of his influence with Michael Foucault's endeavor, that he owes much debt, he believes in the writer's definite individual touch on the anonymous collection of text that constitute a discourse such as Orientalism. The notion of individual in the discourse is the only significant element that distinguishes Said from Foucault, since the latter gives little optimism for individual text or author. Yet, Said's regards the power of the person can be feasible perhaps only in the case of Orientalism. In this regard, he claims that the objective behind his analysis is to use close reading of the text to highlight the contention between a writer or individual's text readings whose goal is to reveal the dialectic between the complex collective construction to which the work individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which the writer's work contributes and the individual text or writer. Therefore, it appears that he tries to make a sort of extension to Foucault's analysis following cultural order, because Foucault approach cannot be easily followed as it based on a series of experiments. Based on James Clifford's analysis of Said's Foucauldian approach. Opposing to Foucault, who views authors' identities as nothing more than labels to assert discourse, Said's writers are able to be assigned psychohistorical typicality and are often depicted in their works as having representative Orientalist experiences. Humanist' myths of repressed authenticity often divert Said's reading of Orientalist discourse. Clifford comes to the conclusion that Said covers the techniques used to define cultural order that Said includes the methods by which cultural order that has been externally

established in opposition to Otherness. Within an imperialist context colonial peoples' regions' as well as their definitions, representations, and textualizations are considered as internal' representations, and they lead to similar results since they breed physical and ideological repression and confinement.

Foucault analysis enables Said to tackle culture as a sort of organized disciplines governed by power and knowledge, as he states:

Through a system or sovereign approach, culture is reduced into a huge collection of self-congratulating concepts and disciplines that the critic must extract and critique without claiming to stand outside of history, subjectivity, or environment via a system or sovereign method. Critical awareness, after being detached from the dominant culture takes a responsible opponent attitude. (269)

Thus, Said's method in Orientalism aims to expose the dominant culture's discourse in order to detach from and destroy its oppressive system. Although Western discourse about the Orient is associated with knowledge and power, Said is well aware that it breeds hegemony and seeks subordination. As a result, Gramsci's Marxist approach to cultural hegemony is crucial in constructing Said's Orientalism.

Following Gramsci<sup>3</sup>'s cultural hegemony, Said sees that the Western power spread knowledge via culture and ideology , what legitimates its dominance and control over the Orient. According to Bertens, Gramsci thinks that hegemony is domination by consent.

the ruling class governs and oppresses the rest of the classes while convincing them that they are working for their own good to the extent that they upraise their culture to the level of becoming the dominant one, resulting in the dominance by consentment.

Following this approach, Orientalism legitimized Western imperialism by convincing

---

<sup>3</sup>Antonio Gramsci: Italian Marxist scholar and one of the leading theorists of the previous century. He contributes to Western Marxism development. Gramsci's fundamental concept of culture and hegemony has significantly influence Marxism.

the locals that the new dominant culture constitutes global civilization. (204)

Gramsci defines hegemony considering it the connection between ideology and physical instruments to maintain power and control over dominated classes. Thus, hegemony serves as a link between the ruling ideas and the subject. Coercion and consent keep the ruling class in power. The material sphere is a structure linked to an intellectual superstructure. These concepts have been entrenched in civil society, including the courts, bureaucracy, and educational systems” (Parkash 235). For Gramsci, both control over production resources and power never surrender masses of people or the working class to become hegemonic. Rather, it is by giving their consent the working class secures dominance to the ruling class. If we put it differently, the colonizer could never be able to secure his dominance over the Orient without spreading missionary ideas. This means that the Westerners felt superior once they convinced Subaltern people that it was their duty to civilize the uncivilized world. Subaltern groups, therefore, accepted voluntarily the Westerner authority because they absorbed the idea that it is in their interest to accept them. In this regard; Gramsci’s theory cultural hegemony is so important to Said. It allowed him to understand the Orientalists discourse in representing the Orient.

In his philosophy, Antonio Gramsci considers social context and history are stones on the road to all sorts of knowledge. For him, our ideas and viewpoints needed to understood in the context of certain specific social and historical contexts, because life is what determines awareness and not the vice versa. Ignoring such factors, according to Gramsci, would conceal truth and power. In this sense, Gramsci resembles Foucault when he believes that truth and power are two connected subjects, i.e where there is truth, there exists power. This means that Gramsci believes that politics cannot be separated from civil life and culture, because it is the route that leads to them.

Antonio Gramsci’s theory Cultural Hegemony plays a significant role in shaping Said’s ideas while analyzing Orientalist discourse. It allows him to understand the ideology and the culture behind the colonial discourse. Drawing on Gramsci theory, Said asserts that the colonialist used culture to implant certain thoughts in the minds of the Orientals in a way that allows them to see his invasion legitimate,

natural and even to their benefits. Culture is, in this regard, used as an influential tool to control the minds and draw hegemony. Ngugi Wa'Thingo underscores in his text decolonizing the Minds that "political and economic dominance could never be effective and final in its own without controlling peoples' minds." Regulating peoples' culture necessitates to control their means to show self dominance over Others.

Based on this perspective, one understands that Said, like Wa'Thiongo, regards the discourse of Orientalism as a set of cultural constraints imposed upon Orientals to put control over their minds. Therefore, the imperialist attained supremacy when his ideas and views become universal and dogmatic. Back to Gramsci's idea of consent, one notices that the Westerner did not rely on the use of force, in the beginning of his invasion, to dominate the Orient. Rather, it is pretty obvious that he indirectly grabbed their consent by inducing certain ideological thoughts in their minds to avoid their resistance. For Said, with little resistance from the Orient itself, the scientist, merchant, soldier or priest was in or contempelated the Orient. (7)

Furthermore, Said regards Orientalism as a significant academic practice. It is a means to execute cultural domination. According to Said, the dominance of culture is taken through Orientals consent or through executing economic pressures. In his words, Said intends to say that both domination and hegemony took part in subjugating Orientals. To reinforce Said's view, Walia Shelly regards that historical and literary accounts are considered as significant evidences on how hegemony takes part.

In considering literature, the mirror of society, these texts have reflected the colonizer's true culture and identity. Literary texts are true evidence on how the dominated individuals assert their cultural identity and historical existence. This further suggests that the views and the stories Orientalists constructed about Orientals is directed to subdue their minds, and influence them both psychologically and mentally to absorb the fond idea that the colonizer came to their benefits in order to enlighten and civilize them. In this sense, Said asserts that Orientalism is better understood as a set of limitations upon and constraints upon thoughts than as amere firm doctrine. It is a set of durable ideas or

Orientalists notions that affected people who are labeled as Orientals and those defined as Occidentals.

By employing the expression “a set of durable ideas”, Said refers to an important issue, because the expression denotes to what extent might such ideas get to once Orientals have assimilated them. In so doing, Said intends to refer to Orientalist ideas and their enduring effect on Orientals. Such ideas are in fact not only durable but also dangerous once they become a kind of dogma; a characteristic that never ends with the end of colonialism. Thus, one assumes that Said considers Orientalism as an ideological weapon directed against Orientals to put a durable control over them. In this regard, Abdellatif Al Aidi asserts that until Orientals begin to consider Western colonization as essential to their salvation, Orientalism will not stop pounding home the idea that they are barbaric, uncivilized, and in desperate need for assistance. since the colonized already see colonization as a blessing, the colonizer does not need to employ force to preserve dominance. (7)

Accordingly, the Westerner has participated in the long lasting subjugation of Orientals by using culture as a brainwash tool, if one may say, instead of coercion. For this reason, Said asserts that it is the modern Orient that Orientalizes itself. By using culture as a hegemonic device, Westerners were able to invade and control Orientals’s minds using ideological ideas rather than coercion. They often put noble causes such as educating and civilizing the natives as a veneer to justify their invasion and hide their hideous motifs. In Said’s words, this beautiful veneer is often called White man’s burden. The latter is no more than a big lie used to deceive and manipulate Orientals. In this regard, one notices that Said has found in Gramsci’s theory a better understanding to how hegemony took place in the Orient.

Said determines that consent establishes hegemony based on the division Gramsci found between political and civil societies. By using ideological and educative ideas to grab the voluntary consent of people, Orientalism therefore nurtured hegemony better than using economic and military force, once the Orientals become convinced that colonialism is for their own benefits and progress. In Said’s view.

Within civil society, (Culture) is at work. Here, the power of ideas, institutions and

Other individuals are mediated by consentment rather than dominance, as defined by Gramsci. In light of the fact that hegemony is a phenomena driven by culture, Western political society which is comprised of state institutions like army must be interpreted as means of leading dominance (Said7).

Consequently, Orientalism is no more than a romantic discourse aims at executing hegemony over the natives and controlling them mentally, by using ideological brainwash tools to take their consent and avoid their resistance. For this reason, it becomes so hard to liberate such people even after centuries of independence to change their vision towards themselves. According to Mcleod John, “signing declarations of independence and lowering and raising flags is not the sole way that one becomes free from colonialism. A mental shift that challenges the prevailing patterns of thinking is also necessary. In this regard, Oreintals, as Wa Thingo once mentioned in his book, “to decolonize the minds must at first alter their vision towards themselves and the ways Orientalists represented them to be totally independent.

#### **2.4. Orientalism and The False Image of “the Other”**

In the discourse of Orientalism, representation is created by travel writers, military officials, poets and artists to reflect European anxieties and their preoccupations with East. In Said’s perspective, “the notion of faithfulness to the original usually forms the foundational basis of representation. Still, a number of additional ideas are closely related to representation, wherein its definition encompasses not only innately similar topics but also collective past, customs and the discourse shared within a specific field or area.

As it is mentioned before, Orientalism as a theory represents Said’s vehement assault to speak the naked truth, to uncovering the grave oppression and misrepresentation Western imperialism exercised over colonized people. It intends to analyze the way European imperials have described the Orient not only in the travelogues and records of simple expeditors but also in the literary works of many famous writers. Orientalism, as Said claims, "is not light European imaginative construct about the Orient, but

a construction of collective body of thought and practice used as a longlasting significant investment asset for generations. Sustained investment solidified Orientalism as a framework of understanding regarding the Orient and a recognized convention to penetrate Western perception via the Orient. Similarly, that identical investment not only proliferated but also produced genuinely fruitful assertions emanating from Orientalism and permeating popular culture (6). In this perspective, Orientalism, as a phenomenon, is not more than a Western exercise of misrepresentation of the Orient, the Arab world and Muslims in particular.

As a mythical creation, the Orient is appeared through a series of imaginative representations and stereotypical images in the writings of Orientalists to serve European imperialism. For Said, "the sequence of stereotypical pictures, wherein the Orient or the Other\_\_\_a kind of stand-in for the West or the self\_\_ is perceived as being irrational, backward, despotic, inferior, aberrant and sexually feminine. Europe\_\_\_the West, the self is perceived as being fundamentally rational, developed, humane, superior, virtuous, normal, and masculine. (Qtd.In Shabaniard23)

Thus, one can say that these series of representations of the " Orient " contributed to a big extent in creating a dichotomy between the West/ 'the self' and the Orient/ " the Other", a dichotomy that served in extending European hegemony over the East as a whole.

Said's Orientalism has provided numerous approaches to the various ways in which the Orient is perceived. Said asserts that the Orient as a word came into existence which I ruled by [which was] by a series of cravings, despotisms, and plans. These desires and projections created the taste for exotic, imperial projection and a long lasting separateness between the two worlds.

In order to expose the possible types of Orientalists' writings, Said first distinguished between latent and manifest Orientalism. Manifest Orientalism encompasses a range of explicitly expressed perspectives concerning Oriental society, languages, literatures, history and sociology. In contrast latent Orientalism has maintained more consistent enduring and consensus- based mode of thought. In this perspective, the manifest signifies the difference in forms and personal styles, whereas latent

pertains the subconsciously formed notions that highlighted the Orient's, what emphasized "the Orient's distinction, its oddness, backwardness, silence, and femininity as well as its prone flexibility.

Through his analysis of Orientalism's styles; Said demonstrates that while the variations in personal style and literary form among Orientalist writers have been overt in manifest Orientalism, the fundamental themes that have permeated their works such as Orientess division, oddness, its "In manifest Orientalism, the differences between Orientalist writers, their personal style and form of writing have been explicit, but the basic content of their writing, "the separateness of the Orient, its oddness, deterioration, silence, fimininity, and its prone flexibilitiy," have essentially mirrored latent Orientalism. Thus, latent Orientalism resulted to race classification, what divided the world into backward and advanced cultures and Societies.

For centuries, the West has "spoke for" and "represented the Orient" to put control over it. By negating its voice, the Orient appeared as a silent and static entity that lacks wisdom and civilization. For this reason, the Orient and Oriental people have rarely seen or looked at, instead, they have been *seen through*. Due to ethnocentrism of Europeans, Said argued that Orientals were viewed as problems to be solved or confined, rather than citizens or people, and as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist. The representation of the silent Orient started in 18<sup>th</sup> c fascination with *The Arabian Nights* or *The Thousand and One Nights*. This text was translated into French by Antoine Galland in 1704–1717, and thereafter translated many times into English in the 19th century. It was the key to Western image of the Orient as a place of exoticism, a place of mystery and romance. It emphasized the lost past classical Oriental grandeur vis a vis the contemporary Orient's barbarism. In Said's view, the distance between the occident and the Orient is expressed through "textual representations rather than its objective reality" (6). In his canvas *The Snake Charmer*, for instance, Gérôme portrays "a young boy holds the snake while an old snake charmer plays off to the left. The audience is huddled together against the wall "(Bloom 34).The mystery Gérôme creates in this work lies in the location of the viewer. It drives the viewer to watch the whole scene from the backside of the boy. In this regard

Bloom claims that “We are negated to watch the scene from the back, only seeing the backside of the boy and the show” (34). Linda Nochlin writes, “Gérôme is not reflecting a readymade reality but, like all artists, is producing meanings” (q.d. In Bloom 15). Moreover, the tiled wall behind the audience signifies the deterioration of the walls; hence, it refers to the deterioration of the entire Muslim society and civilization.

The false representation of the Orient appeared in the body of fiction written by William Thackeray, the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, Joseph Conrad, and Rudyard Kipling. The superficial reading of Kipling’s *Kim* (1900), for instance, looks like an adventure story of a young boy scout to India. However, the contrapuntal reading of the novel shows the impact of colonization. “The novel contains much more than the story of an Irish orphan, raised among natives in Lahore, who wanders all over India being a Tibetan lama’s disciple and a British intelligence agent at the same time” (Kleinhofa 63).

Said argues that Kipling's "classical 'colonial' text" is heavily influenced by imperial ideology, as it lacks any potential for anti-imperial resistance, making the empire seem natural and eternal. This presentation has reinforced the discourse of imperialism to the extent that it is taken for granted. In this regard, many Victorian writers, including Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, and Robert Louis Stevenson, depict the Oriental Other in their works. It also appears in the writings of several North American authors, including Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Henry James, and Thomas Hardy. Additionally, Said sees that the Orient was feminized in European representation, as it portrayed as irrational feminine “passive, exotic, sexually alluring, submissive” (182- 220), as well as “silent and supine” (138). Whereas the West appeared rationally masculine, dominant, self-controlled and able to possess the East. According to Mavlude Zengin, “representation creates an analogy between the ways of marginalization and subjugation of the East by Western thought and woman by patriarchy.” Irrationality/stupidity has long been associated with the Oriental people, and irrationality has always been associated with women. Rationality has long been associated with Europeans and masculinity”

(844). The image of the silent, exoticized Oriental female often depicted naked or partially clothed in many Western works of art, conveying the sense of a barbaric active creature for sexual pleasures. Such image appeared in Flaubert's experience with the Egyptian courtesan Kuchuck Hanem. When Flaubert slept with the courtesan, as Said notes, he wrote a letter to his friend Louise Colet saying that, "the Oriental woman is no more than a machine; she makes no distinction between one man and another man". (Said 187).

By describing her as a silent, passive and inferior Other, Flaubert provides a model of the Oriental woman. According to Said, in this influential narrative, Kuchuck "never spoke of herself, never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was typically Oriental " (6). In this regard, Ensieh shabaniard asserts that "Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled" (24).

In colonial discourse, woman representation often colludes with patriarchal values. In her essay "Can the Subaltern speak?", Gayatri Spivak argues that the representation of marginalized people is linked to "positioning. socioeconomic, gendered, cultural, geographic, historical, and institutional " (qtd. In Salazar 173). This means that Oriental women are double colonized, since they are victims of both imperial ideology and patriarchal systems and traditions. According to Spivak," the image of the silent and powerless woman "cannot escape Othering" (qtd. In Salazar173). It refers to the unequal relationship between the Orient and the Occident that based on power and knowledge. According to Salazar, "the crux of Spivak argument is that the representations of the developing world conflate two related but discontinuous meanings of representation "speaking for," in the sense of political representation, and the second is "speaking about" or "representing it" in the sense of making a portrait". Therefore, the image of the silent Oriental woman refers to the Orient, the silent subaltern or

the Other as created by the West to dominate it and speak thereby for it.

In order to bypass the silence imposed by Orientalism and the isolation of the polarized discourse, the Oriental Other should be empowered to speak for and represent himself/themselves. In his book *culture and imperialism*, Edward Said argued that despite the continuities of long traditions, habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, there is no reason to insist on their separation and distinctiveness except prejudice and fear. In this regard, *Transculture* is developed as a model of cultural development that liberates humans from the material dependencies that they receive as members of a certain group or ethnos, and challenges the vision of “clash of civilizations”. It is considered the next level of liberation as it provides freedom from “one’s own culture” as well as “the prison house of language” (Epstein322).

### **2.5. *Transculture Fiction: An Alternative Discourse of Being Beyond Otherness***

In recent years, the term “transcultural” has arguably been one of the most significant and extensively discussed conceptual keywords in social sciences humanities. The theoretical concept of transculturality was initially introduced in Latin America during the late 1940’s, when Fernando Ortiz introduced the term transculturation. Ortiz defined transculturation as the process of cultural influences and fusions between colonizing and cultures of the periphery which may be asymmetrical at times.

In an age of global mobility and ever-increasing interconnectedness, it appears that notions such as national political fixed borders and cultural edges are on the verge of becoming smudged. Identities and societies, as Frank Schulze-Engler suggests that cultures are more fluid, less homogeneous, and less territorially fixed than previously assumed, resembling loosely bound streams of meanings and practices. For this reason, contemporary scholars active in the field of the humanities are interested in studying the state of twenty first century’s culture and society under the lens of *Transculture* perspective. In Contemporary Literature, the new generation of writers, who experienced cultural dislocation, whether as a personal choice or forced by different life circumstances to cross the national borders of their countries are named as “culturally mobile writers” or “Transcultural writers”. These

writers, as Professor Arianna Daningo maintains; in her book *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility*, published in 2015:

Live abroad and experienced transnationalism; they develop multilingualism that they become fluent in many languages, physically immerse oneself in several countries, expose themselves to diversity, and foster numerous, flexible identities. As they physically travel across the world and see many cultures, they find themselves less and less ensnared in conventional migrant/exile mindset and more likely to seize that chances and independence that variety and mobility provide them. (3)

In this regard, it seems that within the Transculture framework, when one culture crosses borders turn free of its oppressive mechanisms, and it becomes no longer sufficient in itself, i.e. “all cultures look decentered in relation to all Other cultures, including one's own.” (qtd. In Dagnino2). Using Schulze-Engler and Pettersson as a reference, the definition of transcultural fiction is as follows: “a work that contributes to feeding the need for a wider global literary perspective by transcending the borders of a single culture in its choice of topic, vision, and scope.

As a discipline, Transculture is considered a branch of *Culturology*, a comparative analysis that studies culture, as Bakhtin puts it, as “an organic unity [.....] and is capable of transcending itself, that is exceeding its own boundaries” (135). Taking the Russian formalists’ Viktor Shcklovsky’s notion of *defamiliarization* or *estrangement* as a basis for constructing the transcultural thought, contemporary scholars contend that as art defemailiarizes itself in making the familiar as unfamiliar, to intensify and deepen the process of perception because perception is an aesthetic end in itself, Cultorology looks for the *culturality* of culture. In this regard, Ellen Berry and Mikhail Epstein argue that:

Culture studies de-autmatizes our understanding of art and culture overall by revealing their artificial structures and odds and enabling us to go beyond their automatism, if art, as part of culture deautomatizes our perception of things. Cultural studies separate and

alienate us from our upbringing and culture in order to enable us to express our identities freely. When culture is seen in this transcendental light, it may be critiqued as a whole, rather than as a collection of discrete subfields. Today, transcultural theory and practice are being developed via field of culturology. (23)

Based on this perspective, one regards that if culturology interests in studying the culturality of culture or its self-awareness, the transcultural thought and practices interest in studying the transformation of culture. It is, in this regard, considered as a set of theories that liberate culture from its repressive and oppressive mechanisms.

the process of transcendence, as researchers notice, begins in culture per se, when it frees individuals from the symbolic dependences to a given culture and ethnicity and or social and erotic factors. By reversing their inherent traits into cultural dimension, individuals reproduce their identities and social status. For this reason, several cultural forms including literature, cinema, writing are still hold natural and ethnic labels like white and black, male and female, Russian, African and American that still connect culture to geographical regions and physical conditions. According to Epstein “every culture has its peculiarities, manias, paranoias, ideological presumptions and limitations, methods of instruction, informational filters. etc” (25). By surpassing these natural limits of culture, transcultural process will open access towards the next level of human liberation, and this time by liberating them from the symbolic dependencies, ideological addictions, ...etc that belong them or attach them to a particular cultural group. Thus, once culture is capable of transcending its limits and boundaries, it opens possibility for transculture.

In this perspective, transculture is characterized as "an open scheme of symbolic alterations to existing cultures and their recognized systems of signs" (Epstein 24). According to Epstein<sup>4</sup>,

---

<sup>4</sup> **Mikhail Epstein:** is Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Cultural Theory and Russian Literature at Emory University (Atlanta). Born in Moscow, he relocated to the United States in 1990. His research interests include the history of Russian literature and philosophy, postmodernism, semiotics and linguistics, as well as new methodologies and

transculturalism is important in world politics today, where the factor of fixed cultural identity based on race, ethnos, religion, or ideological commitments has proven to be a source of conflict, violence and calamity, rather than peace and solidity. Although concepts such as globalism, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and culture pluralism remain strong, particularly in the United States, these models expose single cultures or groups of cultures in the big world to exhibit their pride. Yet, they “retreat once more into their sexual closet or ethnic enslavement. The *encapsulation* of every culture inside its own or the elevation of the globally homogenous culture above Others. Which of which is better? The two are worse” (329).

Globalism or Multiculturalism have determinism as a common feature in their pursuit of making a global homogenized world. Such trait based a heavily cultural dependence on gender, ethnicity, race, and the sexual Orientation of its representatives leaving no autonomy to individuals who are destined to be globalized homogenized to serve ethnic/gender identity. Under the rigid scheme of the two determinisms, i.e. American globalism (enchants mass culture) and multiculturalism (minority or ethnic culture), individuals fall in the trap of their illusion and contradictions, because both of them have ideological conflicts, in which the individual has no free will except that he “hides from one culture in the shelter of the Other” (Epstein329).

In a study entitled *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt used the concept transculturalism in postcolonial literature and referred to as “contact zones”<sup>5</sup> phenomenon, wherein she argues that “social spaces where disparate cultures meet [...] often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and

---

interdisciplinary approaches to the humanities. He has written 18 books and over 500 essays and articles, which have been translated into 14 other languages. His publications include *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture* (1995), *Transcultural Experiments: Russian and American Models of Creative Communication* (with E. Berry, 1999), *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture* (with A. Genis and S. Vladiv-Glover, 1999), and *Cries in the New Wilderness: From the Files of the Moscow Institute of Atheism* (2002), and *Mapping Blank Spaces: The Future of the Humanities* (Russian 2004).

<sup>5</sup> **Contact Zone:** When hybridity is the subject of literary discussion, Homi Bhabha is quickly cited. He employs the terms 'third space' and 'in-between space' to characterize the cultural overlap in a contact zone. This cultural encounter produces cultural hybridity, which results in "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone" (Ashcroft et al 118). According to Homi Bhabha and Pratt, these forms are typically produced by the dominant culture (that of the Self). Bhabha contends that these new forms emerge as a counter-discourse to the prevailing and hegemonic frameworks of the Self. However, Anne Ronning hypothesized that in these 'contact zones' cultures meet, although not always in binary relationships.

subordination.” (03). Although Pratt’s analysis intended to show how modes of representation from the centers is assimilated and then transformed in a creative manner by the peripheries, the relationship that governs such an operation is dichotomous and confined between colonizer and colonized cultures. In this regard, the critic Anne Holden Rønning claims that she agrees with what Pratt suggested that in these ‘contact zones’ cultures meet, but not necessarily in relationships which are binary based, since the very core of transculturation is the ability to move freely from one cultural stance to another and back again” (5). It seems that Pratt’s transcultural notion of contact zones is similar to the hybridization notion of Homi Bhabha that emerged with the homogenized discourse of multiculturalism and globalism.

As a new model of cultural development, Transculture is regarded as an alternative to isolating polarized discourse of Orientalism, leveling globalism, as well as the isolating pluralism result of multiculturalism. In his view, Epstein claims that one of the declared liberties to be undeniable rights of the person, there appears the independence from one’s own culture, where one was raised and schooled. This freedom is perhaps the most valuable despite its being the most overlooked up to this point. (339)

Multiculturalism in its assumption claims people to have political rights to choose the geographical space where should they live, yet, it trapped many of those who crossed borders to find themselves either prisoners of their own traditions and culture or obliged to assimilate the new culture of the host country to become its prisoners, turning by that their backs to their own culture. However, transculture as new alternative model is regarded as a new realm of development, in which it transcends the borders of established cultures as (ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender...etc). In his view, Epstein asserts that *Transculturation* occurs when individuals navigate their own cultural boundaries and crossroads with Other cultures through their own cultural wanderings and transgressions.

In order to understand the process of transculture, one should refer to Bakhtin’s concepts developed in culturology as “outsideness,” “being beyond,” or “exotopy”. The transculture process means the

individual should locate himself outside the culture to understand it. This also means that one can accurately understand a particular culture once he distances himself from it, i.e. by transcending it or going beyond its boundaries. In his view, Bakhtin asserts that foreign culture's full and profound expression is only fully and profoundly revealed in the eyes of another culture. This can be applicable to white and black cultures, wherein the true essence of the white or Western culture cannot profoundly be perceived only through the black eyes.

By considering transculture "the site of interaction among all existing and potential cultures," an increasing number of people find themselves feeling outside the ethnic, racial, sexual, ideological, and other constraints imposed by the culture in which they were born. According to Epstein, the transcultural space permits any individual to break free from the constraints imposed by a particular culture; thus, he becomes independent of his home primary culture. Epstein also defines transculturation as "the process of self-distancing, self-estrangement, and self-criticism of one's own cultural identities and assumptions" (10). He also describes it as "the freedom of every person to live on the border of one's 'inborn' culture or beyond it". This means that Transculture as a theory intends to surpass the binary opposition of the superior and inferior, colonizer versus colonized cultures the foundation stone of the postcolonial thought and studies. This conception is supported by Welsch's view that categorizing today's cultures as islands or spheres is factually wrong and normatively misleading. Cultures no longer have the implied form of uniformity and distinctness. They have instead taken on a new shape, which can be described as transcultural because it crosses traditional cultural barriers. Today's cultural settings are essentially defined by mixtures and permeations.

In view of the contemporary inconsistencies and cultural changes, it appears that any barrier whether geographical, ethnic, national, religious or cultural is now considered outdated and has no longer the same effect as before. In short, Transculture intends to shift the focus from collective cultural identity into implementing individual awareness about culture. Any individual is capable to select from the existing culture what suits them based on context and circumstances; hence "it offers a universal

symbolic palette on which an individual can blend colors to produce an expressive self-portrait” (). In order to attain the transcultural dimension, the individual should be physically and imaginarily deterritorialized. Such perspective is plainly explained by Nick Couldry, in his book *Inside Culture. Re-Imagining the Method of Cultural Studies* published in 2000, when he described Transcultural approach to the self as an open ended process. In this regard, he claims that: what is missing Post-structuralist statements of the death of the subject lack an understanding of the active, reflective self. Few would now argue that the self is a simple 'thing' rather than an open-ended process; one of the major aspects in that process is reflexivity, which involves thinking back on our past and the conditions that have led us to be who we are. (119)

As per Schulze-Engler, the main focus no longer lies in the problem of how cultures shape social groups and their perceptions, but in the question of what individuals and groups do with culture in an increasingly globalized world. In the emerging global complexities of interwoven mutual groups and transnational people, the central issues subjects and agents are no longer cultures but individuals.

Transculture in this regard is considered as a new mode of existence, wherein an individual should experience such a physical, imaginarily deterritorialization, spatial and cultural displacement and linguistic dis/appropriation. Epstein labeled this sort of a process as “Creative Transpatriation” and it calls for a kind of physical and emotional detachment from one’s motherland or his own culture, territory and roots as well as a national disalignment from one’s nation/ethnic collective fatherland, as Welsh puts it. Yet this detachment signifies a critical distance rather than the opposite, because in an increasingly globalized world there is less need to coincide cultural identity with the national identity of the individual.

One of the oldest presumptions is that the person’s country or rank must dictate how they are culturally shaped. It is both ridiculous and dangerous to simply that someone who has an Indian or German passport must also be clearly and culturally Indian and German, and that if this isn’t the case, he’s some person without a

homeland or a traitor to his mOtherland. Anywhere that a person is shaped by disparate cultural interest, connecting these transcultural elements with one another becomes a particular identity-forming effort. An increasing amount of identity work involves integrating elements from different cultural origins. And ultimately, the only thing that can ensure our identity and competency is our capacity to bridge cultural boundaries. (Welsch199)

One assumes that the contact zone of different cultures is a possible road to transculturality. In this respect, transculture is acquired in the interaction between cultures when we undergo a perilous experience of transegressing and speculating culture.

Yet, the passage to transculturality is still viewed as a rare phenomenon even in 21<sup>st</sup> century, wherein only few people have succeeded in living such an experience. Most of people when they cross the boundaries of their culture, they turn either prisoners to their mOther language and tradition, or they turn their backs to their own culture to become prisoners to host country culture. In this process, only few who succeed in integrating two or more than two cultures and are at the same time able to keep a space of freedom from any of them. Imaginative or creative writers are among the few people who succeed in living such a transcultural development. As progressive representatives of mobile global middle class, those creative writers appear as privileged individuals able to get benefit from their socioeconomic background as well as their good level of education.

According to Daningo, imaginative writers “whose transcultural Orientations may and indeed do become more manifest due to their self-reflexive attitudes, their ability to articulate the process of transformation they undergo, their willingness to conceptualize it, put it into words and share it with their fellow human beings through a plethora of fictionalized characters and storylines” (8). Unlike interculturalism, that considered each culture as entity in itself, and individuals as dependents to such an entity. Consequently, it failed to see that in a rapid globalized world, cultures become much more intermingled, and individuals their cultural identities by drawing on different cultures. This means that

transculturality is the ability to negotiate different cultures based on the individual own capacity and their experiential background. This transcultural transformation process occurs at an individual level, yet it has a collective resonance. In this regard, Epstein compares it to Borges' Louis epic "Aleph".

In Borges' "Aleph," the universe's brightest point is depicted as all times place and spaces coexist without being overshadowed. Aleph may seem like a fiction shaped by physical reality, but culture is a symbolic reality with infinite meanings. Transculture can be envisaged through Aleph of the entire cultural world. (qtd. In Slobodanka 9)

In comparing the transcultural dimension to Borges symbolic world, Epstein, therefore, regards the transculture as "a continuum"; a new possible way of living, a place where all cultures can actively meet and thrive. According to Daningo,

An interpretation of Epstein's transcultural continuum could be an all encompassing space of subjective awareness and cultural promises that acknowledges the formative significance of naïve/national cultures and to some extent the worldviews that go along with them, while also permitting an openness to acceptance, integration, inclusion, negotiation, and permeation of Other cultures, languages, and worldviews (4).

This means that transculturalism is considered as a new form of humanism that intends to go beyond the chauvinistic frame of nationalism.

In his view, Lamberto Tassinari argues that transculturalism can be conceptualized and envisioned as an emerging form of humanism, predicated on the notion of renouncing the entrenched traditional identities and cultures that were frequently the result of imperialistic empires and ingrained religious dogma (12). Thus, transculture opens a way to come to terms with ourselves, to profoundly analyse ourselves in our societies or out of them. It opens a way to negotiate a new way of living amidst difference. For Welsh.

An antipathy directed towards immigrants is conceptualized through a psychoanalytic

view as a form of self hatred that is essentially projected. Individuals may experience a visceral objection to aspects of strangers that they themselves repress and overtly struggle with. The ability to address external transculturality will only be possible when we cease ignoring our interior transculturality and instead acknowledge. (201)

Yet the questions that should be posed who are the transcultural writers? And what are the main tenets of transculture writers that distinguish them from Other writers? In which way their transcultural experience affected their creative art works?

Transcultural writers, such as Amine Maalouf, Alberto Mongel, Alija Trjanov, Arondati Ry, Micheal Odaatje, Jumpa Lahiri, .... etc, have attained their transcultural identity once they embraced transculture as a way of being and developed a global perspective. They are named "Creative Transpatriation writers"; a process of combining defamiliarization from one's culture of the origins to emphasise their physical and imaginary crossing of borders (moving beyond one's culture as it mentioned before) but they triumphed over any possible way of identity formation which rely heavily on ethnic, national, cultural affiliations.

In investigating Transcultural fiction, it seems that transpatriation is more than a writing style in a literary genre. Instead, it is the cultural attitude of transcultural writers, and it plays a primordial role both in writing their texts and studying transcultural fiction. The transpatriation experienced by transcultural writers created a specific attitude that effectively produced a particular literary output which crossed culture, constructing by that a dialogue across cultures. According to Couldry, "Each person carries an individual history of reflection which cannot be reduced to shared cultural patterns." This history, which is both accidental and structured, is the record of that person's perceiving, absorbing, interacting, reflecting, retelling, reflecting again, and so on. This specific 'structure' is what we understand by 'experience' (51).

In doing so, they intend to change an entire mindset and to create new outlooks. this could never be reached without the interaction between the transcultural writers and their globalizing readers. This

means that both texts and their writers have a strong effect on altering the cultural system. Said maintains that, the true intellectual is a secular individual positioned within a society whose ethics is determined by factors such as context in which it takes place, the interests it evidences, the extent to which it aligns with a consistent and universalistic ethic, the way in which it differentiates between justice and power, and the revelation of one's priorities and choices (Representations 120). Additionally, he points out that he refutes that authors are determined by ideology, class, or economic history in a mechanical way; rather he believes that writers are to a great extent part of their societies' histories, shaping and being shaped by both in varying degrees. Cultural and their corresponding aesthetic origins are derived from historical experiences. Therefore, transculture is much more than a theory but a mode of inquiry that relies on a set of critical tools and conceptual framework adopted from comparative cultural studies.

Comparative literary studies play a primordial role in shaping transcultural approach as they rely on interference and translation. By comparing comparative literature and transcultural studies, researchers can avoid focusing solely on national literature when analyzing cultural dynamics and literature in contemporary mobile societies. In this regard, Marcel Pope suggests that comparing and combining cultures help in finding medium ground between Western and Eastern, Southern and Northern cultures as well as the dominating and dominated worldviews and Western, Northern and Southern, dominant and peripheral worldviews. As Kundera puts it, relying heavily on national literature means trapped once more in national paradigms.

In short, the central principles of transculturalism foster a non essentialized approach to culture. Cultures are not absolute, fixed, separate autonomous entities based mainly on ethnicities; rather, they are increasingly confluent in one another. There is a kind of permeation and ongoing dialogue between them. Transculture literature and writers focus on human agency, the individual freedom of the cultural choice; it is an approach that rejects rigid, contained cultural, ethnic, and national stances, while acknowledging the significance of individual's primary roots.


## 2.6. Conclusion

After having theorized representation from Orientalism to Transculturalism, it appears that question of representation resemble a crisis in postcolonial discourse as it is connected the biased discourses of Orientalism and colonialism that are based on binary opposition; wherein East appears as silent static entity vis a-vis a civilized advanced West. The analysis reveals that Orientalism as defined by Said is an outstanding theory to understand the past relations between the Orient and the Occident that created the present disparity. The term was first used as an artistic mode rather than a way of representation, Europeans used it to describe worlds and cultures they had never come across before. Since that time, the Orient has been a mythical, silent world, and it had been labeled the “Other”. In order to dig within the imperial tradition of representing the Orient, Said embraced Michel Foucault’s concept of discourse, that constructed upon Power/Knowledge, as a methodology for his research. Foucault’s theory has demonstrated that their discourse breeds hegemony and aims at subordination. His study also shows that the colonialist used culture to implant certain thoughts in the minds of the Orientals, in a way that allows them perceive his invasion as legitimate.

Liberating the East from colonial dependencies requires a change in the way of thinking, or as Ngugi Wa’ Thiongo puts it “Decolonizing the Minds”, challenging the dominant ways Orientals follow in viewing and identifying themselves, as well as the ways Orientalists used to represent them.

The diagnosis of the misrepresentations also demonstrates that the Orient was also feminized in European representation; it is portrayed as irrational feminine, silent and sexually attractive. Whereas, the West appeared rationally masculine and dominant. The image of the silent and powerless woman is another proof of “Othering” the East to speak for it. In order to bypass of the misrepresentation of the Oriental Other and defy East/West dichotomy, the Oriental Other should be empowered, the mindset should be altered, and Orientals should have their authentic voice speak for and represent themselves. Hence, they could be able to end their single story.

In order to end the single story of misrepresentation and centuries of silence constructed by Orientalism and the hegemonic colonial discourse, *Transculture* is paradigm of cultural development development that frees humans from the material dependences that that come out of belonging to a particular cultural group or ethnicity, and challenges the idea of “clash of civilizations”. It is an alternative to isolating polarized discourse of Orientalism, leveling globalism, as well as the isolating pluralism result of multiculturalism. It is the site of interaction among the existing culture, wherein individuals feel free of the restrictions imposed by a single culture by setting their differences as ground for similarity, tolerance and coexistence.



---

**Chapter Three:**  
**Speaking Maps, Speaking the Imperial Past:**  
**Reinventing the Cartography of the World and**  
**Bridging the Mezzateera in Ahdef Souief *The***  
***Map of Love* (2000)**

“So geographers, in Africa maps,  
With Savage pictures fill their gaps  
And o’er unhabitable downs  
Place elephants for want of towns”  
Jonathan Swift (qtd. In March Zoe 56)

### 3.1. Introduction

Maps had certainly been instrumental in shaping world’s history, and spreading colonization and domination. Whether in visual or ideological perspective, when we refer to the history of maps, we discern that they are more than just a simple depiction on paper of the earth’s surface. Therefore, writing or drawing a map implies having the ability of suppling powers and offering meanings to visual element. In her historically dense novel *The Map of Love* (1999), the British Egyptian born novelist Ahdaf Souief highlights the history of Egypt in the last one hundred years through mirroring intercultural love stories. Ahdef Souief seeks to call into question the inevitability of Western colonization of Egypt by re-examining and juxtaposing it with the current dominant force of neocolonization in the post-independance period, which has appeared in implementing structural hierarchies between civilized *West* and the static *East*. The novel underscores the tactic used to establish and maintain colonial /neocolonial authority in Egypt, using the same strategies, particularly the imposition of force, poverty, inequality, sectarianism propagation, and education control. As the novel progresses, Egyptians face the same obstacles and issues that existed during the British occupation.

By reading Souief’s *The Map of Love* as a transcultural novel that intends to represent the 'voice of love' that substitutes the 'voice of conflicts' in an attempt to bridge the world’s discontent through mutual dialogue between East and West, the chapter focuses on how Ahdaf Souief constructs a transcultural encounter, weaving a network of the personal and political,

by straddling two historical periods, namely the late nineteenth-early twentieth century period of British colonial intervention in Egypt and the pre-millennial period of globalization.

In using *Travel writing* as a strategy, Ahdaf Souief weaves a postcolonial perspective on history to be able to write a revisionist contrapuntal narrative to the history of Egypt. By drawing parallels between two romances which take place in disparate eras: Anna Winterbourne and Sharif El Baroudi that transcends the colonial past to meet Isabel Parkman and Omar El Ghamraoui's contemporary story which is set in United States and Egypt in 1997. In so doing, Souief creates a contact zone wherein the fusion of diverse cultural, historical and religious backgrounds open possible routes for dialogue between different characters: Arabs, British and Americans allowing coexistence between the self and the Other.

Moreover, the woven love stories between the protagonists of the novel are not a mere romantic stories, rather they are on the one hand employed as a mechanism of unity and solidarity to break the inevitability of colonization and deconstruct East /West binary oppositions. On the Other hand, by uniting humanity through conscience and putting past and present differences as ground for similarity, a *mezzaterra* state of understanding would be created connecting the past with present, the private with the political and romance with history, paving the way for hope or " Nur Elhayt ", the name that Anna Winterbourne has given to her daughter, as a common ground for all humanity.

