The Middle Eastern Novel in English

Literary Transnationalism after Orientalism

by

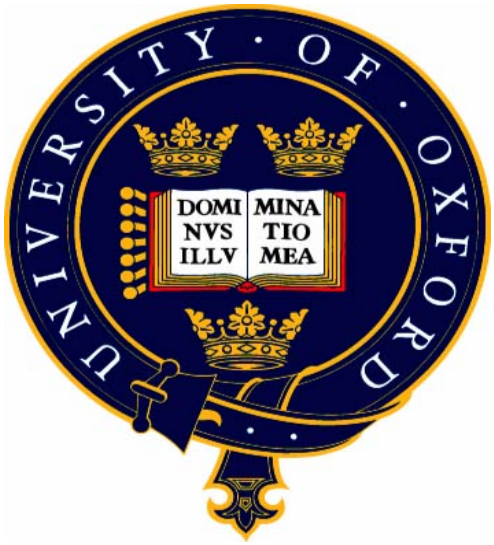
KARIM MATTAR
Lady Margaret Hall
12 August 2013

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the production, circulation, and reception of contemporary Middle Eastern literatures in Britain and the United States. I'm particularly interested in the novel form, and in assessing how both translated Middle Eastern novels and anglophone novels by migrant writers engage with dominant Anglo-American discourses of politics, gender, and religion in the region. In negotiation with Edward Said's *Orientalism*, I develop a materialist postcolonial critical model to analyse how such discourses undergird publishing and marketing strategies towards novels by Ibrahim Nasrallah, Hisham Matar, Yasmin Crowther, Orhan Pamuk, and others. I argue that as Middle Eastern novels travel, whether via translation or authorial acts of migration, across cultures and languages, they are reshaped according to dominant audience expectations. But, I continue, they also retain traces of their source cultures which must be brought to the surface in critical readings. Drawing on the work of David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti, and Aamir Mufti, I thus develop a reading practice, what I call 'post-Orientalist comparatism', that allows me to read past the domesticating strategies framing these novels and to newly reveal their more local, thus potentially transgressive, takes on Middle Eastern socio-political issues. I cumulatively suggest that Middle Eastern novels in English formally embody a dialectic of 'East' and 'West', of the local and the global, thus have important implications for our understanding of the English and world novel traditions.

I conceive of my thesis as a dual intervention into the fields of postcolonial studies and world literature. I am primarily concerned to reorient postcolonial theory around questions of Middle Eastern literary and cultural production, areas that have been traditionally neglected due to an entrenched, but unsustainable, anglophone bias. To do so, I turn to the work of Edward Said, and rethink the foundational problematic of *Orientalism* with an eye towards political, material, and cultural developments since 1978, the year in which *Orientalism* was first published, and towards the unique transnational positionality of the genre of the Middle Eastern novel in English. I also turn to theorists of world literature such as David Damrosch in order to develop a reading practice thoroughly attentive to issues of circulation, but, along the lines set out by Aamir Mufti, seek to interrogate their work for its occlusions of the impact of orientalist discourse in the historical development of the category of 'World Literature'. My thesis thus not

only draws on postcolonial and world literary theory to analyse its object, the Middle Eastern novel in English, but also demonstrates how proper attention to this object necessitates a theoretical recalibration of these fields.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'd like to thank Elleke Boehmer, my doctoral supervisor at the University of Oxford. Her unequivocal support for my work, her close, careful readings, and her insightful suggestions have not only helped me shape this thesis from the ground up, but have also contributed immeasurably to my efforts in framing it with reference to the wider field of Postcolonial Studies. Beyond such intellectual support, her institutional support has been a key factor in the development of my academic profile and my successful attainment of an Assistant Professorship in English at the University of Colorado at Boulder, to start in August 2013. Her exemplary work ethic and her incisive postcolonial sensibility have come to model for me a politically engaged professional intellectualism to which I continue to aspire. More than a supervisor, Professor Boehmer is a mentor and a friend. The debt of gratitude I owe her will not be forgotten.

Special thanks also to Nicolas Royle and Jennifer Wicke. Their early support and encouragement during my Master's studies at, respectively, the Universities of Sussex and Virginia helped propel me towards the professional academic path in the first place. Their continued guidance and friendship have made this often thorny, meandering path both navigable and pleasant.

My deepest gratitude, in advance, to Laura Marcus and Aamir Mufti for agreeing to examine this thesis. I look forward to what I'm sure will be their foundational guidance as I seek to translate the thesis into a monograph.

Numerous individuals have kindly read draft chapters, invited me to present related material at international conferences, or engaged in formative discussions about my work. For their constructive criticisms and dialogic generosity, I'd like to especially thank Emily Apter, Anna Ball, Anna Bernard, Joseph Boone, Hamid Dabashi, David Damrosch, Marwa Daoudy, David Fieni, Michael Levenson, Eric Lott, Stephen Morton, Ankhi Mukherjee, Mohamed-Salah Omri, Jahan Ramazani, Matthew Reynolds, Bruce Robbins, and Avi Shlaim.

Versions of several chapters have appeared or are forthcoming as journal articles. Revised sections from Chapter Two are forthcoming in issues 50.1 and 50.2 of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* as articles entitled, respectively, 'Mourid Barghouti's 'Multiple Displacements': Exile and the National Checkpoint in Palestinian Literature' and 'Out of Time:

Colonial History in Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses*'. Revised sections from Chapters Three and Four have been published in issue 14.4 of *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* as 'Re-Reading the 'Rogue State': The Politics of Gender in Anglophone Iranian Literature'. And revised sections from Chapters Five and Six are forthcoming in issue 23.1 of *Translation and Literature* as 'Orhan Pamuk and the Limits of Translation: Foreignizing *The Black Book* for World Literature'. I'd like to thank the editors of these journals, respectively Janet Wilson, Robert Young, and Stuart Gillespie, for their enthusiasm for my work and their tireless efforts in bringing these publications to fruition. I'd also like to thank Anna Ball and Patrick Williams, guest co-editors of the special issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 'Palestine and the Postcolonial', in which 'Out of Time' will appear.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council has funded the majority of my doctoral research through its 'Doctoral Awards Scheme'. Without the generosity of the AHRC, this thesis would not have been possible. Oxford's Lady Margaret Hall, through its 'Barbara Johnstone Aware for Graduate Research', and Faculty of English Language and Literature, through its 'Meyerstein Award for Graduate Research' and 'Language Training Grant: Advanced Arabic', have likewise contributed substantially to the funding of my studies. The AHRC 'Research Training Support Grant' and the Modern Language Association 'Convention Travel Grant' have enabled me to present my research at international conferences.

Finally, my most personal and heartfelt thanks to my parents, Awni and Hala Mattar, and to my sister, Mira Mattar. Their emotional and financial support has provided me with the solid grounding necessary for the successful completion of any such endeavour. Moreover, they, having made me fully aware of my exilic Palestinian family history despite the alien cultural influences of their migration to, and my birth in, London, are to a large extent responsible for the dual perspective that fuels my critique of neo-Orientalism in 'East' – 'West' cultural interactions here. In a sense by them, this thesis is dedicated to them, and to the Mattar and Bakhit clans dispersed, irrevocably, across Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Britain, the United States, and beyond.

With love,
Karim Mattar, 12 July 2013

Introduction

Post-Orientalist Comparatism: Mapping the Middle Eastern Novel in English

One of the constitutive ironies of Postcolonial Studies as practiced in British and American English departments is that for all Edward Said's, the field's key progenitor, efforts as a critic, Palestinian and other Middle Eastern literatures have gone largely neglected as legitimate objects of study. This has no doubt been due to institutional as well as political pressures – world literatures in languages other than English naturally fall outside the disciplinary remit of English. However, such neglect is rapidly becoming unsustainable. Since Arabic literature was granted symbolic international recognition through Naguib Mahfouz's award of the Nobel Prize in 1988, there has been a relative boom in translations from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish into English, with novelists like Mahfouz and Orhan Pamuk proving especially amenable to publishers and markets alike. Further, public interest in the region, spurred by the events of 9/11 and the 'War on Terror', has led to a parallel boom in the production of, especially, novels originally written in English by Middle Eastern migrants to the UK and the US. Novelists like Ahdaf Soueif and Hisham Matar, as well as memoirists like Azar Nafisi, are currently experiencing an upsurge in reputation almost comparable to that of Salman Rushdie in the early 1980s.

How do we, as scholars of the postcolonial, account for the increasing prominence of Middle Eastern literatures in British and American literary cultures? How do we understand such literatures in relation to embedded and contemporary discourses of the Middle East as 'other', and to related assumptions about politics, gender, and religion in the region? How are such discourses inscribed in practices of publishing and reading when it comes to the Middle East? How are they mediated through the novel form in particular? What does the Middle Eastern novel in English tell us about the relationship between 'oriental' and 'occidental' cultures, about the form and politics of the global novel? How do we develop critical and theoretical models appropriate to this object, and how does it impact emergent cartographies of a world literary system? And why a specifically *postcolonial* approach to the Middle Eastern novel in English?

In this thesis, I aim, broadly speaking, to make two overlapping arguments. First, that the field of Postcolonial Studies can no longer justify marginalizing Middle Eastern literatures given the volume of Middle Eastern novels produced both in translation and in English, and can no

longer afford to given the geopolitics of terror, war, and neo-imperialism currently defining 'East' – 'West' relations. Second, that a materialist postcolonial approach is essential for addressing the ways in which what I call 'neo-Orientalist' discourses undergird the production, circulation, and reception of such novels in Britain and America. Through these arguments, I develop a new critical practice, what I call 'post-Orientalist comparatism', attentive to how the Middle Eastern novel in English thematically and formally registers regional experiences of politics, gender, and religion, and to how it consequently reshapes the novel form itself.

Postcolonial Studies and the Middle East

Of course, Middle Eastern literatures have not been completely overlooked in Postcolonial Studies. In our broadly post-Saidian critical landscape, the last few years have witnessed a range of established and up-and-coming postcolonial scholars begin to address the issues raised by such literatures. While their concerns often overlap, their approaches have exhibited a strong tendency towards specialization. Their work may be categorized in the following manner: Anglo-Arab literature, and related issues of migration, xenophobia, and cross-cultural mediation (as in Waïl Hassan, Layla al-Maleh, Geoffrey Nash, and others); Middle Eastern to English literary translation (Salih Altoma, Said Faiq, Servinc Turkkhan, etc.); the geopolitics of terror and neo-imperialism (Elleke Boehmer, Derek Gregory, Neil Lazarus, Ania Loomba, Stephen Morton, etc.); Palestine and the politics of Zionism, colonization, and occupation (Anna Ball, Anna Bernard, Joe Cleary, Bart Moore-Gilbert, Ihab Saloul, Patrick Williams, etc.); Islamic feminism and gendered immigrant writing (Lila Abu-Lughod, Miriam Cooke, Lindsey Moore, etc.); Muslim immigrant writing (Claire Chambers, Peter Morey, Amina Yaqin, etc.); and the Arab Spring (Ayman el-Desouky, Ziad Elmarsafy, Caroline Rooney, etc.).

Without doubt, each of these approaches contributes richly to our understanding of its specific area of emphasis. Indeed, I, across this thesis, develop my arguments about appropriate postcolonial methodologies for such areas in close critical dialogue with this work. Neo-imperialism remains a key concern throughout, while specific chapters address postcolonial approaches to Palestine, Anglo-Arab literature and the Arab Spring, Islamic feminism and gender, and the politics of translating Islam. But, I would like here to briefly note a pair of

related problems that apply to what might be considered the subfield of 'postcolonial Middle East studies' in general.

Firstly, little of this work pays substantial attention to the material contexts of publishing and translating Middle Eastern literatures. Often obscuring the tensely politicized conditions under which such literatures are produced in the first place, it demonstrates a lack of reflexivity about its own, often translated, objects of analysis, about book history. In other words, this subfield, as it currently stands, risks reproducing the ideological biases of publishing in its very selection of texts to analyse. Secondly, and more importantly, the subfield has as yet failed to systematically articulate the intersections and overlaps between its various areas of specialization. Certainly, specialization carries the considerable advantage of precise critical focus on the politics and history of, say, a given genre like the Anglo-Arab novel or Muslim women's writing in English. But, such genres, I contend, cannot be properly understood without thorough attention to not only their contexts of production, but also to a wider Anglo-American literary culture of the Middle East that encompasses both anglophone novels and translated texts, both geopolitics and the politics of gender, religion, and so forth. In other words, I'm suggesting that a shared set of assumptions about politics, gender, and religion in the Middle East governs the production of Middle Eastern literatures, indeed, of a hegemonic narrative of the region, in Anglo-American culture, and that the areas postcolonial critics have focused on might fruitfully be read in relation to one another within this cultural context.

The most pressing task for an incipient 'postcolonial Middle East studies', then, is developing a critical and theoretical framework for synthesizing its areas of concern. This thesis attempts just such a synthesis.

Orientalism and Postcolonial Materialism

As I've suggested, a materialist postcolonial framework attuned to the publishing and reading contexts of Middle Eastern literatures in English is important for understanding contemporary practices of cultural hegemony pertaining to the region, thus for synthesizing the subfield's concerns. As such, the framework I craft in this thesis derives in no small measure from Said's foundational critique of Orientalist discourses in 19th century Western Europe. For Said, the designation 'Orientalism' has three interdependent meanings: firstly, it is an academic discipline

whose teaching and research focus is 'the Orient'; secondly, it is 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and […] "the Occident"'; and thirdly, it is historically and materially specific institution for 'dealing with the Orient', 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over' this region (Said 1979: 2, 3).

Although I explore academic appropriations and mediations of Palestine in Chapter One, 'Palestine and the Postcolonial', my more general emphasis is on Said's second and third definitions of Orientalism. In the 19th century discourses he primarily addresses, the Middle East was constructed as a region of laxness, irrationality, and femininity, thus, distinguished from a more progressive Occident, made ideologically susceptible to imperial domination. Since the first publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, though, numerous developments in the Middle East have transformed the geopolitical landscape and have prompted a new set of discourses to legitimate attitudes and policies towards the region in Anglo-American culture. Rather than being framed by an ontology and epistemology of *cultural* difference, contemporary discourses of the region, I would like to suggest, are framed primarily by a *political* distinction between 'our' democratic forms of representation, participation, and universal human rights and 'their' repressive disavowal of such forms in preference for authoritarian nationalisms. In this light, I read dominant culture approaches to Palestinian claims to autonomy and return, to authoritarian rule in Gaddafi's Libya, to gender relations in post-revolutionary Iran, and to the rise of political Islam in Turkey as just so many manifestations of a more fundamental, *neo*-Orientalist distinction between 'Occidental' democracy and 'Oriental' authoritarian nationalism.

Certainly, Said engaged deeply with such regional developments, especially as related to Palestinian politics and culture, after the writing of *Orientalism*. Further, a range of scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod, Talal Asad, Hamid Dabashi, Rashid Khalidi, Joseph Massad, and Saba Mahmood can be said to have taken Said's lead, and explored issues of politics, gender, and religion in the post-'78 Middle East with a sharp eye trained on neo-Orientalist discourses. Without doubt, *Orientalism* opened many doors to such critique. Yet, again, a systematic, synthetic approach to the emergence of neo-Orientalist discourses in the historically specified period of exacerbated 'East' – 'West' political tension after *Orientalism* is still lacking.

While an overarching theory of neo-Orientalism is outside the scope of this thesis, such discourses, defining the cultural landscape in which the Middle Eastern novel in English is

produced and read, must be taken into account in contextualized literary readings of the genre. The materialist postcolonial framework I develop here, derived from the work of Aijaz Ahmad, Timothy Brennan, Arif Dirlik, Graham Huggan, Neil Lazarus, and Lawrence Venuti, thus aims to pinpoint how neo-Orientalism structures practices of literary production, circulation, and reception when it comes to material from the Middle East. These practices, I argue, comprise today's 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' in the literary domain. In each chapter, I focus respectively on Anglo-American discourses of Palestine, the 'Rogue State', Middle Eastern gender inequality, and political Islam, and ask how they influence publishers' selections of texts to publish and translate, their marketing strategies, the popular and academic reception of such texts, and the politics of translation.

Post-Orientalist Comparatism

In itself, a materialist postcolonial approach is insufficient for critical readings of the Middle Eastern novel in English. This is because Middle Eastern novels exceed their material determinations and the accompanying ways in which, as I argue, they are contained or domesticated for Anglo-American audiences. Rather than coming into being *ex nihilo* in the receiving culture, they are products of transnational movements across the borders of nation and language, whether via translation or authorial acts of migration. As they travel and are reshaped according to the values and needs of the receiving culture, they carry with them thematic and formal traces of the source culture that, in the insights they offer into regional politics, gender relations, and religion, potentially undermine dominant discourses. In other words, they engage the hegemonic narrative of the Middle East as well as the global imperium of English through which this narrative is reproduced in their language and form. Sitting on the geopolitical fault line, the Middle Eastern novel in English is a site of mediation between, crudely speaking, 'East' and 'West', offering what David Damrosch calls a 'double refraction' of both (Damrosch 2003: 283). While the Saidian critique of Orientalism lays the groundwork for an 'East' – 'West' mediation to come, what I'm suggesting here is that the Middle Eastern novel in English inscribes such mediation in its very form.

I'd like to propose that the processes by which this genre appropriates and reimagines the novel form from a Middle Eastern perspective, engaging neo-Orientalism along the way, can be

best understood through the theories of world literature developed in recent years by Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti, and others. These theorists have provided exemplary accounts of the ways in which texts and forms circulate through the world literary system, of how they emerge from often strained, but also fruitful, processes of cultural negotiation, accommodation, and cross-fertilization in the spaces between distinct literary traditions. Approaching the Middle Eastern novel in English novel from their perspectives opens up key new interpretive possibilities. It allows us to objectively attend to questions of the importation of the European novel form in Middle Eastern contexts, of how Middle Eastern writers have recreated this form by integrating local cultural material (linguistic registers, tradition stories or folktales, Koranic or high-literary allusions, etc.), and, most importantly, of how such mediations of 'East' and 'West' engage neo-Orientalism as they circulate to Anglo-American host cultures. In short, theories of world literature allow us to critically comprehend the place of the Middle Eastern novel in English in the world literary system.

Yet world literature has often been criticized precisely for obscuring such broad postcolonial concerns. For Djelal Kadir, the transitive practice of 'worlding' implicit to such critical projects is equivalent to 'imperial moves that circumscribe the world into manageable global boundedness' (Kadir 2004: 7). More immediately relevant here, Aamir Mufti, in a recent essay entitled 'Orientalism and the Institution of World Literatures' (2010), argues that from its very inception, the Goethean concept of world literature has mystified its Orientalist underpinnings. Emerging in the period of colonial expansion, world literature, he continues, was invented in the crucible of a 'philological Orientalism' that, as ideological complement to 'the far-reaching refashioning of the cultures and societies of the world', played a key role in 'producing and establishing a method and a system for classifying and evaluating diverse forms of textuality, now all processed and codified uniformly as literature' (Mufti 2010: 461, 464-5). Dependent on this codification of literarity, current theorizations thus re-inscribe the power dynamic inherent to 19th century cultural imperialism – in a word, Orientalism is the political unconscious of world literature. 'Whether we view', Mufti concludes, 'world literature (with Franco Moretti) as a conceptual organization rather than a body of literary texts or (with David Damrosch) as a special kind of literature, that which circulates beyond its "culture of origin", […] we cannot ignore the global relations of force that the concept simultaneously puts in play and hides from view' (*ibid*: 465).

While the historical ambitions of this thesis are more modest, I wish to adopt the spirit of Mufti's argument, and recalibrate world literature theory around the question of neo-Orientalism in contemporary literary and cultural exchanges between 'East' and 'West'. Indeed, the Middle Eastern novel in English, given both its embeddedness in neo-Orientalist cultural production and its formal and political mediations, is a particularly valuable site for such theoretical revision. As I trace the global trajectories of novels by Ibrahim Nasrallah, Hisham Matar, Yasmin Crowther, and Orhan Pamuk, as well as a range of Middle Eastern poetry, memoirs, and anthologies, I seek to develop a critical practice that weaves a strong postcolonial sensibility derived from Said and Mufti into world literature theory. I call this practice 'post-Orientalist comparatism'.

Re-Orienting the Global Novel

Recent work on the global novel – as in, especially, Moretti's considerable oeuvre – has made substantial headway into conceptualizing its spread, appropriation, and re-circulation throughout the diverse regions of the world. While brief forays into understanding the Middle Eastern novel in global context have certainly been attempted – Moretti's encyclopaedic, multi-authored, multi-volume study of *The Novel* (2006), for example, contains essays on Mahfouz and Pamuk – the wider contributions this genre has made to world literature have yet to be fully articulated. As described above, I aim, in this thesis, to demonstrate how Middle Eastern novels reshape novelistic forms to reflect local experiences of politics, gender, and religion, and, as they circulate through English, consequently engage neo-Orientalist discourses. More specifically, I focus on Middle Eastern takes on the historical novel, the dictator novel, the novel of migration, and the postmodernist novel. Cumulatively, the novels I explore suggest the diversity of Middle Eastern adaptations of Euro-American aesthetic forms. Together, they, re-orienting the global novel from a broadly Middle Eastern perspective, force open a transnational literary space for dialogue and negotiation beyond the binaries of neo-Orientalism.

* * *

Each of my chapters revolves around a key discourse of the Middle East currently circulating in Anglo-American dominant culture. Specifically, I focus on discourses of Palestine, the 'Rogue State', gender, and Islam. Each picks a novel and other significant texts, usually originating from the same Middle Eastern state for effective comparison, on the basis of both its prominence in British or American literary culture and its direct and revelatory treatment of the chapter's theme. I assess the material contexts of this novel's production, circulation, and reception, highlighting instances of its domestication, and provide a critical counter-reading attentive to the ways in which its treatment of politics, gender, or religion engages dominant discourses. I emphasize how Middle Eastern experiences are embedded in and reshape novelistic form, arguing that form is the means by which the Middle Eastern novel in English transmits such experiences in transnational literary space. Throughout, I demonstrate how postcolonial and world literature theory might be productively realigned around the issues raised by the Middle Eastern novel in English, and thus cumulatively develop post-Orientalist comparatism as a new critical practice.

Chapters One and Two ground what I call my 'post-Saidian' intervention into Postcolonial Studies by focusing on discourses of Palestine circulating therein, and developing, through literary readings, a 'post-Saidian theory of exile' as a corrective to problematic practices in the field. In Chapter One, 'Palestine and the Postcolonial: Edward Said, Exile, and Partition', I discuss the formative, but largely downplayed, influence of Said's Palestinian affiliations as his work has been appropriated in Postcolonial Studies. After outlining his rich, exilic response to Palestinian identity and culture, I then demonstrate that the institutionalized field of Postcolonial Studies has, in its recent and fraught turn to Palestine, often approached this issue only on the basis of a disavowal of the foundational Saidian problematic of exile. Most clearly manifest in the emergence of an alternative, 'partition' paradigm through the work of Joe Cleary, Anna Bernard, and Gil Hochberg, such disavowal, I argue, has resulted in the marginalization of issues of colonial history and the *Nakba*. I conclude that a return to the colonial history – *Nakba* – exile nexus is crucial for a Postcolonial Studies attuned to Palestine's complex and traumatic past.

In Chapter Two, 'Towards a Post-Saidian Theory of Exile: Mourid Barghouti and Ibrahim Nasrallah', I model such a critical return through close literary readings of Mourid Barghouti and Ibrahim Nasrallah. After outlining, and taking on board, Bernard's critiques of the idealizing and universalizing tendencies of Saidian exile, I turn to Barghouti's memoir *I Saw*

Ramallah (1997; trans. 2000) to demonstrate a more grounded, localized, materialist theory of exile as enacted in Palestinian literature. Broadening the discussion, I then foreground the Palestinian national checkpoint as a pivotal site for the articulation and representation of exilic Palestinian identity. Along with his first, Barghouti's second memoir, *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2009; trans. 2011), traces the dynamic of exile and prohibited return as manifest at the Allenby Bridge checkpoint with exemplary depth and sophistication. In the second half of the chapter, I suggest that such attention to exilic experience necessitates detailed investigation of the colonial history that preceded it. Here, I discuss the dominant Israeli 'New Historian' narrative of the *Nakba*, and argue for a turn to Palestinian oral historiography to counteract the occlusions inherent to this narrative. I then show that Nasrallah's historical novel, *Time of White Horses* (2007; trans. 2012), attempts to resolve the 'symbolic problem' of the invisibility of the *Nakba* in global culture by formally inscribing Palestinian oral history. This Palestinian revision of the European form of the historical novel, I conclude, becomes formally riven between mythic and historical registers, and thus indicates the impossibility of aesthetic resolution in the Palestinian case without the national resolution of return.

By developing a post-Saidian intervention into postcolonial discourses of Palestine, Chapters One and Two both metonymize and frame my wider intervention into dominant Anglo-American discourses of politics, gender, and religion in the Middle East. Chapters Three, Four, and Five then expand the post-Saidian into the post-Orientalist by exploring the publishing, reception, and translation of Middle Eastern literatures in Britain and the United States.

In Chapter Three, 'Publishing the 'Rogue State': Hisham Matar and Libyan Literature in Translation', I explore the effects of American discourses of the 'Rogue State', predecessors of those of the 'Axis of Evil', on the publishing of Libyan literature. I start by outlining conflicting theories of the rogue state, and arguing that the concept is an ideological mystification of US geopolitical interests. I then demonstrate, through analyses of anthologies of rogue state literatures in translation, that commercial publishing has a vested interest in maintaining such mystification. Why, I ask, have Libya's two most prominent men of letters, Ahmed Fagih and Ibrahim Al-Koni, received scant international attention compared to the young anglophone Libyan novelist Hisham Matar? I argue that Matar's dictator novel, *In the Country of Men* (2006), sprinkling a touch of commodifiable Middle Eastern flavour on this genre, and has been so successful precisely because it, through its reproduced, domesticating form, reproduces

dominant cultural values. *In the Country of Men*, I conclude, thus contributes to the ideological framework by which the neo-imperial British, American, and French intervention into the Libyan Revolution of 2011 was naturalized as humanitarian.

In Chapter Four, 'Consuming Middle Eastern Women: Azar Nafisi and Yasmin Crowther', I explore the effect of discourses of the disenfranchised, repressed Muslim woman on the reception of anglophone Iranian women's memoirs and novels. Building on my previous chapter, I argue that such discourses facilitate the marginalization of Rogue States such as Iran in the international community, and that a literary culture obsessed with narratives of women's repression reproduces this political ideology. Drawing on Islamic feminist scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod, Miriam Cooke, and Saba Mahmood to provide another perspective on gender relations in Iran, I then critically compare Azar Nafisi's highly successful memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) with Yasmin Crowther's relatively unknown novel *The Saffron Kitchen* (2006). After discussing the reception histories of these two texts, I argue that Crowther's revision of the postcolonial novel of migration, by providing a dual, cross-cultural perspective on Iranian women's experiences, counters the dominant narrative established by Nafisi and others. *The Saffron Kitchen*, I conclude, inscribes an incipient Islamic feminism into the form of the novel of migration, and opens a space of dialogue more sensitive to Iranian women's 'multiple belongings'.

In Chapter Five, 'Islam and the Politics of Translation: The Case of Orhan Pamuk', I explore the effects of discourses of political Islam on the translation of Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Black Book* (1990; trans. 1994, 2006). I aim to expand current postcolonial discussions of immigrant Muslim writing, as in Claire Chambers, Peter Morey, and Amina Yaqin, to what might be considered the immigrant text of world literature. I open with an analysis of Lawrence Venuti's categories of 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation, and argue, against Venuti's privileging of the linguistic and discursive registers, that the politics of translation has more to do with material contexts than with language. After demonstrating this argument with reference to Güneli Gün's and Maureen Freely's respectively foreignizing and domesticating translations of *The Black Book*, I then chart the material limitations imposed on literatures from the Islamic Middle East in the global economy of translation. I round this chapter off by outlining how 'exotic' and 'cosmopolitan' frames of reference have come to shape the reception of translated Middle Eastern texts in the world literary system.

In Chapter Six, 'Foreignizing *The Black Book* for World Literature', I provide a final demonstration of the critical value of post-Orientalist comparatism through what I call a 'foreignizing' reading of *The Black Book*. I start by showing how translational prejudices against Islamic source material are replicated in readerly prejudices against this aspect of Pamuk's oeuvre. Ian Almond's and Walter Andrews' readings of *The Black Book* as a postmodernist novel that destabilizes religious identifications are two cases in point. Contesting such readings, I then provide a foreignizing corrective that, through close attention to Turkish cultural history, comprehensively details how Pamuk draws on Sufi traditions in order to imaginatively re-integrate Turkey's cultural past with its secular present. *The Black Book*, I conclude, thus traverses the aesthetics of the postmodernist novel and emerges on the other, Turkish side. Its contribution to world literature consists of its inscription of what I call 'cultural neo-Ottomanism' in a uniquely Middle Eastern novelistic form.

In the context of the world literary system, the novels of Nasrallah, Matar, Crowther, and Pamuk collectively rewrite the global novel by appropriating Euro-American aesthetic forms, and, reshaping them to reflect local, Middle Eastern experiences of politics, gender, and religion, circulate them back to global culture through textual and authorial migrations. As they do so, they critically engage neo-Orientalist discourses of the Middle East. Demanding a recalibration of postcolonial and world literature theory, the Middle Eastern novel English, its form and politics, its mediations of 'East' and 'West' in our geopolitically charged landscape of world literature, might be fruitfully approached through what I have called post-Orientalist comparatism. In detailing such an approach, it is my hope that this thesis will have contributed to an enhanced understanding of cultural difference in an increasingly complex world.

Chapter One

Palestine and the Postcolonial: Edward Said, Exile, and Partition

In this chapter, I explore discourses of Palestine currently circulating in the field of Postcolonial Studies. As a key site of geopolitically engaged criticism within the academy, Postcolonial Studies might be considered a liminal case study for assessing the parameters of debates about Palestine in wider Anglo-American culture. By discussing the possibilities and limitations of this field, and, in the following chapter, suggesting productive new directions, I hope to contribute to expanding such parameters, and re-focus attention to the crucial and often marginalized issues of Palestinian colonial history, *Nakba*, and exile. As such, Chapters One and Two, by establishing my post-Saidian intervention into Postcolonial Studies, both metonymize and frame my wider, post-Orientalist intervention into Anglo-American discourses of politics, gender, and religion in the Middle East.

In Section One, 'Edward Said and the Exile Paradigm', I outline Said's foundational theories of exilic Palestinian culture, and argue that Postcolonial Studies has often repressed Said's Palestinian affiliations even as it has appropriated other aspects of his work. In Section Two, 'Palestine in Postcolonial Studies: Disciplinary, Theoretical, and Political Disjuncts', I discuss the reasons behind the field's entrenched neglect of the question of Palestine, and argue that these are no longer sustainable in the face of Palestine's colonial history and Israel's current practices of expanded settler-colonialism in the West Bank. In Section Three, 'The Partition Paradigm', I explore the recent turn to Palestine in the field, and criticize the emergence of 'partition' as a strong paradigm therein for its occlusions of questions of colonial history, the *Nakba*, and exile. I conclude that for Postcolonial Studies to fulfil its political and historical remit vis-à-vis Palestine, it must return with renewed vigour to the foundational Saidian problematic of exile.

1. Edward Said and the Exile Paradigm

Said is commonly acknowledged to be one of the founding figures of Postcolonial Studies. In books like *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), he developed a uniquely influential methodology for addressing how imperial relations of power, authority, and inequality

undergird historical and contemporary representations of non-Western cultures. He correspondingly helped set the scene for a reflexive critical interrogation of colonial discourse and postcolonial engagement in the fields of Literary Studies, History, Geography, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, and so forth in what, in the 1980s, came to be known as Postcolonial Studies. Said also emerged from the 1970s as one of the leading representatives and advocates of the Palestinian cause in the United States, a public intellectual whose humanist outlook disrupted popular as well as academic constructions of the Palestinian as inhuman, terrorist, other. Through books like *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *After the Last Sky* (1986), *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994), *The End of the Peace Process* (2000), and *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map* (2003), not to mention his work with the Palestine Liberation Organization and innumerable media interventions, he humanized the Palestinian struggle, producing a distinctively exilic and secular understanding of Palestinian politics, history, and culture for the wider domain of appropriate scholarly inquiry. One could do worse than to cite Said as a point of origin for most current theories of and approaches to both the postcolonial and the Palestinian.

In this section, I outline Said's approach to Palestinian literature and culture as a point of origin, a beginning, for the range of critical approaches to the topic currently gaining traction in Postcolonial Studies, indeed for the recent upsurge of interest there in the Middle East more generally. I extrapolate Said's mature theorization of Palestinian literature from *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, one of his most intimate and least studied texts, referring to others of his texts that deal with issues of exile, return, the *Nakba*, nationalism, literary form, and secular humanism at relevant points throughout the discussion. I argue that although Said discussed Palestinian exile and exilic intellectualism extensively elsewhere in his work, *After the Last Sky* provides us with his most complete articulation of Palestinian literature as essentially exilic. It is, in short, a key point of origin for what I refer to as the exile paradigm in Palestinian literary studies.

But I also demonstrate here that Said's other work not immediately concerned with Palestine, that which has had the most pronounced impact on Postcolonial Studies, is crucially informed by his experience and understanding of Palestinian exile. As early on as *Orientalism*, and further expressed in 'Reflections on Exile' (1984) and *Culture and Imperialism*, it is apparent that Said's experience of a particularly Palestinian exile grounds in many important

ways his critical perspectives, specifically his use of a 'contrapuntal' reading method and his development of secular humanism as a horizon for intellectual engagement. Perhaps fitting for a field that has, until recently, systematically ignored Palestine, Postcolonial Studies has generally failed to acknowledge the Palestinian origins of many of its own inherited methodologies. By bringing such origins to light, I hope to contribute to counteracting a dominant, Bhabha-esque privileging of migrancy as hybridity in the field, insisting instead on the tragic materiality that grounds the revolutionary critical perspective afforded by exile.

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By his own account, Palestine only became central to Said's self-identification as an engaged intellectual after 1967, when the Arab defeat at the Six Day War, which Palestinians refer to as the *Naksa*, or Setback, shook the young Columbia professor out of his career-oriented complacency. Said was born to an affluent Christian family in Jerusalem in 1935, and emigrated with his family to Cairo upon the United Nations vote for the partition of Palestine in December 1947. The *Nakba*, or Catastrophe that befell the Palestinians in 1948 when between 714,000 and 744,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes, 418 of their villages destroyed, depopulated, or occupied, and 11 urban centres depopulated, certainly left a deep wound on the young boy's psyche.[1] Decades later, close to his death, he recalled his first encounter after the *Nakba* with members of his extended family, 'all […] greatly reduced in circumstances, their faces stark with worry, ill-health, despair', to conclude that they, like the Palestinian refugee more generally, 'had their lives broken, their spirits drained, their composure destroyed forever in the context of seemingly unending, serial dislocation' (Said 2001a: 206). But this foundational trauma was not to resurface for Said, 'completely caught up in the life of a young professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University', until the events of 1967

[1] Estimates of the extent of the *Nakba* among the major historians of Palestine vary quite considerably due to a number of methodological, statistical, definitional, and ideological differences. For the total number of displaced Palestinians, Benny Morris has 700,000, Rashid Khalidi 700,000, Avi Shlaim over 700,000, Walid Khalidi 714,000-744,000, Nur Masalha 740,000, Ilan Pappé 800,000, and Salman Abu-Sitta 935,000, with the United Nations Conciliation Commission counting 726,000 in 1949; for the total number of destroyed, depopulated, or occupied villages, Morris has 369, Walid Khalidi 418, Pappé 531, and Abu-Sitta 531 (see Morris 1987: 603-4, xiv-xviii; R. Khalidi 2010: 21; Shlaim 2009: x; W. Khalidi 1992: xxxii-xxxiii, xv-xx, 585-94; Masalha 2012: 5; Pappé 2006: xiii; Abu-Sitta 2000; UNCC 1949: 22). Throughout this chapter, I will use the estimates reached by Walid Khalidi in *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (1992), widely regarded as the most authoritative and methodologically sound historical source on the *Nakba*.

(Said 1994b: xiii). Then, and for 'the first time since [he had] come to the United States', Said 'was emotionally reclaimed by the Arab world generally and by Palestine in particular' (*ibid*). What happened in the Arab world began to concern him personally, and 'could no longer be accepted with a passive political disengagement' (*ibid*: xiv). As a result of this epiphany or near-Pauline conversion, Said was to become a mediator and occasional advisor for the PLO, an indefatigable proponent of Palestinian rights in the American media, and the foremost critic of Israeli / Palestinian conflict, Palestinian culture, and Zionism in American academia. As Ardi Imseis neatly summarizes, Said played at least three distinct roles in advancing popular and scholarly discourses of Palestine: he acted as a *narrator* of Palestinian experience, as a secular *critic* of Arab as well as Zionist and Western power and nationalism, and as a remarkably insightful *visionary* of long-term solutions to the conflict (see Imseis 2010: 248, *passim*). Further, Said's newfound recognition of his responsibilities as an exiled Palestinian academic in the United States was to feed directly into his mature conceptualizations of the engaged intellectual, the contrapuntal method, and secular humanism, with momentous consequences for numerous fields of scholarly inquiry, especially Postcolonial Studies.[2]

Said's exilic Palestinian identity has most immediately impacted Postcolonial Studies via its subtle structuring effects on his two most influential books in the field, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Although critics have not failed to note such effects – Bill Ashcroft makes the case perhaps most strongly by arguing that 'Palestine was at the center of the writing of *Orientalism* because it had become […] the pressing focus of Said's identity' – I'd like to suggest that they have been largely repressed as the field has adopted the critical model of *Orientalism* while, until recently, marginalizing the Palestine question (Ashcroft 2010: 291). Apart from effectively effacing the most crucial political horizon of his theoretical work, this failure to fully integrate Said's exilic consciousness into various postcolonial appropriations of *Orientalism* for other cultural and political contexts has resulted in a Bhabha-derived critical orthodoxy of hybridity as the endgame of intercultural exchange. By briefly demonstrating the

[2] For further detail on Said's biography, his political engagement, and how this impacted his intellectual trajectory, see especially his *The Question of Palestine* (1992), vii-xlv, *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994b), xiii-xlviii, *Out of Place* (1999), and *Reflections on Exile* (2000a), xii-xxxv. For excellent secondary accounts of the personal underpinnings of Said's politics and criticism, see Rashid Khalidi's 'Edward Said and Palestine: Balancing the Academic and the Political, the Public and the Private' (2008), Ilan Pappé's 'The Saidian Fusion of Horizons' (2008), Adel Iskandar and Hakem Rustom's 'Introduction: Emancipation and Representation' (2010), Joseph Massad's 'Affiliating with Edward Said' (2010), Ardi Imseis's 'Speaking Truth to Power: On Edward Said and the Palestinian Freedom Struggle' (2010), and Avi Shlaim's 'Edward Said and the Palestine Question' (2010).

centrality of Palestine in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, I wish to intervene in this trend, and suggest a more materialist model of exile at the very foundation of postcolonial theory.

At the outset of the book, Said describes how '*The personal dimension*', alongside other aspects of his contemporary political and intellectual scene, led him to a particular course of research and writing that resulted in *Orientalism* (Said 1979: 25). This personal investment, Said explains, derives from his 'awareness of being an "Oriental" as a child growing up in two British colonies', so that his study of Orientalism has, in may ways, been 'an attempt to inventory the traces upon [himself], the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals' (*ibid*). More specifically, it is his experience as 'an Arab Palestinian in the West' that had such a formative impact on the writing of *Orientalism*, that to a large extent necessitated it:

> There exists here [in the United States] an almost unanimous consensus that he [the Palestinian] does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or as an Oriental. The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny (*ibid*: 27).

Although Said only occasionally, and not at great length, returns to Palestine in this book, this brief passage unambiguously establishes its personal, political, and cultural significance throughout, framing his geographically and historically wider-ranging critiques of power, discourse, and representation in crucial ways. Apart from suggesting a deeper history of orientalist misrepresentation of the Palestinians than that of Zionism – an important theme Said returns to in *The Question of Palestine* and elsewhere – this passage defines the immediate political stakes and motivations of Said's intervention into all forms of ideological othering, whatever their objects, in literary, media, popular culture, academic, and political discourses.[3]

[3] For perhaps the most focused account of the Palestinian underpinnings of *Orientalism*, see Bill Ashcroft's 'Representation and Liberation: From Orientalism to the Palestine Crisis' (2010). There, he argues that *Orientalism* provides a specific methodology for resisting 'the hegemonic discourse that propels [Israeli] colonization', and to effect what he calls a 'postcolonial transformation' of the representational paradigm to which and by which Palestinians have been subjected (Ashcroft 2010: 299, 298). Although Ashcroft's essay is promising in its attempt to bring Palestine into the fold of Postcolonial Studies, it is, at its core, deeply symptomatic of the critical and political limitations that have largely prohibited this. Apart from eliding the question of Said's own abhorrence of the term 'postcolonial', the essay is premised on just the sort of anti-Fanonian rejection of resistance in any realm but the discursive that, dominant in Postcolonial Studies as the field has become institutionalized, has precluded Palestine as a 'legitimate' or 'acceptable' object of study (see Bernard 2010a; Ball 2012: 1-17). Ashcroft

Likewise, *Culture and Imperialism* doesn't dwell on Palestine in any extended way. But, as in *Orientalism*, Said's experience as a Palestinian, specifically here his exilic consciousness, frames and structures the book from the outset. As Said explains, *Culture and Imperialism* 'is an exile's book' (Said 1994a: xxvi). As an experience of belonging to 'both worlds', the Arab and the Western, yet 'without being completely *of* one or the other', exile has enabled Said to understand 'both sides of the imperial divide […] more easily' (*ibid*: xxvi, xxvii). He later concludes that this dual perspective afforded by exile is the foundation of intellectual engagement:

> [I]t is no exaggeration to say that liberation as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. From this perspective then all things are indeed counter, original, spare, strange. From this perspective also, one can see "the complete consort dancing together" contrapuntally (*ibid*: 332).

But before turning to this, Said's mature theory of the exilic intellectual, it is important to understand in detail the Palestinian basis of his approach, and, correspondingly, his interpretation of Palestinian literature and culture in terms of exile.

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distinguishes between material and discursive resistance, and systematically disavows the former to, in effect, make Palestine palatable in the field: 'The key difference' between 'the Palestinian people' and other colonized societies, he argues without justification or evidence, 'is that liberation does not lie in resistance to its actual colonizers – the Israelis', but in 'resistance to the hegemonic discourse' (Ashcroft 2010: 298, 299). This move not only negates the rich and important history of Palestinian military resistance to Zionist colonization as an appropriate area of postcolonial inquiry, not only undermines the evolving tapestry of nonviolent resistance to actual colonization in the form of civil disobedience initiatives, local and global protests against settlements and occupation, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, and so forth, but also, and most importantly here, contradicts what Said himself has insisted upon regarding resistance. As Said unequivocally explains in 1994, in his 'Introduction' to *The Politics of Dispossession*:

> In sum, we need to move up from the state of supine abjectness with which, in reality, the Oslo Declaration of Principles was negotiated […] into the prosecution of parallel agreements with Israel and the Arabs that concern Palestinian national, as opposed to municipal, aspirations. But this does not exclude resistance against the Israeli occupation, which continues indefinitely. So long as occupation and settlements exist, whether legitimized or not by the PLO, Palestinians and others must speak against them. One of the issues not raised by the Oslo Accords, the exchange of the PLO-Israeli letters, the Washington speeches, is whether the violence and terrorism renounced by the PLO includes largely nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, self-defense, etc. *These are the inalienable right of any people denied full sovereignty and independence and must be supported* (Said 1994b: xlv, italics mine).

Rather than accept the sort of watered-down version of resistance Ashcroft advocates in order make Palestine legible within Postcolonial Studies, surely the challenge is to renegotiate the field's foundational prejudices so that it can properly encompass Palestinian history, politics, and culture in all their complexity, so that it can make itself relevant for the most glaring and violent instance of colonialism in today's world.

For Said, the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948 represents the single most important event not just in modern Palestinian history, but also in modern Arab history more generally. As he explains in an essay on 'Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction After 1948' (1974):

> To say that 1948 made an extraordinary cultural and historical demand on the Arab is to be guilty of the crassest understatement. The year and the processes which it culminated represent an explosion whose effects continue to fall unrelentingly into the present. No Arab, however armed he was at those and later moments with regional or tribal or religious nationalism, could ignore the event. Not only did 1948 put forth unprecedented challenges to a collectivity already undergoing the political evolution of several European centuries compressed into a few decades: this after all was mainly a difference of detail between the Arab East and all other Third World countries, since the end of colonialism meant the beginning and the travail of uncertain national selfhood. But 1948 put forward a monumental enigma, an existential mutation for which Arab history was unprepared (Said 2000a: 46).

The success of the Zionist enterprise in Palestine, Said continues, brought forth the spectres of disunity, fragmentation, and extinction throughout the Arab world. Now fractured at its very heart, torn from the flow of historical continuity and thrust into a vicious modernity threatening it with destruction, Arab national consciousness was forced for the first time to encounter its own existential fragility, thus to restore historical continuity, heal its ruptures, and reclaim the present (see *ibid*: 47-48). The engaged cultural producer, Said concludes, had a pivotal role in forging this new national consciousness: 'as a producer of thought and language', his was a task of ensuring 'survival to what was in imminent danger of extinction' (*ibid*: 48).

Of course, nowhere was and is this task more pressing than in Palestine. I now turn to *After the Last Sky* to investigate in detail Said's most intimate and extended account of the *Nakba* and its consequences in Palestinian society and culture. *After the Last Sky* is comprised of a series of more than 100 photographs of 'Palestinian lives' – ordinary, everyday lives caught within an extraordinary political landscape – taken, between 1979-1986, by the Swiss documentary photographer and activist Jean Mohr in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza, in Israel proper, and in the refugee camps that scatter the Middle East. These haunting yet resilient images are accompanied by Said's extended commentary, which amounts to a moving meditation on the individual lives, their society, culture, and relentless exile, often lost in the balance of a 'high politics' approach to Israel / Palestine. The aim of juxtaposing image and text in such a way is to call into question the dominant (Zionist / Western) representational paradigm by which Palestinians are 'visible' only as 'fighters, terrorists, and lawless pariahs' (Said 1986: 4). The book thus seeks to 'replace' such reductive visual tropes with 'something

more capable of capturing the complex reality of [Palestinian] experience' (*ibid*: 6). And what results, an 'unconventional, hybrid, and fragmentary' form of expression that mixes media, genres, and styles, both reflects the fundamental dispossession and dispersion of Palestinian experience, and establishes a new, non-linear, dialectical logic to constellate exilic experience, to 'patch things together' (*ibid*: 6, 23).

Although the image / text interplay is certainly fascinating, and formally embodies the content of Palestinian experience in a unique way, I will concentrate here on the written text for its equally unique analysis.[4] At the heart of Said's approach to Palestine in *After the Last Sky*, as throughout his oeuvre, is the *Nakba* of 1948. From the outset of the book, Said frames the *Nakba* as the singular defining event of modern Palestinian history, one that has caused both the fragmentation, dispersal, and destruction of Palestinian society and the formation of a new, exilic national identity: 'every Palestinian', he states as a matter of fact, 'knows perfectly well that what has happened to us over the last three decades is a direct consequence of Israel's destruction of our society in 1948' (*ibid*: 5). He later expands on this insight to describe the *Nakba* as 'the loss of place and of history', as a severance from the past that, symptomatic of the impossibility of Zionism, has been 'periodically and ritually' repeated in the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (1967) and the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan (1970) and Lebanon (1982) (*ibid*: 149). To extend Said's account, we might also consider the humiliations of the Oslo Accords (1993) and the continuing abuses of settlement building, the Gaza blockade, military incursions, illegal detentions, and so forth in terms of a ritual repetition of originary trauma. In the Palestinian context, as Said makes clear, history repeats itself first as tragedy, then as more tragedy.[5]

Given the foundational trauma of the *Nakba*, the question for Said then becomes how to best interpret, to understand its cyclically recurring impact on Palestinian experience. And Said is equally certain that 'no clear and simple narrative is adequate to the complexity of our

[4] For further discussion of form in *After the Last Sky*, see Said's interview with Salman Rushdie in *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994b), 107-29, and Joseph Massad's essay 'Beginning with Edward Said' (2008). While in the interview both Said and Rushdie recapitulate the 'form reflects experience' formula expressed in the book, Massad's essay takes *After the Last Sky* as a jumping-off point for a wider investigation of 'the dialectics of seeing and blindness' throughout Said's oeuvre, and of the visual as it pertains to Orientalism (Massad 2008: 123). As such, Massad's essay breaks new and unexpected ground in Said criticism, further opening this for Media Studies, Cultural Studies, and so forth.

[5] For further discussions of the *Nakba* elsewhere in Said's work, see especially *The Question of Palestine* (1992) and *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994b), 137-44, 156-74.

experience', that no 'clear, direct line can be drawn' from the past to the present (*ibid*: 5; see also 129). While, as explained above, the dialectical form of *After the Last Sky* itself provides an alternative logic for interpreting such complexity, it is Said's evocation of the content of Palestinian experience after the *Nakba* that primarily interests me here. 'Palestine', writes Said in one of the many passages in *After the Last Sky* of his most passionate, poetically charged prose, 'is exile, dispossession, the inaccurate memories of one place slipping into vague memories of another, a confused recovery of general wares, passive presences scattered around in the Arab environment' (*ibid*: 30). Exiled not only from place and history, but also from the possibility of telling that history, Palestinian life is thus 'scattered, discontinuous, marked by the artificial and imposed arrangements of interrupted or confined space, by the dislocations and unsynchronized rhythms of disturbed time' (*ibid*: 20). Having been jostled from the map, 'the experience of dispossession and loss' has paradoxically become 'the essence of Palestinian identity', and the 'truest reality' of the Palestinian, always 'a person in transit', 'is expressed in the way [he crosses] from one place to another' (*ibid*: 120, 164, 130). 'This', Said concludes, 'is the deepest continuity of our lives as a nation in exile and constantly on the move' (*ibid*: 164).

As Said emphasizes throughout *After the Last Sky*, such Palestinian reality is expressed in its exilic culture, especially the numerous literary works by pivotal figures like Mahmoud Darwish, Ghassan Kanafani, and Emile Habiby to which he constantly alludes. As the lived experience of exile has, by dislocating the Palestinian from his own society and history, shattered the possibility of integrated, continuous narrative, the 'characteristic mode' of Palestinian literature has become 'broken narratives, fragmentary compositions, and self-consciously staged testimonials, in which the narrative voice keeps stumbling over itself, its obligations, and its limitations' (*ibid*: 38). Best reflected in Habiby's classic novella *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* (1974; trans. 1982), its forms are thus 'outrageous', replete with 'mock-epics, satires, sardonic parables, absurd rituals' (*ibid*: 20). But, and this is I think the crucial point Said wants to convey, Palestinian literary form never descends into vacuous postmodernist play. While its fragmentary nature embodies the fragmentations and dislocations of exile, its very existence marks an attempt to 'patch things together', to forge a non-linear constellation of connections between past and present, inside and outside, presence and absence from the ruins of history and against the deafening silence imposed by history upon the Palestinian narrative. As Said, taking his cue here from Darwish, puts it, Palestinian literature comprises an attempt 'to

transform the mechanics of loss into a constantly postponed metaphysics of return' (*ibid*: 150). Itself embodying the exilic form of Palestinian literature, *After the Last Sky* thus not only constitutes an important addition to the expanding canon, but also, by reflexively engaging with the social, historical, and cultural conditions that necessitate such a form, sets out a compelling and vastly influential paradigm for interpretation – what I've called the exile paradigm in Palestinian literature.

I'd like to suggest that it is only with a thorough understanding of Said's approach to his own as well as to Palestinian exile more generally that the significance of his widely appropriated, and often decontextualized, theories of the exilic intellectual fully comes through. Passages such as the one cited above from *Culture and Imperialism*, where the 'exilic energies' of artists and intellectuals are celebrated, perhaps lend themselves to this sort of decontextualization. But Said always makes sure to emphasize that his understanding of exile as an intellectual temperament is grounded in his experience of exile as a traumatic, human condition of irrevocable uprooting and displacement. In his 1993 Reith Lectures, collected as *Representations of the Intellectual* (1996), where Said provides his fullest statement of exile as a 'metaphorical condition' of 'the intellectual as outsider', he also insists that his 'diagnosis of the intellectual in exile derives from the social and political history of dislocation and migration' (Said 1996: 52, 53). Likewise, in his 'Introduction' to *Reflections on Exile* (2000), Said clearly situates his personal experience of Palestine in terms of 'dispossession and exile', and 'the sense of dissonance' this has engendered, as a foundation for his understanding of exile as an 'intellectual vocation' which 'refuses the jargon of specialization, the blandishments of power, and […] the quietism of non-involvement' that saturates his work (Said 2000a: xxxiii). I now turn to the title essay of that collection for Said's most detailed elaboration of the relationship between material and critical exile.

'Reflections on Exile' opens with a passionate plea to distinguish the contemporary experience of exile with that celebrated, through early 20th century figures like James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov, as 'a potent, even enriching, motif of modern [or modernist] culture' (*ibid*: 173). Given the exponentially greater scale of exile in 'our age', which has become the 'age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration' due to 'modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers', exile can no longer serve 'notions of humanism' (*ibid*: 174). To expand from Said's early identification of the often unacknowledged

social and material consequences of globalization and neo-imperialism here, one might say that contemporary exile also gives the lie to empty discourses of a free-flowing, hybridizing transnationalism, that it re-orients our attention towards the lives lost in the balance of untrammelled capitalist expansion. As Robert Spencer argues, 'nothing could be further from Said's work than Homi Bhabha's insouciant endorsement of the conditions of dispersal and homelessness' or the 'glib rhetoric' of 'breathless transnationalism', 'departure lounge internationalism', and 'the 'free air miles' sentiment in postcolonial theory' (Spencer 2010: 393). For Said, exile is anything but 'a privilege' (Said 2000a: 184). Taking his cue from Theodor Adorno's opposition to the 'administered world' of 'ready-made forms, prefabricated "homes"', Said defines exile, 'fundamentally a discontinuous state of being' where subjects are cut off from 'their roots, their land, their past', as 'an *alternative* to the mass institutions that dominate modern life' (*ibid*: 184, 177). Exile teaches that 'homes are always provisional', that nationalisms and languages are orthodoxies of thought that can becomes prisons, and that beneath the enclosures of familiar geographic and ideological territories, the world is 'secular and contingent' (*ibid*: 185). It thus demands the cultivation of a 'scrupulous […] subjectivity' that sees 'the entire world as a foreign land': 'Most people', Said writes, 'are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions' (*ibid*: 184, 186). And Said calls this awareness 'contrapuntal' as he describes the revolutionary critical potential afforded by an otherwise bleak and very real contemporary condition (*ibid*: 186).[6]

So then, a clear, if complex, line of derivation from Said's exile to Palestinian exile to exile as a critical temperament to the contrapuntal method. I'd like now to extend this line towards Said's notion of secular humanism as the final horizon of intellectual engagement. As argued most incisively by Bruce Robbins, the meaning of the term 'secular' as it resonates throughout Said's work is 'as an opposing term not to religion but to nationalism', when nationalism is understood as, in Said's words, a 'narrative form' with its 'founding fathers, […] basic, quasi-religious texts, […] historical and geographical landmarks, [and] official heroes and enemies' (Robbins 1994: 26; Said 2000a: 176). Although Robbins is absolutely correct to pit

[6] As may be expected, the secondary literature on Said's theorizations of the exilic intellectual is extensive. For some of the strongest, most detailed discussions, see Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's 'The Politics and Poetics of Exile: Edward Said in Africa' (2005), Hamid Dabashi's *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in Time of Terror* (2009), 1-16, Robert Spencer's '"Contented Homeland Peace": The Motif of Exile in Edward Said' (2010), and William Spanos' *Exiles in the City: Hannah Arendt and Edward W. Said in Counterpoint* (2012).

Saidian secularism against nationalism, it is important not to jump from this premise towards just the sort of 'contentless cosmopolitanism', as Aamir Mufti puts it, vigorously rejected by Said (Mufti 1998: 96).[7] In his important and influential essay 'Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture' (1998), Mufti, drawing on Said's reading of Erich Auerbach in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983) as a locus 'the minority problematic', resolves this contradiction by firmly situating the Saidian secular within the experience of exile (*ibid*). In order to make an important link between Said and Hannah Arendt, who describes the Jews of Europe as 'the *minorité par excellence*', thus between post-Holocaust Jews and post-Nakba Palestinians as parallel communities of stateless refugees, Mufti prefers the term 'minority' over 'exile' here (*ibid*: 103). But as the definitions of both closely overlap – Mufti describes minority as 'a permanent condition of exile', and evens hyphenates the terms as 'minority-exile' – I'll stick to the more literally Saidian 'exile' throughout (*ibid*: 105, 107). As Mufti explains, the 'loss and displacement' characteristic of exile as a material, embodied experience give rise to secular criticism as an 'ethical imperative', as 'a critique of nationalism as an ideology of hearth and home' that exile shows is always provisional, contingent, delusionary (*ibid*: 105, 107). In other words, secularism is the intellectual and critical complement to exile as mediated experience, and, as such, it is comprised of humanistic opposition to the ideologies of nation, identity, and belonging.

It should be clear from this brief account that secular humanism might also be considered the theoretical basis of Said's eventual recognition of the 'single-state solution' to the Israel / Palestine conflict. As early on as the first, 1979, edition of *The Question of Palestine*, it is evident that Said's secular impulse lies behind his political vision for 'the only possible and acceptable destiny for the multicommunal Middle East',

> the notion of a state based on secular human rights, not on religious or minority exclusivity nor […] on an idealized geopolitical unity. […] The ghetto state, the national security state, the minority government, were to be transcended by a secular democratic polity, in which communities would be accommodated to one another for the greater good of the whole (Said 1992: 220).

[7] Of course, Robbins' work on cosmopolitanism itself criticizes the universalizing tendencies prevalent in that discourse, and seeks to ground contemporary cosmopolitanism in well-defined cultural, historical, and political contexts. See his 'Introduction Part 1: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism' in his and Pheng Cheah's edited volume *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (1998), 1-19, for Robbins' now canonical statement of a situated contemporary cosmopolitanism.

But, as Avi Shlaim summarizes in his useful account of the 'four main phases' of Said's thought on the political solution, 'Two major events in the 1980s led Said to reexamine his position and to move from a one-state to a two-state solution', the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987 (Shlaim 2010: 283, 284). The ideal of a single, bi-national, democratic state comprised of all of Mandatory Palestine, containing both Jewish and Arab communities on the basis of political, civil, and social parity, and unconditionally, as Said stressed throughout his writings on the issue, affirming the right of Palestinians exiled in 1948 to return to their original homes, was not to re-surface for Said until the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993.[8] Said met this agreement, 'an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles', with utter outrage and disgust (Said 1994b: xxxiv). He felt that it amounted to a monumental denial of Palestinian rights – of statehood, self-determination, an end to settlements and occupation, and return – in exchange for nothing but meagre Israeli recognition of the PLO as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' (see especially Said 1994b: xxxiv-xlviii). Said thus reverted to his original position, reconciling for the final decade of his life his theoretical vision of secular humanism and his political vision of a single bi-national state, where 'the two peoples can live together in one nation as equals', as 'the only long-term solution' (Viswanathan 2001: 434; Said and Barsamian 2003: 63).[9]

Such a resolution seems apt for a Palestinian intellectual who refused to allow his experience of exile to lead him into the temptations of an exclusionary nationalism, who, moreover, mobilized that experience to define not only an essentially exilic Palestinian culture, but also a mode of humanistic thought as a foundation for political engagement. As I hope to have shown, tracing Said's intervention into – or invention of – Postcolonial Studies back to the

[8] For Said's unconditional affirmations of the Right of Return, see, for example, *The Question of Palestine* (1992), 46-55, and *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994b), xliii-xlv. All such affirmations are in strict accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, which, adopted by majority vote in December 1948, decrees that 'the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property' (UNGA 1948).

[9] Since Oslo, history, which has seen a vast expansion of settlement building in the West Bank, the fragmentation of the Palestinian community there, and an elaborate, draconian system of roadblocks, checkpoints, and closed roads being built, has clearly proven Said's misgivings about the Accords justified, and an ever increasing number of commentators on Israeli / Palestine are turning towards his perspective. For extended analyses of Said's politics, see Ardi Imseis's 'Speaking Truth to Power: On Edward Said and the Palestinian Freedom Struggle' (2010) and Avi Shlaim's 'Edward Said and the Palestine Question' (2010).

tragic materiality of his own exile seems imperative if the field is to accommodate its repressed Palestinian origins, and pay proper heed to the 'others' of its institutionalization.

2. Palestine in Postcolonial Studies: Disciplinary, Theoretical, and Political Disjuncts

The task of 'Palestinizing', or perhaps, following Mufti, 'minoritizing' Postcolonial Studies, recalibrating the field from the perspective of the cultures it has marginalized, is such a pressing one precisely because the field has developed into a central site of globally attuned, geopolitically engaged critique within the academy. The ways in which it, as a limit case for 'radical' thought, has negotiated the question of Palestine are thus particularly relevant for a wider understanding of the practices by which Middle Eastern politics, literatures, and cultures more generally are mediated for Anglo-American intellectual cultures. As Palestine remains a highly controversial issue within especially American academia, where 'sympathetic' professors, student activists, and symposia are often met with the charge of anti-Semitism and their opportunities correspondingly delimited, it is important to understand the capacities and limitations of what is often considered to be the most politically outspoken of the academic disciplines to address Palestine in an equitable, historically accurate, and politically incisive way.[10]

[10] Said was of course himself subject to one of the most vicious campaigns of academic discrediting and intimidation since the McCarthyite '50s for his views on Palestine, including character assassination, hate mail, death threats, the vandalism of his office at Columbia, and being investigated by the FBI from 1971 to his death. He has discussed these issues most extensively in a volume of essays he co-edited with Christopher Hitchens entitled *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (1988) (see also *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994b), xiii-xxiii). Although, due certainly to his own efforts as well as growing public consciousness of the abuses of the Occupation, open discussion of Palestine seems to be occurring more regularly in American academia since Said's death in 2003, the culture of intimidation, harassment, and exclusion remains *de rigueur*. One of the most noxious of recent McCarthyite efforts to discredit and marginalize pro-Palestinian academics is David Horowitz's *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America* (2006), which, with clear prejudice and little scholarly acumen, claims that due to their Palestinian sympathies, scholars like Noam Chomsky, Juan Cole, Hamid Dabashi, Norman Finkelstein, Joseph Massad, and others comprise an anti-American and extremist faction in the academy that must be weeded out. Other exemplary recent cases include the 2004 'Columbia Unbecoming' scandal at that university, when the David Project, a pro-Israeli student activist organization, accused the then Assistant Professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History Joseph Massad of anti-Semitic prejudice in the classroom and unsuccessfully called for his dismissal; the 2006 Yale controversy, when Juan Cole, apparently for pro-Palestinian views expressed in his *Informed Comment* blog, was denied a Professorial position by the Senior Appointments Committee after being approved by both the Sociology and History departments; the 2007 DePaul controversy, when the university's Board on Promotion and Tenure denied Norman Finkelstein promotion due to a vicious campaign launched against him by Alan Dershowitz for his criticisms of Israel and the 'Holocaust industry', leading to Finkelstein's resignation; the 2012 'HR-35' controversy, when California's State Assembly passed a bill equating criticism of Israel in terms of 'apartheid' with anti-

Of course, Postcolonial Studies has been, from the mid-1990s, widely attacked on grounds of crude 'culturalism' by critics like Aijaz Ahmad, Timothy Brennan, Arif Dirlik, Graham Huggan, Neil Lazarus, and Benita Parry. Such critics have accused postcolonialism of neglecting its conditions of emergence in a global capitalism that allows for the migration of third-world writers, texts, and intellectuals (including, for Ahmad, Said himself) to Western metropolitan cultural centres; naively celebrating such figures as universal or representative; downplaying the marketing of third-world texts for cosmopolitan Western tastes or as exotic consumer commodities; denying the impact publishing contexts have on literary form; and, in my own extrapolation from especially Brennan, failing to consider the political and cultural conditions of a postcolonial text's translatability. But the field has also been remarkably resilient in encompassing such critiques and revising its theoretical foundations in their light. A new generation of scholars, including Elleke Boehmer, Derek Gregory, Ania Loomba, Stephen Morton, and Aamir Mufti, not to mention many of those listed above, have reenergized Postcolonial Studies through comprehensive attention to the fraught areas of globalization, neo-imperialism, world literature, and, incipiently, translation. I'd like to suggest here that the process of maintaining and expanding the field's reflexive relevance for the contemporary world pivots on its capacity to broach the question of Palestine.

When considering the history and institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies, one of its more striking and worrisome features is its apparently systematic marginalization of the question of Palestine. Although in recent years a range of scholars have attempted to 'Palestinize' the field, it is important to contextualize their approaches with reference to such systematic neglect, and its underlying disciplinary, theoretical, and political determinants. As prelude to my

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Semitism and banning BDS activism on University of California campuses; and the 2013 Brooklyn College controversy, when a range of pro-Israel activists, university administrators, and New York City officials unsuccessfully attempted to shut down a conference there, involving Judith Butler and Omar Barghouti, on BDS. For a detailed account of pro-Israeli prejudices in American education, and strategies for 'unlearning' them, see Marcy Jane Knopf-Newman's *The Politics of Teaching Palestine to Americans: Addressing Pedagogical Strategies* (2011). British academia is, by and large, more tolerant and supportive of Palestine activism, with vigorous Solidarity and BDS campaigns running across UK campuses and university towns. A particularly telling case occurred recently, in October 2012, when Ronnie Fraser, director of Academic Friends of Israel, brought a lawsuit against the University and College Union for its BDS activities on the grounds of institutional anti-Semitism. The UK Employment Tribunal ruling on the case dismissed it, 'the wreckage of this litigation', in the strongest possible terms: 'Lessons should be learned', they concluded, 'from this sorry saga. We greatly regret that the case was ever brought. At heart, it represents *an impermissible attempt to achieve a political end by litigious means*. It would be very unfortunate if an exercise of this sort were ever repeated' (Employment Tribunals 2013: paragraph 178, italics mine). It should be clear that this failed attempt at 'lawfare' against Palestinian activism in British academia stands in stark contrast to the multiple successful instances in the US listed above, especially the California State Assembly's decision to pass HR-35.

discussion of current postcolonial approaches to Palestine in the following section, it is, then, first necessary to investigate such prejudices and the extent of their influence on the field. This section attempts exactly such a contextualization.

* * *

Said notoriously dismissed the term 'postcolonialism' and the field he in large part spawned, suggesting, in a 1997 interview for *Interventions*, 'I do not think I belong to that' (Said 1998a: 82). In a useful recent essay, Robert Young lists a number of reasons why this was the case, including the 'initiation ritual of criticizing Said' prevalent in Postcolonial Studies as prompted by Ahmad's critiques, its penchant for the unworldly abstractions and jargon of theory, and its post-Fanonian 'retrospective analysis of colonialism [as] predicated on and written from the positive achievement of the anti-colonial movement', a 'story from which the Palestinians have been left out' (Young 2012: 25, 35; see also Ahmad 2008: 159-220). Although each of Young's reasons provides ample explanation for Said's hostility to the postcolonial, I'd like to foreground the third of these as particularly consequential. In the *Interventions* interview, Said characterizes 'postcolonialism' as a 'misnomer' that, implying 'colonialism is over', distorts or mystifies the fact of 'neo-colonialism' (Said 1998a: 82). Apart from the neo-colonialism of globalization, which, through agents like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, produces 'structures of dependency and impoverishment' around the world, Said makes it clear that he is here talking about neo-colonialism in 'my part of the world' – an unmistakeable reference to 'the colonial present', in Derek Gregory's phrase, of Palestine, thus inconceivable within what Said takes to be the literal temporality of the 'post-' in 'postcolonial' (*ibid*; Gregory 2004).[11]

Both Joseph Massad and Ella Shohat likewise reject the literal *post*-colonial as inapplicable to the Palestinian context. For Massad, 'Colonial and postcolonial are terms that are generally used to designate a historical trajectory of the beginning and end of the process of colonialism and the ushering in of a new era' (Massad 2000: 311). Given that Ashkenazi Jews in Israel after 1948 'view themselves as living in a postcolonial space and era', and that Palestinians in this period 'view themselves as still living in a colonized space and in a colonial era', the

[11] See also Said's discussion of the overlaps and divergences between postmodernism and postcolonialism in his 1994 'Afterword' to *Orientalism* (Said 1979: 348-52).

contemporary space covering Israel and Palestine is defined by a 'synchronicity of the colonial and the postcolonial' that renders attempts to define the world in terms of the latter incoherent (*ibid*: 312). Shohat makes similar objections about the 'ahistorical and universalizing deployments' of 'postcolonial', as well as its 'potentially depoliticizing implications' (Shohat 1992: 99). As with Said and Massad, she argues that the more 'pastoral' term 'postcolonial' blunts, in its institutional settings, the sharp edge of terms like 'third wordlist critique', 'neo-colonialism', and 'resisting cultural practices' (*ibid*). Identifying the 'post' in 'postcolonial' as applicable to the national liberation movements of the '50s and '60s, she asks how the field would categorize 'contemporary anti-colonial / anti-racist struggles' carried out by Palestinian writers such as Darwish and Sahar Khalifeh (*ibid*: 104). Dramatizing the absurdity of any such categorization of these apparently 'pre-"postcolonial"' writers, she concludes that the 'unified temporality of "postcoloniality" risks reproducing the colonial discourse of an allochronic other, living in another time, still lagging behind us, the genuine postcolonials', thus that the 'globalizing gesture of the "postcolonial condition," or "post-coloniality," downplays multiplicities of location and temporality' (*ibid*).

Given the contemporary coloniality of Palestine, Said's, Massad's, and Shohat's critiques of 'postcolonial' understood as a historical signifier seem justified. But it should be clear to any practitioner in the field that all three critics are relying on an antedated definition of 'postcolonial' that largely fails to correspond to the term's deployment in Postcolonial Studies from the 1990s. Certainly, as Neil Lazarus explains, the term 'postcolonial' was, in the wide array of scholarship on decolonization, anti-colonial nationalism, and state-formation from the 1970s, used 'in a strict historically and politically delimited sense, to identify the period immediately following decolonization' (Lazarus 2004: 2). But, Lazarus continues, a definitional 'sea-change' occurred in the intervening period (*ibid*: 4). Citing Homi Bhabha, 'so influential in framing the parameters of postcolonial studies', he argues that '"postcolonial" has ceased to be a historical category', and has become 'a fighting term, a theoretical weapon, which "intervene[s]" in existing debates and "resists" certain political and philosophical constructions' (*ibid*: 3, 4). I'll return to the specifics of Bhabha's framing momentarily, but for now it should be stressed that the commonly accepted usage of 'postcolonial' from the inception of the field is one of deconstructive praxis that traverses the discourses of colonial modernity in order to criticize and resist political, social, and cultural manifestations of hegemony in the contemporary world. On

the basis of the field's actual self-definition, then, Palestine, with its legacy of British imperial involvement and Zionist colonization recirculating into the present, *should* have been a priority in Postcolonial Studies from its earliest years.

It is not simply a matter of oversight or missed opportunity that this was not the case, that very little attention was in fact paid to Palestine in the 1990s. No doubt underlying the frustrations of Said, Massad, and Shohat, Postcolonial Studies demonstrated a constitutive inability or unwillingness to confront Palestine in this period. The classic example of such neglect is Bill Ashcroft's, Gareth Griffith's, and Helen Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989), another founding text. In their apparently exhaustive list of literatures that count as postcolonial, including those of 'African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, […] Sri Lanka, [and] the USA', Palestine, not to mention the rest of the Middle East, is conspicuous by its absence (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2002: 2). Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to locate any monograph, collection, or article from the 1990s that mentions 'Palestine' alongside 'postcolonial'.[12]

In an unpublished essay on 'Palestine and Postcolonial Studies' (2010), Anna Bernard perceptively lists the reasons why Palestine and its literatures have traditionally been marginalized. Firstly, she writes, this is simply because 'postcolonial literary studies is taught in English departments' (Bernard 2010a: 4). Long-standing disciplinary boundaries have led to the construction of an primarily Anglophone, and, to a lesser extent, Francophone, postcolonial literary canon, naturally precluding professional research and teaching in languages other than English, including the Arabic in which the majority of Palestinian literature is written. Reading in translation has similarly been, and mostly continues to be, taboo in the disciplinary formation of English. Secondly, Bernard continues, there is the 'methodological barrier posed by […] the dominant theoretical paradigms [of] difference, hybridity, scepticism towards grand narratives, and above all a constitutive anti-nationalism' (*ibid*: 6). These paradigms are of course derived in no small measure from Bhabha's influential framing of the field. For Bhabha, the 'postcolonial perspective […] attempts to revise those nationalist or "nativist" pedagogies that set up the

[12] Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature* (1987), another classic in the field which analyses Central American, South Africa, and Palestinian literatures as literatures of the colonized, might be considered an exception here. But in this case the exception proves the rule. As Anna Bernard argues, discussions of Harlow's book in Postcolonial Studies 'don't often acknowledge that her thesis draws heavily on the work of the Palestinian novelist and theorist Ghassan Kanafani, although Harlow herself is forthcoming about her sources' (Bernard 2010a: 4).

relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition', or that, in Lazarus' gloss, it 'evinces an undifferentiating disavowal of all forms of nationalism and a corresponding exaltation of migrancy, liminality, hybridity, and multiculturality' (cited in Lazarus 2004: 3; *ibid*: 4). Given that much of Palestinian literature, as Said explains, is driven by a desire to reconstitute a nationalism on the brink of extinction, and that the experiential traumas of Palestinian exile are hardly material for 'exaltation', such structuring paradigms have proved inapplicable to the Palestinian case, again leading to exclusion rather than theoretical revision.[13] And thirdly, Bernard concludes, there is the more 'sinister' pressure imposed by the academic politics of studying Palestine and its literatures in especially North American institutions, as the numerous fabricated controversies involving 'hiring, publication, tenure, and funding' listed in note 10 above amply demonstrate (Bernard 2010a: 7).

In recent years, a veritable chorus of scholars, prompted by the post-Soviet rise of globalization and globalization theory, 9/11 and the 'War on Terror', and the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions, have called for a renewal of postcolonial theory to meet these key contemporary challenges. Ania Loomba and her co-editors of the important volume *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005) state the case most urgently. Arguing that the 'intellectual priorities' of Postcolonial Studies 'must respond not only to the search for historical clarity about the making of modern empires but also to the continuing and bloody ambition of neo-imperialism', they continue:

[13] Bhabha's specific, if occasional, comments on Palestine support this argument well. As Bernard writes, citing his 1991 essay on *After the Last Sky*, Bhabha attempted to force Palestine into the post-nationalist paradigm by arguing that the figure of the Palestinian in Said's text is one of 'forlornness', who '"disrupts" metanarratives of nation' – clearly a flawed reading of *After the Last Sky* as well as a deeply objectionable understanding of Palestinian exile (Bernard 2010a: 7). Further, Bhabha's rather disparaging obituary of Said, 'Untimely Ends' (2004), reflects the extent of his misunderstanding of Palestine, and may perhaps be considered symptomatic of certain elements of postcolonial resistance to the issue. Exemplifying just the sort of orientalist cliché Said was devoted to undermining, he writes that 'the high Saidian style speaks with a moral passion', what he later calls 'Said's rage', 'that sometimes sacrifices analytical precision to polemical outrage' (Bhabha 2004: 19, 20). More seriously, he takes issue with Said's characterization of Palestinian terrorism as 'the response of a desperate and horribly oppressed people', arguing that it, reflecting Said's 'dark two-dimensionality', ignores Hamas' 'perilous strategies of political control' and 'internally destabilizes […] any representative Palestinian leadership that could have the power to negotiate a just and lasting peace' (cited in *ibid*: 20; *ibid*: 20). The problem with this account is that it equates Palestinian terror, which Said also criticized, with Israeli human rights abuses while ignoring the causal priority of Zionist colonization (and its own historically documented terrorist practices) in the emergence of said terror. Bhabha's failure to properly contextualize dramatically simplifies, even obscures, Israeli / Palestinian political relations, and further distances the issue from the appropriate realm of postcolonial inquiry.

> As postcolonial intellectuals, we have to be responsible also to the cultural and political struggles that define the social being of once-colonized nations today. Faced with these circumstances, we see postcolonial studies reasserting its vocation in coming to terms with the contemporary shape of neoliberal global institutions, as well as with the wide ideological and intellectual spectrum that has begun – very recently – to align itself with the global juggernaut. Postcolonial studies cannot abandon, and must raise with new urgency, the epistemological questions that have animated the field from its inception: questions about the shifting and often interrelated forms of domination and resistance; about the constitution of the colonial archive; about the search for alternative traces of social being; about the interdependent play of race and class; about the significance of gender and sexuality; about the complex forms in which subjectivities are experienced and collectivities mobilized; about representation itself; and about the ethnographic translation of cultures. These have to be seen not as distractions from "real problems," but as integral to our coming to terms with globalization as a new epoch nonetheless substantially organized by familiar and baleful structures of power. Writing the histories of unsuccessful or successful colonization, of anticolonial nationalisms, and of the state of nations after independence – the history of empire and its aftermath – requires an awareness of the struggles that define the present as much as those that characterized the past (Loomba *et al*: 13-4).

Apart from its fiery prose and pressing contemporaneity, most crucial in this passage is its insistence on the exigency of drawing on the considerable established strengths of postcolonial theory, its unique ability to confront 'structures of power' with a wide array of 'epistemological questions', for coming to terms with similarly structured contemporary forms of globalization, neo-imperialism, and so forth.[14] Likewise, Neil Lazarus and Priyamvada Gopal insist that Postcolonial Studies change its 'framing assumptions, organising principles and intellectual habits' in order to address 'the contemporaneity of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism' as manifest in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton more generally that 'the contemporary neo-imperial hegemony of the United States' is 'one of the most pressing postcolonial issues of our age' (Lazarus and Gopal 2006: 7; Boehmer and Morton 2010: 7).

Given such efforts to recalibrate the field for the contemporary world as well as its sharpened global and geopolitical commitments, Postcolonial Studies must surely now prioritize Palestine as a key area of inquiry and critique. Given its powerful theoretical armature and

[14] Added to these strengths, we might also consider those bestowed by Postcolonial Studies' rise to institutional prominence. Now largely considered an key area of specialization within English departments across the Atlantic, the field is supported by a continually expanding network of specialized academic appointments; specialized research grants from sources as diverse as the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), the British Academy (UK), the Leverhulme Trust (UK), the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA), and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (USA); specialized academic organizations such as the Postcolonial Studies Association and the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, along with their related conferences, symposia, and other events; and specialized publications, including monograph series such as Routledge's 'Research in Postcolonial Literatures' and journals such as *Interventions* and the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. Institutionalization certainly carries with it the risk of homogenization, but, if a field has been as dedicated to revising its disciplinary and theoretical foundations as has Postcolonial Studies in recent years, then the professional benefits of (relatively) secure employment, funding, networking, and publication opportunities conferred by institutional stability should not be disregarded.

institutional resources, its established standing within the academy, Postcolonial Studies has too much to offer not to be considered a primary site for addressing the question of Palestine. To address Palestine and its literatures, though, would require overcoming the specific disciplinary, theoretical, and political barriers listed above.

Regarding discipline and language, we might, with Bernard, argue that 'the restriction of postcolonial literary studies to Anglophone literatures is […] problematic, for it assumes that the cultural history of modern imperialism can be understood through the relatively narrow prism of the histories of those countries subjected to direct British rule' (Bernard 2010a: 6). She rightly continues that when mastery in the original language, in this case Arabic, is lacking, the 'benefits of reading Palestinian […] literatures alongside other literatures produced in conditions of colonial rule, anti-colonial struggle, and even postcolonial independence […] outweigh the costs, whether or not these texts are read in translation' (*ibid*: 8). I would only add here the proviso that the process of reading any text in translation should always be contextualized in research and teaching, so that the material and ideological determinants of the text's translatability – the network of cultural attitudes towards the other that influence publishers' selections of which texts to translate, domesticating and foreignizing translational strategies, and practices of reading and reception – are foregrounded. Regarding the theoretical predominance of hybridity, migrancy, and anti-nationalism, we might follow a Saidian line, and, as demonstrated in section 1 above, seek to revise such foundational tenets from the perspective of the traumatic material reality of Palestinian exile. As Said argues, such an experience is more representative of the 'age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration' than that of jubilant, borderless transnationalism, and as such may be integrated as a cornerstone of postcolonial thought. And regarding the political pressures habitually mounted on scholars of Palestine, well, a strong dose of Saidian 'outrage', balanced by an affirmation of academic freedoms, might be in order here.

Ultimately, though, all these disciplinary, theoretical, and political pressures are insignificant when weighed against the truly outrageous pressures of ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, property theft, occupation, military violence, and illegal detention – the tragic eschatology of Zionism – to which Palestine and Palestinians have been subject for more than a century. Fully cognizant of such Palestinian history as, in Walter Benjamin's phrase, 'one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage', Postcolonial Studies must come to

regard any injunction against sustained attention to Palestine as insignificant, and start to pick up the pieces of its own shunned, broken other hurled by history at its feet (Benjamin 1999a: 249).

3. The Partition Paradigm

In this section, I demonstrate that the prejudices outlined in the previous have largely been overcome through the efforts of scholars like Bill Ashcroft, Anna Ball, Anna Bernard, Joe Cleary, Derek Gregory, Gil Hochberg, Stephen Morton, Ihab Saloul, and Patrick Williams. Yet, I continue, Postcolonial Studies has often accommodated Palestine only on the basis of a disavowal of the foundational Saidian problematic of exile. Although there is much to be lauded in the current scholarship on Palestine – and I certainly acknowledge and build on this work not only for breaking new ground in the field, but also for its incisive critiques of colonial history, occupation, and occasionally exile itself – some troubling tendencies remain. I locate regressive elements in the emergence of 'partition' as a strong, in some quarters dominant, critical nexus for addressing Israel / Palestine at the expense of Saidian exile. By working through what may be called the 'partition paradigm', and drawing on the strengths of other scholarship that doesn't fit this model, I lay the groundwork for developing in the following chapter a 'post-Saidian exile paradigm' more closely attuned to colonial history, thus more appropriate for engaged postcolonial critique.

* * *

In the years, perhaps not coincidentally, since Said's death, a wide range of postcolonial scholars, or scholars of Palestinian literature who have specifically drawn on postcolonial theory, have been engaged in what may be characterized as a reflexive, multivocal project of bringing the field's conceptual apparatus to bear on the Palestinian case. Through a growing series of monographs, journal special issues, exploratory symposia, and other events, they have, in a process yet to reach its apex, collectively effected a shift in, or expansion of, the postcolonial remit, renewing and reenergizing the field very much along the lines suggested by Loomba, Lazarus, Boehmer, *et al*. A productive diversity of postcolonial approaches to Palestine can now be discerned in the field, each of which reflects a unique, but not always successful, negotiation

of the multiple disciplinary, theoretical, and political barriers that have traditionally precluded such attention. By exploring some of these approaches, especially the partition paradigm, in detail, I hope to demonstrate the need for continued vigilance regarding institutional and other pressures, and lay the critical groundwork for the alternative, post-Saidian exile paradigm I develop in the following sections.

The various contemporary postcolonial approaches to Palestine range across a spectrum of genuine, if revisionary, endorsement of postcolonial theory for this particular case, to reframing the case in terms acceptable to the theoretical orthodoxy, to outright rejection on the grounds of mutual incommensurability. On, say, the more positive end of the spectrum, Cleary, Hochberg, and Bernard propose the 1948 United Nations partition of Mandatory Palestine into Israel and the West Bank as the foundational lens through which to read the consequent nationalisms and their 'separatist imaginations' (see Cleary 2002; Hochberg 2007; Bernard 2010b); Gregory and Morton British colonial history in Palestine, its discriminatory practices, violence, and 'states of emergency', as the exemplar for a Zionist project which extends into 'the colonial present' (see Gregory 2004; Morton 2013); Williams and Saloul a Saidian understanding of Palestinian exile as the critical basis for interpreting Palestinian literature (see Williams 2009; Saloul 2012); and Ball a mutual destabilization of the categories of 'Palestine' and 'postcolonial' through feminist critique of a reified and patriarchal notion of Palestinian nationalism (see Ball 2012). In the middle of the spectrum, Bhabha attempts to force Palestinian literature into the post-nationalist paradigm through his reading of Said's *After the Last Sky*, and Ashcroft does the same by disavowing Palestinians' material practices of resistance in favour of a more palatable, anti-Fanonian notion of discursive resistance (see, respectively, notes 13 and 3 above). On the more negative end, Philip Carl Salzman, Donna Robinson Divine, and the contributors to their co-edited volume *Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2009) obtusely and with clear ideological bias reject not only a postcolonialism, misunderstood as a unified field, 'trapped by its own methodology and its passion for radical change', but also its 'advocacy function' in the Palestinian case (Salzman and Divine 2009: 3, 5). Ultimately reproducing just the sort of politicized academic pressure that has limited professional opportunities for scholars of Palestine, they summarily dismiss the important contributions Said, Massad, and others have made to our understanding of Zionist colonial history as 'dichotomous', 'derogatory', 'static', 'cherry picking', and 'misrepresenting', and conclude that Postcolonial

Studies has hindered, rather than promoted, 'a full and clear understanding of that country's [Israel's] history or society' (*ibid*: 4, 5).

As should be clear from this brief survey, the more positive attempts to revise postcolonialism for Palestine have most effectively furthered our theoretical, historical, political, and literary knowledge of the area. Yet some troubling tendencies, symptomatic of the discursive limitations imposed by years of institutional pressure, remain. These are evident in the strong critical nexus developed around the conceptual and historical lens of partition through the scholarship of Cleary, Hochberg, and Bernard.

Cleary, a former student of Said's at Columbia, has been most influential in modelling the partition paradigm. His monograph *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine* (2002) comprises a wide-ranging analysis of the literatures surrounding the 20th century partitions of, primarily, Ireland and Israel / Palestine, but also those of East / West Germany, India / Pakistan, and South Africa. Aiming to place partition, with its direct bearings on questions of 'the nature of the colonial and postcolonial state, the construction of majorities and minorities, and the connections between literature and the nation, culture and the state', firmly on the agenda of Postcolonial Studies, the book thus belongs to the new generation of globally and geopolitically attuned postcolonial scholarship discussed above (Cleary 2002: 4). Cleary's topic of investigation is the role cultural narratives play in partitioned societies – representing 'one of the media through which the trauma of partition is subsequently memorialized and understood by the peoples involved', such narratives 'either help to ratify the state divisions produced by partition or to contest the partitionist mentalities generated by such divisions' (*ibid*: 2). His main argument is that while partition is often popularly advocated 'on the basis that it is the only practicable solution in situations where two antagonistic national groups […] inhabit a shared territory', such attempts at constructing ethnically homogeneous states 'cannot be accomplished without extraordinary communal violence' (*ibid*: 11). In his readings, he thus attacks literatures which, in their thematizations of national struggle and the encounter with the ethnic other, end up consolidating partitionist ideologies (including, most relevant here, the Israeli writer Amos Oz), and applauds those which contest such ideologies (including Kanafani) (see *ibid*: 142-85, 186-225).

Both Hochberg and Bernard also employ partition as the central mediating category by which to approach Israeli and Palestinian literatures, though their means of doing so differ quite

substantially. In her monograph *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of the Separatist Imagination* (2007), Hochberg abjures Cleary's Saidian emphasis on Zionist colonial history as a key context for the politics of partition, instead focusing on 'the dominant ideology of separation that informs the current relationship between Arabs and Jews in Israel / Palestine' (Hochberg 2007: 1).[15] Arguing that this ideology underlies legal and political enactments of partition, she aims, through a series of literary readings, 'to free both "Arab" and "Jew" from their current status as markers of fully separable, if not radically opposed, identities' (*ibid*: 16). Her readings of canonical figures from across the spectrum of Israeli – Palestinian identity positions, including Albert Memmi, Albert Swissa, Anton Shammas, and Darwish, thus focus on the ways in which they evoke the cultural histories, libidinal ties, and psychological affiliations that bind 'Arab' and 'Jew' together in a shared destiny. 'Arab' and 'Jew', she aims to demonstrate, 'continue to escape their assigned opposed position within this structure of differences', and are rather 'organically attached', that they 'dwell inside each other' (*ibid*: 16, 17).

Bernard follows on Cleary's footsteps more directly. In her essay 'Forms of Memory: Partition as a Literary Paradigm' (2010), she proposes 'a basic method for comparing works of 'partition literature'', which emerges here as a distinct 20th century, postcolonial genre representing 'either the event of territorial partition or its consequences' (Bernard 2010b: 10). Acknowledging Cleary's account of its function, Bernard argues that he overlooks the shared formal, thematic, and aesthetic features of this genre, 'the unexpected and suggestive convergence of its techniques', and thus fails to identify, at a generic level, literary strategies which engage the logic of traumatic separation and reconciliation in partitioned states (*ibid*: 10). She identifies three distinct modes of the genre, the romance, the *Bildungsroman*, and the fragmented narrative, and argues that they not only testify to 'the physical and psychic violence inflicted by partition', but also, beyond Cleary, create '"counterfactual" representations of pre-partition history or the post-partition present' (*ibid*: 10, 11). Partition literature, she concludes, thus challenges the logic of partition by counterfactually lamenting its forgotten alternatives.

Clearly, there is much to commend in the uses to which the partition paradigm has been deployed by Cleary, Hochberg, and Bernard. It has allowed for a wide-ranging, global

[15] In fact, Hochberg never actually acknowledges Cleary as a predecessor or even refers to his work despite the fact that *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State* was published five years prior to her own major contribution.

comparatist approach linking Palestinian history and literature with what are often considered to be the more straightforwardly colonial and postcolonial histories and literatures of states across Europe, South Asia, and Africa, thus making Palestine legible in the field. It has produced incisive critiques of the ideologies of political and ethnic difference that undergird established Zionist discourses of Palestine and those of Israel as an exclusively Jewish state. And it has likewise foregrounded the failures of Palestinian nationalism, albeit in the context of an inequitable distribution of power, both in resisting Zionist colonization and in adequately negotiating even an attenuated independent state. In short, the partition paradigm has mobilized a pressing postcolonial framework for addressing the question of Palestine in the context of the territorial overlap between two competing, and unequal, nationalisms.

The evident advantages of this paradigm for approaching Palestine in Postcolonial Studies shouldn't, though, blind us to its major flaws. Firstly, critiques of partition seem inevitably to lead to the promotion of the single state solution. Such advocacy is most explicit in Cleary, who argues that 'the history of partition in the region has little to recommend it, and a bi-national state in historic Palestine that would be the joint homeland to both peoples may well be the only long-term solution worth fighting for' (Cleary 2002: 48). While Hochberg stresses that her 'focus […] is literature', the political import of her central thesis is at least implicit when she argues that the 'relatively new territorial and economic realities [of occupation], while so far working in the service of separatist ideologies, nevertheless introduce a level of social and linguistic familiarity that furnishes our cultural imagination with "old-new" ways […] for envisioning the relationship between the two peoples in terms of proximity and affiliation' (Hochberg 2007: 3, 6).

Beyond Said's influential sponsorship, what Cleary, for one, acknowledges to be the 'utopian' ideal of a single, bi-national state must, I feel, indeed be considered as the final political horizon for engagement with Israel / Palestine (Cleary 2002: 48). A secular and democratic state covering the entirety of Mandatory Palestine, one which unconditionally recognizes the Palestinians' historical claims as well as their right to representation on the basis of parity, would certainly seem the most equitable long-term solution given Israel's *de facto* settler-colonial expansion into the West Bank and the resulting unviability of a coherent Palestinian state there.

Single-state thinking, though, is deeply problematic in our current political juncture for a number of reasons. Today, as Rashid Khalidi explains, the prospect of a single state is 'even more distant' than that of equitable partition due to 'the attachment of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to having a state of their own', Israeli political insistence on an exclusively Jewish state, and continued international emphasis on the two-state solution as a blueprint for peace (Khalidi 2010: xxxviii). Logically coterminous with the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state, the idea of a just single state is anathema to Israel and its international allies, those who hold all the power, thus a political impossibility in the present. Apart from its yet greater implausibility, promoting the near-impossible ideal of a single state carries with it considerable strategic risk. On the one hand, as Noam Chomsky argues, such talk is equivalent to 'just offering a gift to the Israeli right wing and to the United States' – by which he means it would be used as a pretext for further Israeli territorial expansion into the West Bank (Iskandar 2010: 384). On the other, it undercuts the various Palestinian and international efforts to end the Occupation, including the successful 2012 Palestinian Authority bid for the recognition of Palestine as a 'non-member state' at the UN General Assembly, the right to appeal to the International Court of Justice over illegal settlement activities correspondingly acquired, the increasingly visible and vociferous forms of local anti-occupation activism, and the likewise expanding international solidarity campaigns, most notably the BDS movement. All such efforts are premised on the internationally recognized illegality of occupation and settlements as stated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which, unanimously adopted shortly after the Six Day War in 1967, affirms the 'inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' and calls for the 'Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict' (UNSC 1967). As a single state would transcend the territorial division of Israel and Palestine, promoting it now wound render irrelevant the only internationally binding agreement that explicitly defines the Occupation as illegal, and thus would deprive the various forms of political, legal, and civil resistance to its abuses – forms which are beginning to result in *actual, concrete improvement in the lives and circumstances of Palestinians living under occupation* – of the basis of their legitimacy. Although I wholeheartedly endorse a single, bi-national state as a long-term ideal, supporting it under present conditions is, I fear, quixotic. Seeing as single-

statism is both an implicit and explicit correlative to anti-partitionist critique, that paradigm should be called into question on the grounds of political irresponsibility.[16]

A second major flaw in the partition paradigm relates specifically to Hochberg's analysis. Although her book is useful in challenging the orientalist ideologies which underwrite the Zionist, and especially Ashkenazi, construction of a 'European' ideal of Jewishness stripped of its Arab roots, as well as the detrimental effects of Ashkenazi political dominance on Israeli society, there are in fact a series of problems here. Most importantly, Hochberg conflates the ideology of ethnic Jewish / Arab separation employed by Zionism and Palestinian nationalism to further partitionist ends with the political ideology of Israeli / Palestinian separation that, premised on the history of Zionist colonization, precedes and necessitates its ethnic corollary. Such conflation is indicated by Hochberg's use of language, where lists ('Jew', 'Israeli' / 'Arab', 'Palestinian'), strokes ('Jew/Israeli', 'Arab/Palestinian'), and parentheses ('the Jew (or the Israeli)', 'the Arab (or the Palestinian)') reduce 'Jew' and 'Israeli', 'Arab' and 'Palestinian', into interchangeable signifiers (Hochberg 2007: 3, 7, 17, 19, *passim*). Apart from implying that a recognition of ethnic parity is the essential solution to an essentially political conflict, this conflation is deeply problematic because it obscures the causal priority of Zionist colonialism in a conflict consequently misread as rooted in ideologies of ethnic difference. It thus shifts the burden of justice from Israeli acknowledgement of historical wrong in its formation as a state to the parallel acknowledgement of the other in the self on the part of both the Israelis and the Palestinians, misrepresented as Jews and Arabs. This is clearly an inequitable resolution when such wrong constitutes the factual basis of the current conflict, and has led to the overwhelming political and military domination of one group over the other.

Underlying Hochberg's conflation of the ethnic and the political is her equally problematic assumption of the hitherto repressed inseparability of Jewish and Arab ethnic self-identifications. Certainly, as Said and Mufti have argued, a shared history of suffering binds European Jewry and post-*Nakba* Palestinians together in a broad existential sense, in an affiliative poetics of exile whose value as a critical tool they have persuasively demonstrated.

[16] The one-state solution is being increasingly discussed, if not by the international political community, then at least by politics and international relations scholars from across the spectrum. For detailed scholarly approaches to the issue, see especially Raja Halwani's and Tomis Kapitan's *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Philosophical Essays on Self-Determination, Terrorism and the One-State Solution* (2008), Virginia Tilley's *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock* (2010), and Hani Faris' (ed.) *The Failure of the Two-State Solution: The Prospects of One State in the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (2010).

But when it comes to specific relations of filiation, rather than affiliation, between Jewish and Arab identities, to the 'historical, political, cultural, and, above all, libidinal ties that bind these identities together', Hochberg's analysis, grounded on such ties, becomes speculative (*ibid*: 2). She rightly devotes considerable attention to demonstrating the Arab cultural roots of the Mizrahiyim, Maghrebim, and Sephardim – the historical Jewish communities of the Arab world from Spain and North Africa to Iraq – and arguing that such roots have been systematically erased due to internalized orientalist prejudice among the dominant class of Ashkenazi, or European, Jewish immigrants to Palestine (see *ibid*: 9-15). But her argument for inseparable Jewish and Arab identities depends on a comparable demonstration of the repressed Jewish cultural identity of Palestinians. In this case, Hochberg appeals only to vague theological speculation about the 'historical intimacy between the two Semitic figures', and to a decontextualized quotation where Said explains that the Jew is a 'physic factor' for Palestinians, extrapolating from this an 'identification' of both – clearly insufficient premises on even inductive grounds (*ibid*: 8, 7). While, as mentioned above, Hochberg's deconstruction of the Ashkenazi myth of a de-Arabized Jewish identity is useful, her conclusion of ethnic parity, with its implicit ideological consequence of steering critique away from the causal priority of Zionist colonization, is thus unjustified. Criticism based on questions of ethnicity and identity would be better served by following the lines set out by Israeli 'New Historian' Shlomo Sand in his *The Invention of the Jewish People* (2009). There, he provocatively attends to the ways in which precisely such myths, as well as those of a homogenous Jewish community of 'chosen people' descended from biblical Israel, have laid the foundations for Israel as a colonial political entity at the expense of Palestine and the Palestinians: as Sand argues, 'Zionist colonization could certainly not have been undertaken without an ideological preparation that gave rise to the blossoming and crystallization of [these] myths' (Sand 2009: 314).

Related to this problem in Hochberg, the third, and most important, flaw in the partition paradigm is that it risks displacing the categories of colonial history, *Nakba*, and exile as the primary interpretative nexus for a postcolonialism attuned to Palestine. Certainly, the *Nakba* plays an important role in the partition narratives of at least Cleary and Bernard. For Cleary, the events of 1948 demonstrate that 'Zionist self-determination […] was achieved at the cost of the absolute negation of the right to self-determination of those that were displaced' (Cleary 2002: 40). Bernard, drawing on the scholarship of Salah Hassan, takes this thought a step further, and

suggests that 'the partition of historic Palestine into the Jewish state and the non-sovereign Palestinian territories is *synonymous* with the *nakba*' (Bernard 2010b: 29, italics mine). But in both cases the *Nakba* then becomes a historical 'ground zero' for post-48 critiques of the separatist ideologies subsequently produced by Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, reducing literary reading to a practice of identifying forms which consolidate or contest the logic of partition, or which produce 'counterfactual alternatives'. This shifts the burden of postcolonial criticism away from the Zionist colonial history that produced partition in the first place, away from exile as the defining characteristic of post-*Nakba* Palestinian life and culture, and towards a potentially decontextualized, presentist attitude towards competing Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms whose myopic lens focalizes the utopian ideal of a binational single state as the only possible resolution. Apart from the political limitations of this sort of thinking, critique grounded on a post-partition nation and narration model thus undermines postcolonial theory's considerable strengths in interpreting both the after-effects of colonial history on native society and culture, and current material practices of resistance to expanding settler-colonialism in the West Bank.

At best, as in Cleary and Bernard, the partition paradigm, with its emphasis on the dynamics of post-partition Israeli and Palestinian nationalism, marginalizes what for many is not only the central political and existential problematic of Palestine, but also the central thematic, formal, and material problematic of Palestinian culture. As Edward Said puts it in his 1992 'Introduction' to *The Question of Palestine*, 'Exile is thus the fundamental condition of Palestinian life', 'the energy for what is best […] in the components of its remarkable literature' (Said 1992: xxvii). At worst, as in Hochberg, where the *Nakba* is deprived of its historicity and read as a narrative tool in 'a national politics of memory', the partition paradigm directs critique to separation rather than colonization, to the means rather than the project of Zionism, obscuring the violent, traumatic reality of Palestinian exile altogether (Hochberg 2007: 19; see also 116-37). Ironically enough, then, the category of partition, by unequivocally linking Palestine to other colonial contexts, has allowed Postcolonial Studies to raise the question of Palestine as central to its remit, but has only done so only on the basis of just the sort of Bhabha-derived disavowal of nationalism that traditionally precluded Palestine and led Said, Massad, and Shohat to reject postcolonialism *per se*! One might even say that broad political antipathy to Palestinian

nationalism has here mapped seamlessly onto theory, resulting in a compromised appropriation of the name 'Palestine' for an institutionally mediated field.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that entrenched disciplinary, theoretical, and political prejudices against the study of Palestine in Postcolonial Studies have mediated the emergence of 'partition' as a strong, but deeply problematic, paradigm for a newly 'Palestinized' field. It would be misguided, though, to conclude from my assessment that I'm recommending Postcolonial Studies univocally adopt the cause of Palestinian nationalism or even lend its weight to the two-state solution. Rather, I have simply wanted to foreground the critical limitations of the partition paradigm, the ways in which it, while providing a powerful critique of nationalism, unavoidably results in advocacy for the mirage of a one-state solution and displaces the crucial postcolonial issues of colonial history, *Nakba*, and exile. Postcolonial Studies, I'd like to suggest, would be better served by following the exemplary lines set out by Gregory, Morton, Saloul, and Williams, and return with renewed vigour to the Saidian problematic of exile if it is to faithfully encompass a violent and complex Palestinian history.