### **3.2. The Beginning of the End: Exploring the Colonial Past and Interpreting the Present**

The epic novel under examination is 2000 Booker Prize winner. *The Map of Love* is translated into Arabic by the writer's mOther Dr. Fatima Mousa, after it was first written and published in English language by the Anglo-Arab writer Ahdaf Souief, who was born in Cairo in (1950- ).

Souief's novel *The Map of Love* tells colonizers and colonized untold story during British empire in Egypt, as well as their capacity to overcome language, cultural, and religious barriers. The novel is a beautifully crafted and enunciated aesthetic formula that depicts the overlapping stories of three ladies: Amal El-Ghamraoui from Egypt, Isabel Parkman from USA, and the British lady Anna Winterbourne. The latter lives a century earlier than the former ones. Each of the three female characters comes from a different part of the world, and fatefully discovered that they have blood kinship attached to the genealogy of the Egyptian Family *Al- Baroudi*. Furthermore, within the same work, Souief connects between two intercultural love stories set in separate ages, which she constructs as a double. The first is Anna Winterbourne and Sharif Al-Baroudi's love story, which is set in England and colonial Egypt after the Omdurman War (1898) and lasts until 1913, whereas the second is the postmodern love story of Isabel Parkman and Omar El Ghamrawi that begins in modern-day Egypt and the United States in 1997.

Souief collects the diary entries and letters of the British lady Anna Winterbourne together with the testimony of Layla al-Baroudi (al-Ghamrawi) in the beginning of the twentieth century England and colonized Egypt, as well as Amal al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman at the end of the twentieth century in the United States and Egypt. This cross-century story which spans several generations and people from various cultural backgrounds, presents historical evidences portrayed via a hegemonic European discourse of Orientalism.

*In the Map of Love*, Souief narrates the story of a freshly widowed English lady named Anna Winterbourne journeying to Egypt in 1900. The bold Anna follows her curiosity about Egyptian culture after seeing a striking painted canvas at the museum in London.

After she encountered the imagined East in texts, Anna made her decision of visiting Egypt, which was at that time under the British occupation. In her way to Sinai with her Arab manservant Sabir to see the pyramids, Anna disguises in European man outfits; but is accidentally kidnapped by a group of

Arab extremists on the road. While being a hostage in the house of an Egyptian Pasha, Anna meets the wife of the imprisoned activist Layla Al-Baroudi. The latter becomes her friend and introduces her to her brother and attorney Sharif Pasha El Baroudi. Sharif falls in love with Anna and marries her to become Anna haram Sharif Pasha El-Baroudi. After the assassination of her husband Sharif, Anna Winterbourne takes her newly born daughter Nour El Hayat and heads back to England, as she promised him; hence the contact between the two families stopped.

According to Souief, a story might begin with the weirdest of things: A magical lantern, an overheard discussion, and a shadow on a wall. The narrative began with a trunk, according to Amal al-Ghamrawi. An antique brown leather trunk that was cracked and dry, with a vaulted top over which two straps fastened with brass buckles blackened by age and neglect (15). In Moore's words, "texts duplicate texts, in the Map of Love, and characters replicate characters; texts also travel, not only characters" (153). Through the eyes of Ahmed's daughter, Amal Al-Ghamrawwi, while reading an ancient trunk full of diaries and letters, some in English and some in Arabic, all belonging to the long-deceased Anna, the story begins. The novel opens in 1997, when Anna's granddaughter, Isabel Parkman, a young American woman, who has recently divorced, finds the inherited trunk in the house of her late mother. Isabel discusses the subject with her beloved Omar Al-Ghamrawi, an old Egyptian artist residing in New York. To ensure a better understanding of the mystery of the trunk, Omar refers her to his sister Amal, an Egyptian translator.

Anna's trunk contains pieces from Al Ahram, Al-Liwa, The Times, and The Daily News newspapers, calligraphy books, letters, diaries, a three-piece tapestry with a pharaonic image and Arabic inscription, and Qur'an verses. "It is He who brings forth the dead" (491) and that "from the dead come the living" (516). This tapestry is woven by Anna and depicts Egypt's Pharaonic history and the Islamic heritage. Anna's tapestry becomes a contrapuntal reading of colonial history and a transcultural space that depicts the coexistence between the East and The West cultures.

In addition to Anna's letters and diaries, the trunk includes the testament that was written in Amal's grandmother hand-writing (Leila El Baroudi), telling the story of her brother Sharif who falls in love with an English woman, what drives her to realize the unexpected blood kinship. Amal classifies the papers by type and size of paper and colour of ink, and she turned out addicted to reading the story of her father's uncle Sharif El Baroudi and his beloved Anna. "Amal reads and reads deep into the night. She reads and lets Anna's words flow into her, probing gently at dreams and hopes and sorrows she had sorted out, labelled and put away" (14). Yet she is distracted by President Mubarak's regime, who has taken off her family lands.

Isabel gets attached to Omar, the Egyptian life, culture and political problems. After developing a romantic relationship with Isabel, Omar learns that in 1961 he was in love with her mother, what ignites Isabel's suspicion believing that she might be his daughter. Isabel chooses to name the boy she gives birth to "Sharif" and she travels to Egypt with him. Along with Amel, Isabel and her son are waiting for Omar to eventually return to Egypt.

In this intensely historical, political and romantic novel, Souief begins with the geneology of the family and firmly connects it to the past of Egypt, as an important indicator to comprehend the narrative events as well as the dual role Amal plays as the novel's narrator and translator of Anna's diary and Leila El Ghamraoui testimony. The novel incorporated the voice of the Englishwoman Anna Winterbourne, wife of Sharif Basha al-Baroudi, in addition to the contemporary voice of Amal. Since Anna's story is regarded as a contrapuntal text – a rereading of the colonial history to deconstruct the hegemonic discourse- one assumes that Anna's narrative gives a positive impetus for the historical intersection in the novel.

The novel begins with chapters titled: "A Beginning", "An End of a Beginning", "A Beginning of an End" and "An End", respectively. According to John Erickson in his book *Islam and Postcolonial Narrative*, "Every beginning has its roots elsewhere" (qtd in Ciricir,103). Thus, the word beginning

could be read as a metaphor resembling the unending effect of colonialism. Uncertainty about whether the past is truly past as well as disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was are the root causes of appeals to the past which are among the most common strategies in interpreting the present (1). Actually, the present is shaped and informed by the past, and it is crucial to remember that neither can exist in isolation from the Other. For Said, the effects of European imperialism are still foreshadowing the contemporary history, for the past is never enclosed in itself, but it recurs itself in the present actualities of people and their memories. Likewise, Souief opens her novel with the family map, showing that contemporary members of the same family carrying the names and the fates of their ancestors. According to Ayşe Ciricir, “nasab/genealogy is considered a form of history writing in the Arab East” (104). Focusing on genealogy, therefore, demonstrates that the effect of the colonial past is impossible to be surpassed, but it needs recognition, revision and understanding in postcolonial time. For this reason, Souief opens “The beginning”, the first chapter of the novel, with Agathon’s quote “even God cannot change the past” (3). Similarly, and after reading Anna’s diary, Amal finds herself immersed in Anna’s story as if it speaks of her; hence, she claims, “why should I expect the story to end? this trunk has tracked me down over a century and continent.” (97).

Souief’s novel travels over two different times the past and present, wherein Souief rereads the British colonialism of Egypt and juxtaposes to the present. According to Malak Susan the novel is considered as masterpiece of revisionist meta-history of Egypt in the twentieth century” (Malak128). In order to undermine the disparity between the center and the periphery, Souief opens a postcolonial debate by overlapping the experience of Westerners and Orientals and whom mainly belong to two different periods of time and cultures. In so doing, Souief creates an interconnected contrapuntal narrative of multiple voices, dialogues, genres and memories, straddling cultural, historical and geographical borders, wherein *The Map of Love* becomes their contact zone.

*The Map of Love* grows into what Said characterizes as “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" (Said 22). One understands that the contrapuntality of the novel plays on the one hand a significant informative role that helps in understanding the history. On the Other hand, it is how Soueif intends to reconstruct and rewrite history through contrapuntal reading in order to dismantle the Western power as the only historical agent that could speak for and represent the Orient. In this regard, Boccardi shows that "Said's emphasis on the discursive aspect of Orientalism, whose textual production makes up a substantial portion of the imperial archive, makes this work particularly reverberating with the political narrative project of *The Map of Love*" (Boccardi 107). Soueif's *Map of Love*, viewed as an archive to resist British colonization of Egypt, seeks to disrupt/contrapunt the existing colonial history by "destabilizing the homogeneity of the archive" (qtd. In Ciricir139). The novel narrates and transmits Egypt's history, with Soueif densely describing colonized Egypt mentioning Urabi Revolt in 1882, Omdurman War in 1898, Mahdist Revolt in Sudan in 1891 to reach Al-Nahda Movement in Egypt, using personal female narratives such as letters, diaries, and testimonies as a powerful historical archive.

In *Inspired* by Anna's diary, Amal finds herself motivated to examine a significant critical period in Egyptian history, mostly from 1900 to 1911. Amal's kaleidoscopic vision for interpreting the past is first nourished by reading Anna's journal and subsequently by researching books and articles. In the same way Anna weaves her tapestry, the novel weaves history wherein both past and present are represented in a complex narrative. Amal draws parallels between Egyptians' lives 100 years ago and 1997. Soueif seeks to illustrate Egypt's painful history both under colonialism and after independence by juxtaposing the past and the present, which Anna finds intriguing: "How much is our life governed by the lives and past actions of Others?" (466). In short, Soueif's love story exemplified the hardship that independent Egypt endured. Suzan Derraj accordingly describes the novel as "a truly postcolonial novel as it rewrites, revises, and re-assesses colonization time in the Middle East" (12). Thus, it talks of Western aspirations to subjugate Egypt as a critique of all forms of colonization.

Despite knowing the ending of Anna's love story, Amal is intrigued by the voyage to the past, which echoes in her current history. In a same spirit, it appears that Soueif is interested in reviewing Egyptian history because "we always know how the story ends". "We don't know what occurs along the way" (74). An epigraph from the charter of 1962 opens the narrative, to introduce the historical scope of the novel, and to show how Orientals resisted the British imperial from the beginning. Thus, Egypt ceased to be the silent supine and homogeneous Orient. Traveling the past, focusing on Egypt between 1900-1911 and then mediates it with the present time 1997, is what allows Amal to understand the social and political complex status of Egypt as she says. "I admit that I find dealing with the events of a century ago easier than dealing with the circumstances we are in today, but I do not think I am in a time wrap" (218). Anna narrates how one British said that "imperialism; colonialism is embedded here, is the spirit of the age" (27). In using the present tense instead of the past tense to speak about colonialism, Soueif indicates that the colonizer still has the upper hand in Egypt. In this regard, Soueif contends in an interview:

I assumed that we had arrived at a truly postcolonial historical moment: a free environment in which the ideology, emotions, and philosophy basis of injustice had been rejected by the Westerners, our former colonial masters. Colonialism appeared to be terribly unacceptable in the 1960s, alongside racial discrimination, female servitude, and homosexual bashing. And now we recognize that this notion of newly revealed equivalence was not well-founded. (I Have Always Looked)

According to Edward Said, opposition against the Empire always triumphs, but the post-colonial subject finds it difficult to carry the project forward. Presumably, the writer attempts to disclose one significant hidden fact about the colonizer's impact on Egyptians and their society; wherein the latter dominance is not political but mental and ideological.

In this juxtaposed narrative, *The Map of Love* fictionalizes both the Orientals struggle for independence in the past and the failure of postcolonial state to liberate the minds. Souief characters Anna, Sharif and Amal represent the harsh reality of Egyptians' life, in which they still suffer from the same problems they endured in the past, when they were under the British mandate such as poverty, inequality and illiteracy. Souief highlights the importance of the past in shadowing the present in order to show how the postcolonial state extends the hegemony and builds up anOther system of exploitation. In this respect, Lama Nusair contends that in employing historical events, the writer infers that all past events, eventhough terrible, should be treasured because they shape the present, which shapes one's future in turn. Love is a natural emotion, as the novel suggests, should not conflict but rather work toward growth and reconciliation. In this case Sharif's anthusiasim and love both for his nation and Anna, are both natural events. (187)

The liberation of the mind in the postcolonial time becomes such a more contested issue than independence itself. By highlighting the impact of the colonial past on the present, Souief is not looking for reconciliation but change or what brings difference to the contemporary life in Egypt.

Alone with the trunk, Amel embarked in her family house in Tawasi, both to mourn her late father Ahmed and to read and translate Anna's papers. The trunk includes many papers written in Arabic that Isabel could not read; for this reason, she relies on translation to make the exchange with Isabel possible. As an American journalist, Isabel is working on her project on Millennia's view in Egypt, and Amal acts as translator to help her understand both the documents of the trunk and Egypt per se. By translating some of the documents, Amal starts reading and writing history. Although the story is Anna's story rather than that of Amal; yet the latter finds herself and her past in reading Anna's words, and unwrapping the archive of her documents.

The story begins with death instead of birth. "she cannot – or will not – understand, and give up hope. She waits for him constantly" (4). After witnessing the atrocious crimes that the Empire

committed in the Omdurman War (1898), Edward, Anna's spouse, got assassinated in a silent way. He turns out a symbol of the brutality of the empire, sacrificing his own life along with the thousands lives of Sudanese dervishes in Khartoum, whose bodies are dismembered by General Kitchener's army, to repay the debt. The harsh reality of the imperial project undermines the principles that Edward once had about honour, duty, and manliness.

To demonstrate that Edward's death is a result of colonial guilt, Soueif portrays Edward's father, Sir Charles, as a strong anti-imperialist man who provides Anna with mediating knowledge, preparing her to be another sympathetic character in the story. For this reason, Hassan emphasizes that "Anna's journal and epistles swiftly turn out to be a historical record of fierce combat against the rules of the colonizer and of dynamic transformation of society" (qtd. In Ciricir 140). With Sir Charles and Anna, Soueif shows that the history replicates itself in which Oum Durman War becomes a painful memory for the contemporary Egypt and a reference to it appears several times in the novel, and this might be the reason why the novel starts with death. Soueif demonstrates to what extent history brings colonizers and colonized people together in the void of grieving. In this concern, Geoffrey Nash notes that "Arab women authors search for techniques to break into narrative, whereas some women poets have turned to grieving for departed siblings and husbands in order to establish a platform from which to speak voices" (351).

Upon reading history of the death of ancestors, Amal discerns that the end is in the beginning. In order to problematize the beginning and the end in the novel, mourning turns out to be the space that Soueif creates to unite the colonizer and the colonized through. While mourning the history of her nation and the past, Soueif shows that Amal's mourning transcends Egypt to reach another space wherein she remembers her past life and her sons left in England, after divorcing her English husband, and she longs to unite with them. Again, the past disrupts the present, in which Anna's Victorian England arouses troubling memories for Amal as a postcolonial subject; hence it problematizes her rereading of history. Thus, in this novel "The personal is the political", I quote (298), and the personal

history overlaps history of the nation. The reading of history persuades Amal to unite with *fallaheen* in Tawasi and to see the house of Sharif Basha which turned into a museum. At the same time, she starts thinking about her future and how she could unite with her sons, after a long period of paralysis and confinement in her flat.

While in Tawasi struggling for *fallaheen*, the story of Anna shifts the language of the novel into the imperial language using the voices of both the Egyptian peasants *fallaheen* and the Egyptian *efendiyya*/Western-educated, when Amal reads about Denshwai incident.

In June 1906 and near the British force camp in *Tantah*, some British officers send a letter to *Umdah*, claiming their wish to shoot some pigeons. Instead of sparing time in waiting for his reply as the law states, the officers immediately started their expedition. An old man from the village asks them to shoot far away from the villagers, but they did not consider his words, and they shoot from the nearest place. As a result, the fire starts in the storeroom of wheat of one of the *fallaheen*. The owner of the house and his wife run towards the soldiers to beat them, yet one of the officer's gun goes off and accidentally shoot the woman. The clash between the *fallaheen* and the soldiers begins, and the officers open fire on villagers. As a result, five people, including a police officer, are killed. One of the escaping officers returned to the camp and died later from sunstroke. A villager approached him in an attempt to help him, but when the soldiers noticed the villagers around the fallen body, they assumed he had been slain. As a result, the British authorities placed several locals on trial.

Following this incident, the defense, which included an Egyptian named Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyed, claimed that the locals were just reacting to the British soldiers' actions. Sharif Basha volunteers to defend *Fallaheen* in this case, but is turned down. As a result, the villagers were found guilty in this shame trial and sentenced as an example. Some were whipped, while Others were executed publicly in town. (423-230). In 1907, the prisoners get liberated but the widowed women and the orphaned kids never forget the barbarity of the coloniezer and grew up with disturbed history.

According to Said, those people “accumulating history” (qtd. In Circir148), because all what they know about history is its violent version. “The cruelty and the barbarism of the British imperial against the peasants made Anna feel ashamed and disgusted” (229). The Imperial cruelty impacted even Sharif Basha. Sharif Basha struggles for independence of the country and asks for an elected parliament and a constitution, yet he ends up assassinated, and no one knows who has killed him. The bafflement of his death persuades the reader to question the challenges of independence and postcolonial time. In this regard, El-Feky emphasizes that “This colonial cruelty is a disgrace for the civilization that the occupying British represent” (22). This incident in particular falsifies the imperialist claims of justice and civilization.

While reading this incident, Sheikh ‘Isaa recites surah el-Asr (*The Time*) in Qur’an, reminding Amal about the juxtaposition between Dinshawai incident and the bombing of Luxor temple in present time. In this incident tourists are killed at the temple bombing, as Amel informed by Khadra (daughter of Abu-El Maati one of the fallaheen) .

Fifty or a hundred, we don’t know. At the temple.

And there was a battle and shooting and now the government has turned on the people —’  
‘They took my father, they took my father —’

‘What’s our village got to do with this?’ ‘They’ve turned on the whole of the Sa id, not our village alone.

War, ya Sett Hanim, war. Seventeen men they’ve taken from our village. And what are people to do? Where can we go?’

‘Where did they take them? The police station?’ ‘The central police station, the markaz.’(383)

The police accused the peasants, and many of innocent fellaheen have been interrogated without any mercy. Paradoxically, Amel takes her British passport with her as she goes to the police station to meet the Lwa'a (the officer in charge) to request the discharge of the villagers. Indeed, while the local women who accompany Amel are denied entry into the police station due to their native status, Amel herself is permitted entry.

In Menya, many of the "ordinary fellaheen, being arrested, and Amal sees "the rope around Am' Abu el-Ma neck, the blood trickling from the corner of his mouth into the fine wrinkles of his chin "(385). Although the fallaheen are not fanatic people, the government, due to the fear and America's pressures, regarded them as Islamic terrorists, wherein "Everybody is a suspect", Abu'El Ma'ati declares (384). Hence, harsh measures are necessary to be adopted while interrogating with them. This similar incident shows that Egypt is still under the hegemonic power exercised by the West, namely America. Soueif demonstrates how history repeats itself by drawing parallels between the situation of the modern fellaheen during the attack on Luxor and the Denshawai incident. Consequently, it is made clear that the post colonial state, which is meant to defend its citizens, is the one who degrade them by carrying out American-mandated judgements at the expense of those defenseless people.

Accordingly, Dr. Ali Allaham emphasizes in his article that Soueif is cognizant of the ways in which the colonial framework is being replicated by the current Egyptian government. Moreover, the Dinshwai and Luxor cases show that collective punishment is a kind of suppression. The Egyptians are intimidated by collective punishment, which keeps them under control (15).

Education is another plight contemporary fallaheen in Tawasi are struggling with. Abu'El Ma'ati informed Amal that the only school in the town that her great-granddad had built in 1906 is closed by the government due to their suspect in the political affiliations of the volunteer teachers.

'They refer to them as terrorists ...' 'So, what exactly are they then?'

‘They’re our kids, ya Sett Hanim. Young peple are vulnerable and easily mislead.’

‘Ya Am Abu el-Ma ati, your daughter was widowed by them —’ ‘

Lives are in the hand of God. It was a battle, ya Sett Hanim, who knows who killed who?’ ‘In any case. What’s this to do with the school?’ ‘The teachers, the volunteers, they claimed to be terrorists and to be destroying the minds of our kids.’ ‘And the women’s class?’ ‘That too.’ ‘And the clinic?’ ‘Everything.’ ‘La hawl illah.’ (114)

When the fallaheen refused to give “the list” of the possible names of suspected teachers, the state closed the school. Eventhough Amal asks the help of her old friend the patriot Tarek Attya, his interference could not solve the problem, as the government emphasized that ““The unit will be reopened next week. The school can open if the teachers are approved. You’ll need a list of their names, and once they’re vetted, the school will open” (180).

Abu’El M’aati claims that the government has shuttered their clinic and even set fire to the sugar cane field, because they believe that terrorists hide there. When Amal asks the man whether those teachers are Isalmist or communist, he provides no accurate answer, and all what he says is that they speak of justice. After all, the ultimate ambition for Abu’ El M’aati is to let “the fallah tills his land and the government talks in Cairo” (Soueif 126). Since the teachers are educated and open-minded, the government claim that they are terrorists and extremist, and which is a mere lie, just to close the schools. Because knowledge is power, as Foucault puts it in his theory, the Egyptian autocratic government does not prioritize education and improvement out of fear of revolution and opposition. Instead, it continues the British colonizer’s plans and actions of keeping Egyptians ignorant in order to continue ruling over them and exploiting them in manual labor for the loWest loWest wages.

“The List” issue persuades Amal in taking her final decision of closing her appartement as soon as Anna’s story finshes, and to settle in Tawasi for “There are a plenty of things that she can do there, so many things to give, and so many things to learn and acquire. If only she could use the list to resolve

the issue, she is unable to get a list of names from fallaheen— and she is unable to reopen the school without it” (262).

Furthermore, Isabel questions why fellaheen are not revealing the names of the teachers to the government, who they believe are negatively influencing the peasants: “can’t see why the fallaheen should mind giving a list of names to the authorities. ‘They won’t acting improperly,’ she declares. ‘They’re offereing their time to staff the school’” (180). Responding to Isabel inquiry, Amal regards “collecting a list” was a typical tactic employed by colonials to enslave people, take them for war or tax them, as she tries to explain. “Centuries of lists being used to tax people, to abduct their children to dig canals or till the Khedive’s land or be exterminated in battles; centuries of mistrust, only momentarily interrupted by what the fallaheen today refer to as “pleasant time”. The time of Abd el-Nasser. She looks perplexed and I try to nudge our talk towards where it’s safer, to a ground where I feel more comfortable. Back in time. It’s not challenging” (181).

In her diary, Anna points out that nationalist thinkers like Azhari sheikh Muhammed Abdu and his teacher Djamel al-Din al-Afghani stress the value of education both for males and females. Intriguing measures nevertheless introduced to stop it by colonial rulers, particularly Lord Cromer. In his educational techniques, Cromer desires more British brains and more Egyptian working hands.

In February, Law School students went on strike to protest new requirements similar to those in basic schools. They saw these regulations — instituted by Mr Dunlop, the new Secretary of the Ministry of Education — as an affront to their dignity. The Government immediately closed down the School for a week, during which time they negotiated with the students, who returned to their classes on 3 March. On 24 March Cromer appointed Mr Dunlop Adviser to the Ministry of Education — in effect the Minister. This has been a most unpopular and provocative appointment, especially as it is in Education that the Egyptians find themselves most badly served by the British Administration. (357)

This problem is brought up by Mr. Willcocks, an apponent of the British mandate in Egypt, who claims "not much is done to instruct people to learn how to rule themselves" (92). Mr. Willcocks is well aware that the British Agency does not finance any educational programs for Egyptians. He went on to say "he did not think we planned to abandon Egypt once we had completed reforming her — or we would be working to empower individuals to make more decisions for themselves" (92). This aspect supports the British disregard of education, which was done in order to maintain Egyptians illetrate.

“The list” issue is anOther valid evidence, showing that the past is not truly past and the state’s laws do not serve the citizens. Egyptians continue to suffer from colonial practices that the Egyptian government repeatedly employs to appease oppressors such as America. In this regard, Soueif states, "Our colonial rulers could not have done it better - humiliation, torture, collective punishment. Political institutions have been systematically emasculated over the last 30 years or so" (4).

### **3.3. The Hegemonic Discourse and the Representation of the Other**

In the words of Ali Allaham, the colonial spirit permeates the present time by reinforcing the colonial power and hegemony that were once held by the West and the East (12). In this novel, the reader draws parallels with Said’s Orientalism discourse. The West/East dichotomy is based on the binary antagonism of the colonizer Self and the colonized Other. This duality is underscored in Sharif’s article "The State of Relations Between the West and the East as He Sees Them Today" (490). Contentment with the European’s own image in the East is different from the one he has of himself in his own country and among his own people, is anOther source of connection, according to Sharif Pasha. While in the East, certain aspects of the European mentality are permitted to flourish that do not find expression in his native country.

The Hegemonic discourse predetermines the attitudes of how to represent the Other, inspite of the mechanism that used to convey the stereotypical representations. In the beginning of the novel, Anna writes in her diary that Edward involved in the brutal massacre in Um Durman out of his believing in

Orientalists' constructed discourse over the Eastern monster "Other" represented in "the fanatical dervishes" in Sudan. The hegemonic discourse makes Edward unable to see that the Other in Sudan is fighting for their justice and freedom which are common human rights. Thus, the false representations of justice as injustice and the stereotypical representation of the Other as fanatical dervishes is what pushed British soldiers to fight them in Umderman. In similar vein, the colonial hegemonic discourse refers to Egyptian natives as peasants and fanatical Islamist or the Other in order to put control over them. In postcolonial era, the Egyptian government repeats the same discourse of binary opposition, by referring to the natives in Tawasi as "*fellaheen*" and terrorists. Thus, the word *fallaheen* used by the Egyptian government is closely related to the history of colonization, as it already appears in colonial discourse. They are classified as non citizens, what legitimizes using force against them to degrade their power. Meanwhile the military forces conflate *fallaheen* with terrorist to kill them . the officer informs Amel that "Everybody is a suspect"(384).

Significantly, just after the bombing of the temple in Luxor and the arbitrary detention of *fallaheen* in Tawasi, Amal went to the police station to see Am Abu El Maati and talk to the officer about the arrested *fallaheen*. Upon her arrival at the police station, the soldier prevented the two native women accompanying her and pushes them back, saying " No natives". Amal shockingly replied . 'Natives? These people are your people.' 'Impossible,' the soldier says. 'I'll be shot" (383). One assumes that the *fallaheen* are prevented from entering the police station due to their inferior class as peasants, whereas Amal who belongs to the educated upper class citizens is allowed to see the officer. Although the government is very sure that there is no link between Terrorists and the *fallaheen* in Tawasi and Saa'ied in general, the government regarded them as the Other, what legitimizes their detention and torture.

Interestingly, the government does not target the peasants only, but their lands and crops get burned, and the schools of their children closed too. Besides, Volunteer teachers who help the *fallaheen*'s children in receiving education are also labeled as terrorists, because they spread

knowledge about justice and asks for their humanity. In Juxtaposing the peasants search for justice with the natives in Umm Durman who fought the British colonizer for their own justice, Souief regards that the postcolonial dominant discourse in Egypt draws inspiration from the colonial discourse in a way that recalls Orientalists representations of the Other.

The conflict between peasants and the government is a conflict of interests. By inscribing violence against the peasants and considering them as terrorists, the government is able to mask the real problem at the heart of the conflict which is related the unjust land laws and taxes the government wanted to impose on the peasants undemocratically. In this regard, Deena 'Ulama, one of the intellectuals and the old friend of Amal, declares to Isabel that "Too many powerful people have links to the West now. Money links. Big business.' 'The interests of the governing class are different — are practically opposed to the interests of the majority of the people'" (206). One understands that the Egyptian government is supported by its business men, what increases the antagonism between the peasants and the government. The fallaheen view that partnership with the Israeli, for instance, a real threat to their life, because the partnership will take their lands away, hence they will lose their jobs. For this reason, the government intends to silence them by considering them terrorists to legitimize violence against them both nationally and internationally.

### **3.3.1. Arts and the Perception of the Other**

Arts play a primordial role in shaping both the way of representing and perceiving the Other. Before starting her journey to Egypt, Anna perceives Egypt and the Oriental Other through Orientalists tales and the writing of Mr. Boyle and Lord Cromer's writings as well as the painting she saw in London museum. In the beginning of the novel, Anna writes in her diary about the son of John Evlying who is sent "up the Nile to study Arabic, acquire habits of observation and self-reliance and save them in his diary and not to imbibe Jingo ethics'. If that is not too bad of a wish — I hope I were that son" (21).

Upon her arrival at Alexandria, Anna stays at Shepherd Hotel. Her travel experience starts with visiting many places and landmarks, yet she keeps on viewing Egyptians through the same Orientalist lens. The exoticizing representation of the East, and Egypt in particular, in the paintings, books, and British travelogues that Anna read help in determining her reaction towards the Other. In her visit both to the bazaar and Zeinab hanim's Haramlak<sup>6</sup>, Anna says:

Everything about it is just as I remembered it: the merchandise so abundant, the colors are striking, and the fragrances are distinctive—no, I could not have imagined the smells—indeed, I couldn't have—but they blend in perfectly with entire scenery. A scent of spices and incense permeated the air from the shelves upon shelves of fragrant oils, sacks filled with herbs and spices, and necks turned down to reveal tiny mounds of smooth crimson henna, lumpy ginger and slender black carob. (67)

Before learning that her journey will connect her destiny to Egypt, Anna's knowledge of Egypt is shaped by Lewis paintings and the British common sense: "And with knowledge, a belief must have gradually developed in my head that, if a creature of such little significance as myself can be said to have a destiny, that destiny somehow, had a link to Egypt" (94). Orientalist's hegemonic discourse and its representation of the exoticized Other that pervades British literature, Art and painting has heavily impacted Anna's reactions towards Egypt in the beginning of her adventure. Anna writes in her journal about the scene when she first finds herself in Sharif Pasha haramlek: "I was kidnapped as a man and according the Oriental tales that I have read, it has happened that a Houri or a princess has ordered the abduction of a young guy to whom she falls in love" (122). Furthermore, Anna describes her immediate experience of Egypt at the train station in Alexandria as a "magical space", a space which is carved out by the British imperialist based on its racist rules.

---

<sup>6</sup> Haramlak: is the place exclusively reserved for women in the Sultan Palace (See the Appendices' Section)

Worst of all, I saw them as bright, exotic creatures, walking in kind of magical space, unaware of everything around them, at ease chattering to each Other as if they were out for stroll in the park, while the people, pushed aside, watched and waited for them to pass in the park, while I felt both the fear of being discovered and the strangeness of their sweeping past me without notice. (174)

While in her way to Senai with Sharif Pasha, Anna disguised in the clothes of veiled Egyptian woman, what allows her to construct this perspective about her British community in Egypt. In her description to the British at the train station, Anna disregards the natives as if they do not exist. Such experience gives Anna the impression that she did not leave Britain, saying: “And yet—I sit in my room at the Shepherd’s hotel possessed by the strangest feeling that still I am not in Egypt” (102).

### **3.3.2. The Role of Translation in the Representation of the Egyptian Other**

Noteworthy, translation also plays a significant role in misrepresenting the Other. Depending on Mr Harry Boyle’s fraudulent translation, Lord Cromer manages to get the necessary troops he needs in Egypt. The fictitious translation aids in the preparations for August nationalist revolt. “Submitted a paper which was to give a true picture of the workings of the Oriental mind; it was supposed to be the translation of a letter which had reached him secretly, and as such, it was transmitted to the Foreign office in 1906. “the truth was that Harry Boyle wrote the original letter himself”, only Lord Cromer realized " (431).

Before translating it by Harry Boyle, the original letter is written in Arabic and serves as warning to the foreign office “of general dissatisfaction among Egyptian people and notables. It was supposed to convey the plot of a big Nationalist rising, giving all particulars about the time, the strength, the manner of conducting the revolt against British rule” (432). Although Harry Boyle invented the translation, using a large number of Orientalist stereotypes that legitimizes the British presence in Egypt, he transmits the true image of the representation of the Other. Clara Boyle, his wife and the

secretary of the Foreign Office, asserts this. "although he [Harry Boyle] invented the 'translation,' he did not invent the spirit of it which served as a graphic illustration of the situation" (494).

In his translation, Boyle heavily relies on flowery language in transmitting the picture of the East. Among the expressions he used. "To the Branch of the Fair Tree, the light Rain of the Generous cloud, the Son and Daughter of the prophet" (363). When Anna read this line, Sharif Basha shockingly recognized that the letter is a forged translation and it is no more than a "joke" and "nonsense" (363). Sharif Basha and his friends Shukrey Bey and Y'aqub Artin recognize that the translator is not an Arab and he knows nothing about Arabic language and Islam. In response to the fake translation, Shukri Bey contends: "It could not have been written by an Arab. It makes no sense", whereas Ya 'qub Artin thinks that "this is the work of an Englishman. An ignorant Englishman who imagines he knows how Arabs think" (419).

In spite of the fact that Egyptian educated people like Sharif Basha and his friend can easily interpret Boyle's words as fake representation of the Oriental Other that has nothing to do with reality, yet the British reader when he reads Boyle's letter will believe the content of the translation, because they already constructed a preconception about the Oriental Other from literature, paintings and British travelogues. Thus, the fake translations such as the one done by Boyle ideologically blinds the British people to see "the wrong being done here [Egypt] and that there is a living world which [British] people are refusing to see or hear about," as Anna argues (209). According to Trabelsi, "The ideology that seeps through conservative translations, art and all the Other media aligned with the hegemonic discourse blind and deafen British people to the "living world" of the Egyptian Other and restrict their knowledge of that Other reductive and dehumanizing stereotypes" (92).

Intentionally, Souief attempts at giving, from the very beginning of the novel, hints about Orientalists representation of the Oriental Other in literature and translation as well as the idea of the lure to the exotic, along with their adventurous travels in order to twist the narrative into Orientalist

discourse. Thus, Souief strategically used Orientalism in order to subvert Orientalism discourse. In this regard, Ayse Ciricir maintains that Souief's main concern "is to create a real Orient that is absent in Said's criticism and she gives voice, form and history to the Orientalized Oriental which makes the novel contrapuntal" (108).

The British have supremacy over Egypt under the pretext of civilizing and educating Egyptian people, because the West represents rationality and civilization. As a result, the Egyptian society was subject to the British power, whether in political, educational or cultural aspects. These aspects of power impose the Western personality upon the Eastern. The British view themselves superiors over the Egyptians in terms of morals and knowledge, and they keep distancing themselves from the natives. Consequently, this establishes hierarchies between the Self and the Other. In his conversation with Anna, Sharif Pasha is aware of Orientalists misrepresentations of the East and how literature nurtures the negative representations of Arab male, especially in harem, demonstrating the binary opposition between the British Self and the Egyptian Other. For this reason, he asks her:

"Weren't you afraid of me? The wicked Pasha who would lock you up in his harem and do terrible things to you?" "What terrible things?" "You should know. They're in your English stories". (Soueif 153-54)

Throughout the novel, Anna dismantles imaginary stereotypes. Anna is aware that British bureaucrats are purposefully dismissing the Egyptians' abilities to rule their country. She writes to her father-in-law, Sir Charles, that "Mr. Boyle took the line you would expect. that the country had never been run so efficiently, and that the Egyptians had never been happier or more prosperous than under Lord Cromer" (96). To extend the British colonization over Egypt, British administrators and Oriental secretaries such as Harry Boyle claim that the British are assisting Egyptians to establish civilized life in their country, and it would take centuries before the Egyptians finally learn how to rule themselves. In this regard, Anna claims:

I've begun to believe that what we're doing is denying that Egyptians have a 'awareness of themselves'--and that by doing so, we eliminate any doubts about our right to be here. We can remain here to "guide them" and help them 'grow' as long as we feel they are like pets or tiny children. But if we realize that they are as aware of themselves and their place in the world as we are, then the honorable thing to do is pack up and leave. (247)

In fact, the colonial process of Othering is still overshadowing contemporary life. Omar's American wife for instance, has divorced him after one year of marriage just because she discovered that he is an Arab from the East, which means that he is inferior than her. "The war? A war makes a husband divorce his wife?" 'We both discovered I was an Arab,' he said lightly" (294).

Thus, Omar's wife could not transcend their cultural differences. Besides, Amal, in the very beginning of the novel, when she hears that Isabel is an American journalist who conducts a project about the future of Egyptian millennium, immediately views her as an Other American who intends to reduce the Oriental Other through stereotypical representations.

Similarly, when Isabel meets Omar Elghamraoui for the first time, she identifies him based on the rumours she knows about Arabs as terrorists. She asks Deborah: "Is he really involved with terrorists?" (8). Based on the stereotypes and hegemonic discourse as discursive strategies employed by the British colonizer, the self is valorized over the Other, what legitimizes the representation of the Oriental Other as inhuman and inferior to the self. Hence, the colonial discourse emptied the Other from his humanity in order to take the burden of civilizing, enlightening and protecting him. One assumes that in their relationship with Egyptian Other, Anna and Isabel heavily rely on the stereotypical images that the colonial discourse constructed in literature, painting, translation, books and media rather than on the Other per se, what interprets the total absence of communication and understanding between the British and the Egyptian characters in the beginning of the novel.

The colonial power, be it British or American, still takes advantage of Egyptian resources and industries, by claiming that they are teaching the Egyptians how to invest in their economy. Tareq Bey Attya, an Egyptian patriot and old friend of Amal, for instance has signed contract with the Israeli team to design the infrastructures and modernise his farm, thinking that in bringing Israelis' technology, he transfers power to his country.

‘It’s up to us not to give them power. If I hire a few Israelis on my land, transfer their technology — how does that give them power? I’m transferring their power to me. You think it would be better to hold on to our old methods and pretend they don’t exist? That’s hiding our head in the sand. These old ideologies are no good any more. Everything is determined by economics.’ ‘Everything?’ ‘Everything.’ ‘I thought you were a patriot,’ I say bitterly. ‘We went out on demonstrations —’ ‘I am a patriot. I do more for my country by strengthening its economy than I would by sitting in a rut and hoping things will take the course I want somehow.’

However, as an intellectual mind Arwa Salih<sup>7</sup> regards that “ it will get worse. We’re headed for an age of Israeli supremacy in the whole area. An Israeli empire” (199). This Opinion is reinforced by Deena’s words “They’re already talking of Israeli brains and Arab hands” (200).

In juxtaposing the past with the present, Souief observes that Egyptians’ present time is not better than its past, since Egypt as well as many Other Arab countries are still entrapped in the same cruel imperial game. The debate between the intellectual minds in Tawasi such as Dr. Ramzi, Arwa Salih, Ms. Deena and Mahgoub gets heightend, when Isabel asks them about their vision towards the next millennium. Dr. Ramzi for instance, holds a pessimist view as he sees that “For the millennium —

---

<sup>7</sup> Arwa Salih: was born (1951-1997); an Egyptian Communist feminist writer, novelist, translator and University teacher. She was a leading leader in students’ radical movement in 1970’s, and a member of the political bureau of the Egyptian Communist Workers’ Party. Her book *Stillborn: Notebook of Woman from the Student Movement Generation in Egypt* is translated by Samah Salima and published in 2018 by Seaguel Books London Ltd.

everything, it is always the same,' he says. 'It will be the same' (198). For Dr. Ramzi, Egypt will never change due to the intersection of many colonial powers (British, American, and Israelis) in the region, which means that history repeats itself. Besides, Mahgoub comments that, "The next millennium? The future being planned for us is a terrible one —'" (200). Egyptian intellectuals are aware of the inevitability of history as Dr. Ramzi contends, "It's history...The combination of several situations. After a hundred years, historians will say that what happened was unavoidable. If we look at Egypt a hundred years ago, we can see that what happened was unavoidable" (200).

In spite of the pessimistic vision that both Dr. Ramzi and Mahgoub hold, Deena has a completely opposite opinion. "'What's terrible,' says Deena, 'is how we've taken on the role of the victim, the Done-To. We sit here and say "they're planning for us, they're doing to us" and wait to see what "they" will do next'" (200). Deena is sick of playing the role of obedient victims, she calls attention to an important point in which everyone is responsible of making history, it is up to individuals to change their history or not. The problem with Egyptians is that they are allowing Others dictate their history, as Deena pinpoints "Ya Doctor, history can be changed,' Deena says, 'it's people who make history. The problem is that we are allowing Other people to make our history'" (204).

In juxtaposing and analysing Egypt's past and the present, Souief as well as the protagonists in the novel are aware of the inevitability of the past. Yet, she diagnoses the problem to provide a remedy in order to break the silence imposed by the past and the inevitability of history, and therefore, she dismantles hierarchies between East and West.

After she ends the conversation with her intellectual friends, Amal thinks, "It can't be that horrible. Surely, it cannot be that horrible. There must be a way, but we cannot see it yet. A method of creating a space for ourselves in which we can be the best versions of ourselves—we just can't see it now" (209). For Amal, the past can never be changed and history is inevitable, however reading history leads to understanding the beginning of things; the beginning that gives part of the story but it is not the

whole one. Amal claims, "That is the beauty of the past; there it lies on the table." Journals, photos, a candle-glass, and a few historical books. You leave it and return to find it unaltered. You can go back and look at the beginning. You can read on to find out what happens. And you describe the tale that they, the ones who experienced it, could only tell in part" (209). One assumes that, Amal El Ghamraoui, the lady of forty years old, plays the role of connecting the Present with the Past, and completing the rest of the forgotten or ignored story.