Chapter Two

Towards a Post-Saidian Theory of Exile: Mourid Barghouti and Ibrahim Nasrallah

Saidian exile, though, is not without its own critical limitations. These have been effectively foregrounded by Bernard in her review essay on renowned Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti's memoir *I Saw Ramallah* (1997; trans. 2000), an impressionistic account of the author's return to occupied Palestine after an enforced absence of thirty years. There, Bernard makes a strong and richly detailed case against Said's idealization and universalization of exile as definitive of Palestinian experience. Her reading hinges on what she calls Barghouti's 'existentialist materialist aesthetic', a narrative strategy that aims to dispel the false abstractions of nationalist literature in favour of a new commitment to immediate sensory experience and to the 'fragmentation' and 'circumstantial diversity' of Palestinian lives (Bernard 2007: 666). According to Bernard, Said, given his insistence that the memoir 'at bottom reenacts exile rather than repatriation' in his 'Foreword' to the English edition, misreads or misrecognizes Barghouti's 'critique of the idealized exilic perspective' (Barghouti 2004: xi; Bernard 2007: 674). Such a perspective, she continues, 'does not account for those whose lives are defined not by their experience of displacement but by the Israeli occupation', those whose lives Barghouti, thus providing a corrective to Said, minutely traces as they encounter a social and economic collapse quite distinct from that of the displaced (*ibid*: 678). By foregrounding the disparities in the living conditions of various groups of Palestinians, Barghouti, Bernard concludes, lays the imaginative groundwork for a Palestinian unity based not on a romantic or nostalgic nationalism, but on a sharpened recognition of particularity, on cooperation across difference.

In this chapter, I seek to develop what I call a 'post-Saidian theory of exile' that, taking Bernard's critique of idealization and universalization on board, effects a critical shift back towards the core postcolonial issues of colonial history, *Nakba*, and exile as prescribed in Chapter One. In Section One, 'Mourid Barghouti's 'Multiple Displacements', I work through Bernard's critique of Saidian exile via a close, contrasting reading of *I Saw Ramallah*. I argue that despite his rejection of abstract, universalizing notions, Barghouti in fact develops a more nuanced, flexible notion of exile which, based on lived experience, redefines occupation as a particular form of displacement, thus establishing continuities between disparate Palestinians on

the basis of similarities underlying, rather than cooperation despite, difference. Drawing on the work of Williams and Saloul, I then identify Barghouti's post-Saidian notion of exile as a new critical paradigm that moves beyond problematic idealization while remaining faithful to the issues of colonial history and the *Nakba*. In Section Two, 'The National Checkpoint in Palestinian Literature', I suggest the Palestinian national checkpoint as a pivotal site for the articulation and representation of exilic Palestinian identity. I then demonstrate the critical value of post-Saidian exile by re-reading Barghouti's accounts of Allenby Bridge, an infamous national checkpoint which embodies the dynamic of exile and prohibited return, in both *I Saw Ramallah* and its sequel, *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2009; trans. 2011). In Section Three, 'Colonial History in Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses*', I complete my articulation of post-Saidian exile by turning to the colonial history that gave rise to Palestinian exile in the first place. After critically discussing the dominant Israeli 'New Historian' narrative of the *Nakba*, and suggesting Palestinian oral historiography as source of 'counter-history', I argue that Nasrallah's historical novel *Time of White Horses* (2007; trans. 2012) attempts to resolve the 'symbolic problem' of the invisibility of the *Nakba* in global cultural by formally inscribing oral history. Showing that such a Palestinian revision of the historical novel only results in fragmented, riven form, I conclude that aesthetic resolution in the Palestinian case is impossible with the national resolution of return.

1. Mourid Barghouti's 'Multiple Displacements'

Ra'aytu Ramallah (1997), translated by Ahdaf Soueif as *I Saw Ramallah* (2000), is a particularly significant text for assessing the mediating function of Postcolonial Studies vis-à-vis Palestine as, since its publication in English, it has emerged as one of the most prominent literary representatives of contemporary Palestinian experience in Anglo-American culture. The original Arabic edition of this memoir, Barghouti's first prose work, garnered him enthusiastic regional attention through the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, awarded him in 1997, and the Palestine Prize for Poetry, granted in 2000. But, substantiating Pascale Casanova's thesis that regional literatures require consecration through Euro-American intermediary agents like translators, award-bodies, and, in this case, reputable critics for wider international recognition, it was only with Soueif's translation and Said's sponsorship that *I Saw Ramallah*

began to achieve its representative stature (see especially Casanova 2004: 82-125). As Bernard notes, 'the English edition of *I Saw Ramallah*', with high-profile releases in the US by Random House (2003) and in the UK by Bloomsbury (2004), 'linked Barghouti with two of the best-known Arab writers in the English-speaking world and so established him as a writer of international standing' (Bernard 2007: 665). Cementing this standing, the numerous reviews have followed Said's lead in asserting that the book 'is one of the finest existential accounts of Palestinian displacement that we now have', with near-universal praise on both sides of the Atlantic from a range of newspapers (including *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*), magazines (*Publishers Weekly*, *Banipal*, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, etc.), and journals (*The Arab Studies Journal*, *Middle East Journal*, *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, etc.) (Barghouti 2004: vii). Indicating Said's consecrating influence, as well as the tone of the reviews more generally, Peter Clark of the *TLS* goes so far as to claim that *I Saw Ramallah* is 'The most eloquent statement in English of what it is like to be a Palestinian today' (Clark 2002).

The memoir is loosely structured around the trajectory of Barghouti's 1996 return to his native village of Deir Ghassanah, just north of Ramallah, after an exile of nearly 30 years. At Cairo University in 1967, where he was studying English Literature, Barghouti was prohibited from returning to the West Bank after the Six Day War and Israel's ensuing occupation. Since then, he has lived in Cairo, Kuwait, Budapest, and, most recently, back in Cairo, where his reputation as Darwish's poetic successor has been steadily growing. In fact, Barghouti's poetics, a 'concrete and physical language' grounded in the everyday, comprises a turn away from Darwish's tendency to mythologize and allegorize Palestine, and thus resists abstraction in favour of a delineation of 'lived experience' (Barghouti 2003). *I Saw Ramallah* brings this aesthetic sensibility to bear on the autobiography form. It significantly opens at the border between Jordan and the West Bank, at the Allenby Bridge checkpoint, where Barghouti, with a bead of sweat sliding down his forehead, begins the process of capturing his experience of return through the sensory and psychological immediacy of the first-person present. This fraught, impassioned voice then carries him, and his narrative, through the charred landscapes of occupation and towards first home. Present is interspersed with past throughout the narrative as Barghouti continuously reflects on his years in the wilderness, as well as on a prelapsarian Deir Ghassanah, demonstrating the persistence of exile through the continuities and ruptures of

history. Likewise, the autobiographical style is interspersed with essayistic accounts of the politics of occupation and poetic meditations on exile, place, subjectivity, and writing, cumulatively resulting in a fragmentary, hybrid form that, in its abrupt temporal, geographical, and stylistic transitions, reflects in Saidian fashion something of the experience of exile.

The genre of Palestinian memoir has received relatively scant attention compared to the more popular and widespread genres of fiction and poetry. Such neglect is rapidly becoming unsustainable given the ready availability in English of a critical mass of autobiographical writings from the last sixty years, including, beyond Said, Darwish, and Barghouti, those of Mufid Adbul Hadi, Susan Abulhawa, Suad Amiry, Hanan Ashrawi, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Ghada Karmi, Leila Khaled, Serene Husseini Shahid, Hisham Sharabi, Raja Shehadeh, and Fawzi Turki. Further, the Palestinian memoir seems a fascinating site of intersection between postcolonial life-writing, now enjoying an appreciation of critical currency, and Palestinian oral history, likewise enjoying a resurgence through the work of Palestinian historiographers like Ahmad Sa'di, Lila abu-Lughod, and Nur Masalha after decades of disparagement by even the Israeli New Historians. Picking up on such critical potential, two of the more prominent book length efforts to theorize postcolonial life-writing, Bart Moore-Gilbert's *Postcolonial Life-Writing: Culture, Politics, and Self-Representation* (2009) and Norbert Bugeja's *Postcolonial Memoir in the Middle East: Rethinking the Liminal in Mashriqi Writing* (2012), take the Palestinian memoir as a key case study (see Moore-Gilbert 2009: 111-130; Bugeja 2012: 37-75). Moore-Gilbert, focusing on Said's *Out of Place* and Amiry's *Sharon and My Mother-in-law: Ramallah Diaries* (2006), suggests that the genre 'be understood in the first instance as an attempt to mitigate the invisibility of Palestinians' in contemporary culture as well as in Postcolonial Studies, and that it provides a political corrective to earlier constructions of autobiography as primarily 'a *literary* mode' (Moore-Gilbert 2009: 115, 111). Bugeja, focusing on *I Saw Ramallah*, takes the political dimension of Moore-Gilbert's approach a step further, and argues that the genre provides 'incisive critiques of the powerful, internationally orchestrated cabal that perpetuates and ensures the lasting containment of the Palestinians and the postponement of their bid towards self-determination' (Bugeja 2012: 38).

Although both Moore-Gilbert and Bugeja usefully further promote the cause of expanded attention to Palestine in Postcolonial Studies, they only scratch at the surface of the Palestinian memoir's generic significance. In an important essay on the genre, Juliane Hammer argues that

'the Palestinian diaspora experience is a crisis that conditions the particular form that [Palestinian] memoirs take', one which therefore registers 'a perceived crisis of memory, an anxiety about the risk of forgetting the lost homeland' (Hammer 2003: 177). Not only relevant in terms of directly contributing to the complex picture of 20th century Palestinian life, such memoirs thus also act as 'historical documents', 'written testimony of the events that have shaped the personal, cultural and political identities of the authors', and, as such, may be read alongside the parallel historiographic genre of oral testimony (*ibid*: 178). *I Saw Ramallah*, reflecting a unique crisis of memory prompted by Barghouti's return to a now alienated landscape of occupation, might well, then, be contextualized with reference to the formal particularities and politicized remit of its genre.

When approaching questions of exile and occupation in *I Saw Ramallah*, and especially when attempting to distinguish, as Bernard does, between the two, it is important to remember that the category of Palestinian exile historically applies not just to those who were expelled abroad in 1948, but also to the internally displaced. According to the most recent *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons* (2012), 'The percentage of refugees in the oPt [the Occupied Palestine Territories of Gaza and the West Bank] is about 42 percent of the total population', with approximately one million of the West Bank's total Palestinian population of more than 2.5 million having been, since 1948, displaced from their original homes (al-Azza 2012: xvii). Further undermining the critique of Said's universalization of the exilic experience, the *Survey* estimates that, at the end of 2011, 'there were at least 7.4 million displaced Palestinians representing 66 percent of the entire Palestinian population (11.2 million) worldwide' (*ibid*). The figure of the Palestinian who has not in one way or another been touched by exile, whether personally or culturally, whether forced to move down the (Hebraically re-named) road due to a government-sanctioned home demolition or shunted across oceans and continents, is necessarily a fabrication. On the West Bank, such displacements continue every day via the routine violence of the Occupation – overt acts of terrorism, property theft, the separation of communities from their farmlands, the bulldozing of homes, and so forth. While I acknowledge that a critical idealization of exile may problematically feed into nationalist discourses, it is a documented historical fact that the vast majority of Palestinian experience, thus Palestinian culture, is grounded on, if not defined by, exile.

In *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti makes it clear that his experience of return is thoroughly mediated by his lifelong exile. He repeatedly questions not only his own memories when confronted with the 'colors, smells, and sounds' of Palestine, but also whether he can still, or can ever again, belong to a place which has likewise lost its memory of him (Barghouti 2004: 62). 'What does Deir Ghassanah', Barghouti asks himself after his poetry reading in the village square, 'know of you, Mourid? What do your people know of you now? […] You too do not know the times they have been through. […] Have they not changed also?' (*ibid*: 84-5). These profound and legitimate doubts give pause to any sense of repatriation, and Barghouti comes to 'know' that 'the stranger [or *al-gharīb*, literally 'the exile' in Arabic] can never go back to what he was', that 'It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever' (*ibid*: 4, 131).

The second of these passages is particularly significant here, as Said cites it as one of his central pieces of evidence for the essentially exilic nature of the text:

> So it is in this newly invigorated and rediscovered Ramallah that Barghouti the exile and dispossessed writer finds himself anew – only to find himself again and again in the new forms of his displacement. "It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever." Thus despite its joy and moments of exuberance this narrative return at bottom reenacts exile rather than repatriation (*ibid*: xi).

Correspondingly, Bernard, in her wider-ranging critique of Said's 'misreading', takes special issue with this assessment. She argues that the passage in question represents 'only the first stage of Barghouti's thinking' (Bernard 2007: 677). As he continues that 'the paradox is that strange cities are then never completely strange. Life dictates that the stranger acclimatize every day', Barghouti, she claims, is actually refusing 'to thematize exile […] as the defining characteristic of his identity as a Palestinian' (Barghouti 2004: 131; Bernard 2007: 677). Ironically enough, Bernard is here guilty of exactly the same failure to fully contextualize she attributes to Said. In the same paragraph, Barghouti continues that this sort of acclimatization is a 'bribe' proffered by 'Life' to ward off against the relentless discontent and suffering of exile, that:

> This happens to the exiled, the stranger, the prisoner, and something like it happens to the loser, the defeated, the abandoned. And as the eye accustoms itself, little by little, to sudden darkness, they

> accustom themselves to the exceptional context imposed by their circumstances. If you become accustomed to the exception you see it in some way as natural (Barghouti 2004: 131, 132).

Rather than, as Bernard asserts, suggesting that the exile 'is compelled to go on living, forming new connections and losing the immediacy of his relationship with his former home', Barghouti is, in full flow of the passage, warning against precisely the sort of acclimatization that would see the 'exception' as 'natural', that would ever accept any loss of connection with the dispossessed home (Bernard 2007: 677). And Barghouti explicitly states as much not only as an ethical imperative for the exilic consciousness, but also as a political imperative for a justice to come: further attenuating the sense of individual repatriation, he hypothetically asks, 'What does my return, or the return of any other individual mean?', concluding that, 'It is their return, the return of the millions, that is the true return' (Barghouti 2004: 38).

Further, it is clear that Barghouti intends the text, as part of its 'existentialist materialist aesthetic', to register the experience of permanent displacement, so that the narratives of return and of life under the Occupation are themselves structured by that experience at a formal level. It's not just, as Barghouti meditates, that 'Writing is a displacement', a sort of existential separation from society and the usual run of life (*ibid*: 132). It's also that the writing of the memoir takes on the characteristics of displacement he makes sure to emphasize early on:

> He [the exile] is the one whose relationship with places is distorted, he gets attached to them and repulsed by them at the same time. He is the one who cannot tell his story in a continuous narrative and lives hours in every moment. Every moment for him has its passing immortality. His memory resists ordering. He lives essentially in that hidden, silent spot within himself (*ibid*: 3-4).

With its constant and erratic scene-shifts from Ramallah to Cairo to Budapest to Beirut to Amman to London, its contractions and expansions of temporality, its overlapping of past and present, memory and lived experience, its rapid stylistic and tonal transitions, and its absolute resistance to continuous narrative, the memoir itself takes on the form of exile.

Given the permanence of Barghouti's exile, his project then becomes one of 'patching together' the experiences of the externally and internally displaced, of the cosmopolitan poet and the villagers of Deir Ghassanah: 'They', he writes, again recalling Said, 'lived their time here and I lived my time there. Can the two times be patched together? And how? They have to be' (*ibid*: 85-6). This is in order, as Bugeja astutely notes, 'to renew […] a deteriorating relation

between the two realities' by forging 'a narrative link between the mental spaces of exilic memory and imagination and the worsening material conditions on Palestinian land inside the Territories' (Bugeja 2012: 39). I want to suggest that Barghouti finds this narrative link by reconceptualizing exile in terms of a temporalization of space. On the one hand, he insists that 'The displaced person becomes a stranger to his memories', to a place which is 'not a place, [but] a time' (Barghouti 2004: 131, 88). On the other, he perceives that the village of Deir Ghassanah, described with near-Achebian ethnographic rigour, is 'forced […] to remain with the old' by the Occupation, forced to remain in a condition of economic underdevelopment or bad modernity (*ibid*: 69). His displacement from the past is thus linked with Deir Ghassanah's displacement from the future, and both conditions are understood in terms of an exile defined as disrupted temporality – 'Displacements', he summarizes, 'are always multiple' (*ibid*: 131). Further, Barghouti makes sure to emphasize that the disrupted temporality of both the externally and internally displaced is a direct consequence of the *Nakba*, what he calls the 'original crime' and 'the beginning and end of this evil', and which, unambiguously attributed to 'Israel's responsibility', has shaped 'our entire fate, whether in Palestine or in the Diaspora' (*ibid*: 41, 156).

In *I Saw Ramallah*, then, Barghouti develops a more fluid, encompassing, even metaphorical notion of exile which allows him to both weave together a patchwork of Palestinian identity from the strands of disparate exilic experiences, and to identify the *Nakba*, with its violent colonial history, as the primary source of such injustice. The memoir thus exemplifies the rootedness of its genre's crisis of memory in the *Nakba*, and, in its existential, cultural, and formal insistence on exile as definitive of post-*Nakba* Palestinian experience, enacts what Bugeja calls a narrative strategy of 'Exilic realism' for counteracting history's occlusions (Bugeja 2012: 39).

2. The National Checkpoint in Palestinian Literature

In an insightful essay on Said and Darwish, Williams has outlined what might, following Barghouti's example, be considered a post-Saidian theory of 'multiple displacement'. There, he identifies and defines several 'modes of dispossession experienced by Palestinians', including 'the territorial, the ontological, the narrative, the historiographical, the ethical and the dialogic'

(Williams 2009: 85). As he readily acknowledges, all these modes are in fact derived from Said's scattered writings on the issue. Given, though, Said's hesitation to categorize Palestinian exile in such a way, preferring instead the sort of embodied evocation of its personal, cultural, and historical dimensions that gives rise to a misperceived idealization, it seems apt to describe Williams' more methodical analysis as post-Saidian. Territorial dispossession is 'the most significant both materially and symbolically', and pertains to the losses of land and property in, especially, 1948, and also since 1967; the ontological consists of 'denials that an entity called the Palestinian people exists or that Palestine itself exists'; the narrative and the historiographic consist of 'the Israeli blocking of the production of a narrative of Palestinian history and national identity'; the ethical relates to 'the refusal to accord any validity to Palestinian rights, claims and sufferings'; and the dialogic derives from Israeli claims that it has 'no appropriate interlocutors' for dialogue with the Palestinians due to their lack of national, ontological, and ethical existence (*ibid*: 85, 86, 87). To this list, we may add Barghouti's temporal displacement or dispossession, under which both internally and externally displaced Palestinians are excluded from past and future time. Due to the problems I've recounted with both the partition and the Saidian exile paradigms, it seems to me that developing a post-Saidian theory of exile premised on such varied forms of dispossession, on 'multiple displacement', is an essential new direction for Postcolonial Studies.

In his recent monograph *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination* (2012), Saloul exemplifies precisely the critical history-*Nakba*-exile linkage I've been arguing for throughout. Justifiably arguing that 'little attention has been paid to the cultural memory of *al-Nakba*', his book focuses on such cultural memory as 'a powerful narrative signifier of the modern Palestinian imagination' (Saloul 2012: 3, 2). His central argument is that 'Narratives of *al-Nakba* offer a set of symbolic identifiers and images […] of loss of place' which 'provide the exiled subject with a concrete geopolitical orientation of the lost home, and expose the ways in which that loss continues to be experienced in the present' (*ibid*: 2). He thus circumvents the problems we witnessed in Hochberg's comparable account, where the *Nakba* is reduced to a narrative tool in the service of the separatist imagination, by rightly insisting on the continued structuring influence of that original loss on contemporary Palestinian experience and culture. Through a range of cultural readings – including the fiction of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and Liyana Badr, the films of Tawfiq Saleh and Mohammed Bakri, and various oral testimonies – he

demonstrates that a range of memorial modes, especially 'fragmented narrativity', 'exilic narrativity', and 'performative narrativity', are 'at the heart of how Palestinians narrate loss of homeland in exile' (*ibid*: 6). Through Saloul's intervention, then, the Saidian circle broken by a widespread postcolonial marginalization or occlusion of exile has not only been closed, but has also been expanded for increasingly urgent issues like trauma, nostalgia, post-memory, and oral history.

I return to the literatures of colonial history and the *Nakba* in the following section, but for now I want build on the work of Williams and Saloul, and foreground the Israeli / Palestinian national checkpoint as a pivotal site where the dynamic of exile and prohibited return is defined. Ranging from the Allenby Bridge checkpoint between Jordan and the West Bank and Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport to, with Israel's blockade of Gaza in mind, the Rafah checkpoint as a locus of (humanitarian, military) transgression as well as a cipher of shifting international relations before and after Mubarak, national checkpoints are crucial here as symbolically charged physical locations which Palestinians exiled in 1948, and their descendants, must navigate in order to gain access to their homeland. They are where the rights of the externally displaced must be negotiated and re-negotiated with an authority that denies their very existence. They not only mark boundaries between states, but also those between citizenship and insurgency, belonging and non-belonging, presence and absence. As Rashid Khalidi, following Said's assertion that 'our truest reality is expressed in the way we cross over from one place to another', puts it, 'The quintessential Palestinian experience […] takes place at a border, an airport, a checkpoint' (Said 1986: 164; R. Khalidi 2010: 1).[1]

My own experience of the checkpoint is insignificant when compared to the daily indignities and disruptions suffered by Palestinians on the West Bank, when, moreover, weighed against the enormity of the prohibition placed upon those exiled Palestinians left literally with

[1] In global context, the Palestinian checkpoint may well be considered in relation to the development of increasingly sophisticated border control technologies across the 20th and 21st centuries. Under the uneven geographies of colonialism and globalization, in locations as diverse as Northern Ireland, East / West Germany, partitioned India and Pakistan, Apartheid South Africa, America's Mexican border, and Iraq, such technologies, administering space and regulating flows of people and goods, have come to embody relations of power and inequality in the contemporary world. Perhaps best exemplified by the Palestinian case, the global checkpoint thus marks, as Wendy Brown argues, a blockage in the system of unfettered transnational flows, and interrupts celebratory discourses of globalist expansion (see Brown 2010: 7-28). For a wide-ranging study of the technologies, transgressions, and cultural representations of checkpoints across the Middle East, Europe, South Asia, and Latin America, see David Fieni's and my co-edited special issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* on 'The Global Checkpoint: 'Rights' of Passage, Performances of Sovereignty' (forthcoming 2014).

nothing – no home, no family, no community, no state – by the *Nakba*. Nevertheless, I take that experience as in some small way representative of at least those of other second- and third-generation exiles who categorically refuse any severance from their origins, who, against the fantastic designs and desires of the powerful, remain intent on envisioning a future only on the premises of the past.

My family was exiled from Palestine in 1948, with my father, two months old at the time, his mother, sister, and three brothers leaving their ancestral home in Jaffa for Beirut on the 2nd of April, after several months of terrorist attacks on the part of the Zionist colonial militias, the Irgun and the Haganah. My grandfather followed suit on the 3rd of May, after the Irgun's mortar bombardment of Jaffa's civilian population on the 25th of April, and shortly before the *Nakba* of the 15th of May. The Haganah, by then in full control of the city, then funnelled the remaining Palestinian population of 4,000 into the Ajami neighbourhood and imprisoned them there for two years. Not one member of my family was ever emotionally (or, until their more recent acquisition of European passports, legally) able to return. At the onset of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), their exiles were doubled, with each of the surviving siblings making their way to the more stable environs of Britain, France, and Germany to raise their families. Having heard rumours that the family home had been destroyed in the 1970s, presumably on the basis of Israel's 'Absentee Property Law' – a legal justification for Israeli state theft of property owned by exiled Palestinians – I decided in December 2011 to myself return to Jaffa, and discover what remained of my estranged heritage. After complications resulting from the re-naming of what was preserved in family memory as 'Shāri' Hosni', Hosni Street, into 'Ben Ahituv', and the guidance of a pharmacist with an encyclopaedic memory of Ajami and its families, including mine, from before the *Nakba*, I succeeded. And what I discovered was, not unexpectedly, a literalization of Darwish's image for the lot of all Palestinians: 'you left nothing for us / Except for these rocks' (Darwish 1996).

My arrival at Ben Gurion Airport a few days earlier was no less loaded. At border control, my Arabic name trumped my British passport and cynical crucifix, and I was instructed to wait in that dingy corner of the terminal now familiar to most non-Jewish travellers to the Holy Land. After an unexplained four hours observing my universally Arabic peers, some visitors, some residents of Israel or Palestine, I was finally invited for my 'Interview'. This consisted of a crude 'good cop, bad cop' routine, where a young woman who identified herself

only as 'Ella' asked basic questions about the nature of my visit, and one 'Ami' delved into my (now Lebanese) family background, my email accounts and passwords, my father's phone numbers, my involvement in Palestinian activism, and so forth, constantly repeating the phrase 'you are in Israel now'. By any standards, this sort of warrantless interrogation should be unacceptable. At Ben Gurion, as the countless testimonies assiduously published by the online journals *Electronic Intifada* and *Mondoweiss* demonstrate, it is the norm, and often results in much viler abuses than I experienced (including strip searches, confiscation of personal property, detention, and deportation). Indeed, Ben Gurion has recently, apparently without noting the historical irony, instituted a policy of attaching stickers on arriving passengers to differentiate between Jews and Arabs! The deeper irony here, of course, is that my right to even visit what has been my family home for centuries is now determined by people who have been there for only a few years, yet claim my documented family property as exclusively theirs. Fundamentally, the experience of the national checkpoint was for me one of unbearable contradiction and rupture, where the order of things is turned on its head as not just the past is uprooted, but also truth, fact, reality. For the exiled Palestinian, the checkpoint is an inversion of time and space, a void between times and spaces, a screen that through its process of screening projects and enacts fantasies of possession. In the necessity of its existence, though, the checkpoint also registers the impossibility of such fantasies, thus might be considered a key locus of cultural and political resistance.

Palestinian literature has strongly reflected the archetypal checkpoint experience throughout its short history, and might fruitfully be considered a literature of the checkpoint. For example, Darwish's poem 'Identity Card' (1964; trans. 1996) takes place at such a site, and features a defiant refrain, since taken by Palestinians as a popular rallying cry, hurled at the Israeli border agent who would deny Palestinian self-identification: 'Write down!', the speaker demands, 'I am an Arab' (Darwish 1996). Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun* (1963; trans. 1998) – perhaps the most important of all Palestinian literary works – is set in the undefined border zone between Iraq and Kuwait which, allegorizing the void between Israel and Palestine, exile and return, its exiled Palestinian characters must chart through a series of checkpoints. Classics such as Habiby's *Saeed the Pessoptimist* and Elias Khoury's more recent *Gate of the Sun* (1998; trans. 2006), feature significant border-crossing episodes, in these cases at the Lebanese border, and Said touches on his arrival at Ben Gurion in *Out of Place*. In broader

cultural context, Palestinian film – from Saleh's *The Deceived* (1973) to Mai Masri's *Frontiers of Dreams and Fears* (2001), Elia Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* (2002), and Hany abu-Assad's *Rana's Wedding* (2002) – is rife with depictions of the checkpoint experience. Translating culture into activism, the multimedia artist Khaled Jarrar has exhibited his photographs of the abuses of restricted mobility at the actual Howarra and Qalandia checkpoints (*At the Checkpoint* (2007, 2009)), and, in another project, he has forged a passport seal for the 'State of Palestine' and invited West Bank civilians to have it stamped in their official documents (*Live and Work in Palestine* (2011)). Beyond Palestinian literature and culture proper, the checkpoint has emerged in global culture as an almost defining icon of historical and contemporary Palestinian experience. J.M.G. Le Clezio's novel *Wandering Star* (1992; trans. 2005), Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Palestine* (2001), Yoav Shamir's documentary *Checkpoint* (2003), and Alexandra Bouillon's and Sheila Menon's short film *No Way Through* (2009) are just a few of the works that invite metropolitan audiences to imagine a dystopian world of walls, barriers, gates, boundaries, and borders, the Palestinian world. The list goes on…[2]

Certainly, many of these and other prominent works focus exclusively on the ever-expanding network of West Bank checkpoints which, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, amounts to '542 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement' as of June 2012 (UNOCHA 2012: 32). As Israeli architectural historian Eyal Weizman comprehensively details, this system 'splinter[s] the West Bank into a series of approximately 200 separate, sealed-off 'territorial cells' around Palestinian 'population centres'' (Weizman 2007: 146). Palestinians, Weizman continues, 'have to apply for more than a dozen different travel permits […] to travel to different categories of space through different categories of checkpoint', and are furthermore 'barred from the Jordan Valley, Jerusalem and the enclaves trapped between the Wall and the Green Line' (*ibid*). He thus concludes that the checkpoint system, 'designed to impose and maintain a policy of total closure', has assumed 'an overall strategic layout, constituting a complete territorial system whose main aim is to dominate and manage the lives of Palestinians' (*ibid*). When considered alongside the incursions of Israel's

[2] Palestinian literature might be considered a literature of the checkpoint in another sense, too. The relates to Casanova's analysis of Euro-American consecrating institutions, which, given their function of mediating literary circulation on the basis of cosmopolitan ethical and political norms, manifest as, in effect, metaphorical checkpoints in the world literary system (see especially Casanova 2004: 82-125). Said, Brennan, and others have discussed the linguistic, cultural, and political barriers that limit the circulation of Palestinian and Arabic literatures (see Said 1994c; Brennan 1997: 42-3). For a more extensive account of the 'worlding' of Palestinian and Israeli literatures, see Bernard's *Rhetorics of Belonging: Nation, Narration, and Israel / Palestine* (forthcoming 2013).

so-called 'Security Fence' beyond the Green Line, effectively annexing large areas of internationally recognized Palestinian territory, the 121 illegal settlements acknowledged by the Israeli government, inhabited by more than 350,000 settlers on the West Bank and more than 300,000 in East Jerusalem, and the numerous roads reserved exclusively for Jewish settlers, it is clear that the checkpoint system, part of what Weizman calls Israel's 'architecture of occupation', is intended to fracture and fragment the Palestinian community, to create 'facts on the ground' that render an independent Palestinian state impossible (see *ibid*). In other words, the West Bank checkpoint, I contend, is an implicit internal attempt to place Palestine beyond its own borders, thus might productively be read as a version of the national checkpoint. Accordingly, it would be important for critical work on literary and cultural representations of the West Bank checkpoint, as in Nurith Gertz, George Khleifi, and Anna Ball, to contextualize the practices of occupation with reference to a longer history of colonization and exile, a history expressed in the experience of the national checkpoint (see Gertz and Khleifi 2005; Ball 2012: 101-30).

Despite thoroughgoing, even overwhelming, literary attention, I don't think anyone has explored the existential, political, and symbolic resonances of the national checkpoint with as much depth and sophistication as Barghouti himself. He devotes entire chapters of *I Saw Ramallah* and its sequel *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* to what became, after the Oslo Accords of 1993, the joint-operated Israeli / Palestinian Authority checkpoint on the Allenby Bridge. Fitting not only as the actual location of Barghouti's return, Allenby Bridge, originally built by the British general Edmund Allenby in 1918, occupies a unique place within the exilic Palestinian imagination. Spanning the River Jordan between Jordan and the West Bank, it is the sole designated entry and exit point, apart from the increasingly difficult checkpoints around Jerusalem, for Palestinian residents of the West Bank. As such, it is overladen with symbolic weight, and might, alongside Ben Gurion and Rafah, be considered a paradigmatic national checkpoint.

* * *

I Saw Ramallah opens with Barghouti in the middle of his passage across Allenby Bridge, across the times and spaces of exile and return. Signalling his 'existentialist materialist aesthetic', he

begins by recording his immediate sensory perceptions of the bridge: 'It is very hot on the bridge', he narrates, 'A drop of sweat slides from my forehead down to the frame of my spectacles, then the lens' (Barghouti 2004: 1). But this process rapidly loses coherence as a 'mist', figuring the superimposition of memories of 'scenes that span a lifetime' on perception, 'envelops what I see', and the 'view' correspondingly 'shimmers' (*ibid*). The chapter, enacting the sudden dislocations of exile, then suddenly transitions to a recollection of Barghouti's original displacement in 1967, which, in turn, leads to more speculative passages on 'the stranger', poetry, and so forth. Such an interplay, or dialectic, of memory and perception structures the rest of Barghouti's account of crossing, indeed, the rest of the memoir, and frames his experience of Allenby in relation to its multiple personal and cultural significations.

Continuing his crossing, Barghouti is directly confronted with the bridge's excess of signification. The names it has been attributed by Palestinians and Jordanians, politicians and 'common people' ('the Bridge of Return', 'the King Hussein Bridge', 'al-Karama Crossing', 'the Allenby Bridge', 'the Bridge'), shower down on the experiencing consciousness, suggesting the agency of various socially, politically, or culturally embedded perspectives in creating, through language, distinct, often divergent, meanings (*ibid*: 10). Such ideological overload gives rise to an interpretive crisis on Barghouti's part: as he crosses, he is unable to decide whether he is experiencing 'a political moment? Or an emotional one? Or social? A practical moment? A surreal one? A moment of the body? Or of the mind?' (*ibid*: 11). Barghouti regains his intellectual and emotional bearings only when he encounters, on the other side of the bridge, an Israeli soldier 'wearing a yarmulke' (*ibid*: 12). Seeing that 'This is a real hat and not a literary conceit', he is thus reminded, as Bernard perceptively argues, of the bridge's 'primary function as a means of political control', that, like the hat, it is 'a real object which enables the soldier to control human traffic into Palestine, not merely a symbol of that control' (*ibid*; Bernard 2007: 672).

Bernard concludes of this episode that it marks Barghouti's attempt to distance himself from the bridge's 'over-determined' symbolism of 'dispossession and occupation', and to 're-narrate' it 'using language which is more attentive to its status as an object producing certain relations between individuals' (*ibid*). I agree with this reading – Barghouti is clearly resisting the sort of abstraction and idealization that would reduce the physical object, like the land itself, into an item on a political agenda. His hypothetical 'Who would dare make it into an abstraction now

that it has declared itself physical to the senses?' applies equally well to the bridge as it does to Palestine, his referent here (Barghouti 2004: 6). But I'd like to suggest that such a re-narration or re-narrativization again represents only the first stage of Barghouti's thinking. It is precisely through his revisionary materialist analysis of the Israeli / Palestinian power dynamic as manifest at Allenby, an analysis actually extended into *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*, that he develops a new, more immanent symbolism of a checkpoint experience defined primarily by exile. To fully grasp Barghouti's complex response to the checkpoint, though, it is first necessary to explore the architecture and functioning of Allenby in greater depth.

In *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (2007), Weizman has provided the most detailed and authoritative study of Israel's multifaceted 'technologies of control' in the geopolitical space of its occupation, of the 'geographical, territorial, urban and architectural' strategies that undergird what he calls 'Israel's continued colonization of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza' (Weizman 2007: 9, 5). Although the book may be criticized for failing to encompass what he acknowledges as 'the century-old process of Zionist colonization, land-grab and dispossession that preceded [1967]', it provides a groundbreaking critique of late-modern practices of colonial occupation, and, as such, should be of high interest to postcolonial scholars, whatever their specializations (*ibid*: 9). One of Weizman's primary areas of interest is the checkpoint, a site of control which, in his analysis, includes those 'border connections between the 'outside' world and the areas handed over', after the Oslo Accords of 1993, 'to limited Palestinian control' – i.e. the national checkpoint (*ibid*: 139). His main concern is with how the architecture of such terminals resolves 'the structural paradox that resulted from the seemingly contradictory desire to enable the functioning of Palestinian autonomy while enabling Israel to maintain overall control of security' (*ibid*). In other words, he is concerned with how relations of power between Israelis and Palestinians are materially embodied, in this case architecturally, at the checkpoint, which then comes to 'diagram' those historical and political relations and their 'structural paradoxes' (*ibid*: 141). Naturally enough, he focuses here on Allenby.

For Weizman, Allenby is a particularly telling case, one which represents 'a new conceptual border', due to its unique architectural features (*ibid*: 144). He explains that the incoming Palestinian, as he enters the terminal's large main hall, sees only 'a Palestinian policeman and a raised Palestinian flag' – according to Article X of the first Annex to the Gaza-Jericho Agreement (Oslo I), no Israeli state insignia are permitted (cited in *ibid*: 140; see also

UNGA/SC 1994). Nevertheless, he continues, the Israeli security presence is ubiquitous, hidden behind the one-way mirrors that scatter the terminal's interconnected rooms and various pathways. They are positioned in such a way so that the 'Israeli security behind them could observe, unseen, not only the Palestinian passengers but also the Palestinian police personnel themselves' (Weizman 2007: 140). As the passenger approaches border control, the Palestinian agent passes his identity and travel documents to concealed Israeli security personnel, who, of course, retain the power to authorize or deny entry on the basis of Israeli law. Metonymic of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian border control, then, internalizes the panoptic gaze, and, in a mechanism of self-discipline, masks Israel's actual sovereignty over space behind a façade of autonomy. A 'diagram of the new power relations articulated throughout the Oslo process', the Allenby checkpoint, Weizman concludes, thus manifests in its architecture the political, economic, and military logic of post-Oslo occupation (*ibid*: 141).

Wulidtu Hunak, Wulidtu Huna (2009), translated by Humphrey Davies as *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2011), is almost uncanny in its closely overlapping depiction of the power dynamic manifest at Allenby. Yet it reframes this dynamic from the perspective of an exilic Palestinian consciousness passed down from generation to generation, creating a new symbolism of the checkpoint along the way. The memoir charts Barghouti's second return to Palestine in 1998, two years after the events of *I Saw Ramallah*, this time accompanied by his 21 year old son Tamim. Similarly structured around a chronological first-person present account of the trip interspersed with disorienting temporal, geographic, and stylistic transitions, its thematic and formal doubling of *I Saw Ramallah*, alongside the doubling implicit in the central father-son relationship, suggests a generational repetition of exilic experience, its cyclically recurring impact on Palestinian consciousness. Again, Barghouti inscribes the experience of exile in his account of the Allenby checkpoint.

Like Weizman, Barghouti approaches Allenby fully conscious of the hollowness of 'all the peace agreements, the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority' that have led to the propagation of 'Palestinian flags in its sky and offices' (Barghouti 2011: 37). 'No one', he writes, piercing through the mystifying function of the UN's designated 'policemen' and 'flags', can pass through the checkpoint, or 'any crossing point into or out of Palestine', 'without an Israeli permit, Israeli stamps, an Israeli security search, and the checking of his or her name against an Israeli blacklist' (*ibid*). Such sovereignty is fortified by the armed Israeli soldiers he

has encountered on his various crossings. 'Ethiopian, Brooklynite, Slavic, Yemeni', the soldiers, he continues, share 'no homogeneity [in] their features' – implying their divergent cultural backgrounds as well as their physical features – except that 'they're all armed' (*ibid*: 32). Constituting 'a nightmare for every Palestinian who crosses the bridge', they, as representatives of Israeli state sovereignty, shatter the cliché that 'bridges are symbols of communication, connection, and coexistence' suggested by Oslo, they collapse Fairuz's romantic notion of Allenby as a 'Bridge of Return' (*ibid*: 32, 33). But Barghouti doesn't content himself with highlighting the discrepancy between the bridge's concrete, material workings and its now failed, worn out symbolism. Contrary to what Bernard argues, he then explicitly overwrites it with a new symbolism: through his materialist analysis, the bridge becomes 'a symbol of discrimination, distance, disunion, and the historic distinction between the frightener and the frightened', 'a great gap, a chasm with teeth' (*ibid*: 33). As a site of 'historic distinction', it reproduces, in monadic form, the enforced separation of the Israeli and the Palestinian that, culminating in the exile of hundreds of thousands during the *Nakba*, consigned the latter to an existence of beggared waiting at the gates of his own heritage. The everyday experience of waiting characteristic of 'crossing points, borders, and checkpoints' thus dramatizes the existential tragedy of waiting, 'year after year and generation after generation', for return (*ibid*: 48).

Enter Tamim, and the transmission of exilic consciousness across the generations. Barghouti's experience of bringing his son to Palestine for the first time is riddled with natural paternal anxiety. Firstly, anxiety about the practicalities of Tamim's crossing: 'Will he', Barghouti worries, 'be subjected to that experience [of interrogation] and its unknown outcomes on his first visit? Will he handle it properly? Will he get agitated and confused?' (*ibid*: 43). Secondly, anxiety about his son's reaction to his alien homeland as he returns 'Palestine to Tamim, and Tamim to Palestine': 'Will it be', he muses, 'like the moment of his birth, on the banks of the Nile, twenty-one years ago? Will it be like the moment when we chose his name?' (*ibid*: 44, 42). Indeed, Barghouti interjects in this passage a detailed account of his son's birth, rendering his first entry into Palestine across the Jordan a ritual performance of consecration through baptism or rebirth, 'the closing of one circle of life and the opening of another' (*ibid*: 42). But a deeper anxiety shakes Barghouti to the core here, that of paternity itself as it is obviated at the checkpoint. 'The crossing point', he explains, 'nullifies the fatherhood of fathers,

the motherhood of mothers, the friendship of friends, and the love of lovers' (*ibid*: 43). Although he is immediately referring to his loss of control over the situation as he surrenders Tamim 'to the jailer', the symbolic gravitas of nullified fatherhood at the physical location of exile and return must not be underestimated (*ibid*: 44). Suggesting the stunted lineage, the loss of connection with ancestry and roots, definitive of exile, the checkpoint becomes a site of generational rupture where fathers and sons, bred on disparate, dislocated cultural memories, lose their means of communication. As a point of return, though, the checkpoint also indicates the possibility of healing, of regaining lost cultural memories, of reliving them through the eyes of future generations. As such, the checkpoint actualizes resistance to those who would eviscerate Palestinian memory and history from the soul of the land – transgressing it in art and politics, theory and practice, is a cultural imperative.

In their co-edited volume *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (2007), Sa'di and abu-Lughod argue that Palestinian memories of the *Nakba*, reflected in literature, historiography, and oral testimony, provide a 'counter-history' of 'the myth of the birth of Israel', and 'criticize the present in the name of a trauma that has hardly begun to be recognized' (Sa'di and abu-Lughod 2007: 6-7). They aim to explore the functioning of 'postmemory', a generational transfer of memory which, through 'imaginative investment and creation', produces unique cathectic charge (*ibid*: 21). Likewise, Masalha, in *The Palestinian Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (2012), argues that, due to widespread attempts at 'Nakba memoricide', the project of reclaiming memory constitutes 'a key site of the ongoing struggle in Palestine-Israel' (Masalha 2012: 10). In this section, I hope to have demonstrated that the national checkpoint, inscribing both fantasies of exclusionary sovereignty and practices of transgressive return, might be considered a front line in the battle over memory. Further, I hope that through my reading of Barghouti, a set of new, critically valuable notions of exile, specifically the temporal and the generational, have clearly emerged. I take these to contribute to a wider, post-Saidian theory of exile that, premised on a history of colonization and *Nakba* as crystallized in the checkpoint, articulates a crucial new direction for Postcolonial Studies.

3. Colonial History in Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses*

As I've shown through my reading of Barghouti, the multiple displacements that comprise my post-Saidian theory of exile all originate in the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948. To complete my articulation of this theory, then, it is necessary to explore the *Nakba*, and the Zionist colonial history that preceded and gave rise to it, in greater depth.

For Palestinians, the *Nakba* is a foundational site of crisis in at least three distinct senses. Firstly, it is a site of national crisis. Comprising what Walid Khalidi estimates as the forced displacement of 714-744,000 Palestinians from their homes, the destruction of 418 villages, and the depopulation of 11 urban centres, the *Nakba* is synonymous with the annihilation of Palestinian society, culture, and history, and led to the 'territorial' and 'ontological' modes of dispossession identified by Williams.[3] Secondly, it is the site of a crisis of representation. As Said explains in *After the Last Sky*, the *Nakba*, by fragmenting Palestinian society, detaching it from its cultural and territorial roots, shattered the possibility of continuous, organic narrative – like the Holocaust, it is a trauma too vast to be encompassed within coherent aesthetic form. Further, it has been subject to widespread, ideologically motivated denial – what Williams calls 'narrative dispossession' – so attempts at representation must contend with both the geopolitical invisibility of the Palestinians and the material limitations imposed on the circulation of their story in global culture. And thirdly, it is the site of a crisis of historiography. The *Nakba* marks not only the loss of Palestine, but also the loss of the historical record of continued Palestinian existence across the centuries. Already in 1948, the Haganah, as part of 'Plan Dalet', stole numerous private collections of manuscripts and tens of thousands of Palestinian books. This process was replicated during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, when the Israeli army looted the Palestine Research Centre's 'Beirut Archive' of 25,000 bound volumes and subsequently bombed the Centre itself, and again in 2001, when the Israeli government closed the Orient House in East Jerusalem and confiscated its 'Jerusalem Archive' of 17,000 books and 200,000 hard copies of original documents.[4] Described by Williams in terms of

[3] See note 1 above for varying estimates as to the extent of the *Nakba*.

[4] For an overview of the theft of Palestine's archives and historical records, see Masalha's *The Palestinian Nakba* (2012), 135-47.

'historiographical dispossession', such assaults amount to a monumental erasure of Palestine's national heritage, of evidenced Palestinian claims to land, property, and identity.

Beyond its intrinsic tragedy, the loss of Palestine's historical record has paved the way for the hegemony of an alien narrative about the *Nakba*, that of, in Benny Morris' coinage, the Israeli 'New Historians' (Morris 1988). With the opening of Israel's military archives in the 1980s, the New Historians, including Morris himself, Shlaim, Ilan Pappé, and, more recently, Sand, were able to definitively confirm what Palestinian historians had been arguing for decades, that the Palestinian exodus of 1948 was not a voluntary action. In a self-defined project of rejuvenation and redress, they thus countered Israel's recalcitrant and long-entrenched official denial of any responsibility for the *Nakba*. Yet much of this revisionist history is premised on its own denial of the existence of workable Palestinian archives. For Morris, who fails to take account of the systematic destruction of such archives, Palestinians produced no '"state" papers', they have no '*documentation* [on 1948] of the sort historians must rely on' (Morris 1994: 42). Of the limited Palestinian material Morris, lacking Arabic, has been able to access, he claims it is 'slight, unreliable, tendentious, imaginative and occasionally fantastical' (*ibid*: 43). Few other New Historians use Palestinian sources in any extended way. A history told from the standpoint of the victor, one which explicitly silences the voice of its victims, is bound to be one-sided, and, indeed, the New Historical approach to the *Nakba* has largely obscured the teleology of Zionist settler-colonialism even while questioning Zionist myths of voluntary Palestinian departure.

The main line of New Historical thinking about the *Nakba* interprets it, as Masalha ironically summarizes, in terms of ''shared responsibility' for the Palestinians over their catastrophe' (Masalha 2012: 170). In *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (1987), the grouping's pivotal work, Morris explains that 'The Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design, Jewish or Arab. It was largely a by-product of Arab and Jewish fears and of the protracted, bitter fighting that characterised the first Israeli-Arab war; in smaller part, it was the deliberate creation of Jewish and Arab military commanders and politicians' (Morris 1987: 286). Shlaim, taking up Morris' 'shared responsibility' argument, likewise insists on 'the part played by the Palestinians themselves in the disaster that eventually overwhelmed them' (Shlaim 2009: 59). Apart from the thoroughly offensive implications of, in Said's phrase, 'blaming the victims' – equivalent to blaming European Jewry for the Holocaust – this approach, as Masalha again delineates, allows the New Historians to read the *Nakba* in terms of 'a clash of

two legitimate nationalisms', and thus to deny the Right of Return (Said and Hitchens 1988; Masalha 2012: 170).[5] At best, the New History elicits a 'liberal Zionism' that criticizes the Occupation while ignoring its root causes. At worst, it negates the causal priority of Zionist colonization from the 1880s in a gradual process of Palestinian dispossession that culminated, rather than originated, in the events of 1948.

In his groundbreaking study *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), Pappé, sharply and quite publicly breaking from Morris, has sought to interrupt the New Historical narrative of 'shared responsibility'. It is precisely because, he argues, Morris 'exclusively relied on documents from Israeli military archives' that he 'ended up with a very partial picture of what happened on the ground' (Pappé 2006: xv). 'Had Morris and others', Pappé continues, 'used Arab sources or turned to oral history, they might have been able to get a better grasp of the systematic planning behind the expulsion of the Palestinians in 1948 and provide a more truthful description of the enormity of the crimes the Israeli soldiers committed' (*ibid*). His main object of contention is 'Plan Dalet', set in place on the 10th of March, 1948 by the Zionist 'high command' in Palestine, specifically David Ben-Gurion (born in Poland as David Grün) and his colonial militia, the Haganah. He takes Morris to task for reading Plan Dalet as a defence strategy in the event of war – for Morris, the plan states that it is only 'In the event of resistance [that] the armed forces in the village should be destroyed and the inhabitants should be expelled from the state' (Morris 1987: 63). By turning to Arab sources, Pappé, like Palestinian historians such as Walid Khalidi, Rashid Khalidi, abu-Sitta, and Masalha, extensively demonstrates that Plan Dalet was in fact consciously designed for the systematic expulsion of the native, two-thirds majority Palestinian population. Moreover, it comprised one of the most flagrant and least acknowledged acts of ethnic cleansing in the 20th century: 'When it created its nation-state', he concludes, 'the Zionist movement did not wage a war that 'tragically but inevitably' led to the expulsion of 'parts of' the indigenous population, but the other way round: the main goal was the

[5] For Said's more extended critique of the New Historians, especially Morris, see his article 'New History, Old Ideas' (1998). There, he argues that although Morris provided substantial proof of the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians in *The Birth of the Refugee Problem*, he was 'reluctant to draw the inevitable conclusions from his own evidence', remaining 'enough of a Zionist to believe the ideological version – that Palestinians left on their own without Israeli eviction' (Said 1998b).

ethnic cleansing of all of Palestine, which the movement coveted for its new state' (Pappé 2006: xvi).[6]

In the years since the publication of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, Pappé's intervention, as well as mounting archival evidence, has led Morris to revise his earlier views. Like Pappé, he now concedes that an explicit program to uproot the Palestinian population was in place before 1948. But, unlike Pappé or indeed anyone but the most hardened of Zionist ideologues, he has actually endorsed the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, arguing that 'There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing' (Shavit 2004). He continues:

> That is what Zionism faced. A Jewish state would not have come into being without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians. Therefore it was necessary to uproot them. There was no choice but to expel that population. It was necessary to cleanse the hinterland and cleanse the border areas and cleanse the main roads. It was necessary to cleanse the villages from which our convoys and out settlements were fired on (*ibid*).

As I hope is evident, this rhetorical move on Morris' part brings into the clear light of day the Zionist logic implicit all along in the New Historian's 'shared responsibility' argument – that attributing blame to the victims is a means of evading responsibility for the crimes, bordering on the genocidal, committed in the name of Israel, thus of foreclosing the possibility of justice.

Taking Pappe's lead, recent Palestinian historiography has turned to oral history in order to rectify the errors and oversights of the hegemonic discourse produced by Morris, Shlaim, *et al*, to allow the silenced Palestinian voice to once again be heard in accounts of its own story. Masalha, stating the case most urgently, argues that 'Palestinian oral history […] is a significant methodology not only for the construction of an alternative, counter-hegemonic history of the Nakba and memories of the lost historic Palestine but also for an ongoing indigenous life, living Palestinian practices and a sustained human ecology and liberation' (Masalha 2012: 212). In short, 'oral history is a particularly useful decolonising methodology' (*ibid*: 213). Likewise, Sa'di and abu-Lughod argue that Palestinian memory, as reflected in oral testimony 'made public', counters the 'historical truth' defined by the 'narratives, documents, and archives of the victors', that, 'by dint of its preservation and social production under the conditions of its

[6] In *The Invention of the Jewish People* (2009) and its follow-up, *The Invention of the Land of Israel* (2012), Sand likewise breaks from the dominant line of New Historical thinking about the *Nakba*. But he takes his analysis back further than even Pappé, back to the 'myths' of Jewish exile, genealogical descent, and the 'historical right' to Palestine that constitute the founding ideology for the establishment of the state of Israel.

silencing by the thundering story of Zionism', it contributes to 'a counter-history' (Sa'di and abu-Lughod 2007: 6).

For Postcolonial Studies to fulfil its remit of engaging with Palestine's 'colonial present' through the sort of sustained interrogation of the past prescribed by Loomba *et al*, it seems to me essential to understand that past from the Palestinian perspective as voiced through oral history. Postcolonial scholars such as Gregory and Morton have begun this process by turning to the colonial underpinnings of the *Nakba*. In a wider-ranging analysis of the 'war on terror' in the Middle East, Gregory grounds his critique of Israel's current and expanding project of colonizing the West Bank in 'the colonial past', explicitly asserting that 'The Zionist dream of uniting the diaspora in a Jewish state was by its very nature a colonial project' (Gregory 2004: 78; see also 76-106). Drawing on Gregory's model, Morton, for his part, focuses on how Israel's 'political and legal techniques' of occupation are directly derived from emergency measures imposed on the Palestinian population during the British Mandate (Morton 2013: 174). Arguing that much recent scholarship critical of the Occupation fails to 'address the specific colonial history of these emergency regulations', he seeks, very much along the lines set out by Said, Pappé, and Palestinian historiography, to re-read Zionism as 'a settler colonial ideology that developed in the shadow of European anti-Semitism' (*ibid*: 174, 175). And, further contributing to the project of oral history, he suggests that the 'collective voice' reflected in Palestinian literatures of the *Nakba*, specifically those of Kanafani and Khoury, 'is crucial for […] the light it sheds on how Zionism was regarded as synonymous with European colonialism from the standpoint of its victims' (*ibid*: 180).

In this section, I build on this work, especially Morton's, and explore how Palestinian literature registers and reflects the collective Palestinian voice, how it contributes to Masalha's project of decolonizing history. I focus on the historical novel, and take Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Zaman al Khuyul al-Bayda'* (2007), translated by Nancy Roberts as *Time of White Horses* (2012), as an exemplary case study. By tracing in minute detail the effects of Zionist colonization from the 1880s on traditional Palestinian village life, Nasrallah has provided in this novel the most expansive literary representation of the *Nakba* and its colonial pre-history we currently possess. He thus seeks to resolve what might be considered, in Franco Moretti's terms, the 'symbolic problem' of the invisibility of the *Nakba* in global culture (Moretti 1996: 233). To do so, he appropriates the European genre of historical fiction, and re-inflects it with the

Palestinian voice. I argue that this attempt only results in a contradictory, fragmented, riven form. On the one hand, historiographical dispossession demands a counter-history of epic scale, one that roots the *Nakba* in at least as far back as the 1880s. Although Nasrallah grounds his narrative of the destruction of Palestinian society in this period in oral history, such scale, in turn, necessitates the allegorical, mythic register he employs throughout. On the other hand, he, as if to offset the corresponding lack of interiority, interjects a series of actual oral testimonies from survivors across the narrative via a compensatory historical register. Thus divided between the mythic and the historical, *Time of White Horses*, in attempting to produce Palestinian historical fiction as form, ends up reproducing the crisis of Palestinian representation in the form of historical fiction. Suggesting the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of historical narrative, *Time of White Horses*, I conclude, foregrounds the impossibility of aesthetic resolution in the Palestinian case without a national resolution in the form of return.

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Direct literary treatment of Palestine before the *Nakba* is a relatively new departure in Palestinian literature. Of course, the mythologization of Palestine as a lost Eden has become, especially through Darwish's poetry, something of a dominant trope. Indeed, it may be said that Darwish's poetics, hinging on an interplay between presence and absence, between the plenitude of a symbolic, prelapsarian world where 'We and our country are one flesh and bone' and an exilic present through whose suffering the past is refracted, maps classic Palestinian literature's predisposition towards elegiac, nostalgic, and memorial modes (Darwish 2006). Such interplay is reflected in the form of classic novels such as Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, Habiby's *Saeed the Pessoptimist*, and Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*. In all three cases, characters' memories of their country before 1948 constantly encroach on the narrative present, interrupting, or fragmenting, the flow of narrative, and adding poignant personal and historical context to their experiences of exile.[7] Further, Palestinian memoirs are often strongly committed to reproducing the pre-48 life-

[7] For a detailed account of memorial modes of Palestinian storytelling, see Saloul's *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination* (2012). There, Saloul argues that such modes, including what he specifies as 'fragmented narrativity', 'exilic narrativity', and 'performative narrativity', have 'a performative function in the precarious preservation of cultural optimism […] in the face of the ongoing catastrophe' (Saloul 2012: 6). In other words, they preserve cultural memories of the *Nakba* under the conditions of exile, thus work towards reconstituting an injured, traumatized, fragmented subjectivity.

world in all its social and political complexity. Jabra's *The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood* (1987; trans. 1995), Said's *Out of Place*, and Shehadeh's *A Rift in Time: Travels with My Ottoman Uncle* (2010), among many others, all memorialize a history under erasure by charting personal or familial trajectories of loss with unique affective force.

In all these cases, the representation of pre-48 Palestine is mediated by a memorializing authorial or character-based consciousness. As Saloul, Hammer, and others argue, such mediation certainly fulfils an important function in response to a contemporary crisis of memory. But, apart from in Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses* and a few other cases, direct fictional representation of this history remains lacking.[8] In a recent address delivered at the University of Sheffield, Nasrallah, referring to the novels of Kanafani, Habiby, and Jabra, suggests that this is a deeply unfortunate omission in the Palestinian imagination. '[A] work that expresses what happened to the Palestinians', he continues, is essential for countering aspirations towards the erasure of their cultural memory of the sort reflected in Ben-Gurion's dictum that 'the old will die and the young will forget' (Nasrallah 2012b). To add to Nasrallah's political claims for Palestinian historical fiction, we might also consider the phenomenology of reader response. As Wolfgang Iser explains, the activity of reading a literary text is a 'creative process' that, by activating 'our own faculties', enables us 'to recreate the world it presents' – reading, that is, positions the reader as an active producer of the world projected by the text, thus situating him as an immediate subject of experience (Iser 1980: 54). In the case of a text such as Nasrallah's, reading, following the phenomenological approach, prompts imaginative identification with the experiences of pre-48 Palestinians faced with colonization and gradual dispossession. Thus carrying the potential to both preserve cultural memory and stimulate enhanced understanding of the *Nakba*, *Time of White Horses*, it seems to me, demands special postcolonial attention.

Time of White Horses is the penultimate in a series of seven novels that make up what Nasrallah calls his 'Palestinian tragicomedy', and was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2009 (Nasrallah 2012a: ix). Loosely modelled on Honoré de Balzac's *La*

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[8] The only other such novels I know of are Khoury's *As Though She Were Sleeping* (2007; trans. 2011) and Sahar Khalifeh's *Of Noble Origins* (2009; trans. 2012). *As Though She Were Sleeping* is set in the Nazareth and Jaffa of the mid-1940s, and, recalling William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930), interweaves in modernist fashion a young woman's, Meelya's, dreams of the past, present, and future as the catastrophe rapidly approaches. *Of Noble Origins* is set in the Palestine of the 1930s, and, retrospectively narrated from the perspective of a young girl yet to be born, explores the double threats of British sovereignty and Zionist colonization as they impact the representative Qahtan family leading up to the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-39.

Comédie humaine (1842), the 'tragicomedy' spans 250 years of Palestinian history and aims to reflect 'the very nature' of the Palestinian people through dedicated attention to a specific aspect of their experience in each volume (Lea 2007). In a 2007 interview for *The Guardian*, Nasrallah, recalling Said's and Barghouti's projects of 'patching together', explains that:

> A Palestinian living in the Gaza Strip, for example has experienced different political and social conditions to those experienced by another living on the West Bank. […] The same goes for Palestinians living in the diaspora, or in Jordan, Lebanon or Syria. In fact, I would say there are Palestinian peoples, and not a single Palestinian people. Nevertheless, there is one thing common among them: one dream, one destiny and one homeland (*ibid*).

Of his fourteen other novels, only two have appeared in translation, *Prairies of Fever* (1985; trans. 1993) and *Inside the Night* (1992; trans. 2007). Neither of these returns to pre-48 Palestine, focusing instead on the nightmarish experiences, depicted through a lyrical stream-of-consciousness, of exiled Palestinians throughout the Arabian Peninsula. *Time of White Horses* thus occupies a unique place within Nasrallah's oeuvre as well as within the canon of Palestinian literature.

Time of White Horses tells the story of the Palestinians' loss of their homeland. It covers the period from the 1880s to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and charts the increasingly violent impact of successive Ottoman, British, and Zionist claims to sovereignty on the fictional village of Hadiya. Nasrallah locates Hadiya, Arabic for 'peaceful', just west of Jerusalem, on what is now the Israeli side of the Green Line. Based on the author's own village before his family's displacement in 1948, it thus serves an allegorical function with respect to Palestine as a whole. It is the focal point of the narrative, and, through the story of Hajj Mahmud, the village elder, and his multigenerational family, most notably the resistance leader Hajj Khaled, Nasrallah devotes considerable narrative attention to detailing its factually derived customs, horse lore, social relations, agricultural economy, and so forth. Nasrallah grounds his fictional representation in fact by directly transcribing, in a series of italicized passages, oral testimonies from 'witnesses who had been uprooted from their homeland and […] presented [him] with detailed accounts of the lives they had lived in Palestine' (Nasrallah 2012a: ix). Of special concern to the author is creating a sense of the Palestinian villagers' symbiotic, Edenic relation to their land, a relation symbolized by their reverence for their horses, and gradually broken by the violence of colonial history. While the Ottomans are depicted as an abstract presence, more

interested in tax collection than in control, the British military, whose contradictions and excesses are captured in the historical figure General Edward Peterson, and Zionist colonization soon emerge as Hadiya's, and Palestine's, vastly more dangerous antagonists. A sense of the inevitable looms throughout the narrative as the villagers of Hadiya witness, despite their legal and military attempts at resistance, the growth of an armed Zionist settlement on their farmland. In an outcome long foreshadowed by Nasrallah, the settlement, with British support, eventually overwhelms Hadiya, and its villagers, with all the weight of cultural memory they carry in their persons, are either massacred or expelled. Dedicated to 'their memory', *Time of White Horses* thus also seeks to preserve their memory for a justice to come (*ibid*: x).

In *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez* (1996), Moretti suggests that the postcolonial novel resolves the 'symbolic problem' of Weberian disenchantment in European literature (Moretti 1996: 233). Discussing Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967; trans. 1970), a story of the 'incorporation' of 'an isolated community […] in the modern world-system', he argues that it does so by 're-enchanting' the process of modernization from the perspective of the periphery (*ibid*: 243, 250). *Time of White Horses* might fruitfully be read along similar lines. In this case, the 'symbolic problem' is the invisibility of the *Nakba* in global culture. As this signifies a *failure* of 'incorporation' – the Palestinians, as exiles or stateless refugees, remain excluded from the world-system – Nasrallah's resolution is to inscribe their story, their voice, into the narrative of world history by appropriating the European genre of historical fiction, and re-inflecting it from the Palestinian perspective. To assess Nasrallah's contribution to a Palestinian counter-history, then, it is first necessary to trace the trajectory of generic influence and revision that shapes *Time of White Horses*.

Like its author (family exiled from Palestine in 1948 – born in Jordan in 1954 – lived in Saudi Arabia before returning to Amman) and the material text (written in Amman – translated by the American University in Cairo Press – worlded through English), the form of *Time of White Horses* maps a transnational circuit of cultural exchange, of generic travelling across the borders of nation, language, and culture. As mentioned above, Nasrallah identifies Balzac as a key model for his project of crafting a Palestinian historical fiction, and also cites Victor Hugo, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dickens, and Goethe as influences (see Nasrallah 2012b). Nasrallah's penchant for Balzac can be readily explained if we take into account Georg Lukács'

reading of the French realist in his magisterial study of *The Historical Novel* (1962). For Lukács, Balzac perfected the genre initiated by Walter Scott, the 'broad, objective, epic' genre that, by portraying 'the struggles and antagonisms of history by means of characters who […] represent social trends and historical forces', gives 'living human embodiment' to history (Lukács 1962: 31, 33, 34). Although Balzac 'at times surpasses his master in [his] realistic portrayal[s]', his more substantial contribution, Lukács continues, consists of his development of a historical fiction that 'passes from the portrayal of *past history*', as in Scott, to 'the portrayal of the *present as history*' (*ibid*: 93, 94). Most extensively demonstrated in *La Comédie humaine*, it is not difficult to understand Nasrallah's attraction to a Balzacian aesthetic that, beyond its broad historical sweep, situates the present as a continuous historical process rooted in, reproducing, and potentially transforming the past.

Of course, Nasrallah's appropriation of European historical fiction is not 'pure' or direct, but rather mediated by the genre's postcolonial refashioning in, pivotally, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), a novel to which *Time of White Horses* bears significant resemblance. As Richard Lane usefully summarizes, Achebe's achievement in *Things Fall Apart* lies in his resistance to Eurocentric 'modes of analysis and representation', especially the individualism characteristic of its literature, preferring instead to represent Umuofia from the perspective of a local metaphysics of communal identity, cyclical temporality, and tribal spatiality (Lane 2006: 37). He thus produces, in John Thieme's terms, a 'revisionist fictional history' or 'alternative historiography' (Thieme 2001: 18, 19). Closer to home, Naguib Mahfouz's *The Cairo Trilogy* (1956-57; trans. 1990-92) engages in exactly this sort of generic revisioning from a broadly Middle Eastern perspective, replacing, as Sabry Hafez notes, the European 'individual' with 'the family and the collective' at the core of the narrative (Hafez 2001: xiii). Given its comparable ambition and scope, *Time of White Horses* should be contextualized as a Palestinian extension of such revisionist, or postcolonial, historical fiction. But, due to the problems and crises attendant on Palestinian representation, it is an extension that results in a uniquely contradictory form.

For Nasrallah, the erasure of Palestinian cultural memory demands a counter-history of epic scale, one that, by rooting the narrative of that erasure in at least as far back as the 1880s, firmly establishes an embedded and organic Palestinian society in a teleology of loss culminating in the *Nakba*, and daily reproduced in the various attempts at historiographical dispossession. In this way, he seeks to preserve Palestinian memory for a cultural project of redress, as well as for

an ethical and political project of justice. But, the very scale of this counter-history necessitates, in turn, an allegorical or mythic register in order to traverse, within the confines of the novel form, seventy years of the most complex societal transformation vis-à-vis a multitude of interconnected domestic and foreign agents. Correspondingly, Nasrallah's depiction of traditional village society is idealizing and static, lacking in the realism of internal conflict, his characterization simplistic, devoid of depth or interiority, and his rendering of political conflict reductive, with 'good' and 'bad' posited as an absolute moral dualism according to which actions are judged. In a word, Nasrallah's narrative, due to its necessarily mythic register, lacks interiority.

Nasrallah's idealization of village life is indicated from the first sentence of *Time of White Horses*, 'A perfect miracle had taken on flesh' (Nasrallah 2012a: 3). While directly referring to Hamama, the white horse which suddenly manifests in Hadiya, a 'mass of light' symbolizing the 'free spirit', this sentence is also suggestive of Hadiya, or Palestine, itself (*ibid*: 4). Hamama had been stolen two days earlier and, upon her arrival in their village, Hajj Mahmud and his son Khaled set out to retrieve her and restore the balance of nature her theft had disrupted. 'Don't you know', Khaled implores, 'that to steal a mare is tantamount to stealing someone's soul?' (*ibid*). Shortly thereafter, Hamama's rightful owners arrive from a neighbouring village, and, after an elaborate ritual of welcoming and exchange, she is handed back to them as per custom (see *ibid*: 29-33). Both allegorizing and exemplifying the dynamic on which the rest of the narrative hinges, this opening episode posits a law of ownership sanctified by an organic, symbiotic relationship with nature or land, policed through the observance of custom, and threatened only by abstract external agents who would claim possession by force.

This idealizing tendency runs throughout Nasrallah's representation of Hadiya, its customs, internal politics, agricultural economy, and so forth. Especially telling is his account of Hadiya's gender relations. An early chapter, 'Things Forbidden', retrospectively tells the story of Mahmud's marriage to Munira, and sets a pattern repeated time and again as the narrative progresses from one generation to the next. The chapter opens with what seems like a non sequitur: 'In Hajj Mahmud's household […] the only thing that was never allowed at any time was to insult a woman or a mare' (*ibid*: 38). This comparison, also repeated throughout the narrative, sets the scene for the ensuing description of marriage as a patriarchal and asymmetric

exchange of property. In an almost exact instance of what Claude Lévi-Strauss calls the 'alliance theory' of kinship relations, Mahmud's and Munira's fathers, in order to cement ties between their two prominent families, are described as having agreed on the exchange of the fourteen year old girl, deemed 'free of all defects', for a dowry of '180 piasters to be delivered to the wife in cash' (*ibid*: 39).[9] Certainly, Nasrallah's narration here is not free from a hint of irony. Yet he presents Munira as a character whose only concern both before and after marriage is with being 'a real housewife' – that is, with cooking and attending to the children (*ibid*: 40). In a process by which she has unconsciously internalized her own commodification, her identity is thus reduced to that of a surface image projected by a series of male figures. It's not the historical accuracy of Nasrallah's account of Islamic marriage practices in mid-19th century Palestine that is in question here. Rather, it's the way in which he, due to his mythic register, deprives Munira of subjectivity, and thereby reproduces and naturalizes such practice through form.[10] In other words, his picture of social relations in Hadiya is static, lacking in internal conflict, so fails to live up to his professed Balzacian model of historical fiction, at least as understood by Lukács.

This is not to say that in Nasrallah's world Palestinians are not capable of evil. Indeed, Nasrallah almost invents a new form of narrative abjection for the figures of Habbab and his double al-Hamdi, collaborators with, respectively, the Ottomans and the British. The pattern of Nasrallah's scathing, unredeeming characterization is set in the chapter 'A Third of Life!'. In this chapter, Habbab, having been enlisted by the Ottomans as a tax collector and ordered to 'humiliate those who have the audacity to raise their voices in protest, making separatist demands', sets out to acquire a wife (*ibid*: 27). In what Nasrallah presents as a direct extension of Habbab's ill-gained power into the realm of the social, he does so by force. He demands of the young girl's family that 'I want her ready by Thursday morning', and, having 'wrested her away from them against their will', brings his wedding ceremony to a climax by shooting his stumbling horse (*ibid*: 59). Again exploiting the uncomfortable linkage discussed above,

[9] See Lévi-Strauss' *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969).

[10] A more focused feminist approach to Palestinian culture, such as Ball's in *Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (2012), would no doubt find such passages in *Time of White Horses* of high interest. In Ball's terms, Nasrallah's novel might appear to hark back to certain patriarchal discourses of Palestinian nationalism, discourses that, while resisting 'hegemonic colonial narratives', 'bear their own sites of silencing' (Ball 2012: 3). I would not disagree with such a reading, but would argue that rather than being derived from any patriarchal prejudice on Nasrallah's part, the sort of silencing evident in his novel is determined by the constraints of his use of form and genre.

Nasrallah uses this episode to demonstrate that unnatural power, power derived from external sources, is equivalent to a rupture in the unmediated relationship with nature as symbolized by women and horses. In this way, he establishes a stark, reductive dualism between the 'good', Palestinians who honour natural law, and the 'bad', any external agent who would transgress the dictates of such law.

Nasrallah continues to categorize Palestinians according to this dualism, all-too-transparently positioning al-Hamdi as Habbab's post-Ottoman narrative heir by having him take possession of the latter's house (see *ibid*: 327-32). Moreover, he then expands it into an overarching normative framework for addressing colonial history *per se*. Successively, the Ottomans, the Greek Orthodox Church, the British, and the Zionists are all figured in terms of their violent impact on the Palestinians' rooted and sacrosanct cultural identity, whether this takes the form of tax collection, religious conversion, land acquisition, civil law, martial law, or armed settlement.[11] In Nasrallah's reading, colonial history in Palestine amounts to the British assertion, backed by law and the military, that 'These lands don't belong to you. They belong to the state', and the Zionist assertion, backed by the British, that 'This is our land. The Lord promised it to us' (*ibid*: 321, 613). Likewise, he sums up the authentic Palestinian voice in the simple, unshakeable nobility of Khaled's assertion, against the force of such claims, that 'I'm not fighting to win. I'm fighting to preserve what's rightfully mine' (*ibid*: 458). Thus reducing seventy years of the most complex history into a mythic battle between good and evil, Nasrallah ends up dramatically simplifying the very society whose cultural memory he is trying to preserve.

It almost appears, then, a compensatory mechanism for this mythic register that Nasrallah introduces into *Time of White Horses* a series of directly transcribed passages of oral testimony, signified by italics, along with a series of quasi-academic historical footnotes and numerous allusions to historical figures, events, and battles. These testimonies are mainly concentrated in the novel's long 'Book Two: Earth', which, in the author's words, 'addresses the decade of the 1930s which was set ablaze by the 1936-39 revolt' (Nasrallah 2012b). They range in subject matter from medicine, matrimony, mourning, and modernization in the traditional Palestinian

[11] As the textual evidence for my argument here is too vast to cite, suffice it to draw the reader's attention to a few exemplary passages: Ottoman tax collection (141-54); Orthodox Church missionary practices (34-7); Church land acquisition (71-4, 485-95); British civil law (319-22, 504-9); British martial law (443-51); and armed Zionist settlement (319-22, 333-36, 577-623).

village to historical battles with British and Zionist forces, and likewise vary in length from single sentences interjected in the midst of narration to entire chapters. Their effect is always to supplement the events Nasrallah is narrating, to ground his fictional representation in facts gleaned from witnesses and survivors, rather than to add original material. As such, they, like the scattered, unsystematic footnotes on General Edward Peterson, the symbolism of the keffiyeh, the Palestinian Revolt, and so forth, serve no function in a narratological sense – they do not contribute to the unfolding causality of the *histoire*, and, strictly speaking unnecessary, they interrupt its flow, leaving it in fragments.

A particularly telling instance occurs very late in the novel, in a chapter entitled 'Hadiya by Night'. By this point in the narrative, set during the *Nakba* itself, the neighbouring settlement had already overwhelmed Hadiya, and the preceding chapter describes a Zionist assault in which the village is razed. 'Hadiya by Night' opens by shifting focus to Naji, Khaled's son and a representative of the third generation of Mahmud's family, who had been imprisoned in Jerusalem for resistance activities thus is 'the last person to reach Hadiya' (Nasrallah 2012a: 599). This technique is successful – it allows Nasrallah to foreground the full traumatic impact of Hadiya's destruction by focalizing it through the eyes of a character who had hitherto seen only its prime. Thus 'The shock was almost unbearable' (*ibid*: 600). Nasrallah continues:

> There was no one. Fire was consuming many of the houses. Dead bodies filled the streets. When he came to the place where his house had been, he didn't find it. It had been blown up. Nothing was left of it but scattered rocks. He began digging with his hands in a search for some clue as to what had happened and what had become of his wife and children.
>
> There was nothing but ruins (*ibid*: 601).

Rather than, though, exploiting this solid and highly charged focalization by following Naji as he searches for his family, Nasrallah instead chooses to continue the chapter by suddenly shifting to an oral account of the destruction of another village, along with the political observations on the British, Zionist, and Arab leaderships such remembering entails. Certainly, this passage is equally, if not more charged with affect. As the witness, bringing to mind Ernest Hemingway's aesthetic of understatement, recounts:

> *The entire village square was before me. There was no light at all, as if the entire night had been concentrated there in the square. But I could still see. Or maybe I wasn't seeing. Maybe I was just*

hearing, but it seemed as though I could see the sound that was moving from place to place. When I fired the first volley, I realized I'd hit one of them. I didn't know whether I killed him (*ibid*: 602-3).

But, by attempting to situate Hadiya's fate in the wider historical context of the *Nakba*, Nasrallah's interjection of this testimony here has the narrative effect of attenuating or forestalling the climax of Hadiya's tragic circle.

As I've argued, such testimonies and the historical register they represent serve another sort of function, generic rather than narratological – they compensate for the mythic register that, by necessity of his novel's epic scope, defines Nasrallah's attempt to forge a Palestinian historical fiction. Thus formally riven between the mythic and the historical, *Time of White Horses* inscribes the crisis of Palestinian representation in the form of historical fiction. Discussing Lebanese literature, Said, in a phrase that might fruitfully be extended to the Palestinian, has described the novel more broadly as 'a form recording its own impossibility' (Said 1990: 142). Expanding from Said, Clearly has argued that despite Palestinian literature's strong compulsion towards a social realism that promises, through 'thick description and vigilant social observation', a 'full and faithful account' of a Palestinian history under erasure, these very conditions of erasure make such a form 'most difficult to realise' (Cleary 2002: 194). It is because, he continues, the Palestinians 'are a scattered and stateless people' that 'the demand for the 'big' or synoptic all-encompassing novel should seem so pressing' (*ibid*). This same reason, in turn, 'makes it exceptionally difficult to produce the 'big' novel that would bind these scattered communities into the coherence of a single narrative' (*ibid*). Cleary concludes that rather than abandoning social realism, classic Palestinian literature has rather 'shot through' the realist drive with an Adornian 'modernist sensibility' – in other words, the 'ruptures and contradictions' evident in novels by Kanafani, Habiby, and Anton Shammas mark, via a critical negativity, the form of the historical injustice by which they were produced (*ibid*: 196).[12]

[12] Although I've criticized Cleary for employing the partition paradigm as a framework for interpreting Palestinian literature, I take his reading here to be exemplary. This is precisely because it bears, at least at this stage of his argument, no significant relation to partition. His thesis regarding the modernist form of Palestinian literature derives from an essentially Saidian theory of exile as the condition of both the possibility and impossibility of such, and, as I've shown, Said understands exile as a consequence of the *Nakba* rather than partition. Cleary's deviation here from partition demonstrates the difficulties of incorporating Palestine in Postcolonial Studies – while he needs partition to link Palestine to other more acceptable postcolonial contexts, his reading implicitly shows that Palestinian literature doesn't fit this model. In other words, this methodological contradiction in *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State* is symptomatic of entrenched postcolonial resistance to Palestine.

In this section, I've shown that Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses* explicitly attempts just such a 'big', all-encompassing novel that binds scattered Palestinians in a coherent narrative of loss. As with the novels of Kanafani *et al*, this attempt has resulted in its own formal ruptures and contradictions. But rather than being woven into its aesthetic through an Adornian modernist sensibility, the contradictions of *Time of White Horses* are the unintended consequence of Nasrallah's Lukácsian historical sensibility. *Time of White Horses*, then, rewrites the crisis of Palestinian representation – the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of historical narrative – in the form of historical fiction. While its form, as in Kanafani, signifies *Nakba* and exile, Nasrallah's novel thus also foregrounds the impossibility of aesthetic resolution in the Palestinian case without the national resolution of return.

Conclusion

Derived from my readings of Barghouti and Nasrallah, the post-Saidian theory of exile I have developed across this chapter takes us back to a colonial history that culminated in the *Nakba* and gave rise to the multiple forms of displacement that characterize contemporary Palestinian existence. In doing so, post-Saidian exile insists on a justice premised on return. This ethical, political, and existential imperative is embedded in the essentially exilic forms of Palestinian literature. Transcribing its own impossibility, Palestinian literature also inscribes the impossibility of a Palestinian aesthetic without return. For Postcolonial Studies to fulfil its political remit as well as faithfully encompass Palestinian literature, it should thus return to the critical colonial history-*Nakba*-exile linkage I've delineated through my post-Saidian theory of exile.

Chapter Three

Publishing the 'Rogue State':
Hisham Matar and Libyan Literature in Translation

Having laid the groundwork of my post-Saidian intervention into Postcolonial Studies in Chapters One and Two, I develop here, and in Chapters Four and Five, a wider post-Orientalist intervention in Anglo-American discourses of politics, gender, and religion in the Middle East. Respectively, I focus on publishing, reception, and translation as material practices by which dominant discourses are reproduced in literary culture, and trace, through my critical practice of post-Orientalist comparatism, how Middle Eastern writers engage such discourses, how they mediate between 'East' and West', through their use of novelistic form. I cumulatively argue that Hisham Matar, Yasmin Crowther, and Orhan Pamuk, like Ibrahim Nasrallah, reshape Euro-American aesthetic forms to reflect Middle Eastern experiences, and thus, creating a space for cross-cultural dialogue and negotiation, re-orient current cartographies of a world literary system.

In this chapter, I focus on the prevalent North American ideology of the 'Rogue State' as a method for categorizing Middle Eastern political repression and extremism, and ask how it has influenced the publishing of translated and anglophone Libyan literature. I also introduce my approach to anglophone Iranian literature in this context as prelude to my more detailed discussion in Chapter Four. In Section One, 'Critical Horizons of the Rogue State', I outline the significance of this ideology for properly contextualized readings of Middle Eastern literary material. In Section Two, 'Theories of the Rogue State from Right to Left', I trace the emergence of 'Rogue State' as a category of international politics designed to meet US foreign policy and security needs in the post-Cold War era, discussing a range of political theorists' accounts along the way. By historicizing the concept, I hope to demystify it and suggest the political interests behind its formulation. This analysis paves the way for a critical understanding of the role the rogue state concept plays in contemporary culture. I argue that it defines borders – national, ideological, and cultural – between allies and enemies, between cosmopolitans and nationalists, between literature and propaganda. While the enlightened, cosmopolitan 'we' upholds democratic principles, respects human rights, and strives for an international community, the regressive, extremist 'they' denies these founding tenets of 'our' civilization. In this context, the media largely function as a border control mechanism: their demonizing tropology of the other sustains and reproduces the ideological

distinction instituted by politicians, strategists, and military personnel. In Section Three, 'The Globalized Media: Monopolization and Resistance', I analyse the mass media with reference to Ben Bagdikian's influential 'media monopoly' paradigm, unpacking its implications for representations of rogue states and, in the next section, for a globalized publishing industry rapidly heading in a similar direction.

In Section Four, 'Old Media in a New World: Anthologies of Libyan and Iranian Literature in Translation', I turn to the literary domain. I distinguish between corporate and independent publishing, and test the market limits of even the latter through my readings of three independently published anthologies of translated Libyan and Iranian literatures. My test cases are Khaled Mattawa's *Literature from the "Axis of Evil"* (2007), Ethan Chorin's *Translating Libya* (2008), and Nahid Mozaffari's and Ahmad Karimi Hakkak's *Strange Times in Persia* (2009). I ask how, as they import and introduce Libyan and Iranian texts, editors and translators negotiate between prevalent images of these states as rogue and the realities of lived experience there. Further, I assess the contribution of such editorial practices to the production of Libyan and Iranian literatures as branches of world literature. Here I rewrite, from a post-Orientalist perspective, David Damrosch's theory of world literature as a 'double refraction' living within the 'elliptical space' between its source and host cultures (Damrosch 2003: 283).

In Section Five, 'Anglophone Libyan Fiction: Ahmed Fagih, Ibrahim Al-Koni, and Hisham Matar', I concentrate on anglophone Libyan fiction. I introduce this field by comparing the translation and reception histories of two of Libya's most celebrated novelists, Ahmed Fagih and Ibrahim Al-Koni. It is in this publishing context that I read Hisham Matar's highly acclaimed, Man Booker shortlisted dictator novel *In Country of Men* (2006), which was originally written in English. This novel comprises the first-person retrospective narrative of Suleiman, a Libyan exile living in Cairo, as he recounts his traumatic childhood experiences under Gaddafi's totalitarian regime. Focusing on the relationship between author, narrator, and object of narration, I argue that the narrator's cynical reshaping of his younger self's lived experience allows him to frame Libyan politics in accordance to audience expectations about the rogue state. Thus reproducing the form of the cosmopolitan dictator novel under a Middle Eastern guise, Matar commodifies the region for ready international consumption – this is the key reason, I suggest, for his novel's overwhelming success relative to Fagih and Al-Koni. I conclude that *In the Country of Men* contributes to the ideological framework by which the neo-imperial British, American, French intervention into the Libyan Revolution of 2011 was naturalized as humanitarian.

1. Critical Horizons of the Rogue State

The North American geopolitical concept of the 'Rogue State' is one of many currently circulating neo-Orientalist projections of political difference onto the Middle East. It inhabits the same cultural space as the US State Department's list of 'State Sponsors of Terrorism', President George W. Bush's rhetoric of an 'Axis of Evil', Bernard Lewis's and Samuel Huntingdon's theses on the Islamic world's civilizational hostility to the West, and other, more media-based images of fundamentalist, terrorist, and 'Islamofascist' states.[1] The post-Saidian scholars, such as Hamid Dabashi, I discussed in my Introduction have dedicated substantial attention to deconstructing the system of tropes and stereotypes supporting and surrounding the language of Middle Eastern fundamentalism, terrorism, and so forth. Less attention, though, has been paid to the concept of 'Rogue State', a key precursor to these other, more prominent instances.[2]

A rogue state is officially understood as a state that has crossed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour as defined by the international community, either through dictatorship, the abuse of human rights, or external aggression. In reality, though, the concept is based in US foreign policy strategizing, and designates or has designated (perceived / projected) threats to US national interests such as Cuba, North Korea, Libya, Iran, and Iraq. The concept has played a key role in US foreign policy from the late 1980s to the present, providing conceptual and political means to justify targeting states, the majority of which happen to be Middle Eastern, that are taken to threaten US economic, strategic, or political interests. It has a real, that is, quantifiable, political history; its influence on executive decision-making can be accurately measured; and direct links between foreign policy towards rogue states and media discourses and representations of such enemy states can be, and have been, traced. In contrast to wider media-based images and cultural discourses of the Middle

[1] I discuss the 'State Sponsors of Terrorism' and 'Axis of Evil' designations below. For theories of a 'Clash of Civilizations', see Lewis' 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' (1990) and Huntingdon's 'The Clash of Civilizations' (1993) and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). In these articles and monographs, Lewis and Huntingdon argue that cultural differences between so-called Western and Islamic civilizations are the source of post-Cold War global conflict. Edward Said and Amartya Sen criticize this thesis for neglecting both 'internal diversities' within civilizations and the dense histories of material and intellectual interactions between civilizations (Sen 2006: 42; see also Said 2001b). As for 'Islamofascism', see Christopher Hitchens' 'Defending the Term *Islamofascism*' (2007). Although the term appeared as early as 1990, William Safire credits Hitchens for popularizing, in the post-9/11 period, the link it makes between Islamic Jihad and the European dictatorships of the 1930s and '40s (see Safire 2006).

[2] Said introduces one of Noam Chomsky's books on rogue states, *Acts of Aggression: Policing "Rogue" States* (1999), but he seems more interested in US - Iraqi relations, Palestine, and the 'hatred of the Arabs' in the US than with the 'Rogue State' concept itself (Chomsky 1999: 9). As I discuss below, major critical analyses of the concept have mainly been conducted by Chomsky, Jacques Derrida, and American political theorists.

Eastern state, the concept 'Rogue State' thus provides critical analysis with an unequivocal insight into the confluence of politics and representation when considering neo-Orientalist practices. Given the concept's particular political history, it also forces a recalibration, on the basis of hitherto under-appreciated contexts of international relations, of the questions posed by post-Saidian scholars about such practices.

To what degree does anglophone Middle Eastern literature reproduce or challenge neo-Orientalist discourses of the Middle Eastern state? How have discourses of the rogue state influenced trends in literary production, reception, and representation? How do writers negotiate between image and reality as they produce narratives of their states of origin for anglophone audiences? In approaching these questions, I focus on Libya and Iran. The overwhelming majority of literary texts from or about Libya and Iran are, as they are (re)produced in Britain and the US, either explicitly or implicitly framed in relation to these states' designation as rogue and the accompanying negative media portrayals. By 'framing', I mean the marketing of such texts as consumer commodities by publishers, the production of Libyan and Iranian texts as objects of world literature by critics, editors, and translators, and the representation of Middle Eastern states by migrant writers conscious of markets. All of these framing practices take place in the specific political, media, and cultural contexts of the rogue state concept, and must be taken into account in critical readings.

Although several other Middle Eastern states fall or have fallen under the rogue state designation (namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Sudan), Libya and Iran prove particularly valuable as case studies. First, both have been especially visible objects of political and media suspicion since their respective revolutions in 1969 and 1979. Due to the radical statements, positions, and affiliations of their leaderships, the spectacular acts of violence or terrorism in which they have been involved (the Iran Hostage Crisis, the Lockerbie bombing), and their nuclear or WMD ambitions, both have been long-term targets of successive US administrations and of neo-Orientalist discourses. Second, their many cultural and political differences make for a useful contrast. Libya is a small desert state of around six million inhabitants; Iran a huge one of varied terrains and a population of around seventy-five million. The Libyan Revolution was founded on, and strictly observes, a secular model of statehood; the Iranian Revolution was spearheaded by clerics who retain strict control, under Sharia, of the 'Islamic Republic's' political structure. Libya has considerably softened its stance towards 'the West' in recent years due to comprehensive international sanctions; Iran maintains and has strengthened its positions on regional politics and nuclear self-reliance despite intense sanctions. The Libyan Revolution of 2011 toppled, with British, American,

and French military support, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's 42 year dictatorship; Iran's so-called 'Green Revolution' of 2009-10, following Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed victory in presidential elections, only resulted in widespread police brutality and political repression. Many more differences as to language, literature, demographics, ethnicity, class relations, and economics can be cited, but for the time being it should be noted that both states' status as rogues, enemies, despite being distinct in most ways puts a further dent in neoconservative fantasies about a homogenous Islamic 'civilization identity', as Huntingdon puts it, hostile to 'the West' (Huntingdon 1993: 25). Third, but this also applies to the other states listed above, literatures from or about both states have a growing presence in anglophone literary cultures which is rarely historically contextualized. Forth, and this applies mainly to Iran, the tense international showdown on the nuclear issue makes working on its designation as rogue particularly timely and topical. Although I focus mainly on Libya and its literatures in global circulation in this chapter, I also refer to the Iranian case throughout with an eye towards my more detailed discussion of gendered representations of the rogue state in Chapter Four.

These chapters in no way constitute an apology for Libyan and Iranian regimes that have functioned as effective totalitarianisms in the last few decades. Not only have the dictatorships of Gaddafi and the Iranian Ayatollahs restricted most forms of political freedom at the level of state, but also the human rights records of both states has been truly dire. In Libya, the issue of political imprisonment without trial has received considerable attention. Through *In the Country of Men*, Matar has been able to draw attention to his father's long-term imprisonment in Tripoli's infamous Abu Salim prison, and to mobilize continued international pressure on Gaddafi for accountability. Further, journalistic, publishing, and religious freedoms continue to be heavily restricted, with (self-)censorship a fact of everyday life. Similar prisoner conditions, limitations on expression, and forms of censorship are also widespread in Iran, but under the state's rigid interpretation of Sharia, various personal (dress, marriage, travel), sexual (homosexuality, adultery), and other freedoms are also criminalized and harshly punished (including by public execution and stoning). The issue of gender inequality is especially pronounced in Iran, where the compulsory hijab acts, for many, as a symbol of women's inferior legal and social status in most areas of public and private life. Writers like Azar Nafisi, whom I consider in Chapter Four, have been highly vocal proponents of the women's movement in Iran as they and their texts have migrated to anglophone contexts. State repression affects most strata of Iranian society, and in recent years its extent has most clearly been made manifest in the state's adoption of near-emergency measures to subdue, control, and decimate the 2009-10 election protests. The

Green Revolution, led by Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Ahmadinejad's closest presidential contender in 2009, was crushed through the systematic state violence of information control, mass arrests, rape and torture under imprisonment, militia violence, and unabashed executions. Nevertheless, for Iranian reformers and activists, as well as for their international allies, such violence has only served to further legitimate the Green agenda.

It is not my intention here to undermine the importance of these very real conditions of repression, violence, and trauma under which large segments of the Libyan and Iranian populations live. My interest as a literary critic, however, lies more in asking what function such accounts, characteristic of both media and literary representations of Libya and Iran, serve in anglophone cultural contexts. What regional, strategic, and economic interests underlie such negative portrayals? Why are alternate, often postcolonial, narratives of contemporary Libya or Iran, such as those of Libya's best-known man of letters, Ahmed Fagih, invisible in comparison? Why do states like Saudi Arabia and Israel, equally if not more problematic on political freedoms, women's rights, and human rights, rarely receive the same kind of sustained criticism as rogue states? In short, I'm interested in questioning the other side of the West - rogue state equation, in confronting the system of representation attendant on the rogue state concept, an inquiry definitively *not* equivalent to condoning or sympathizing with the regimes the concept typically designates. By exploring the cultural power of the rogue state concept, I hope to demonstrate the necessity of a more nuanced political, historical, and cultural understanding of states like Libya and Iran, both good candidates as paradigms of neo-Orientalist discourse.

Rather than provide a detailed overview of recent Libyan and Iranian history, I, for the sake of fluidity, highlight key historical facts and arguments at relevant points throughout Chapters Three and Four.[3] One issue, though, requires special mention. Unlike Iran, which

[3] For the most comprehensive attempt to cover modern Libyan history in English, see Dirk Vandewalle's *A History of Modern Libya* (2006). Tellingly, this book contains a number of flaws and factual errors. Firstly, Vandewalle underplays the impact of pan-Arabism and of King Idris's privatization of the oil industry on Gaddafi's Revolutionary ideology, instead framing the Revolution as motivated by the King's inefficiencies and general malaise at relations with the West (see Vandewalle 2006: 78). Secondly, he suggests that Gaddafi's stance on the West was purely a rhetorical tool used as 'a vindication of [the Revolution's] own ideological stance' rather than a genuine, and populist, grievance about Libya's colonial history, Palestine, and so forth: 'History – and historical wrongs inflicted by the West on Libya – have been used from the beginning [of the Revolution] to create a sense of shared suffering and exploitation' (*ibid*: 99). Thirdly, he argues that Libya's contemporary opening to the West is based on the Revolution's internal economic and social failings rather than on the external pressure imposed by sanctions and the US invasion of Iraq (see *ibid*: 8). In *Libya and the United States: Two Centuries of Strife* (2002), Ronald Bruce St. John provides an excellent corrective account in his work on Libyan - US relations. Following the line drawn by Michael Klare detailed below, St. John argues that US engagement with Libya in the 1990s was based on the military establishment's financial need to redefine foreign policy, by targeting new enemies, at the end of the Cold War.

remains resistant to international pressure regarding its nuclear program and abuses of human rights, Libya's attitude towards the West and the international community has considerably thawed since 1999. After an economically crippling decade of unilateral US and international sanctions targeting Libya for its purported involvement in terrorist activities, 1999 saw Gaddafi deliver the Libyan suspects of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing for trial to a Scottish court specially convened in the Netherlands. UN sanctions were rapidly withdrawn. After the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, Gaddafi set about dismantling Libya's WMD programs and compensating the Lockerbie victims. US sanctions were consequently withdrawn in 2004, and, indicating the normalization of ties with the US and the EU, Libya's designation as a 'State Sponsor of Terrorism' was officially rescinded by the US State Department in 2006. Libya has since been taken by International Relations scholars as a model of the effectiveness of negotiation rather than force in dealing with a rogue state.[4] Given such recent history, its seems profoundly ironic that the British, French, US, and other governments, supported by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, unflinchingly imposed a 'No-Fly Zone' in response to the events of the Libyan civil war. Effectively crippling the Libyan state's military capabilities and leading to Gaddafi's deposition, such action appears the *telos* of his decades-long demonization, a context whose motivations must be taken into account when considered the foreign intervention in the revolution. While, as

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For a rueful, secular-liberal account of the failures of the Iranian Revolution, see Ervand Abrahamian's *A History of Modern Iran* (2008). Abrahamian's explicit political leanings are somewhat tempered by open acknowledgements of clerical, artistic, journalistic, and other repressions under Shah Pahlavi (see Abrahamian 2008: 155). His pre-election emphasis on the Presidents rather than the Ayatollahs, though, feeds into the problematic rhetoric surrounding Ahmadinejad and distracts attention from the real holders of power in Iranian politics. For a highly critical, Saidian account of media representations of Iran, see Arshin Adib-Moghaddam's *Iran in World Politics: The Question of the Islamic Republic* (2007). While I certainly take an important cue from his call for a 'critical Iranian studies' premised on the insight that 'The question of the Islamic Republic can only be sufficiently addressed [...] if we *pluralize* our understanding of post-revolutionary Iran', there are a few points in Adib-Moghaddam's discussion I'd like to dispute (Adib-Moghaddam 2007: vii; italics mine). He argues that 'With regard to Iran, the [US-based ideological] consensus is built by influential, idea-producing conglomerates established by neoconservative functionaries and activists with close links to influential lobbying organizations and like-minded parties in Israel' (*ibid*: 126). While it is without doubt the case that the Israel lobby in the US as well as Israeli politicians have exerted strong pressure on American administrations regarding Iran, this rather one-sided, conspiratorial account undermines the role military strategists have played in designating Iran a threat to US security needs. Further, by locating the problem solely in neoconservative ideology, Adib-Moghaddam skips over the fact that the Democratic Clinton administration still regarded Iran an enemy state. This concern might have been addressed by making an argument about the influence, through lobbying practices, media, public opinion, of the American Right on even Democratic presidencies, but the argument still needs to be made.

[4] See Yahia Zoubir's 'Libya in US Foreign Policy: From Rogue State to Good Fellow?' (2002), Lisa Anderson's 'Rogue Libya's Long Road' (2006), and Jonathan Schwarz's 'Dealing with a "Rogue State": The Libya Precedent' (2007). Hostile attitudes towards Libya have remained close to the surface, though, as illustrated by the widely discussed diplomatic fallout between the US and British governments following the 2009 compassionate release of Abdelbaset al-Meghrahi, convicted for the Lockerbie bombing, from incarceration in HMP Greenock.

with Anglo-Iranian literatures, I ask how Anglo-Libyan literatures are framed in relation to dominant culture discourses of Libya as rogue, I'm especially interested here in how Libyan writers and texts contribute to or challenge the ideological framework by which this intervention was naturalized.

2. Theories of the Rogue State from Right to Left

The prominence of the concept 'Rogue State' in today's Anglo-American news media - *CNN*, the *BBC*, *The Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and so forth - appears to exemplify the executive version of the manufacturing consent paradigm famously articulated by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (see Herman and Chomsky 2008). Distinguished from an elite version by media theorist Piers Robinson, executive manufacturing consent 'emphasises the extent to which news media content conforms with the agendas and reference frames of government officials where government officials are understood as members of the *executive*' (Robinson 2002: 13). Policy measures regarding states designated rogue by such officials from the Reagan era to the present, namely Syria, Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and, until recently, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea are certainly widely discussed in the media, reflecting differences among the political elites. But, the use of 'Rogue State' as a frame of reference for all these states goes unquestioned and un-historicized.

As articulated by President Clinton's National Security Advisor Anthony Lake in 1994, shortly before the term came into wide public usage, rogue states are 'ruled by cliques that control power through coercion', 'suppress basic human rights', 'promote radical ideologies', 'are embarked on ambitious and costly military programs - especially in weapons of mass destruction', and 'sponsor [...] terrorism and assassination worldwide' (Lake 1994: 46, 52). These five defining points - dictatorship, the abuse of human rights, extremism, WMD, and the sponsoring of terrorism - frame the overwhelming majority of mainstream Anglo-American news media representations of the above listed states. Coverage of Iran and, until around 2003, Libya, the foci of this chapter, falls neatly into this pattern. The BBC World Affairs Correspondent Nick Childs offers a representative, if moderate, media perspective on both states in his 2001 analysis of 'The New Bogeymen'. As well as foregrounding Libya's role in the Lockerbie bombing of 1988, Childs reminds us that Gaddafi was 'a dangerous pariah' suspected of pursuing 'efforts to develop secret weapons programmes' and 'to destabilise the Middle East' (Childs 2001). Regarding Iran, although he neglects the state's ultra-conservative theocratic regime and repression of women, free speech, and democratic

reform, issues that have regained their currency since Ahmadinejad's election as President in 2005, Childs certainly highlights its 'regional ambitions' (presumably its links with Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah) and plans for 'weapons of mass destruction' (*ibid*). The proximity between US (and British) government and media discourses of rogue states is further exemplified in any number of articles, editorials, and specials from all the above listed sources, the central influences on attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of foreign affairs. Such discourses have been criticized by political and International Relations theorists across the political spectrum. By carefully attending to these critiques, I hope to establish a critical political framework for approaching the hitherto underexplored question of the cultural power of the rogue state concept, of its impact on Anglo-American cultural representations of and exchanges with systematically orientalised states like Libya and Iran.

Political theorists on the right generally accept the official premise that, as Robert Litwak puts it, 'the [rogue state] designation in rooted in *tangible external behaviour of concern*' (Litwak 2000: 7; italics mine). The 'adjectival insistence', to borrow F.R. Leavis' phrase, of Litwak's formulation, which chimes with Madeline Albright's short-lived attempt to shift to a terminology of 'States of Concern' in 2000, works to identify the 'behaviour' of Libya, Iran, *et al* as *objectively* unlawful in the context of international law as defined by the UN Charter (see Leavis 2008). Consequently, such theorists are primarily interested in the designation's effectiveness in what they take to be justified foreign policy concerns of containment and deterrence.[5] The overriding problem they detect is that the rogue state designation implies a homogeneity or unified set of goals across disparate states. Again, Litwak states the issue most clearly: he argues that 'Policies should be fashioned to address the particular circumstances in each country rather than grouping countries under generic categories such as 'rogue state'' (Litwak 2000: xiv). James Lebovic expands on this insight by detailing the 'unexamined [policy] assumptions' that follow from generic categorization, including privileging an offensive stance (pre-emptive strikes, coercion, sanctions), overstating the threat, and planning for the short-term (Lebovic 2006: 2). Similarly, Derek Smith pushes for a more balanced approach to the threats posed by rogue states, one emphasizing interaction with the international community as opposed to the American unilateralism Litwak and Lebovic also criticize (see Smith 2006: 3-14). Of course, this set of

[5] As well as Litwak, James Lebovic, and Derek Smith, see Alexander Lennon's *Reshaping Rogue States: Pre-Emption, Regime Change, and U.S. Policy Toward Iran, Iraq, and North Korea* (2004), Peter Brookes' *A Devil's Triangle: Terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Rogue States* (2007), and Robert Rotberg's *Worst of the Worst: Dealing with Repressive and Rogue Nations* (2007). Ranging from the academic (Lennon) to the hawkish (Brookes), all these critics are working from the same series of assumptions.

approaches is itself structured around its own 'unexamined assumptions' of objectivity and of the 'special responsibility', as Lake puts it, of US foreign policy in dealing with international issues (Lake 1994: 46).

By tracing its historical emergence and the performative contradictions of its usage, theorists and critics on the left have convincingly demonstrated that the rogue state concept is a reification: in identifying the behaviour of certain states as objectively unlawful, it masks or mystifies the specifically American military and geo-strategic interests determining its designations. It should be noted here that only the US, the UK, and Ukraine officially employ the concept, that it is not recognized by the UN and openly dismissed by governments like those of France and Germany. In his monograph *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy* (1995), Michael Klare has provided the most substantial and influential account of the concept's history. He argues that due to the potentially disastrous cutbacks on US military funding at the end of the Cold War, senior officials like Generals Colin Powell, who became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1989, and George Butler, promoted to the Office's Director of Strategic Plans and Policy in the same year, 'responded by seeking to invent a new *raison d'être* for the military establishment [...] based on non-Soviet threats to US security' (Klare 1995: 10). As only minor threats existed at the time, the Pentagon needed to elevate them into 'major adversaries' 'posing a clear and present danger to American security interests' (*ibid*: 14, 25). This was achieved by the now institutionalized method, termed by Klare a 'New Demonology', of foregrounding their 'anti-Western orientation', their proliferation activities, their sponsoring of terrorism, and their leaders' 'violent and immoral intentions' (*ibid*: 24-26). Thus, a 'Rogue Doctrine' was forged in the early 1990s and was crystallized in culture through the foreign policy discourses of successive Presidents (*ibid*: 26).