In this regard, Ali Allaham contends that "The value of Soueif's map is navigating the detour of temporalizing. She diagnoses the problem and presents a panacea that can cure the poisoned Egyptian society. This cure-all medication is what she calls *mezzaterra*" (19). In writing a novel with transcultural agents such as Anna, Amal and Isabel, Soueif is able to create a *Contact Zone* or what she calls a *mezzaterra*. In transcending time and space differences, her women characters are, through their love and unity able to travel different cultures, able to set their cultural differences as a ground for similarities and co-existence. Thus, Soueif's *Mezzaterra* is a common space for all humanity as for the better of it.

### 3.4. The Nile Divides and Meets: Bridging the World through *Mezzaterra*<sup>8</sup>

Ahdaf Soueif's works seek to carve a space for a cultural meeting between the East and the West. In her book (2004), *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground*, Soueif defines *mezzaterra* as a "spacious meeting point, a common ground with avenues into the rich hinterlands of many cultures and traditions" (6). Thus, setting a ground for tolerance and acceptance can be the positive outcome of the dialogue between the East and the West. *Mezzaterra* is the contact zone that Ahdaf Soueif creates to locate her ideology of living together in harmony; it refers to "the construction of a meeting point for diverse cultures and traditions, a common ground" (Brahimi223). It is a mutual ground instead of

---

<sup>8</sup> **Mezzateera** : The word "Mezzaterra" is a concept Soueif coined herself. "Mezza" is the Latin for "middle" and "terra" the Latin for "world" or "ground". Soueif refers to this space as the "common ground". In her 2004 publication, *Mezzaterra*, she explores "encounters" that take place in this space.

competitive or conflicting one, as it offers an enrichment working at both sides of the construction. Ahdaf Soueif herself describes the common ground as follows:

[The Mezzaterra is] a territory imagined, if not built, by Arab philosophers and reformers beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt dispatched students to the West, who returned inspired by the best of what they saw on offer. Generations of Arabs defended it during the terrible days of colonization. (Mahjoub 57)

As a transnational writer, Soueif voyages in, borrowing Said's term, different cultures without valorizing either of cultures or identities; instead she deals with in equal manner, allowing a space for a new transcultural identity to emerge out of this interaction. Soueif aspires to construct a space where many cultures interact freely without hierarchies and struggles. Thus, her term colludes with Epstein who defines Transculture as "an open system of symbolic alternatives to existing cultures and their established sign systems" (24).

In the novel, the mezzateerans such as Anna, Amal, and Isabel stand on a middle ground that gives them access to many traditions (Muslim, Egyptian, Christian, Arab, Western, African, Mediterranean, etc). Their ability to get access to different cultures and traditions allows them to become mezzateerans or acquire fluid transcultural identity. This means that instead of being concerned with how to defend their national and well fenced identity, Anna, Amal, Isabel and Omar are preoccupied with the affinities across cultural differences. Sharief Basha, for instance, regards that such affinities are "Our only hope- and it is a small one- lies in a unity of conscience between the people of the world for whom this phrase itself would carry any meaning" (424). In such unity of conscience, the world will turn into an open space "where everyone could engage freely in the exchange of ideas, art forms, technologies" (Soueif 7). One assumes that Ahdaf Soueif's mezzateera is a representative narrative voice that aspires to open dialogue through difference and diversity rather than polarization and divergence. It seems

similar in its input to Epstein's Transculture, by considering it an alternative to isolating polarized discourse of Orientalism, leveling globalism, as well as the isolating pluralism result of multiculturalism.

Epstein claims that "Among the many freedoms proclaimed as inalienable rights of the individual, there emerges yet another freedom that is probably the most precious one, though so far most neglected—the freedom from one's own culture, in which one was born and educated" (339). In similar vein, Sharif Basha recognizes the intercultural relationship: "If there are elements of Western Culture in us, they have been absorbed through visiting your countries, learning in your institutions and opening ourselves to your culture. There we have been free to choose those elements that most suited our own history, our traditions and aspirations- that is the legitimate commerce of humanity" (Soueif 484). Although Sharif Basha admits the inevitability of the influence of the West upon Egypt, he underscores the importance of the freedom of choice. He is aware that one should communicate with Other cultures to take from them what suits his own culture and tradition and what is useful for one's own benefit and for the development of his/her nation.

The interaction between different cultures opens room for exchanging knowledge, products, technology. In the same context, Said writes, "Cultures and civilizations are so interconnected and interdependent as to beggar any unitary or simply delineated description of their individuality" (349). Isabel, for instance, comments on the swiftness of internet in connecting people from all over the world, and transmitting and exchanging information in free way. "I am serious. The potential is incredible. Look at all the action and information groups on it. The speed with which you can get a piece of news out. The freedom from control. Have you seen all the postings in support of the civilians in Iraq?" (424). Furthermore, when Isabel asks Omar: "Do you think of yourself as Egyptian? I'm sorry, this is personal.' She had surprised herself with the question but he answered easily. 'Yes. And American. And Palestinian. I have no problem with identity'" (49). Thus, as a transcultural agent, Omar feels quite at ease in straddling different cultures and national identities at the same time without any

sort of tension between them. In her *Meezateera*, Souief therefore creates a transcultural space, or a zone of contact between cultures, in which there is no hierarchies or intolerance between the characters who belong to varied cultural backgrounds.

In order to achieve the transparent view of transculturation, Souief's novel opens a revisionary reading of history and the hegemonic and stereotyping modes of representation of the Orient. By doing this, Souief endeavours to demonstrate, on the one hand "how post-colonial studies produced packages of stereotypical representations, such as the life of the harem and the downtrodden exotic eastern lady with the objective of advertising it to the Western reader. On the Other hand, she aims at writing world literature, what requires re-evaluating knowledge about the representation of the East. Souief's idea can be best described in borrowing Said's term "voyage in", that expresses the writers' deliberate attempts to delve into Western discourse, blend with it and alter it in order to have their concerns recognized" (Kaïd 4).

In using Travel narrative, as a strategy in the novel, Souief is able to create the *mezzateera* as an open space that makes the encounter between the disparate cultures possible. James Clifford notes, travel "emerged as an increasingly complex range of experiences. practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture" (3). Souief uses travel narratives to examine the politics of Arab representation in Western culture. According to Wail Hassan, this novel does not aim to be a nativist "postcolonial" text or uncritically adopt the travel narrative genre. Instead, it is told from the perspective of "immigrants as distinct from travellers...in whose case the 'encounter' remains between cultures that are presumably separate and discrete" (158). Hassan affirms that the writer-immigrant's experience is one of cultural blending and interpretation, not to mention the various complex loyalties that the traveler or temporary resident does not always or necessarily share. The immigrant experience adds additional layers to the challenge of cultural translation.

Western travel writing has undergone a transformation or revision that presents a modern, globalized view of the world as one inclusive place of all people and where cultural interactions are founded based on equality and compromise. One assumes that Soueif's *The Map of Love* appears within the context of transcultural literature, in Other words, literature that opens a cultural dialogue between East and West. In short, the novel is an antidote to the *Map* of the hegemonic colonial discourse representing the silent exotic Other and the cultural clash between East and West.

### **3.5. Neither East, Nor West: Love is the World's Quest**

In her article *Ahdaf Makes a Map of Love*, Hanane Bishara asks various questions about replacing conflicts with the voice of love: "What if 'love' becomes the motor that moves peoples instead of 'conflicts'?" What if 'conflicts' vanish forever, and 'love' replaces them? What if love is used to divide the maps, ignoring political borders and ongoing conflicts?" (16). Effectively, Love in the novel turns out to be the transcultural contact zone and a meezaterra of coexistence and compassion that harmoniously unites multiple people, cultures and religions.

#### **3.5.1. The Transcultural Journey of Finding the Self in the Other**

Anna's journey begins in Egypt when she arrived at Alexandria on the same day Egyptians were celebrating both the new Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church and khedive return from Europe. Anna recorded in her diary that she comes across a city that fuses European style with Egyptian identity, what gives her the impression that the encounter between East and West is possible, as they can coexist in an intermediate cultural space. Based on Anna's observation, Alexandria turns into a Contact Zone wherein the two desperate cultures could meet and interact. In her first letter from Egypt to her friend Caroline, Anna states that Alexandria looks "to have more of the Europe of the Mediterranean in it than anything else, and were it not for the costume of the native Arabs and the signs in their language, you might fancy yourself in some Greek or Italian town" (56). Anna's description refutes Orientalists claims about the East as an exotic static place full of anarchy and

barbarism as Said writes in his criticism of Orientalism. Moreover, her remark blurs the geographical distances as well as the cultural limitations she might feel as an outsider within Alexandria. As a contact zone, Alexandria allows Anna on the one hand to invoke the spatial and historical disjunctures, whose trajectories intersect now. On the Other hand, the cultural encounter allows her to form a new identity.

Her transcultural identity persuades her to straddle two cultures; hence she is able to negotiate the British constructed image of Egypt as “fanatical wickedness” upon receiving Egyptians’ welcoming smiles, as she declares, “— receiving nothing but smiles and kind looks from the Natives and doffed boaters from the Europeans — was hard put to imagine scenes of fanatical wickedness. But I am yet new to this place and know nothing of it save what can be seen by the most superficial eye” (59). Furthermore, Anna finds Alexandria as a “jolie place” wherein she finds composure. The warm welcoming of the locales of Alexandria and their smiling faces enables her to recover after month of mourning her late husband Edward. In a letter to her father in law Sir Charles, she writes “I am better in health and spirits than I have been for a long time” (61), indicating that the city is a distinguished place of elsewhere.

In her initial attitudes towards the Other, Anna foreground the impact of the colonial hegemonic discourse of the representation of the Other over the British people. However, what distinguishes Anna from the Other British is her open mindedness and her feeling of being interpellator to Egypt. Anna interaction with Egypt and the Egyptian Other extends as she opens to the quotidian life of the indigenous people. In her journey to the Palace and Abdin Bazaar, Anna learns many details about Ancient Egypt. She writes in her journal about her journey to the *Souq*. “The product [is] so abundant, the colors so bold..... [and] people are continually reaching out to you and begging you to buy their wares.....I have no experience with such transaction. No doubt, I'll learn.” (67). Anna, hence, realizes that it is only through unprejudiced observation and mutual dialogue with the inhabitants, she learns more about Egypt and the Egyptian Other. Her interaction with the Other allows her to see the truth

behind the British imperialist scene that Egyptians are people fighting for their justice, what persuades her to question the stereotypes that inform their attitudes towards Egyptians and their blindness to the justice of their cause.

In spite of the fact that Khedive's Ball is a limited space, it gives Anna the chance to interact with Egyptian notables; it strengthens her friendship with national Egyptian elites, nationalist Egyptian ladies as well as anti-imperialist ladies such as Nabawiyya Musa, Malàk Hifni Nasif, Labiba Hashim, and Lady Anne Blunt, ...etc. Anna's experience at Khedive's Ball gives her the opportunity of seeing things from a different lens. While at Khedive's palace and when the doors to supper opened, Anna noticed that there was a rush to enter the room. Anna stayed back awhile what gives her the chance to see the reaction of the native elites. "I saw that some Native gentlemen did the same and indeed took the opportunity very soon to leave. I had the oddest feeling that I had seen one of them before — I only caught the briefest glimpse of him as he was turning to leave, but something in that moment transported me back to the Costanzi" (87).

Although she never met them before, Anna feels that she knows one of the Effendis'. Such an encounter has broadened her perspective on Egyptian life and culture. She, for example, writes to her companion Caroline about how "Egyptian women do not seem to attend such ceremonies, and how the native notables "kept to themselves," and avoid dancing" (94). This scene allows her to discern difference between East and West cultures. Moreover, while preparing herself to attend Khedive's ceremony at the Ball, Anna chooses to dress herself in a way showing respect to the Egyptian Muslims and their tradition. "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 I did wear Lady Winterbourne's tiara and my mother's amethyst necklace and I believe I did not disgrace the Empire!" (87). Anna reciprocal understanding and respect to Egyptians and their culture and religion allows her to become dialogic in a way that boosts her to learn about the local culture rather than resisting it.

Anna's change is best signalled in changing her travel accounts. In order to write an objective unbiased account, Anna chooses to locate herself in a zone of transformation “ At this point blue stops and green begins”(63) in response to the call of her friendship with Egyptians. In her attempt to get profound knowledge about the Egyptian Other, Anna expresses her wish to learn Arabic in order to communicate with Egyptian people using their language and terms. For this reason, she relies on translation. Thus, the use of Arabic will allow Anna to listen carefully to the Other and understands him, or as Gyatri Spivack puts it “listens to the Other as if it were a self” (qtd in. Trabelsi, 101). In communicating her desire to learn Arabic to her friend Dean Butcher, Anna recorded in her journal that he calls her attention to *Mullaqat*, saying ‘Ah! you want to read the Mu allaqat?’ (83). Anna finds similarity between the name of the Arabic Seven Odes Poetry and the name given to her favourite church in Egypt Mu'allaqa. She learns from Dean Bucher that “ ‘ allaqa’ means ‘to hang’ and the Mu allaqah is named thus because it is hung on the ancient gateway of the Roman fort. The Mu allaqat are the ‘hung’ poems, because they were the winning poems in the great poetry competition that took place every year in Mecca and so had the honor of being ‘hung’ on the door of the House of God (the Kaa’ ba)” (83). Again, translation plays a primordial role in persuading Anna to recognize how one word such as Mu'allaqa could make the connection between Islam and Christianity possible, as she figures out that both her favourite Egyptian church and Mouslims’ Kaa’ba are Mu'allaqat.

The effect of learning Arabic leaves a profound impact on Anna who feels that she becomes part of the culture. In her spiritual journey, Anna blurs all the boundaries of differences to construct a non-essentialist perspective, as she starts to “pray enduring — peace” (84). This spiritual journey allows Anna to observe how the churches and mosques of Cairo could possibly coexist in a harmonious way, what motivates her to acknowledge that Egypt is not a mere ground for celebrating cultural and religious diversity; rather this diversity is an essential component for their survival. Consciously, Anna finds that there are common similarities between East and West.

The listening to the Egyptian Other and the interest in his culture and language leads Anna to discover the British racist fraud in fabricating negative image of the Egyptians. She writes in her letter to Sir Charles that, based on Mrs Bucher emphasis, she believes that “the Egyptian character is “not lost” but “degraded completely degraded” (91). This incident in particular marks the change in Anna’s journey from a mere Orientalist observer to a transcultural writer of her own story that bridges the discontent between East and West through her mutual interaction with Egyptians. One assumes that in using travel writing as a strategy, Souief succeeds in constructing an anti-colonial ideology through Anna’s journey to Egypt in the beginning of the novel to provide a critique to the Western representation of Egyptians and the Arabs in general . Then, through the mutual interaction of Anna with Egyptians such as Leila and Sharief during and after her detention, Souief’s meezaterra emerges through the friendship and the plurality of thought they construct.

While at Sharief Basha El Baroudi’s Harem, during her detention, Anna opens up to Leila by informing her about their life. In her papers, Leila writes: “[feeling] our way towards each Other as though our ignorance, one of the Other, were the one thing in the world that stood between us and friendship” (136), what drives them to construct a solid friendship through mutual understanding. The two women exchanged thoughts about education, independence and the importance of the veil. Leila, for example, seizes the opportunity at Nur El Huda Hanim's Harem to alter Anna's perception of "Harem". Instead of a Siesta, Anna attends an intellectual debate with highly educated female writers such as Zineb Fawaaz, who "has published several articles on the 'Woman question' many articles about the position of women in their society" (211). She is also the author of "a book which is a collection of short biographies of ladies of note — apparently our own Queens Elizabeth and Victoria are among them!" (212). Upon her interaction and mutual dialogue with the educated women in harem, Anna learns that there is a big difference between the fabricated image of harem in the books she read and the true picture that she herself experiences.

Anna writes in her letter to Sir Charles, "All in all, I do confess, I found the company and conversation most pleasing and quite contrary to the prevailing view of harem life being one of indolence and torpor" (212). The experience that Anna lives in Haramlek has not only corrects her conception about harem, but makes a radical shift in her character "I find a changed and invigorated Anna now" (212). In fact, the interaction with the intellectual ladies of harem takes Anna to another realm of development, in which she transcends the borders of established cultures as ethnic, national, racial, religious, ...etc, as Epstein contends. This experience opens her eyes and mind towards seeing things from within and giving each thing its true meaning and value. Hence, Anna discerns that the intellectuality of the ladies makes the harem such a captivating place that adds to the entire beauty of Egypt and its history.

Despite the cultural and linguistic differences between Layla and Anna, the friendship of the two women is developed into a strong bond of sisterhood and mutual understanding after Anna gets married with Sharif Basha. In the day of her wedding, for instance, Anna writes, "I told Layla that I leave myself in her hands and she is to arrange all things as she would for her sister" (311). Through peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding, Anna develops a transcultural identity as she communes with Layla and her mother-in-law Zineb Hanim. With the help of her new family, Anna happily fuses the two cultures British and Arabic as a life style. She writes to Sir Charles, "I am grown great friends with my belle-mère and we demonstrate our recipes to each other in the kitchen" (337). Moreover, she learns how to dress herself in Egyptian-European fashion what demonstrates her belief in cultural confluence.

Anna's love for her new family is reflected in her love to her father-in-law Old Baroudi "And I am grown fond too of old Baroudi Bey, who sits silently in his shrine all day long but will look up and help me with an Arabic word when I am in need" (337). While she is weaving her tapestry in his shrine, Anna shows a great ability to learn Arabic from Sharif's father as he recites Qur'an, what demonstrates

that the chasm between the two desperate worlds can possibly be bridged through mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Significantly, in this transcultural experience, Anna finds herself feeling outside the ethnic, racial, sexual, ideological limitations imposed by a single culture. Anna, for instance, joins El Baroudi family in celebrating their Islamic occasions such as the month of Ramadan and Eid without feeling the need to effacing herself, or giving her back to her culture and religion. On the contrary, her husband encourages her to continue celebrating the Christmas as she used to do. “Although Sharif Basha surprised me with a handsome gift, an Ethiopian cross set with rubies, yet it seemed odd to me that the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of December should on the whole be passed like any Other day — and especially so this year as Christmas falls in the month of Ramadan” (335). By commemorating both Islamic and Christian events, Sharif and Anna achieve a sense of moral unity as they each appreciate one Other's beliefs and traditions. The peaceful coexistence of difference in Egypt is resembled in the coexistence between Islam and Christianity in El Baroudi house in particular, and Egypt in general, indicating that the cultural antagonism between East and West can possibly be resolved through mutual dialogue and peaceful relations.

The transcultural marriage between Anna and Sharif Basha El Baroudi helps in setting a ground for acceptance and tolerance; in addition to helping them straddling different cultures and religions, their love turns into a space that allows them to surpass the political and cultural antagonism the colonial discourse and map has drawn between the two worlds. They also see that this chasm can be bridged through compassion and love. Both of them find in each Other the partner they are looking for. Sharif finds in Anna the exact partner he needs “to be someone to whom I can turn, confident of her sympathy, believing her when she tells me I’m in the wrong, strengthened when she tells me I’m in the right” (137). The fact that Anna accepts to undergo a solo travel experiment beyond the boundaries of her nation demonstrates that she is such a challenging and open-minded partner and who has a kind soul that is willing to accept and love cultural difference. Similarly, Anna finds in Sharif Basha “a man of

influence by reason of his position, his integrity, his patriotic stance and, naturally, his lineage” (143). Anna respects his perseverance and determination not only in demanding a simple end to the British occupation “but that the country should be governed — like ours — by means of an elected Parliament and a Constitution” (143).

The transcultural marriage opens Anna’s eyes towards looking at things through the eyes of Egypt notable intellectuals such as Sheikh Mohammad Abdou, Mustafa Kamel and Qasim Amin members of Hizb El Watani, in their discussions of the colonial situation, as well as the daily interaction with the natives. These interactions pave the way to Anna to juxtaposing the British imperial discourse with the Egyptian Nationalist counterpart, what allows her to construct a humane opinion rather than a politically biased one. She writes to Sir Charles that “I understand so much more now of what I used to hear you say. I have started to believe that what we are doing is denying that Egyptians have a ‘consciousness of themselves’---- and that by doing so we settle any qualms of conscience as to our right to be here. So long as we believe that they are like pets or small children, we can remain here to ‘guide them’ and help them ‘develop’” (221).

Despite British authority preventing Egyptians from being heard abroad, Anna notes that Egyptians "cannot speak because there is no platform for them to speak from, as well as language difficulties." By that, I mean not just the ability to translate Arabic speech into English, but also the ability to speak as an English speaker, for only then can the justice of what they say be served (348). For this reason, she decides to make the Egyptian issue reach the British conscience, in the same way it reached her, by using translation. " What if someone, an Egyptian, could communicate with British public opinion in a way that they could understand? Someone who could use the right words, use the right image or quotation, strike the right chord, and therefore win the hearts and minds of the British people? What if such an individual had access to a secure platform? Isn't it worth trying? (348). Therefore, Anna proposes translation as a ground that bridges East and West and transmit Egyptians’ voice beyond the national boundaries.

Anna translates the articles written by her husband Sharif Basha El Baroudi that sheds light on the colonial presence in Egypt as well as the “economic” and “religious, historical, [and] romantic” attractions the East holds for Europe (481). Throughout her translations and active role in transmitting the Egyptian voice overseas, Anna at least succeeds in changing the British opinion about an entire world they refuse to see. Moreover, in translating the articles of her husband, Anna succeeds not only in giving voice to the Egyptian cause, but she gives voice to her transcultural experience in Egypt and her interaction with the people and the culture that she becomes part of. In addition to the role she plays in voicing the Egyptian anti-imperialist discourse in the West, she succeeds in transmitting a positive image of the West through her role in giving lectures on Western art at the Egyptian School of Fine Art. Thus, Anna’s transcultural experience allows her not only to express herself through travel writing and painting, but also through weaving a story of coexistence that transcends boundaries and barriers to bridge the gap between the two worlds, and to live a century later through her grandchildren.

### **3.5.2. Mezateerans’ Transcultural Dialogue: Transcending the Beyond**

In similar vein, Souief weaves through the transcultural love story of Anna and Sharief anOther contemporary love story between Omar El Ghamraoui and Isabel Parkman. Amidst the unsteady relations between the Occident and the Orient, Isabel, an American journalist interested in the future of millennia in the Middle East, falls in love with Omar. The latter is the twentieth century counterpart of Sharief Basha and Edward Said figure<sup>9</sup> due to his criticism of East/West relations.

Omar El Ghamraoui is the mostly hated by the Western media. “The ‘Molotov Maestro’ they call him, the ‘Kalashnikov Conductor’ (23), because he intervenes as a public intellectual against injustice and oppression, mainly through his music and books. He participated in the fighting in Amman in 70’s and a member of the Palestine National Council with which he broke after Oslo Accord. Aware of his

---

<sup>9</sup> Several commentators have viewed Omar's persona as an homage to Edward Said, considering that he is nicknamed "Molotov Maestro" and "Kalashnikov Conductor" (17), in the same way that Said was famously labelled "Professor of Terror" (Davis; Heilmann and Llewellyn 92; King 147). Omar, a Palestinian supporter opposed to Israeli occupation, is severely disillusioned with the political forces at work in 1990 Palestine.

political Orientation, Isabel inquires whether Omar is involved with the fundamentalists groups such as “ Hamas, or Hizbollah. Or in Egypt” (159), or he is really one of the terrorists as the media says about him. Responding on her inquiry, Omar declares that he is not a terrorist, demonstrating to her the exaggerated role media plays in transmitting distorted images ‘Not so long ago, Hillary Clinton would have been called a communist for her views on public health’ (159). One assumes that Isabel conception about the East is shaped by the false representations of the Western discourse.

Influenced by her grandmOther Anna, Isabel plans to learn more about Egypt and Egyptians through her interaction with them, and she finds in Omar what she is looking for. While interacting with him, her image about the East, resembled in Egypt, is gradually modified. Isabel finds in Omar an open minded intellectual immigrant and “... Career pianist, conductor and writer; debut with NY Philharmonic 1960 ... tours ... The Politics of Culture 1992, A State of Terror 1994, Borders and Refuge 1996 ...” (27). He is a sophisticated writer and a man of reason with “Thirty-seven years of music, and five years of words. And it is in these last five years that he has hit the news” (27). The interaction with Omar persuades Isabel to rethink the stereotypical images representing Arabs as Barbaric fanatical people. In one of her conversations with Omar, Isabel learns about the bad living conditions of fellaheen. In order to understand the Egypt better, Isabel decides to cross the beyond in order to construct a fresh and unbiased opinion about the internal and external issues of concern.

Upon her visit to Tawasi village with Amal, Isabel learns more about the measures the government takes towards the villagers in arresting and condemning them as terrorists after the sudden bombing of Luxor temple. Interestingly, as she listens the conversation between Amal and the wives of fellaheen, Isabel understands that America is the reason behind their miserable situation; thus the government is taking such harsh measures towards them just to please America. One of the hopeless fellaheen’s wives declares that ‘Everything that happens they say Amreeka wants this. they cancel the peasant cooperatives, Amreeka wants this — ‘It’s the same thing. Isn’t Amreeka the biggest country now and what she says goes?’” (158) .

Inspired by Anna's transcultural journey to Egypt , particularly her firm love and support of the cause of her husband, through translating his articles to transmit the Egyptian voice beyond borders to reach the British conscience, Isabel takes the decision of following the same path in her relationship with Omar. Isabel informed Amal that she decides to help Omar in sending his voice around the globe, by creating "a home page for him and linked it with several information sites, and now his articles went across the world and into cyberspace the moment they appeared in the paper," (421).

By bridging the gap between the past and present with the love stories of Isabel and Omar and Anna and Sharif, Souief demonstrates the enduring value of Anna Winterbourne's map of love drawn at the turn of the century. Both Anna and Isabel comprehend the critical political situation of their partners and they decide to support them despite their different beliefs and thoughts. Noteworthy, in depicting Isabel taking similar decision as the one's taken by her grandmOther, Souief ensures that transculturation acts more than an alternative cultural strategy; rather it is a timeless humanitarian concept that connects between people and cultures. By means of Isabel, Souief guarantees the perpetuation of Anna's map of love which attests to the complexities of interpersonal relations, especially when Isabel find the missing piece of the tapestry that Anna weaves a century before in her handbag , indicating that what is kept separated by the hegemonic discourse is possibly to be brought together through the Meezatterra of Love . In reassembling the three panels of the tapestry together, Isabel becomes able to discern the meaning that Anna intends to convey through her tapestry that both represents and translates the past and the present of Egypt and the Egyptian culture. In her article "Translating Egypt", Hala Halim remarks that:

Like various letters, records, and discussions that compromise this disjoined novel's storyline, the tapestry acts as a gathering place for all of the characters, requesting and honoring their involvement. Amel understands the relationship between the three distinct components and their unity as they are all a part of the same tapestry after Sharif provides the concept and inspiration, Anna weaves it, Omar and Isabel hold the pieces.

Every character's actions are equally important, and only their combined efforts will enable the tapestry to come to life. (4)

One assumes that the tapestry that Anna weaves paves the way to Souief to create her meezaterra, as a transcultural space in her novel, wherein there is no hierarchies or intolerance between dissimilar characters from varied cultures. Furthermore, Souief also reiterates the continuity of transcultural convergence through the pregnancy of Isabel short after she finds the third panel Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris in ancient Egypt. Thus, the baby Sharif and Nur El Hayet, daughter of Anna and Sharief El Baroudi, are mixed blood meezaterrans and the offspring of the interaction of different cultures and religions who demonstrate the possibility of the transcultural human coexistence in spite of barriers of time and space. Their parents transcend their cultural differences and are united through love; as an outcome, their unity contributed to creating a meezaterra, reassuring that 'The Nile divides and meets again,' and again, and again. 'He brings forth the living from the dead' (451).

### 3.5.3. Anna and My Amal: Trans(re)lating the Past and the Present

In the beginning of the novel, Anna declares: "My name is Anna Winterbourne. I do not hold (much) with those who talk of the Stars governing our Fate" (16). Souief has intentionally named her transcultural protagonist of the novel Anna in order to transrelate the two worlds and bridge the chasm between the two cultures. The name Anna perfectly sounds familiar in Arabic language to mean "me" or "أنا" and has also meaning in the English culture as it refers to "grace" or "the gracious one". In his article *Transcultural Writing: Ahdaf Souief's Aicha as a case Study*, Hechmi Trabellsi, a Tunisian critic, contends that Ahdaf Souief intends to pour "Arabic blood in her texts so that her Arab readers would 'hear' Arabic behind her English words. Besides, her non Arabic readers would feel the Other tongue behind the English vocabulary" (qtd. In Bishara 26). The story of Anna in *the Map of Love* starts with the trunk that Isabel Perkman, the granddaughter of Anna sends to Amal from America to Egypt, on the advice of her brother Omar El Ghamraoui, hoping that Amal would help her in

translating the diary of her grandmOther and many Other documents written in Arabic into English. While translating the diary of Anna, the process of translation turns into a process of finding the self in the Other. In order to do so, Souief adopts doubling between the author and the narrator Anna and Amal, respectively as an effective strategy. According to Ftaiha Berrahal Kaid, “through the choice of the name Anna which in Arabic means “I” and “me.” The contact of the writers themselves with anOther culture and anOther language, in this case Britain and English” has definitely lead to an intense consciousness of Otherness” (4).

Although Amal is living in contemporary Cairo, she finds herself too connected to Anna’s story. Unlike Anna, Amal is not obliged to cross geographical boundaries in her journey to compare between people and cultures. Rather, the process of reading allows her to travel through time straddling back and forth through past and present. The process of reading and probing Anna and Leila El Baroudi documents allows Amal to compare herself to representations of her female ancestors and the stereotyped images of Western culture. Hence, the process of reading helps her to reconcile with herself. While reading and translating the diaries, Amal expresses her eagerness to “know who the people are of whom she speaks, to paint in the backdrop against which she is living her on the page in front of me” (26).

As she arranges the pieces of the diary together, Amal starts narrating the story of Lady Winterbourne in Egypt a century before. Her understanding of the historical and family dynamics of the time permits her to edit Anna’s past and compels her to write in the blanks in her notebook.

In so doing, Amal starts weaving and writing her own story based on the diary of Anna, as if Anna was recommending her to tell history using her standpoint. In this way, Amal finds herself involved in the same role as her GrandmOther Laila al-Baroudi; she found herself in a century ago. “This is not my story. This is a story that I found in a box... which came from London to Cairo... it is a story of two women... Isabel, the American, and Anna Winterbourne, her British GrandmOther, and originally

the box owner. As for me, if I have a role in this story, it is the same role as my Grandmother had, a hundred years ago. the role of the narrator of her brother's love story" (18).

In the course of reading and translating Winterbourne's story, Amal starts her journey into Anna's past, through close reading and sympathetic inference. As a result, she becomes increasingly infatuated with Anna's Journal. Amal al-Ghamrāwi feels a great connection to the diary and sometimes imagines it speaks to her. As she reads Anna's journals and letters, Amal admits this. "I'm obsessed with Anna Winterbourne's brown journal." She's become real to me... "I need to fill the gaps" (26). After reviewing Anna's records, Amal notices a striking parallel between her life and Anna's. For example, when Amal reads that Anna may have failed her marriage by allowing her husband to join the British Army in Um Durman, she understands with Anna's sad heart because she has had a similar experience with failed marriage. For this reason, she writes, "Once upon a time, I lived with a family, a husband and children. That happened in England. In a Victorian novel-inspired mansion" (45).

Moreover, Amal finds in Anna's narrative a way to recover from her own past. While reading the love story of Anna and Sharif, Amal becomes able to escape the memories of her failed marriage and to prevent herself from being nostalgic to her past. Upon her return to Egypt, Amal confines herself in her apartment in Cairo; she is unable to see any person, only her servant Tahyya and her husband Am Madani, the building keeper. Yet the change gradually takes place in her life, when she starts reading and editing Anna's love story. Amal becomes completely absorbed in Anna's story, what motivates her to open her heart again and restore an old love affair with her friend Tarek Attya; hence she becomes able to revise the image of love that turns gloomy after her divorce.

In connecting the personal with political, Souief constructs the love story between Amal and Tarek within a challenging political atmosphere parallel to the one that unites Anna and Sharief together in the past. In discussing the internal and external affairs in Egypt with Tarek Attya , Amal disagrees in some points with the business men mentality he embraces, particularly as he brings Israeli team to

redesign the infrastructure, which means that he is pro to the normalization of Israeli-Egyptian relations. Despite their different political opinions, both Amal and Tarek stay deeply attracted to each Other, emphasizing that love can bring together what politics divides.

The reading of Anna's documents allows Amal to finally reconcile with herself and her past. Hence, she finds herself visiting Tawasi, her home town in Upper Egypt, and she decides to settle down there until she finishes her reading. Amal admits that. "Here in Tawasi, I reflect on my English life and I find myself wondering if there is some sense in which this, Anna's Egyptian life, will only be fully real to her once it has been linked with her older one, witnessed by someone she has known and cared for from her earliest days?" (465). In Tawasi, Amal gets in touch with fellaheen such as Am Abu El Maati, chief man of her family farm and Khadra, his daughter and many Other women in the town, what helps her to understand the injustice done by the government against them. She becomes more involved in the life of the fallaheen in Tawasi, as she promises to help them in solving the problem of the closed school that Sharief Basha constructed it a century before, and she does her best to reopen it again, what changes her from a weak and silent woman into a self-confident one who is proud of her national identity.

One assumes that Souief has strategically created the character of Amel to give on the one hand hope to her people and fellaheen in particular, and to bridge the gap between the Egyptian privileged intellectuals and the real people of the country. On the Other hand, through the transformative character of Amel, Souief is able to make connection between the two cultures. Through Amel, the transcultural story of love among multiple people has traveled time and space to weave a map that bridges the gap between East and West through meezaterra of coexistence and tolerance.

### **3.6 Weaving Meezaterra's Tropes and Language**

The stories of 'Omar and Isabel, Sharif Basha and Anna, and Amal are woven together through Anna's tapestry. The tapestry is three-paneled and functions as an alternative mezzaterra. Through her

three paneled tapestry, Anna intends to add contribution to the Egyptian renaissance, by uniting multiple individuals and different cultures through love and coexistence. In this tapestry, Anna weaves tokens of Egypt's Pharaonic and Islamic histories together. It depicts "the Goddess Isis, with her brother consort the God Osiris and between them the Infant Horus<sup>10</sup>, and above them a Quranic verse" (Soueif 403). The Quranic verse says. "It is He who brings forth the living from the dead" (Soueif 491). In this regard Annette Lucia Giesecke indicates that "Weaving is the type of skill by which a house, a village, or a city is constructed. Weaving is a means to build an environment as well as a means by which to cement social relations within the built environment" (qtd. In Trabelsi123). This means that Anna's tapestry is a metaphor representing the transcultural love that unites Anna and Sharif Basha El Baroudi in the past and transcends boundaries of time and space to unite Omar El Ghamraoui and Isabel in the contemporary time. It reflects on human experiences as it refers to regeneration. Just after the death of Sharif Basha, his daughter Nur Elhayet comes as a Horus to life to weave a new transcultural relationship in the contemporary time between Omar and Isabel who in their turn bring their baby Sharif to keep the chain of transcultural love between East and West alive.

Moreover, the tapestry represents three religions together. Ancient Egypt religion, Islam and Christianity, hence it becomes a *meezaterra* that represent the coexistence between different religions and cultures. It also represents the human experience that emerges in the end of the novel when the three panels are put together. The tapestry represents a voice of love instead the voice of conflict; it is an alternative metaphor for hope instead the clash of cultures and civilizations that breeds hierarchies. Manfred Lohmayer comments, "The tapestry metaphor is as hopeful as The Map of Love's denouement. There is no happy ending for the novel's characters, and the prospect for Egypt's and the

---

<sup>10</sup> The story of Isis and Osiris in ancient Egyptian mythology revolves around Osiris, an earthly ruler, and his jealous brother Set. Set secretly created a human-shaped casket to fit Osiris, but it was sealed and thrown into the Nile. Isis, devastated, searched for the casket and returned it to Egypt. Set found the casket and enragedly chopped Osiris's body, scattering parts throughout Egypt. Isis reassembled Osiris and wrapped him in bandages. Some accounts suggest that Isis breathed life back into Osiris's body, resulting in the birth of Horus. Horus fought Set to avenge his father's death, but neither god secured an overall victory. Osiris was declared king of the underworld, Horus king of the living, and ruler of the deserts as the god of chaos and evil.

Middle East's futures appears bleak, but a message of hope endures, if only as a mere image stored in a trunk and waiting to be rediscovered in the future" (39). Although Souief ends the novel with Omar's death, baby Sharif comes to life as a glimpse of hope for a better future constructed upon understanding and tolerance between all Egyptians in spite of the differences between them, as Amal and Mabrouka comment. "“from the dead come the living’, ‘the branch is cut but the tree remains’. Mabrouka weeps and wraps and mutters, ‘The precious one goes and the precious one comes.’ (451) .

In addition to Anna's tapestry, the magical grove that Sarif Basha El Baroudi made for his daughter Nur El Hayet serves as an alternative transcultural space wherein plants from different places in the world, such as “an Italian Cypress, a Jacaranda, a Poinciana, a Magnolia, a Persian Lilac and a Palestinian Willow” (361), are brought to live there in a harmonious unity. This magical garden represents to their daughter the harmonious coexistence between them, and paves her the way to see the future from meezaterra lens.

Noteworthy, Souief opens every chapter in the novel, which are 29 chapters, with an epigraph that plays a primordial role in weaving a *Meezaterra* of love and coexistence. The Epigraphs belong to a variety of writers who belong to different times, religions and cultures such as. Shakespeare, Emnam Jalal Eddine Essuetti, Negib Azoury and John Monsell, ...etc. In so doing, Souief intends to weave a transcultural map as an alternative space wherein people inspite of their religious and cultural differences can possibly interact and share knowledge through open dialogue and compassion.

Remarkably, the language of *the Map of Love* that Souief weaves is per se metonymic. In order to construct a meezaterra as an alternative space of coexistence, Souief vacillates between English and Arabic a translational space of transformation; hence, she draws attention to the translational novel or *Arabization* of the novel as a new alternative genre. According to Wail Hassan, “this aspect of the genre and holds that “translational texts may Arabize, Africanize, or Indianize English, sometimes by transliterating words and expressions for which there is no English equivalent, then explaining them

in the text or in a glossary or not all” (754). Likewise, Soueif relies on this strategy in writing Arabic words with English letters such as: “Khalas” (387) to mean “it is enough, and “Ya Sett” stands for madame and “ya Abeih”, a title of respect for the old brOther, (381). Arabic proverbs also appear in a beautiful Arabized spirit. “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) and “if Anna had asked for bird’s milk he would have brought it to her” (392). In Arabizing the language, Soueif is able to dismantle the centrality of English in discourse by appropriating it. Thus, *The Map of Love* is considered as an English-Arabic novel because, as Soueif underlines in an interview that “the novel has an authentic Arab voice in its English expression which culminates in the Arabic word wigdan/inner soul, passion and sensibility” (Massad and Soueif 89). In fact the transliteration of the Arabic words in the novel works in parallel with Amal’s mission of translating the Arabic Egyptian expressions into English. In so doing, Amal infuses the Arabic spirit in the language of the novel. In this regard, Claire Chambers also perceives 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” (British Muslim Fictions 24).

Moreover, In her article *The Strategic Use of Positive Orientalism in Soueif the Map of Love*, Ayshe Ciricir contends that “Soueif draws attention to appropriation, or Arabisation, of European cultural forms, such as the novel genre, to deconstruct the Orientalist discourse. Appropriation is the subversive use of imperial cultural forms and languages and *The Map of Love* resists political and cultural hegemony in its treatment of language” (108). In order to be able to refute the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism and the false representation of the Other, Soueif dismantles the centrality of English by appropriating it, because the relation between English and Arabic is similar to colonizer/colonized relationship. Hence, rather than using common language, Soueif relies on Arabization as an alternative linguistic space that bridges the gap between the characters in the novel, as if their friendship helps them in creating a middle ground between English and Arabic. In doing so,

they dismantle hierarchies and set their differences as a ground for similarity to preserve the social network and coexistence.

Furthermore, the original contribution of Souief in the novel is not related to the insertion of Arabic in English novel (translational text), rather she intends to call attention to the different variations of the language when it is opened to code switching. Souief's astute appears, according to Moore, in inscribing "different pronunciations of English, elementary standard Arabic, idiomatic Egyptian Arabic and even body language in the novel (qtd. In Ciricir, 109). Hence, Souief is not only able to Arabize the language, but to persuade her reader to hear Anna's Victorian style, the American English of Isabel as well as the colloquial Arabic of Egyptian fellaheen women in the same text. In addition, Souief attempts at drawing attention to the role translation plays in interrogating Orientalism and bridging the gap between East and West.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In her enlightening and delighting novel *The Map of Love*, Souief exposes the history of Egypt in a mesmerizing contrapuntal reading. In juxtaposing the colonial past with the postcolonial present of Egypt, Souief notices that Egyptians still suffer from the same problems they experienced before such as terrorism, ignorance, poverty, and most importantly they still indirectly controlled by the Westerner. To refute the inevitability of colonialism and the hierarchies constructed between the Self and the Other through Orientalism hegemonic representations, Souief creates a Meezatterra as a transcultural space that opens channels of dialogue between the Self and the Other, wherein both parts exchange thoughts, construct firm conscience, and transmit voices. Through Meezatterra, Souief acts as an authentic voice as she weaves a ground of empathy and coexistence between cultures and religions.