Litwak faults Klare for neglecting the history of tense and often military US engagements with Libya, Iran, and other rogue states in the 1980s (see Litwak 2000:7). The very fact that they were being placed on the State Department's legally binding list of 'State Sponsors of Terrorism' from 1979 indicates the tangible threat they posed long before the Rogue Doctrine came to be formulated. Further, although Litwak doesn't mention this, a 'New Demonology' seems very much operative in President Reagan's 1986 pronouncement that Gaddafi is the 'mad dog of the Middle East' and in, as William Beeman puts it, the media's use of Ayatollah Khomeini's 'bearded, scowling visage [...] as a visual trope for the negative, devilish view of Iran in the United States' from the time of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 (Reagan 1986; Beeman 2005: 10). Despite this critique, there seems to be an

unacknowledged affinity here between Klare and Litwak. It is precisely the homogenizing and unifying tendencies of the rogue state concept Litwak finds so distorting that Klare seeks to explain with reference to post-Cold War military strategy. The 'large systemwide threat to global stability' Klare argues the Rogue Doctrine promotes is indeed the pivotal factor of its formulation (Klare 1995: 12). In the same policy-defining article by Lake cited above, he unequivocally states that the 'ties' between nations as culturally, politically, and geographically diverse as Cuba, Sudan, Libya, Iran, and North Korea 'are growing as they seek to thwart [...] a global trend [namely, American democracy and trade liberalization] to which they seem incapable of adapting' (Lake 1994: 45). While we can agree with Litwak, then, that US officials perceived Libya and Iran as threats as early as 1979, it is thus highly probable that Klare's account of the post-Cold War use of the rogue state concept to exaggerate, unify, and objectify US military concerns is accurate. In any case, it is certainly the reified understanding of states like Libya and Iran embodied by the concept that has resonated so successfully in the media, and that holds undiminished cultural power as a reference frame for foreign policy and the Third World.

Building on Klare's work on the history of the concept, Noam Chomsky and Jacques Derrida focus on the performative contradictions of its usage in global politics. Chomsky distinguishes between literal and propagandistic uses, with the literal defining 'a state that defies international laws and conventions, [that] does not consider itself bound by the major treaties and conventions', and the prevailing propaganda version whatever is 'presented by those who have the power to control discourse, propaganda, framework of discussion, and so on' (Chomsky 2001; see also 2000: 1). By cataloguing US and British atrocities over the last fifty years (the use of chemical and biological weapons, interventions in Vietnam, Central America, Sudan) and highlighting the non-designation of US allies that fulfil the literal definition (Suharto's Indonesia, Israel), he argues that 'the leading "rogue state" in the world is the United States' (Chomsky 2001; see also 1998, 2000: 1-12). In its current usage, then, ‘a "rogue state" is not simply a criminal state, but one that defies the orders of the powerful – who are, of course, exempt’ (Chomsky 2000: 30). Derrida expands on this notion of exemption, or, more precisely, exception as articulated by Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin, and Giorgio Agamben. He argues that the act of declaring or branding a state 'rogue', of declaring its exception from the international community, itself constitutes the assumption of a sovereignty over that community that has the power to decide who is included and excluded from the family of nations. This assumption of sovereignty indicates a roguishness logically prior to that of the state declared rogue, as it flouts international law as founded by the UN

and based on democracy and the equality of states. Thus, 'those states that are able or in a state to denounce or accuse some 'rogue state' of violating the law, of failing to live up to the law, of being guilty of some perversion or deviation, those states that claim to uphold international law and that take the initiative of war, of police or peacekeeping operations because they have the force to do so, these states, namely the United States and its allied states in these actions, are themselves, as sovereign, the first rogue states' (Derrida 2005: 102; see also 93-106).

3. The Globalized Media: Monopolization and Resistance

I've outlined Chomsky's and Derrida's approaches to bring home the fallacies of objectivity and American exceptionalism in critical thinking about rogue states. Beneath these points of empirical and political contention between theorists on the right and left lies a shared distrust, articulated from the opposing perspectives of US security needs and international justice, of the rogue state concept itself. While many of these theorists, though, acknowledge its mediated cultural power, none has so far fully explored the political, economic, and cultural determinants and consequences of its continued circulation in the Anglo-American mass media. Even studies of media representations of many of the individual states designated rogue are hard to come by. With Libya and Iran, the only substantial monograph is Beeman's perceptive *The Great Satan Vs. the Mad Mullahs: How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other* (2005). Beeman even-handedly examines the symbolic and mythologizing discourses by which 'both nations construct the "other" to fit an idealized picture of an enemy', and argues that such pictures serve the 'domestic political purposes' of each (Beeman 2005: 4, xii). As the mass media have served to frame, narrate, and publicly justify Anglo-American foreign policy in relation to rogue states, studies like Beeman's, generalized for the rogue state concept, are sorely needed.

In his book on rogue states, Chomsky's undeveloped allusion to Ben Bagdikian's influential *The New Media Monopoly* (2004), an earlier edition of which he had worked closely with in *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), suggests a fruitful approach (see Chomsky 2000: 121). Bagdikian demonstrates that five 'global-dimension firms', the Euro-American multinational media corporations Time Warner, Disney, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Viacom, and Bertelsmann, 'own most of the newspapers, magazines, book publishers, motion picture studios, and radio and television stations in the United States'

(Bagdikian 2004: 3).[6] Bagdikian argues that such concentration of ownership and the cartel-like operations of the 'Big Five' manufactures 'a social and political world' of overtly conservative to far-right leanings (*ibid*: 9). This is due to the historical dependence of media corporations, whose power was being consolidated and globalized from the early 1980s, on a Reaganite (and Thatcherite) neoconservatism that combined economic liberalism (involving fiscal incentives for large corporations) with a conservative domestic and foreign policy agenda. Beyond important campaign contributions, Bagdikian continues, it was and remains necessary for media corporations to publicly legitimate, to naturalize for voters, the political agendas of a Republican party on which their growth depends. While domestically this has resulted in a rise of corporate power at the expense of social needs, in foreign coverage media monopolization has led to the systematic obscuring of the nature of foreign policy for decades. Bagdikian cites coverage of US (non)intervention in Guatemala, East Timor, and Chile to support this argument, but the lesson can effectively be extended to media representations of rogue states in the same period (see *ibid*: 11-26, 91-113).

Bagdikian's materialist critique, inspired by Marshall McLuhan's classic *Understanding Media* (1964) and establishing a strong paradigm for media theorists like Douglas Kellner and Robert McChesney, convincingly dispels a number of myths about media autonomy and disinterestedness. The uncritical echoing of official discourses of rogue states in their media representations offers particularly strong evidence for his case. But, many in the industry have found Bagdikian's conclusions alarmist and exaggerated. His most vocal critics include Ben Compaine, a media consultant to several large corporations and publications (e.g. *AT&T*, *The New York Times*), Jack Shafer, a journalist for the hawkish online magazine *Slate*, and Adam Thierer, an important researcher for right-wing think tanks such as *The Cato Institute* and *The Progress and Freedom Foundation*. Against Bagdikian, Chomsky, McLuhan, *et al*, these critics have aligned themselves with and, on occasion, influenced the Federal Communications Commission's official stance that the media industry in its current, largely deregulated state offers 'more media choices, more sources of news and

[6] Although Bagdikian concentrates on media corporations' effects in the US, an indication of their trans-Atlantic and transnational power can be provided by an abbreviated list of News Corporation's holdings in Britain. Apart from the British cultural space he is able to indirectly claim through the fluid migration of Fox's US-produced film, television, news, and internet products, Murdoch in effect owns the high circulation tabloids *The Sun* and *News of the World*, the prestigious broadsheets *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*, and the nation's largest pay television service *British Sky Broadcasting*.

information, and more varied entertainment programming available to [American audiences] than ever before' (FCC 2002: 4).[7]

For Shafer, such abundant sources are available because patterns of ownership in the media industry are far less concentrated than Bagdikian, whom he accuses of 'overstatement', asserts (Shafer 2004). Owned by individuals and companies of widely divergent interests, Shafer continues, American newspapers, television networks, publishers, and even radio stations are able to cater for the most diverse of American tastes in domestic and foreign socio-political issues. This rather cynical argument, mentioning *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, NBC, *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, Pearson, and so on for evidence, fails to disclose that *all* are in fact owned by Bagdikian's 'Big Five' or a few other similarly sized and structured corporations.

On a more substantial note that pinpoints the heart of the matter, Compaine and Thierer acknowledge, to a degree, the extent of concentrated corporate ownership of US media sources, but argue that 'competition [therefore diversity] and concentration are not mutually exclusive' (Thierer 2005: 67; see also Compaine 2000: 537-582). It is certainly the case that the period of multinational consolidation from the early 1980s has seen huge increases in the quantity of media sources available, and that, alongside technological developments, this may be accounted for by competition between large corporations like News Corporation and Viacom, their correspondingly intensified attention to niche or specialist markets, and the economies of scale they offer. But, with its insistence on the quantity of available media sources (the 'more [...] more [...] more' of the FCC's formulation), this argument fails to register the influence a centralized, corporate-controlled industry structure may have on the nature, the quality of the content such sources offer. While diverse options in, say, news coverage, ranging from a 'liberal' broadsheet like *The New York Times* to a neoconservative television channel like *Fox News*, are readily available to consumers, a closer look at these options reveals a striking similarity in, if not approach, the broad ideological framework in which stories are reported. It can be expected, for example, that *Fox News* would insist that due to Iran's purported nuclear program 'The fate of millions of people and the security of the United States are at stake' (Wallace 2005). What poses a significant problem for critics claiming the diversity of media sources is, though, the fact that *The New York Times*, with its overwhelming emphasis on 'Iran's Nuclear Effort', Iran's

[7] Putting theory into practice, the FCC has further loosened existing regulations on ownership and concentration in recent years. In 2003, for example, it decided to increase national television ownership caps from 35% to 39%, allowing News Corporation's Fox television network to increase its market share to 39%, and Viacom, through its various networks, to 38% (cited in Thierer 2005: 7).

'Capacity to Make Bomb Fuel', and 'Iran's Nuclear Program', is, despite its less bombastic tone, engaged in just the sort of foreign policy scaremongering that would make *Fox News*' Bill O'Reilly proud (Broad 2010; Slackman 2010; *The New York Times* 2010). As can best be explained with reference to Bagdikian's thesis of the influence of corporate interests, the diversity of at least foreign coverage in the news media seems only apparent, masking a shared neoconservative framework that ultimately serves the economic interests of large corporations rather than public needs and, by extension, democracy itself.

Alongside the growth of corporate power over the mass media, the last thirty years have witnessed an unprecedented surge of alternative media sources. The internet has become ubiquitous as a democratic medium of cultural exchange, media content from successful regional corporations like Al-Jazeera and Telesur has gradually been made available to Western consumers, and independent film producers and book publishers have grown in presence, stature, and popularity. In his updated 2004 edition of *The New Media Monopoly*, Bagdikian readily acknowledges the internet, in blogs, e-magazines, independent news sites, and so forth, as a site of informational resistance to the dominant culture. Although he warns of government surveillance, of inequalities of usage across classes and races, and of the possibility of access limitations being imposed (with piracy, pornography, terrorism, and religious or political extremism as excuses), he is generally optimistic about the internet's future (see Bagdikian 2004: 55-73). Further, media corporations face the challenge of what reputed journalism professor Philip Seib calls the 'Al Jazeera effect' (Seib 2008: *passim*). Regional satellite television networks like Al-Jazeera and Telesur were founded, as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez puts it in his role as financier of Telesur, to counteract 'the media dictatorship of the big international news networks' and to provide 'native' narratives of regional matters (quoted in *ibid*: x). But, Seib argues, the launching of Al-Jazeera English in 2006 suggests that Western audiences are as starved for alternate sources of information as their Latin American and Middle Eastern counterparts. Thus, in his words, Al-Jazeera English fills a 'vacuum' in the market left by 'Western news organizations [that] were doing a poor job of reporting the complex realities of events in [the Middle East]' (*ibid*: 42).[8] It seems, then, we have solid grounds for optimism regarding the internet and

[8] Luckily for the North American branches of the 'Big Five's' television news operations, Al-Jazeera was deemed too politically contentious for the principal US cable and satellite services after the Bush administration demonized it as the 'the Osama bin Laden channel' (ironically, Al-Jazeera is available in the UK on none other than *BSkyB*) (quoted in Seib 2008: 42). Nevertheless, Seib predicts that the demand for Al-Jazeera's brand of reporting among the US's immigrant communities, left-leaning minority, and a populace disillusioned by the Bush administration's falsehoods about the Iraq war, a demand reflected in the popularity of its English website,

regional media competitors. A more complex dynamic, though, governs independent publishing which, unlike other alternative sources, still economically depends on the same audiences that corporate media and publishers, representing the dominant culture, have shaped for years.

4. Old Media in a New World: Anthologies of Libyan and Iranian Literature in Translation

In his *Communicating Knowledge: Publishing in the 21st Century* (2003), John Feather has fruitfully suggested that the centralization and corporatization of publishing has resulted in an industry backlash, analogous to that of Al-Jazeera in the news media, as independent houses have consciously established themselves on oppositional grounds. He argues that as with television, film, and radio, 'the global publishing industry [has become from the early 1980s] increasingly dominated by a small number of multinational corporations with holdings on several continents' (Feather 2003: 28). These corporations include the Holtzbrinck Group and the Pearson Group, as well Vivendi, News Corporation, and Bertelsmann.[9] Postcolonial critic Sarah Brouillette estimates that Bertelsmann, whose vast holdings include Anchor, Everyman, Modern Library, Random House, and Vintage, alone controls '10 per cent of all English language book sales worldwide' (Brouillette 2007: 50). As is commonly noted by publishers like André Schiffrin, managing director of Pantheon until 1990, and critics like Feather, Bagdikian, Brouillette, and Suman Gupta, corporatization has led to profitability rather than literary merit becoming the prime imperative of publication (see Schiffrin 2000: 104; Feather 2003: 45-7; Bagdikian 2004: 126; Brouillette 2007: 53-4; Gupta 2009: 160-1). Consequently, publishing has become a rationalized process that, as Gupta neatly summarizes, results in 'a form of tacit market censorship': as publishers divide audiences into marketable categories ('chicklit', children's literature, literary fiction, etc.), Gupta continues, 'Certain sorts of texts simply do not have the opportunity to surface for the gauging of informed readerships; certain sorts of texts are pre-framed in a manner that makes them unavoidably visible before they are read in any meaningful fashion; and certain sorts are pushed on readers in so concerted and predetermined a fashion (by their pricing, design,

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will make it economically necessary for broadcast corporations to include the channel in the near future (see *ibid*: 42-3).

[9] To list some of the more prominent holdings of these corporation, Holtzbrinck owns Macmillan, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Pearson Penguin and Longman, Vivendi Houghton Mifflin, and News Corporation Harper Collins.

publicity) that their readerships are circumscribed in advance' (Gupta 2009: 161). Timothy Brennan and Graham Huggan, following on from Aijaz Ahmad's and Arif Dirlik's influential work on postcolonialism's erasure of its globalized conditions of emergence, expand on these consequences for specifically Third World and postcolonial writing. For Brennan, non-Western writers are only appropriated in the metropolitan centres of literary production if they fit a 'cosmopolitan' and homogenizing political, aesthetic, and cultural model that can appeal to wide audiences (see Brennan 1997: 36-44). For Huggan, such writers are reduced to commodities in an industry that markets on the basis of their 'exotic' commercial appeal (see Huggan 2001: 1-33).

Elleke Boehmer and other postcolonial critics argue that the aesthetic of 'market postcolonialism' Brennan and Huggan critique can also be a site of resistance to forms of power, domination, and inequality under a globalization in which the publishing industry is ensconced. For Boehmer, 'the audacious crossing of different perspectives in post-imperial writing', which Brennan defines as complicit hybridization, 'can work as an anti-colonial strategy' that can 'give us a critical comparative - and also *postcolonial* - purchase on globalised realities' (Boehmer 2005: 236; 2004: 14). While Boehmer provides an accurate corrective to the accounts of Brennan *et al* on aesthetic grounds, a corrective on which I rely in my reading of Yasmin Crowther in Chapter Four, it is also necessary to explore independent publishing as a potential *material* site of such resistance. Going back to Feather, he argues that 'The chorus of dissent' from publishers bemoaning operational changes during the rush of takeovers from the 1980s 'has actually spawned a new generation of independent publishers' that 'can operate successfully in niche markets' for poetry, new fiction, local history, special interest books, Third World writing, and politically subversive material (Feather 2003: 47). He thus sees the relationship between commercial and independent publishers as symbiotic, each catering to a specific set of cultural needs economically or ideologically unviable for the other (see *ibid*: 48).

Given that many independent publishers operate on a non-profit basis and were founded in opposition to commercial publishing, there is much validity to Feather's argument. Such a radical credo, conscientiously advertised on web-pages and book-jackets, is indeed often central to such houses' self-marketing. Nevertheless, his case for the subversive potential of independent publishing must be gauged on the basis of the ideological orientation of its products. Recent anthologies of literatures from states like Libya and Iran originating from independent publishers offer particularly valuable evidence, as they deal with highly contentious material sometimes officially considered enemy, extremist, or terrorist

propaganda. *Literature from the "Axis of Evil"* (The New Press), *Translating Libya* (Saqi Books), and *Strange Times in Persia* (I.B. Tauris) all share the ambition of placing previously underrepresented literatures on the map of world literature for anglophone popular and academic audiences.[10] To do so, they, by necessity, critically engage with mediated or 'mediatised' perceptions of rogue states. Analysing their editorial gestures of collusion, resistance, and self-critique will, as well as map the way Libyan and Iranian literatures are framed for and received by Anglo-American audiences, indicate the ideological limits of independent publishing in relation to the dominant culture.

Literature from the "Axis of Evil" was produced through a partnership between *Words Without Borders*, an online magazine dedicated to international writing in English translation, and The New Press, a US-based non-profit house established in 1990 and focusing on American social issues (race, women, immigration, etc.) as well as international writing. Khaled Mattawa, its editor, argues that 'Since the 1970s, American access to world literature in translation has been steadily decreasing' (Mattawa 2007: xiii). Contributing to this regressive process, he continues, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control exerts a form of cultural power unjustifiable in a state 'fiercely proud of its tradition of free speech' by 'requiring any publisher wishing to bring out a work by an author from a so-called "enemy nation" to apply for a licence' (*ibid*: xiv). In objection to direct governmental control over the '"free trade" in ideas and literature', as well as to the demeaning 'Axis of Evil' rhetoric itself, Mattawa wishes to introduce literatures that have been effectively censored in the US, and through them to 'provide fresh perspectives on the notion of the "enemy nation"' (*ibid*: xv-xvi). The anthology thus attempts to offer 'nuanced insights into the ideas, beliefs, daily lives, and articles of reference of people in other cultures' (*ibid*: xvi). This is a laudable ambition, but one founded on a paradox: in challenging the misperceptions resulting from the 'Axis of Evil' rhetoric, the anthology, as Mattawa openly acknowledges, reproduces 'an American point of view' that arbitrarily groups politically, socially, and culturally diverse states (*ibid*: xx). Indeed, many writers whom he wished to include refused to participate for this very reason. As a result, the anthology settles for an uncomfortable compromise that excludes the very writers who, like Mattawa, most steadfastly reject the notion of an 'Axis of

[10] While few comparable anthologies of translated Libyan literature exist (I've only come across Fagih's edited volume *Libyan Stories: Twelve Short Stories from Libya* (2000)), anthologies of English diasporic and translated Iranian literatures are currently highly attractive to publishers. Of the most prominent are Shouleh Vatanabadi and Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami's *Another Sea, Another Shore: Persian Stories of Migration* (2000), Persis Karim's *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* (2006), Lila Azam Zanganeh's *My Sister, Guard Your Veil; My Brother, Guard Your Eyes: Uncensored Iranian Voices* (2006), and Niloufar Talebi's *Belonging: New Poetry by Iranians Around the World* (2008).

Evil'. Its contribution to 'allaying ignorance, stimulating curiosity, and opening the minds of [American] readers' is therefore less certain than Mattawa hopes (*ibid*: xx-xxi).

Anthologies of literatures from individual rogue states evade this constitutive paradox of *Literature from the "Axis of Evil"*. Further, they can offer more representative selections of a state's writers, as well as the space to discuss national histories and literary traditions. The editors of both *Translating Libya* and *Strange Times in Persia* admirably fulfil these important critical functions, functions that may genuinely contribute to an improved understanding of Libya, Iran, and their cultures. Ethan Chorin, editor of *Translating Libya*, discusses the transformation of the Libyan short story form in the context of the state's history from the 1960s, details through some amusing anecdotes the difficulties of tracking down and translating the texts, and summarizes the geographical and cultural features of the state's many diverse regions. Nahid Mozaffari and Ahmad Karimi Hakkak, editors of *Strange Times in Persia*, similarly discuss Iranian history, literary traditions, and the current state of Iranian literary production, as well as provide capsule biographies of each of their 42 novelists and poets. But, these anthologies are also self-consciously produced in a hostile Anglo-American dominant culture. While lessons on the overlaps of literature and history in Libya and Iran are of high value, the ways in which editors engage this culture ultimately determines the nature and reception of their selections.

Published by the UK-based Saqi Books, which advertises itself as 'A magnet for daring new voices from across the globe', *Translating Libya* is an uncanny example of how the landscape of world literature is shaped by world politics (Saqi Books Webpage). Its 'daring new voices' are those identified by Ethan Chorin, an editor who happens to be an American diplomat who served from 2004 to 2006 as the new US embassy's Commercial / Economic attaché. From the diplomat's perspective, it was only due to eased US-Libyan relations following the extradition of the Lockerbie suspects in 1999 and Gaddafi's renouncing of WMD after the invasion of Iraq, developments resulting from years of sanctions and international isolation, that Libya 'reappeared on the world map' (Chorin 2008: 9). Recalling Marlow's observations in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Chorin aims to fill this blank new cartographic space with a collection of stories each of which 'takes place in a different Libyan city, village or place of note' (*ibid*). The anthology thus literally frames Libya for American audiences as 'one of the dark places of the earth' to be reclaimed or colonized for the imagination city by city, region by region, by the diplomatic gaze (Conrad 1988: 9). Further, this gaze shifts register into that of the exoticizing tourist as Chorin describes his expeditions in search of material from the British Embassy's Oasis Club

to the 'chaotic mess' of Tripoli's Souk al-Juma, from Hotel Vienna, a colonial remnant, to the 'fetid lagoon' at the heart of a worn Benghazi (Chorin 2008: 25, 36). His travelogue, replete with 'first impressions' of cities and villages, descriptions of colourful locals, and the excitement of international flights and diplomacy, appears to fall into a time-worn Orientalist pattern that would have dismayed Said. Chorin's adventurism aside, his anthology does provide one of the few entries for anglophone readers into a small but uniquely situated body of literature.

Amateurism gives way to professionalism in the academically edited *Strange Times in Persia*. This anthology of Iranian literature from 1979 is published by I.B. Tauris, a London house specializing in the Middle East and 'Founded in the mid '80s with an eye towards filling a gap between trade houses and university presses' (Zeitchik 2002).[11] Its editors, argue that Iranian literature is currently neglected by Anglo-American readers due to 'doubts about the "marketability" of Iranian fiction and poetry among [anglophone] publishers' created by 'the highly politicized and negative image of Iran in the West' (Mozaffari and Hakkak 2009: xvi). They rightly aim towards 'remedying this situation' and providing 'a window into a largely undiscovered branch of world literature' (*ibid*). In contrast to the other anthologies I've discussed, Mozaffari and Hakkak aim to make this larger book 'as representative of Iranian writers as possible' and to 'reflect the diversity and hybridity of Iran and Iranian culture itself' (*ibid*: xxv, xxiii). Their selection process, though, is deeply problematic. It is premised on an ideological privileging of secularism over theocracy, the middle classes over the masses, and feminism over patriarchy (see *ibid*: xx-xxi). Only writers who express or exemplify such sympathies are chosen to represent a country the majority of whose population, if the 2005 and 2009 Presidential elections are any indication, holds a strong religious, conservative, and traditional system of values. The editors draw a picture of the Revolution, acceptable to Western liberals and cosmopolitans, as a legitimate struggle against Shah Pahlavi's repressive dictatorship initiated by students, intellectuals, workers, and clerics most of whose ideals were soon corrupted by an equally repressive theocracy (*ibid*: xvi-xxi). Consequently, they identify Iranian writing *per se* with the liberal ideals of the Revolution. They state that 'Most of the writers' are 'middle class', 'secular', and 'cosmopolitan', and that '[a] large body of feminist literature [...] has also grown and flourished' (*ibid*: xxi, xx). This identification leads them into a tricky contradiction: if a powerful theocratic regime founded on reactionary principles imposes 'strict censorship', how is it possible that liberal 'writers and

[11] In the last few years, I.B. Tauris has expanded its range to include works on other regions such as East Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the fields of History, the Social Sciences, and International Relations.

poets have multiplied and literary magazines have flourished' (*ibid*: xx)? Either the regime isn't all that powerful - unlikely given its survival through a catastrophic war with Iraq, legitimacy crises posed by reformers like Mohammad Khatami and Mir-Hossein Mousavi, and continued international sanctions. Or, it is not interested in literary and cultural production - more unlikely as it operates as an effective totalitarianism in its micro-political control over dress, sexuality, gender relations, education, and law. Or, not all Iranian writing is premised on opposition to theocratic rule. This seems a valid assumption given the diversity of the population, its conservative majority, and the 'flourishing' of Iranian literature since the Revolution.[12] By choosing not to represent this side of Iranian culture in their anthology, Mozzafari and Hakkak betray their own political biases which, however laudable, do a violence to the literature they wish to comprehensively introduce.

As with *Literature from the "Axis of Evil"* and *Translating Libya*, *Strange times in Persia* thus remains in dialectical collusion with culturally embedded perceptions of rogue states even while challenging their power by introducing contemporary Iranian literature. Postcolonial critics like Boehmer, as indicated above, have suggested the dual capacity of anglophone texts produced by Third World migrants to simultaneously exist as complicit or, after Huggan, exotic commodities for Western audiences, and as 'serious attempt[s] to comprehend [...] an expanded post- or neo-colonial world' (Boehmer 2004: 12). What the three anthologies I've discussed show is that a similar doubling, Damrosch's 'double refraction' as, in my parlance, a dialectic of collusion and resistance, is operative in migrations *of* the literary, in the travels of a foreign text as it is received into a host culture with its own 'values and needs'. They also show that when the values of one culture regarding another are so pervasively shaped by a neo-Orientalist concept like 'Rogue State', it is difficult for world literature to exist except as a politicized refraction of the national.

5. Anglophone Libyan Fiction: Ahmed Fagih, Ibrahim Al-Koni, and Hisham Matar

To attribute the relative scarcity of Libyan literature in English translation only to the political impasse of the last few decades, as Chorin would have it, would be misguided. Libya is a small state of around, according to estimates for 2010, six million mostly rural inhabitants whose literary traditions are centred around oral poetry. Moreover, after the

[12] Indeed, the works of several major contemporary poets and novelists who the editors have failed to include reflect dominant state ideologies. Ali Garmarudi and Tahereh Safarzadeh are probably the most famous examples.

Revolution of 1969 Gaddafi nationalized publishing by setting up a single publishing house and imposing strict censorship on any form of political dissent. Even though, as Mattawa puts it, 'the vast majority of the intelligentsia' identified with 'Arab nationalist and socialist progressive movements' of the sort Gaddafi implemented in Libya, these developments led to the rapid deterioration of Libyan letters, with many writers in the 1970s and 1980s choosing exile over censorship, and many others being imprisoned (Mattawa 2007: 226). The 1990s saw something of an improvement in this state of affairs. With international pressure mounting on Libya's human rights record among other issues, Gaddafi issued a general amnesty for political prisoners and literary output consequently expanded. Despite the state's residual culture of nationalized publishing, censorship, and self-censorship, novelists like Ahmed Fagih and Ibrahim Al-Koni have achieved a rare prominence in at least the world of Arabic literature, where both have been recipients of important awards and accolades.[13] By looking briefly at these two novelist's circumscribed translation and reception histories in the world of anglophone literature, I hope to establish a publishing context for Libyan fiction through which to approach Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men*, which has enjoyed another fate altogether.

Fagih's survival as a writer through the Revolutionary upheavals of the Libya's modern history is, in part, based on his strong postcolonial sensibility. Although he has mentioned occasional quarrels with censors (see Fagih 2009), his ideological stance is generally in accord with the ideals of the Revolution. He strongly criticizes all forms of colonial and foreign influence over Libya, and argues that 'in 1969 the revolution came to overthrow all those powers which had taken control of society, and to confirm the Arabic and Islamic character of the country, liberating it from the remnants of the colonial power represented by the military bases and foreign influence' (Fagih 2007). Such a sensibility is especially pronounced in his short story ‘The Locusts’ (1981; trans. 2008), a Fanonian allegory of violent nationalist and communitarian resistance to universal colonial power that closely echoes Gaddafi's own discourses on national self-identity (see Fagih 2008a: 108-121). Perhaps in response to Fagih's forthrightness as well as to his unquestioned talents and expertise, the regime has accorded him a series of important cultural and diplomatic

[13] Including Best Novel at the 1991 Beirut Book Exhibition for Fagih's trilogy *Gardens of the Night* (1991; trans. 2008), which was also ranked 16th on the Arab Writer's Union list of 'The Best 100 Arabic Books', and the 2005 Mohamed Zafzaf Award for the Arabic Novel, the 2006 French Order for Literature and Arts, and the 2008 Sheikh Zayed Book Award for Al-Koni's various offerings.

positions.[14] Nevertheless, the main thrust of his fiction is far more politically and socially nuanced than this picture suggests. As Ali Abdullatif Ahmida discusses in, as yet, the only critical piece in English on Fagih's masterpiece, *Gardens of the Night* (1991; trans. 2008) depicts a Western-educated Libyan subject who experiences intense alienation from a society whose 'tribal and Islamic laws' conflict with 'the new consumerism of the modern oil economy' (Ahmida 1998: 109; see also Fagih 2008b). Comparable in theme to Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966; trans. 1969), *Gardens of the Night* thus explores a question of more profound significance than that of the Revolution, the question of modernity itself as it impacts Libya and places the state in the (Western, cosmopolitan) narrative of world history. Such a text is crucial for our understanding of Libyan history, society, and culture, and would well feed into canons of Third World or postcolonial literatures in translation. We must therefore ask why it is so difficult to access, only available from 2008 through Xlibris, an American self-publishing / on-demand printing company that offers none of the editorial, marketing, and distribution services of even non-profit publishing houses. Although the reputable British independent house Kegan Paul published five (slim and shoddily edited) volumes of Fagih's translated writings in 2000, the vast majority of his canon remains entrusted to his skills as a translator and self-publisher naturally lacking the resources needed to grant his books a proper English birth.[15]

Unlike Fagih, Al-Koni has had little contact with the Libyan regime, choosing exile in Russia, then Switzerland, for most of his adult life. Moreover, and like Assia Djebar, he identifies himself as a Tuareg rather than a Libyan, a member of that community of Berber nomads who have inhabited the North African Sahara for at least 2,000 years, since well before modern national boundaries were established. Al-Koni's novels are infused with the desert landscapes of his youth, the desert representing for the visionary writer a 'metaphorical world', a 'synonym for the entirety of human existence', a symbol of both 'existential alienation' and of 'freedom' (Al-Koni 2009). Paying close attention to mythology and local lore, they trace tribal patterns in Tuareg society, often pitting the Tuaregs' spiritual unity with man, beast, and land against the alienating forces of modernity - urbanization, mechanization,

[14] In the 1970s, Fagih edited several journals (*Cultural Week*, *Arabic Culture*, *Pioneers*), all subsidized by the state, and served as Director of Libya's National Institute of Music and Drama. From the 1970s to the present, he has also been appointed head of the Press Department in the Libyan embassy in London, as well as ambassador to Greece and Romania.

[15] The five Kegan Paul volumes of 2000 are *Charles, Diana and Me* (short stories), *The Gazelles and Other Plays* (drama), *Libyan Stories: Twelve Short Stories from Libya* (edited anthology), *Valley of Ashes* (novel), and *Who's Afraid of Agatha Christie, and Other Stories* (short stories).

colonial warfare, and so forth. *The Bleeding of the Stone* (1990; trans 2001), the first of Al-Koni's novels translated into English, follows a lonely Bedouin's existential crisis as he attempts to protect the *waddan*, the Barbary Sheep much revered by Tuaregs, from hunters armed with cars and automatic weapons. *Anubis* (2002; trans. 2005) and *The Seven Veils of Seth* (2003; trans. 2008) are both multi-layered narratives that employ what T.S. Eliot might have called a 'mythic method', using ancient Egyptian mythology to order and control stories of Tuareg societies in confrontation with modern civilization (see Eliot 1999). *Gold Dust* (1990; trans. 2008) is concerned with a tribal youth's relationship with his thoroughbred Mahri camel as Italian invaders and famine introduce a divisive sense of avarice within his society. The publication of these novels in respectable English translations by the likes of May Jayyusi, William M. Hutchins (otherwise famous for his work on Naguib Mahfouz), and Elliott Colla has clearly been, in the last few years, a great coup for Libyan letters, hopefully signalling a wider trend that will lead publishers to 'discover' other neglected writers.[16] Further, they are guaranteed at least a wider Anglo-American circulation than Fagih's novels due to the efforts of important UK- and US-based independent houses and university presses like Arris Books, The American University of Cairo Press, Garnet Publishing, and Arabia books. Nevertheless, they have as yet received very little critical attention, with only brief reviews appearing in specialist magazines like *Banipal* and *World Literature Today*. As I hope is evident, Al-Koni's novels would provide fascinating new material for critical studies in the emerging sub-field of postcolonial ecocriticism, as well as for other specializations in postcolonial and world literature studies.

In the context of this near-desert landscape of Libyan fiction in English, Matar's *In the Country of Men* must seem an oasis in the form of a novel for anglophone critics and audiences, offering a rare internal glimpse of the dynamics of Libyan society under Gaddafi. Written in English, published in 2006 by Penguin, and lauded in major newspapers, by major writers, and by important award bodies, the success of *In the Country of Men* has certainly overshadowed that of even the most accessible translated Libyan fiction.[17] In Western literary cultures, its role in translating the Libyan 'other' is thus especially significant. By

[16] Two more translations from Al-Koni, *The Animists* (2010) and *The Puppet* (2010), are due for imminent release at the time of writing.

[17] Reviews have appeared in *The Independent*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, etc., and writers like J.M. Coetzee, Nadeem Aslam, and David Dabydeen have discussed the novel in the most glowing terms. Also, *In the Country of Men* was shortlisted for the Man Booker and the Guardian First Book prizes, and received the Commonwealth First Book Prize for Europe and South Asia, the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize, and the inaugural Arab American Book Award.

providing a close critical reading of *In the Country of Men* in relation to the neo-Orientalist discourses of Libya, I hope to interrogate the conditions of its success and attend to wider questions about the role of the Western-Libyan political encounter in anglophone Libyan literary production.

In the Country of Men comprises the first-person retrospective narrative of Suleiman, a Libyan exile living in Cairo, as he recounts his childhood experiences in Tripoli. There, the brutality of Libyan politics under Gaddafi directly impacts his family and friends during the Summer of 1979. The novel's English prose focalizes Suleiman's perspective as a nine-year-old with a masterly precision and immediacy through which, in the author's words, 'the tempo and texture of my roots', 'an Arabic hum', resonates (Matar 2006a: 248). Aesthetically, it may be said that the novel generalizes Ian Watt's notion of 'delayed decoding', as it hinges on young Suleiman's frustrated struggles to comprehend events beyond his intellectual and moral reach: his mother's alcoholism, which he can only interpret as her 'illness'; his father's political activities, 'disappearing', and torture at the hands of the Mukhabarat, the Soviet-trained secret police; and the televised execution of Ustath Rashid, a close family friend and neighbour (see Watt 1981; Matar 2006a: 1).[18] The novel proceeds as a narrowly avoided tragedy of Suleiman's interpellation into the violent, patriarchal country of men: as the alluring violence of the country, its law, seeps into his blood, he begins to reproduce it in confrontations with the boys and beggars of his neighbourhood. Deeming it too dangerous for Suleiman to stay, his parents eventually send him to Cairo where he experiences a perhaps more haunting tragedy, that of exile. Unequivocal in its condemnation of Gaddafi's Libya, a society of fear held together by the symbolic violence of show trials and public executions, *In the Country of Men* thus also provides a subtler critique as it minutely delineates a consciousness traumatized by totalitarianism.

When asking why *In the Country of Men* has been so successful, its aesthetic qualities, especially the masterly precision by which Matar reproduces a child's experiences and perceptions, should not be overlooked. Nevertheless, almost all the novel's critics have made a point of foregrounding and praising Matar's critique of, as J.M. Coetzee puts it, 'the brutalities of Libyan politics' (quoted in Matar 2006a: i). Novelist David Dabydeen's review

[18] Watt developed the notion of delayed decoding with reference to Joseph Conrad's canon, especially *Heart of Darkness*. As he explains, delayed decoding puts the reader 'in the position of being an immediate witness of each step in the process whereby the semantic gap between the sensations aroused in the individual by an object or event, and their actual cause of meaning, was slowly closed in his consciousness' - puts the reader, that is, in the position of the traumatized subject (Watt 1981: 270). Matar's use of this formal device suggests that a broader, 20th century literary history of delayed decoding under the traumatic conditions associated with colonialism, tyranny, political violence, and so forth might well be drawn.

for *The Independent* is worthy of particular note, as he contextualizes his reading with reference to the issue, detailed above, of Libya's improved diplomatic standing with Western powers. It is the conciliatory attitude of leading European and American politicians resulting from Gaddafi's softened stance, he writes, that Matar 'confronts', choosing instead 'to remember the brutality of Libya under Gaddafi' (Dabydeen 2006). Dabydeen applauds this act of remembrance for cutting through the hypocrisies of international politics and keeping a sharp eye on the individual lives lost in the balance.

Like others of this general consensus, though, Dabydeen fails to consider the wider cultural contexts where Libya has always, in its modern history, been the target of similar narratives. This omission suggests a lack of critical reflexivity that probes the cultural conditions of a novel's appeal, here the accustomed tropes and images of the rogue state that, at a key moment of disorienting political change, can anchor, and apparently have anchored, responses to *In the Country of Men*. This critical failing is deeply problematic, as it contributes to the continued cultural viability of neo-Orientalist discourses, to their role in laying the ideological groundwork for foreign intervention, and to the neglect of other writers producing alternative or counter-narratives of modern Libya. Among the professional reviews, the only voice of dissent I've come across is Palestinian critic Samir el-Youssef's in the *New Statesman*, a socialist British political magazine. The hypocrisy he detects is Matar's, who, actually writing a novel about a lonely child in Tripoli, 'shoehorns in Libyan politics under Gaddafi in a manner that precisely tallies with Western stereotyping' in order to tempt publishers attracted to the 'free publicity' the War on Terror accords related books (el-Youssef 2006). While el-Youssef is correct about Matar's stereotyping depiction, I'd like to argue that the reasons for it are more complex. It stems not only from the changing dynamic of Libyan-Western relations, but also from Matar's biography. Further, it is achieved through a formal strategy that runs deeper than the regurgitated images of secret police, show trials, and executions the Palestinian critic rightly finds objectionable.

Although Matar insists that *In the Country of Men* 'is a product of [his] imagination', the narrative closely parallels some keys facets of the author's biography with important bearings on questions of politics and form (Matar 2006a: 248). Firstly, like Suleiman's father, Matar's, a human rights activist and vocal critic of Gaddafi's regime, was 'disappeared' by the authorities in 1990, and his fate remains unknown to this day.[19] Secondly, like

[19] Matar has used the novel's success to draw public attention to his father and to the residually contentious issue of political imprisonment in Libya through a series of newspaper articles in *The Independent* and *The Guardian* (see Matar 2006b; Matar 2010). In one of those rare moments when literature concretely mobilizes action,

Suleiman himself, Matar is a first-generation emigrant from Libya who has turned to writing as a means to recall a troubled Libyan childhood in terms both intimate and political. Given these biographical facts, it is perfectly understandable that Matar would want to write a novel that foregrounds some of the reasons of Libya's long-term international vilification. But given the parallels between biography and narrative, it seems the case that a formal entanglement between author, narrator, and object of narration, one disavowed by the author, runs through *In the Country of Men*. This entanglement is key to understanding how Matar appropriates the form of the cosmopolitan dictator novel for Libyan political experience, thus commodifying that experience for international consumption.

In the Country of Men formally hinges on the easily overlooked relationship between the exiled adult narrator and his younger self, the object of his story. Adult Suleiman is introduced in the opening sentence as the narrating 'I' who is 'recalling now that last summer before I was sent away', only to recede into the background until the final pages where he, along with the present tense, resurfaces as a Caireen pharmacist (*ibid*: 1). In between, the narrator seamlessly assumes the perspective of young Suleiman as he confronts political, familial, and social contexts beyond his intellectual and moral reach. The assumption of the child's-eye-view is clearly signposted later on the first page as Suleiman naively describes his mother's alcoholism as her 'illness' (*ibid*). Object thus becomes subject as the past is narrated in terms of lived experience. This formal strategy is employed in order to establish the interpretive parameters of the traumatic events to follow in an archetypal humanism that sets up the innocence of childhood against the corrupting influence of totalitarianism. Using a formulaic and overwrought symbolism as prominent in Islam as in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the narrator unambiguously indicates Suleiman's archetypal status in Chapter four, where the child climbs a mulberry tree in his father's garden to taste 'the best fruit God had created' (*ibid*: 47-8).

The narrative thus unfolds as a narrowly-avoided tragedy of Suleiman's interpellation into a masculine subject position constructed, in Libya, as ruthless in its expressions of power. As in Louis Althusser, Suleiman is 'hailed' in Chapter 11 by the presence of Sharief, a secret policeman (see Althusser 1971). Although his Islamic education, which he recalls at this moment, warns him about the 'fires of Hell' that 'will be like a voice calling', Suleiman 'can't help but turn' when he hears his name (Matar 2006a: 46, 130). As he peers into

public figures like Desmond Tutu and David Miliband, as well as International PEN (the signatories of whose petition include Salman Rushdie, J.M. Coetzee, Orhan Pamuk, Michael Ondaatje, Wole Soyinka, and Ian McEwan), demanded from Gaddafi, to no avail, Jaballa Matar's release.

Sharief's eyes, 'a strange force within them seemed to be pulling me', and Suleiman experiences 'some excitement at being so close' to the older figure's gun and stench, his 'sign of manhood' (*ibid*: 130, 132). This fascination with power is reproduced in Suleiman's interactions with Bahloul, a neighbourhood beggar, at whom he throws rocks and later attempts to drown (see *ibid*: 116-9, 217-9). Further, Suleiman is alienated from his gang when, appropriating the law's designation for political activists, he accuses his best friend Kareem of having a traitor for a father. The visceral impact of such an accusation for deeply indoctrinated subjects is suggested by Suleiman's inability to complete the sentence: he manages only a 'tr-' before being physically assaulted (*ibid*: 108). Symbolized by the replacement of the father's by the Guide's, Gaddafi's, portrait in the family living room, an act that dismantles and reassembles the family triangle as a politicized social unit, Suleiman's changing behaviour thus represents the intrusion of authority into private, interior lives (see *ibid*: 90-1). By transcribing his lived experience in such a manner, the narrator produces Suleiman as a subject, innocent of a past he is too young to understand, influenced by and responding to Libyan politics as immediate and dehistoricized. Indeed, the impact of his narrative depends on such innocence. But, given his strongly affective condition of dispossession and exile, it may be argued that the narrator is unreliable, and that he structures Suleiman's experience according to an ideologically motivated version of Libyan history that foregrounds certain features and places others under erasure. In this case, the narrator exerts a form of tyranny, of violence over his 'subject' comparable to that of Gaddafi in its motivations.

The question of history and its erasure is figured in the narrative by the fate of Ustath Rashid, Kareem's father and an academic art historian who is imprisoned, tortured, and publicly executed due to his political activities. During a field trip to the ancient city of Lepcis Magna attended by Suleiman, Kareem, and his university students, Rashid situates modern Libya as the product of a long series of colonialisms. After explaining to his students that the city was 'founded by people from Tyre', modern day Lebanon, he then rapidly jumps from conqueror to conqueror across the centuries to explain that 'Subsequently it became Phoenician, then, of course, Roman' (*ibid*: 25). The implication, of course, is of a chain of occupiers that extends through the period of Italian rule from 1912 to 1927 to the present. Elsewhere, the narrator interrupts the action to introduce restaurateur and colonial descendant Signor Il Calzoni, a caricature whose overzealous chanting of 'Long live the Guide' and declarations that 'I am also Libyan' suggest his precarious position given Gaddafi's anti-imperialist ideology (*ibid*: 19, 20). As the narrator takes the time in these episodes to

smuggle in, through his characters, a critical commentary on Libya's colonial heritage, his neglect of the contexts of the 1969 Revolution must appear wilful. His only mention of this defining event of Libya's modern history occurs in passing, in a subsidiary clause: 'After Qaddafi's September Revolution overthrew King Idris, Judge Yaseen didn't return to Cairo' (*ibid*: 75).

Given this act of narratorial evasion or misdirection, the suggestion of Gaddafi's erasure of Libyan history in art historian Rashid's execution appears disingenuous. Especially so as, in strict historical context, Gaddafi's no doubt ideologically biased speeches consistently invoke Libya's colonial past, and that the third volume of *The Green Book*, published in 1979, includes a sophisticated Marxian account of 'the movement of history' (see Gaddafi 1979). Staged as pure spectacle, the execution takes place in the National Basketball Stadium for a cheering, chanting, howling crowd, the Libyan demos as many-headed monster. Their frenzy is directed at the terrified figure of Rashid as the speaker, 'in a voice like a high-pitched siren' reminiscent, for Suleiman, of Sheikh Mustafa's sermons, equates Gaddafi's desert origins with those of Moses, Elijah, Christ, and Mohammad and, approaching ecstasy, calls for the removal of the 'corrupt elements' who oppose Libya's spiritual as well as political Guide (Matar 2006a: 182, 183). Also staged here, then, is the narrator's version of a Libyan politics orchestrated by demagogues and kept in power by the easily-swayed masses, a spectacle with which Western readers are all-too-familiar.

The final three chapters of *In the Country of Men* trace Suleiman's migration to Cairo at the end of his traumatic summer, and his subsequent growth into the position of adult narrator. Soon after he is taken in by Judge Yaseen, an Egyptian family friend who had left his Libyan home under similar circumstances, Suleiman is astonished by 'how free I came to feel from Libya' (*ibid*: 230). From this newly distanced perspective, he reflects that 'Nationalism is as thin as a thread, perhaps that's why many feel it must be anxiously guarded' (*ibid*). This passage can be taken to exemplify the process of Suleiman's mature thinking: as a personal experience, his feeling of liberation, is expanded into a generic observation about nationalism, a political stance emerges by which, with no other evidence, the actions of others may be judged. While loosening the bonds of national identity, exile has caused Suleiman to 'suffer an absence, an ever-present absence, like an orphan not entirely certain of what he has missed or gained through his unchosen loss' (*ibid*: 231-2). The orphan simile suggests an affective rupture from the network of associations in family, friendship, and landscape that constitutes identity. It is through increasingly sporadic telephone conversations with his mother that a grown Suleiman learns of and experiences, second hand,

his father's re-imprisonment in 1994 and death soon after. As Suleiman imagines his father 'without me, without my hands, my now grown-up arms, strong enough to lift him, to press him to my chest, to say all the meagre things people say at such moments', a longing for home, and an accusation directed at those who had separated him, surfaces in the narrator's tone (*ibid*: 243). That this tone had been present throughout a narrative explicitly framed as lived experience prior to exile is now made clear, so that innocence turns out to have been always-already corrupted by authorship.

As I've suggested, *In the Country of Men* falls squarely within the genre of the dictator novel. While, to my knowledge, there has been no sustained criticism on the dictator novel as a global form – most studies circulate around the Latin American Boom of the 1960s and 1970s, and focus on figures like Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa – Matar's novel allows for some preliminary thoughts in this direction. Firstly, *In the Country of Men* strikes all the right thematic notes – its critique of power and authoritarianism, its investigation of masculinity in a paternalist state, and its emphasis on political violence are all well in accord with the genre's established concerns. Secondly, its blurring of formal boundaries between author, narrator, and object of narration recalls the postmodernist techniques employed by its Latin American predecessors to suggest the destabilization or fragmentation of identity under authoritarianism.

Yet its belated appearance on the stage of world literature relative to its predecessors – also including Naguib Mahfouz's *Children of Gebalawi* (1959; trans. 1981) – must be taken into account when considering its form. Discussing the worlding of magic realism more generally, critics like William Rowe and Raymond L. Williams have argued that 'second-generation' magic realist writers like Isabel Allende and Angela Carter adopted the stylistic features of the form globally popularized by García Márquez and others while erasing its radical political intent – in a word, they commodified magic realism. 'In the 1980s', Rowe explains, 'magical realism became a genre formula, transferable to scenarios that lacked the particular historical characteristics [of Latin American modernization], and was even adopted as a model by non-Latin American writers' (Rowe 1997: 506-7; see also Williams 1996). Although it would be unfair to make parallel claims about the politics and historical contexts of *In the Country of Men* given Matar's stance on Gaddafi's Libya, this novel, like those of Allende and Carter under Rowe's reading, certainly relies on the stylistic conventions established and popularized in global culture by its predecessors. By replicating such conventions for the Libyan context, then, *In the Country of Men* commodifies Middle Eastern politics for ready international consumption through the very familiarity of its form.

Answering the question of this novel's success, its form thus reflects its author's position of native informant, reproducing cosmopolitan literary conventions just as Matar reproduces neo-Orientalist political values.[20]

When considering the relative success of Libyan writers, issues of language and translation must of course also be taken into account. But language barriers have certainly been overcome before, most notably with Mahfouz and Tayeb Salih from the Arabic novelistic tradition. Whatever the case, a gross inequality of publishing and critical attention remains between writers with a long-standing international reputation of high-quality, politically nuanced, and historically sophisticated fiction like Fagih and Al-Koni and a young writer like Matar, whose reputation rests on one novel that problematically falls into a familiar pattern of neo-Orientalist discourses regarding the Middle Eastern state. Postcolonial and world literature critics should pay renewed attention to such disparities, and carry out readings that place novels like Matar's in proper historical and literary contexts.