The success of Suief's meezatterra is translated in the novel through the successful transcultural love and marriage of Anna and Sharif in the past and Isabel and Omar in the present, what breads conscience and unity; the unity that gives a glimpse of light for better future for all humanity through

the birth of Nur El Hayet and baby Sharif. In addition to the successful transcultural marriage of the characters, the Arabization of language resembles the positive marriage between cultures. In order to dismantle hierarchies between the Self and the Other, Souief weaves a linguistic meezaterra, demonstrating the possibility of bridging the chasm between East and West through coexistence, understanding and empathy. In straddling boundaries and dismantling East/West hierarchies, the Map of Love transcends the boundaries of form as it refuses categorization. It refuses to be read as purely romance, historical fiction, travel writing, or even postcolonial. Rather it is all of them and its aesthetic lies in the harmonious unity between all these elements. By transcending boundaries, barriers and crossing points in content and form, *The Map of Love* constructs a Mezzaterra of coexistence, empathy and acceptance between cultures, religions, and traditions.



---

**Chapter Four :**  
**Speaking Trans(re)lation, Speaking Transition:**  
**Showing *Rea* and Heading *Tarig* in Leila**  
**Aboulela *The Translator* (1999)**

Their love story is difficult (...) the problem is first one of communication – how to communicate across the borders of North/South cultural and religious difference...” (Friedman 21, 2009)

#### **4.1.Introduction**

In his article entitled, "*Leila Aboulela and the Ideology of Muslim Immigrant Fiction*" (2008), Wail Hassan compares between Tayeb Salih and Leila Aboulela's novels *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) and *The Translator* (1999). In this comparative study, Hassan asserts that the discourse in Salih's and Aboulela's novels represent *East* and *West* as two dichotomous entities in terms of the climate, traditions, and culture. However, he affirms that both novels and their novelists aspire to modify the discursive and ideological norms of hegemonic representation. Although both novels narrate the journey of two young Sudanese characters to the North, Tayeb Salih's work "mirrors the disillusionment of the 1960s and 1970s generations, hers is a story of recovery and fulfillment" (Hassan, 2008). Aboulela's *The Translator* succeeds in narrating a North-South romantic story with a happy ending to indicate the possibility of bridging the chasm between the two cultures (Hassan, 2008). However, Salih's protagonist (Mustafa Sa'eed) fails to reconcile the contradictions of his life upon his return to Sudan. The failure of both the narrator and Sa'eed is envisaged in their in-betweenness status that alludes to the unsettled conflict between the North and the South in the postcolonial literature of Salih's generation. Thus, the generation of Aboulela's fiction undertake the challenge of on-going first generation project by representing Muslim identity in the West.

The Contemporary generation of transnational writers have grounded ethics through negotiating with the difference. By refusing the polarizing tendencies which historically shaped by political and ideological false assumptions, the cultural narratives could be understood as "frameworks" through which individuals identify themselves in the world and tell stories about the "Other". Historically

speaking, intercultural narratives depicting the relationship between Islam and the West are either narratives showing incompatibility between cultures, espousing by that Samuel Huntington “Clash of Civilizations” or “compatibility” narrative endorsing the possibility of “coexistence” between cultures under the umbrella of acculturation. Yet the third category of possible narrative is called “a paradigm” (Cohen,7). Such emerging paradigm narratives of “a not yet told story” are somewhat concurring with the existing narratives, yet they endorse the idea that cultural boundaries are no longer fixed and cultural authenticity or purity is radically shifted into transcultural fluid space, or as de Souza puts it, culture is no longer a noun but a “verb” (62). Hence, they provide a possible route to the crisis of representation. This chapter is bifocal. on the one hand, Leila Aboulela’ *the translator* can be read as a transcultural novel of self affirmation and transformation of an Arab African Scottish female character due to the cross cultural encounter. On the Other hand, translation is used as a counterhegemonic discursive tool that brings East to West because the protagonist is a translator. Outstandingly, the translation process depicted in Aboulela's novel is inverted. The dominated element does not translate the dominating one in order to assimilate the latter's culture; rather, the dominated element translates its own culture, paving way for the dominating to comprehend it.

Interestingly, the source text that the protagonist has relied on is Q’uran, the holy book and the foundational rock of Muslims Religion. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on the contact zone where postcolonial, translation, and migration studies intersect in their function and the shaping of a place. The latter can be transformed into a fluid translated place or a place of transrelation and hence, it resembles a transition and this colludes with Epstein’s Transculture. Both translation and translator play a primordial role in Leila Aboulela novel, wherein translation is used as an empowering linguistic instrument as well as a metaphor of cultural transposition and modulation.

#### **4.2. *Transforming the Self, Transforming the World: Transcultural Bridges***

Leila Fouad Aboulela (1964-) a Sudanese contemporary novelist. She is the pioneer of *Halal Fiction*, what gives her reputation among many contemporary writers and classified her as a crosscultural

postcolonial writer who tries to bridge the gap between East and West, emphasizing women's struggles in her fiction. The main reason behind selecting her novel as a specimen to this chapter is mainly that it concerned with the conflict evident between cultures. In her novels, Aboulela always tries to find a middle way out of these cultural encounters. Her novels reflect the spirit of Islam and reassures dialogues and interactions among cultures to resist stereotyping and misconceptions of Islam, Arabs and Africans, presenting progressive Islam—democratic in nature to resist patriarchy and colonization misinterpretation of religion and the entire East respectively.

In her semi-autobiographical novel *The Translator* (1999), Leila Aboulela focuses on the practical aspect of Islam and how it can be developed and solidified in a secular environment, going beyond the dichotomy of Islam versus the West. The protagonists in this novel look at being “‘Muslim’ [not only] as a cultural or political identity but something close to the center, something that transcends without assimilating the culture of the West nor denying her gender, nationality, class and race” (“Leila Aboulela”). In so doing, Leila Aboulela’s novel is in tune with Epstein *Transculture* as “an open system of symbolic alternatives to existing cultures and their established sign systems” (Epstein 24). Thus, transculturation enhances the reciprocal effect of the process of interaction that is considered two-way path that can result in new creations; it is the only communicative dynamic that leads to go beyond the dialectic of the polarized discourse of the dominating and the dominated one acting as bridge or a glue between them. In this regard, Dora Sales contends that:

The interaction of different civilizations generates artistic creations that subvert any overarching viewpoint. As a clear reflection of a society where multiple cultures coexist, transcultural writing, as opposed to homogenous viewpoints emphasizes the desire to communicate the interaction and communication between one and the Other. Sometimes, transcultural writers rebel against existing norms in order to generate, rewrite and negotiate them from both their own cultural and transcultural viewpoints. They do this by using the language of and narrative of the (former) colonizer. They

create from the bridge, the border and the interstitial space while working simultaneously with many cultural sources. Transcultural writers' narrative work, particularly in the postcolonial sphere, is an emerging field where these encounters have found voice. Translation may be defined as their attempts to change and rewrite identities that were previously suppressed, obscured, or stereotyped by discourses propagated from the center. (72-73)

In *The Translator*, Aboulela's undergoes an experience of survival and self-transformation, while examining Sammar's life, a Sudanese Muslim widow lives in Scotland. Sammar relocated to Sudan at the age of seven, after she was born in Scotland. She stayed for a considerable time before marrying her cousin Tarig, and moving back to Aberdeen to attend a medical school. After the sudden death of Tarig, who resembled her entire life and world in Aberdeen as she knows no one except him there, Sammar finds herself alone far from her native city of Khartoum haunted by thoughts and memories of her late husband and her separated son Amir, whom she left in Sudan with her mother-in-law to take care for.

Sammar experienced a state of disorientation as she found herself obliged to come to terms not only with the bleak nasty weather of Aberdeen, but with cold loneliness and her memories with Tarig and her family in Khartoum. Amidst her loss, Sammar finds refuge in the return to Q'uran and the five prayers. The five prayers are, for instance, "the sole challenge, the last vestige with normality, without them she would have collapse, forgotten the time when the day turns into night" (14-15). Sammar thinks that the solution to her problems is in religion and not outside of it.

When she started translating Islamic articles from Arabic to English for Rae Isles, with whom she falls in love, a Middle East Historian and a lecturer in *Third World politics* in the same department at a university in Aberdeen, Sammar's life took a turn for the better. Rae is her antithesis; he is an agnostic, yet has an interest in Islam. He has been divorced twice and has a daughter who lives abroad. Whereas Sammar, who works as his Arabic translator, is a widow who has a son is still living in Sudan

with her mOther-in-law. As a pious Muslim woman, Sammar struggles to reconcile her Islamic convictions with her female desires, as she knows for certain that she, as Muslim woman, cannot marry Christian or non-believer.

This intricate love affair is what boosts Sammar to think outside the box through the enactment of her beliefs both in religion and translation, what allows her to undergo self- transformation. Hence, instead of preferring to go on her self-exile and silence, Sammar focuses on finding meaning to her life and a reason to fight the course for, by translating Islam, its true practices and the entire Muslim world and culture to Rae who resembles the Secular West. When Sammar returned to Sudan to translate the interview with *Al Nidaa* group and bring back her abandoned kid, the two of them were temporarily detached to reunite again after they gained social and intellectual knowledge that allowed them to better understand each Other. In the end of the novel, Rea converts to Islam out of his volition instead of Sammar's imposition.

*The Translator* is set in two different cultural contexts and contrasting cities. Aberdeen and Khartoum, respectively. The bleak Scottish weather makes Sammar feel lethargic from the inside, whereas the warm in Khartoum makes her feel excited and alive. The problem with Sammar is that she is deeply immersed in her *Arabic Islamic* culture and refuses to assimilate the Western culture. She distanced herself from both family members in Sudan and from the society in Scotland. For her, the Scottish streets are "a maze of culture shock" (70).

In spite of the fact that she is a Scottish citizen as she was born in Aberdeen, Sammar has strong ties with her homeland Sudan as well as her familial, cultural and religious backgrounds. For this reason, in the novel, rather than depending or conforming to the Social norms and the culture in Aberdeen and the Scottish society as a whole, Sammar is represented as a translator and devout Muslim woman, looking for a *contact zone* between two seemingly incompatible cultures. In his article, "Cross-Cultural Bridges and Transformation in Leila Aboulela' *The Translator*", A. Nejat Töngür affirms that "Sammar is depicted to be seeking a reconciliatory stand point between total rejection of

British cultural norms and ardent assimilation into the larger British society” (136). The novel received nominations for the Orange Prize in 2000 and the IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards in 2001. It was named one of the New York Times' 100 Notable Books of the Year. According to Dora Sales, professor of Jaume University, "With *The Translator*, Aboulela offers a realistic and lucid novel about the search for identity and its constant revision and negotiation, which is always open and ductile" (76).

After the death of her husband, Sammar alienated herself from the surrounding society in Aberdeen. She adheres her Muslim and African identity, through putting a series of Nostalgic, environmental, religious and cultural barriers. Such barriers hindered her change, simply because "change implies the capacity to relinquish at least aspects of a given identity" (Robins 61). Thus, Sammar failed to co-exist with people in Aberdeen, or to build bridges of understanding between people and cultures, what might heal her wounds, allowing an opportunity for self-transformation and transition.

Sammar is depicted as a passive nostalgic woman, who longs for her homeland in Sudan. "Four years and her soul had dived in the past, nothing in the present could touch it" (29). Nostalgia is the means through which Sammar resists the Western culture, because she lacks power to change. Thus, Sammar failed to coexist because she desired to escape her present through bringing her past memories up, what renders her life worthless. Moreover, Sammar does not remember her past life only; rather she even remembers how the African people suffer "there is a "sheer dust and meagerness. Poverty and Sunshine of Africa" (16). Even though she remembers how the African people suffer, she shows no determination to go back home to give a helping hand to those people. Instead, Sammar isolated herself and cut relations with her family in Khartoum, because she fears the return. In addition to her low self-esteem and sense of inferiority, Sammar regards her people in Sudan as inferiors too, as "she wonders that her aunt knows roller blades. "Roller blades, how did they find out about things like that?" (87). Nostalgic memories trapped Sammar to live in a void without doing an effective thing in her life as an educated woman. According to Edward Said "the task of the intellectual "is explicitly to universalize the crisis, to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to

associate that experience with the sufferings of Others” (44). As a result, Sammar’s nostalgia and passivity drives her to fail both as a person and as an intellectual.

Furthermore, the religious difference makes Sammar sensitive towards the society she lives in; what launches a clash within her. The work demonstrates in several occasions how Westerners are sensitive to Muslim Sammar. For example, the department head summons her to remark, "I have no problem at all with the way you dress”. Paradoxically, she means that she does not want to see her different from the Scottish people. Besides, When Sammar learnt that the family of Rae’s ex-wife still in close contact with Rae, as they received him in their house to spend winter holiday with his daughter Mhairi and merry Christmas together, it was a kind of culture shock for her. “In Edinburgh, an old man let his daughter's ex-husband to live with him. This must be civilized behavior, a "amicable divorce." Where she came from, the divorced spouse was someone who 'turned out to be a son of a dog' or she turned out to be nuts' and was treated as such. "No one stayed friends, no one stayed on speaking terms" (37). Moreover, she wonders when she first read a sentence in a letter sent to Rae from his daughter saying "Get Well Soon, Dad"(100), as if the daughter is sending an order to her father, or she “was taught to believe that her father's health was in his hands, under his command" (104).

In spite of the aggressive attitudes towards her as a Muslim, Sammar does not think for a second about how to defend Islam; rather she tries to explain certain Islamic terms for Rae. Sammar does not paly the true role of the translator as she supposed to do, because the translator is “an influential cultural mediator who can employ transition to serve political issues (Simon, 58). Instead of defending her religious identity, Sammar’s religiosity turns into a barrier as it privately practiced and negatively employed. The assault on Islam and Muslims makes her feel estranged and boosts her to stick to her prayers as the “only challenge”. In her days "the only thing she could rouse herself to do was pray the five prayers" (16).

Language is anOther barrier Sammar puts on in her road to self- transformation. Despite being an Arabic-English translator, she lacks confidence in speaking English. Sammar has difficulty

communicating with the Scottish people, though she masters their language. This issue is clear when she visits the library; the sight of the librarians makes her uneasy. "Sammar felt like a helpless immigrant who didn't know any English, she imagined the English words lifting away from her brain, evaporating, forming a light mist" (13). "In this country, when she spoke to people, they seemed wary, on their guard as if any minute she would say something out of place, embarrassing" (6). Despite her fluency, Sammar appears faced subtle difficulties with the language. As a translator in one of the universities, this demonstrates that Sammar's English is perfect; her conversations with Rae are a true evidence on her fluency, though there are some linguistic problems related to the culture of the target language, wherein some Arabic words have no equivalent terms in the target language, because they are deeply rooted in the source language (Arabic) as well as its culture and religion. For This reason, Sammar has used some Arabic terms with the same Arabic pronunciation but in English letters. This way means that "There are aspects of culture and religion that cannot be translated or accurately transmitted from one culture to the Other" (El Ghamedy 25).

The fact that Sammar uses Arabic in her speech does not refer to the speaker's linguistic weaknesses, rather, it has several implications such as, the universality of English language is limited; this means that it fails to represent marginalized people (The Oriental Other) and speak their ideologies. This can also be regarded as a method of cultural expansion in which linguistic alternatives such as loan<sup>11</sup> transfers and *claque*<sup>12</sup> are used to broaden the language. (Tymoczko 24). Notably, Sammar's insistence on speaking Arabic shows how strongly she identifies with her language and culture. As such, it is a way for Sammar to fight against the idea of linguistic genocide<sup>13</sup>, which is defined as "the systematic replacement of an indigenous language with the language of an outside, dominant group, resulting in a permanent language shift and the death of the indigenous language" (Day 164).

---

<sup>11</sup> Loan : in translation, loan is an old term originated in historical linguistics of 1900s( Riionheimo). The phenomenon means word for word translation from one language into another. It resembles literal translation of meaning.

<sup>12</sup> *Claque* : refers to a word borrowed from another language by literal translation; hence it creates a new lexeme in the target language

<sup>13</sup> Genocide : linguistic genocide refers to phenomenon of the death of language.

The Scottish weather is one of the major barriers that hindered Sammar from assimilating the Scottish culture, wherein she finds it too cold to resist; she sits "armed against cold" as if cold weather is a personified enemy" (43). Her way in describing winter weather, as "hostile" (3), demonstrates her loath to the European weather. She remains at home, "watching from her window people doing what she couldn't do. children walking to school through the swirling leaves" (3). Sammar's hostility towards the cold of Aberdeen confines her at home for nearly four days without food. Once she goes out, she rushes up "famished, rummaging the shops for food, dizzy with effort" (3). Sammar's genuine problem stems from her within, she refuses to acknowledge that Europe and Africa are different. Hence, Sammar's hate of the Scottish weather is a by product of her constant comparisons between Aberdeen's bleak weather and the hot one in Sudan, and Africa as a whole.

Regardless the several barriers and fences that separate Sammar from Scottish culture, Aboulela demonstrates that the disparity between the two cultures can possibly be bridged. Aboulela attempts to establish a middle ground in this intricate affair, by espousing the idea of converting the agnostic Rae Isle to Islam in order to marry Sammar, at the end of the novel. In an interview with Aboulela in 2005, Anita Sithi writes in "*Keep the Faith*", in the Guardian:

Aboulela's profound understanding of both cultural and geographic exile is evident in her writing. Her immigrant background formed her transcultural viewpoint, which does not suggest that she has difficulty with in assimilating and adapting host society. On the Other hand, the main female characters in her work explore their identities on personal, cultural, and religious levels. This process of introspection and self reconstruction is facilitated by their physical distance from their native places. Aboulela does, in fact, think that religion is a question of personal faith rather conventions and traditions. She hails from progressive family that did not reject women's rights and independence (her mOther is university professor and her grandmOther studied medicine in Egypt in 1940's). (23)

Religion is the primary barrier that separates Sammar and Rae. She is a committed Muslim; religion is deeply intertwined with identity building (whether cultural, personal, or religious), whereas Rae is an atheist who views Islam through an academic lens, i.e. Islam and Muslims are nothing more than a research topic for him. In her opinion, Sammar thinks that the problem could be easily solved if Rae converts to Islam, through uttering *Al-Shahadah*, ignoring that the gap between them is related to culture incommensurability. Conversion is not pressed by dominant discourse and social structures, rather it is much more prompted by personal beliefs, desires and most importantly the quest for adhering Islam. For this reason, Aboulela unexpectedly converts Rae to Islam, showing that *Hidaya* or faith "comes direct from Allah" (198).

Despite of converting Rae to Islam, it seems that Aboulela did neither explain how he made up his mind, nor showing him posing some profound questions related to conversion. Meanwhile, she allows the reader to get access to Sammar's thoughts about Islam and her way in explaining and presenting Muslim culture and religion to Rae. This sudden conversion is credited to the possibility that Rae gets affected by Sammar's way of communicating Islam through translation. In his View, Ayers declares "It seems legitimate to affirm that Rae's conversion to Islam is the outcome of a process that took place during his contact with Sammar" (Ayers 172). This means that Aboulela intends to explore through her subject matter the true power of translation in both making self-transformation and building bridges between cultures and people in order to heal the deficiencies. Thus, she attempts at taking her reader beyond the mere functionality of minority culture within dominant culture (hybridity, assimilation and acculturation) into a more radical state of pluralism.

According to Alghamdi Alaa, Aboulela character and story take into account Said's Orientalism, but they do so in a way that seeks to assist the Orientalist rather than condemn him. Comparably, Sammar, the main character of Aboulela's novel, takes the reader much beyond the romance story of patriarchal understone by closely examining and showing empathy for the masculine perspective" (24). In her theory "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak contends "if the subaltern has no history and

cannot speak in the framework of colonial production, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow...” (28). Spivak thinks that postcolonial female writers experience effacement because of their culture as well as their gender. Based on the colonial conceptual construction of gender, males are given power and supremacy over females.

#### **4.2.1. The Role of Translation in Self Affirmation and Culture Representation**

The challenge in *The Translator* lies in empowering her protagonist Sammar to speak her voice through translation, in her relationship with the Orientalist Rae. In so doing, Aboulela intends to associate herself and her female character intimately within the colonialist narrative without being subjugated by them. Thus, she gets the ability of writing back to colonialism, and powerfully subvert them. This way the subaltern can finally speak affirming herself.

In postcolonial narrative, female hybrid characters are culturally repressed, and according to Spivack “ it is very often that “white men save brown women from brown men” (Spivak 93). Yet in the case of Sammar, the transcultural communication has given a new equilibrium, wherein Rae, the white man and Orientalist historian is in need of a woman who is able to provide him rescue. For this reason, Aboulela has given Sammar the title of a translator, in order to make her more proficient and able to cope with a multicultural context. Sammar’s proficiency in translating the Orient, along with its language, culture and religion is what turns her agent, marking by that both transition and self affirmation after a long phase of silence.

By considering Aboulela novel a transcultural literary work, this means that it has an underlying objective resembled in decentering monolingualism; then it will be easy to disrupt and dismantle the monolithically worldview. In the global era of Twenty First Century, it seems that transcultural fiction acts as a possible route towards transcultural dialogue; it is a means to overcome the seemingly superficial differences, and to construct out of such differences and particularities transformative bridges, wherein the need for translatability, negotiation, and pluralism, echoing by that N’guigi Wa’thiongo words, written in his text *Moving The Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*:

African, Asian, South American, and European Literature traditions are changing in the direction of freely sharing and taking from this vast history of human creation on the basis of equality and respect for one another. Then, like a universal garden of many colored flowers, the richness of a shared global culture will be expressed in the distinctive qualities of our diverse languages and civilizations. The diversity of many flowers reflects their “floweriness”. Crossfertilization does occur between them, though. They each carry the seeds of a brand-new tomorrow, too.

As an activity, translation reflects the world by using words as a powerful tool to communicate and negotiate both culture and ideological powers. In this regard, Susan Bassnet asserts that.

The process of intercultural transfer is continuous, and translation does not occur in void. Moreover, the process of transferring information across linguistic and cultural barriers takes place multiple steps, which makes translation a highly manipulative activity. Equal treatment of texts, authors, or systems is a rare, if any, aspect of the translation process, which is not a transparent, innocent process and is loaded with significance at every turn. (2)

By considering translation, a dynamic act through which cultural differences are bridged and communications take place, the transformation through such communication is never immediate. Rather, some challenges must be undergone before becoming so. By identifying the protagonists of the novel as visible translators, this means that both Sammar and Rae are linguistically and culturally bilingual, and deeply immersed in their source cultures and religions. Remarkably, the two protagonists are very conscious of the mediation and negotiation between cultures. To gain her by his side both as his translator and beloved, Rea Isle, the Western male, is, thus, obliged to alter some of his beliefs in order to accompany her where she stands for his own benefit rather than for hers.

By identifying Sammar as a translator, this means that she is highly skilled and an excellent language purveyor for the elite. Yet this role can never be fulfilled without her own power and

venerability. Being a translator, Sammar is able to make a link between two different linguistic worlds, and has authority over several fields while assisting Others in setting a middle ground between them. Thus, Aberdeen university's need for Sammar, the translator, means that there is a fracture or a gap, and the presence of the latter is necessary to bridge this existing gap. In the regard of the translator's visibility and involvement, Antoine Berman argues that.

The fundamental goal of translation – is to express in writing a specific relationship with the Other and to enrich one's own identity by utilizing the foreign. This is in stark contrast to ethnocentric framework of all cultures, which is driven by a kind of narcissism that aims to make society a pure and unadulterated whole. [...] An opening, a conversation, a crossbreeding, a decentering is the essence of translation. It is either "a putting in touch with or it is nothing at all to translate. (qtd in, Sales78)

Despite the obstacles that separate them, particularly religion that regarded as part of Sammar's identity construction, Sammar falls in love with Rae Isle, because he resembles a space of freedom to her as a woman; meanwhile, she cannot turn her back to her culture as well as Islam that she learnt how to understand the world and fight the course through.

In spite of the fact that the translator is considered to have subservient role, in terms that he/she is not the creator of meaning but purveyor of Others meanings, this role is primordial in gluing cultures. In discussing the irony in Aboulela's title, Nadia Butt argues that the work portrays Islam as "untranslatable," which is a valid criticism. Certain parts of culture and religion cannot be accurately translated or transmitted from one culture to another. To obtain comprehension or union, one may only seek to convey them wholesale" (qtd. In Elghamdi 25). Sammar bravely attempts to build bridges where none exists, by using her skill as professional translator in bending words to convey the desired message, and therefore, speak her voice.

Furthermore, in order to create a new story that had never been told before, Aboulela complicates the plot structure within which Sammar and Rae Isle find themselves. From his point of view, El

ghamdi argues that "this story has the power not only to overturn the colonial power dynamic within which it is situated, but to effect and explicate change by conquering the two problematic elements originally introduced, namely, Rae's persistent illness and Sammar's own compulsive silence" (26).

The theme of Rae's illness is established early in the narrative and is revisited throughout. Rae's asthma is linked to the West and the harsh winter weather, which aggravates his condition. "loneliness is Europe's malaria" (103). According to Edward Said, "the original Orientalism, a compulsion to look East in order to find (or construct) a 'lost' part of oneself" Rae's health problem will never be cured unless he reunites with Sammar in Sudan; but, to do so, he must understand her and accept their differences" (1994). That is why, Sammar's silence is a vital component in the story of self affirmation and transformation that Aboulela intends to convey. Her journey from silence, fragmentation to full voice and agency represents the transformative growth both in her voice and social integration.

As a translator, Sammar acts as transmitter of cross-cultural concepts and values through language; but she must silence herself in order to ensure understanding. For this reason, silence appears in the beginning of the novel. Despite her love to Rae, she refused to tell him about her former life experience. Rather, she relies on her linguistic intelligence as translator along with her hybrid knowledge in including what is pertinent and sifting away undesirable content in transmission. In doing so, Sammar does not only translate words from English to Arabic, but rather, she translates her own life experience to Rae, by sending him the real image that he can understand. Thus, Sammar's silence is both cultural and deeply personal, and the need to silence herself is one of the challenges that should overcome throughout the narrative.

This silence carries a strong connotation that negotiates the dominant narrative related to healing Rae's intractable suffering. Sammar used cooking as a metaphor to anticipate to her own silence. She claims that "her intrusive thoughts and words are like the "froth" that forms when she makes chicken soup and must be "lifted away" before the soup can be served (7). She believes that the dish would be undeniable if the froth included in, because the latter mars the soup. For this reason, she pushed it

down to take it over. This froth is related to her past life, her family problems with her aunt and her son she left behind in Khartoum. All these matters should be removed, so that they cannot impact her life again. As a translator, Sammar is “moulding Arabic into English” and leaving a finished product that is “transparent like a pane of glass” (167). For this reason, she feels that her past life and family issues are no more than a froth on the surface of her life and regarded superfluous to her communication with Rae; thus, she desires to obliterate her past life and to “... make a gift of [her]self, a child to be moulded” (7).

Sammar’s desire to dispose of her past life and memories is a result of personal and psychological agony rather than cultural awareness. Due to Sammar’s aunt and mother-in-law abusive words and hostility, Sammar felt as if guilt is imposed on her. Again, when she returned to Khartoum, her professionalism and intelligence have been sharply interrogated by her aunt to whom she resembles a source of fear. Therefore, the feeling of being guilty is associated with Sammar’s life in the West. Yet, if Sammar considers her life in the West regretful and damaging, this means that Aboulela will focus more on the psychological identity of the character and her personal trauma, as the character struggles to adapt or assimilate to the host society culture, and this is not the message that she intended to convey. Noteworthy, Sammar is determined to transcend her subjugated self without the help of Rae.

Upon her return to Khartoum, Sammar was able to face her past problems and paved the way to peaceful coexistence with her family as she turned deeply aware of her religion and culture, and Ramadan opens a possibility for bridging the gap with her family and brings solace to her life in Rae’s absence. Thus, the character searches for her own identity on personal, cultural and religious levels, in a complete process of self-interrogation and self reconstruction that the geographical distance from the home land Sudan has fostered it.

As it is earlier mentioned in this chapter, Sammar’s silence is somewhat connected to her role as a translator. Hence, Sammar and Rae, as language transmitters and purveyors of Muslim culture to Western intellectuals, resolve their differences by sharing perspectives and forming a relationship

comparable to that of a translator. An interstitial discussion with places for resistance and creation, where the most important thing is to understand one another. That is, because they want to communicate and create an in-between place for themselves, they symbolically translate their differences and use them as a basis for locating their similarities and hence understanding.

#### **4.2.2. Translation: A New Paradigm for Transcultural Spaces and Identities**

The denomination "translator", etymologically derived from Latin, means "bearing across," and "literally means the one who straddles linguistic worlds and assists Others in finding their way between them and bridges an existing gap that holds cultures together" (Qureship 69).

In *The Translator*, the protagonists' profession as translators is read as a metaphor wherein postcolonial, translation and migration studies interconnect to construct the place and transcultural identities; this place can be transformed into fluid translated space or a place in translation. It is the contact zone wherein characters meet both personally and culturally, since the novelist employed translation as an instrument of fiction, in which its first level is linguistic transfer whereas the second acts as cultural mediator between disparate cultures and ideologies. Thus Aboulela as many Other theorists and novelists has fictionalized translation and make it a theme for expressing new configurations of cultural spaces. In this regard, Alesandera Rizzo asserts that "Translations is a road that allow immigrants to remould their identities, by challenging the notion of place and translation itself" (143).

In literature, original aesthetic works are generally followed by subsequent translations. Translation allows readers to make a constant shift between the original text and its translation, hence, this shift entails another shift from one language and culture into another. This permanent shift represents a transitional movement that bridges the gap between the original text and its translation, through the presence of a place. The latter is regarded as a fluid space or a place in translation through which writers challenge the notions of invisibility and inequality; therefore, they would be able to re-read the history of marginalized identities and cultures from this contact zone. Translation in this regard

turns into a power of navigating across linguistic and cultural boundaries instead of a mere reproduction of texts; it is an activity that emerges from real and political contexts rather than neutral places. Translation, as Susan Bassnett remarks, becomes “an exciting journey,” for it is “about wanting to cross boundaries and enter into new territory” (11).

Correspondingly, in Aboulela novel, Sudan and Scotland as two disparate geographical spaces are strategically translated by Sammar to create out of them her own space. By using cultural translation, Sammar succeeds in crossing borders through the process of translation, while she is writing and transferring Khartoum, Arabic language, culture, Islam and her own identity, creating by that her own space within the hosting place. The latter is transformed into a fluid transcultural space. Sammar, for instance, succeeds in transposing her homeland Khartoum into the Scottish space, where the Arabic culture is uncommon or does not exist at all. Hence, in this transcultural fluid space, individuals (both immigrants and natives), languages and cultures have the possibility to co-exist.

In dealing with space, Aboulela describes it in a fluid, complicated manner, frequently cutting off links with reality to retell experiences and sensations through imagined places or along hallucinations. By using cultural translation, Sammar transposes the local culture to the foreign space in Scotland; hence, she succeeds in transferring her native space, including material culture, to the adopted space. In the very beginning of the novel Sammar is depicted as a traveller/translator, her widowhood pushed her to work as professional translator. Her sense of exile is magnified by the permanent loss of her husband along with the loss of her homeland Khartoum, and her son she left there. Her first difficulty appears as she could not cope with the misty foggy cold weather of Scotland as well as the people in Aberdeen, as they described as superhuman giants or simply different. Eventhough she acknowledged that she has something in common with Rae Isle, yet she still believes that they belong to different worlds divided by high barriers of religion, race, and nationality.

In part one, Sammar described home as chandelier on the ceiling of her life, circles of lights” and the main source of her stability and safety (32); for this reason, she criticized Other different cultures and lifestyles as foreign. Yet upon her return to her home land Khartoum, Sammar succeeds in constructing a balanced identity, in which she builds a bend with her family and roots; meanwhile she feels nostalgic to Rea and her job as translator. “she [finds] herself nostalgic for her old job, the work itself, moulding Arabic into English, trying to be transparent like a pane of glass not obscuring the meaning of any word” (150).

Language plays a primordial role not only in finding her place, but in creating it where it does not exist. Following the dream that the novel unfolds through, Sammar meets Rae at the Winter Gardens, which display varied habitats from all over the world in the center of the foggy metropolis. At the Winter Gardens entrance, significant language is employed to identify and describe the gardens to the public, emphasizing language's involvement in place construction: “The door to the Winter Gardens (an extended greenhouse in Duthie Park) was covered with signs. So, no prams or pushchairs allowed, sorry no dogs allowed, opening hours 9.30 till dusk” (4). In referring to the contributing role of words or language in creating a place, according to Ashcroft et al, "does not simply propose a binary separation between the 'place' named and described in language, and some 'real' place inaccessible to it but rather indicates that in some sense place is language, something in constant flux, a discourse in process" ( 345-346). Besides, Sammar also observed that everything in Britain “was labeled, everything had a name. She had got used to the explicitness” (4).

Across Sammar’s notes, Aboulela intends to allude to the colonial history, wherein labeling played an important role in creating tow dichotomous worlds separated by geographical boundaries to serve political ideologies. In this regard, Ashcroft et al claim that “. . . language always negotiated a kind of gap between the word and its signification. In this sense, the dynamic of ‘naming’ become a primary colonizing process because it appropriates, defines, captures the place in language” (Ashcroft *et al* 346). Unlike people in Aberdeen who view Sammar as an ostracized *Other*, Rae never labeled her.

Rather he sees their differences as grounds for locating their similarities and generating understanding. Once Sammar feels accepted, she created her space within the host society. Her sense of the place changes from an alienated Other into someone who belongs to Aberdeen. Sammar feels at home in the first conversation she has at Rae's house, what reinforces their relationship.

When she visits Rae's house for the first time with her Pakistani-Scottish friend Yasmin, "she thought as she drank her tea that she was in a real home. She had not been in a real home for a long time" (22). Then, the idea of home turns to be more inclusive. When Sammar makes a reference to school uniforms in Sudan, as she puts her finger on a picture "[from a magazine article about schoolgirls in Somalia], Rae was watching her, a look in his eyes like kindness. Encouraged she said, 'I used to wear a uniform like that in secondary school'" (17). Responding on her statement that indicates her difference, Rae is persuaded to talk about his own school uniform too, showing similarities between them. "They made us wear shorts even in the winter. It was awful, walking to school in the cold" (17).

Outstandingly, in discussing their differences to put common grounds between them, Sammar's hyphenated identity transcends the concept of home, transforming it into an open space in which she feels cared for, respected and her loneliness is cast away. Outside Rae's house, "Sammar stepped into a hallucination in which the world swung around. Home had come here. Its dimly lit streets, its sky and the feel of home had come here and balanced just as before her" (21). Furthermore, "She saw the sky cloudless with too many stars, and imagined the night warm, warmer than indoors." She smelled dust and heard stray dogs barking in the street's rubble and potholes. A bicycle bell tinkled, frogs croaked, and the muezzin coughed into the microphone, starting the azan for the Isha prayer" (21).

One assumes that Sammar reminds herself that the sense of place is different now, because she feels respected; hence the restrictions that had kept her silent so long were being breached. "They shattered when she stated, in Rae's flat, with her fingertips on the magazine, 'I used to wear a uniform

like that in school.' The rules smashed and shattered her head into little light fragments" (45). Once she felt his acceptance, Aberdeen turned into a space wherein Sammar experiences at her subconscious level that she is at home. This confirms that home is felt in the transcultural experience, which turns out to be the site of interaction among all existing and potential cultures, wherein grounds of understanding and compassion are constructed and the restrictions imposed by one single culture escaped. Thus, home is a choice; it is "where a person chooses to be on the border's of one's own culture or beyond it" (24), as Epstein emphasized. Similarly, in that same night Sammar felt she was back. This was "her first dream of the present, the first time this grey landscape had found a place in her sleeping mind. Four years and her soul had dived into the past, nothing in the present could touch it" (29).

Her feeling of being at home had erased the spatial barriers between Sudan and Scotland, leaving her wondering, "Where was she now?" What country? What year? She climbed the steps, entering a hallucination in which the world had swung around. Home and the past had arrived, balanced specifically for her" (41). In blurring the boundaries of the place, Aboulela is able to challenge Orientalists claims of the differences between the two presumably disparate worlds *East* and *West*. Hence, as the notion of boundaries turned false, their binary opposition gets blurred too.

Remarkably, when Sammar realizes her actual feeling of place and being, she "ran up the stairs that she had frequently taken a step at a time, dragging her grief." Now the stairs had a distinct vibe and brightness" (41). She now sees her apartment through new eyes: "Ugly curtains, faded bedspread [...]" "She held these things in her hands, as if for the first time" (67). She also resolved to get rid of her belongings, as she had done following Tarig's death, but this time she feels differently since she is certain of what she wants to do. "Big black bags, folding and putting stuff away in a bag... But now, with no anguish or burning in her head and chest, she worked quietly, deciding what she wanted to keep and what she didn't" (67). She finally transforms her "hospital room" into a new space, reflecting her new/old self".

Furthermore, Sammar's relationship with Rae and their daily conversations transforms her relation with people in Aberdeen. Unlike her years of isolation and silence, Sammar now knows the place and she can go shopping or participate in daily activities, because she has a new sense of belonging: "The shops were beginning to open their doors. Sammar passed a newsagent, a sports shop, fishmonger, bakery. The grocer shop which sold halal meat was closed; it opened late in the day. . ." (66). In the past, Sammar was highlighting the idea of difference and separateness between "them" and "us", but now regards things from a different lens. Hence, Sammar experiences a state of reverse nostalgia when she was able to find contact zone between the borders of homeland and host land.

Things that stood out—an earring on a man's earlobe, a lady strolling a dog large enough to swallow the infant she was pushing in a pram [...] Sammar no longer noticed these things, nor did she stare at them in terror, as she had done in previous years. Her eyes had gotten numb over the years, and she had gradually realized and felt relieved that she was not alone, that not everyone believed what the billboards proclaimed, and that not everyone understood why that woman maintained such a massive, ferocious dog in her home. (70)

Noteworthy, when Sammar and Rae intend to go in two different directions. Rae plans to travel to Sterling to attend his uncle's burial, while Sammar travels to Egypt as an interview interpreter and then to Khartoum to meet her relatives, Sammar says: "more than anything in the world, now, she wanted to go with him to Stirling" (73). And, when she broke off with Rae and left back to Sudan, the meaning of home shakes again to generate conflicting senses, as she felt that weather in Khartoum is sterile. "Sammar sat on the porch and there was no breeze, no moisture in the air, all was heat, dryness, desert dust" (195). For this reason, she recalls her words in the first visit to Khartoum at age seven: "Home was a vague place, a jumble of what her mother said. Home was a grey and white place like in the photographs of her cousins which arrived air mail" (66). One understands that the dialogic configuration of what home is, allows Sammar to discern the true meaning of home; that home comes

out of real experience rather than imaginations. Being at home does not mean to be attached to a particular place and fixed boundary; rather, home is the feeling of compassion that makes her inner life stable and balanced.

In addition to depicting Sammar's personal identity in between two worlds due to the unsettled relation with her family, her professional identity as culture mediator and translator plays an important role in blurring boundaries and bridging the gap between the two desparate worlds and cultures, by creating a zone of contact wherein people and cultures could possibly interact to set grounds of tolerance, coexistence and understanding.

Sammar's profession is interpreted as an allegorical. She works as a translator at the university, and she is even transferred to Egypt to work as fundamentalist's interview translator (with whom she openly opposes) and British mediator. The experience of translation turns as a test for Sammar's faith, wherein she introduces Islam to the reader through her daily life in Aberdeen. For instance, the reader learns the meaning of Hidjab, fasting and the five prayers which are presented as part of her culture and religious identity a long with a cultural choice to practice them within a particular boundary. In this perspective, Caryl Emerson believes that "to understand anOther person at any given moment, therefore, is to come to terms with meaning on the boundary between one's own and anOther's language. to translate" (qtd. In Abu Shomer<sup>7</sup>).

Accordingly, the relationship between Rae and Sammar presents an example of transcultural exchange and communication; their love, conversations along with the process of translation surpass the stagnant binaries between East and West and the polarized colonial discourse. Thus, both Sammar and Rae are transcultural and translingual subjects who learn through translation that the in-between space is in fact a zone of contact between cultures and it entails understanding, constant negotiation and most importantly decision-making in a particular context and time.

As translators, Sammar and Rae play a primordial role in communicating their differences and negotiating the limits between them. The translators should not confine themselves in transferring and

transposing words and texts from one language to the Other; rather, the translator's role is not neutral because the key role of translation is ideological in nature. In transcultural narrative, translation turns into a vehicle for transculture identity construction and culture representation. In Aboulela novel, translation becomes a way of survival and intercultural communication for transcultural subjects who embody the complexity of cultural encounter that persuade them to negotiate their differences, while looking for their place in this transnational world. As a result, transculture as a contact zone between cultures emerge.