Conclusion

In a recent essay on the narrativization of Libya's 'elusive revolution', Barbara Harlow suggests that the British, French, and American imposition of a 'No-Fly Zone' during the civil war of 2011 was a 'neo-imperial exercise of the codes of humanitarian intervention, in the name of a "responsibility to protect"' (Harlow 2012: 455). In this chapter, I have argued that such narrativization is premised on a long-entrenched ideology of the Middle Eastern rogue state, an ideology which has shaped, and continues to influence, practices of literary production, circulation, and translation pertaining to Libyan, Iranian, and other Middle Eastern literatures. The relative invisibility of more complex literary representations of Libyan politics and history, such as those of Fagih and Al-Koni, in Anglo-American literary

[20] As postcolonial critic Stephen Morton lucidly explains, the term "native informant' is conventionally used in ethnography to describe indigenous people who provide information about non-western societies to western ethnographers' (Morton 2007: 142). Critics and theorists like Homi Bhabha, Aijaz Ahmad, Arif Dirlik, and Timothy Brennan have made 'native informant' a stock category in postcolonial studies, where it typically designates third world intellectuals who mimic or otherwise adopt a Westernized system of cultural and political values to describe their home societies. The figure of the native informant has thus been viewed with a high degree of suspicion, as a cultural agent of imperial projects or of hegemonic globalization. For a thorough revisionist account of the native informant, see Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999). Spivak tracks the foreclosure of the native informant in canonical texts of Western modernity (Kant, Hegel, Marx), and, using the tools provided in such texts, seeks to articulate modes of agency from the native informant's complicit, but repressed, subject-position. For Spivak, then, the native informant models a critical postcolonial sensibility for a present in which postcolonialism is intricately bound up in the circuits of hegemonic globalization, in which the critic's positionality is always complex, ambiguous, unfixed.

culture highlights the material dimensions of this argument. The appropriation of the commodified genre of the dictator novel and the reproduction of neo-Orientalist discourse in Matar's *In the Country of Men* suggest its literary dimensions. Given the limitations of this culture vis-à-vis states like Libya, its implicit and explicit effect of foregrounding their roguishness and obscuring alternative narratives of, say, their colonial histories, it thus contributes to the ideological framework by which the Western military intervention into Libyan domestic politics was naturalized as humanitarian. It seems the responsibility of geopolitically engaged postcolonial and world literature criticism to attend to the ways in which ideologies of 'East' and 'West', democracies and rogues, 'us' and 'them', are embedded in the structures of the world literary system.

Chapter Four

Consuming Middle Eastern Women: Azar Nafisi and Yasmin Crowther

In this chapter, I build on the critical framework I developed in Chapter Three for approaching discourses and representations of the rogue state. I turn here to neo-Orientalist discourses of the repressed, disenfranchised Muslim woman, and their role in further marginalizing rogue states such as Iran in the international community. I trace the effects of such discourses on the emergence of anglophone Iranian literature as a new field in Anglo-American literary culture, focusing on questions of its popular and critical reception, and ask how gendered narratives of post-revolutionary Iran reproduce or challenge them.

In Section One, 'Iran, Gender, and the Politics of Representation', I outline my approach to these issues with reference to the rogue states ideology, and suggest that the work of Islamic feminist scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod, Miriam Cooke, and Saba Mahmood offers a fruitful post-Orientalist critique. In Section Two, 'Between Fiction and Autobiography: The Genres of Anglophone Iranian Literature', I survey the more prominent genres of anglophone Iranian literature, arguing that Max Saunders' term 'autobiografiction' provides rich conceptual grounds for considering their representations of Iranian women. In Section Three, 'Islamic Feminism in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*', I explore the popular success of Nafisi's memoir in light of its rejection of Islamic feminism, and discuss the heated critical debate which has surrounded it. In Section Four, ''Multiple Belonging' in Yasmin Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen*', I argue that Crowther's revisionist postcolonial novel of migration counters the dominant narrative of Iranian women's repression established by Nafisi and others by providing a dual, cross-cultural perspective. I also explore various postcolonial approaches to migration here, and outline what a novel such as Crowther's contributes to a wider theorization. I conclude that *The Saffron Kitchen* inscribes an incipient Islamic feminism into the form of the novel of migration, and opens a space of dialogue more sensitive to Iranian women's 'multiple belongings'.

1. Iran, Gender, and the Politics of Representation

Following from my discussion of the fallacies of objectivity and American exceptionalism in critical thinking about rogue states in Chapter Three, I would like here to extend this critique by focusing on one prominent feature of the rogue state doctrine as defined by American

policy-makers: the suppression, as Anthony Lake puts it, of 'basic human rights'. More specifically, I wish to assess how women and women's rights in rogue states are figured in political and media discourses in preparation for military and other aggressive interventions. We can all remember how the treatment of women under the Taliban was used as a key ideological justification for the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, when '*chador*' suddenly became a household term and images of veiled Muslim women saturated the media. As with Afghanistan, so with Iran, deemed an enemy by successive US administrations since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 due to the concomitant Hostage Crisis, the state's support of so-called terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and, especially, its purported nuclear weapons program. Given the ongoing hostility towards Iran in American political and media discourses, with even the Democratic Barack Obama administration refusing to abandon the nuclear option as at least a strategic tool, it is particularly pressing and timely to assess how gendered discourses of this rogue state lay the foundations for war.

Lake, who was again pivotal in stating the executive stance towards Iran, claimed that 'The American quarrel with Iran should not be misconstrued as a "clash of civilizations" or opposition to Iran as a theocratic state' (Lake 1994: 52). Nevertheless, representations of gender have everything to do with Islam as the West's civilizational 'other'. Continuing his account, alluded to in the previous chapter, of the mutual symbolic demonization of Iran and the US, William Beeman shows how 'the bearded, scowling visage of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini [has served] almost as a visual trope for the negative, devilish view of Iran in the United States – a Mad Mullah, among other Mad Mullahs' (Beeman 2008: 10). Extending this argument, it could be said that the image, the perception of radical theocratic authority underlies much, if not most, of public and critical discourse regarding gender in Iran. A brief survey of, again, mainstream American news media sources like *Fox News* and *The New York Times*, will reveal an uncanny insistence on stories of women's repression under the Islamic Republic's strict theocratic regime. Further, the most authoritative monograph on this issue written in English, Hamideh Sedghi's *Women and Politics in Iran* (2007), is premised on the idea of a monolithic state that, by utilizing biopolitical strategies such as 'concealing women's bodies, gender segregation and inequality', 'uses gender as a source of legitimacy in order to consolidate its power [and Islamic identity]' (Sedghi 2007: 201, 7).[1]

[1] Sedghi's book certainly reflects the dominant current in anglophone scholarship on gender politics in Iran, although the last few years have seen scholars such as Roksana Bahramitash, Eric Hooglund, Mehri Honarbin-Holliday, and Arzoo Osanloo provide revisionist accounts of gender politics in Iran.

Such discourses result in the widespread perception that the Islamic Republic, and, by extension, Islamic law, is incompatible with women's rights, a perception which Muslim women (and men) around the world find deeply offensive. Indeed, Islamic feminist scholars like Lila Abu-Lughod, Miriam Cooke, and Saba Mahmood have well documented how the majority of Iranian women, at least in the years immediately preceding and following it, supported the Revolution and willingly donned the veil as a sign of political (anti-imperialist) and / or cultural (Islamic) identity (see Abu-Lughod 1998: 14-15, Cooke 2000: xi, Mahmood 2005: 1-10). Moreover, these discourses obscure what Cooke calls the 'multiple belongings' (religion, politics, gender, etc.) of women in Iran and elsewhere in the Islamic world, the diverse ways in which faith and gender commitments are negotiated in Iranian society, and the varied and extensive subject-positions Iranian women adopt in relation to the often conflicting demands of family, profession, religion, state, and global politics (Cooke 2000: 59). They, in short, gender the borders – national, ideological, and cultural - drawn by the rogue state concept between 'us' and the Iranian 'other': 'our' societies are legitimated for their liberal and progressive approach to women's rights in contrast to a patriarchal Iranian society in which gender inequality is the norm. Colonial desires to unveil the abject, disenfranchised Muslim woman are thus intertwined with neo-Orientalist desires to define others.

2. Between Fiction and Autobiography: The Genres of Anglophone Iranian Literature

Given its widespread success in British and American literary culture, the field of anglophone Iranian literature is rapidly emerging as a crucial site for exploring such issues of cross-cultural representation. It raises a series of key questions which this chapter aims to address: how do its representations of women relate to culturally dominant discourses of Iranian women as abject victims of a repressive, patriarchal regime?; how do they consolidate, contest, cut across, or engage with such discourses?; how do audience perceptions and market demands influence writers' approaches to Iranian gender politics, shape their narratives, and structure the reception of their texts in the Britain and the United States? In the broadest terms, such questions amount to asking whether anglophone Iranian literature is a commodified field of literary production, subservient to dominant, thus marketable, cultural and political values, or whether it contains or even gestures towards strategies of resistance to commodification, material, aesthetic, or thematic.

Anglophone Iranian literature started to coalesce into a distinct field in the late 1990s, some twenty years after the Revolution.[2] Since then, a range of mainly US publishers have brought out a steady stream of narratives pertaining to lived experience in the Islamic Republic, to the state's social and political turmoil, to experiences of exile, emigration, and loss, and to the forging of new, dual identities in the spaces between Iran and the US, Iran and the UK. Markets, and the majority of reviewers, have responded favourably to texts that promise insight into that 'troubled' part of the world, with memoirs like Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) having become mainstays on bestseller lists, for award-bodies, and for reading groups. Such narratives have only increased in popularity since 9/11, and can be divided into two prevalent genres: Iranian women's autobiographies / memoirs and anglophone Iranian fiction.

The Canada-based Iranian scholar Nima Naghibi has provided an interesting psychoanalytic reading of autobiographies by writers, beyond Nafisi, including Gelareh Asayesh (*Saffron Sky* (1999)), Tara Bahrampour (*To See and See Again* (1999)), Marjane Satrapi (*Persepolis* (2003, 2004)), and Azadeh Moaveni (*Lipstick Jihad* (2005)). Aiming to explain their politics as well as their sudden prominence, she argues that this generation of writers were at a formative stage of childhood or adolescence when the Iranian Revolution took place. Experiencing it as 'interruption', as 'trauma', as 'a wound inflicted during a key period in the authors' personal development', this generation, she continues, has been unable to assimilate the Revolution, which thereby returns as a haunting psychic kernel that must be worked through in the specific form of the autobiography (Naghibi 2009: 80). Correspondingly, 'nostalgia for a lost childhood', the sentiment that pervades these narratives, is intimately bound up with 'a nostalgia for a lost (prerevolutionary) nation or home' (*ibid*).

As the autobiographies thus align with dominant cultural and political conceptions of Iran, they belong, for Naghibi, to Graham Huggan's category of the 'ethnic autobiography'. For Huggan, the ethnic autobiography is a commodified genre that aims to fulfil growing

[2] It is estimated that more than 4 million Iranians have emigrated from their native country since 1979. As the post-Revolutionary theocracy targeted cosmopolitan writers and intellectuals, many of these chose to flee in order to continue their work. Diasporic literary communities have therefore flourished in the Middle East, Europe, and North America, raising important critical questions of exile and emigration, first- and second-generation emigrant approaches, Farsi versus adoptive tongues, trauma, nostalgia, 'writing back' to the Islamic Republic, transculturation, and so forth. See Peyman Vahabzadeh's 'Where Will I Dwell? A Sociology of Literary Identity within the Iranian Diaspora' (2008) for the fullest overview in English of the debates surrounding post-Revolutionary diaspora literature. There, he argues that the category of 'exile literature' to which most writers of the 1980s generation clung for political purposes is limited, and that 'emigrant literature' more accurately captures the varied approaches to politics, transnational identity construction, source and host cultures, etc. of diasporic writers. Less attention has been paid to specifically *anglophone* 'exile' or 'emigrant' Iranian literature.

market demands for '*cultural authenticity*' (Huggan 2001: 157). But while offering 'indirect access to 'exotic' cultures', it, as commodity, re-moulds those cultures to suit dominant values, rendering the ethnic 'other' 'amenable to a mainstream reading public' (*ibid*: 155).[3] With Iranian women's autobiographies, it might be said that the demand for authenticity is heightened, made all the more acute, due to the image of Iranian women as veiled, their stories undisclosed, hidden, repressed. Indeed, publishers have played on colonial desires to unveil what Naghibi characterizes as 'the simultaneously eroticized and abject Muslim woman', enticingly juxtaposing pictures of veiled women on book covers with subtitles promising intimate knowledge, (Naghibi 2009: 81).[4]

Naghibi's line of analysis might well be extended to the novels. After all, their authors belong to the same generation as Nafisi *et al*, began publishing in the same time frame, and are all exiles or (first- or second-generation) emigrants from Iran living in the US or the UK. Moreover, they almost universally reflect a similar political orientation as the autobiographies. A brief thematic survey of the most prominent recent texts reveals an overwhelming emphasis on issues of political imprisonment, women's subjugation, and the various forms of violence to which Iranian citizens are subject.

Farnoosh Moshiri, now living as an exile in Texas, is probably the most celebrated novelist of this field, and novels like *At the Wall of the Almighty* (2000) and *The Bathhouse* (2004) deal with the traumas of political imprisonment in the early days of the Revolution. The latter is especially provocative, as, reminiscent of Sanaz's experiences in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, it details the increasing emotional and psychological reliance of its young female captive on her (male) captor. *The Septembers of Shiraz* (2007) by Dalia Sofer, a Jewish Iranian writer similarly exiled in the US, semi-autobiographically expands its attention to an

[3] It is important to note that here, as elsewhere in *The Postcolonial Exotic*, Huggan stresses that many ethnic autobiographical writers (his example is the Aboriginal autobiography) 'have proved singularly adept in 'playing the market' to their own ideological ends', so 'have succeeded in articulating their own highly distinctive life-narratives and histories' (Huggan 2001: 176). A similar proviso should be applied to my reading of Iranian women's autobiographies: even though I focus on their co-optation, their alignment with dominant cultural values, many go out of their way to stress the immigrant's feeling of dislocation and to challenge the (mis)representation of Iranian women in the Western media. *Saffron Sky*, *Persepolis*, and *Lipstick Jihad* all suggest such counter-narratives.

[4] The literature on veiling is vast, and represents an array of perspectives ranging from the neo-Orientalist (the veil as a symbol of women's universal oppression under Islam) to the Islamic feminist (the veil as a symbol of women's cultural and political identity). For a powerful post-Orientalist approach that examines the veil as a site of Orientalist fantasy and Western ideology, see Meyda Yegenoglu's *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (1998). For postcolonial approaches that address veiling relative to the various issues of gender discrimination / oppression, representation / tropology, gendered agency, the ethics and politics of postcolonial intervention, and the challenges to feminist theory, see Alison Donnell's special issue of *Interventions* on 'The Veil: Postcolonialism and the Politics of Dress' (1999) and Reina Lewis' and Sara Mills' co-edited volume *Feminism and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (2003).

entire Jewish Iranian family when, in 1981, its patriarch is accused of being a Zionist spy and, predictably, is arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. In *The Blood of Flowers* (2008), Iranian-American writer Anita Amirrezvani innovatively employs historical parallelism to suggest Iranian women's repression. Set in the oriental lushness of 17th century Isfahan, the novel is centred on the trope of woman-as-commodity as, after her father dies, its fourteen year-old heroine is forced into labouring for her uncle and later into a loveless marriage. Finally, the widely acclaimed *Sons and Other Flammable Objects* (2008) by Iranian-American Porochista Khakpour takes a more critical, nuanced stance as its émigré Iranian characters navigate problems of identity and cultural stereotypes in a hostile post-9/11 American culture. Despite its enlightened approach, though, this novel presents Iran as a hazy, almost-forgotten memory as it focuses on forms of emigrant cultural adaptation in the US.[5]

One might say that these novels function by depersonalizing and sublimating the (post-)revolutionary traumas experienced first-hand by autobiographers like Nafisi into archetypal images that aim to encapsulate the repressive heart of the Iranian regime. Like the autobiographies, they, by eliciting strong affective responses on the part of the reader, forcefully impress a particular narrative about Iran. Although they do so in a weaker way than the autobiographies - paratextually rather than textually, as it were - the novels even meet market demands for authenticity. Publishers have been especially keen to play up authors' biographical credentials - their experiences of Iranian repression, exile, and so forth - on book jackets, while authors themselves have usually been more than willing to volunteer such information in interviews about their novels.

The foregoing critical survey of anglophone Iranian literature has attempted to draw parallels between the field's prevalent genres on thematic, political, and material grounds. A less obvious, but equally suggestive, parallel or overlap between the autobiographies and the novels is discernible, though, through close analysis of their formal features. The nature of this overlap is captured well in Max Saunders' term 'autobiografiction', which, derived from a 1906 essay by Stephen Reynolds, designates a complex space between fiction and autobiography. In his detailed recent studies of autobiografiction in the early 20th century, Saunders identifies and distinguishes between the many forms it may take (the use of

[5] A few key Iranian novelists in translation should also be noted. From the Dutch, Kader Abdolah's heavily political novels *My Father's Notebook* (2006) and *The House of the Mosque* (2010) are about the traumatic impact of the Revolution on families and on later generations of Iranians. From the Farsi, Shahrnush Parsipur's *Women Without Men* (2004), Hushang Golshiri's *The Prince* (2006), and Shahriyar Mandanipour's *Censoring an Iranian Love Story* (2010) have proved especially attractive to publishers and reviewers.

autobiographical experiences, people, or events in a work of fiction; the use of autobiographical forms such as the diary or journal in fiction; autobiographical accounts of fictional characters; etc.) (see Saunders 2009, 2010). He argues that beyond the more obvious 'negative reasons an autobiographical writer may assume a fictional disguise' (a wish for concealment due to familial, sexual, or psychological concerns), modernist writers such as Proust, Joyce, and Woolf employed autobiografictional forms for 'positive', 'deconstructive' reasons such as challenging 'generic boundary-lines' (Saunders 2009: 1056). These writers, he concludes, show that 'all autobiography has fictional tendencies' and that 'all fiction [...] has an autobiographical dimension' (*ibid*).

I would like to suggest that Saunders' thesis can fruitfully be extended to anglophone Iranian literature, and that the blurring of generic boundary-lines in both the autobiographies and the novels has crucial consequences for representations of women. Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, which I take as a representative autobiographical narrative, and Yasmin Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen* (2006), a representative novel, are especially interesting in this regard. On the one hand, *Reading Lolita* is a memoir about the reading of fiction, specifically Western classics by Nabokov, Fitzgerald, James, and Austen banned by the post-Revolutionary Iranian regime. As I demonstrate below, the feminism Nafisi derives from such texts, forming the basis of her representations of gender inequalities in Iran, is 'universal' or 'international' in orientation. Nafisi's memoir is thus mediated by fiction, and consists of a highly stylized, fictionalized account of Iranian women that obscures their Islamic feminist sympathies, their multiple belongings. On the other hand, *The Saffron Kitchen*, as reflected in its revision of the postcolonial novel of migration, is partially shaped by autobiographical experience. Like Sara, the novel's main character, Crowther is a second-generation immigrant to the UK, and has reported that her relationship with her Iranian mother has indeed influenced her depiction of the novel's central mother-daughter conflict. Moreover, she conducted extensive research in Mashhad, a key location in the novel, and elsewhere in Iran in preparation for writing. As I explain, Crowther's migratory background and personal experience of Iran feeds into, mediates, her representation of the multiple different roles women play in contemporary Iranian society, her complex and reflexive take on Iran's modern history that cuts across, deconstructs familiar tropes of the rogue state. Critically comparing these two texts through the lens of autobiografiction opens key new interpretive possibilities. Doing so allows us to assess both how autobiographers use the strategies and techniques of fiction to render their representations of women marketable,

commercially viable, consumable, and how novelists (occasionally) draw on personal experience to represent Iran and Iranian women in ways that resist commodification.

3. Islamic Feminism in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*

In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Nafisi narrates her experiences as an English Literature professor in post-Revolutionary Iran attempting to teach canonical texts of the Western tradition, mainly Vladimir Nabokov, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Jane Austen. Preaching the democratic power of imaginative literature throughout, she traces the impact the newly empowered clerical regime had on her curriculum as well as on her status as a woman professor, the objections of her (male) student body to texts considered licentious and otherwise in conflict with the tenets of Islam, and the identifications a select group of young women invited to a private book club make with texts and characters. Much of Nafisi's time is spent constructing parallels between, say, Nabokov's villains or Austen's heroines and comparable Iranian behaviour, which she, her students, and her readers consequently perceive through the lens of fiction. In the memoir's most egregious instance of such parallelism, Nafisi compares Iran's ruling clerics, who 'had tried to shape others according to their own dreams and desires', to Nabokov's Humbert Humbert, effectively reducing them to rapists (Nafisi 2003: 33). Although the weight of the narrative lies more on the subversive act of reading, and teaching, forbidden embodiments of Western decadence rather than on the readings themselves, the readings thus set out the interpretive parameters of Nafisi's, her colleagues', her family's, and her students' experiences under 'the regime'. Special attention is paid to instances of women being repressed, including brothers overzealous to restrict their sibling's movements, 'Morality Squads' inspecting women's attire at every turn, and prison guards raping and murdering their captives. What *Reading Lolita* offers, in short, is a highly personalized, stylized account of post-Revolutionary Iran from a woman's perspective thoroughly mediated by fiction.

Reading Lolita won the Book Sense Book of the Year Award and hit the *New York Times* bestseller list shortly after publication. The controversy surrounding the book, though, stems from an article Columbia Iranian Studies professor Hamid Dabashi wrote in 2006 for the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram Weekly*. After comparing, with little textual evidence, Nafisi's book to 'the most pestiferous colonial projects of the British in India' and arguing that it recycles 'a kaffeeklatsch version of English literature as the ideological foregrounding of American empire', Dabashi turns to the author herself (Dabashi 2006). He accuses her of

possessing no 'scholarly credential[s]', of having close ties with stock figures of American neoconservatism like Paul Wolfowitz and Bernard Lewis, and of being 'the personification of [the] native informer and colonial agent' (*ibid*). Although many critics have taken issue with Dabashi's fiery polemics, I would say the impact of the article is based more on its denaturalization of Nafisi's representation of Iran. It questions the function of negative representations of a state Dabashi acknowledges is problematic, especially regarding its treatment of women, in an already belligerent American culture. It blurs the boundaries between legitimate critique and warmongering propaganda.

As can be expected, the ensuing debate has been sharply polarized. Numerous scholars have spoken out in Nafisi's defence, accusing Dabashi of 'strategic misreading', of being a cultural 'Stalinist', and, most importantly, of ignoring 'the extreme social and political conditions that forced Nafisi underground' (Lewis-Kraus 2006; Fulford 2006; Papin-Matin 2007). Just as many others have rearticulated Dabashi's critique with more balanced attention to the text itself. Seyed Mohammad Marandi scours the text for 'misrepresentations of Iranian society and Islam'; John Carlos Rowe identifies textual expressions of the author's neoliberal sensibility, arguing that *Reading Lolita* 'is an excellent example of how neoliberal rhetoric is now being deployed by neoconservatives'; and Fatemah Keshavarz has written her own book-length counter-autobiography aiming to dispel myths about a joyless Iran promulgated by *Reading Lolita* other texts of the 'New Orientalist narrative', criticizing, along the way, Nafisi's 'selective and exaggerated account of life in postrevolutionary Iran', her 'reductionist interpretation of the causes and effects of events', and her lack of attention to local culture and Iranian literature (Mohammed Marandi 2008; Rowe 2007; Keshavarz 2007: 2, 6, 9, see also 109-144).[6]

Rather than attempt to address all the issues raised by such critics, I wish to approach *Reading Lolita* by following a line of inquiry set out by John Carlos Rowe. He suggests that the success of Nafisi's book is based, in part, on its appeal to 'Western readers with feminist commitments, especially the feminist universalism that ignores the different historical and cultural situations of women around the world' (Rowe 2007: 258-9). This point is intended to

[6] Amy DePaul's essay 'Rereading *Reading Lolita in Tehran*' (2008) evades easy categorization in either of the two sides of the debate. DePaul argues that while Nafisi exaggerates pre-Revolutionary women's freedoms, ignores women's embrace of the veil, and undermines the value of Iranian literature, *Reading Lolita* still provides 'a valuable record of the perils of revolutionary zeal and the importance of literature in surviving them' (DePaul 2008: 90). I find this 'rereading' problematic as it takes Nafisi's claim to be writing a memoir, a 'record', at face value, and downplays the role of fiction in the text's construction and in the interpretation of experience.

expose Nafisi's representation of women's repression in Iran as founded on principles that, appearing universal, are in fact local, particular, 'Western', and thus to implicitly point towards alternate narratives of Iranian women's experiences.

Nafisi's brand of feminism is best foregrounded by exploring the way she constructs post-Revolutionary Iranian woman's subjectivity. Her treatment of women is marked, primarily, by omission. As noted above, most Iranian women willingly took on the veil to define their political and cultural identities in the Revolutionary years of 1978-79. But nowhere in *Reading Lolita* are their stories told, their perspectives understood, or their interiority rendered.[7] Rather, Iranian women are uniformly constructed as subject to, victims of, a violent, patriarchal Islamic Law manifest in the innumerable instances of brutality and humiliation that scatter every page.[8] Nafisi goes further, and suggests women's masochistic, death-driven interiorization of the Law in describing an arbitrary flogging Sanaz, one of her students, receives as 'a source of satisfaction to her, a compensation for having yielded to those other humiliations' (Nafisi 2003: 73). The sexual undertone of this thought is more fully expressed towards the end of *Reading Lolita*, where Nafisi describes 'Living in the Islamic Republic' as 'like having sex with a man you loathe': 'you make your mind blank - you pretend to be somewhere else, you tend to forget your body, you hate your body' (*ibid*: 329). By comparing Islamic society, or, more accurately, society under the Iranian regime's adoption of Islam, to, effectively, a rapist, Nafisi is implying that the Islamic Republic is a male ideological formation that simultaneously expresses and mystifies a psychosexual need to control and dominate women's bodies. Women, as they succumb to and internalize such domination, as they come to accept the state's definition of themselves, have no hope of resistance. No hope, that is, apart from in the private, interior space of Nafisi's living room, where the weekly meetings of her book club are held. There, as her students 'shed their mandatory veils and robes', each gains 'an outline and shape, becoming her own inimitable self' (*ibid*: 5, 6). Only by shedding the veil and the weight of Islamic Law it carries in Iran can women, for Nafisi, become subjects.

Nafisi's rejection of any possibility of a coherent and fulfilled identity for women under the Islamic Republic, and, by extension, under Islam, is not only implicit. Elsewhere in

[7] The 'mixed group' of women at Nafisi's book club, who have 'different and at times conflicting backgrounds, personal as well as religious and social', presents, as Rowe notes, a 'deceptive synecdoche' of Iranian society (Nafisi 2003: 11; Rowe 2007). Each is privileged and well-educated enough to attend university, and all are committed to the values Nafisi had espoused as their professor before she had enlisted them to her book club.

[8] Including enforced veiling, public dress inspections, exclusion from the professions, seclusion, illegalized contact with men, virginity tests, restrictive marriage laws, and physical abuse.

Reading Lolita, she states that Islamic feminism is a 'myth', 'a contradictory notion, attempting to reconcile the concept of women's rights with the tenets of Islam' (*ibid*: 262). In disavowing Islamic feminism, a feminism dedicated to women's rights under the social and cultural conditions particular to Islamic societies, Nafisi, I believe, is clearly positioning herself as Rowe's universalizing Western feminist whose secular-liberal assumptions distort many important realities of women's lives in Iran and elsewhere in the Islamic world. Nevertheless, she does pose an important conceptual challenge by suggesting the incompatibility of feminism and Islam under a conservative Iranian regime.

To meet this challenge, I've found Mahmood's monograph *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005) instructive. In this volume, Mahmood provides a highly articulate interdisciplinary framework for an Islamic feminism attuned to the complexities of national and global Islam. Using the Egyptian women's piety movement as an extended ethnographic case study, Mahmood explores the 'conceptual challenges that women's involvement in the Islamic [Revival] poses to feminist theory' (*ibid*: 2). She argues that traditional secular-liberal feminist assumptions about agency, resistance, and freedom must be revised in Islamic contexts where 'women's active support for socioreligious movements that sustain principles of female subordination', a support no longer explicable in terms of false consciousness or socialization, has led to new forms of women's empowerment, socio-political participation, and identity construction in Islamic societies (*ibid*: 5, see also 1-39).[9] It is precisely such secular-liberal assumptions that Arzoo Osanloo argues are also being challenged by Iranian women in numerous sites such as Quranic reading groups, Tehran's Family Court, and law offices, where women are renegotiating their rights under the Islamic regime (see Osanloo 2009). As is evident, Mahmood, Osanloo, and others provide an exemplary framework for understanding the repressed 'other' of Nafisi's text, the woman committed to both religion and rights in Iran.[10] In this context, Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen* is of particular critical interest as, revelling in the complexity of Iranian

[9] Mahmood has (problematically) been taken to task by reviewers like Pamela Klassen, Valentine Moghadam, and Sindre Bangstad for not providing sufficient empirical ethnographic evidence to support her more theoretically framed thesis that the Egyptian piety movement upends secular-liberal feminist assumptions about agency and resistance. Nevertheless, I find her theoretical articulations highly suggestive and, indeed, validated in the Iranian context when one takes into account the empirically rich work of scholars like Bahramitash, Hooglund, Honarbin-Holliday, and Osanloo, all of whom reach similar conclusions.

[10] Of course, the universalizing assumptions of second-wave Western feminism have been, from the early 1990s, contested and complicated on many fronts beyond that of Islamic feminism. In the postcolonial, transnational, or global domains, some of the most incisive and influential feminist theorists dedicated to renegotiating distinctions between the particular and the universal, the local and the global, and to developing frameworks for understanding 'multiple belongings' include Boehmer, Avtah Brah, Teresa de Lauretis, Francoise Lionnet, Caren Kaplan, Gillian Rose, and Spivak.

women's identity, it counterpoints the Iranian woman's autobiography as exemplified by *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and, potentially, incipiently, provides a rare anglophone literary expression of Islamic feminism.[11]

4. 'Multiple Belonging' in Yasmin Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen*

Although *The Saffron Kitchen* was reviewed warmly in the few British broadsheets and specialist journals, like *Wasafiri*, which actually noticed it, Crowther's novel significantly received nothing like the attention and success of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, winning no literary awards or a wider, non-specialist audience across the Atlantic. Perhaps testifying more to the limited reach of the Abacus, Crowther's publisher, publicity department than to qualms about the novel's subject matter, *The Saffron Kitchen* went under the radar of the vast majority of national newspapers in the US. This novel tells the story of Sara, an Anglo-Iranian woman exploring her identity in West London, and that of Maryam, Sara's mother and a first-generation immigrant, as she abandons an alienating adoptive home for Mashhad and Mazareh, the Iranian towns of her youth. After Sara's miscarriage exposes the generational and cultural distance between mother and daughter, Maryam's return prompts memories of her juvenile love for Ali, her father's servant, her rebellion against a strict code of feminine behaviour, and a brutal rape ordered by her father, an army General. Sara, standing in for both author and reader, then travels to Iran in order to bridge the distances from her estranged mother and from her culture.[12] While in her travels she witnesses the abuse and subjugation of women under patriarchy, Sara also discovers that her mother's exilic non-belonging is another form of constraint and that multiple redemptive possibilities are available to contemporary Iranian women.

The Saffron Kitchen is thus a novel of migration. It is constructed around the migrations of its characters, which, mirroring the author's own, open up narrative spaces for the comparative literary exploration of Iranian and British society. It pays special attention to the experiences of women, but beyond merely tracing the cultural differences women encounter in the act of migration, it also explores how these experiences are mediated by British perceptions of Iran and Iranian perceptions of the West. In other words, the novel is

[11] Rare, that is, in English. See Cooke's *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism Through Literature* (2000) for an excellent study of 20th century Islamic feminist authors in Arabic, including Assia Djebar, Nawal El Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi, and Zaynab al-Ghazali.

[12] Crowther has discussed her research trips to Iran as well as the autobiographical dimensions of The Saffron Kitchen in interview. See Crowther's 'A Conversation with Yasmin Crowther'.

highly self-conscious of the contexts of its reception, and works against gendered stereotypes of Iran by employing migration as a literary metaphor for cross-cultural understanding based on authorial experience.

Crowther explicitly situates her novel in relation to perceptions of Iran as other, as rogue, circulating in the dominant culture of her audience. When asked by Hassan, a poor villager Maryam encounters on her return to Mazareh, 'What do English people think of us, Maryam Mazar?', she eventually replies that 'In London, I'm surrounded by people who know this country only through their news, a cartoon of Iran' (Crowther 2006: 120, 132). While *The Saffron Kitchen* is itself a corrective to cartoonish misrepresentations, Crowther also works to historicize contemporary Iranian politics and to trace the effects of Iran's negative portrayal from West to East. By setting Maryam's childhood in 1953, she carves out a narrative space for characters to discuss and experience the events of this second most important year, after 1979, of Iran's modern history. 1953, of course, saw the ousting of Mohammad Mossadeq, a democratically elected Prime Minister who had nationalized the British-controlled oil industry, in a CIA sponsored coup that effectively left the Shah an autocrat. Alarmed by the violence on the streets of Mashhad between the Shah's militias and citizens loyal to their Prime Minister, Maryam turns to her powerful and wealthy aunt Soroya for answers. Given her class position and her brother's, Maryam's father, role as General in the Shah's army, Soroya offers her naive niece a biased explanation of Mossadeq as a 'sick old man whom the world mocks' and of the need for 'a strong leader to make strong alliances and secure our place in this world' (*ibid*: 68-9). Although no other version of these events is provided in the novel, Maryam's father's abuse of power in his household may be read as a counter-narrative, allegorizing, as it does, the abuses of 'strong' leadership on a national level. Western perceptions of the Revolution are similarly weighed against Crowther's dramatizations of Iranian society after 1979. In their roles as immigrants witnessing the Revolution from afar, Maryam and Dr. Ahlavi, an old family friend, gesture towards Crowther's narrative strategy. When subjected to televised images of 'lopsided bodies hanged, dangling and dead, from towering cranes in Mashhad' and of 'men beating themselves with chains', Maryam's response, 'That's not my Iran', suggests the gap between image and reality Crowther attempts to bridge as well as the more literal one between pre- and post-Revolutionary Iran (*ibid*: 114, 115).[13] Further, although Dr. Ahlavi mourns the

[13] This is precisely the gap that Iranian-American writer Persis Karim, in her revisionist anthology of Iranian diasporic writing, suggests that women immigrant writers have started to confront. 'Woman writers of the Iranian diaspora', she argues, 'have had an experience parallel to that of their counterparts living in Iran' and

substitution of an Iran 'welcomed around the world [...] for our culture, our civilization' for one considered part of '"the axis of evil", [...] the scourge of the earth', his resilient declaration, 'I am proud of my country', is directed at those who would consider it 'a thing of pity, of scorn' to be called Iranian (*ibid*: 136-7, 137).

In *The Saffron Kitchen*, Crowther is particularly concerned with the image / reality gap as it pertains to representations of Iranian women. To bridge this gap, to find a mode of representation appropriate to women's lived experience in Iran while deconstructing familiar, mediatized tropes of the same, Crowther employs migration as a literary metaphor for cross-cultural understanding. But in doing so, she significantly also revises the form and function of the (postcolonial) migration topos. As critics like Aijaz Ahmad and Timothy Brennan censoriously explain, postcolonial novels of migration are all-too-often structured around a character's movement away from politically, socially, and / or culturally backward or repressive 'third-world' states and towards the more inclusive cosmopolitan, metropolitan centres of the Western hemisphere. Such movement, Ahmad and Brennan continue, is reflected in the adoption of an emergent global aesthetic, obscures local conditions and forms of political engagement, and, at bottom, enacts what Brennan describes as an 'overcoming [of] *that* to join *this*' (Brennan 1997: 38; see also Ahmad 1992: 73-94). While it would certainly be reductive to characterize all postcolonial migration novels in terms of cosmopolitan arrival, we do see such a pattern being played out in several of the Iranian novelists listed above, as well as in other prominent examples of anglophone Middle Eastern novels like Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) and Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* (2006). Crowther complicates this form by depicting Maryam's arrival in a relatively liberal 1960s England in terms of alienation, and by tracing the redemptive possibilities open to Iranian women through Maryam's, and Sara's, return to Iran. Bearing comparison to Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (1999), *The Saffron Kitchen* thus realizes the critical possibilities Elleke Boehmer, citing writers like Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Wilson Harris, Bharati Mukherjee, Ben Okri, Arundhati Roy, and Salman Rushdie, attributes to 'the migrant novel': 'far from forestalling political commitment', Boehmer explains, as also cited in the previous chapter, 'the audacious crossing of different perspectives in post-imperial writing can work as an anti-colonial strategy, indeed one opposed to totalitarian systems of all descriptions' (Boehmer 2005: 235, 236).

'have felt compelled to respond to the view of Iranian women purveyed by both the Islamic Republic and the Western media' (Karim 2006: xx). While, as I've shown, autobiographical and fictional texts often indeed challenge dominant culture representations of gender in Iran, I have argued that they also have to contend with the limitations imposed by the reproduction of such discourses in publishing and reception practices.

Maryam's arrival in England in the early 1960s allows Crowther to witness the country through the immigrant's eyes in its post-imperial years of social and demographic transformation, and, paradoxically, all she finds is a set of constraints parallel to those of Iran. Seeking a security she had thought lost after being dismissed from her father's house, Maryam marries Edward, a 'pure' British character. Nevertheless, his mother's anxieties about a foreign daughter-in-law foreground her underlying difficulties of assimilation, the distances and hesitations between immigrant and native (see Crowther 2006: 156-8). Such difficulties, also reflected in Maryam's moments of reclusion, occasional violent outbursts, and the eventual failure of her marriage, are based on the lack of a shared world of emotion and memory that give context to her present self. But, suggesting a dislocation of identity attendant on migration, she only realizes this when back in Iran. On her return, Maryam complains about how 'shallow my roots have felt in England', where she has 'no one to share stories with, or to remember' (*ibid*: 132). Her life in England, though, has provided a valuable comparative perspective by which she can look back on her youthful quest for self-identity against the feminine norms (etiquette, arranged marriage, housewife status, segregation from 'masculine' affairs of politics and employment, etc.) brutally enforced by her father. All she finds in England is 'another world where I had to work out the new traditions, habits, how to appear just so' (*ibid*: 222). She thus realizes that 'there are many types of freedom and each has its price: freedom to love, to travel, to belong', and that 'For each freedom we choose, we must give up another' (*ibid*: 133). In a paradigmatic reversal of the narrative of cosmopolitan arrival, the experience of migration thus enables Maryam to weigh her youthful ideals against their 'price', belonging, and choose the latter as she returns to Iran, to Ali, and reconstructs her life.

To round off her revision of the postcolonial novel of migration, Crowther narrates Maryam's return to post-Revolutionary Iran largely from Sara's, a stand-in for both author and reader, estranged, but increasingly sensitive, perspective as an anglicised outsider as she attempts to track down her mother. In her journey, Sara certainly witnesses something of the gender inequalities imposed by Islamic patriarchy. For example, when she meets Hassan, an old family friend who encourages Maryam's renewed contact with Ali, he flinches when she offers him her open palm as, after prayer, 'He thinks touching [her] will make him unclean' (*ibid*: 203). Nevertheless, the brunt of her narrative is on the redemptive possibilities available to Iranian women, which Sara only comes to understand through the immediate, affective practice of migration, and which she, in her role as stand-in for the author, passes onto the anglophone reader in an equally affective story that cuts through gendered

assumptions and stereotypes of Iran. While Sara meets a series of strong, independent Iranian women throughout her travels – most notably Shirin, who exercises a domestic authority that upends the patriarchal constraint Maryam was subject to in her father's household – such redemptive opening centrally derives from her evolving understanding of her mother (see *ibid*: 254-5). More than understanding, Sara experiences the passions and constraints of her mother's past by proxy. When he refuses to touch Sara's hand, 'She felt as if Hassan had slapped her or seen her naked', a hint of what her mother felt under the soldiers' hands (*ibid*: 203). Sara's fury and tears at the injustice of Shirin's behaviour towards Ali when she bars him from her home carry a trace of Maryam's frustration at her conservative father's expectations (*ibid*: 254-5). This unconscious but felt identification with the contexts of her mother's past prepares Sara to hear for the first time the story of Maryam's rape. This is the very story for which Crowther has prepared her readers by crossing the gendered borders separating 'us' from 'them' and reflexively navigating the unfamiliar terrain of Iran's social and cultural history. Lying behind the tropes and discourses on which much anglophone Iranian literature relies, Crowther thus teaches, are lives and histories, multiple forms of belonging and identity, the postcolonial novel of migration can point towards when attentive to ideological and cultural borders.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I hope to have demonstrated the value of Islamic feminist scholarship for attending to neo-Orientalist representations of gender relations in rogue states, as reflected in the field of anglophone Iranian literature. I have argued that the genre of autobiografiction provides for fruitful critical readings of this field. It allows us to assess both how Iranian women's autobiographies employ the strategies and techniques of fiction to meet British and American market demands for 'authentic' accounts of gender inequalities in Iran, and how anglophone Iranian novels draw on their authors' autobiographical experiences to engage with commodified representations. Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen* is exemplary in this regard, as it emphasises a more complex version of Iranian women's experience than that usually presented in the field, and it embodies, through the revised topos of migration, nuanced and difficult forms of cross-cultural understanding. Further, it deconstructs the unilateral logic of the rogue state by which Iranian women are defined and appropriated for metropolitan consumption, and helps pluralize our understanding of post-Revolutionary Iran. Crowther's revision of the postcolonial novel of migration, inscribing into this form a rare

expression of Islamic feminism, thus not only serves as an object for postcolonial and world literature approaches attuned to neo-Orientalist representations of the Middle East, but also as a model for them.

Chapter Five

Islam and the Limits of Translation: The Case of Orhan Pamuk

Postcolonial discussions of Muslim writing in Anglo-American culture often gravitate around immigrant Muslim writing in English. Aiming to update Edward Said's classic *Covering Islam* (1981) for the post-9/11 period, studies like Peter Morey's and Amina Yaqin's *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation After 9/11* (2011), their, with Rehana Ahmed, edited volume *Culture, Diaspora, and Modernity in Muslim Writing* (2012), and Claire Chambers' *British Muslim Fictions: Interviews with Contemporary Writers* (2012) all subscribe to this model. While fruitfully complicating neo-Orientalist 'framings' of a regressive, patriarchal, and violent Muslim culture through analyses of and interviews with writers such as Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Mohsin Hamid, Nadeem Aslam, and Kamila Shamsie, they overlook questions of the role of translated Muslim literatures from the Middle East in relation to dominant culture discourses. How do publishers select which texts to translate? What translational strategies are employed for Muslim or Muslim-related source material? How are Muslim perspectives domesticated or commodified through practices of publishing and translation, and what do these practices tell us about literary and cultural interactions between 'East' and 'West' in the context of neo-Orientalism? What insights do translated texts offer into Islamic cultures, and what kinds of critical models do we need to develop in order to reveal such insight?

In this chapter, and the following, I seek to expand the current postcolonial discussion of Muslim literature for what might be considered the immigrant *text* of world literature. I address questions such as listed above through Orhan Pamuk, a particularly visible world literary figure whose sophisticated engagement with Islam in his Turkish culture of origin has often been misrepresented or, indeed, mistranslated. Across these two chapters, I explore translation theory, world literary circulation, and the reception of Islamic literary material in Anglo-American culture, cumulatively arguing for the 'foreignizing' reading strategy I demonstrate in Chapter Six with reference to Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990; trans. 1994, 2006).

In Section One, 'Reading the 'Translational Turn' in Literary Studies through Orhan Pamuk', I critically assess Lawrence Venuti's categories of 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation, and argue, against Venuti's privileging of the linguistic and discursive registers, that the politics of translation has more to do with material contexts than with language. In Section

Two, 'Languages of Domestication and Foreignization', I demonstrate this argument with reference to Güneli Gün's and Maureen Freely's translations of the first sentence of *The Black Book*, and chart the material limitations imposed on literatures from the Islamic Middle East in the global economy of translation. In Section Three, ''World Literature' as Cultural Domestication', I outline a sociology of translation attentive to how 'exotic' and 'cosmopolitan' frames of reference have come to shape the reception of translated Middle Eastern texts in the world literary system. I conclude, following David Damrosch, that criticism must become attuned to how the 'values and needs' of the host culture determine the translation and reception of Islamic literary material.

1. Reading the 'Translational Turn' in Literary Studies through Orhan Pamuk

In the spirit of Emily Apter's twenty highly suggestive, aphoristic 'Theses on Translation' in her remarkable monograph, *The Translation Zone* (2006), I'd like to open by proposing my own additional thesis: 'Translation has nothing to do with language'. In one sense, this is of course hyperbolic, self-contradictory rhetoric which I'll later modify into something more sensible. In another, it, much like Apter's Beckettian pairing 'Nothing is translatable' and 'Everything is translatable', demarcates limits, here the limits of what Susan Bassnett (then Bassnett-McGuire) and André Lefevere name in their co-edited volume *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) as 'The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies' (Apter 2006: xi, xii; Bassnett-McGuire and Lefevere 1990: 4).

This cultural turn, which is also strongly associated with Lawrence Venuti's work in the 1990s, was paradigmatic: it liberated translation theory from a mechanical reliance on Applied Linguistics, which prioritized questions of equivalence, authenticity, and substitution between what were termed the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL), and foregrounded the interfacing of cultures embodied in the language and very act of translation.[1] It developed

[1] In his essay 'Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation' (2005), Harish Trivedi provides a useful historical overview of the development of Translation Studies as a field. He argues that 'J.C. Catford's book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics* (1965) was perhaps the last major work' written on the assumption that 'translation was an interaction between two languages', and that shortly thereafter translation came to be understood as 'a rather more complex negotiation between two cultures' (Trivedi 2005: 2, 3). Trivedi fails, though, to identity and distinguish the literary sociological dimension of such negotiation, emphasizing instead that the cultural turn was comprised of new recognition of the embeddedness of language in culture. I return to this point below. Further, Trivedi traces the (lack of) influence of the cultural turn on the field of Cultural Studies. I wish to

around two overlapping axes which, for critical purposes, I'd like to keep separate. On the one hand, Bassnett, Lefevere, Venuti, *et al* drew on Cognitive Linguistics, especially its renewed interest in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and on the poststructuralist language theories of figures like Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari, re-theorizing language as a repository of cultural values and meanings, a system of embedded codes by which subjectivity and ideology are framed. On the other, they deployed the insights of literary sociology, with Pierre Bourdieu naturally being a key influence, to situate the act of translation in the material contexts of its production, circulation, and reception, and to open a series of new issues like asymmetries in the volume of translations from and into English, relations of inequality between major and minor languages, and, broadly, the cultural conditions determining the selection of foreign texts to translate (see Bassnett-McGuire 1980; Bassnett-McGuire and Lefevere 1990; Venuti 1995, 1998).

The cultural turn also had significant effects beyond the discipline of Translation Studies. By making translation directly relevant to issues of subjectivity, ideology, cultural difference, and transnational literary exchange, it facilitated the wide-ranging appropriation of translation theory in Literary Studies over the last decade or so. In this period, influential scholars like Apter in Comparative Literature, Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch in World Literature, and Bassnett herself, Gayatri Spivak, Harish Trivedi, and Maria Tymoczko in Postcolonial Studies engaged translation with a depth and impact that might tempt one to propose a 'translational turn' in Literary Studies to mirror the earlier Bassnett-Lefevere formulation. Indeed, Apter goes so far as to suggest translation as a new foundation for Comparative Literature. Her second thesis even posits an identity between them: 'Global translation is another name for comparative literature' (Apter 2006: xi). And for Damrosch, literature only becomes *world* literature through translation (see Damrosch 2003: 288-297). While I don't think Postcolonial Studies has yet produced comparably scaled self-redefinitions on such grounds, these are perhaps becoming more likely as the field expands beyond its traditional anglophone / francophone core.[2]

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conduct a similar investigation with regards to Literary Studies, where developments in translation theory have had a more pronounced impact.

[2] In the Introduction to their co-edited volume *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999), Bassnett and Trivedi outline the increasing significance of translation theory in Postcolonial Studies:

Given the translational turn in Literary Studies, it seems imperative that literary scholars critically interrogate the often all-too-readily adduced arguments and methodologies of translation theory. I'd like to contribute to this process by questioning the poststructuralist, high theory bias in Venuti's approach to language. Venuti's project might be described as prescriptive: it seeks and advocates strategies that resist, counteract what he calls 'the violence of translation', 'the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language' (Venuti 1995: 18). This project is crucial as, given the trade imbalance Venuti (problematically) detects between translations from and into English, current translation practices underwrite the global hegemony of Anglo-American culture, of English, and are symptomatic of a complacency that he describes as 'imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home' (*ibid*: 17).[3] In poststructuralist fashion, he sees language, the

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At this point in time, post-colonial theorists are increasingly turning to translation and both reappropriating and reassessing the term itself. The close relationship between colonization and translation has come under scrutiny; we can now perceive the extent to which translation was for centuries a one-way process, with texts being translated *into* European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange. European norms have dominated literary production, and those norms have ensured that only certain kinds of text, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture, come to be translated. As Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier point out, translation is often a form of violence […]. Moreover, the role played by translation in facilitating colonization is also now in evidence. And the metaphor of the colony *as* a translation, a copy of an original located elsewhere on the map, has been recognized (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999: 5).

As is evident here and in the contributions to this volume, translation has been taken up to further inquiry into established areas of concern in Postcolonial Studies. But I wish to suggest that translation can also open a new range of concerns in the field. It offers methodological and theoretical coherence to postcolonial inquiries into languages and literatures from regions traditionally excluded from an anglophone / francophone-oriented field. Regions such as the Middle East, Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe have distinct and complex histories of colonial / imperial violence that demand specialized postcolonial attention. Translation offers important means to expand the disciplinary remit in their direction, and may thus redefine Postcolonial Studies in a foundational way.

[3] Venuti insists on the trade imbalance between translations from and into English throughout his work. In *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), he shows that 'British and American book production increased fourfold since the 1950s, but the number of translations remained roughly between 2 and 4 percent of the total' and that 'In 1990, British publishers brought out 62,980 books, of which 1625 were translations (2.4 percent), while American publishers brought out 46,743 books, including 1380 translations (2.96 percent)' (Venuti 1995: 12). He contrasts British and American publishing patterns to those of other, mainly Western European, countries, where 'Publishing practices [...] have generally run in the opposite direction' (*ibid*). In 1985, 9.9 percent of all French publications were translations; in 1989, translations accounted for 25.4 percent of Italian publications; and in 1990, they constituted 14.4 percent of German publications (*ibid*). Further, the majority of these translations into other languages were from English. Venuti updates these statistics in *The Scandals of Translation* (1998), but the theoretical and political conclusions he draws are the same (see Venuti 1998: 160-165). As he explains in the earlier volume, 'These translation patterns point to a trade imbalance with serious cultural ramifications' (Venuti 1995: 14). Regarding translations from English, foreign publishers have, 'By routinely translating large numbers of the most varied English-language books', 'exploited the global drift toward American political and economic hegemony in the postwar period, actively supporting the international expansion of Anglo-American culture' (*ibid*: 15). Likewise, British and American publishers have 'reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the

linguistic choices translators-as-politicized cultural agents make, as the source of resistance to the violence of translation: against 'domesticating' translation, which aims 'to bring back a cultural other as the same' for domestic political agendas, he, in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), posits 'foreignizing' translation, 'a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text' (*ibid*: 18, 23). Although Venuti shifts to a Deleuzo-Guattarian terminology of 'minoritizing' translation in his later book *The Scandals of Translation* (1998), I'll trace the problems of his faith in the transgressive, deconstructive potential of language through close attention to the domestication-foreignization dichotomy, which has been particularly successful in flying the Translation Studies coop and entering into the mainstream of literary and cultural criticism.[4] My argument, in sum, is that domestication-foreignization is a false dichotomy at the level of language, as the material contexts of production, reception, etc. assessed by literary

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United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other' (*ibid*). Anthony Pym takes issue with the statistical premises of Venuti's argument. His main point is that despite the lower ratio of translations to non-translations in English-language as opposed to foreign publishing, the total volume of translations into English is still far greater than into other languages. According to Pym, Venuti conceals this fact, which he substantiates with his own statistics: in Venuti's period of analysis (1960-1986), 'the *Index Translationum* lists more than 2.5 times as many translations in Britain and the United States (1,640,930) than in France (624,830) or Italy (577,950)' (Pym 1996: 69). I agree with Pym that English-language readers have more access to foreign materials in translation than Venuti accounts for, and that this leads to important cultural consequences. But, his argument doesn't offset the fact that, *per annum*, Anglo-American publishers export more and import less than their foreign counterparts, and that translation thereby possesses a relatively smaller cultural share in Britain and America than elsewhere. It is crucial for Venuti to insist on this trade imbalance so as to warn about its long-term effects – the relatively greater and ever-increasing impact of Anglo-American culture on foreign cultures and the relatively smaller and decreasing impact of foreign cultures on the Anglo-American.