### 4.3. Exchange is Oxygen: Language Appropriation and Culture Representation

Translation as an exciting journey as it is about crossing one realm to enter a new one, showing by that cultural interaction. The names of the protagonists in Aboulela novel are not arbitrarily chosen, rather each name represents the interplay between language appropriation and culture representation. Although the name of the protagonist *Sammar* is rarely given to girls in Khartoum, as it is uncommon in the entire Sudan, "perhaps she would have been given a more common one" (Aboulela,5), because she is the only girl named Sammar in school and college. Yet, when Rae asks her of the meaning behind her name. "[d]o you pronounce it like the season, summer?" (5), Sammar replies, "[y]es, but it does not have the same meaning" (5). Sammar goes on elucidating that "[i]t means conversations with friends, late at night. It's what the desert nomads liked to do, talk leisurely by the light of the moon" (5). As the narrative progresses, these conversation is materialized through extended telephone conversations until late at night between the two. By making connection between night conversations and Nomad life in interpreting the name *Sammar*, Aboulela offers a hint to cultural representation, in which the name Sammar is acutely attached to desert or the Orient as Orientalists viewed it. The name Sammar is chosen by Mahassen, her aunt, the only strong and opinionated woman in the novel, or she describes her as "a true leader really" (7).

Remarkably, by choosing a name *Sammar* which is neither a common one in Sudan nor one that is completely uncommon in Scotland, due its recognizable rhythm, Aboulela places Sammar in a

position of in-between, where she can easily navigate back and forth between cultures. As a result, the name Sammar that signifies long conversations refers exactly to the protagonist's mission as translator who acts as language mediator and culture representative. In depicting Sammar as an ordinary person with profound meaning; it attempts at eliminating the possibility of being an ideological person. she "felt of herself to be simple, someone with a simple need, easily fulfilled, easily granted" (51).

Moreover, the name *Rae* is much more familiar in the Orient than in Europe. In English, the name *Rae* should be written with "y" or "ea" rather than "ae" to mean *Ray* or the thread of light. However, the name is a homonym to the Arabic word "Rai"= "رأي" which stands for "opinion" in Arabic language. For this reason, Sammar comments on his name saying, "[y]es, ... He had lots of opinions" (154). As an Orientalist Historian and intellectual who wrote a book on *The Illusion of An Islamic Threat*, Rae holds different opinions from the rest of his community about the Orient, what reflects the different stereotypes, false assumptions and prejudices that Orientalist intellectuals and Supremacist have formed on Islam and Muslims, to misrepresenting them. Significantly, Rae's last name "*Isle*" is also a reference to the British Isles and the country's colonial history.

From the very beginning of the novel, it seems that both Sammar and Rae are aware of the feeling of empathy that exists between them. Sammar is aware of Rae's loneliness and need due to his physical collapse (as he is asthmatic), because she herself suffers from loneliness and need in a cold society that considers her as a mere Other. Rae also seems to have similar feeling of empathy towards her. He told her that "I have never had so much empathy for anyone in my life". However, empathy alone will not bridge the gap between them unless objective knowledge about the Other checks negative prejudices and representations and anticipates conversation with them. Both protagonists are well-versed in their respective domains (Scotland and Africa). According to Alred, interaction with the Other should be built in the complicated process of mediation and negotiation that places the individual between identities and cultures, rather than simply with empathy or in a contrastive attitude. In his view, Alred regards that.

The centrifugal movement of each group to build a new center of interaction on the boundaries and frontiers that unify rather than split them is the locus of contact, not the centripetal reinforcement of one group's identity by comparison with Others. Frontiers become portals and invites rather than barriers and limits. (Stevens *et al.*34).

Interestingly, the name of Sammar's husband *Tarig* is also loaded with meaning. The Arabic name is Tarek, with final "k" or "qf" in Arabic, and it means "the evening caller" or a "shining star" "نجم طارق"; yet Sammar insisted on pronouncing it with final "g" "طريق" when Rae queries the right spelling of the word. This means that the word means finding the exact road; hence, by considering Sammar and Rae transcultural subjects, they are looking for their true road or place in this world, wherein long conversations and the interplay between language and culture create a zone of contact, to possibly negotiate their differences and build bridges of understanding, away from the polarized discourse of Self/the Other or us/them. Accordingly, this justifies the above mentioned statement, that Aboulela has not randomly chosen the names of her protagonists. Rather, names such as Sammar and Rae are loaded with cultural meanings, and they bear representation to Muslim and Western worlds, respectively. Significantly, the name *Tarig* resembles Transculture as a new possible road, or antidote to "the clash of civilization", "the false representations of the Other", and "the hierarchic polarized discourse", attempting at bridging the gap between the two disparate worlds *Islam* and *the West* through culture understanding.

In order to rethink the crisis of culture representation, the basic premise of contemporary transculture narrative be captured in the two questions: "how particular societies differ from each Other", and "how all human societies resemble one another" (qtd in Abu Shomer 11). According to Kirasawa, the answer to the two questions does not necessitate neither to domesticating the "exotic" nor to "exoticize the domestic" (12). This means that the distinction between the two does not need "involvement" in terms of assimilating the host country culture nor "detachment" which means giving

back to homeland culture. Similarly, the employment of English in Aboulela novel should not be viewed as an act of betrayal to her native language and culture. Rather, she uses English without any attempt to distort the culture of origins.

Aboulela inserted many words which are deeply rooted in the Arabic language and Muslim culture and identity, what adds rhetoric and cultural value to the novel. Expressions such as "Eid Mubarak" (177), "Wudu" (185), i.e (ablution), "Sharia" (26), i.e (Islamic jurisprudence), and "Ya Allah, Ya Arham Elrrahimeen" (22), are intentionally inserted in Arabic, though they are translatable to add culture profundity to the novel as well as promoting transcultural dialogue, the main objective of the novel, as it shocks/shakes readers to take part both in translation process and to examine/interact with the culture the authoress represents. Furthermore, the untranslatability of words means that there is a culture bound in which the interpretation of certain words which are deeply rooted in culture leads to misconception especially if they are interpreted out of their cultural context. This exactly what disappoints Sammar while reading *Al-Nidaa* Manifesto. "The document was handwritten, badly photocopied and full of spelling mistakes. It was stained with tea and what she guessed to be beans mashed with oil" (5).

In depicting the *Manifesto* as poorly photocopied and full of mistakes, Aboulela alludes to the distorted image of Islam in Western eyes along with the false assumption Orientalists constructed on Islam and Muslims, and the entire Orient in their literature. In Sammar's opinion, it appears so paradoxical that a small group, even though distinct, is unable to develop a manifesto in a precise and clear language, and claiming to be the authentic voice of all Muslims. A manifesto rife with errors serves as a mirror of the *Al-Nidaa* members' illiteracy in Arabic. Consequently, one might assume that it also illustrates their ignorance of Islam per se. Besides *Al Nidaa manifesto* is mainly based on the images that mainstream Western media itself used to highlight the different stereotypes about Muslims.

The main objective of Orientalist literature and Western media is to create a broad picture of the Muslim World based on a few specific elements that have been removed from their cultural contexts. They do this in order to implant specific images of Islam and Muslims into the collective consciousness of Westerners, as doing so best advances their projects. Relying on her astute, Aboulela skillfully illustrates the danger that comes out monolithic discourse and one sided story, especially when it is based on fragmented information.

#### **4.4. Islam as a Life Map: Dismantling Hierarchy and Bridging East and West Gaps**

In her suggestive title *The Translator*, Aboulela places the metaphor “translator” within transculture discourse to negotiates the crisis of representation of Islam and Muslims in Western academia. The Scottish Orientalist Historian Rae Iles and the Sudanese Translator Sammar symbolically refer to *Islam* and *the West*, respectively. Aboulela transcultural literary work seems to share an underlying aim, namely, to decenter monolingualism and dismantle a monolithical worldview. Therefore, a possibility for transcultural dialogue will be opened to bridge the gap, through renegotiating borders as not fixed, but an open space of multiple voices to overcome the seemingly incommensurable differences.

In addition to Rae and Sammar, several Other characters add weighty contribution in enriching the novel ‘s transculture discourse, by revealing their diverse plural voices in which the novel balances. The novel introduces Rae’s youth friends Chris and Steve who first stepped the Orient with them, wherein they visited Egypt, Libya to settle finally down in Morocco where the former encountered his first ex-wife Amelia who is a blend of English, Arab and Spanish cultures. In addition, Rae’s uncle David, who converted to Islam and constructed his Muslim family in Egypt. Moreover, the presence of Yasmin, Sammar’s Scottish Pakistani friend and Rae’s assistant along with Rae’s friend the British Lebanese Fareed have a significant presence in constructing the narrative, and enriching the discussion on West-East relationship. All of these characters are depicted as autonomous subjects constructing a

world with multiple voices, making the world an open space of culture contact, what allows them to renegotiate the notion of fixed borders.

Among this multitude of personalities embracing diverse points of views about the world, two significant voices of Rae and Sammar emerge to echoing their surrounding voices and communicating their incommensurable differences to create a fluid zone of personal and cultural contact. Locating the novel in Transculture narrative and “open spaces”, Rizzo argues that this process “subverts the hierarchic polarities of the privileged original” (147). In so doing, Aboulela renegotiates borders as well as cultures which appear as neither fixed and stable, nor sufficient in its own, but fluid and permeable subject to constant change.

In bridging the gap between *the West* and *Islam*, Phillips demonstrates in her article “*Leila Aboulela’s the Translator: Reading Islam in the West*” that “by portraying common Muslim characters that are neither fanatical nor suppressed by their faith, endure hardships on a daily basis, and navigate identity concerns in a transnational setting, Aboulela aims to glue the misunderstanding between West and East” (66).

Noteworthy, the distorting image of the *Other* and propagating fallacies about its culture and religion is deeply rooted in the history of Orientalism discourse. Astutely, Aboulela implicitly treat several intricate issues related to the misrepresentation of the *Other* and the discourse of antagonism between West and East, through the love story of the translator Sammar and the Orientalist Rae. Although the narrative moves back and forth in time and geography, showing Sammar’s comparative perspectives about the Scottish and Sudanese cultures, the reader is persuaded to take part in this progressive incidents through the different expectations constructed of the love story.

To refute Western misconceptions about Islam and Arab Muslim women, Aboulela opens the narrative, employing Sammar's self-analysis of later restored subjectivity and agency as a new instrument. According to Amal Amireh, these misconceptions resemble “the usual laundry list of the

eternal grievances of Arab woman” (qtd. In Zennoun 9). Such list includes false images about woman’s passivity, veils as instrument’s of oppression and silence, polygamy, and many Other issues that represent the backwardness of Arab-Muslim world.

In depicting the protagonist Sammar wearing a veil , Aboulela intends to go beyond presenting the image of the modest Islamic woman wearing *Hijab* (Islamic dress and head scarf). Sammar “covered her hair with Italian silk, her arms with tropical colours. She wanted to look as elegant as Benazir Bhutto, as mesmerizing as the Afghan princess she had once seen on TV wearing hijab, the daughter of an exiled leader of the mujahideen” ( 9). Thus, Sammar veil is a source of her agency rather than passivity and silence. In order to mark the power of self -transformation, Aboulela associates Sammar with Benazir Bhutto, the Afghan princess and the leading Pakistani politician and prime minister.

In his article, *Re-Sitting Religion and Creating a Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Souif and Leila Aboulela* , Geoffry Nash claims that “The depiction of the veil also bespeaks the writer’s larger strategy of “re-appropriating loaded Islamicisms from the lexicon of Western intolerance” (30). For this reason, when Sammar has recovered from her depression and the sense of loss, she bought new clothes and scarves with vivid colours. In fact, Sammar’s passivity is much more related to her heavy attachment and love to her late husband Tarig instead of patriarchical society’s oppression, as if she obliterates the self in the Other. Her memories of her childhood in Khartoum are more about Tarig than about herself, to the extent that she even fails to distinguish between her actions and his own actions, while retaining her memories: “Was it Tarig who always shaped designs in the dust with his feet? Or was it she? Shifted twigs, dented bottle tops, kicked around . . .” (27).

In *The Translator*, Aboulela exposes a number of issues related to the exoticized Western representations of the silent subaltern, and woman in general. Instead of presenting Muslim culture and its religious practices as alienating for women, the novel portrays fasting as a way for nurturing the Islamic culture. In remembering her childhood memories, Sammar acknowledged that fasting

practices were not exclusively limited to boys; girls also practiced fasting to express their strength and to imitate their mOthers. Sammar recalls, “But they all had been like that, even the girls. Are you fasting? A cool yeah, or just a nod, deliberately casual, like it was not a big thing. Though later they would copy their mOthers, my head aches, I can’t bear it. I have lost weight, I can hardly eat at night” (31).

Comparatively, the text alludes to the fluidity of this experience by mentioning how it is perceived differently depending on where you are. Fasting Ramadan is completely different in Aberdeen due to the shorter days and cold weather. “Cheating”, “Too easy, it doesn’t count”(31), Tarig used to tell Sammar jokingly. Fasting Ramadan was viewed as a fanatical, rigid religious practice in the West, because of false and misleading representations of Islam as a monolithic, alien philosophy. To portray the true meaning and picture of fasting as an Islamic and cultural tradition with multiple purposes and extricate it from their fallacies, Aboulela conveys this image through the enthusiasm of teenagers such as Sammar and her cousins and their emotions while undergoing fasting experience. “Sammar remembered [Tarig] fasting Ramadan when he was twelve and still going swimming, riding his bike in the burning heat of the afternoon, defiant and a little crazy, wanting to prove he was strong” ( 32). Hence, Aboulela is able to extricate it from Western false representations.

In order to indicate Qu’ran as a daily Muslim practice instead a fanatic ideology, Aboulela refers to Sammar’s childhood memories. As a child Sammar used to recite the words of the Qur’an while crossing “treacherous streets where rabid dogs barked too close. ‘Say. I take refuge in the Lord of daybreak . . .’, At night too, inside the terrifying dreams of childhood, she had said the verses to push away what was clinging and cruel” (102). Thus, Islam and Quaran are sources of woman security and empowerment rather than oppression and silence.

In subverting Western false assumptions about the role religion plays in Muslims life, the novel comparatively shows that there is a sharp distinction between Islam as divine law and some non-Islamic cultural practices adopted by human beings and it reflects their limited mindset. According to

Marina Lazreg, « hegemonic Westerner representations depict religious dogma as the sole reality governing the Muslim and Arab women's lives » (qtd. In Zennoun 12). In Islam, the widowed women, for instance, must wait four months and ten days, before thinking to start her life over. Yet, Sammar imposed on herself a harsh mourning period of four years, before she thinks of remarriage. In the end, she recognized how reasonable are the Islamic laws than the laws she embraced. "Sammar thought, as she often thought, of the four months and ten days, such specifically laid out time, not too short and not too long. She thought of how Allah's Sharia was kinder and more balanced than the rules people set up for themselves" (69). In a similar vein, when Sammar was alone in her office, in the absence of her office mate Diane, she locks the door from the inside in order to create a private religious context; but at the airport, and at praying time, when sammar finds no specific place for praying, thus, she chooses to pray where she was sitting. " it was time to pray and the saddest thing was that there was nowhere to pray. . . . Sammar prayed where she was, sitting down, not moving" (132); what demonstrates that Islam is sympathetic with Muslims.

Moreover, Sammar's insecurity comes out of her fear of some social practices back in Sudan such as « Honor killing » instead of Islam as a divine law. When Rae proposes to take her in a private ride to show her a lighthouse, she apologizes to not being able to accept his proposal, criticising her society's practices which are more tolerant with men over women. "Once upon a time, in another part of the world, were the fears someone will see us together, alone together ... a woman's reputation is fragile as a match stick ... a woman's honour ... Reputation was the idol people set up, what determined the giving, the holding back. A girl's honour ... your father will kill you ... your brother will beat you up [emphasis is original]" (82). Sammar perceives Scotland as a secure place that subverts the laws of "idols" back in her "home", but she never criticised Islam. Rather, she privileges the Islamic ethic of self-monitoring over both Western and Eastern notions of individual freedom. Unlike the laws of "idols" , Islam appears as a universal ethic that transcends the geographical and cultural boundaries of a particular place and time. It is a life map that provides a new vision to this

wrold . “But idols’ powers are not infinite. They cover a place, a particular community and a time. Sammar watched Reputation lose its muscle, its vigour, shrink and frizzle out in this remote corner of the world. When idols fall, the path to the truth is uncluttered, clear. Who saw her, knew her, was with her all the time wherever she went?” (57).

Concerning the notion of polygamy or poligamous suitor, Aboulela has implicitly discussed it through the relationship between Mahacen and Sammar. JanMohamed describes the two women relation as the “conflation of identity and location”, which attempts to divide women’s subjectivities along the East/West binary and Other geographical boundaries (97). Although she is an independant educated woman, who lives part of her life in the West, Sammar accepts to be a co-wife in a polygamous marriage, simply because she regards Ahmed Yassine as a religious man who “feels duty towards widows” (13). Paradoxically, Mahacen who never attended schools and never visited the West holds more positive views about mariage.

Unlike Sammar who regards poligamous suitor as an alternative to the woman who faces emotional or economic gap, Mahacen views marriage as relationship that should be based on emotional and intellectual comptability between couples instead of any financial ,emotional or religious conviction. For this reason, when Ahmed Yassine, the religious man, asked Mahassen for Sammar’s hand, she refused and silenced him . “He started to talk to me about this [marriage] and I silenced him. I shamed him, the old fool” (13). Mahassen reminds her that individualism never means self- relization, hence, she corrects her vision to remarriage and pushed her away from accepting poligamous marriage, just because she wants to escape her sadness and sense of loss.

Besides, Aboulela refutes the Western notion of progress which is adequate to women’s financial advancement. Although she works in a Western country, Sammar is unable to meet financial expectations workers in some Arab countries are able to do. Short before her return to Khartoum, Sammar received a letter from Mahacen, including a list of things that she wants her to bring them back with her, what makes Sammar thinking that “her aunt must imagine that she was making millions,

an expatriate like those who found jobs in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf” (87). Hence, Aboulela distorts the image of the independent Western woman to reduce feminist struggle for rights. Aboulela demonstrates through her novel that Islam plays a primordial constructive role in the life of Muslims once its willingly and consciously embraced. Sammar faith in Islam acts as a saviour to her life, in making it more balanced. According to Steiner:

The literature of [Aboulela's] presents as the antidote, or better solution to this sense of loss. Aboulela asserts that having a spiritual connection to God can help people deal with loss and suffering while also forming unanticipated and occasionally transcending human ties across cultural barriers. [...] Aboulela sees her characters' faith as a liberating force that enables them to develop international identities as women, rather than adhering to Western conceptions of Muslim women. She also plainly criticizes “discourse which emphasizes enslavement and patriarchal control over women. (qtd. In Töngür 142)

In stigmatizing Islam as a potential threat to the Western ideals, Orientalists surpassed the problem of cultural Othering to present a rhetoric of antagonism that escalated unexpected levels in the discourse of Islam and the West. In this regard, Adwan and Awad draw attention to the constructive role of Islam for Sammar, in which it helps her “to deal with antagonistic environment that followed the Gulf War of 1991, which labels Arabs and Muslims as barbaric, foes, and unwanted intruders; as a result, she is able to change [the hostile environment] into a place where people are willing to live” (qtd. In Tongur142).

Rae tells Sammar that in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution the antagonistic discourse and aggressive reaction between Western and Eastern cultures reached its heightened levels in Britain .

Nobody writing in fifties and sixties could have imagined that Islam would become so important to the region's politics. I have always loved Fanon, but even Fanon was blind to the religious sentiment of the North Africans he wrote about.

He never connected anti-colonialism with Islam. The start of the Iranian revolution caught everyone off guard. Who were these individuals? What was it that kept them going? After that, a rush of inaccurate ensued. The fear that this world engulf the entire region **was greatly exaggerated.** (109)

In tracing the reasons behind this antagonistic reaction against Islam and Muslims, Rae writes a book entitled *The Illusions of an Islamic Threat*. Rae's researches decipher that the roots of this assault dates back to "the Seventh century when the church denounced Islam as heresy" (109), that made a relationship between the West and the Middle East hostile. Although Rae is a "Middle-East" historian and a lecturer in "Third World" politics, he refuses to be referred to as a "Islamic expert" because the term implies "much monolith" (7). Furthermore, his book *The Illusion of an Islamic Threat* adds a voice to the narrative that rejects the concept of the "Other" adversary, and his unwillingness to be referred to as a "Islamic expert" undermines the stated monolithic certainty.

In one of their daily discussions, Yasmin, Sammar's coworker, describes Rae as an Orientalist. Yasmin's depiction is deemed wrong by Sammar, who believes Rae is not capable of fitting the idea identifies. She is aware that Orientalists are "evil individuals who damaged the image of the Arabs and Islam", according to Said's descriptions. Something read in class, in literature or something related to school history. For Sammar, the Orientalist who stands at a distance is thus unable to translate the culture of the East authentically. For this reason, she adds, "[m]aybe modern Orientalists were different" (21). It seems that Rae can be placed under a new category labeled modern Orientalists.

In spite of the fact that Rae knows about Islam and expelled from school at a younger age, for writing an essay about Islam under the title. "Islam is better than Christianity" (17), his interest in Islam is no more than an academic research interest. In writing his essay, Rae emulated what was written in his uncle's letter, rather than what he was believing in. In fifties, David served as a sergeant in the British navy, wherein he considered as defiant, because he converted to Islam and married an

Egyptian woman with whom he has children. Excitedly, Rae tells Sammar "I had Egyptian cousins, relatives in Africa. I was very excited by that. I thought it was very romantic" (18). Unconsciously, Rae's expression "very romantic" is implicitly feeds Orientalist thought that intends to romanticise all what is connected to the East.

Considering Rae as modern Orientalist and academian, he strives to be objective and to detach himself from his culture to ensure that his understanding of the cultural Other would be intact. Modern Orientalists should remain loyal to their culture to not be accused of culture betrayal, even if this loyalty will hinder them from speaking the truth about Islam. Yasmin refers to this fact when she emphasises that Rae's conversion to Islam "would be professional suicide" (22), as it would have viewed as an act of cultural betrayal. As an Orientalist, Rae acknowledges that what Western media try to convince their audiences about Islam and Terrorism is a mere fallacy.

Such anti-terror initiatives," I perceive them as part of a hype to cover up the true problems of unemployment and incompetent administration", he declared. These radical groups- with whom I have spoken- have no specific intentions to establish what they call " an Islamic state" or "Islamic economy". These movements are protests, and they have grounds for their protest-including the occupation of the West bank by Israel, for example, and the mediocrity of the ruling party, which is mostly a client state of the West and receives no public support. These groups feed off the fury of people, especially the fury directed towards social inequality. (27)

Nevertheless, Rae's interest in Islam and his prolific knowledge of the politics of Middle East, all what he can do is to be detached "I believed that being objective and detached was the best thing I could do for a place and people who meant a lot to me." In the midst of all the bigotry and deceit, I wished to be one of the few who said what was reasonable and just". One assumes that Western Academians are still not fully ready to transcend their dominating supremacist views. Rae's neutral stand point is never enough for Sammar, because it allows him analyze different points of view without

assigning them a truth value. "[d]on't you realise how much you hurt me saying objective and detached, like you are above all of this, above me, looking down ..." (126).

Rae, in fact, has no problem in representing opposite views from Christianity and Islam without believing in either. He admits that he used to write falsified things about Islam and Arabs' dignity. "[w]hat I regret the most ... is I used to write things like "Islam gives dignity to those who Otherwise would not have dignity in their lives", as if I didn't need dignity myself" (192). In their opinion, Orientalists believe that Arabs are by nature inferiors and lack inherent dignity, the thing they attempt at compensating in religion. In his article, "*Leila Aboulela and the ideology of Muslim immigrant fiction*", Hassan Wail poses a very important question concerning the characterisation of Arabs in relation of both Islam and The West ; of whether Arabs lack inherent dignity due to their belonging to the 'Third World' countries or because they are non- Westerns (298). Again, one understands that, if Arabs' dignity was not stemmed from their religion, they would, according to Orientalists, derive it from Other sources such as Western doctrines. To justify their views, supremacist had divided the world hierarchically into two dichotomous entities, the advanced West and the inferior exotic East.

In order to undermine Eurocentrism attempts, Aboulela alludes to this issue through the scattered magazines that layed open on the floor of Rae's house, showing pictures of different world maps. One of the articles on traditional world map illustrates deformed continents in terms of proportion to one another. "Europe appeared larger than South America, North America larger than Africa, Greenland larger than China, when the opposite was true" (16). Sammar compares this map to the latest *equal-area map* which shows Africa as " a massive elongated yellow, Britain a rosy insignificance" (16). In her novel, Aboulela demonstrates that Eurocentric monolithic world view is invalid today in the face of the open dialogue between East and West. She attempts to open dialogue between Islam and the West, that will nurture mutual understanding and coexistence beyond polarization, via juxtaposing the views of Sammar and Rae with Yasmin's monolithic non Eurocentric standpoint. Instead of viewing

the world in Black and white, the conversations of Rae and Sammar provide better understanding to their cultures and the entire world, allowing by that mutual enlightenment and understanding.

#### **4.5. Transcultural Dialogue to Transcend Positionality**

According to Abu-Shomer, dialogue is "an area of unrest" because it constantly requires honesty of voice, which is a prerequisite for appreciating the "Other" (9). In spite of the fact that Yasmin is a Pakistani Scottish Muslim, born and raised in the West, she still holds the idea of an imagined home (Pakistan) as a discriminatory discourse of "us" versus "them". Her standpoint reflects the counter voice in the novel's transculture discourse, as she is depicted as self assured with firm views concerning East/West relations. Relying on monolithic worldview that still views things from a reductive angle, Yasmine classifies people accordingly, by adopting "we" to refer to the collective identity or the entire Third World. "we are not like them" ; "we have close family ties, not like them" (17); "Our children are dying of hunger while the rich count their calories!" (16). She also expresses her unhappiness with her host community by using the word "loathe". "I loathe this shitty British weather", "I loathe all this fuss about the Royals" (19).

Amal Amirah describes Yasmin's attitudes as "misuses of hybridity in producing knowledge about the Other," in which hybridity "becomes a strategy of differentiation" (186). Thus, Yasmine has incorrectly leveraged her Western location to develop reductive notions regarding East/West. While in a library, Yasmine insists on using Sammar's card to borrow twelve books, despite the fact that only six are permitted, defending her actions with the phrase "we pay tax" (24). Remarkably, the books Yasmin borrows reflect a cynical attitude towards her pregnancy, her books are entitled. "cesarean birth", "abortions", "infertility" and "miscarriage" (24). This also demonstrates her negative narrow mindset towards things and to the entire world.

Notably, when Yasmin discovers about Sammar and Rae's relationship, she finds it unacceptable and strongly objects to it saying. "You are the last person I would anticipate this from. "What do you imagine you're doing?" (132), referring to Rae as a "Orientalist" whose "occupation is hazard" (130),

"Someone like him is probably an agonistic if not atheist. Everyone in the department is an atheist. Religion is the opium of the people for these leftists. And all that" (132). According to Abu-Shomer, Yasmin "mystifies her position by bringing up contradictory ideas jumbled together"; while she blames the West for being intolerant of "left-wing" people, she sees Rae's atheism as a threat to Sammar's beliefs. At the same time, she focuses her criticism toward the West, suggesting that Rae's probable conversion would make him a traitor to Western Christianity. (12)

Yasmin: "As it is, he has a large critic base". Some believe he is excessively progressive, and some even call him a traitor for disclosing the reality about a different culture."

Sammar: Which kind of traitor is he? Yasmin: to the West. You know, the idea that West is the superior.

Sammar. "but you can never tell about people" (22).

Loaded with her ideological speculative points of view, Yassmin plays a significant role in hindering the relationship between the two before it starts. Yassmin's depiction is important to the transculture narrative, wherein Aboulela puts her in counterbalance to Sammar's position to show that the world cannot be perceived with plurality of people governed by a single monolithic view, rather it is through the plurality of consciousness that people could negotiate their differences and build bridges of understanding.

Unlike Yassmin, Sammar seems more comprehensive to Rae and the life in Scotland. She effectively uses her love and her position as translator to occupy two places Sudan and Aberdeen, and tries to balance her life through developing the sense of self-discovery. In this regard, Iain Chambers maintains that "Such places provide the occasion for self-discovery, as the experiences and feelings we carry with us from a certain place are simultaneously "sustained across encounters and clashes with Other histories, Other places, Other people", touched and shaped by these encounters" (4). The experience of being in mid- position allows Sammar to evaluate her Arab culture in comparison to Rae's and Islam, without being influenced by Yassmin's views of culture authenticity, nor prevented from doing that because she is a mere Other. In his view, Epstein asserts that "We acquire transculture

at the boundaries of our own culture and at the crossroads with Other cultures through the risky experience of our own cultural wanderings and transgressions” (330).

Sammar's self-examination enables her to occupy what Casey Blanton refers to as "a nomad position" that entails "[u]nfixing oneself so that the place cannot equal truth[, which] allows one to embark upon a two-directional journey examining the realities of both sides of cultural differences so that they mutually may question each Other" (111). Thus, Transculture becomes “the site of interaction among all existing and potential cultures”, in which the more and more individuals find themselves feeling outside the ethnic, racial, sexual, ideological, and Other limitations imposed by the culture into which they were born. More Importantly, in Zennoun view “Such a process can also be described as cultural translation, which underlines the fact that cross-cultural and transnational experiences do not always result in cultural hybrids; very often a translation process occurs that allows for two worldviews to coexist without mixing” (12).

Rae and Sammar effectively play a significant role as agents of open dialogue between East and West. In spite of Rae's academic position as Orientalist, and Sammar's failure to acknowledge the difference between them, their in between cultures position is what allows possibility for mutual understanding. Their discussions about the difference between Qur'an and the Islamic sacred *Hadith* turns into an illuminating experience for both of them. Although she considers herself Muslim, Sammar is unaware of the distinction between Qu'ran and Hadith and she was not ready to provide an exact answer, until Rae unexpectedly inquires about it . “ how they differ from Qu'ran ? what do they say ? how do they put it ?” “she [is] not prepared for that and falter[s] a little, saying that the book [is] upstairs, and she [will] have to get it” ( 40). It is Rae's questions what persuades her to think and start making her researches, what provides better understanding to her religion. In one of their conversations, Sammar translates to Rae one of the prophet's, peace be upon him, sayings that clarifies the meaning of Divinity.

*"Allah Almighty says. I am as My servant expects me to be. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself; I make mention of him to Myself and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in a better assembly. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length ; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed".(41)*

Just as such conversation boosts Sammar to think, it made him also interanalyse her answers. Hence, he compares the translated words of *Hadith* with the words of the secular society: "In this society,' he said, 'in this secular society, the speculation is that God is out playing golf' (41). The mutual conversation of sending and receiving information between Sammar and Rae challenges imperialist conceptions about the civilized West as a source of enlightenment and wisdom for the recipient Orient.

Through Sammar and Rae, Aboulela finds a middle way to speak the unspeakable and bridge what was once considered unbridgeable, such as each culture is an entity sufficient in itself. Their mutual enlightenment does not represent a genuine cross-cultural encounter, as described by Amireh, "with both learning about their differences, limitations, and misconceptions, and moving towards mutual recognition, respect, sympathy, and a sense of the current relations that have obscured such mutual understanding" (192). Rae's understanding appears to be based on more than just sympathy. Rather, it is the outcome of his cultural encounters in North Africa during his stay in Morocco. Rae is a typical Orientalist, having lived in the Arab world and been exposed to Arabic and Muslim culture. Similarly, Sammar finds comfort in Rae, who appears to understand, "not in a modern, deliberately non-judgmental way, but as if he was about to say, '[this] has happened to me too.'" (6). What Aboulela intends to say colludes with Epstein Transculture in which a person may never be able to understand Other cultures unless s/he undergoes the same cultural experiences of members of these different cultures.

In the beginning of the novel, Sammar mistakenly interprets Rae's difference from Others in his society as sameness to her, hence, she blindly refused to acknowledge that he is Aethist, what allows her expect that he will immediately convert to Islam after their first debate. Her attempt at intervening in Rae's life only reverses the direction of intervention, bringing the clash between self /the Other to the surface. When all her expectations failed, Sammar thinks that to convert to Islam, Rae needs more knowledge about what Islam is. She starts acting as a teacher and moralist, yet she suddenly fails to make him convert, simply because her position turns their relationship into a battlefield wherein none seems to be victorious. Likely, Rae too oscillates between two positions towards the Other, based on his powerful position as Western academic expert on the Middle East and the third world politics. In his relation to Sammar, Rae seems more empathetic, seeing their differences as grounds for similarity ; yet he cannot escape his position as Orientalist Historian when it comes to *Al Nidaa* group. Unlike Sammar who sees the human side behind the manifesto: "It is sad", she tells Rae. "There is something pathetic about the spelling mistakes, the stains on the paper, in spite of the bravado. . . you get a sense of people overwhelmed . . . by thinking that nothing should be what it is now" (26), Rae echoes the imperialist view, by classifying Al Nidaa group under one single category "They are all like that"(26).

Besides, when he is referred to as an *Islamic expert*, he resisted the label, insisting on that "there could be no such monolithic" (5). In this perspective, Zennoun regards that the label reflects imperialists mindset, « In Western hegemonic discourse Islam is synonymous with the ultimate Other and, therefore, is understood to stand for all the incompatible categories of third world and Middle East, as well as their histories and politics"(15). Despite his resisting act, Rae still acts based on the hierarchical binary opposition that governs East/West relations. Despite his empathy, Rae's language unconsciously underlies binary opposition. Therefore, it seems that when Sammar expected his immediate conversion to Islam, as if she overlooked the power relations underlying Rae's position.

Through *The Translator*, Aboulela on the one hand depicts the pitfalls of essentialist reductionist politics that based uniquely on either sameness or difference, instead of the recognition of both at the

same time. On the Other hand, communication between the two conflicting cultures is always attainable once the two sides are willing to listen, negotiate, and understand. In the end of the novel, Rae converts to Islam, acknowledging that the true Islam is not related to a particular place or time, as it has nothing to do with what is written about Islam.

"Ours isn't a religion of suffering, nor is it tied to a specific location," he remarked. His words drew her in closer than ever before, as if it were now 'ours' rather than hers alone. And he understood. Not a religion of pathos, not a religion of redemption by sacrifice. He stated, "In the end, I discovered that it had nothing to do with how much I'd read or how many facts I'd learned about Islam." Knowledge is essential, that is true. But faith comes straight from Allah. (198)

Therefore, their relation succeeds due to the potentiality of transculture dialogue that open space for mutual understanding and coexistence.


#### **4.6. Conclusion**

In *The Translator*, Aboulela succeeds in creating through transcultural dialogue a zone of contact, wherein the Orientalist Rae Isle and the Sudanese translator Sammar become able to transcend their cultural differences to set grounds for mutual understanding and enlightenment.

In this Transculture narrative, the deterritorialized Sammar and the Secular Rae Isle act as two distinct voices wherein a new story of possible coexistence and understanding emerges. Although they come from diverse worlds East/West, Sammar and Rae challenge Other characters' antagonistic and ideological attitudes to appear different, not only to the world surrounding them, but also to themselves, through their endeavour to create a contact zone based on mutual understanding and empathy.

Aboulela strategy implies the depiction of different characters (Sammar, Rae and Yasmin), acting as multiple voices, in which each represents his own world to reflect the different existing cultural paradigms that foreshadow Islam and The West relations. The interaction between the different conflicting attitudes, perspectives and ideologies of the characters allow Aboulela not only to

understand the imperialist ideology but rather to provide means to subvert it. In short, the transculture dialogue between Rae and Sammar as two distinct critical voices allow them to create a third story that perceives that culture is translatable; it is subject to constant interaction and permeable change through the mutual dialogue and understanding between individuals.



---

**Chapter Five:**  
**Speaking Magic(al) Realism: Opening  
Doors and Shifting Discourse in Mohsin  
Hamid's *Exit West* (2017)**

When borders shift, people shift with them – identities take new shapes and discourse follows suit....”

(Cecelia Gheorghiu, Introduction)

## 5.1. Introduction

In her article *The World is Spinning Around Us*, Cecelia Gheorghiu contends that: “The world is spinning around us, and we are spinning with it; as geopolitical shifts occur, people's identities and the way they see and represent the world change as well” (01). The close scrutiny of Cecelia’s words draws attention to people’s global movements in recent years, when huge masses of people desperately flee from violent civil wars in their home lands such as Yemen, Syria or Iraq conflicts, and Other countries that resemble the Orient seeking refuge and politics of inclusion in the West. These huge masses of immigrants and refugees that cross borders towards Western countries have participated in a way or another in mapping the world, shaping the social fabrics, geopolitical positions, and paradigms of the world politics or power. In one word, by crossing borders, people did not only change the physical space/place where they used to live, rather, they alter their mental space also. Their movement eliminates the mentally constructed borders between the two worlds the Orient/ the Occident; it affects the way they represent themselves in the world, reconstructing by that the old cliché of the exoticized and marginalized Other created by the discourse of Orientalism.

This chapter aims at exploring Mohsin Hamid ‘s *Exit West* (2017), a novel that sheds light on the global movements of people and refugees’ crisis in the aftermath of civil wars in several countries in the Orient. It is a narrative voice with an optimistic vision for a world with porous borders, as an attempt to destruct the dichotomy of the Superior representative West and the inferior static East, in a world with no boundaries. With the rise of global displacement, people and cultures become interconnected like never before. This inescapable interconnectedness has largely reorganized the

social and cultural life of people in the world, and re-examines the ways wherein people, nations and cultures can coexist away from the polarized discourse of difference that promotes ethnic and racial division. By considering Hamid's magical realism as a postcolonial narrative mode that bridges the ideological discontent between the so-called East and West, this chapter looks at the expression magical doors as a metaphor for Globalization and transculturalism, pointing out to the idea of shifting borders that would probably induce a shift in discourse, what obliterates the old cliché of Orientalism. The chapter demonstrates that when people shift, identities altered, and the world shifts with them, too. Hence, nothing looks as it was before. Besides, *Exit West*, the novel per se, is a metonym for exit off the idea of the West; a narrative voice that breaks the silence of the Orient and challenges the discourse of Orientalism. It is a narrative that aspires to establish an empathetic bond by revealing the deeper aspects of the global transcultural world and how people can coexist.

### **5.2. *Exit (To/Off) West: The Past is a Country Which We Have All Emigrated From***

The Literary piece under scrutiny is the latest work of the Pakistan Expatriate British author Mohsin Hamid. Mohsin Hamid, a transnational author, has been preoccupied with crucial global topics such as the identity crisis, racism, and mass migration. In addition to the timeliness of his stories, Hamid expresses a lot of fear about the future. *Exit West* (2017) addresses the most topical and interestingly timely problems, such as global conflict, reactionary nationalism, border crossing, and a growing refugee crisis. Despite the literary criticism that considered it as a realistic or a historical novel based on the assumption that Hamid fashions a dystopian reality that mirrors our current time by discussing the refugees crisis that began in 2011 and made itself heard and felt overseas, particularly in Europe to change its history in 2015 through the pressure of more than one million refugees and migrants, one should not frame it under any category, solely because its author declared on multiple times that his story "may be representative for any present or future migrant crisis of such amplitude" (qtd. In Ghorghius81).

*Exit West* received exceptionally favorable feedback, applauding both its timeliness and the quality of the writing. It was named the New York Times Best Book of the Year, won the LA Times Book Prize for Fiction, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and was nominated for the Man Booker Prize in 2017.

Barack Obama, the former president of U.S. A, described the work as one of the twelve books he 'enjoyed the most' in 2017 (qtd. In Wood 2018). Although it appears to be dystopian literature in that it 'conjur[es] up a dreadful future if we do not detect and address its symptoms in the here and now' (Gordin et al 2). The novel is optimistic in tone because it is a literary endorsement of humans' ability to identify with one another. In a world where both the time difference and the geographical distance between nations are drastically decreasing. Mohsin Hamid envisions a world with no rigid boundaries and in which people can move around freely.

*Exit West*, Hamid's fourth and most recent novel, follows Saeed and Nadia, two young lovers who met when their city was on the verge of a civil war between the national government and the militants. When things turned worse, the young couple finally decided to flee their homeland, using fictitious doors which lead in less than a second to different locations across the globe. The meeting of the two protagonists takes place in unnamed city and in unspecified year. All what the reader learns about from the onset of the novel is "a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace, or at least not yet openly at war" (Hamid 1). It seems that Hamid has intentionally desired to open space for interaction between the reader and the text, to the extent that the unnamed city could be modelled by any of the Oriental countries which turned into murderous battlefields starting with Lahore Pakistan, the homeland of the author to reach Syria, Libya, Sudan, and many other countries which are still at war. In addition, one could be able to understand that Hamid has intentionally preferred to not label, determine or name his city to make it an open space; a space wherein the reader could imagine different possible meanings. The unnamed city could for instance resemble the world, the *contact zone* that Epstein discussed in his *Transculture*; an open space wherein people beyond their national, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious,

sexual differences meet each Other after crossing borders to amalgamate, thrive and complete each Other away from the established political credos that nurtured the clash of civilizations. This contact zone is the place where an individual chooses to live in freedom beyond his national geographical borders and regardless his race, social class and religion (Epstein 24).

Owing to his American and British cultural and educational 'adstrata', neither could Hamid be simply labelled as a 'Pakistani novelist', nor a purely British Contemporary novelist. For Cesilia Ghorghius, "one should not consider him merely a British author; that would be akin to an imperialistic cultural appropriation that today's cultural politics deems unacceptable, and that would disregard his multiculturalism as both a person and a writer of fiction"(82) .

By describing himself as a 'mongrel' who has travelled the world since early childhood, having called 'home' three cities situated at immense distance one from the Other: Lahore, New York and London, Hamid represents a contemporary postcolonial voice that each time asserts his hybridity, which, to him, ends up outlining a literary credo, which he shares.

In the introduction to his collection of essays in *life, Art and Politics* entitled "*Discontent and his Civilization*", Hamid writes:

Mongrel. Miscegenator. Half-breed. Outcast. [...] We frequently use epithets to describe hybridity. They should not be. Hybridity need not be a concern. It could be a solution. Hybrids are more than just mixes of groups. Hybrids indicate erroneous group boundaries. And this is critical, for creativity stems from intermingling, from rejecting the lifelessness of purity (Hamid xvii).

The novel features only two named characters: Saeed and Nadia. According to Claire Chambers, "with this choice of names Hamid 'engages in onomastic play, because the initials of "N" and "S" in his characters' names complete the missing compass points implied in the novel's title, Exit [East] West. To some extent, Nadia agrees with broad generalizations about the global north and Saeed with the global south" (216). In addition, Saeed holds purely Arabic Name which means "happiness". He

is an example of a Muslim conformist who lives with his parents and adheres to most of the beliefs and traditions he has inherited from them. This automatically will give a hint about how the novel incidents will progress as some buzzwords appear to the forefront such as extremist, oppressed, and radicalist. However, Nadia is typically a European name derived from “Nathalia/ Nathalie or Natia to mean “hope”. As unusually, Nadia is such an independent woman that conceals much more than what she reveals. She doesn’t believe in traditional ways of thinking or living. She is a mysterious character who abandons her home and religious practices, even though she wears a black robe to conceal her body. Unlike Saeed, Nadia is not a Muslim woman but born in Muslim family. She violates all the social, cultural, religious rules of Muslims. she doesn’t pray, rides a motorcycle and has a penchant for psychedelic mushrooms. She contravenes all the expectations of what a Muslim woman is; her liberal outlook on religion, sex and various Other topics surprises even Saeed. While she may be ‘clad from the tips of her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch in a flowing black robe’, (Hamid 1). In his selection of such a character, Hamid either intends to offer a new image of the contemporary Muslim woman, the one that contradicts the previous silent, oppressed, and marginalized woman, the thing that Western representations failed to do with, or Nadia depicts the secular atheist West, whereas, Saeed refers to the Conservative East. In so doing, Hamid flawlessly attempts to bridge the discontent between East/ West at the end of the novel, when Saeed and Nadia (presumably South and North) empathetically accept to coexist inspite of all the differences they have, to complete each Other. The choice of the two names Saeed and Nadia is never arbitrary, rather, it reflects Hamid’s craving to appeal new ways of being and seeing in the global ethos that is in tune with Epstein “Transculture”. In this regard, Anita Desai, *The New York Review of Books*, wrote. “Hamid’s work fills a void that has long been left empty in contemporary publications”. (qtd. In Munro2)

The title of the novel exhibits ambiguity in meaning, as Mohsin plays with the words Exit West that whether means: exit to West, or exit from/off the idea of West? The novel’s title is a metonym, in which it tries to challenge many terms such as border, nation, place as well as the world system per se

as these terms seem outdated. *Exit West* attempts at shedding light on the increasing instability of the world system and imagines what might happen next. It seems that the novel wonders that there are some new changes taking place on the geopolitical level in the contemporary arena.

According to Wallerstein, "all systems vary. That is, the system's machinery is constantly deviating from its equilibrium point ("Structural Crisis" 11). Based on Wallerstein's assumptions, one might conclude that there have been some fundamental changes in the way the world order and imperial powers (America and Europe) operate. Such alterations caused departures in the equilibrium, which led to a structural crisis.

This crisis is expressed in *Exit West* through the breakdown of the imperial structure (the center) in the periphery ( Saeed's and Nadia' unnamed Muslim city that resemble the Orient), through violence and turbulent wars, between the government and the militant groups who are financially sustained by the imperial regime. Yet, the crisis becomes perilous with the opening of the network of doors, wherein migrants pour through such doors in huge masses, making a fracture in the fabric of the nation, and hence in the entire world system. In this regard, Hamid states that the world is "full of fracturing...of regions pulling away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart" (158). The framework of this contemporary society "cut[s] across divisions of race or language or nation, for what did those divisions matter now in a world full of doors, the only divisions that mattered now were between those who sought right of passage and those who would deny them passage" (155).

In the beginning of the novel, the reader was aware about the world system of the novel, since there are references to the hierarchical world system, what marks the novel's contemporaneity by tackling issues of our current time, as the war started in unknown city presumably in the East, wherein Saeed and Nadia like many Other refugees decided to exit towards the West through magical doors seeking a peaceful place away from war and its calamity; however, when the magical doors turned into portals pouring refugees from all over the world, the reader noticed a breakdown in the system as the portals

turned unpredictable. Therefore, the novel inner world becomes ambiguous as if Hamid intends to say that doors system leads immediately to the breakdown of the imperial system.

The breakdown of the Structure in the periphery appears in the first pages of the novel, particularly when many companies are shuttered, including the advertising agency that Saeed works for. Similarly, the insurance agency where Nadia works has closed its doors. In the city, the access to internet is disabled, in addition to power outages, travel whether by land or air becomes impossible. Yet, this breakdown has affected the rest of the world, particularly the center, with the unexpected and never intended opening of the network of doors that lead to Europe (Mykonous, Italy, London and then to Marine in North America).

*Exit West* intends to depict the breakdown of the imperial system as these metaphorical doors have been opened, and the imaginary borders that had been built for centuries to serve ideological and imperial goals, creating by that disparity between the isolated, exotic, and inferior East and the civilized, superior West, are actually crossed to build bridges of movements and communication. Thus, the novel is not a mere depiction of refugees' crisis in the world, and their hope in finding a peaceful place away from homeland wars, desolation and famine, as many critics declared. Rather, it intends to go beyond such a problem to discuss the unpredictable rupture or disequilibrium between the empire and its periphery. Especially, when the powerful imperial system failed to resist the huge masses of migrants crossing its territories through the network of opened doors. In order to allow readers understand the nexus of this crisis, and how the powerful turns powerless; Hamid describes in depth the incident of penetrating the home of a pale-skinned woman while she was sleeping alone. In the opening passage of page five, he mentions. ".....far away in Australia a pale-skinned woman was sleeping alone in the Sydney neighborhood of Surry Hills. Her husband was in Perth on business [.....] On her right ankle, perched in the dip of her Achilles tendon, was the blue tattoo of a small mythological bird" (5).

In this passage, the white sleeping woman refers to the imperial system, in which the letter “T” of the word “T-shirt” describes how was the system centuries ago before the opening of doors, structured on Tyranny, oppression and dictatorship. Yet, with the opening of doors, it turns weak and supine as the woman was left home alone to meet her fate. Besides, the blue tattoo of that mythological bird resembles the West fake ideals of “freedom, knowledge and power”.

To further his explanation, Hamid adds:

Her home was alarmed, but the alarm was not active. It had been installed by previous occupants, by Others who had once called this place home, before the phenomenon referred to as the gentrification of this neighborhood had run as far as it had now run. The sleeping woman used the alarm only sporadically, mostly when her husband was absent, but on this night she had forgotten. Her bedroom window, four meters above the ground, was open, just a slit. (6)

Since they had fabricated the imaginary boundaries between the center and the periphery, in order to serve their ideological colonial needs, the Western imperialists thought that their “home” would be safe and secure forever, because the two dichotomous entities a civilized West and the mysterious East would never meet, as Rudyard Kipling mentioned in his Ballad poem *East and West* “East is East and West is West, and the twins shall never meet again”. Yet, Orientalists failed to consider that the world will change one day and the system that was once powerful would fail to cope with new phenomena; hence, nothing looks as it was before. Everything will be altered including the term “home” that is given a new definition in this transcultural world, wherein it becomes “a place where a person chooses to live within the borders of his own culture or beyond his ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, and geographical borders” (Epstein24). What was considered a safe home and a secure territory turns fragile and got blurred, especially when doors transformed into portals transporting masses of refugees from different places within few seconds, altering if not rejecting by that every distance in time and space between the center and its periphery.

To escalate this crisis in order to represent the breakdown of the imperial system, Hamid describes the doors, in the fourth paragraph from the same page, as follows: “The door to her closet was open. Her room was illuminated by her computer charger and wireless router, but the closet doorway was pitch black—the heart of darkness. And out of the darkness, a guy emerged”(6). In using the expression “heart of darkness”, Hamid intends to make an explicit reference to Orientalism and the colonial era, wherein the Orient is described as dark, barbarious, uncivilized, silent and exotic place; a place that the British imperialist writer Joseph Conrad labeled in his novel “Heart of Darkness”. In her article, “*Waiting in motion: mapping postcolonial fiction, new mobilities, and migration through Mohsin Hamid’s ExitWest, Mobilities*”, Amanda Lagji asserts:

By referring to the passage as a "heart of darkness, Exit West addresses the previous texts of racism rather than reinforcing them. The progressive revision of judgment in Hamid's sentence - from certainty about terrible rolling eyes to the uncertainty of 'perhaps' – pictures the Conradian racism of 'rolling eyes' and highlights the uncertainty that characterizes these moments of sudden and unexpected encounter. Marlow's certainty and judgment in Heart of Darkness are absent here. Additionally, Exit West's portals provide simple travel across time and space, supposedly open to everyone, in contrast to Heart of Darkness, where Europeans move while Africans remain mostly stationary in both time and space in the Congo. (7)

Furthermore, the man who emerged out of darkness is depicted as follows:

He was also too dark, with dark skin and shaggy dark hair. He wriggled with great effort, his hands gripping the doorway on either side, as if he was trying to pull himself up against the force of overwhelming torrent against gravity, or against the rush of a monstrous tide. His neck trailed his head, tendons straining, and finally his, his half-unbuttoned, sweaty, gray-and-brown shirt on his chest. All of a sudden, he paused in his exertions. His gaze swept across the room. He glanced at the dozing

off woman, the closed bedroom door, and the open window. Regaining strength, he struggled desperately to enter, but in desperate silence, the silence of a man struggling in an alley, on the ground, late at night, to free himself of hands clenched around his throat. But there were no hands around this man's throat. He wished only not to be heard. With a final push he was through, trembling and sliding to the floor like a newborn foal. He lay still, spent. Tried not to pant. He rose. (7)

The refugee man resembles an Oriental man who sinks in his darkness, with a dark skin and dark wooly hair, whereas his darkness refers to his barbarism, monstrosity, uncivilization, and centuries of marginality and dependance to the oppressive imperial system. The man is fighting to find a way out of his darkness, to break the link of silence and dependency that he has been living in for ages, and to "free himself of hands clenched around his throat." But no hands were on this man's throat" (7).

Hamid describes the man, in the end of the passage and after he has crossed it, as a "newborn foal", as if crossing borders gives the man a new free life to reproduce and thrive beyond his ethnic, racial, national borders. What was considered a safe home and a secure territory turns fragile and got blurred, especially when doors transformed into portals transporting masses of refugees from different places within few seconds, altering if not rejecting by that every distance in time and space between the center and its periphery.

Hamid's work depicts the breakdown of the world system by establishing a system of doors that can be opened anywhere, at any time, to guide individuals who pass through to any location. The network of doors, once opened, remains open indefinitely, and the travel through them is monotonous, with passagers exiting from various locations. This graphic symbolizes people crossing boundaries, breaking down the rigidly structured hierarchical organization. However, they also constitute a form of anti-systematicity. The introduction of this system of doors, which operate in an unpredictable and disjunctive manner, facilitates the breakdown of the world system.

Throughout the course of the novel there is a studios bodies' movement towards the West, wherein Said and Nadia are one of them. However, such a movement has been preceded by anOther crusade towards the East (the opposite direction). This crusade led to the spread of imperialism, finance and technology whether imposed by the colonial regime or a result of global technological infection. Thus, it could be possible to read the novel as a setback to West to east that becomes east to West, marking by that the eroding of the imperial system and a turning point in the geopolitical system of the entire world.

As Saeed and Nadia were travelling through the system of doors, looking for a peaceful place instead of an accurate direction, they find themselves travelling Westward not only geographically but systematically, in which each door they get through brings them closer to the core. Departing from their peripheral country of origins, Nadia and Saeed crossed the first door to stepping in Mykonos, an isle in Greece (referring to the weakest system and border in Europe). Then, they crossed a new door to lend in London (United Kingdom the prior hegemon). Finally, they found themselves in the United States ( the current powerful system or hegemon), wherein they decided to settle down and start over a new life.

The voyage through these doors is crowded, with passengers emerging on the Other side supine and debilitated. And once opened, the doors appear to remain open, necessitating the presence of armed guards to secure the newly opened borders. However, they also constitute a type of anti-systematicity. The narrative depicts the breakdown of the world system through this unpredictable and disjointed system of doors. The unpredictability in the doors system appears in the novel in a form of network of doors that could open anywhere, at any time, and lead to any place. In this regard, Hamid writes: "Rumors had begun to swirl of doors that might transport you elsewhere, frequently to regions far away, well removed from this death trap of a country. Some people claimed to know people who knew Others who had passed through such doors. They indicated that a normal door may become a special door, and that this could happen to any door at any time (41). Saeed and Nadia as well as many Other

unnamed characters' intrusion through these doors marks the anti-systematicity of the world system; it is an alert towards the beginning of the breakdown of the rigidly structured hierarchies of our current world system. Thus, "the system of opened doors" in the novel could be seen as an analogy to the current geopolitical paradigms and the global movements of bodies from East to Westwards that render the existing geographical and national borders, particularly the imaginary borders that made a gap between the center (West) and its peripheries in (the east) meaningless. In this regard, one can say that *Exit West* is a novel that attempts to offer a vision about the future of the world that alludes to but can never predict the consequences.

### **5.3. No East, No West: All the World's a Refuge and We are All Migrants Through Time**

With the rise of globalization, people as well as cultures turned much more interconnected like never before. For this reason, more adequate ways of envisaging and representing an emerging global culture are being sought; ways that promote cultural intermingling and similarities away from the polarized discourse of separateness and national chauvinistic emphasis on borders and ethnic racial differences. According to Bryant Scott "Transnational writers, who have emerged from varying cultural perspectives, are, perhaps, predisposed toward insight not afforded to those writing embedded within a singular perspective" (3). The interconnectedness that globalization has created among the different aspects of life such as social, cultural, or economic has permeate to individuals to cross the borders of their nations which were previously colonized towards the West, communicating their experience.

As a mongrel person and a bicultural writer who associates himself with transnational literature to be called a multi-territorized author, Hamid divides his time between Lahore Pakistan, London, New York, Italy and Greece that is carrying a sense of belonging to multi-territories. In being so, Hamid succeeds in sharing his experience, as he tries to depict nowadays increasingly globalized world with all its contradictions. The novel then is a timely reflection of the events of the contemporary world, where everyone seems to be on the move. According to Divani Agrawal, "it's a novel that imagines a

world where people can suddenly move beyond their borders but the novel does not hesitate to reveal another ground reality that borders too are seen as places of brutality and under threat” (35)

In the novel, Saeed and Nadia represent every contemporary refugee. By the end of the novel, the narrator declares that "We are all migrants through time." (Hamid 209). Critically speaking, the world around us is changing; it moves at a rapid pace with a single digital click, and we, too, change with it, or migrate with time, even if we spend our entire lives in the same location. At another point in the story, the narrator states. "That summer it seemed to Saeed and Nadia that the whole planet was on the move, much of the global south headed to the global north, but also southerners moving to other southern places and northerners moving to other northern places." (Hamid 167).

In the Twenty First century, history is moving faster than ever before or as it used to. With the technological advancement, it seems that borders between nations are erased and need to be redrawn. In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid attempts at depicting “the whole world on move” (167). In an interview on PBS News Hours, Hamid declares that “The innovation of resorting to magical realism in the novel is inspired by the magic of technology” (qtd. In Gorghiou88).

The exit to West takes the form of black rectangles, which appear in places where regular doors used to be, transporting migrants to various places on earth in a matter of seconds. Rather than plainly targeting East/West dichotomy to show that the world is changing, and we also need to change. Whether we move through spaces or not, we need to redefine borders and to change our ways of seeing and being. Hamid prefers to begin with the obliteration of geographical distances – at the mental level, relying on the use of technology, and the smartphone in particular. In the same interview, he claims. “So, the majority of us currently have a small black rectangle in our pocket [...]. And when we stare at it, our consciousness departs our bodies to go so far, as if you could magically arrive somewhere else, or look at your phone, and suddenly you find yourself reading about Antarctica, the Moon, and Mars” (“PBS News Hour” 2018).

Relying on technology as well as magical doors, Hamid can speak the unspeakable, because technological advancement would allow the body to move as fast as the mind. According to Hamid, “contemporary authors who too readily explain all their narrative choices had better be mistrusted. The more they speak, the less they say, and the more they may throw their readers on a wrong track”. (qtd. In Ghorghious88). By considering it a postcolonial discourse, Magical Realism is employed to foreshorten history. According to Selmon “this literary device of his resembles “the foreshortening of history so that the time scheme of the novel metaphorically contains the long process of colonization and its aftermath” (Selmon 10). Because it breaks with the Western tradition, magical realism depicts a continuation of the decolonization, a project initiated by early postcolonial scholars, that culminates in a fictional world characterized by cultural hybridity where the borders between countries have been blurred so that one can no longer distinguish between a centre and the peripheries. In employing this oxymoronic strategy —that consists of a binary opposition between the representational code of reality (Western realism) and Fantasy (postcolonial strategy), Hamid may conceal another attempt at ‘writing back’ after centuries of silencing. In her article “Doors That Could Take You ElseWhere”, Paula Brauer contends:

A double vision between “official history” and what Stephen Selmon refers to as “ a cluster of opposing views that attend to see history as a kind of alchemical process, somewhat analogous to a way of seeing, in which silenced, marginalized, or dispossessed voices within the colonial encounter themselves form the record of true history” is made possible by magical realism’s ability to draw attention to the constructed nature of any history (414). Gabriel Garcia Márquez is a prominent figure in this regard, as his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is widely regarded as a historical narrative from viewpoint of the oppressed. This seems to be essentially different from Hamid’s imagined future at first glance. The latter, instead of changing preexisting

narratives, crafts a brand-new one. However, both share the same postcolonial notion.

(305)

Hamid's novel is in itself an ironic strategy to cover the fractured territories of reality. It is a reversed colonization of the West, by envisaging Western countries overpopulated with migrants from all over the world within a matter of seconds.

The opening pages of the novel demonstrate that Hamid attempts to play with a series of clichés or recurrent notions. "Location, location, location, the estate agents say. Geography is destiny, respond the historians" (Hamid 9). It seems that the language Hamid used is mimetic; it is used as a tool to deconstruct the existing ideological thought and the colonial discourse that established upon the binary opposition of "Us and "Them". In short, Hamid's novel is the refusal to label and categorize, showing the end of the single story of "Us" and "Them".

After the death of their beloved ones, Saeed and Nadia decided to exit their homeland through the magical door, leaving Saeed's father behind because he refused to abandon the place of his lifetime memories and where his wife's body rests. The path that the characters traversed is referred to as "was both like dying and like being born, and indeed Nadia experienced a kind of extinguishing as she entered the blackness and a gasping struggle as fought to exit it[.....]all the doors of which save one were normal doors, all but the one through which she had come, and through which Saeed was now coming, which was black" (98). The novel frequently emphasizes the deep blackness of the doors. In the first chapter, for example, a man from an unspecified but 'perilous' place (7) with 'dark skin and dark, woolly hair' emerges from a closet doorway described (in a not-so-subtle allusion to Joseph Conrad) as 'dark, darker than night, a rectangle of complete darkness - the heart of darkness'. In the second episode, in an alleyway in Tokyo, 'two Filipina girls, in their late teens' emerge from 'a doorway of total blackness, as if no light were on inside, almost as though no light could penetrate within' (27).

Moreover, "Nadia and Saeed struck by the darkness of the door in the sense that it does not reveal it did not reveal what was on the Other side, and also did not reflect what was on this side, and so felt

equally like a beginning and an end”(98). Like many Others in the novel, Nadia and Saeed have no idea about where the doors will take them. For this reason, the doors “were being discussed by world leaders as a major global crisis” (83). Hence, the Black mysterious doors evoke the sense of loss, indicating the beginning of crisis in wealthy civilized Western nations, wherein people (refugees) do not know when and where they will appear, once they step in the door, and the authorities could not expect where or when the next door will appear. By injecting the idea of black portals, it is here where Hamid critiques the laws that govern the established Western notions of “*Borders*”, “*nativism*”, and “*nation*”.

The analogy between doors and borders that *Exit West* draws is cleverly chosen for it metaphorically holds several implications. For the expression “open door” is close in meaning to “open border”, in which both expressions give an opportunity to start over. However, such an opportunity could unfortunately not open to everyone. In the novel, some of them are blocked and closed by governments or militant groups, just like it is the case with some borders. For this reason, Nadia and Saeed are obliged to pay someone to find them an exit door out of their home country. Moreover, the closed doors and closed boundaries are what separate the two worlds, and thereby, creating a sort of imbalance between them.

In the opening pages, *Exit West* illustrates how borders and doors are established to keep unwanted intruders out, probably, because they already know that when people cross the boundaries of their nation to enter another country might feel as native to that country. The reader first encounters such a phenomenon, when the man intrudes the house of the pale-skinned sleeping woman in the Sydney neighbourhood.

Her home was alarmed, but the alarm was not activated. It had been erected by prior inhabitants, by those who had already lived here, before the process known as gentrification of this neighborhood had progressed as far as it had. The sleeping woman only used the alarm on rare occasions, usually when her husband was away, but she had

forgotten about it on this particular night. Her bedroom window, four meters above the ground, was open, but just slightly. (6)

The very concept *home* is predominantly defined as “a fixed, bounded, and discreet place” (Ralph and Staeheli 518). In this passage, the representation of home is constructed in relation to nation-state. Nations inevitably place geographical borders that separate the people 'within' from different peoples outside, i.e borders are fakely constructed to block intruders. Thus, within this view, we define home in relation to our place of birth or origin or to the place where our ancestors, family, and community are located. Although this scene is injected to create an atmosphere of danger, it reflects reality. The concept home and homeland have turned into problematic terms in this multicultural globalized era.

As the events of the novel progress and as masses of people step through doors out of desperation, the doors culminates in the dissolution of geographical borders in the novel. Here, Hamid mentions.

The news at the time was full of war, migrants, and nativists, but it was also full of fracture, of regions pushing away from nations and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it appeared that while everyone was coming together, they were also falling apart. Without borders, nations looked to be unreal, and people questioned their role. (Hamid 155)

The last line in the above mentioned quote demonstrates one truth that borders in the East are mere fabrications to serve colonial needs. In this perspective, Cocoran contends that “the Western involvement in the creation of borders in the Middle East must be seen as an attempt to enforce Western consensus on Other areas of the world” (Corcoran 1). For this reason, when doors are stepped by huge masses of immigrants, borders get blurred in *Exit West*, what muddles with this consensus. Thus, the unexpected opening of magical doors in the novel resembles a resisting process against colonial established borders, and against colonialism as a system that objectified to divided the globe into two opposite spheres and hence to confine the resources of wealth and power in the West and make them inaccessible to the east.

In addition to decreasing distance between nations, magical doors condensed time what makes migration an easy process. Unlike the traditional ways of migration that were full of danger, the magical doors are accessible in which people from all over the world would pour through without any harm. Moreover, no one of the protagonists gets hurt; yet the only risk they faced is that the migrants once they step through such doors, they do not know where it could exactly take them. As a result, it becomes quite possible for people in the novel to migrate. In spite the fact that the possibility to migrate through door in the novel has nothing to do with migration in reality, yet Hamid demonstrates in *The New Yorker* that the magical doors “allowed [him] to compress the next century or two of human migration on our planet into the space of a single year” (Hamid 2017).

By representing the process of migration in the future, the magical doors of the novel can be considered as a shortened version of what might the future of the world be, what disrupts history. In using magical realism, as a postcolonial discourse, Hamid intends to rewrite history but from a different point of view. In employing magical realism, early postcolonial writers, such as its Godfather Gabriel García Márquez, focused much more on rewriting history from their point of view as previously colonized ones, in an attempt to demonstrate that the recorded was fake, reflecting colonizers and Orientalists point of views. Yet, Hamid’s magical realism today intends to draw attention to the idea of the possibility of coexistence between multiple histories in the future.

Furthermore, Hamid’s vision of a possible future of coexistence does not intend to modify or change the existing narrative, rather it intends to create a new one, wherein the same postcolonial idea of decolonizing the mind is traced in both narratives. Rather than continuing on the same tragedy of decolonization, by depicting how migrants from former colonized countries would, in crossing boundaries, fall in the trap of identity loss, trauma, unhomeliness and host culture assimilation to the extent that they become hybrids, Hamid intend to shed light on the idea of cultural hybridity wherein borders between nations got blurred to lose its significant effect and meaning. By opening doors, geographical distances between nations will be decreased and time shortened, hence the discourse will

change due to power shifting. In fact, the closing of borders has made the West a wealthy and secured world, what given it the right to dominate the political discourse. Thus, the West spoke and represent the East for centuries.

Once more, Hamid's idea of opening doors has disrupted another important notion established by Western politics. "Western nativism", in other word, who is a native citizen? In the very beginning of the novel, Hamid introduces his protagonists as citizens in unnamed city which swallowen by refugees:

In a city swollen by refugees but mainly at peace, or at least not publicly at war, a young guy met a young woman in a classroom and did not speak to her. For days. His name was Saeed, and her name was Nadia. He had a beard, not a full beard, but a carefully groomed stubble, and she was constantly dressed in a flowing black robe from her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch. (1)

Although the author has described the two protagonists and acknowledged their status as citizens, he left the city's name ambiguous, Yet, when he added "swallowen by refugees but still mostly at peace", he shifted the reader's attention towards one important idea related to refugees. The latter once they cross the boundaries of one nation, they bring with them chaos; thus, automatically many things would be altered, not only in what concerns their status and the entire life but in the nation per se . In page 23, as Saeed's and Nadia's relationship progresses, the omniscient narrator presents to the reader a clear image about the refugees' status.

Refugees had taken many of the city's open spaces, building tents in the green belts between roadways, erecting lean-tos next to house boundary walls, and sleeping rough on pavements and street edges. Some appeared to be attempting to mimic the rhythms of a normal existence, as if it were entirely natural to live under a sheet of plastic propped up by twigs and a few chipped bricks. Others glanced out at the city, seemingly angry, surprised, pleading, or envious. Others did not move at all. Perhaps

they are dazed or resting. Possibly dying. When making curves, Saeed and Nadia had to take care not to run over an outstretched arm or leg.(23)

The expressions employed in such a passage emphasizes the difference between the novel's two protagonists as native citizens of the city and the refugees arriving in their city. Noteworthy, Hamid draws the reader's attention to what might happen to individuals' status once they cross the boundaries of their proper nation, they will be marginalized because they are refugees and their presence is illegal. Their adverse conditions turned them into outsiders using places of leisure of the natives as places of survival. Besides, Hamid described them as marginal refugees living between roads and next to boundaries, they sleep in the margins of streets, and exposed to sudden death. Because their position/status is still ambiguous, they are described as "some", "Others", and most of all "refugees" as a group rather than determined individuals, what makes a distinction between such bodies and Nadia and Saeed.

In addition, words such as 'seemed', 'what looked like', 'maybe', and 'possibly dying' determine that refugees holding their fate in hands to the extent that both Nadia and Saeed 'ha[ve] to be careful not to run over an outstretched arm or leg', with the refugees", because their position is dangerous. Yet among all this chaos, they still try to "recreate the rhythms of normal life"(Hamid 23). Paradoxically, later on in the novel Nadia and Saeed themselves, who in the beginning of the novel are very careful to deal with refugees because their status are different, turned into refugees once they stepped through the magical door that allowed them to cross the boundaries of different nations.

By turning into refugees themselves, Nadia and Saeed situation prove to the general reader that nothing in this world is predictable and what seems secured and protected for today is in fact not. For this reason, Hamid cleverly injected in the second paragraph of page 2 the following idea " it 'might seem odd that in cities teetering at the edge of the abyss young people still go to class', but that 'this is the way of things, with cities as with life, for one moment we are pottering about our errands as usual and the next we are dying' (1-2). Hamid attempted to call the mind of his reader towards what

will happen in the next following pages to the protagonists, who were very busy about going on their life in a time when their city is invaded by masses of refugees whom they might change its status for ever as well as the status of Nadia and Saeed.

In fact, the concept of refugee who can be identified as a stateless individual resembles a crisis in what is related to notions such as nation and nationhood. In this perspective, Giorgio Agamben went on to claim that “under the nation-state system, the so-called sacred and inalienable rights of man prove to be totally shielded at the exact moment it is no longer feasible to identify them as rights of the inhabitants of a state” (Agamben 116). In the opening pages, the narrator identified Nadia and Saeed as citizens in unnamed city pursuing a course in identity cooperation and working in different agencies. This means they have rights and duties to practice as citizens, whereas the refugees in the same city lack protection and live in the margins of the city because they are stateless. Hence, Nadia and Saeed themselves lost their rights the moment they stepped in the doors and decided to leave their home city (presumably their nation), wherein they turned stateless.

In the novel when the doors first start to appear, people step through them out of desperation, without knowing whether they risk death by doing so. This mass of refugee movements does not resemble a crisis for a particular nation, rather they alter the concept nationhood per se. Using Agamben’s words, “they are arguably “dematerialized” as citizens and “recomposed” as stateless, losing their 'so-called sacred and inalienable rights' in the process” (Agamben 115). The refugees in the unnamed city of Saeed and Nadia have no rights and live without protection in tents installed in the margins of the city simply because they are stateless.

Similarly, when Nadia and Saeed agreed to pay a mysterious agent to arrange their escape, they found themselves on a Greek island”. When Nadia and Saeed arrived at the refugee camp in Mykonos, they were informed by compatriots that they were in a refugee camp with hundreds of tents and lean-tos and people of many colors and hues. They gathered around fires that burned inside upright oil drums and spoke in a cacophony that was the languages of the world, like a communications satellite or a

spymaster tapping into fiber optic cable under the sea". Instead of neglecting the refugees of the camp, Nadia and Saeed find themselves obliged to think about their life in the camp and to be very careful to not leave their refuge camp, because life there is dangerous. "The island was pretty safe, they were told, except when it was not, which made it like most places. Decent people vastly outnumbered dangerous ones, but it was probably best to be in the camp, near Other people, after nightfall" (101). In due, Nadia and Saeed are obliged to lose their inalienable rights as Agamben suggested. Based on this stateless situation and fear, Nadia and Saeed decided to leave the camp. With the help of a local volunteer whom Nadia befriends, the two protagonists reach the second door, which sends them to a city of London, wherein they find themselves in an empty mansion with many Other migrants from various parts of the world.

All around London, houses, parks, and empty lots were being populated in this manner, some by a million migrants, Others by twice as many. It appeared that the more empty a space in the city, the more it attracted squatters, with unoccupied mansions in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea particularly hard-hit, their absentee owners often discovering the bad news too late to intervene, and similarly, the great expenses of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, filling up with tents and rough shelters, such that it was now said that between Westminster and Hammersmith legal residents were a minority, and native-born ones vanishingly few, with local newspapers referring to the area as the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation (126).

The migrants occupying the residence successfully resist police attempts to evacuate them from the mansion. As a result, the confrontation between natives and migrants reaches its peak when a nativist crowd attacks these migrants, escalating the conflict and transforming London into a war zone. "around this zone were soldiers and armoured vehicles, and above it were drones and helicopters, and inside it were Nadia and Saeed, who had run from war already, and did not know where next to run" (135). The

term “black holes” does not refer this time to the system of magical doors, rather, it is the city of London which divided into “black zones” and “light zones” out of the conflict between native born people and the legal residents of London who find themselves increasingly small in number vis a vis the flood of immigrants/refugees that described by the media as as ‘black holes in the fabric of the nation’.

Noteworthy, the term fabric of the nation or nations is first mentioned in this passage to refer to what constructs a nation, i.e the Western policies woven centuries ago to promote nativism, superiority and restrict the movement of bodies of the peripheries across borders. Hamid’s novel intends to suggest that the more exits (doors) to West get opened, the more this fabric will be torn up. Hence, one can say that *Exit West* is optimistic in tone as it imagines the post-national future as the frontiers between nations get blurred to the extent that notions such as nativism and nationhood will fade-away; thus, the previous correlations made between a person and where did he come from and his history and where he/she prefers to live is no longer significant.

Again, Hamid’s *Exit West* is aligned with what Epstien proposed in his theory transculture experiment, in which man is free to choose where he wants to be inspite of his colour, language, history, religion and gender because the world per se becomes an open space full of porous; a transit area as that of Mykonoos isle, wherein “ in this group, everyone was foreign and so, in a sense, no one was” (100). What is being depicted in this quote refers to the existence of a diverse and multi-cultural community in the camp. So in a way, all in the group are foreigners but at the same time, they are united by their foreignness. This suggests that migrants experience in this world will open new ways for constructing an entire life by altering Western policies.

By alluding to refugees’ experience, Hamid intends to suggest that their encounter with new cultures, societies and bodies as well as their standing against natives promotes the idea of co-existence and aims at attaining a better understanding of a human being by going beyond borders and boundaries and the discourse of the self and the Other.

Saeed and Nadia migration through different spaces is also a migration through time, because they undergo different changes that altered the person within them, the way they view the world, as it altered the world per se as they are able to modify the Western policy, and to exit the idea of conflict between natives and immigrants that themselves represent the center and the periphery; hence they advocate the idea of coexistence as the only solution for the best of this humanity. For instance, when the protagonists stepped at Mykonos, Nadia constructed a sense of belonging with foreign people such as making friendship with the local Greek girl. This sense of belonging is not based on national roots intensifies as she moves farther away from her city of birth through space and through time. Rather, it is the sense of belonging that developed out of finding meaning to her life which is not tied to a specific place or location.

Likewise, the idea of coexistence becomes evident when Saeed and Nadia moved to London Mansion. While living in the mansion which is predominantly inhabited by Nigerians, Nadia becomes the only non-Nigerian member of a council that is primarily composed of Nigerian elders. As a member of the council, Nadia does not feel that she is an outsider, rather she feels at home and she belongs to the mansion. During her meetings with the council, she recognizes that a feeling of belonging is not only achieved by sharing a similar racial, cultural, and religious background.

Over time, she came to realize that Nigerians were not all Nigerians; some were half Nigerians, or from places bordering Nigeria, or from families that spanned both sides of a border, and that there was perhaps no such thing as a Nigerian, or certainly no one common thing, because different Nigerians spoke different languages and belonged to different religions (144).

Nadia's awareness that the council members are not full-blooded Nigerians, as well as her realization that there is most likely no such thing as being entirely Nigerian. Nadia believes that a sense of belonging and home is established not just by sharing the same geographical origin, nationality, religion, or cultural background, but also by understanding, morality, open-mindedness, and valuing

one another. In this regard, Hage Ghassan assumes that a sense of belonging or community "is achieved when an individual lives in a space where one acknowledges Other people as one's own and feels that he is also recognized by them as such" (418).

Moreover, *Exit West* unfolds its pages by inviting readers to make comparisons between the magical doors that can unexpectedly be opened at any moment of time and any place and the actually-existing digital technologies. In the first pages, for instance, it appears that the moment the dark man crossed the magical doors to find himself in the closet of the white-skinned sleeping woman in Sydney coincided with Saeed's sending of an email to one of the agency clients and the latter received it. Thus, the virtual immediate transmission of an email is synchronized with the immediate transportation of people through magical doors.

Additionally, once the civil war started in their city, mobile phone networks and internet connectivity suddenly disappeared. Hence, Saeed and Nadia get isolated and disadvantaged to each other as well as to the entire world, because their phones and the network function as access portals to the world just as the magical doors that used to transport people. This means that the magical doors that turned into portals in the novel are in fact a reference to communication devices that exist to connect between people and the entire world today. The novel has explained the effect of technology, when Saeed and Nadia crossed the door to find themselves in London as a second destination:

As Nadia sat on the steps of a building reading the news on her phone across the street from a detachment of troops and a tank, she thought she saw online a photograph of herself sitting on the steps of a building reading the news on her phone across the street from a detachment of troops and a tank, and she was startled, and wondered how this could be, how she could both read this news and be this news, and how the newspaper could have published this image of her in [...] and she almost felt that if she got up and walked home at this moment, there would be two Nadias, and one would stay on the steps reading and one would walk home, and two different

lives would unfold for these two different selves. She thought she was losing her balance or possibly her mind, and then she zoomed in on the image and saw that the woman in the black robe reading the news on her phone was actually not her at all. (154-5)

In this passage, Nadia experiences a veritable hallucination or what is called autoscopy though she does know that the woman on the news is not her. Yet, by repeating the same line “sat on the steps of a building reading the news on her phone across the street from a detachment of troops and a tank” more than once, Hamid smartly confuses his reader who actually think as if he/she is mistakenly reading the passage. In so doing, Hamid makes a link between Nadia’s confusion and that of the reader, what makes us, as readers, sense her confusion. Nadia’s inability to distinguish between the two pictures only until the end of the passage, makes her feel alienated.

In spite of the fact that magical doors allowed Nadia to swiftly travel through space and time in two distinct places, but this did not make her perplexed and somewhat alienated as the huge effect of the existing technology. The capacity for the taken and online published images is what buffled Nadia, and pushed her to imagine as if there are two of her here and there, and within the same time. Thus the instantaneous online unfolding of news and images is what compresses time and space in this world; this rapidity transports us into different spaces in a matter of seconds. As it makes it possible to travel the past, it is quite possible to take us to the near future. Hence, we will turn into migrants through time, what it makes black holes in the entire fabric of the universe as if its image is being distorted.

About the analogy between the contemporary digital technology and the magical portals of the novel, Chambers says: “the novel’s vignettes (which she refers to as ‘cutpiece scenes’) serve to ‘give an indication of the space-time compression effected by the doors, symbolizing our ubiquitous screens in an exponentially technologizing world’ (237). Evidently, the analogy between *Exit West*’s magical doors and contemporary digital technology is explicitly referred to when they are in a refugee camp in Mykonos being likened to listening in to an undersea fibre-optic cable, or being oneself a

‘communications satellite’ ( 100). Thus, the digital technologies help in decreasing the disparity between rich natives and poor migrants which are in fact a reference to the disparity between the center and the peripheries. In this sense, Lagji contends “Hamid’s doors ‘aggravate the existing unequal dynamic forces between North and South (Lagji 219).

In fact, Hamid’s exit West invites readers to imagine a world with porous borders and magical doors that transport people to unexpected destination in a matter of seconds. In our contemporary world, people get a large access to digital technology. The easy access to digital technology and networks becomes ungovernable and nonrestricted, as it would take people in anstantaneous travel to several destinations. The magical doors in Exit West encourages readers to think of how the network makes the transmission of information, images and even fraud information so easy. Digital network functions as a tool that declonizes or liberates the mind, as it could reduce the inequalities between the center and the periphery.

Evidently, the novel intends remind the readers about the refugee fenomenan, eventhough they did not cross the boundaries of their nations, and have zero contact whether with legally or illegally displaced people, it is quite important to learn that they are themselves refugees; their experiences as refugees are mediated by these actually-existing networks. By making readers empathize with Saeed and Nadia as refugees, Hamid attempts at universalizing the phenomenon. In an interview, Hamid asserts that, ‘if we can recognize the universality of the migration experience and the universality of the refugee experience – that those of us who have never moved are also migrants and refugees – then the space for empathy opens up’ (qtd. In Chandler 2017). Thus, once an individual becomes aware that he per se could be a mere refugee through time, the spaces between nations would be perforated and boundaries get blurred.

The excessive use of the existing technology turns individuals into immediate refugees and migrants through time; such an experience is what makes boundaries between nations fluctuate. Suposing that

every individual could become a refugee in the world, this made refugees speak the unspeakable truth about the Other; hence they disembody the figure of the Other.

Noteworthy, all along the novel, there is no reference to the first person narration “I”, yet a universal “we” is employed, emphasizing that. This universal “we” avows that transience is a ‘loss [that] unites humanity, unites every human being’ (Hamid 202). In the novel, both Nadia and Saeed depicted as transcending boundaries with each Other and parted into separate lives too. Yet at the end of the novel and in spite of the differences in the way they view the world, their experience is what united them a half century later, as they returned for the first time to the same city and agreed to meet and communicate:

though most of the Others close by had changed, and they sat beside one another on two adjacent sides of a small square table, under the sky, and they looked at each Other, sympathetic, for time had done what times does, but looks of a particular recognition, and they watched the young people of this city pass, young people who had no idea how bad things once were, except what they studied in history, which was perhaps as it should be, and they sipped their coffees, and they spoke. Their conversation navigated two lives, with vital details highlighted and excluded. (228)

The idea that Hamid implemented in this quote echoes Salman Rushdie’s words thirty five years earlier, that it “may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity” (Rushdie 1982). By considering Hamid’s writing world literature, *Exit West* in this regard suggests that human beings are not temporal but relational migrants; hence, they should transcend the past in order to coexist for the past resemble a loss.