[4] Venuti derives the term 'minoritizing translation' from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari on 'minor literature', which, as he glosses, evokes the radical heterogeneity of language by 'submitting the major language to constant variation, forcing it to become minor, delegitimizing, deterritorializing, alienating it' (Venuti 1998: 10). As distinct from domestication and foreignization, categories which refer to the language of a given translation strategy, minoritizing translation encompasses both the selection of foreign texts to translate and the discourses used to translate them. By carefully selecting foreign texts to translate, translators can 'redress patterns of unequal cultural exchange and […] restore foreign literatures excluded by the standard dialect, by literary canons, or by ethnic stereotypes in the United States [and in the United Kingdom]' (*ibid*: 10-11). Similarly, translators can develop translation discourses in order to 'exploit the multiplicity and polychrony of American English, "conquer[ing] the major language in order to delineate it in as yet unknown minor languages"' (*ibid*: 11). It is precisely the conceptual disjunct between selection and translation discourse that renders, for Tymoczko, categories like minoritizing translation incoherent. She argues that without even a Wittgensteinian 'family resemblance' linking choice of text and discursive strategy under the umbrella category of minoritizing translation, Venuti is attempting 'to define a category characterized by disjuncts of various properties rather than partial overlaps' (Tymoczko 2000: 35). Although Tymoczko's critique here is also directed at domestication and foreignization, it is less successful in this regard as Venuti largely frames these categories in terms of discursive strategy rather than selection. Nevertheless, her other critiques of domestication and foreignization are, as I show below, accurate.

sociology pre-frame the consumption of the foreign text and pre-determine the political effects of language. I thus aim to discredit domestication-foreignization as linguistic categories, but also to refunction them for a sociology of translation of wider value to Literary Studies.

I'll illustrate this argument with reference to the two English translations (so far) of Orhan Pamuk's novel *Kara Kitap* (1990), *The Black Book*, Güneli Gün's (1994) and Maureen Freely's (2006). First, I'll concentrate on the way in which each renders the novel's first sentence, charting along the way the political stakes of their respectively foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies. Second, I'll examine the novel's reception as 'World Literature', showing that its academic / critical construction as a postmodernist novel culturally, rather than linguistically, domesticates it in conformity to Euro-American aesthetic criteria, and obscures elements of its engagement with local and national history and culture, its foreignness.

Beyond the happy coincidence of having access to two substantially distinct translations of *Kara Kitap*, this novel, and Pamuk's oeuvre as a whole, represents a key contemporary site for addressing issues in World Literature such as cultural appropriation, transnational literary exchange, and textual journeying across the borders of language, culture, and nation. This is because Pamuk has, almost uniquely, achieved the highest of international successes – translation into over fifty languages, global sales of over seven million, universal critical acclaim, and scores of awards including the Nobel Prize in 2006 – despite originating from today's 'civilizational other', the Islamic world. As Edward Said suggests in his anecdote about the New York publisher who, in 1980, refused to translate Naguib Mahfouz because 'Arabic is a controversial language', the tensions of literary exchange are violently pronounced when it comes to material from the Middle East (Said 1994: 97).[5] Pamuk's success thus forces us to

[5] I focus on Arabic and Middle Eastern literature in translation here, but see Note 9 below for more detail on Turkish literature in translation. According to the outstanding online statistics database in UNESCO's *Index Translationum*, approximately 30-70 translations from Arabic into English have been produced *per annum* between 1979 and 2011, amounting to 1595 in total (although the full results for 2009 onwards have not yet been provided). Interestingly, there are no significant variations in the quantity of translations produced after 9/11, a period which has seen an upsurge of Arabic and other Middle Eastern literatures originally written in English (or at least their increased visibility). These are clearly miniscule figures when compared with the volume of translations from other major world languages (for example, over 28,500 from French, over 28,000 from German), and when compared with the total of well over 145,000 translations into English from all languages since 1979. Referring specifically to Mahfouz's treatment in American literary culture even after he won the Nobel Prize, Said seeks a political explanation for such a 'disparity between the interest taken in Arabic literature and that in other literatures outside the Atlantic world': he argues that 'It is impossible not to believe that one reason for this odd state of affairs is the longstanding prejudice against Arabs and Islam that remains entrenched in Western, and especially American, culture' (Said 1994: 97, 98). Although Said argues that the relative lack of translations from Arabic is no longer an excuse for limited interest as numerous quality translations from figures like Adonis, Elias Khoury, Emile Habiby,

question its conditions. And these conditions are legible in the features of Pamuk's work critics, academics, award-bodies, and even publishers have consistently chosen to foreground: the mediation between East and West, religiosity and secularism, repression and democracy novels like *The White Castle* (1985; trans. 1990), *My Name is Red* (1998; trans. 2001), and *Snow* (2002; trans. 2004) attempt; his cosmopolitan ethical stance on Turkish minorities such as Armenians and Kurds; his advocacy of free speech under repressive Turkish governments; and his adoption of what Adam Shatz in the *London Review of Books* calls 'the Esperanto of international literary fiction', a 'playful postmodernism' that mixes genres and pays homage to Western models like Thomas Mann, William Faulkner, Jorge Luis Borges, James Joyce, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Marcel Proust (Shatz 2010: 15). I don't want to imply that these features are not indeed prominent in Pamuk's work, only that they, as they circulate in critical discourses, frame Pamuk as a cosmopolitan writer and obscure the depth of his engagement with the local and the national. *The Black Book*, Pamuk's *magnum opus* about a lawyer, Galip, who searches for his missing wife Rüya through the semiotic labyrinth of Istanbul and its aborted Ottoman, Islamic past, is exemplary in terms of both its embeddedness in the local and the almost willful misinterpretation it has provoked.

2. Languages of Domestication and Foreignization

In its original Turkish, the first sentence of *Kara Kitap* reads as follows:

Yatağin başindan ucuna kadar uzanan mavi damali yorganin engebeleri, gölgeli vadileri ve mavi yumuşak tepeleriyle örtülü tatli ve ilik karanlikta Rüya yüzükoyun uzanmiş uyuyordu (Pamuk 1990: 11).

Tayib Salih, Ghassan Kanafani, and Mahmoud Darwish had recently appeared at the time of writing, the statistics cited above indicate a deeper institutional prejudice both rooted and reflected in publishing trends. Said Faiq, editor of one of the few book length studies on translations from Arabic, a volume entitled *Cultural Encounters in Translation from Arabic* (2004), follows a similar line of analysis. He argues that 'Though the West has, in the 1980s and 1990s, opened up to Third World people, cultures and texts […] the literatures of the Arab-Islamic world remain generally marginalised' and that 'Translation from Arabic', when it occurs, 'still proceeds along familiar and established scripts' such as of terrorism, religious extremism, state repression, female subjugation, and so forth (Faiq 2004: 5, *passim*). Although little else has been written specifically on the matter of translation from Arabic / Middle Eastern literatures apart from scattered essays and articles, Timothy Brennan usefully complicates Said's thesis that the neglect of such literatures is based entirely on political prejudice. While Brennan certainly acknowledges 'the political hostility toward the Arab world in the United States', he argues that the complexity of the Arabic literary tradition, the unfamiliarity of its politics and history to world audiences, and the fact that Arabic literature doesn't have to be addressed to an English-speaking metropolis (due to the size of domestic audiences) render it unattractive to publishers and translators (Brennan 1997: 42, see also 42-3). In other words, Arabic literature doesn't fit into the cosmopolitan mold of other more successfully translated world literatures due to its formal and thematic complexity.

To highlight important features of the Turkish, I've broken this sentence into fragments and attempted a translation as faithful as possible to the original word order:

> Yatağin başindan ucuna kadar uzanan
> mavi damali yorganin
> engebeleri, gölgeli vadileri ve mavi yumuşak tepeleriyle
> örtülü
> tatli ve ilik karanlikta
> Rüya yüzükoyun uzanmiş uyuyordu
>
> The bed from its beginning to its end
> the blue checkered quilt
> its mountains, shady valleys and soft blue hills
> covered with
> in the sweet and warm darkness of
> Rüya facedown outstretched slept

The grammatically correct form of a Turkish sentence that, like this one, comprises a definite subject ('Rüya'), an intransitive verb ('uyuyordu', 'slept'), and one or more prepositional phrases ('yatağin tatli ve ilik karanlikta', 'in the sweet and warm darkness of the bed'; 'yorganin örtülü', 'covered with the quilt') is subject-preposition-verb. So the sentence should read 'Rüya yatağin tatli ve ilik karanlikta uyuyordu', literally: 'Rüya the bed in the sweet and warm darkness of slept'. But, and this is the key point to note here, Pamuk rearranges the word order, deferring the subject to the end of the sentence, alongside the verb. While such deferral would be appropriate for an indefinite subject, in this case Pamuk has inverted the correct word order, producing a 'devrik cümle', or inverse sentence, now a high literary embellishment among contemporary Turkish writers. As Freely explains in her essay 'A Translator's Tale', the 'devrik cümle' allows the writer to 'offer up a string of allusive images that [float] about unanchored and haiku-like until the last word [pins] them down' (Freely 2006: 31). The use of such unusual sentence structure has special resonance in a novel like Kara Kitap: not only do the 'long and dizzying baroque sentences' that result reflect Galip's increasingly frenetic quest through Istanbul: they also originate, as Pamuk himself puts it, 'from the chaos, history, present richness, indeterminacy and energy of the city' (Pamuk 2007: 138). As Pamuk's use of language is intimately bound up with his narrative and its setting, the linguistic distances both opened and closed by translation become spatial distances from Istanbul, and the domestication-foreignization dichotomy thus assumes yet another layer of significance in Pamuk's work. But before turning to that, a few

other important features of the Turkish should be highlighted: its lack of the verbs 'to be' and 'to have', its use of a single word for 'he', 'she', and 'it', its use of agglutination, its predisposition towards the passive voice, and its aversion to direct statements of fact. These features have led Freely to conclude that 'a fine Turkish sentence often [obscures] who did what' (Freely 2006: 31).

In her translation, Gün renders the sentence as:

> Rüya slept on her stomach in the sweet and warm darkness under the blue-checkered quilt which covered the entire bed with its undulating, shadowy valleys and soft blue hills (Pamuk 1994: 3).

Although Gün has shifted the word order, notably moving the subject and main verb to their natural positions, I maintain that she leans towards a foreignizing strategy here as her sentence replicates the sensual flow of the original, its accumulation of overlapping, endlessly modified prepositional phrases. I wouldn't say that the translation alienates English from itself – after all, it remains grammatically correct – but it is still a far cry from the fluency and transparency that for Venuti mark a more domesticating strategy (see Venuti 1995: 1). Its lack of secondary boundary marks leaves one breathless, its adjectival insistence with a sense of Leavisite exasperation. In short, it draws attention to the English in potentially subversive ways.[6] But

[6] For extended readings of Gün's translation, see Klaus Gommlich's and Esim Erdim's 'Evolving Imagery in the Translation of Orhan Pamuk's *Kara Kitap*' (2001) and Servinc Turkkhan's 'Orhan Pamuk's *Kara Kitap*: (British) Reception vs. (American) Translation' (2010) (the latter of which actually reproduces, step by step, example by example, the argument of Gommlich's and Erdim's earlier collaborative essay without ever citing it). Both articles agree that, as Gommlich and Erdim put it, Gün's translation 'walk[s] on the brink of foreignizing the target text' (Gommlich and Erdim 2001: 240). This strategy is stylistically evident throughout the translation in Gün's unusual sentence constructs (e.g. the opening sentence as analyzed above); her literal rendering of idiomatic expressions (e.g. 'You've vacated your face again' (*ibid*: 241)); and her use of synonyms rooted in Greek, Latin, and German rather than in Anglo-Saxon to mirror Pamuk's reference to the Arabic and Persian roots of modern Turkish and to create an archaic tone (e.g. 'Whenever I cast a restorative gaze on the past, I seem to perceive a throng perambulating in the dark' (*ibid*: 242; Turkkhan 2010: 53)). But both also regard her translations of culturally specific imagery otherwise lost on the target audience as domesticating. The most convincing example in both articles is Gün's translation of the title of Chapter Eighteen, 'Apartman Karanligi'. Literally, this phrase translates as 'the apartment darkness', and for the Turkish reader refers to a specific architectural feature within a modern building, an airshaft or airwell, as well as to 'the psychological space that this physical space is associated with' (Gommlich and Erdim 2001: 243; see also Turkkhan 2010: 50-52). The airshaft image is rife with local symbolic resonances, linked as it is to modernization, consumer capitalism and waste, familial relations, and community formation in the post-Atatürk era. As none of these resonances come through for the target audience, both articles continue, Gün translates 'Apartman Karanligi' as 'The Dark Void', 'a metaphor more familiar to the Western reader in its suggestivity of loss and betrayal' (Gommlich and Erdim 2001: 244). Gommlich and Erdim conclude that 'The text becomes easier to follow but the specificity of the history, the culture and social reality is suspended' (*ibid*). (In an interesting reversal, Freely renders the title as 'The Dark Air Shaft', suggesting another layer of overlap between domestication and foreignization as I discuss below (Pamuk 2006: 179)). Both articles see Gün's use of domestication and foreignization interchangeably in a positive light. For Gommlich and Erdim, the result is a hybrid text that evokes

does it 'signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text'? I would say 'no', as the linguistic difference of Pamuk's sentence resides in its experimental manipulation of the Turkish language, something that cannot be carried through no matter how alienating or defamiliarizing the translation. In her important critiques of Venuti, Tymoczko challenges the category of foreignizing translation due to difficulties in deciding on what counts and what doesn't.[7] But it seems the category lacks theoretical coherence on a more foundational level: while foreignization may well employ the source language to upset norms and values encoded in the target language, it, by definition, cannot signify the effects of the source language on itself, the impossible, untranslatable foreignness of the foreign text.[8] This is a bit of a problem if the category promises more authentic access to the other.

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the complexity of both languages, both literary traditions. For Turkkhan, the translation exemplifies 'a workable balance between fidelity and freedom' that challenges a (British) translation review establishment that she, following Venuti, shows favors fluid translations into the British English vernacular (Turkkhan 2010: 55). While I've found both of these articles mostly persuasive in their use of evidence, one of the purposes of my own, as I expand below, is to show that even the instances of foreignization they have pointed out are also domesticating in orientation, that they fail to signify apart from in ultimately opaque parallels between the two languages Pamuk's engagement with the Turkish, that there remains an untranslatable core in all translation that renders the gestures foreignization makes to the cultural other impotent. In other words, I want to show that domestication and foreignization are theoretically incoherent when it comes to the language of translation, and that the work of identifying the overlapping use of both strategies in practice, as both articles do, is misguided.

[7] Tymoczko's critique of Venuti's conceptual apparatus – not just of the domestication / foreignization dichotomy, but also of resistant and minoritizing translation – is rich and complex. She distinguishes between formal and functional definitions of these categories, and argues that they are incoherent in either case. Her critique of their formal status is, as I explained in Note 4 above, that they encompass both a translator's choice of text and his discursive strategy in translating it, and are thus internally riven or disjointed. I argued that this critique is inapplicable to domestication and foreignization as these categories are mostly defined in terms of discursive strategy, and are more formally coherent than Tymoczko suggests. But I agree with Tymoczko that they lose this coherence when we try to identify a given translation strategy in terms of its function. She argues that 'the functions of minoritizing or resistant or foreignizing translations are quite variable' – they can resist 'internal cultural oppression', 'external cultural oppression', and so forth (Tymoczko 2000: 35). As the category of foreignizing translation doesn't clearly define what exactly is being foreignized, what specific function it has, there are no criteria for identifying such a strategy, and identification ultimately depends on 'somewhat arbitrary personal judgements – a matter of taste, let us say - on the part of Venuti and others who use his approaches' (*ibid*). My argument is that even under the perhaps impossible circumstance where a translation is universally agreed to be foreignizing in orientation, Venuti's category only allows for the foreignization of the target language from itself, which implies only an abstract and generic reference to the culturally other. In a text like *Kara Kitap*, difference resides in the author's manipulation of the source language, an effect or set of effects that cannot be carried through in any translation, no matter how foreignizing.

[8] The untranslatable, long a stock category in Translation Studies, has recently been revived in Emily Apter's attempts to define a new Comparative Literature attuned to globalization and contemporary geopolitics. In *The Translation Zone*, she provides a philosophical definition of untranslatability as the radical alterity of the foreign language or text, arguing that 'The challenge of Comp Lit is to balance the singularity of untranslatable alterity against the need to translate *quand même*', then traces, through close analysis of Algerian-Arabic to English translations, the problematic of a more politicized form of untranslatability pertaining to the exclusion of unpalatable national literatures from international literary markets (Apter 2006: 91; see also 94-108). In 'Untranslatables: A

If foreignization domesticates, then does domestication foreignize?[9] I think Freely's version of the sentence bears witness to this possibility, a suspicion supported by the fact that Pamuk minutely oversaw and edited all of Freely's work. As Freely has it:

> Rüya was lying facedown on the bed, lost to the sweet warm darkness beneath the billowing folds of the blue-checked quilt (Pamuk 2006: 3).

Clearly, this is a cleaner, more elegant sentence than Gün's. Its fluency comes at a price, though, that of the marvelous topography of the quilt and, as Azade Seyhan puts it in her critique of Freely's translation, 'the spirit of Pamuk's idiom' (Seyhan 2008: 213). For Freely, these are acceptable losses. Although her only explicit criticism of Gün's work is that it is 'somewhat opaque', her real qualms with Gün's attempts at stylistic or idiomatic fidelity are evident in her 'Translator's Afterword' to *The Black Book*, which I quote at length (Pamuk 2006: 464):

> All too often, the grand, allusive flourishes are lost on readers accustomed to the simpler and more straightforward logic of English. The passive voice becomes cumbersome and even obfuscating. […] Mesmerizing lists of verbal nouns (the doing of . . . the seeing of . . . the having been done unto of) begin to grate on the nerves. The tenses are robbed of their nuances, and the graceful unfolding of cascading

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World System' (2008) she, drawing on his famous essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1923), suggests that 'Untranslatability is not unlike Walter Benjamin's notion of translatability; qualified as something that cannot be communicated in language, a kernel of "the foreign" that remains, an ineffable textual essence only realizable in the translational afterlife, or a sacred literalness of the revelatory word that great literary works strive for but rarely ever achieve' (Apter 2008: 584). This Benjaminian recalibration of untranslatability, with its theoretical suppleness and evident applicability in an engaged global critique, is certainly useful for mobilizing 'theoretical and curricular ventures in literary comparatism that aim for geopolitical specificity and theoretical reach against the fine grain of aesthetic comparison' (*ibid*). Indeed, her two examples of such ventures, Barbara Cassin's edited volume *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (2004) (*Vocabulary of European Philosophy: A Dictionary of Untranslatables*) and Franco Moretti's edited volume *The Novel* (2006), bear strong witness to the significance of untranslatability in an engaged literary comparatism. Here, I attend to the untranslatable on a more localized scale, as it were, as pertaining to source language syntactic and semantic structures which engage with their own linguistic traditions in ways that cannot be carried through in translation, no matter the degree to which they are replicated in the target language.

[9] Again, Tymoczko has been sharpest in pointing out the false dichotomy Venuti produces between domestication and foreignization. She argues that 'ambiguity and inconsistency' are always present in a translation 'when we try to apply the [...] polarities that are commonly used to categorize translations: polarities such as *literal* and *free*, or *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*, or *domesticating* and *foreignizing*, or *fluent* and *resistant*' (Tymoczko 1999: 56). This is because 'translations have self-contradictory elements in their specific configurations: for example, a text that is "formally equivalent" in language [or foreignizing] might in virtue of the translation process lose the humour of the text and fail to convey the formal qualities of the humorous genre being translated' (*ibid*). I agree with Tymoczko, and want to push her argument further. Just as the loss of the text's formal qualities, such as Pamuk's manipulation of the Turkish language in *Kara Kitap*, domesticates even a foreignizing translation, the more fluid access a domesticating translation offers to the thematic material of the text is, as I argue below, an at least implicit act of cultural foreignization.

clauses becomes an ungainly procession of non sequiturs. The verb that should have been the twist in the tail appears so early it robs the long sentence of its suspense, so that, instead of gaining momentum, each sentence seems to double back on itself. It's not just the meaning that gets muffled, it's the music (*ibid*).

Freely's alternative to stylistic fidelity might be described as 'musical fidelity', a faithfulness to the inner music of the original whose challenge is to 'reorder the various parts of the sentence in a way that [allows] it to unfold and reveal its heart' (*ibid*). Of course, such a translational practice would risk becoming hopelessly subjective were it not for the author's sanction. Nevertheless, the eloquent and well-wrought English sentences that result are highly effective: rather than enveloping the thematic material, complex enough as it is, within a layer of unnatural, obscurantist English, they offer cleaner access to the material and illuminate it with a rare sensitivity. As the effects of Pamuk's experimental prose on the Turkish language can never be carried through in translation anyway, perhaps the best a translator can hope for is facilitating access to the foreign *content* of his work.

As I hope to have shown, domestication and foreignization are in themselves not the most coherent categories when it comes to the language of translation: they bleed into one another and fail to clearly define the political effects of a given translation strategy. But the deeper problem is that, by identifying conformity and resistance as functions of language, they obscure the network of material, cultural, and ideological determinants that render a foreign text translatable or commercially viable in the first place, that frame it for the host culture, and that ultimately shape its consumption. It's not just the case that a critical discourse, such as of 'Middle Eastern postmodernism' or 'Latin American magic realism', already surrounds the text before it is read in any meaningful fashion. But also that its (perceived) conformity to such discourses, substantiated by international literary awards and the like, is exactly what makes it amenable to publishers conscious of markets. Regarding Pamuk, we might ask why one novel of his has been translated twice when very few of his Turkish peers, such as the bestselling and hugely popular writer of Islamic salvation novels, Ahmet Günbay Yildiz, have been translated at all.[10]

[10] Saliha Paker's entry on 'Turkish' in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (2001) provides a useful historical overview of Turkish to English literary translation. There, she argues that 'The vast literary output of Ottoman and modern Turkish cultures is represented only in a limited number of translations in English' (Paker 2001: 619). The *Index Translationum* substantiates Paker's premise *vis-à-vis* contemporary Turkish literature, listing only 294 translations since 1979 (of non-literary as well as literary texts – Melike Yilmaz Baştuğ estimates the total number of specifically literary volumes translated between *1880* and 2004 at 138 (see Baştuğ 2009: 38-39)). Paker explains that 'Orientalist' prejudice limited Anglo-American interest in Ottoman culture in the late 19th century to specialists and academics (Paker 2001: 619). Turning to modern Turkey, she argues that translations of

Particular translation strategies seem inconsequential when pre-existent relations between the source and host cultures, between, say, Venuti's Anglo-America and the Islamic Middle East, delimit the pool of appropriate texts to translate.

Of course, no one is more acutely conscious of, even passionate about, the cultural asymmetries that both produce and are reproduced by the global economy of translation than Venuti. Drawing on critical theory, postcolonial theory, and literary sociology, he has almost single-handedly invented a critical language for addressing just how translation is imbricated in contemporary forms of power and hegemony. But, as Tymoczko, Anthony Pym, and others have also pointed out, his work is often conceptually confused (see Tymoczko 1999, 2000; Pym 1996). This leads Tymoczko, for one, to abandon categories like domestication and foreignization, which, she argues, '[offer] us less than we need […] to describe and analyze the relationship between translation and engagement' (Tymoczko 2000: 37). More sympathetic to Venuti's project, or just seduced by his rhetoric, I'd hesitate before dismissing such intuitively forceful terms, and seek to rework them on more solid grounds. Do the problems both Tymoczko and I perceive in domestication-foreignization as linguistic categories – their false dichotomization, the difficultly in determining what counts as a foreignizing translation and what doesn't, and so forth – persist if we redefine them for a sociology of translation, as descriptive and prescriptive of the ways in which publishers select foreign texts to translate, of how they are marketed for international audiences, and of how critics and academics interpret them within receiving cultures? In the following sections, I'll look into the reception of *The Black Book* as

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poetry and fiction from the 1960s to the 1990s were concentrated on a few key figures like Nazim Hikmet and Yashar Kemal, and that since the 1990s, Pamuk has emerged as the most translated Turkish writer. Seeking to understand the 'Observable gaps in the short history of translations from Turkish literature', she continues:

What has been selected for translation in fiction and poetry are works that achieved a certain distinction (e.g. as prize-winners or bestsellers) in modern Turkish literature. But due to shifts in the norms that govern literary taste in Turkey, as well as those (like judging a novel 'not Turkish enough') that govern the academic or more general expectations of British and American readers and publishers, numerous writers of great literary merit, like Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Sabahattin Ali, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar, Oğuz Atay, Yusuf Atilgan, not to mention the remarkable representatives of the boom in women's writing, have failed to attract the individual attention they deserve (*ibid*: 623).

In her published Master's thesis *A Translational Journey: Orhan Pamuk in English* (2009), Baştuğ provides a much more detailed history of Turkish to English translation, including a decade by decade breakdown of translation trends from 1880 (see Baştuğ 2009: 10-46). Although she generally follows the lines set out by Paker, she, citing statistics that show a vastly increased rate of translation from 1960, concludes on a more optimistic note: 'the past decade (the 1990s) represents the most active period for translational flow from Turkish into English. The present decade, however, gives promise of even more volumes' (*ibid*: 38). As one might expect, Pamuk's international success is one of the main justifications for Baştuğ's optimism.

'World Literature', and answer with a strong 'no'. When the majority of critics deem *The Black Book* a postmodernist novel that destabilizes narrative, history, religion, and identity, and when, as I'll argue, Pamuk is only deploying postmodernist techniques to challenge the particularly Kemalist narrative of Turkish identity within the wider arc of the *Künstlerroman* form, it's hard to think of a better term than 'domestication' to describe what's going on.

For now, though, I hope to have clarified what I meant by my opening thesis, 'Translation has nothing to do with language'. Modified in light of my foregoing argument, the thesis might, less pithily but more accurately, read, 'The politics of translation is more a matter of the material, cultural, and ideological contexts of translation than it is of language'. As this raises the possibility that work in Translation Studies can avoid linguistic analysis and comparison altogether, it sets a useful limit to the discipline's cultural turn, one which simultaneously threatens its dissolution and universalizes its applicability in Literary Studies.

3. 'World Literature' as Cultural Domestication

In this section, I want to rework the categories of domestication and foreignization for a sociology of translation. As Venuti has shown, such a sociology would, in its broadest contexts, attend to all the economic, political, social, and cultural determinants governing relations between the source and host cultures, especially their relative hegemony / marginality and asymmetries in the global reach of their languages. When directed more specifically towards a given translated text, it would attend to questions of, as Venuti has systematically put it, 'production, circulation, and reception' (Venuti 1995: 18). *Production* refers to the literary, commercial, political, and other factors that go into the selection of a foreign text to translate, to the act of translation itself, and to the question of whether it was initially written with an eye towards translation for international markets. *Circulation* refers to the movement of a text, via translation, across the borders of language and nation, and to more commercial issues such as its international marketing and distribution. *Reception* refers to reviews and critical / academic readings of the translated text, to the awards it or its author receives after being introduced to international audiences, and to its sales (see Venuti 1995, 1998). Although I hope my argument can be extended to the other elements of a sociology of translation, I'll concentrate here on the role the critical / academic reception of a translated text plays in domesticating or foreignizing it.

Before asking how a foreign text is read in translation, it is important to consider what exactly it is that is being read. For a text undergoes what Casanova, in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004), calls a 'transformation' or 'transmutation', an 'almost magical metamorphosis', a 'change of literary being', when it is translated (Casanova 2004: 126, 127, 136). Casanova's argument is that when a text from a writer on the margins of world literary space, a text otherwise embedded in a national culture or written in a minor language, is translated, it undergoes a passage from 'literary inexistence to existence, from invisibility to the condition of literature' (*ibid*: 127). In other words, the text gains international recognition as *literature* through translation in a process she calls 'consecration' or '*littérisation*' (*ibid*: 126, 7). Indeed, translation emerges in Casanova's account of world literature as 'the foremost example of a particular type of consecration in the literary world' (*ibid*: 133). Although this argument is problematic in that it both underestimates the literarity of minor literatures and overestimates the power of translation to consecrate, it remains exemplary in suggesting the transformative effect of translation.[11]

By momentarily sidelining the issue of hierarchies in world literary space, Damrosch, in *What is World Literature?* (2003), provides a more abstract, objective account of this effect. He seeks to understand the effect of translation in terms of a phenomenology of the work of art: as he explains, 'a literary work *manifests* differently abroad than it does at home' (Damrosch 2003: 6). '[B]y being received', he continues, '*into* the space of a foreign culture', 'works become

[11] The case of the Libyan writer Ahmed Fagih, which I discussed in Chapter Three, illustrates both problems in Casanova's argument well. Libya can certainly be considered, in Casanova's terms, a 'literarily disinherited country' – apart from the internal problem of scarcity of literary output due to a small population, nationalized publishing, and censorship, its literatures suffer the disabling fate of being written in Arabic, a language which is not so well-received in the centers of world literary power (Casanova 2004: 127). These conditions severely restricted the import and translation of Libyan literature into English for many years, although the situation is now slowly improving. But this hasn't prevented the work of a writer like Fagih circulating beyond its national borders and achieving extraordinary prominence in the *regional* (rather than worldly) context of the Arabic-speaking Middle East, as suggested by the many regional plaudits of *Gardens of the Night* (1991; trans. 2008). In other words, *Gardens* has attained, through regional consecration, just the kind of literarity described by Casanova – autonomous recognition beyond the borders of national culture – without ever having been consecrated by a global cultural center like Paris or London. While Casanova might counter that the *Gardens* has attained only a lesser degree of literarity, its example exposes an important blind spot in her topography of world literary space: the role played by literary transactions *within* and *between* what she designates minor languages and marginalized cultures in the shaping of such space. Just as literatures that remain minor can achieve literarity, translation doesn't guarantee their consecration in world literary space. The unfamiliarity of Fagih's *Gardens*, self-translated and self-published through the American on-demand printing company Xlibris in 2008, is a case in point. It indicates that without the commercial, marketing, and distribution services provided by established publishers, a translation remains as foreign to domestic readers as the original text, that a translation still needs to be eased into a domestic culture by other consecrating agents like publishers, critics, and award-bodies if it is to be recognized.

world literature' (*ibid*: 283). As Damrosch has it, translation doesn't so much magically bestow the status of literature to what was previously a mere text; rather it conditions the form or nature of a work's, one already existent as literature, literarity within the receiving culture. The key point to note here is that the space in which the work is worlded, as it were, is 'defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition', so that 'World literature is […] always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture' (*ibid*). Damrosch concludes this thought with the now well-known metaphor of 'elliptical refraction': world literature, he says, 'is a double refraction, one that can be described through the figure of the ellipse, with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone' (*ibid*).

Perhaps I've laboured the point, but it is crucial to insist that the translated text manifests as world literature because certain norms and assumptions, distinct from those that undergird critical approaches to 'native' literatures, govern the reception, the reading of works branded as foreign. Regarding, broadly, the reception of 'Eastern' ('third-world' / postcolonial) texts in the 'West', these norms have influentially been modelled by Timothy Brennan, in *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (1997), and Graham Huggan, in *The Postcolonial Exotic* (2001), in terms of cosmopolitanism and exoticism. Although Huggan certainly provides many important insights into the sociological dimensions of postcolonial literary exchange, I've found Brennan's critique of cosmopolitan culture more fruitful for addressing, specifically, how Middle Eastern literatures are translated and read in Britain and the US. This is not because Huggan's focus is on anglophone postcolonial literature rather than on translation - after all, his arguments about the marketing and consumption of postcolonial literatures might well be extended in this direction.[12] Rather, it is because exoticism, as he defines it, lacks specific political or ethical or aesthetic orientation beyond the dictates of the market. For Huggan, exoticism is a '*symbolic*

[12] 'The Translational Exotic' might look something like the 'Globalization' chapter in Venuti's *The Scandals of Translation* (see Venuti 1998: 158-189). It would ask what role the translation of literary texts plays in global commodity culture, how it mediates between the domestic and the foreign, and how the exotic determines the selection and reception of translated texts. One might go so far as to paraphrase some of Huggan's central questions, replacing 'postcolonial' with 'translation': 'What are the various mediating roles of [translation] […]?';'What role do exotic registers play in the construction of cultural value, more specifically those types of value (re)produced by [translations] […]?'; 'How are these exoticisms marketed for predominantly metropolitan audiences – made available, but also palatable, for their target consumer public?'; 'How has the corporate publishing world co-opted [translation], and to what extent does the academy collaborate in similar processes of co-optation?' (Huggan 2001: viii).

system' that assimilates *any* and *all* 'otherness' or 'cultural difference' into familiar, domesticating terms, thus transforming the foreign text into an readily consumable commodity for global markets – at its core, the 'exoticism' thesis privileges the economic as a determinant of the production, circulation, and reception of postcolonial and world literatures at the expense of the political (Huggan 2001: 13, 14; see also 13-20).

For Brennan, on the other hand, cosmopolitanism is a culturally prevalent attitude towards the other that, in itself, encompasses a series of flexible, but distinct, political and ethical postulates. It privileges non-exilic worldliness, transculturalism, multiculturalism, democratic inclusivity, Enlightenment progress, humanism, and globalism, and rejects the decolonization legacy as well as third-world liberation movements (see Brennan 1997: 36-44). It is embodied not only in a certain type of literature, what Brennan in a famous passage calls 'cosmopolitan writing' or 'cosmopolitan fiction', written by third-world migrants to the Western metropolis, but also in the esteem with which such literature is held by (US) publishers, mainstream literary magazines, international award bodies, and the postcolonial critical establishment (*ibid*: 38, 42). Indeed, just as cosmopolitan writing (re)produces 'a geopolitical aesthetic' which thematically (in narratives of East to West migration, the failings of the postcolonial state, the discovery of democratic participation, etc.) and formally (in the use of hybridity, detachment, irony, etc.) aligns with domestic attitudes towards the other, 'whole strata of professors, journalists, and opinion makers [have come to] fulfil much the same function and play much the same ambivalent role' (*ibid*: 36, 41-2). Supplementing Brennan, it might be said that cosmopolitanism is 'a way of reading' as well as, in his words, 'a way of talking and seeing': it circumscribes the critical horizons for praise or censure of the foreign text, so that the reception of third-world and world literatures (which become, as suggested by the title of this section, examples of 'World Literature' in inverted commas) is an act of interpreting the foreign from the perspective of the familiar, of, in a word, cultural domestication (*ibid*: 37).[13]

[13] When understood in terms of literary sociology, in terms particularly of reception, the categories of domestication and foreignization evade the problems encountered when understood in terms of the language of translation. This is because the ethico-political postulates of cosmopolitanism provide shared and clearly defined criteria for determining whether a given reception strategy is domesticating or foreignizing, criteria whose absence from domestication and foreignization as linguistic categories caused their overlap. Domesticating reading would interpret the translated text from the perspective of cosmopolitan values (e.g. praise or condemn on the basis of whether the text is aligned with such values), whereas foreignizing reading would interpret, as much as possible, from the perspective of the history, politics, religion, and so forth of the text's culture of origin. Naturally, foreignizing reading thus requires specialist knowledge of other cultures, but not necessarily of other languages as it is directed towards both the translated text and the ways in which the text is read in the receiving culture.

Of course, it would by crude and reductive to ascribe a given set of domesticating political and ethical postulates to the entire academic and critical edifice surrounding world literature. As Huggan notes, the type of 'formula fiction' to which Brennan is primarily referring above is 'more the object of suspicion rather than admiration for most postcolonial critics' (Huggan 2001: 12). Further, the discipline of Comparative Literature is itself founded on rich and complex readings of the cultures of origin of texts that would, in translation, be considered world literature. But when considering translations themselves, especially those from the Islamic Middle East, it seems that reception is still mostly governed by a similar politicized understanding of the region, one that the term 'cosmopolitanism' accurately reflects, as that which governs selection, publication, and circulation.

Pamuk's reception is exemplary in this regard, as he has almost universally been read as a mediator of East and West, religiosity and secularism, and so forth, as a writer of multicultural inclusion in a repressive Turkish state, as an advocate of free speech and democratic reform - as, in short, a cosmopolitan. Brennan argues that even the most regionally successful Middle Eastern writers like Mahfouz, Tayeb Salih, and Assia Djebar, 'potential best-sellers', are ignored by American audiences due to political hostility towards the Arab world as well as their formal and thematic complexity (Brennan 1997: 42). My point is that when they are actually translated and read, they are nevertheless mostly interpreted under the auspices of the cosmopolitan, welcomed for reproducing stereotyped critiques of Middle Eastern state repressions, religious extremisms, and gender inequalities or dismissed for producing more complex narratives also critical of the West.

Conclusion

As my foregoing analyses have attempted to show, it is necessary to develop a critical model attuned to neo-Orientalism in material practices of translation, literary circulation, and reception when it comes to literatures of the Islamic Middle East. Such a model needs to attend to the forms of cultural domestication that result from the reception of translated texts as 'World Literature' and to the specific problems of reading literatures from the Middle East and other politically charged regions, while drawing out the cultural difference of the foreign text. In short, a foreignizing reading strategy that puts the world back into 'World Literature'. By

tracing the reception of *The Black Book* as a postmodernist novel and rereading it in terms of its thematic and formal engagement with local and national history, I hope in the following chapter to exemplify such a critical model. For the moment, though, Damrosch again provides an apposite starting point:

> [W]orks by non-Western authors or by provincial or subordinate Western writers are always particularly liable to be assimilated to the immediate interests and agendas of those who edit, translate, and interpret them. [...] [W]e can do better justice to our texts, whether perennial classics or contemporary works, if we really attend to what we are doing when we import them and introduce them into new contexts (Damrosch 2003: 24-5).

Chapter Six

Foreignizing *The Black Book* for World Literature

Building on my previous chapter, this chapter provides a final demonstration of the critical value of post-Orientalist comparatism through what I have called a 'foreignizing' reading of Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*. In Section One, 'The Politics of (Mis)reading Pamuk', I outline this novel's reception history in Britain and America, and argue that critical readings such as Ian Almond's and Walter Andrews', by framing *The Black Book* as a postmodernist novel that destabilizes religious identifications, replicate translational prejudices against Islamic source material. In Section Two, '*The Black Book*: An Introduction', I outline my foreignizing corrective by comprehensively detailing the novel's plot, characters, form, geographical setting, and historical setting with special reference to its treatment of Islam in Turkish cultural history. In Section Three, 'Mannequins, Faces, and Writers in *The Black Book*', I explore these thematic elements in yet more detail, arguing that they well represent how Pamuk draws on Sufi traditions in order to imaginatively re-integrate Turkey's cultural past with its secular present. I conclude that *The Black Book* traverses the aesthetics of the postmodernist novel and emerges on the other, Turkish side, and that contribution to world literature consists of its inscription of what I call 'cultural neo-Ottomanism' in a uniquely Middle Eastern novelistic form.

1. The Politics of (Mis)reading Pamuk

As Orhan Pamuk puts it in a 1994 interview for *Publishers Weekly*, the response to *Kara Kitap* on first publication in Turkey was 'unbelievable' (Pamuk and Stone 1994: 36). The novel rapidly sold over 700,000 copies, and was subject to 'huge media attacks' on stylistic and political grounds (*ibid*). Pamuk was taken to task by both fundamentalists, who claimed the novel mocks the Sufi material he references, and leftists, who claimed it undermines the legacy of Kemalism. The scholarly response was likewise voluminous, and many important early articles are collected in Nüket Esen's *Kara Kitap Üzerine Yazilar* (1992 / 1996).[1]

[1] To be fair to the Anglo-American critics and reviewers I discuss below, most of these early Turkish scholarly articles likewise assess *Kara Kitap* in terms of postmodernism. In Esen's volume, Berna Moran and Jale Parla, for example, read the novel, with its overlapping narratives and newspaper columns, as an example of intertextuality, Ramazan Çeçen as an Eastern take on the postmodernist tale, and Kemal Atakay as 'a collage-novel' (see Moran

As may be expected, a comparable, albeit toned down, critical response in Britain and America was delayed until the appearance of Gün's English translation in 1994. Then, numerous major international newspapers and literary periodicals published reviews that have since come to frame the novel's wider academic reception. These reviews were divided between those like Robert Houston's for *The New York Times*, which found the 'denseness' of the novel overwhelming, and those like Patrick Parrinder's for the *London Review of Books,* which lauded 'its author's ability to combine the anguished cryptography and involuted narrative of the Post-Modern detective novel with the old-fashioned world of the knowable community and the family saga' (Houston 1995; Parrinder 1995: 22). The common denominator among all the reviews is an insistence on Pamuk's postmodernist aesthetic, with many like Houston, Guy Mannes-Abbott for the *New Statesman*, and Jonathan Coe for *The Guardian* (reviewing Freely's 2006 translation) going so far as to open with comparisons with established postmodern masters like Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, and Umberto Eco, consequently framing and delimiting audience expectations (see Houston 1995; Mannes-Abbott 1995: 41; Coe 2007).[2]

Such comparisons are certainly not without their merit. As Pamuk himself clarifies in his famous 2005 (pre-Nobel) interview for the *Paris Review*, 'Borges and Calvino liberated [him]' upon his (re)discovery of the possibilities they opened in 1985 - that is, in the run-up to writing *Kara Kitap* (Pamuk 2005b: 130). But they liberated him from a very specific object - from the constraints of a traditional Islamic literary tradition that, 'so reactionary, so political, and used by conservatives in such old-fashioned and foolish ways', he had not previously considered workable material (*ibid*). With a 'Calvinoesque or Borgesian mind frame', Pamuk continues, he could make 'a strong distinction between the religious and literary connotations of Islamic

1992: 84; Parla 1992: 118; Çeçen 1992: 208; Atakay 1996: 41). On the other hand, some also take pains to avoid this approach: Enis Batur, for example, pays careful attention to *Kara Kitap*'s urban setting, allowing him to draw comparisons with Joyce and Musil rather than with Borges and Calvino, while Sooyong Kim interprets it as 'a Sufi allegory' (see Batur 1992: 11-14; Kim 1996: 235). Such readings gestures towards the (truly vast) interpretive possibilities opened by *Kara Kitap* / *The Black Book*, possibilities otherwise obscured by an overemphatic critical focus on its postmodernism.

[2] A brief listing of the various Anglo-American attempts to generically identify *The Black Book* illustrates my point about its domestication in terms of postmodernism well. It has been defined as: 'a metaphysical thriller' (Marx 1994); 'the mystery novel of your nightmares, […] a Borgesian labyrinth' (Innes 1995: 247); 'a Post-Modern detective novel' (Parrinder 1995: 22); 'a postmodern meta-narrative' (Andrews 2000: 105); an '"Eastern" and "Western" intertext' (Göknar 2006: 34); and a 'Borgesian Encyclopedia' (Seyhan 2008: 148). Interpretations such as these are near-ubiquitous, with only a few critics like Ian Almond and Bernt Brendemoen focusing on the influence of its Sufi aspects on form (see Almond 2003: 75-90; Brendemoen 2007). But, as I demonstrate below, even a more developed 'Sufi' reading like Almond's rapidly falls back into the postmodernist framework set out by his peers.

literature', and thus 'easily appropriate its wealth of games, gimmicks, and parables' (*ibid*). In other words, the postmodernism Pamuk employs in *Kara Kitap* is quite distinct from the internationalist version of the aesthetic a reviewer like Shatz attributes to him, and is firmly embedded in the local, engaging, as it does, with local literary traditions and the ways in which these have been put to service for ideological ends. I will extend this account below, and argue that Pamuk's deconstruction of Turkish identity is also local, directed towards or against a specifically Kemalist identity forged in the state's early Republican years, and that it lays the groundwork for the positive construction of new (literary, artistic) identity positions attentive to Turkey's repressed Ottoman, Islamic past.

For now, though, it is important to note that the British and American reviewers such as those listed above have almost universally failed to take into account the local dimensions of Pamuk's postmodernism, emphasizing the metafictional, metaphysical dimensions of the narrative over its critical engagement with Turkish history, politics, and religion. In her article on the British reception of Gün's translation, Servinc Turkkhan finds fault with reviewers who, without comparisons with the original, attack Gün's language for not conforming to the British vernacular (see Turkkhan 2010: 42). They, Turkkhan continues, fail to comprehend the ways in which Gün contorts the English language in order to register the culture-specific resonances of the original. But for me, their failure has more to do with their elision of the cultural contexts out of which the original emerged rather than with their lack of recourse to the original *per se*. After all, reviewers and even critics of world literature can't be blamed for lacking mastery of the source languages of all the translated texts they encounter. Not properly contextualizing their readings, though, with reference to the source *culture* is inexcusable.

Perhaps surprisingly, little sustained attention has been paid to *The Black Book* in the Anglo-American academic establishment, especially in comparison with the numerous articles and even volumes devoted to *My Name is Red* (1998; trans. 2001) and (the more accessible and immediately politically relevant) *Snow* (2002; trans. 2004). Such limited scholarly output, consisting of a few scattered articles and subsections in wider-ranging books like Azade Seyhan's *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context* (2008), is no doubt due to entrenched prejudices against professional reading in translation as well as to the novel's complexity. But even those who have provided detailed critical readings have generally followed the interpretive paradigms set out by the more extensive reviews. I'll

make this case with reference to two articles, Walter Andrews' 'The Black Book and Black Boxes: Orhan Pamuk's *Kara Kitap*' (2000) and Ian Almond's 'Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets: The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*' (2003). These are useful in that they show that even contrasting critical approaches result in a similar understanding of the novel. On the one hand, Andrews almost entirely dispenses with reference to the source culture, instead reading the novel as a running commentary on a generic (Western) 'postmodern condition' (Andrews 2000: 108). On the other, Almond does closely trace aspects of the novel's source material, specifically its treatment of the Islamic sects Sufism and Hurufism, yet argues that this treatment still plays into Pamuk's postmodernist destabilization of the myths of religious truth, identity, and so forth. Both articles thus contribute to the novel's domestication, circumscribing it within familiar aesthetic and cultural norms and eliding the ways in which it actually revises such norms for Turkish historical contexts - eliding, that it, the more substantial contribution, one only really acknowledged by a foreignizing reading strategy, it makes to world literature.

Andrews' article is replete with references to critics of postmodernism like Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson, and Linda Hutcheon as well as to the critical theorists who influenced them, including Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. He draws on such critics in order to define a generic 'postmodern condition', 'the issue that motivates *Kara Kitap*', which, conceiving 'a world filled with "clues", and thus fraught with the possibility of meaning', nevertheless 'leaves one suspended over the abyss of undecidability' (*ibid*: 108, 109-10). Focusing more on theory than on textual analysis, Andrews then proceeds to interpret the novel, a 'postmodern meta-narrative', as both embodiment and exploration of this condition: citing Jameson's analysis of E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975) as also fitting for *The Black Book*, he argues that 'the novel not only resists interpretation, it is organized systematically and formally to short-circuit an older type of social and historical interpretation which it perpetually holds out and withdraws' (Andrews 2000: 105, 115). Most of the article continues in this manner, and the reader is unfortunately left with a better sense of Andrews' version of postmodernism (and of other exemplary texts like *Ragtime*, *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988), and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984)) than of its specific textual embodiments in *The Black Book*, the purported object of his study.

In the most interesting section of the article, Andrews makes a momentary foray into the novel's Turkish reception. He starts by accurately describing the Turkish left's qualms with the novel's perceived elitism, 'its playful, parodic, and sceptical treatment of narratives, ideologies, and programs that have obviously benefitted [...] the underclass' (*ibid*: 112). But then he enters into murkier waters when he attempts to define the left's suspicion of the ways in which it 'flirts with "historical" topics – in this case, Ottomanism, Ottoman culture, [and] Islamic themes' (*ibid*). He argues that for the left, this 'flirtation' makes it 'complicit in the project of the Islamist right to restore precisely the kind of imaginary "golden age" of psychic and social (and confessional) unity that *The Black Book* parodies' (*ibid*). This account is problematic for two reasons. First, as Pamuk clarifies in the *Publishers Weekly* interview I mentioned above, the left criticized him more for 'not being a proper Kemalist' than for being complicit with the Islamic right - they saw his (quite explicit) criticisms of the Turkish state as an 'antidemocratic force in Turkish history' as counter to their aims of protecting the state, for them a 'progressive westernizer' (Pamuk and Stone 1994: 36). Second, by defining Pamuk's treatment of topics like Turkey's Ottoman and Islamic history as (postmodernist) parody, Andrews underestimates and reduces its complexity, consisting, as it does, of a melancholy poetics of traumatic loss brought about by Kemalist statecraft as well as a project of cultural (that is, literary) neo-Ottoman revivalism both allegorized in and embodied by *The Black Book*. Andrews' insistence on the novel's postmodernism thus blinds him not only to its rich and nuanced engagement with Turkish history, but also to the real political contexts of its Turkish reception, otherwise the most important contribution he would have made to our wider understanding of the novel.

In contrast to Andrews, Almond opens his article on *The Black Book* with a self-conscious reference to the way in which 'the term "postmodern" [has been] pasted onto [Pamuk] by most Western critics, eager to find a writer who "delights in shredding preconceived dichotomies"' (Almond 2003: 77). Correspondingly, his take on the role of Islam in the novel, the object of his study, is more complex. His reading hinges on an analysis of a passage from Pamuk's book of essays *Other Colours* (1999, trans. 2007), where the author describes the formative effect of 'Western, Cartesian rationalism' on his identity as well as the apparently contradictory 'pleasure' he takes in 'Sufism as a literary source' (cited in *ibid*). Almond interprets this passage as Pamuk's admission of having 'two selves', 'a Western, secular, pro-Enlightenment rationalist, and an alternative self, implicitly Eastern, more closely linked with

feelings and pleasure' (*ibid*: 78). Orientalist clichés aides, this argument finds some support in the *Paris Review* interview, where Pamuk diagnoses the Turkish spirit, Turkish identity (including his own), as 'schizophrenic': 'Turkey should not', he assures, 'worry about having two spirits, belonging to two different cultures, having two souls. Schizophrenia makes you intelligent' (Pamuk 2005b: 131-2). More problematically, Almond then goes on to claim that 'Pamuk's attitude towards Islam in *The Black Book* will reflect this precarious dualism' (Almond 2003: 78). His central argument, which I quote at length, is that:

> [O]n the one hand, the secular Orientalist and cynical nonbeliever will expose the myths of various Islamic traditions, suggesting […] material, distinctly untranscendental explanations for the coming of the Messiah or the disappearance of Rumi. On the other hand, the vanquishing of such traditions, and implicitly the larger narrative which sustained them, will leave a sadness and sense of regret in Pamuk's more sensitive, unrational (Eastern) self (*ibid*).