In a globalized world, *Exit West* demonstrates that though immigration and refugees are regarded as problems, they can also function as a new mode of consciousness. *Exit West* opens new ways of seeing and being in a global world where people in spite of their race, religion and place are

free to transcend borders; hence, this makes the novel a representative narrative voice that aspires to open dialogue through difference and diversity rather than polarization and divergence.

#### **5.4. Magical Doors and Porous Frontiers: New Mapping of the Self / the Other**

While the story takes place in an anonymous city undergoing a civil war between the government and militants, the protagonists flee through a system of fictitious doors, quickly transporting the reader from a specific Muslim city experiencing a violent civil uprising to a world with black porous walls on the verge of collapse, anarchy, and chaos. By describing a migration crisis that cannot be controlled by geographical national borders, military surveillance, or international agreements, Hamid's novel allows the reader to delve deeper into the text and examine the urgent change of today's global conditions, particularly wars and human displacement.

Through the use of a surrealist device of magical doors that suddenly transformed into portals or black worm holes that enable thousands of people to pour, or as Hamid puts it "slip away" (211), from the economic destitution and "murderous battlefields" (211) in their home countries, seeking security of the West, Hamid successfully shifted his reader's attention to the new reality emerged out of their displacement to cause a change in the fabric of the nation.

According to critics, Hamid's novels frequently use second-person narrative, which is both formal and political. In his essay collection *Civilization and Discontents*, Hamid declares. "In my writing, I've attempted to promote the blurring of borders. Not only between civilizations or people from various 'groups,' but also between author and reader. Co-creation has been important to my literature, with the idea that a novel is created collaboratively by a writer and a reader. Cocreation is important to my politics as well" (10). Although the novel is told from the third person omniscient, the reader of *Exit West* is turned from being a passive observer and consumer of fiction into an active counterpart of the author in communicating the story progressive events.

Playing with the reader's bias and prejudices, Hamid uses the universal "we" and magical realism as an aesthetic strategy to incorporate the reader in the conversation, rather than simply conveying a

refugee story to a Western audience. Kellog points out that "audiences are increasingly reading work for its representational politics, as opposed to the aesthetics of craft or narrative storytelling" (Kellog).

As their civilization crumbles under the weight of rising violence and deteriorating infrastructure, they begin to hear murmurs about a global network of portals opening. These are regular doors—sometimes in an apartment, an office building, or a stairwell—that transform abruptly and completely unexpectedly into portals to Other locations. Those who go through them have no idea where they will land; yet, with their city at war and their lives in jeopardy, Saeed and Nadia understand that their only hope of survival lies in the mystery that awaits them on the Other side of one of these 'open' doors. Those ordinary doors have suddenly "become special door [s]... without warning" (72), wherein a flood of immigrants from different countries, ethnicities, and religions could cross the portals to transform the globe into denationalized cultural spaces; hence, they cause an enormous split between the First and the Third World to be reproduced within the experiences of everyday life.

Therefore, a new reality has been emerged to draw a new mapping of the self and the Other, in which Otherness is experienced not external of the nation but rather internal to its being. *Exit West* demonstrates that immigration as a problem can also function as a new mode of consciousness that constructed upon a pluralistic narrative open to dialogue, difference, and diversity rather than a monolithic discourse and the imperial standpoint.

Mohsin Hamid's novel that used immigration apocalypse as a frame narrative intends to envisage new ways of seeing and being in a globalized world and such a vision is in tune with Epstein Transcultural view. By using magical doors that enable thousands of people to move freely in and out of nation-states, Hamid challenges the reader to envision a world where everyone, irrespective of class, skin color, or religion, internalizes something of the quality of being a foreigner, an immigrant, a refugee. Rather than focusing on the perilous details of trauma, memories, and the suffering experienced in border crossing, the reader is invited to understand a world without borders and political

restrictions. The unexpectedly and randomly opened black magical doors offer unrestricted freedom of mobility, and draws attention to before and after displacement.

The novel unfolds by describing Saeed and Nadia before their migration. Both protagonists are taking evening college classes “on corporate identity and product branding” (1). The first time Saeed spoke to Nadia, their city had yet to experience any major fighting, just some shooting and odd car bombing. Yet, violence reached its heightened level, when Saeed lost his mother and then Nadia lost her cousin with many other people in a bomb explosion. Her cousin “blown . . . literally to bits, the largest of which . . . were a head and two-thirds of an arm” (29). The sense of witnessing the loss of beloved ones transformed into a trauma and a daily fear for their own life. To escape this trauma, Saeed and Nadia find refuge and stability in their romantic relationship. However, when violence increases to cut the city off from the rest of the world, and windows become the “borders” through which death can easily come” (68), and when private and public executions become so common that “bodies hanging from street lamps and billboards” form a kind of “festive seasonal decoration” (81) Saeed and Nadia, like “countless others” in the country decide to step into the unknown, and to escape the death in their city through magical doors.

Once Saeed and Nadia walked through the magical door to settle down in the Greek Island of Mykonos, the novel shifted focus from a turbulent civil war in Saeed’s and Nadia’s unnamed Muslim city to portray the whole world in move, immigration and chaos, as if there is a sort of new war between the West and the rest of the world to cause fractures and power shift.

The news at the time was full of war, migrants, and nativists, but it was also full of fragmentation, of regions breaking away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it appeared that while everyone was coming together, everyone was also moving apart. Without borders, nations looked to be unreal, and people questioned their role. (155)

The reader in *Exit West* is invited to imagine the world without national borders that supposedly used

to secure nations. In the novel immigration as a problem becomes a new mode of seeing and being. “That summer it seemed to Saeed and Nadia that the whole planet was on the move, much of the global South headed to the global North, but also Southerners moving to Other Southern places and Northerners moving to Other Northern places” (169). Besides, peoples’ or bodies mobility have turned into the paradigm of new historical consciousness, and this reflects Edward Said’s view in describing refugees as ‘a creation of the twentieth-century state’ (Said 1984).

Deterritorialization in the novel is experienced by both the immigrants and the citizens of the host country. When hundreds of migrants silently emerge out through “rectangle[s] of complete darkness—the heart of darkness” (6) into upstate mansions or dark alleys “staking claim” (120), they become much more physically and socially displaced. The magical doors that could be opened everywhere and at anytime become a source of uncertainty and unpredictability inside the West; hence, it caused a radical change by creating “black holes in the fabric of the nation” (126). According to Coker Korpez, “the sheer unpredictable pace of such ‘openings’ creates new social and political dynamics that drastically defy the language of predictability, control, and security that had once dominated in the “secure” and “protected” democratic West. As the motion, conflict, and confrontation with the Other, the stranger, is brought from the periphery to the center, this time it is the West that is feeling the effects of civil unrest (166).

With the unexpected opening of doors, the split between US and Them begins to get blurred because the liberal democratic West is no longer secure. The conflict in the unnamed city (presumably the Orient) has reached the center of the democratic West; when police and the citizens stand hand in hand against the immigrants with aggressive “nativist mobs” (131) carrying “iron bars and knives” and forming “their own legions, with a wink and a nod from the authorities” (132). For the nativists, immigrants resemble a huge problem, whereas immigrants view the nativists represent a source of hate and chaos. This situation is quite similar to the civil war Nadia and Saeed experienced in their homeland. Suddenly, the bright image of the civilized democratic and superior West is diminished

when the government in facing the fear of the Other, rather than being a source of providing security it becomes a problem. In order to confine the movement of immigrants, the government divided the neighborhood into “light and dark zones”(142). The Dark Zones are for immigrants; they are considered as zones of menace for the citizens as well as the new comers. Such a situation of hate and fear reminds Nadia of the fury of the militants in her homeland.

Nadia was stunned by the rage of those nativists proposing wholesale death because it seemed so similar, so much like the rage of militants in her own city. “She wondered if she and Saeed had accomplished anything by moving; whether the faces and buildings had changed but the fundamental reality of their situation had not” (156). Out of this crisis and the politics of loath, instability and violence, a new perception starts to take its place among people. In spite of their difference, whether rich or poor, white or black, nativists or immigrant, Muslim or Christian, people get slowly influenced by such violence and start looking for possible ways of coexistence.

Probably they realized that the doors could not be closed and that new doors would continue to open, and that denying coexistence would have required one party to cease to exist, and the extinguishing party would have been transformed in the process, and too many native parents would not have been able to look their children in the eye and speak with head held high about what their generation had done. (164)

At this point the novel’s focus shifts for the third time. As it seems that what calls the readers’ attention is not the crisis in the West in confronting immigrants flood and the failure of its systems in overcoming such a global risk, but the common sense that emerges to quiet down the xenophobia towards “the Other”. In this perspective Daningo contends that, “The novel’s strength lies in its fictional depiction of the transcultural and “its resistance to being appropriated by one single traditional national canon or being identified with one single, specific cultural/ethnic expression or tradition” (136).

While nativists as well as immigrants begin to look for possible ways of coexistence that could emerge out of the glue of diversity, authorities of nation states start to feign control out of the

uncontrollable. Since they could no longer be able to secure the doors and the national borders, they implemented “right to exclude,” by constructing “human halos” (167) in to preserve their image of power and sovereignty. In one of the working camps of the London Halo, Nadia and Saeed are promised “forty metres and a pipe” that would connect them to “all the utilities of modernity” (167–168). In spite of the security that forty metres could provide, Nadia could not stop dreaming of finding new doors that open to new lands, new people, and new beginnings. Instead of living in a homogenous halo, Nadia prefers to be surrounded with various people such as the ones she encounters in the food cooperative in Marin, California. With these people, Nadia felt that she is beginning to belong as she finds support and the protection she wants among them. Hence, they make her feel “as though a new door was opening up” (215).

Unlike Nadia, who cut all ropes with her past to enjoy the cultural mixture that becomes of the utmost value in her life, Saeed takes his home and culture with him wherever they go: “the further they moved from the city of their birth, through space and through time, the more he [Saeed] sought to strengthen his connection to it, tying ropes to the air of an era that for her [Nadia] was unambiguously gone” (187). In all the places they temporarily lived in, as the Palace Garden Terrace in London, or the London halo, or Marin, Saeed decided to take his “cultural borders” with him. He joined a Pakistani Muslim group in London, because all that is local, “national,” and “traditional” is essential for Saeed; thus, in each departure he feels like “play[ing] roulette” (163). Even though, Saeed tries to recreate the home he left behind in order to compensate the sober sense of displacement to find comfort, Nadia, instead, views each new crossing of doors as a new joy and a new beginning. Each departure allows Nadia to reflect on new cultures and smoothly operate within different systems, communities and values among people of different colours.

She was relieved to see all these people of all these different colors and in all these different outfits around her; better here than there, she reasoned, and it dawned on

her that she had been stifled in the place of her birth for nearly her entire life, that its time had passed, and a new time had arrived. (156)

Consequently, this boundryless experience motivates both Nadia and Saeed to construct a self critical stance, by distancing themselves from their own culture as well as the essentialist narrative of race, religion and gender (for Nadia). Their openness to diverse experiences allows them to construct a fluid and flexible self that thinks outside the box and nurtures respect for Other cultures beyond its own. In Marin, for instance, a wide range of cultures becomes the center of “conversation” for everyone and allows “imaginative engagement” rather than “assimilation.”

This free-spirited culture in the region has also pushed Nadia and Saeed to let go of their deteriorating partnership and pursue Other experiences, people, and relationships. Marin allows its residents to build a heterogeneous community in which they can enjoy the differences without developing a susceptible sense of ethnicity or class consciousness. As a result, the city transforms into a "taster's paradise" (117), serving as a beacon of hope for hundreds of immigrants. According to Hamid, it becomes a city "where the "old" and the "new" come together, are "reborn" and "re-formed" (217). *Exit West* also demonstrates the fact that " the works of magical realism challenge that history to imagine a truly postcolonial and post traumatic future, rather than merely offering a self conscious lament for the postcolonial and traumatic past " (Takolander 119). As a result, if the nineteenth century was the century of the empire, and the twentieth century was the century of the nation-state, Hamid provides a view into what the future holds in its folds.

#### **4.5.Conclusion**

In a globalized world, Hamid’s *Exit West* demonstrates that though immigration and refugees are regarded as problems, they can also function as a new mode of consciousness. *Exit West* is a representative narrative voice that aspires to open dialogue through difference and diversity rather than polarization and divergence. Rather than plainly targeting East/West dichotomy to show that the world

is changing, and we also need to change, we need to redefine borders, and change our ways of seeing and being, Hamid relies on the magic of Magical Realism, resembled in magical doors as well as technology advancement, what makes him able to shift discourse and speak the unspeakable.



---

General Conclusion

After applying the theories and the approach pertinent to this study, the thesis entitles “*Silence Breaking*”: *Investigating Voice and Representation in Selected Postcolonial Novels* has reached the following up shots. The first chapter of the study has discussed and analyzed the review of literature. The chapter is divided into two captions: Orientalism as a postcolonial discourse and the representation of the Other. The navigation across the previous critical research studies, investigated the representation of the Other from multifaceted issues, reveals that Orientalism is more or less a romantic discourse that is far from being objective, because it served at legitimizing Western imperialism and aims at subordination.

This imperial power has been discussed by Said who relates it to language and culture; because, domination mainly functions through language. Thus, language is used as a medium to construct hierarchical powers Superior versus Inferior, or the Occident and the deprived Oriental Other. This Other has been marginalized and silenced, due to the fact that the colonizers are the superiors and, therefore are power holders who speak for and represent it. On the Other hand, representation is regarded as a critical concept in the construction of the Orientalist discourse. Based on this notion, that turned into dogma, the West has appeared as a dominant force in an exchange of power with the East, and, therefore, worked his passage up to construct the dominated Oriental “Other”.

Although most of the exposed literature has discussed the problem of Orientalism as a discourse to dominate and represent the East/Other, very few studies have interested in studying and investigating the Contemporary postcolonial novel and the different ways of representation it identifies to byass the silence imposed by Orientalism discourse. This fact has boosted up the researcher to probe the issue of voice and representation in selected postcolonial novels in an attempt to exit off the idea of Western representation and domination, and to show that the Oriental Other is keen to speak for and represent himself.

The second chapter has theorized representation from Orientalism to Transculturalism. The outcome of the theoretical analysis reveals that the question of representation resembles a true crisis in postcolonial discourse as it is connected to the biased discourses of Orientalism and colonialism that are based on binary opposition; wherein East appears as silent static entity vis a-vis a civilized advanced West. The analysis discloses that Orientalism as defined by Said is an outstanding theory to understand the past relations between the Orient and the Occident that created the present disparity.

The term was first used as an artistic mode rather than a way of representation; Europeans used it to describe worlds and cultures they had never come across before. Since that time, the Orient has been a mythical, silent world, and it had been labeled the “Other”. In order to dig within the imperial tradition of representing the Orient, Said embraced Michel Foucault’s concept of discourse, that is constructed upon Power/Knowledge, as a methodology for his research. Foucault’s theory has demonstrated that their discourse breeds hegemony and aims at subordination. His study also shows that the colonialist used culture to implant certain thoughts in the minds of the Orientals, to gain their consent, in a way that allows them perceive his invasion as legitimate.

Liberating the East from colonial dependencies requires a change in the way of thinking, or as Ngugi Wa’ Thiongo puts it “Decolonizing the Minds”, and challenging the dominant ways Orientals follow in viewing and identifying themselves, as well as the ways Orientalists used to represent them.

The diagnosis of the Orient’s misrepresentations also demonstrates that the Orient was also feminized in European representation; it is portrayed as irrational feminine, silent and sexually attractive. Whereas, the West appeared rationally masculine and dominant. The image of the silent and powerless woman is another proof of “Othering” the East to speak for it. In order to bypass the misrepresentation of the Oriental Other and defy East/West dichotomy, the Oriental Other should be empowered, the mindset should be altered, and Orientals should have their authentic voice to speak

for and represent themselves. Hence, they could be able to end the single story the West had weaved centuries ago.

In order to end the single story of misrepresentation and break centuries of silence constructed by Orientalism and the hegemonic colonial discourse, *Transculture* is developed as a model of cultural development that liberates humans from the material dependencies that they receive as members of a certain group or ethnos, and challenges the vision of “clash of civilizations”. It is an alternative to isolating polarized discourse of Orientalism, leveling globalism, as well as the isolating pluralism result of multiculturalism. It is the site of interaction among the existing cultures, wherein individuals feel free of the restrictions imposed by a single culture by setting their differences as ground for similarity, tolerance and coexistence.

In order to achieve this ultimate objective and give voice to the Oriental Others to speak and represent themselves, the practical phase of the study starts with the third chapter entitled: *Speaking Maps, Speaking Imperial Past: Reinventing the Cartography of the world and Bridging Meezattera in Souief's The Map of Love(2000)*, wherein the discussion and the analysis of the first specimen have reached the following outcomes.

In her enlightening and delighting novel *The Map of Love*, Souief acts as an authentic voice in exposing the dense history of Egypt in a mesmerizing strategic contrapuntal reading. In re-examining the British colonial control over Egypt and juxtaposing it with the modern dominant force of neo-colonization in the post-emancipation period, Ahdef Souief aims at questioning the inevitability of Western colonization over Egypt which has led to implementing hierarchal structure between the wise civilized West/Self and the static East /Other . By juxtaposing the colonial past with the postcolonial present of Egypt, Souief notices that Egyptians still suffer from the same problems they experienced before such as terrorism, ignorance, poverty, and most importantly they still indirectly controlled by the Westerner.

By considering *Maps of Love* a transcultural novel that intends to represent the 'voice of love' that substitutes the 'voice of conflicts' in an attempt to bridge the world's discontent through mutual dialogue between East and West, the chapter focuses on how Ahdaf Souief constructs a transcultural encounter, weaving a network of the personal and political, by straddling two historical periods, namely the late nineteenth-early twentieth century period of British colonial intervention in Egypt and the pre-millennial period of globalization.

To refute the inevitability of colonialism and the hierarchies constructed between the Self and the Other through Orientalism hegemonic representations, Souief has deployed *Travel writing* as a second strategy in the novel. Souief astutely weaves a postcolonial perspective on history to be able to write a revisionist contrapuntal narrative to the history of Egypt. By making connection between two love stories which are set in different centuries: Anna Winterbourne and Sharif El Baroudi that transcends the colonial past to meet the contemporary story of Isabel Parkman and Omar El Ghamraoui that takes place in Egypt and USA of 1997. In so doing, Souief creates a *contact zone* wherein the fusion of diverse cultural, historical and religious backgrounds open possible routes for dialogue between different characters: Arabs, British and Americans, what allows the self to coexist with the Other.

In addition to the two connected love stories that end up with intercultural marriage of the protagonists, the novel begins with chapters, respectively, entitled: "A Beginning", "An End of a Beginning", "A Beginning of an End" and "An End". These titles could be read as metaphors indicating an unending effect of colonialism. Appealing to the past is among the commonest used strategies, not only to show disagreement with what happened, but to indicate whether the past is really past also. Rather, the past is what informs the present time and shapes it; hence, neither of them can stand alone. This indicates that no story is sufficient in itself and history is not the only single story as it is his-story, i.e the story told from the point of view of the superior West. Therefore, it is high time to

revise and transcend the single story of the inferior Oriental Other the superior weaved its threads centuries ago.

In order to be able to surpass the single story of “the Self” and “The Other”, Souief relies mainly on genealogy/ nasab as a renowned form of history writing in the *Arab East*, indicating that though the effect of the colonial past is impossible to be surpassed, it needs recognition, revision and understanding in postcolonial time. In addition to the use of genealogy, Souief also uses the three-paneled tapestry, that is woven by Anna and depicts Egypt’s Pharoanic history and the Islamic heritage, including a pharaonic image and Arabic inscription, as well as verse from Qur’ān. “It is He who brings forth the dead” (491) and “from the dead come the living” (516), as a contrapuntal reading of colonial history and a transcultural space, demonstrating the coexistence between the East and West cultures. Therefore, Ahdef Souief’s *The Map of Love* is considered “a tour de force revisionist meta history novel” (Malak128).

To undermine the disparity between the center and the periphery, Souief opens a postcolonial debate by overlapping the experience of Westerners and Orientals and whom mainly belong to two different periods of time and cultures. In this regard, Souief creates an interconnected contrapuntal narrative of multiple voices, dialogues, genres and memories, straddling cultural, historical and geographical borders, wherein *The Map of Love* becomes their contact zone.

Furthermore, Souief creates a Meezatterra as a transcultural space that opens channels of dialogue between the Self and the Other, wherein both parts exchange thoughts, construct firm conscience, and transmit voices. Through Meezatterra, Souief weaves a ground of empathy and coexistence between cultures and religions. The success of Suief’s meezatterra is translated in the novel through the successful transcultural love and marriage of Anna and Sharif in the past and Isabel and Omar in the present, what breeds conscience and unity; the unity that gives a glimpse of light for better future for all humanity through the birth of Nur El Hayet and baby Sharif.

In addition to the successful transcultural marriage of the characters, the Arabization of language resembles the positive marriage between cultures. In order to dismantle hierarchies between the Self and the Other, Souief weaves a linguistic meezaterra, demonstrating the possibility of bridging the chasm between East and West through coexistence, understanding and empathy. In straddling boundaries and dismantling East/West hierarchies, *the Map of Love* transcends the boundaries of form as it refuses categorization. It refuses to be read as purely romance, historical fiction travel writing, or even postcolonial. Rather it is all of them and its aesthetic lies in the harmonious unity between all these elements. By transcending boundaries, barriers and crossing points in content and form, *The Map of Love* constructs a Mezzaterra of coexistence, empathy and acceptance between cultures, religions, and traditions.

The fourth chapter is entitled: *Speaking Trans(re)lation, Speaking Transition: Showing Rea and Heading Tarig in Leila Aboulela's The Translator (1999)*. In order to propose a possible route to the crisis of representation, the chapter has read Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* as a transcultural book of self-affirmation and change of an Arab African Scottish female character through cross-cultural contact. On the Other hand, it considers *translation* as a counterhegemonic discursive tool that brings East to West because the protagonist is a translator. Outstandingly, the translation process depicted in Aboulela's novel is inverted, in which the dominated element does not translate the dominating one in order to assimilate the latter's culture; but rather, it is the dominated element who translates its own culture, paving way for the dominating to comprehend it.

Interestingly, the source text that the protagonist has relied on is Q'uran, the holy book and the foundational rock of Muslims' Religion. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on the contact zone where postcolonial, translation, and migration studies intersect in their function and the shaping of a place. The latter can be transformed into a fluid translated place or a place of transrelation and hence, it resembles a transition and this colludes with Epstein's Transculture. Both translation and translator

play a primordial role in Leila Aboulela novel, wherein translation is used as an empowering linguistic instrument as well as a metaphor of cultural transposition and modulation.

The analysis of the second specimen Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* 1999 has deciphered that Aboulela succeeds in creating through transcultural dialogue a *Zone of Contact*, wherein the Orientalist Rae Isle and the Sudanese translator Sammar become able to transcend their cultural differences to set grounds for mutual understanding and enlightenment.

In this Transculture narrative, the deterritorialized Sammar and the Secular Rae Isle act as two distinct voices wherein a new story of possible coexistence and understanding emerges. Although they come from diverse worlds East/West, Sammar and Rae challenge Other characters' antagonistic and ideological attitudes to appear different, not only to the world surrounding them, but also to themselves, through their endeavour to create a contact zone based on mutual understanding and empathy.

The challenge in *The Translator* lies in empowering her protagonist Sammar to speak her voice through translation, in her relationship with the Orientalist Rae. In so doing, Aboulela intends to associate herself and her female character intimately within the colonialist narrative without being subjugated by them. Thus, she gets the ability of writing back to colonialism, and powerfully subvert them. This way the subaltern can finally speak affirming herself. In postcolonial narrative, female hybrid characters are culturally repressed; however, the case of Sammar demonstrates that through transcultural communication a new equilibrium is given.

In the novel, Rae the white man and Orientalist historian is in need of a woman who is able to provide him rescue. For this reason, Aboulela has given Sammar the title of a translator, in order to make her more proficient and able to cope with a multicultural context. Sammar's proficiency in translating the Orient, along with its language, culture and religion is what turns her agent, marking by that both transition and self affirmation after a long phase of silence.

By considering Aboulela novel a transcultural literary work, this means that it has an underlying objective resembled in decentering monolingualism; then it will be easy to disrupt and dismantle the monolithically worldview. In the global era of Twenty First Century, it seems that transcultural fiction acts as a possible route towards transcultural dialogue; it is a means to overcome the seemingly superficial differences, and to construct out of such differences and particularities transformative bridges. Hence, it seems that the decolonization and freedom of the mind that Ngugui Wa Thiong'o once discussed in his text *Moving The Centre. The Struggle for Cultural Freedom* can only be attained through Transcultural fruitful dialogue.

In considering translation, a dynamic act through which cultural differences are bridged and communications take place, the transformation through such communication is never immediate as it needs both the translator's power and venerability. By identifying Sammar as a translator, this means that she is highly skilled and an excellent language purveyor for the elite; hence, she is able to make a link between two different linguistic worlds, and has authority over several fields while assisting Others in setting a middle ground between them. In spite of the fact that the translator is considered to have subservient role, in terms that he/she is not the creator of meaning but purveyor of Others meanings, this role is primordial in **gluing cultures** Therefore, one can say that the translation and translators are able to bridge the fracture or gap between the two worlds.

Moreover, using translation as a counter hegemonic strategy is significant in Aboulela's novel, since the process of literary translation per se allows readers to make a constant shift between the original text and its translation; hence, this shift entails another shift from one language and culture into another. This constant shift represents a transitional movement that bridges the gap between the original text and its translation, through the presence of a place. The latter is regarded as a fluid space or a place in translation through which writers challenge the notions of invisibility and inequality; therefore, they would be able to re-read the history of marginalized identities and cultures from this

contact zone. Translation in this regard turns into an exciting journey or power of navigating across linguistic and cultural boundaries instead of a mere reproduction of texts; it is an activity that emerges from real and political contexts rather than neutral places.

As translators, Sammar and Rae play a primordial role in communicating their differences and negotiating the limits between them. The translators should not confine themselves in transferring and transposing words and texts from one language to the Other; rather, the translator's role is not neutral because the key role of translation is ideological in nature. In transcultural narrative, translation turns into a vehicle for transculture identity construction and culture representation. In Aboulela novel, translation becomes a way of survival and intercultural communication for transcultural subjects who embody the complexity of cultural encounter that persuade them to negotiate their differences, while looking for their place in this transnational world. As a result, transculture as a contact zone between cultures emerge.

In order to make the intercultural communication possible among the transcultural subjects in the novel, Aboulela strategy implies the depiction of different characters (Sammar, Rae and Yasmin), acting as multiple voices, in which each represents his own world to reflect the different existing cultural paradigms that foreshadow Islam and The West relations. The interaction between the different conflicting attitudes, perspectives and ideologies of the characters allows Aboulela not only to understand the imperialist ideology but rather to provide means to subvert it. In short, the transculture dialogue between Rae and Sammar as two distinct critical voices allow them to create a third story that perceives that culture is translatable; it is subject to constant interaction and permeable change through the mutual dialogue and understanding between individuals. Through her new paradigm of not yet told story, Aboula is able to speak the unspeakable and give voice to the Other, creating by that a transcultural contact zone that bridges the chasm between the desperate cultures through mutual dialogue and understanding.

Chapter five, the last chapter in this thesis, entitles: “*Speaking Magic(al) Realism. Opening Doors and Shifting Discourse in Hamid’s Exit West (2017)*”. By considering Hamid’s Magical realism as a postcolonial narrative mode that bridges the ideological discontent between the so-called East and West, this chapter looks at the expression magical doors as a metaphor for Globalization and transculturalism, pointing out to the idea of shifting borders that would probably induce a shift in discourse, what obliterates the old cliché of Orientalism. The chapter demonstrates that when people shift, identities altered, and the world shifts with them, too. Hence, nothing looks as it was before.

Besides, the title *Exit West*, is a metonym for exit off the idea of the West; it is a narrative voice that breaks the silence of the Orient and challenges the discourse of Orientalism. It also challenges many terms such as *border, nation, place, home, nativism* as well as the *world system* per se as these terms seem outdated in Twenty First century globalized world. In short, *Exit West* is a narrative that aspires to establish an empathetic bond by revealing the deeper aspects of the global transcultural world and how people can coexist.

In Twenty First Century globalized world, Hamid’s *Exit West* demonstrates that though immigration and refugees are regarded as problems, they can also function as a new mode of consciousness. *Exit West* is a representative narrative voice that aspires to open dialogue through difference and diversity rather than polarization and divergence. Rather than plainly targeting East/West dichotomy to show that the world is changing, and we also need to change, we need to redefine borders, and change our ways of seeing and being, Hamid relies on the magic of Magical Realism, resembled in magical doors as well as technology advancement, internet and smart phones in particular that would allow the body to move as fast as the mind, what makes him able to shift discourse and speak the unspeakable. Thus, one notices that Hamid is a true voice that comes from the margins to end the single story created by Western Orientalism to silence the Other.

Through the magic of magical realism, Hamid is able to forshorten history and create black holes in the fabric of the nation, breaking by that centuries of silence in order to envisage an ending to the single

story of Us/Them imposed by the fabricated geographical and cultural borders between East and West. In addition to Magical Realism, the novel itself is an ironic strategy that demonstrates a reversed colonization by envisaging Western countries overpopulated with migrants from all over the world within a matter of seconds.

Furthermore, the language that Hamid deployed is mimetic; it is used as a tool to deconstruct the existing ideological thought and the colonial discourse that established upon the binary opposition of “Us and “Them”. In short, Hamid’s novel is the refusal to label and categorize, showing the end of the single story of “Us” and “Them”.

After having exposed the outcomes of each chapter, the thesis is able to answer the posed research questions. Transcultural writers such as Ahdef Souief, Leila Aboulela and Mohsin Hamid resemble a true authentic voice that comes from the margins to break centuries of silence and Othering, to speak the inspeakable. Relying on human experiences rather than fabricated representations and falsified discourse, the transcultural writers are carving out a contact zone between East and West, wherein they set their differences as ground for similarity based on harmonious coexistence that breeds acceptance, empathy and tolerance instead of the clash of civilizations.

Moreover, the transcultural novel is a true attempt towards finding possible route to the crisis of representation. It is a novel that refuses labeling and categorization, demonstrating the interconnection between different subject areas such as culture, language, translation, art and religion that resemble a contact zone of interaction, wherein the Self and the Other set their differences as ground for similarity and coexistence through transcultural dialogue, empathy, tolerance and acceptance.

In relying on interdisciplinarity and Arabization, the transcultural novel acts as a counter discourse able to decolonize the mind and depoliticize literature, through empowering the Other to speak for and represent himself, dismantling hierarchies between East/West, opening doors towards transcultural dialogue that induce the shift in discourse. Hence, it demonstrates that we are all selves in front of the

world's changes, in which no one is superior over the Other, and no culture deserves to be valorized over an Other culture, since no story is sufficient in itself, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once declared in her text *The Danger of the Single Story* in 2009, to complete her same words figured in the opening chapter of this study "...this is the result of a single story. It robs people of their honor or dignity. It complicates the recognition of our shared humanity. Rather than highlighting our similarities, it highlights our differences" (2009). Therefore, to break silence of Otherness and misrepresentation, mindset should be altered, many notions should be revised, Orientals should have their authentic voice to communicate their own problems, speak for and represent themselves, and, most importantly look for reality from another angle, because reality, as Grant puts it, "is not what it is. It is a combination of many facts that can be divided into them. No truth is a mere truth, and no one is universal in itself; the interplay between things makes them fruitful" (2016).

Finally, the researcher recommends that it is high time to revise many recurrent notions resulted out of the postcolonial thought such as fixed borders, nativism, nation, and fixed identity, since the Twenty First Century global mobility of people proves that the world can be viewed as a space of transcultural diversity that breeds interaction between diverse free individuals instead of homogenous fixed identities, ethnic groups and cultures. Today's world's is no longer be read through opposition and identification, but through concrete diverse distinctions. The deeper is the multiplicity, the better is the chance for worldwide peace. Significantly, the uniqueness of transculture, as a new field of cultural growth that goes beyond the limitations that consider cultures as (national, ethnic, religious, and racial), and a genre of writing that derives its spirit from the inspiring people's mobility experiences, calls for incorporating it as a subject area in educational syllabi side by side with the Contemporary postcolonial novel as well as comparative literature to exhibit its abundance and interdisciplinarity, and to widen the learner's scope, by pointing out to the fact that transcultural writing is a stone on the road to world literature as it blurs borders between people, cultures and nations, and interests in studying the human being as an experience instead of a fictitious story.



---

## Works Cited

### A. Primary Sources

Aboulela, Leila. *The Translator*. New York. Polygon. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 2009. Print

Hamid, Mohsin. *Exit West*. New York. Riverhead Books, 2017. Print

Soueif, Ahdef. *The Map Of Love*. New York. Anchor Books, 2000. Print

### B. Secondary Sources

Aboulela, Leila. "Keep the faith". Interview by Anita Sethi. *The Observer*. June, 5, 2005.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/jun/05/fiction.features2>. Pdf

Agrawal, Divani. "Mapping Diaspora At The Crossroads: Reading Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*".

*Literary Endeavour*, x (1), 1-188, 2019. Pdf

Agamben, G. *We Refugees*. Symposium. *A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 49. (2). 114–119, 1995.

Alghamdi, Alaa. "*Translating Silence, Transmitting Faith: Personal and Cultural Understanding in Leila Aboulela's The Translator*." *International Journal of English and Literature* 5.1 , 2014. 22-33. Pdf.

Allaham, Ali. "Colonization: The Spirit of the Age in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*".

Damascus. *Damascus University Journal*. Vol,34. N.01,2018. Pdf accessed July 23,2023.

Amireh, Amal. "Writing the Difference: Feminists' Invention of the 'Arab Women'. *Interventions. Feminist Dialogues on Third World Women's Literature and Film*". Edited by Bishnupriya Ghosh and Brinda Bose. New York. Garland Publishing, 185–211, 1997.

- A .Nejat, Töngür. "Cross-Cultural Bridges and Transformation in Leila Aboulela' The Translator".  
Multicultural Narratives. Traces and Perspectives. United Kingdom. Cambridge Scholar  
Publishing. Ed. By Mustafa Kirca and Hywel Dix, 2018.
- Anne. Holden, Rønning. *Literary Transculturations and Modernity: Some Reflections,*” Transnational  
literature, 4, no. 1, 2011.
- Arianna, Daningo. *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility.* Indiana. United  
States of America . Purdue University Press, 2015.
- . "Global Mobility, Transcultural Literature, and Multiple Modes of Modernity".  
The Journal of Transcultural Studies, vol. 4, no. 2, 2013,130-60, doi. 10.11588/ts.  
2013.2.9940.
- Ashcroft B, Griffiths G, Tiffin. H. *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial  
Literatures.* New York. Routledge. 345-346, 2002.
- Ayres, Lana Beth. "*Translation as a Counterhegemonic Discursive Tool in The Translator, By Leila  
Aboulela.*" Revista Escrita, 19 (2014). 165-182. Print.
- BERMAN, Antoine. "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign," tr. Lawrence Venuti ("La traduction  
comme épreuve de l'étranger", 1985, in. Venuti, Lawrence (ed.). *The Translation Studies  
Reader*, London. Routledge, 284-97,2000.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Aesthetics of Literary Creation.* Moscow. Iskusstvo,1979.
- Bertons, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics.* London. Routledge, p. 200, 2000.
- Bhatnagar, Rashmi. "Uses and Limits of Foucault. A Study of the Theme of Origins in Edward Said's  
'Orientalism'", *Social Scientist*. Volume16, (1986), 3–223.
- Blanton, Casey. *Travel Writing. The Self and the World.* New York. Psychology Press. 2002.

- Bloom, Kelly. "Orientalism in French 19th Century Art". Boston College. Electronic Thesis , (15-34), 2004. [Available Online]. Retrieved June, 12th, 2019 from <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/477>, eScholarship@BC.
- Boccardi, Mariadele. *The Contemporary British Historical Novel, Representation, Nation and Empire*. Great Britain, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Brahimi, Sara. "The Representation of Soueif's Female Characters as Suffocating and Liberating Phoenixes. Case Study. Aisha and The Map of Love". Mohamed Ben Ahmed-Oran University. PhD Thesis in English Language, 2016.
- Corcoran, Steven. *Introduction. Dissensus. Jacques Rancière*. London. Continuum. 2010.
- Çirçir, Ayşe. "The Strategic Use of Positive Orientalism in Ahdaf Soueif The Map of Love". MOLESTO. Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi, Article n, 2(cilt02). Vol.02(Sayi 2), (Tamuz) July, 2019.
- "History, Vision and Narrative in Ahdaf Soueif's The Map of Love". Universal Journal of History and Culture. Vol. 1, No. 2, 135-154, October, 2019.
- Chambers, Claire. *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- , *British Muslim Fictions, Interviews with Contemporary Writers*. United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Chambers, Ian. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. New York. Routledge. 1994, p. 4
- Chandler, C. L. "We are All Refugees: A Conversation with Mohsin Hamid." The Nation. 30 October 2017. [https:// www.thenation.com/article/we-are-all-refugees-a-conversation-with-mohsin-hamid/](https://www.thenation.com/article/we-are-all-refugees-a-conversation-with-mohsin-hamid/)

- Day, R. Richard. "The Ultimate Inequality: Linguistic Genocide." *Language of Inequality*. Eds. Nessa Wolfson and Joan Manes. Berlin. Mouton Publishers, 1985. 163-181. Print.
- Dixon ,John. Spencer. *Representations of the East in English and French Travel Writing 1798-1882 with particular reference to Egypt*. Graduate School of Comparative Literary Theory and Literary Translation. University of Warwick. September,2021.
- El Aidi, Abdellatif. "Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony in Edward Said's Orientalism". *Galaxy. International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*. Volume.6, Issue5. 2017. pp15-34. ISSN. 2278-9529.
- El-Feky, Mohamed. "Discovering the Self and the Other:Narrative in Ahdaf Soueif's The Map Of Love." *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol.3. NO.1, (2012). P.22. PDF. [www.irssh.com](http://www.irssh.com), ISSN 2248-9010 (Online),
- Ellen Berry and Mikhail Epstein. *Transcultural Experiments. Russian and American Models of Creative Communication*. New York. St. Martin's Press , 1<sup>st</sup>. ed. 1999, pp. 302-322, 312.
- El-Matiri, Naifa. "Edward Said: Post-colonial Discourse and Its Impact on Literature". *Macrothink Institute. Education and Linguistics Research*. Vol. 5, N. 1 pp15-34, 2019.ISSN 2377-1356. <http://elr.macrothink.org>
- Epstein. N, Mikhail. "Transculture. A Broad Way Between Globalism and Multiculturalism". *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* · Vol. 68, No. 1. January, 2009. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229456246>
- Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan. New York. Pantheon Books, 1972.
- Frank Schulze-Englerare. "Theoretical Perspectives. From Postcolonialism to Transcultural World Literature". Paderborn. Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 20-32, 27, 2007.

- Gordin, M., Tilley, H., & Prakash, G. Introduction. *Utopia/Dystopia. Conditions of Historical Possibility* (NJ. Princeton UP, 2010), pp. 1–20.
- Guvan, Fikrat. “Criticism to Edward W. Said’s Orientalism” *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*. Turkey. Volume15,2019. pp.418-430. DOI. 10.29000/rumelide.580700 , <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/740353>.
- Hamadi, Lutfi.”Edward Said. The Postcolonial Theory and The Literature of Decolonization”. *European Scientific Journal*, Special Edition. Vol2.2014, 36-49.
- Hamid, Mohsin. *Essays in Life, Art and Politics*. . “*Discontent and its Civilization*”. Dispatches from Lahore, New York and London. New York. Penguin, 2015.
- Hage, Ghassan. “Migration, Food, Memory, and Home-Building. “Memory. Histories, Theories, Debates”. Edited by Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, 2010, pp. 416-427. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c999bq.32](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c999bq.32)
- Hala, Halim. “Translating Egypt”. *Egypt. Al Ahram weekly Journal*. Retrieved from [http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/442/bk1\\_442htm](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/442/bk1_442htm) \ AL Ahram Weekly 12-18 August 1999, Issue No. 442.
- Hanane, Bishara. “Ahdāf Soueif Makes a Map for Love: A Reality or a Fantasy Through the Meeting of Civilizations and Times? A Dialectic Vision in the Novel *The Map of Love* by the Egyptian Novelist Ahdāf Soueif”. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*. Vol.10, No.4, pp.13-36. Online ISSN. 2055-0146(Online), 2022. Accessed through. @ECRTD-UK <https://www.eajournals.org/>
- Howe, Jeffery. “Orientalism in French 19th Century Art. Art History”. Senior Thesis. Boston College University Libraries. Boston. USA. Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation. 30 April. 2004. eScholarship@BC.

- Jan.Mohamed, Abdul. *Worldliness-without-World, Homelessness-as-Home. Towards a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual in Edward Said:A Critical Reader*. Edited by Michael Sprinker. Oxford. Blackwell, 1992, pp. 96–120.
- J. A. Simpson, E. S. C., Weiner. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford , Clarendon Press. 2nd. ed. 1989.
- James Clifford. *Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press. 1997. Pdf
- Jukka, Juhki. “Imagining the Other: “Orientalism and Occidentalism in Tamil-European Relations in India”. *Juvaskila Studies in Humanities, University of Juvakila*. ISSN 1459-4331.2006.
- Käid, B. Fatiha. “The Cartography of Arabness and Transnational Feminism in Fadia Faqir’s My Name is Selma and Ahdaf Soueif’s The Map of Love”. *Makalid Review*. No. 7. December.2014. Pdf
- Kellner, Dougllas. Jeff, Shares. *The Critical Media Literacy Guide. Engaging Media and Transforming Education*. Brill Sense. Boston, 20 Mai 2019, 21-22. Pdf
- Kleinhofa, Ingrīda. “Orientalisms and Occidentalisms. Evolution of Concepts and Divergence of Connotations”. *University of Latvia RAKSTI*. 2021, pp.30-63. Retrieved September 2021 from [https://www.apgads.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/apgads/izdevumi/LU\\_Raksti/819/os.819.02](https://www.apgads.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/apgads/izdevumi/LU_Raksti/819/os.819.02)
- Lagji, Amanda. “Waiting in Motion. Mapping Postcolonial Fiction, New Mobilities, and Migration through Mohsin Hamid's Exit West.” *Mobilities*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2019, pp. 218– 232.
- Lohmayer, Manfred. “Constructions of Egypt as Postcolonial Space in Ahdaf Soueif’s The Map of Love and Alaa Al Aswany’s The Yacoubian Building”. *Research Paper Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, University of Regensburg*2013. PDF

- Mahault, Gabrielle. Donzé-Magnier. "Edward Saïd: Orientalism". Maastricht University. Netherlland. 2017. Retrieved. February 23<sup>rd</sup> , 2021 from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/3133607>
- Mahjoub, Jamal. "A Correspondence with Ahdaf Soueif", Wasafiri, 24. 2009, p.56-61.
- Malak, Amin. "Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English". Albany. State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Moore, Lindsey. Arab, Muslim, Woman, Voice and Vision in Postcolonial Literature and Film. Oxford, Routledge, 2008. Pdf
- Mary Louise Pratt. *Emperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York. Routledge, 1992. pp. 4 - 6.
- Massad, Joseph and Soueif Ahdaf. "The Politics of Desire in the Writings of Ahdaf Soueif." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 28 (4), 1999, 74-90, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538394>.
- Nash, Geoffrey. "Re-Sitting Religion and Creating a Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Souif and Leila Aboulela". *Wasafiri* 17. 28–31. 2002, p. 30
- ". "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
- Nick, Couldry. *Inside Culture. Re-Imagining the Method of Cultural Studies* . 2000.
- Nusair, Lama. "Gender Writing: "I am in an English Autumn". *Representations of Arab Women in Postcolonial Literature*". PhD Dis. The University of Edinburgh, 2005. Pdf

- . “ Orientalism (Definition, Evolution, Origin, (Development, Objectivity, Some Prominent Orientalists and their Works”. Encyclopedia of Islamic Studies. Muslim University. F832.2010 (Ch1-p.10). ebook
- *A Brief History Of Orientalism From Said*. 2020. Retrieved September 2021 from <https://www.scribd.com/document/460454171/ebook>
- Oana-Celia, Gheorghiu. “As if by Magical Realism: A Refugee Crisis in Fiction” . Cultural Intertexts Journal .Year V , Volume, 8 ,2018.
- Ouhiba, N. Meriam. “Resistance and Transcultural Dialogue in the Fiction of Anglophone Arab Women Writers. Towards Diasporic Arab-American and Arab-British Poetics of Identities”. PhD Thesis. University of Sidi Bel Abbes, Djillali Liabes. Department of English, 2017.
- PBS News Hour. “Exit West author Mohsin Hamid answers your questions”. March 30, 2018. Retrieved from [pbs.org/newshour/show/exit-West-authormohsin-hamid-answers-your-questions](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/exit-West-authormohsin-hamid-answers-your-questions). June 2nd, 2018
- Paula Brauer. ““Doors That Could Take You ElseWhere”: Migration, Magic and Rancièrian Dissensus in Mohsin Hamid’s Exit West”. University of Munster. Postcolonial Interventions, Res Vol. IV, Issue 1. ResearchGate May, 2019.
- Phillips, Christina. “Leila Aboulela’s the Translator: Reading Islam in the West.” Wasafiri, vol. 27, no. 1, 2012, pp. 66–72. doi.10.1080/02690055.2012.636944
- Quinn, Edward. *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*. 2nd edition. New York. Facts on Files, 2006. Print.

- Ralph, David and Lynn A. Staeheli. "Home and Migration. Mobilities, Belongings and Identities." *Geography Compass*, vol. 5, no.7, 2011, pp. 517–530. Wiley Online Library, doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2011.00434.x
- Rizzo, Alessandra. "Constructing Places and Identities: Migration and the Role of Translation in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator and Lyrics Alley*". *Territories of Translation*. edited by R. Jenn & C. Oster, Arras Cedex, France, Artois University Presses, 2014, pp. 143–56.
- Robins, Kevin. "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe." *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, eds. London. Sage Publications, 1996. 61-86. Print.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. *London Review of Books*. 4 .(18). 1982, 7 October. Retrieved from <https://www.lrb.co.uk>. February,2022.
- Said, W. Edward. *Orientalism*. Modern Classics. London. England. Penguin Books,2003. (pp.1-395).  
----- . *Representations of the Intellectual*. The 1993 Reith Lectures. New York. Vintage, 1996. Pdf.
- Salazar,B. Noel. (2014). "Representation in Postcolonial Analysis". *International Encyclopedia of The Social Sciences*,2014. pp.171-173.  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200010061>; Retrieved, 2021.
- Sales, Dora. "LIVING IN A TRANSNATIONAL WORLD: TRANSLATION AS PART OF TRANSCULTURAL IDENTITY". *Universitat Jaume I. "Transfer" VIII*. 1-2 (mayo 2013), pp. 70-90. ISSN. 1886-5542.
- Schulze-Engler and Pettersson. *Introduction : Concepts of Literature and Transcultural Literary History*. Towards a Global Perspective. Berlin. Walter De Gruyter, 2006. p. 1-35

- Sethi, Anita. "Keep the Faith". *The Guardian*. 5 June, 2005. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/jun/05/fiction.features2>. Accessed 21Jan. 2018.
- Shabanirad, Ensiah, and Seyyed. Mohammad, Marandi. "Edward Said's Orientalism and the Representation of Oriental Women in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*". *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*. SciPress Ltd. Switzerland. Volume 60. 2015, (22-33). Retrieved June2020 from <https://dnb.info/1191595978/34>
- Simon, Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London and New York. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. Print.
- Slobodanka M. Vladiv-Glover Andrew Padgett. *TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES: Special issue on Transcultural Perspectives on Literature, Music, Cinema and Culturology*. Australia. Monash University. Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher. Idyllwild, California. Vol.08, chapter1 and ch2,2012.
- Souief, Ahdaf . *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground* . London Bloomsbury, 2004.
- Spivak. S, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Nelson C and Grossberg L (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Basingstoke. Macmillan Education. 1988, pp.271-313
- Stevens. D, Mc Ginn, N. *The Art of Teaching Secondary English. Transcultural Communication*. New York. Routledge Falmer, 2004
- Stephen, Slemon. "MAGIC REALISM AS POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE: Magic and Other Realisms". *Special issue of Canadian Literature* 116, Spring 1988, p. 9-24
- Svendsen, Amalie. Due. "Representations of the East: Orientalism in Emily Eden's Travel Writing". *Leviathan. Interdisciplinary Journal in English*.N2, 2018, p.60-70.

- Tobias, Hübinette. Orientalism Past and Present. *An Introduction to Postcolonial Critique*. The Stockholm Journal of East Asian Studies. Vol. 13, 2003 pp. 73-80 . ISSN 0284-883X .  
<http://www.divaportal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A177974&dswid=-8145>.
- Trabelsi. Ben Gouider, Hadjer. "Rethinking Community in Dionne Brand's What We All Long For, Ahdaf Soueif's The Map of Love, Michael Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost and Joseph Boyden's Three Day Road and Through Black Spruce". Montreal University. PhD Thesis in English Studies, August 2010. Pdf
- Tymoczko, Maria. *Post-Colonial Writing and literary Translation: Colonial Translation. Theory and Practice*. Eds. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London and New York. Routledge, 2002. 19-40. Print.
- Wail, Hassan. "Agency and Translational Literature. Ahdaf Soueif's 'The Map of Love'." PMLA, 123 (3), 2006, 753-768, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486352>. Accessed, 27 March 2013
- . "Leila Aboulela and the Ideology of Muslim Immigrant Fiction." *Novel*, vol. 41, no. 2-3, 2008, pp. 298-318.
- Wa. Thiong'O, Ngugi. *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. London. James Currey/Heinemann. 1993, p. 24.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. "Structural Crisis, or Why Capitalist May No Longer Find Capitalism Rewarding". American Sociological Association, 91st Annual Meeting. New York, Aug. 16, 1996.
- Wolfgang, Welsch. "Transculturality. The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today". London. Sage, 1999. 194-213.


Zannoun, K, Ghadir. "Home as Love. Transcending Positionality in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*".

Humanities. 2019, 8, 72; doi.10.3390/h8020072.



---

Abstract in French



Sous la pression croissante de la mobilité mondiale des personnes au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, le monde d'aujourd'hui ne peut plus être lu à travers le prisme unique du discours hégémonique de l'Orientalisme, mais plutôt à travers les expériences humaines qui rassemblent des personnes d'origines culturelles et ethniques différentes, construisant ainsi une zone de contact hétérogène et fluide pour ce qui était autrefois considéré comme des blocs monolithiques. Le déplacement des corps et des cultures fait que le monde est de plus en plus interconnecté, ce qui brouille les frontières entre l'Est et l'Ouest en tant qu'entités présumées désespérées. Par conséquent, le discours hégémonique de l'Orientalisme, qui décrivait l'Occident comme une puissance qui "parlait pour" et représentait l'Orient il y a des siècles comme une entité silencieuse, statique et exotique, est sur le point de devenir obsolète. Avec l'émergence de la littérature et de l'écriture transculturelles, la dichotomie entre le soi et l'autre, issue du discours Orientaliste qui marquait la polarisation et les frontières restrictives, est sur le point de s'estomper. En s'appuyant sur les romans postcoloniaux contemporains qui ont dominé la liste des meilleures ventes et qui ont reçu le prix ManBooker, à savoir . The Translator 1999 de Leila Aboulela, The Map Of Love 2000 d'Ahdaf Souief et Exit West 2017 de Mohsin Hamid, cette thèse identifie la manière dont le roman postcolonial transculturel contemporain entend remettre en question le silence imposé par le discours de l'Orientalisme, en identifiant les différentes manières de parler et en s'appuyant sur des récits personnels et des expériences humaines. En suivant une approche interdisciplinaire et en utilisant le texte révolutionnaire d'Edward Said, L'Orientalisme, la théorie de la représentation de Stuart Hall, "Can The Subaltern Speak ?" de Spivack Shkravorty et surtout la théorie de la transculture de Mikhail Epstein comme nouveau modèle pour voir et être au-delà de l'altérité radicale, cette thèse démontre que les écrivains transculturels créent une zone de contact entre l'Est et l'Ouest, où ils établissent leurs différences comme un terrain de similitude basé sur une coexistence harmonieuse qui engendre l'acceptation, l'empathie et la tolérance.

**Mots-clés** . L'Orientalisme d'Edward Said, la représentation de l'autre, la théorie de la transculture d'Epstein, la fiction transculturelle, les romans postcoloniaux contemporains.



---

Abstract in Arabic

## "كسر حاجز الصمت"

### تقصي الصوت و التمثيل في مختارات روائية لأدب ما بعد الاستعمار

في ظل الضغط المتزايد الناجم عن الحراك العالمي للاشخاص في القرن الحادي والعشرين، لم يعد من الممكن قراءة عالم اليوم من خلال العدسة الوحيدة لخطاب الاستشراق المهيمن ، بل من خلال التجارب الإنسانية التي تجمع أناسا من خلفيات ثقافية وعرقية مختلفة معًا، مما يبني وفقا لذلك مجتمعًا مرنا و يخلق منطقة اتصال غير متجانسة لما كان يعتبر ذات يوم كتلاً متجانسة. إن عبور الأجساد والثقافات يجعل العالم أمام ترابط متزايد باستمرار، ما يطمس الحدود بين الشرق والغرب باعتبارهما كيانين متباعدين تفصل بينهما هوة ثقافية شاسعة. ولذلك، فإن خطاب الاستشراق المهيمن، الذي صور الغرب كقوة "تحدثت باسم" ومثلت الشرق لعدة قرون متتابعة كعالم صامت وثابت وغريب، على وشك أن يصبح باليا. مع ظهور الأدب والكتابة العابرة للثقافات، فإن ثنائية الذات/الأخر، الناتجة عن خطاب الاستشراق الذي ميز الاستقطاب والحدود التقييدية، على وشك التلاشي. بالاعتماد على روايات ما بعد الاستعمار المعاصرة التي سيطرت على قائمة الكتب الأكثر مبيعا وحصلت على جائزة مان بوكير، وهي: المترجم لليلى أبو العلا 1999، وخريطة الحب لأهداف سوييف 2000، والخروج غربا لمحسن حامد 2017، تهدف هاته الأطروحة الى تقصي الرواية ما بعد الاستعمارية المعاصرة العابرة للثقافات في تحديثها الصمت الذي يفرضه خطاب الاستشراق، من خلال التعرف على طرق التحدث المختلفة والاعتماد على السرد الشخصي والتجارب الإنسانية. في اتباع نهج متعدد التخصصات واستخدام نص إدوارد سعيد الرائد "الاستشراق"، ونظرية التمثيل لستيوارت هول، و"هل يستطيع التابع أن يتكلم؟" لسيفياك شاكرافورتى. والأهم من ذلك، تعتمد هاته الدراسة على نظرية العبور الثقافي لميخائيل إبستاين كنموذج جديد لرؤية الآخر الراديكالي وتجاوزه، توضح هذه الأطروحة أن الكتاب العابرين للثقافات يقطعون منطقة اتصال بين الشرق والغرب، حيث يضعون اختلافاتهم كأساس للتشابه القائم على التعايش المتناغم الذي يولد القبول والتعاطف والتسامح.

**الكلمات المفتاحية.** استشراق إدوارد سعيد، تمثيل الآخر، نظرية إبستاين العبور الثقافي، الرواية العابرة للثقافات،

روايات ما بعد الاستعمار المعاصرة.



---

Glossary of  
Terms

**Abeih:** A title of respect for an older brother or male relative (feminine. Abla) derived from Turkish.

‘ **am:** (eg. Am Abu El Maati). uncle. Specifically father’s brother. Used as title of respect for older man.

**Azhari:** a graduate of al-Azhar, the thousand-year-old religious university in Cairo.

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

**Culturology:** is a specific branch of Russian humanities that found its earliest expression in the works of Nikolai Danilevsky (1822-85) and Pavel Florensky (1882-1937), culminating in the 1960s-80s with works by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), Aleksei Losev (1893-1988), Yury Lotman (1922-93), Vladimir Bibler (b. 1918), Georgy Gachev (b. 1929), and Sergei Averintsev (b. 1937). Culturology investigates the diversity of cultures and their modes of interaction, and it serves as a metadiscipline within the humanities, aiming to encompass and connect the various cultural phenomena studied separately by philosophy, history, sociology, literary and art criticism, and so on. The philosophy underlying Culturology can be traced back to the German intellectual tradition, specifically the views of Goethe, Herder, Windelband, Simmel, and Spengler on culture as an integrated organism. From this perspective, culture encompasses a wide range of cognitive and creative activity, including politics, economics, science, the arts, literature, philosophy, and religion. All of these domains have their roots in a culture's fundamental intuition, or "ur-phenomenon," which differs depending on historical and ethnic contexts.

**Efendiyya:** (also effendis); plural of afandi (effendi or efen-di). an urban (Western-) educated man who wear costume and Ousmali Tarbouche, generally educated in Turkeyie

**Fellaheen** . fallah (also fellah). peasant. Feminine. fallaha. Plural. fal-laheen, from (f/l/h) to till the land. The root also means. to be successful.

**Hanim:** Turkish title for ‘lady’

**Haram:** the root h/r/m denotes a sacred or inviolable space. The haram of a mosque is the space within its walls. The haram of a university is its campus.

**Haramlek:** the area in a house reserved for women

**Hizb:**a political party

**Khedive:** title of the ruler of Egypt from Abbas Pasha in 1849 to the Sultan Hussein Kamel during the First World War.

**La hawl illah:** islamic term (La Hawla wa La Kuwa Ila Bi Allah) which means no power except that of God’s help.

**Liwa’a:**Officer

**Markaz:** Police Station

**Menya:** a district in Southern Egypt Egypt

**Nasab:** genealogy

**Tantah:** *a district in the South of Egypt*

**Umdah:** the headman of a village. In 1997 a law was passed making it possible for women to hold the position of umdah.

**Sett:** means lady or madame

**Souq:** a market

**Tawasi :**a small Village near Tintah



---

## Appendices

## II. Ahdaf Soueif Biography

Soueif was born in Cairo, where she lives, and educated in Egypt and England. She studied for a PhD in linguistics at the University of Lancaster. Her debut novel, *In the Eye of the Sun* (1993), set in Egypt and England, recounts the maturing of Asya, a beautiful Egyptian who, by her own admission, "feels more comfortable with art than with life." Her second novel *The Map of Love* (1999) was

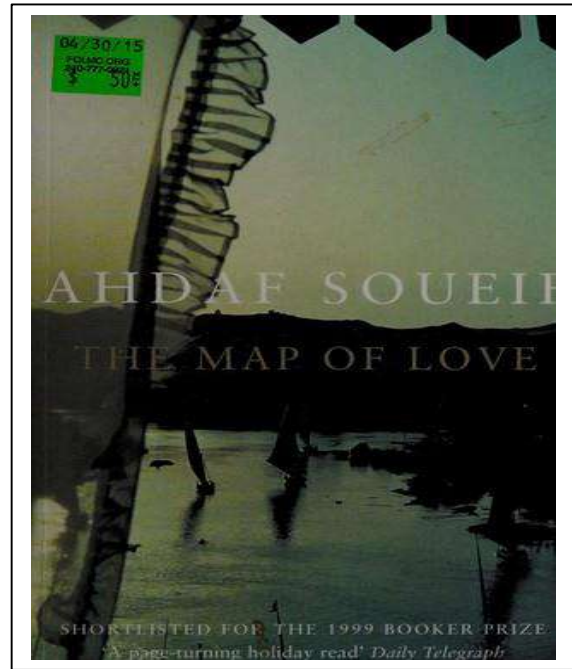


shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, has been translated into 21 languages and sold over a million copies. She has also published two works of short stories, *Aisha* (1983) and *Sandpiper* (1996). She translated Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah* (with a foreword by Edward Said) from Arabic into English. Along with her readings of Egyptian history and politics, Soueif also writes about Palestinians in her fiction and non-fiction. A shorter version of "Under the Gun. A Palestinian Journey" was originally published in *The Guardian* and then printed in full in Soueif's recent collection of essays, *Mezzaterra. Fragments from the Common Ground* (2004). Ahdaf Soueif is also a cultural and political commentator for the *Guardian* newspaper and she has been reporting on the Egyptian revolution. In January 2012 she published *Cairo. My City, Our Revolution* ; it is a personal account of the first year of the Egyptian revolution. She was married to Ian Hamilton with whom she had two sons, Omar Robert Hamilton and Ismail Richard Hamilton.

### III Synopsis of *The Map Of Love*

The Map of Love (1999) is Soueif's second novel set between England and Egypt. The novel tells the story of female protagonists Amal, Anna, Layla, and Isabel creating powerful bonds of love between the protagonists of the novel and their nations.

Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* is a story of politics, love, wit, and grief. It is a wonderfully accomplished and an articulated literary form that



tells the intersecting stories of three women; Egyptian, American and an English woman. One of them lives a century earlier than the Other two. Anna Winterbourne, Amal Al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman are the main female characters; each one comes from a different part of the planet. Lady Anna is newly widowed English woman who arrives to British- occupied Egypt in 1900. Anna is led by her interest and curiosity towards the Egyptian culture due to the painting she saw at the museum when she used to go trying to understand and help her husband before it was too late. Anna disguises in an Arab man outfits in order to achieve her goal, yet her misfortune gets her kidnapped by an ally of a political activist. While being a hostage, Anna meets the wife Layla Al-Baroudi of her abductor and befriends her. Layla introduces her to her attorney brother Sharif who insists to help for making up for his men's mistake. He assists her in seeing the pyramids and Mt. Sinai as she wishes before getting her back safe to her people. An odd feeling sneaks to Anna's heart during the journey towards Sharif. Sharif is a man who divorced once because his marriage lacked love. However, in the desert of Sinai and when Anna is dressed as an Arab woman, both of them develop deep feeling for each another. Anna is drawn in her confusion toward Sharif's silence and decides to return back to her homeland. Layla lectures her brother to make a move; and he does, he proposes marriage. They consider the

consequences of such marriage on both of their lives. They marry and move in to the old house with Sharif's parents, his mother Zainab who is like any normal Egyptian housewife, and his father who rebelled against the British twenty years ago. Anna admires every single aspect of Egyptian identity, therefore; she tries to learn the Arabic language, assimilates the culture, and of course interact with all the family members and servants. As a translator, she engaged herself in the nationalist movement by aiding them, using her connections, to contact with anti-colonists in London, and foreign visitors in Egypt. After four years of marriage, the love couple has a baby girl named Nur al Hayyah , the light of their life. Sarcastically, Sharif devoted his life for fighting British occupation legally and ethically; and after ten year of marriage he is thinking of retirement for the sake of taking a good care of his wife and daughter; he is assassinated. Anna travels back to England as he wished. Contact is lost between the two families. The story develops through the eyes of Amel Al-Ghamrawwi, Ahmed's daughter, while reading an old trunk of diaries and letters, some in English and some in Arabic, all belongs to the long dead Anna. Ahmed is Sharif's nephew. The novel begins in New York; in 1997. Isabel Parkman, Annas great- granddaughter, a young divorced American woman discovers the inherited trunk in her dying mother's house. Omar Al-Ghamrawi the old Egyptian musician living in New York who she falls in love with directs her to his sister Amel in Egypt for best understanding the mysterious trunk. After unfolding Anna's heritage which includes some papers that were written in Amel's grandmother hand-writing telling the story of her brother Sharif who falls in love with an English woman, she realizes the unexpected blood kinship. Amel becomes addicted to the story of her father's uncle Sharif and his beloved Anna, yet she is occupied and distracted by Mubarak's regime, the Egyptian president at that time, who causes a kind of problems in her family lands. Isabel is drawn by Omar's sister's Egyptian life and problems. Only after Omar makes love to Isabel that he realizes that he was her mother's lover in 1961. Thus, she suspects him to be her father. Isabel gives birth to a baby boy she decides to name "Sharif". Anna weaves three panels of tapestry that depict Isis, Osiris, and Horus; the ancient Egyptian deities. However, Mabrouka, the maid of the family, takes the three panels

agoes to Layla to end up with Omar from his father Ahmed. The third one is lost sight of, but Isabel mysteriously finds it in her camera bag saying that it was put there by Umm Aya whom, a mysterious woman she met in al-Baroudi's old house during an unplanned walk she once had alone in Egypt. Amel investigates this claim and finds that the house for a long period of time remains inhabited and fits becoming a museum, and there is no Umm Aya anywhere near. Though Isabel story is hard to believe, yet Amel cannot seem to find another reasonable explanation. Soueif finishes the two stories of Amel and Isabel. Amel's love story with her old friend Tareq „Atiyya is still to be continued; after Tareq has asked to talk to her when she is free. Isabel comes to Egypt with her Sharif, and together with Amel they are waiting for Omar to finally come home and gives one to Anna to take it with her to England, the one that is found in the trunk, another goes to Layla to end up with Omar from his father Ahmed. The third one is lost sight of, but Isabel mysteriously finds it in her camera bag saying that it was put there by Umm Aya whom, a mysterious woman she met in al-Baroudi's old house during an unplanned walk she once had alone in Egypt. Amel investigates this claim and finds that the house for a long period of time remains inhabited and fits becoming a museum, and there is no Umm Aya anywhere near. Though Isabel story is hard to believe, yet Amel cannot seem to find another reasonable explanation. Soueif finishes the two stories of Amel and Isabel. Amel's love story with her old friend Tareq „Atiyya is still to be continued; after Tareq has asked to talk to her when she is free. Isabel comes to Egypt with her Sharif, and together with Amel they are waiting for Omar to finally come home.

#### IV. Biography of Leila Aboulela

Leila Aboulela was born in 1964 in Cairo, to an Egyptian mother and a Sudanese father. She moved to Sudan at the age of six weeks and lived in Khartoum continuously until 1987. Leila learnt English at the Khartoum American School and at the Sisters' School, a private Catholic High school. She graduated with a degree in Economics from the University of Khartoum specializing in Statistics. She



then travelled to Britain where she was awarded a M.Sc. and an MPhil in Statistics from the London School of Economics. In 1990 Leila moved to Scotland with her husband and children. She started writing in 1992 while working as a lecturer in Aberdeen College and later as a Research Assistant in Aberdeen University. From 2000, Leila and her family lived in Jakarta, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha before moving back, in 2012, to Aberdeen.

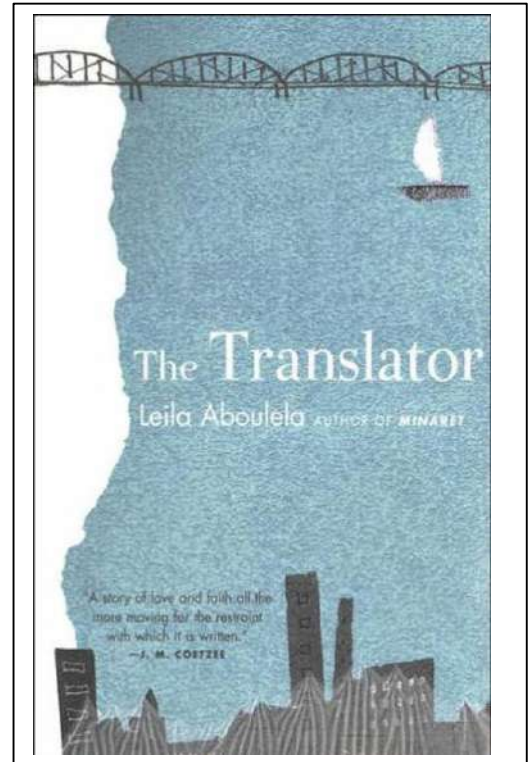
As a Sudanese writer whose work has received critical recognition and a high profile for its depiction of the interior lives of Muslim women and its distinctive exploration of identity, migration and Islamic spirituality, Leila Aboulela is the author of six novels. She has had several short stories published in anthologies and broadcast on radio, and one of her short stories, 'The Museum', won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2000. A collection of short stories, *Coloured Lights*, was published in 2001, followed by a second, *Elsewhere, Home*, in 2018, which won the award for Saltire Society's Fiction Book of the Year 2018.

She is also the author of five novels. *The Translator* (1999); *Minaret* (2005), which tells the story of Najwa, an aristocratic Sudanese woman forced into exile in Britain; *Lyrics Alley* (2010), set in 1950s Sudan and inspired by the life of her uncle - a poet and songwriter – *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015); and *Bird Summons* (2019).

Leila Aboulela is the first-ever winner of the Caine Prize for African Writing. Nominated three times for the Orange Prize (now the Women's Prize for Fiction), she is the author of numerous novels, including *Bird Summons*, *The Kindness of Enemies*, *The Translator*, a New York Times Notable Book of the Year, *Minaret* and *Lyrics Alley*, which was Fiction Winner of the Scottish Book Awards. Her collection of short stories *Elsewhere, Home* won the Saltire Fiction Book of the Year. Leila's work has been translated into fifteen languages, and her plays *The Insider*, *The Mystic Life* and *Others* were broadcast on BBC Radio. She grew up in Khartoum, Sudan, and now lives in Aberdeen, Scotland.

## V. Synopsis of *The Translator*

As a young girl, Sammar grew up in Scotland with her parents and brother, Waleed. When she was seven, her family traveled to her parents' city and country of origin, Khartoum, Sudan. There she met her cousins, Tarig and Hanan, and aunt, Mahasen, for the first time. She soon grew attached to her cousins, and began seeing Khartoum as home. Over the years, she and Tarig realized their romantic feelings for one another. After marrying, they moved to Aberdeen, Scotland, so Tarig could study medicine.



Not long after Sammar gave birth to their son, Amir, Tarig was killed in a car accident. Distraught and alone, Sammar stripped her apartment of all evidence of the past, and left for Khartoum. She had no intention of leaving. However, she had not anticipated her aunt's hostility. When Sammar tried remarrying, her aunt grew angry, insisting Sammar devote her life to Amir instead. Overwhelmed, Sammar left Amir in Khartoum, and moved back to Aberdeen.

She began working as a translator at the local university, a job through which she met her Middle-Eastern historian, scholar, and lecturer, Rae. At first, Sammar regarded their friendship as a work relationship. The more time they spent together, however, the more attached she became to him. Over the winter holidays, Rae traveled to Edinburgh to visit family, while Sammar remained in Aberdeen. Over the break from university, Rae began calling Sammar regularly. They talked about work, politics, and their personal lives. In these conversations, Sammar felt her love for Rae growing. However, she feared what her feelings might mean. As a widowed Muslim woman, she risked her reputation communicating with Rae so intimately.

Despite this knowledge, Sammar did not stop talking to Rae. They continued to see each Other after Rae returned to Aberdeen. The more Rae vocalized his feelings for Sammar, the more confused she became. She eventually started pressing Rae to convert to Islam so they could be together. When Rae refused, Sammar grew angry and hurt. She fled to Cairo early, where she fulfilled a three-week contract as an interpreter. Afterwards, she returned to Khartoum to be with her family.

While there, she resigned from the university, and decided to settle in Khartoum. Despite her efforts to make a new life, she could not forget Rae. Then one night she realized that all of her prayers for Rae's conversion had been selfish. She began praying that he would have a change of heart for his own good. Not long thereafter, Rae's close friend wrote to Sammar. In the letter, he told Sammar Rae had converted and wanted to marry her. Two weeks after she replied, Rae visited Sammar in Khartoum. They began planning their new life together in Aberdeen.

## VI. Mohsin Hamid Biography

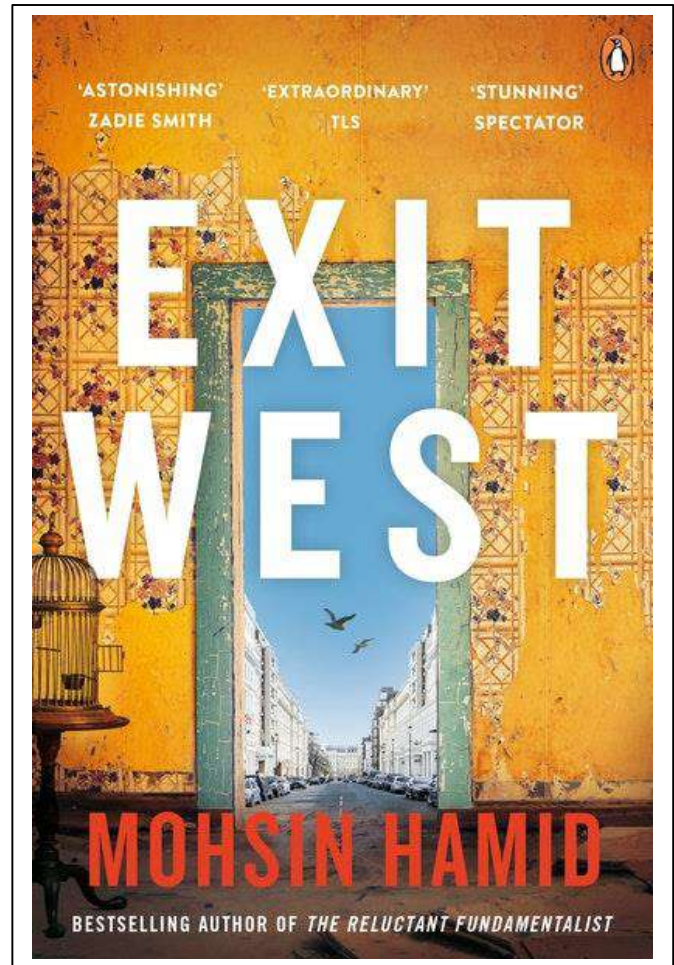
Mohsin Hamid was born in 1971 in Lahore. He grew up mostly in Pakistan, but spent part of his childhood in California and returned to America to attend Princeton University and Harvard Law School. He then worked in New York and London



as a management consultant before returning to Lahore to pursue writing full time. His first novel, *Moth Smoke*, told the story of an ex-banker and heroin addict in contemporary Lahore. It was published in 14 languages and became a cult hit in Pakistan, where it was made into a telefilm. It was also the winner of a Betty Trask Award and a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award. His second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, recounted a Pakistani man's abandonment of his high-flying life in New York. Published in over 30 languages, it became a million-copy international bestseller. It won the Ambassador Book Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, the Asian American Literary Award and the South Bank Show Award for Literature, and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. *The Guardian* named it one of the books that defined the decade. A 2013 film of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Oscar-nominated director Mira Nair starred Riz Ahmed, Liev Schreiber, Kate Hudson and Kiefer Sutherland. His fourth novel, *Exit West*, was released in 2017 and debuted on *The New York Times* bestseller list. It was a finalist for the Booker Prize, was named one of the 10 Best Books of 2017 by the *New York Times Book Review*, and won the *L.A. Times* Book Prize for Fiction and the Aspen Words Literary Prize. Chicago Public Library selected *Exit West* as the 2020 One Book, One Chicago book. Mohsin Hamid writes regularly for *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Review of Books*. He has lectured at dozens of universities around the world, from Stanford and Yale to the London School of Economics and the National University of Singapore.

### VIII. Synopsis of Exit West (2017)

Saeed and Nadia are young adults living in an unnamed city on the brink of war. Saeed asks Nadia to coffee, and they begin to date. However, between societal rules restricting men and women being in public together and escalating tension between the government and a militant group, they rarely get to see each Other. Because Saeed lives with his parents, he sometimes goes to Nadia's flat, disguising himself as a woman to not cause a scandal. Otherwise, they text frequently. Then, the government cuts off all cellular and Wi-Fi

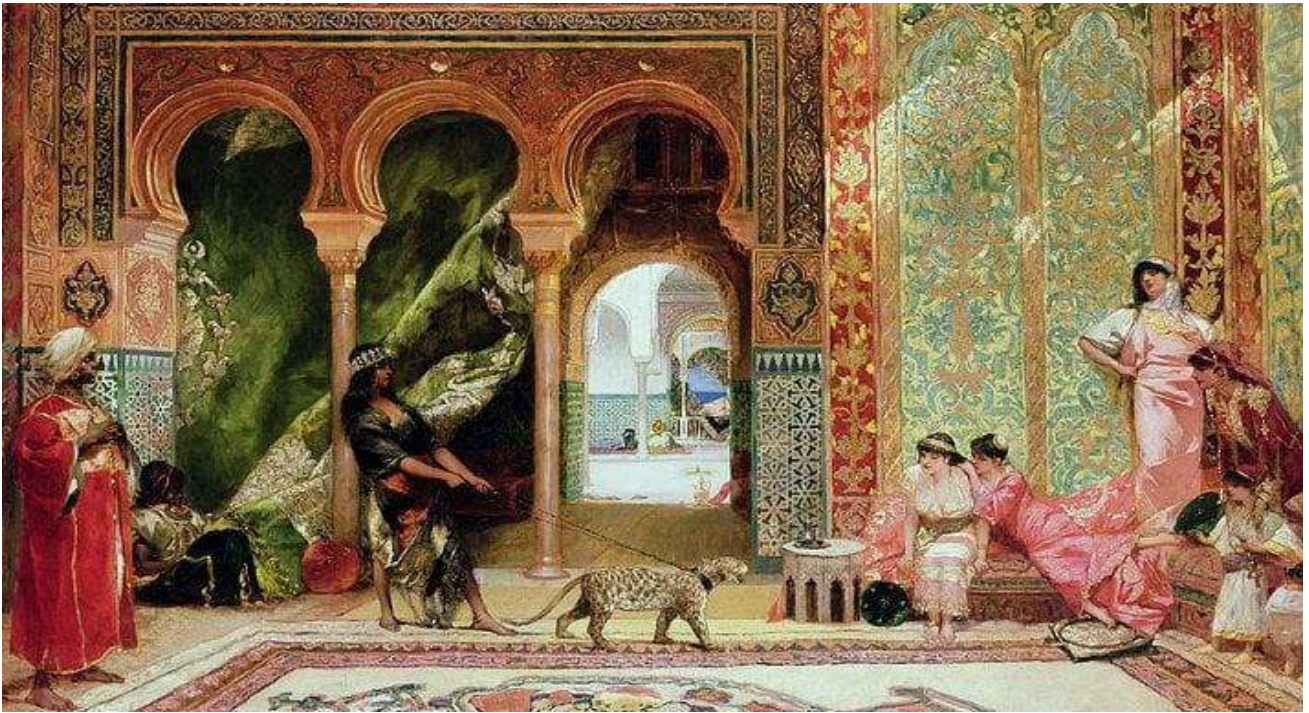


service as a counterterrorism measure, which also cuts Saeed and Nadia off from each Other. Saeed searches everywhere for Nadia and finally waits all day at her flat for her to return. He begs her to move in with him and his parents, but Nadia is reluctant. When Saeed's mOther gets killed by stray gunfire, Nadia relents and moves in with Saeed and his father. As the fighting worsens, Saeed and Nadia hear rumors about magical doors that can transport people anywhere in the world. They don't believe these rumors. he militants eventually take the city, imposing strict rules and surveillance. They hold public executions of those who break their religious rules and those who belong to certain religious denominations. Desperate to escape, Saeed and Nadia meet with a man who agrees to secure them passage out of the city via a magical door. He takes their money and agrees to get in contact. When they hear from him again, Saeed's father announces he will not go with them. He makes Nadia promise to stay with Saeed until Saeed is safe and settled. The next day, Saeed and Nadia pack small backpacks full of supplies and meet the mysterious man at the rendezvous point. He sends them

through a door. They emerge on the island of Mykonos, where a large refugee camp has grown. Wealthy countries have also discovered these doors and keep them strictly guarded to try and cut back on the number of refugees in their countries. After a few months, Nadia befriends a local girl who promises to help them leave Mykonos. The girl makes good on her promise and sneaks Saeed and Nadia through a newly discovered door. They emerge in an empty mansion in London and stay in one of the rooms. Other refugees come to live in the house alongside them. Saeed and Nadia start to feel less in love and become more irritated with each Other because of the stress of their ordeal. Some London citizens attack refugees, but Others volunteer to bring food and medicine into the occupied houses. The British government cuts the power to the neighborhood. As more refugees enter London, they divide themselves by national origin. Saeed would like to move to an Other house to be closer to Others from their country, but Nadia prefers to stay where they are. Eventually, the British government begins a push to make the migrants leave the houses they've occupied. There is a violent siege, but the government finally relents. The government plans to build a halo city on London's outskirts for the migrants to live in. Saeed and Nadia move to a work camp and build houses so that they can someday earn a forty-meter house of their own. Between exhaustion and their fizzling romance, they fall into a rut. Nadia suggests they move to Marin in California. Nadia and Saeed set up a shanty house in Marin. Nadia starts working at a co-op, and Saeed finds solace in a Black-majority religious congregation. Even though they both settle into their new lives, they find themselves changing. Nadia begins to realize that she's bisexual, and Saeed becomes attracted to the daughter of the preacher at his congregation. Although they still enjoy each Other's company, they begin to feel more like friends than lovers. They don't want their relationship to sour, and they know they have to separate. One day, Nadia simply packs her things and leaves. She moves into a room at the co-op where she works and later starts dating one of her coworkers. Saeed grows closer to the preacher's daughter, and they start dating. Although their separation is difficult at first, Saeed and Nadia eventually fall out of touch. Fifty years later, they meet again in a café in the city they once fled from together. Saeed talks about the

stars in the Chilean desert and offers to take Nadia someday. They leave not knowing if they'll ever see each Other again.

**Paintings by Frederick Lewis Mentioned in “The Map of Love”**



*The Lure of the East . British Orientalists Painting in 1864*



*The Egyptian Haramlek*



*Siesta. a forbidden place and secret lives in Haremlek*



*Abeddin Bazaar in Cairo during 18<sup>th</sup> century during British occupation of Egypt*



*Arab Wall Art Bazar in Cairo*



*Midday Meal in Cairo 1875*



*A Street Scene in Cairo in 1862*



*The Arab Scribe, Cairo Signed and dated 1852.*



**Interior School in Cairo in 1890**