On the face of it, this seems a reasonable argument. Pamuk's, or more accurately one of his characters', Celâl's, account of Rumi does indeed dwell more on the earthly than on the spiritual side of the Sufi poet's experiences, on 'the "sexual and mystical" intimacy he enjoyed with certain men' (Pamuk 2006: 254; see also 251-66). Further, melancholy, or, as Pamuk elsewhere puts it, *hüzün* at the fading of Islamic tradition and the psychic and social world it upheld is very much a dominant tone in *The Black Book* and throughout his oeuvre (for his most explicit statement on Turkish *hüzün*, see Pamuk 2005a: 81-96). But on closer inspection, there seem to be a number of problems here. These are effectively brought out if we read this passage alongside another of Pamuk's statements on comparable matters, again from the *Paris Review* interview:

> I'm not mourning the Ottoman Empire. I'm a Westernizer. I'm pleased that the Westernization process took place. I'm just criticizing the limited way in which the ruling elite - meaning both the bureaucracy and the new rich - had conceived of Westernization. They lacked the confidence necessary to create a national culture rich in its own symbols and rituals. They did not strive to create an Istanbul culture that would be an organic combination of East and West; they just put Western and Eastern things together. There was, of course, a strong local Ottoman culture, but that was fading away little by little. What they had to do, and could not possibly do enough, was invent a strong local culture, which would be a *combination* - not an imitation - of the Eastern past and the Western present. *I try to do the same kind of thing in my books* (Pamuk 2005b: 132, italics mine).

The first point to note here is that although Pamuk, by identifying himself as a 'Westernizer', is indicating something of the cynicism Almond attributes to him *vis-à-vis* 'the

myths of various Islamic traditions', he is clearly also conceptualizing the relationship between 'Western and Eastern', and, by implication, secular and Islamic, impulses in Turkey in historical terms. His mention of the failure of the 'ruling elite' to 'invent a strong local culture', 'an organic combination of East and West', is of course a reference to the repression of Turkey's Ottoman, Islamic heritage brought about by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's, the first President of the Republic of Turkey, wide-ranging program of political, economic, and cultural reform in the early years of the state's independence, 1923-1938. In other words, this passage suggests that Pamuk's take on Islam is mediated by (his views on) the history of Turkish statecraft. As I will show, *The Black Book* certainly reflects this complex interplay of religion, politics, and history in Pamuk's lifelong meditation on Turkey, the admired yet repulsive dream that spurs his imagination. But Almond neglects the historical dimension of Pamuk's approach to Islam, instead reducing it to the familiar narrative of the cosmopolitan third-world or Eastern intellectual whose adopted secular-liberal principles allow him, like us, to see past the religious myths in which his compatriots are mired. While Almond does correctly point towards another aspect of Pamuk's approach, his 'sadness and sense of regret' at Islam's decline in Turkey, this cannot be understood purely in terms of West-inspired metaphysical or theological doubt, as the first part of his central argument above and his article as a whole suggest. Rather, Pamuk's *hüzün* is prompted by the failure of a generation of Kemalist statesmen to integrate Islam and other features of Ottoman culture into a modernized Turkey, as this resulted in an enforced alienation from the historical roots that gave cohesion to Turkish culture, society, and identity.

This brings me onto my second, and more fundamental, point about Almond's argument, to its very premises. As the passages cited above show, yes, Pamuk is acutely sensitive to the constitutive divide between Eastern and Western, religious and secular impulses in Turkish identity, in his own. But it would be quite misguided to jump, as Almond does, from this premise to the conclusion that his books 'reflect this precarious dualism'. Almond sees such dualism reflected in *The Black Book* not only in Pamuk's apparently conflicted approach to Islam, but also in the way he distributes traits among his characters. He argues that 'these twin poles of East-West, Feeling-Reason, Spirit-Matter are represented by the figures of Galip and Jelal', with Galip representing 'West' and Celâl ('Jelal' is Gün's transliteration of the name, whose original form Freely employs) 'East' (Almond 2003: 78). But where Almond sees dualism, Pamuk, as he himself states, writes '*combination*', 'a *combination* […] of the Eastern

past and the Western present'. Such combination is most clearly manifest in Galip's identity quest, which sees the collapse of his Westernized identity as an Istanbul lawyer and his gradual adoption of that of a writer, Celâl's and, indeed, Pamuk's double, who memorializes Turkey's repressed Ottoman, Islamic past in his newspaper columns. His practice of literary memorialization is exactly Pamuk's own throughout his novels, especially in *The Black Book* and *My Name is Red*. Recognizing the past within the conditions of the present, it both allegorizes and embodies Pamuk's vision for the future of Turkish identity. This aspect of the novel is under-represented by Almond, who, in a definitive act of domesticating *The Black Book* as a postmodernist novel about deconstruction of identity, goes on to argue that at the end of the novel Galip is robbed of his selfhood, and that 'the secret of our identity is precisely that we have none' (*ibid*: 81). Due to this, and despite its unique engagement with Pamuk's Islamic source material, Almond's article thus falls squarely among the mainstream of Anglo-American critical and scholarly responses to *The Black Book*.

2. *The Black Book*: An Introduction

Up to this point, I have been alluding to my own reading of *The Black Book* in passing, as it were, to highlight key gaps, inconsistencies, and oversights in other critical responses. In order to substantiate all the claims I have made about the novel and its reception in translation, I, employing what I've called a foreignizing reading strategy, now turn more directly to the novel itself. Although my focus is on Galip's identity quest and on the novel's *Künstlerroman* narrative arc, which I trace through the recurring imagery of the mannequin and the face, I also layer my reading with contextualizing references to the source culture. I attend, in various degrees of depth, to the history of Turkish statecraft, to Kemalist modernization and reform policies, to the changing role of Islam in the 20th century, to (Pamuk's analysis of) Turkish *hüzün*, and to the wider culture of neo-Ottoman revivalism. Other characters, episodes, and formal features in *The Black Book* and elsewhere in Pamuk's oeuvre that offer significant insight into the author's approach to such issues will also be explored. Finally, I should note that for the reasons exhaustively explained in Chapter Five, I use Freely's translation throughout.

* * *

The Black Book is a complex, multilayered novel which resists the sort of brief summarization that would have prefaced a more detailed reading. Instead, I will introduce it by outlining a few of its key thematic and formal features, and by reading these in the wider contexts of Pamuk's oeuvre and of Turkish cultural history:

Plot, Characters, Themes: Galip (whose name means 'victor' in Turkish) is a Westernized lawyer living in Istanbul. Leaving him with only a cryptic, nineteen-word goodbye letter, his wife and first cousin Rüya ('dream') has vanished. He then sets out to find her in a quest that takes him from dilapidated family apartments, private archives of left-wing political manifestos, and the poorer quarters of the city, where he visits Rüya's ex-husband, to Istanbul's mosques, markets, squares, ateliers, newspapers offices, nightclubs, and brothels. Galip soon realizes that Rüya has likely taken up with his cousin and her half-brother Celâl, a columnist for the major daily *Milliyet* (and whose name alludes to the given name of Rumi, the 13th century Persian Sufi mystic and poet). His search for his wife thus also becomes a search for Celâl. So Galip reads through the thirty-year archive of Celâl's columns seeking clues to their whereabouts.

These columns have a pronounced impact on Galip. They touch in highly literate, self-conscious, and imaginative ways on Istanbul's and Turkey's cultural history, and include florid speculations on the dead civilizations revealed by the imaginary drying up of the Bosphorus, ironic accounts of Istanbul's consumption patterns as registered in Alâaddin's shop, melancholy assessments of the loss of authentic Istanbullu gestures nevertheless preserved by a lonely artist's mannequins, verbatim reproductions of conversations between the master polemicists of the Turkish press, metaphysical reflections on Turkish identity, and extensive improvisations on the history of Islam in Turkey, especially on Rumi, Sufism, and Hurufism. They initially have the effect of forcing Galip to question his (constructed) Westernized identity, leading to a profound psychological break. Then, through the doctrine of Hurufism to which they expose him, they prompt him to develop a new interpretive paradigm that allows him, for the first time, to really read the signs of his city as well as his own historically mediated place within it, his identity.

Galip's search for his wife thus takes an internal turn, and becomes a search for himself. The search, and the novel, concludes with Galip's discovery of the murder of both Celâl and Rüya, of his 'dream' of a fulfilled Westernized identity in Turkey, most likely by F.M. Üçüncü, one of Celâl's fanatical Islamic revivalist readers. But this discovery is simultaneous with that of

his vocation as a writer very much in the mode of his (absent) mentor Celâl (indeed, he becomes Celâl's, and Pamuk's, double). It turns out, then, that the novel's (apparently simple) thematic premise was all along a device for exploring Turkish cultural identity, the traumas resultant from the Kemalist repression of the Ottoman, Islamic heritage, and the formation of new identity positions that revive or memorialize that past culturally rather than politically.

Style, Structure, Form: *The Black Book* consists of thirty-six chapters, each prefaced by an epigraph borrowed from a vast range of classic Eastern and Western literary, religious, and other historical sources, divided into two overlapping parts. Broadly speaking, Part One, culminating in Chapter Nineteen ('Signs of the City'), traces the collapse of Galip's Westernized identity, whereas Part Two sees Galip, under the influence of Celâl's meditations on Sufism and Hurufism, develop a new identity as a writer attuned to Istanbul's repressed Ottoman and Islamic past. Throughout, chapters alternate between the third- and first-person, with third-person chapters focalized through Galip and narrating his increasingly frenetic quest through the backstreets and alleyways of Istanbul, through the annals of Turkish cultural history, and first-person chapters reproducing verbatim Celâl's newspaper columns for *Milliyet* in all their imaginative and speculative glory. Despite the highly literate and literary qualities of the more immediately striking 'Celâl' chapters – which unfold as idiosyncratic and personalized, but not formally unusual, mini-essays and whose sentences retain the standard SOV word order of the Turkish – the 'Galip' chapters are formally more complex. Their limited third-person form is riddled with free indirect discourse, stream of consciousness, analepses, fantasy scenarios in the subjunctive, metadiegetic narratives, and other narrative devices. Indeed, as only fully manifest in the original Turkish despite even Gün's foreignizing translational efforts, Pamuk's writing style in the 'Galip' chapters becomes increasingly more convoluted, his sentences longer and more dizzyingly baroque, as Galip's quest becomes more feverish, frenetic, in the run-up to his profound psychological break from his habituated identity.

The 'Galip' and 'Celâl' chapters are dialectically intertwined in a number of ways. Most straightforwardly, in the world of the narrative, the 'Celâl' chapters present precisely those of Celâl's columns Galip reads in the preceding third-person chapters for clues as to his cousin's, thus his wife's, whereabouts. As the columns direct Galip's search, the action of the subsequent third-person chapters, it is the relationship between the third- and first-person chapters that

determines the shape of the narrative, the novel, itself. On a broader thematic level, the 'Galip' and 'Celâl' chapters represent, respectively, the individual's search for meaning and identity in the conflicted cultural terrain of Istanbul, and that cultural and historical terrain itself, or at least Celâl's melancholy speculations on it as well as Turkish modernity – in short, they represent 'the individual' and 'society'. As Galip reads through the columns, they, and the cultural and historical material they contain, have the effect of forcing him to question his identity, and to reintegrate himself into a newly historicized Istanbul culture. This central thematic is thus formally manifest in the relationship between the 'Galip' and 'Celâl' chapters. Finally, Galip's process of reintegration is only complete as he comes to write Celâl's column himself in Part Two of the novel (specifically, Chapter Twenty-Nine is the first of the 'Galip' columns). Galip's adoption of the role of the writer suggests a synthesis of the individual and the social, of 'Eastern' and 'Western' impulses – a resolution to the novel's central conflict – and, crucially, this is formally signified in intertwinement of the 'Galip' and 'Celâl' strands. In taking up the column and the novelistic space allotted it, Galip becomes, for the first time, a first person with authority over, thus the right to author, his own identity. And the act of writing itself, as well as its content, its melancholy public excavations of the traumas resultant from Turkish modernity, exactly defines Galip's new identity position and the political aesthetic of *The Black Book* itself.

Within the broader spectrum of Anglo-American critical definitions of *The Black Book* in terms of postmodernism, its designation as a 'Post-Modern detective novel' or 'a metaphysical thriller' deserves special attention when considering questions of genre (Parrinder 1995: 22; Marx 1994). Commentators such as those discussed above have argued that Galip's literally failed search for Rüya and Celâl, taking its narrative cue from Borges, Calvino, and, I'd like to add, Thomas Pynchon, destabilizes the norms of the classic detective novel (a decipherable world of clues, orderly resolutions, etc.) in typically postmodernist fashion. Pamuk's engagement with the detective-novel genre, employing and upsetting its norms, is undeniable. He layers this engagement into the narrative by making Rüya a reader and translator of crime novels, and by having Galip gesture towards his narrative strategy: 'Galip once told Rüya', Pamuk highlights, 'that the only detective book he'd ever wanted to read would be the one in which not even the author knew the murderer's identity' (Pamuk 2006: 50).

But for me, generically pinpointing *The Black Book* as a postmodernist detective novel, even comparing it with this genre, is ultimately reductive. Such critical corner-cutting fails to

account both for the local / historical reasons why Pamuk destabilizes the genre, and for the alternate system for deciphering clues developed successfully by Galip in Part Two of the novel. Pamuk makes it clear that, for Galip, it is specifically Istanbul's semiotic richness that exceeds the interpretive norms of the hero in the classic detective novel, a genre which 'had been conceived abroad': 'How different [are the signs of the city] from the cosy world of Rüya's detective novels, where authors never vexed a hero with more signs than he needed' (*ibid*: 225, 216). In other words, it is the Western hermeneutical paradigm of the detective novel that fails here, and not interpretation *per se*, as Pamuk's postmodernist critics would have it. This should be unsurprising in a novel so much about the cultural failings brought about by Turkey's enforced modernization and Westernization. What may be surprising to critics, as they have generally failed to notice it, is the degree to which Galip, indeed *The Black Book* itself, develops an alternate, explicitly 'Eastern', hermeneutics for reading Istanbul's signs. Galip is on the verge of discovering this system of though in Chapter Nineteen, a crucial chapter which closes Part One of the novel: 'It was perhaps possible to look into the faces of his fellow citizens and see in them the city's long history – its misfortunes, its lost magnificence, its melancholy and pain – but these were not carefully arranged clues pointing to a secret world [as in a detective novel]; they came from a shared defeat, a shared history, a shared shame' (Pamuk 2006: 218). Although Galip only fully develops his hermeneutic later in the narrative, in Part Two as he studies Hurufi doctrine, his incipient perceptual and intellectual transformation is clearly indicated in the same chapter, when he sees (and reads) Taksim Square, an important Kemalist landmark, anew: 'All at once he was stepping into a poor, forgotten country he had never seen before, beholding the brash modern square at its centre' (*ibid*: 223). As Galip's emerging interpretive abilities feed into his discovery of writing as vocation, the novel appears more closely aligned with the *Künstlerroman* genre than with any genre of postmodernist narrative, including the postmodern detective novel.

Although, to my knowledge, no other critics have described *The Black Book* as a *Künstlerroman*, Seyhan has come closest by reading it 'as a quest, as a bildungsroman about rebuilding or a new *Bildung* ("education or formation") (Seyhan 2008: 150). The process of *Bildung*, she continues, passes through three stages: 'the mourning of a culture lost to a mismanaged modernity, the quest for re-presenting that culture as a corrective endeavour (*Bildung* as rebuilding a lost cultural legacy through remembrance), and turning the city into an

encyclopedic site of a new pedagogy' (*ibid*: 151). In its Hegelian logic, Seyhan's reading is perceptive and accurate. But, due no doubt to its place within a larger chapter on 'Istanbul: City as Trope and Topos of Crossed Destinies', it is overly focussed on questions of urban hermeneutics, and thus underestimates the narrative role allotted writing as a vocation of 're-presenting' and 'remembrance'. In *The Black Book*, it is only through Galip's, a stand-in for Pamuk, discovery of writing that a public, expressive form appropriate to the mourning of a lost culture and its re-presentation is forged. As for the protagonists in classic *Künstlerromane* by, say, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, Galip's discovery is mediated by a rejection of, a metaphorical or psychological exile from, bourgeois values – here, the values of an enforced process of Westernization and modernization with which he had been indoctrinated by his upbringing and society. While Galip is certainly influenced by Sufi and Hurufi doctrine on his road to becoming a writer – these prompt him to develop a new interpretive schema for reading, thus expressing, himself and his city historically – it would be misguided to conclude, as do Sooyong Kim and Bernt Brendemoen, that the novel is thus a 'Sufi allegory' or 'sufi tale' (Kim 1996: 235; Brendemoen 2007). Comparable to his usage of postmodernist formal features, Pamuk only employs Sufi material to register Galip's development of a more 'Eastern' hermeneutics as an alternative to imported systems of thought within the wider arc of the *Künstlerroman* form. Sufism, in other words, provides Galip with the inspiration and interpretive capabilities necessary for the ulterior project of writing. Indeed, writing, as Galip states in the last words of the novel when, even in the third-person narrative space hitherto allotted him, he finally narrates his story in the first-person, is 'the only consolation' for the losses wrought by history, for the losses of Rüya, his dream, and Celâl (Pamuk 2006: 461).

Given my preceding argument about the reductive imposition of the category of 'postmodernism' on *The Black Book*, one might object that my reading similarly domesticates the novel in terms of a yet more typically European category, the *Künstlerroman*. It should clearly be stated, though, that I'm not denying the influence of postmodernist aesthetics on *The Black Book*, indeed, on Pamuk's entire oeuvre, only the use to which this category has been put to conclusively identify and define Pamuk's style. Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference in describing the novel as postmodernist as opposed to a *Künstlerroman*. Under the prior description, the novel, as explicitly argued by critics like Andrews and Almond, abandons

such archaic concepts as stable identity, historical truth, and religious truth in favour of an endless play of indeterminate and free-floating signifiers. It is thus forced into place as an example of a worldly cosmopolitanism suited for European and American cultural terrains, and its deeper engagement with Turkish culture and history is largely occluded. Under the latter description, such engagement is by necessity brought to the fore – it is precisely by assessing Galip's growth into a writer that Pamuk's take on the cultural losses brought about by Kemalism and his unique resolution to the conflicts and contradictions of Turkish modernity may be gleaned. *Künstlerroman*, then, is not only a more accurate description of *The Black Book*, but it also provides criticism with a lens through which the thematic and formal content otherwise obscured by domesticating criticism might be appropriately perceived.

Geographical Setting: *The Black Book* is set entirely in Istanbul, which has often been referred to as the novel's 'central character'. And like a character in a novel by, say, Honoré de Balzac or Leo Tolstoy, Istanbul's multifaceted 'psychological' traits – most significantly, the sense of *hüzün* that pervades the city - are drawn by Pamuk as meticulously as are its physical traits, ranging from its topography and landmarks to the faces and gestures of its inhabitants. But Istanbul is no mere backdrop to the narrative that takes place within it. The narrative is, perhaps primarily, about how to read the city. As Galip, under the influence of Celâl's columns, scours the city in search of Rüya, the veil of accustomed perceptions woven by his Western lifestyle begins to drop, and Istanbul transforms into a repository of signs to be deciphered for their hidden meanings. As in Walter Benjamin's work on urban modernity, the signs of the city – its faces, streets, architecture, objects – become for Galip reflections or physical embodiments of the contradictions of, here, a specifically Turkish modernity.[3] In Chapter Nineteen, Galip begins his

[3] To my knowledge, there has been no extended critical work on Pamuk and Benjamin. A Benjaminian reading of *The Black Book*, and, indeed, of Pamuk's entire oeuvre, would be fascinating, as would a comparative analysis of any of their shared predilections or hobby-horses, ranging from urban modernity, urban archaeology, architecture, and history to melancholy, the aesthetics of perception, the fragment, the refuse / detritus of civilization, Proust, translation, libraries, messianism, and so forth. Pamuk himself provides us with an entry point into such an analysis in his 'Preface' to his collection of essays *Other Colours*. There, after stating his admiration for Benjamin ('I am hardly alone in being a great admirer of the German writer-philosopher Walter Benjamin'), he goes on to playfully suggest, neglecting the theoretical and methodological import of Benjamin's use of the fragment, that *Other Colours*, like *The Arcades Project* (1999), is itself 'a book made only from fragments too' (Pamuk 2007: x, xi).

Myself, I would be particularly interested in pursuing the urban archeology line in a potential Pamuk – Benjamin comparison. Such a comparison would seek to read Pamuk's career-long engagement with Istanbul's subhistory as especially evident in *The Black Book*, *My Name is Red*, and *Istanbul* alongside Benjamin's Parisian writings, especially *The Arcades Project*, its various '*Exposés*' including 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth

initiation into the secrets, the 'mystery', of Istanbul, a process that comes to full fruition when he studies Hurufi doctrine in Part Two. And central to this initiation is his perception of Istanbul's signs in terms of *hüzün*, in terms of the city's 'misfortunes', 'lost magnificence', 'melancholy and pain' as in the passage cited above. I'll certainly expand on the consequences of Galip's newly historicized perception of Istanbul below, but for now, I'd like to offer wider context for the concept of *hüzün* by turning to Pamuk's exquisite memoir / impressionistic cultural history *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2003; trans. 2005).

From the outset of *Istanbul*, Pamuk foregrounds how his relationship with the city is shaped by *hüzün*: 'For me', he writes, 'it has always been a city of ruins and end-of-empire melancholy. I've spent my life either battling with this melancholy, or (like all Istanbullus) making it my own' (Pamuk 2005a: 6). As with his novels, the act of writing *Istanbul* appears to have been a process of negotiating *hüzün* for Pamuk, of coming to terms with its roots and seeking a positive reconciliation with the past, of making it his own. Throughout the memoir, he traces manifestations of *hüzün* in the declining stature of his family, in Istanbul's Ottoman ruins and hastily modernized architecture, in the works of the city's novelists, poets, columnists, and encyclopaedists, and so forth. But, in Chapter Ten, he also interrupts what is otherwise an undisrupted series of often speculative, but always strictly localized, reflections on his childhood and on Istanbul's cultural history with an abstract, philosophical account of *hüzün*. Thus

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Century' (1935) and 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century' (1939), and his essays on Baudelaire as collected in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1977) and *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (2006). Both oeuvres seek to explore the contradictions of urban modernity as localized, respectively, in Istanbul and Paris through archeological metaphors and methodologies that uncover layers of their cities' pasts to reveal archetypal features, dialectical images, and social and cultural constructs that not only reflect, but also structure contemporary urban reality. This process and project of uncovering is suggested in Chapter Two of *The Black Book* ('When the Bosphorus Dries Up'), which imagines centuries of civilizational detritus piled up and intermingled on the bed of Istanbul's great waterway, only to be imaginatively recovered in the form of the novel itself (see Pamuk 2006: 16-20). The rest of *The Black Book*, like *My Name is Red* and *Istanbul*, is replete with images of Istanbul's Ottoman, Islamic past that are held in almost dialectical opposition to those of its secular, modern present, and are suggestive of the contradictions of modernity in a specifically Istanbullu, and a more broadly Middle Eastern, guise. On the other hand, the contradictions of Parisian modernity Benjamin is concerned with are revealed through his methodology of constellating dialectical images such as, centrally, the arcade, and also other signs of the material culture of late capitalism including fashion, advertising, collecting, *flâneurie*, prostitution, gambling, photography, and so forth.

While Pamuk, then, hones in on the contradictions elicited by the Islamic / secular, tradition / modernity divides in Istanbul culture and history, Benjamin focuses on those of capitalist mass culture and commodity fetishism in Paris and, by extension, the modern West. The interest of a Pamuk – Benjamin comparison would, following the urban archeology approach, thus lie in tracing the pressure-points revealed in Pamuk's archeology of Istanbul through the lens of Benjamin's materialist approach, and, conversely, those revealed in Benjamin's archeology of Paris through that of Pamuk's worldly, 'East' / 'West' approach. And, indeed, such a project could play an important role in the pressing task of reworking Frankfurt School Marxism from and for postcolonial and comparative perspectives.

drawing attention to itself, this account demands special attention. It opens by noting the Arabic (حزن) and Koranic roots of the Turkish word, where it conveyed 'a feeling of deep spiritual loss', then traces 'the emergence of two very different *hüzüns*' in the next few centuries of Islamic history (*ibid*: 81). The first *hüzün* signifies the melancholy attendant on material or worldly losses, and originates from an (un-Islamic) overinvestment in the transitory world. The second, derived from Sufi mysticism (thus linked with Celâl, whose columns might be read in this light), signifies 'the spiritual anguish we feel because we cannot be close enough to Allah', the anguish of metaphysical dualism and the void it opens between the material and the spiritual (*ibid*). Due to its association with religious devotion, this type of *hüzün*, Pamuk continues, has been held in high esteem in Islamic, and Istanbul, culture, dominating the mood of Turkish music and poetry over the last two centuries. But, and this is Pamuk's main point, the honour accorded *hüzün* in the Sufi tradition is not sufficient to explain its 'central importance […] as a cultural concept conveying worldly failure, listlessness and spiritual suffering' in Istanbul (*ibid*: 82). Rather, while Istanbul's *hüzün*, a communal mood 'shared by millions of people together', is structurally similar to that of the Sufi tradition, it is also 'unique' to the city, local and particular (*ibid*: 83). And this uniqueness is derived from 'the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and – even more important – the way this history is reflected in the city's 'beautiful' landscapes and its people' (*ibid*: 82).

Istanbul's *hüzün*, then, is, in a sense, the anguish and unfulfilled longing caused by *historical* dualism, by the void history has opened up between an (idealized) past held together by Turkey's Ottoman and Islamic self-identification and a present, as Pamuk makes explicit in the *Paris Review* interview and elsewhere, divorced from that past due to Kemalist processes of modernization and secularization. This is precisely the *hüzün* that pervades *The Black Book*, that which Galip perceives in the faces of his fellow Istanbullus and which he, like Pamuk, negotiates by culturally re-integrated the past into the present as he takes up Celâl's column.

Historical Setting: *The Black Book* is set in the days before the 1980 Turkish military *coup d'état*, Turkey's third up to that point, orchestrated by General Kenan Evren against the government of Süleyman Demirel (a detail apparently too minor for the vast majority of Anglo-American commentators to even note). As Celâl, foreshadowing his own murder some 400 pages further into the novel, suggests in the third sentence of the first of his columns reproduced

or transcribed by Pamuk (Chapter Two), this was an era when Istanbul's streets were ridden by a 'frenzied killing spree' (Pamuk 2006: 16). Celâl is of course referring to the spate of political murders conducted in the late 1970s by left-wing and right-wing factions, extremist youth groups on the left calling for communist or Marxist-Leninist revolution and, on the right, proto-fascist groups like *Ülkücü Gençlik* ('The Idealist Youth', infamously known as the 'Grey Wolves'). Such violence left over 5,000 members of these factions, and, from around 1979, public figures like high ranking officials and union leaders, dead on the streets of Istanbul and elsewhere. It had a pronounced effect on Turkish public and political life, disrupting civil order and exacerbating already deadlocked relations between the two dominant parties, Bülent Ecevit's social-democratic *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* ('Republican People's Party') and Demirel's conservative *Adalet Partisi* ('Justice Party'), under whose governments of 1974-7 the Grey Wolves enjoyed a degree of protection. Alongside Turkey's economic and financial crisis, the pressure increasingly mounted by Kurdish separatists, and the 'threat' of Islamic fundamentalism, it was a major contributing factor to the military's, whose vocation was to uphold Kemalist and Republican ideals, takeover of power in 1980.[4] And, apart from in Celâl's murder, it, its roots, and its effects are marked everywhere in *The Black Book*.

[4] Turkish history from 1960-80, when the state experienced three coups, has not been the object of much sustained criticism in English (see Erik Zürcher's authoritative *Turkey: A Modern History* (2004) for an overview of this troubled period). Rather, the vast majority of historical scholarship on Turkey today focuses on issues like politics and religion after 1980, especially on Islamic revivalism and the rise of Necmettin Erbakan's *Refah Partisi* ('Welfare Party') then Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* ('Justice and Development Party'), with terms like 'Modernity', 'Secularism', and 'Islam' variously combined in most titles. This specific emphasis is understandable, as it taps into the recent upsurge of interest in Islam in anglophone historiography and international relations scholarship, itself perhaps a symptom of neo-Orientalist and post-9/11 anxieties about the religion's purported links to fundamentalism, extremism, and terror (although of course much criticism is dedicated to debunking neo-Orientalist myths about Islam).

Likewise, most volumes on Turkey do warn against the dangers of radical political Islam in that country, with some like (Binnaz Toprak's contribution to) Ali Çarkoğlu's and Barry Rubin's edited volume *Religion and Politics in Turkey* (2006) arguing that the *Refah* party was ousted from power in 1997 not because of a secularist military intervention but because 'the majority of the Turkish electorate did not approve of the politicization of religion' and 'did not want religious political parties', because, in short, *Refah*'s policies of granting greater visibility to Islam in Turkish public life (attempting to lift the headscarf ban, to build a mosque in Taksim Square, etc.) were too radical for the public (Toprak 2006: 35; see also Muammer Kaylan's *The Kemalists: Islamic Revival and the Fate of Secular Turkey* for an account of Islamic revivalism as threat). But most also celebrate what they see as the *Adalet ve Kalkinma* Party's, in power since 2002, successful reconciliation of a moderate Islam with principles of democracy, liberalism, and global economics, as this acknowledges minority identities and the force of religion without doing away with Turkey's Republican ideals. Such volumes include Sibel Irzik's and Güven Güzeldere's (eds.) special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 'Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide' (2003), Yildiz Atasoy's *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (2005), M. Hakan Yavuz's *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (2005), Çarkoğlu's and Rubin's *Religion and Politics in Turkey*, Yavuz's *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (2009), and Banu Eligür's (ed.) *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (2010). Just as these volumes argue that the *AKP* made political Islam

Many important narrative features and episodes in *The Black Book* must be reread in light of this previously underexplored context. For example, Chapter Seven sees Galip visit his old friend Saim, an archivist of the voluminous left-wing manifestos, pamphlets, and leaflets then in circulation and competition. This is order to try to track down Rüya's ex-husband, himself a former inhabitant of 'the black-and-white fairy-tale world of little left-wing splinter groups' (*ibid*: 68). What Galip finds is a 'shadowy underworld' of letters, a sea of 'aliases, and aliases that had been manufactured from these aliases, and aliases derived from portions of the manufactured aliases', a crypt of 'acrostics puzzles, letter games that never quite panned out, and almost transparent secret codes' (*ibid*: 74). Moreover, and further to the delight of Pamuk's postmodernist critics, Galip stumbles on a century-old conspiracy theory whereby the Shi'a Bektaşi order, banned by Atatürk, has resurfaced as a Marxist-Leninist group which, unknown to its conscripts, reproduces Bektaşi rituals under the guise of political engagement. While Saim's archive is usually read as a reflection of Pamuk's own narrative strategy, replete is it is understood to be with word games, false leads, and unlikely conspiracies, surely it must also be read as a reflection of Pamuk's take on an internally riven, fragmented, paranoid left, whose own infighting was a major source of the political violence of the period. Pamuk ironically gestures towards the left's political confusion through the figure of Saim, who, 'having accumulated far more than he could ever read', 'still [...] did not know which political line he should take' (*ibid*: 72).

While 1970s Turkish political history acts as a very immediate context for *The Black Book*, this, for Pamuk, is mediated by the longer history of Turkey's modernization after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the horizon of all his work.[5] I'll illustrate how long history

palatable to the Turkish public and military, it could be argued that they function to make Turkish Islamic revivalism palatable to a global anglophone audience, that they, in a sense, domesticate it. Attending to this question is well outside my scope here, though, as it would require thorough analysis of Turkish voting patterns and of the role of the military. For a fictional account of the polarization of religion and secularism in contemporary Turkey, see Pamuk's *Snow*.

[5] As context for current renegotiations of religion and politics in Turkey, the state's longer 20th century history has of course been the object of much discussion in volumes and articles such as those cited above. Zürcher again provides a useful overview of the Republic's early history and of Kemalist reform policies in *Turkey: A Modern History* (see Zürcher 2004: 166-205). There, he outlines how secularizing and modernizing reforms amounting to a Westernization of the Turkish state via policies including abolishing the sultanate and the caliphate in 1922-4; abolishing religious schools or *medreses* as well as the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1924; prohibiting religious shrines, dervish orders, the fez, and other religious attire (not, though, the veil) in 1925; adopting the European clock and calendar, the Swiss civil code, and the Italian penal code in 1926; adopting Western numerals and, constituting the most drastic reform, the Latin script (thus abolishing the Arabic and leading to the excision of Arabic and

mediates the short by turning to Part Two of the novel. There, Galip, impersonating Celâl, receives a string of disturbing phone calls from a fanatical reader of Celâl's, likely his eventual murderer and whose real identity a careful reading reveals is that of F.M. Üçüncü. Now Üçüncü had in 1962 published a Hurufi-inspired tract, *The Mystery of the Letters and the Loss of Mystery*, which, providing an account of Fazlallah, founder of the Hurufi sect, describes the

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Persian words from the language) in 1928; and instituting the 'law of last names', effectively dividing extended families into smaller units and distancing younger generations from their family genealogies, in 1932. Although such reforms changed the face of the country, their most pronounced effect, Zürcher concludes, is that they, by suppressing it, 'politicized Islam and turned it into a vehicle of opposition' (*ibid*: 191).

Most of the volumes and articles which situate Turkey's contemporary political climate within its longer history adopt a similar critical tone towards Kemalist statecraft, especially towards policies aimed at repressing the role of Islam in public and political life. These include Sibel Irzik's and Güven Güzeldere's (eds.) special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 'Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide (2003), Yildiz Atasoy's *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (2005), Muammer Keylan's *The Kemalists: Islamic Revival and the Fate of Secular Turkey* (2005), M. Hakan Yavuz's *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (2005), Esra Özyürek's (ed.) *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (2006), E. Fuat Keyman's 'Modernity, Secularism and Islam: The Case of Turkey' (2007), and Banu Eligür's (ed.) *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (2010). But many also complicate this revisionist narrative, often with an eye towards discrediting the claims of political Islam and / or re-legitimating secularism as the state ideology. In her ethnographic study *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (2006), for instance, Özyürek demonstrates that Turkish citizens in the late 1990s began to express strong feelings of nostalgia for the Kemalist project of secularization and modernization, whose erosion was manifest in the *Refah* Party's 1995 electoral victory. Further, Andrew Davison's 'Turkey, A "Secular" State? The Challenge of Description' (2003), Sinem Gürbey's 'Islam, Nation-State, and the Military: A Discussion of Secularism in Turkey' (2009), and Umut Azak's *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion and the Nation State* (2010) all argue that Kemalism didn't actually repress Islam to the extent that is usually assumed. For Davison, the term 'laicism' is more appropriate to describe the Kemalist approach to religion than 'secularism', as the Kemalist state didn't so much separate Islam from politics, but rather administered its practice and expressions. Gürbey and Azak take this argument a step further, both insisting that rather than repressing it, the Kemalist state attempted to integrate an enlightened version of Sunni Islam, one stripped of superstition and obscurantism, into its now apparently Weberian, rationalist, project of modernization.

There appears, then, to be a constitutive ideological divide in contemporary historical scholarship on Turkey, one with important implications for our understanding of the legacy of Kemalism and of current renegotiations of politics and religion. Both sides are well argued and evidenced. But rather than siding with one or the other, I'd like to briefly suggest relocating the debate on a theoretical level, specifically that opened by Talal Asad's *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (2003). Although Asad only passingly mentions Turkey in that volume, arguing that contemporary Turkish secularists decry the entry of Islamic parties into mainstream politics due to the implication of deprivatized religion, his theoretical account of secularism as an ideological system may well be extended towards that state (see Asad 2003: 199; further, the Turkish experience of secularism in the 20th century may well be used to reread Asad's work, although this is far beyond my scope here). To summarize crudely, secularism, for Asad, is not simply the separation of religion from politics, but rather the transcendental condition by which political participation and legitimacy are defined in modern secular states. In other words, the modern state produces the very distinction between the secular and the religious by which its authority is legitimated and which occludes other forms of community. To extend this account towards Turkey, it could be argued that the Kemalist state, whether its policies are understood as 'secularizing' or 'laicizing', consolidated its power by creating distinctions between the appropriate remits of politics and religion, and thus redefined public as well as political life. If such an argument were to work, the conflicted debate about whether the state repressed or integrated Islam would be reframed into one about the ways in which the state invented the conceptual schema, secularism, by which the relationship between politics and religion is understood in modern Turkey. This would have the added effect of enabling new modes of historical comparatism between Turkey, the Middle East, and Europe with potentially surprising results.

unbridgeable historical and metaphysical schism between East and West, and calls for Turkey's return to its pure Eastern heritage via its rediscovery of Hurufi mystery (see *ibid*: 302-6). Thus positioned as, in a word, an Islamic revivalist, it should be unsurprising that Üçüncü assumes the name 'Mehmet', the Turkish name for Muhammad, in his conversations with who-he-believes-is-Celâl. In these conversations, Mehmet / Üçüncü harangues Celâl / Galip for his address in order, as he eventually confesses, to kill him. His grievances are serious and long-standing: Celâl not only seduced his wife twenty years earlier, but he also betrayed a failed Messianic coup of the early 1960s that he believes 'might have got this miserable country back on its feet' and out, as one its participants earlier tells Galip, of 'the shameful shadow of Europe' (*ibid*: 381, 331). But the underlying impetus of Mehmet / Üçüncü's murderous desire is Celâl's having 'deceived us all, deceived the entire nation with [his] bold lies, scandalous dreams, paranoid obsessions, insinuating refinements, elegant turns of phrase, and endearing antics' (*ibid*: 382). For the caller, Celâl's deception amounts to his having challenged and complicated the (Islamic revivalist) ideal of a return to a pure, authentic Turkish identity: 'Because of you', Mehmet / Üçüncü tells Celâl / Galip, 'I've never had the chance to be myself', to be, that is, the authentic self he would have been if Celâl's columns hadn't seductively posited Turkish identity as a combination of its Islamic past with its modern, secular present (*ibid*: 387). Rather than any specific political intervention like informing on his peers, it is in the writing of his columns that Celâl betrayed the coup that would have reversed the process of Turkey's secularization and modernization.

As I hope is clear, this extended episode, which dominates much of Part Two, demonstrates Pamuk's take on how what I've called the short history of coups, political violence, and Islamic revivalism is mediated by the longer history of Turkey's modernization in the 20th century. But, significantly, it also clearly distinguishes between two modes of recovering the losses wrought by history, of coming to terms with history's traumas: what I'll call 'political neo-Ottoman revivalism', exemplified by Mehmet / Üçüncü and aimed at restoring a glorious past through a violence that ultimately reproduces that of Kemalist reform, and what I'll call 'cultural neo-Ottoman revivalism', exemplified by Celâl / Galip and aimed at re-integrating the past within the conditions of the present through literary and cultural acts of memorializing the Ottoman, Islamic heritage. As the narrative unfolds and Galip takes up Celâl's column, it becomes clear with which mode Pamuk aligns himself.

Beyond its setting, *The Black Book* must be read in historical context in another sense too. It was written between 1985 and 1990, when the long-term effects of the 1980 coup were beginning to become clear. While General Evren's military junta rapidly ceded power to a democratically elected government in 1983, albeit under severely restricted circumstances, the coup's most lasting impact was on the economy. Under Evren, Turgut Özal was appointed State Minister then Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs, and he initiated an extensive program of economic liberalization which amounted to integrating Turkey in the global economy by supporting the International Monetary Fund, reducing import and export tariffs, allowing the foreign exchange rate to float freely, promoting foreign investment, and privatizing state-run industries. And, as Turkish cultural historians like Nurdan Gürbilek and Esra Özyürek have persuasively argued, economic liberalization led to the paradoxical liberalization of the culture industries during one of the most politically repressive eras of Turkey's modern history.

In *The New Cultural Climate in Turkey* (2011), Gürbilek argues that 'the provocative strategies of the market […] incited people to speak' and 'Groups unable to express themselves within the founding Republican ideology began to speak, groups that had no place in the Kemalist modernizing design: Kurds, 'minorities', Islamists' (Gürbilek 2011: 9). She sums up this new cultural climate in terms of a 'return of the repressed' whereby the past, variously reshaped by the competing political, identity, commercial, and other interested claims made on it in the present, becomes a site of constant struggle and contestation in Turkish culture (see *ibid*: 78-89). In *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (2007), Özyürek argues that Turks have, since the 1980s, similarly lost their faith in a future-oriented Kemalist vision, and, like Galip, have begun to 'excavate through the remnants of their past in order to find clues and to help them understand or control the present' (Özyürek 2007: 2). Correspondingly, contemporary Turkish culture is marked, for Özyürek, by a turn away from the 'administered amnesia' of the Kemalist era and towards Turkey's repressed historical traumas such as the Armenian genocide of 1915, the Turkish-Greek population exchange of 1923, and the Kurdish massacres ongoing since the 1920s as sites of public memory (*ibid*: 3). Özyürek concludes that while nostalgia for the Ottoman past is very much a prevalent attitude in contemporary culture (even being co-opted by the tourism industry), the new engagement with the past, its 'multiple and personalized representations', has also allowed 'Turkish citizens to create alternative identities for themselves and their communities' (*ibid*: 2). No doubt the new cultural climate has contributed to the rise of

the Islamic / moderate Islamic *Refah* and *Adalet ve Kalkınma* parties since the 1990s, but more relevant here is the fact that, as Özyürek acknowledges by opening her edited volume with a reference to the novel, *The Black Book* is not only a product Turkish culture's rediscovery of its past, but also models and exemplifies such rediscovery as well as makes a strong case for its future directions. All this is of course manifest in Galip's identity quest and in his encounter with Mehmet / Üçüncü.

3. Mannequins, Faces, and Writers in *The Black Book*

In my foregoing introduction to the central thematic, formal, and contextual elements of *The Black Book*, I outlined my foreignizing reading of the novel. This consists of an insistence on its *Künstlerroman* narrative arc which, against domesticating readings that frame the novel in terms of postmodernism, foregrounds the positive formation of new identity positions that reconcile individual aspirations with cultural history, 'Eastern' with 'Western' impulses, within a wider cultural climate of neo-Ottomanism. I will now flesh out this reading with yet more detailed textual analysis of the thematic significance of the mannequin and the face, images which, as they circulate through the narrative, shadow Galip's trajectory as a writer and provide, when thoroughly assessed, unique insight into the cultural contexts of and influences on his *Bildung*.

By tracing textual instances of this imagery, I will fully demonstrate how Galip's emerging consciousness, mediated by Celâl's column, of the traumas of Turkish modernity draws him towards Sufi and Hurufi material for a new framework for reading his identity and his city, and how this material, in turn, feeds into his discovery of writing as vocation. Apart from adding substance to my foreignizing reading, such an analysis also provides the opportunity for a richer understanding of Pamuk's use of his Islamic source material, as well as of his formal negotiation of 'Eastern' and 'Western' influences. Indeed, I will conclude by arguing that rather than importing 'Western' postmodernist strategies for Turkish content, Pamuk, in *The Black Book*, develops a novel world literary form that fundamentally reworks and reshapes such strategies to reflect the losses resultant of unfettered cultural importation, and to model a more historically sensitive reconciliation of past and present, 'East' and 'West', and so forth. This is what I have called cultural neo-Ottoman revivalism, Pamuk's local, and real, contribution to world literature.

* * *

We first encounter the mannequin in Celâl's column of Chapter Six ('Bedii Usta's Children'), where he describes his discovery of 'the fearsome secret history of Turkey's mannequins' (Pamuk 2006: 59). This discovery is prompted by Bedii Usta's son, who, as Celâl narrates, came 'huffing and puffing' to his office insisting that '"the special thing that makes us what we are" was buried inside these strange and dusty creatures' (*ibid*: 59, 61). The column that results is thus one of a series by Celâl, and later Galip, that promises insight into Istanbul's 'secret history', that enacts a cultural excavation or archaeology against the amnesia of modernity. As we shall see, though, in this case such an excavation has multiple direct bearings on the narrative of Galip's cultural anamnesis and his turn to writing, so carries special significance within Celâl's oeuvre.

As Celâl narrates, Bedii Usta, an actual historical figure and the 'first undisputed master, the patron saint' of Turkey's mannequins, was, under the late Ottoman Sultanate of Abdülhamid II, commissioned to supply models for the Istanbul Naval Museum upon its founding in 1897 (*ibid*: 59). Although Pamuk doesn't really explore the background and contexts of the Naval Museum in *The Black Book*, it should be noted that this monument to Ottoman military history is a key instance of the trend of, to borrow Benedict Anderson's phrase, 'political museumizing' that expanded throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries at the behest of Ottoman and Republican elites eager to codify and mythicize a Turkish national identity (Anderson 1983: 183).[6] As Wendy Shaw argues in her detailed and authoritative recent study *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (2003), practices of late Ottoman museumizing were embedded within the great game of imperial power politics. Steadily declining in terms of economic, political, and military reach throughout the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire, by 1914, saw its former domains in North

[6] Pamuk has, of course, substantially engaged with the idea of the museum in Turkey elsewhere. His novel *The Museum of Innocence* (2008; trans. 2009) and the actual 'Museum of Innocence', whose collections are comprised of the objects and events described in the novel, he inaugurated in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district in 2012 both suggest a unique, individualized slant on this highly visible feature of Istanbul's cultural topography. Although in neither does Pamuk explore the cultural history of Turkey's museums, both, given their emphasis on the individual's personal collection of memorabilia and the quotidian, throwaway artefacts of daily life as suggestive of a given *Zeitgeist*, may be read as anti-museums framed precisely against the museum of national monuments and official history. For Pamuk, it is always in the individual's unique negotiation of personal and public history, rather than in narratives of national identity, that genuine cultural value is found.

Africa lost to the European imperial powers, those of the Balkans absorbed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire or become independent, and, by the end of the First World War, those of the Levant dominated by Britain and France. The Ottoman elites of this era, Shaw continues, thus increasingly needed to redefine a sprawling multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman state along narrower nationalist lines suited to the eventuality of a nation-state based in the Anatolian heartland, and, paradoxically, both modeled on the European nation-state and framed in antagonism to it – in a word, the Turkish state which came to fruition in the Republican era. To do so, figures like Osman Hamdi Bey and institutions like the Turkish Historical Society turned to European ideas of museums, archaeology, and history, which, by utilizing (imported) technologies of excavation, collection, organization, and public display and reshaping them for national ideological ends, 'could represent new communal identities [and] serve as templates for developing modes of Ottoman nationalism' (Shaw 2003: 18; see also 1-30). It is to serve exactly this project of national myth-making that Bedii Usta's talents were first enlisted, and, indeed, the mannequins that resulted, his 'first marvels', consisted of 'valiant youths who had sunk so many a Spanish and Italian vessel in the Mediterranean three centuries earlier standing in their full glory among the royal launches and the galleons' (Pamuk 2006: 60).

Unfortunately for Bedii Usta, his first marvels were so lifelike that, before long, they came up against the Sheikh al-Islam's aniconistic proscription on representations of the human form: 'To replicate', Celâl narrates, 'God's creations so perfectly was to compete with the Almighty, so the mannequins were swiftly removed from view' (*ibid*).[7] Bedii Usta and his mannequins were thus both literally and figuratively driven underground, to a basement atelier in his house in Galata, where they soon come to represent for craftsman and columnist alike an embodied authenticity of gesture and dress buried in the unconscious of Turkish modernity.

'Twenty arduous years later', Celâl continues, 'in the great westernizing wave of the early years of the Republic', mannequins began appearing in Istanbul's display windows, offering consumers eager to throw aside 'their fezzes to don panama hats' and to discard 'their scarves in favour of low-slung heels' models of European elegance to emulate (*ibid*). But it is not just the clothing seductively draped around mannequins that was being emulated here – the very form of the mannequin, considered a cypher of consumerist modernity since at least Benjamin and the 19th century Parisian writers he cites in, among others, *Convolutes* B, G, and Z

[7] Pamuk deals extensively with the aesthetic dimensions of representation under Islamic law in *My Name is Red*.

of *The Arcades Project* (1999), suggests the importation and reproduction of European technologies of advertising that, by objectifying the body for consumption, figure the ever-increasing artificiality and commodification of social relations during the period (see especially *Convolute* Z in Benjamin 1999b: 693-7). As consumer spectacle made flesh, the mannequin, according to Mark Sandberg in his fascinating study *Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Mannequins, Museums, and Modernity* (2002), enjoyed a popular high point from 1880-1910, when it 'proliferated throughout many of the visual-cultural venues of European urban life' and 'could be found increasingly in storefront windows, at international exhibitions, and in several interrelated forms of popular museum display' (Sandberg 2002: 4). As processes of Westernization only fully took hold in Turkey from the Republican era starting in the 1920s, the commercial mannequin appears there, as in the Scandinavian contexts Sandberg primarily addresses, comparatively belatedly, a circumstance with important consequences for its phenomenology. For rather than appearing as, in Jean Baudrillard's words, a 'second-order simulacrum' – a mass produced object designed to imitate and replace an original – as does the Parisian mannequin, the Istanbul display mannequin manifests as a 'third-order simulacrum', a copy lacking an original, or a copy of a copy (see Baudrillard 1994: 1-42). In other words, while the Parisian mannequin was modelled on and modelled the fashion-conscious European urbanite, the Istanbullu mannequin, modelled only on its already prevalent European counterpart, lacks a point of origin in a concrete, if partially imagined, signified. It thus figures the wider early Republican culture by which it was produced, a culture defined by, in Benjamin's terms, a fundamentally phantasmagoric relation to its European 'other', aspiring to a fantastic image of that other as mediated by imported fashions, films, literatures, commodities, laws, educational and political systems, and all the other Western technologies and innovations brought in by the Kemalists. As one shopkeeper to whom Bedii Usta unsuccessfully tries to sell his wares puts it, the function of the mannequin was not to sell dresses, 'but dreams', 'the dream of becoming "the others" who'd worn that dress' (Pamuk 2006: 61).

If Istanbul's display mannequins emulated their European counterparts, Bedii Usta's went the opposite direction, remaining faithful to their native source material, to the appearance of his compatriots down to their very mannerisms, 'the way [they] laughed, wiped [their] noses, walked, looked askance, washed [their] hands, opened bottles' (*ibid*: 63). It is unsurprising, then, that they should be rejected by Istanbul's commercial culture – as Celâl explains, 'his

mannequins did not look like the European models to which we were meant to aspire; they looked like us' (*ibid*: 61). Despairing of this culture, Bedii Usta consequently 'went back to realizing his own dreams, his real dreams, in his own dark atelier', spending the last fifteen years of his life 'giving these terrible homespun images the semblance of flesh and blood, producing more than a hundred and fifty new mannequins, each one a work of art' (*ibid*).

Thus buried in the underworld of Bedii Usta's atelier, his mannequins, his works of art, come, much like Celâl's column on Bedii Usta and, indeed, *The Black Book* itself, to fulfil for Celâl a memorializing function within the wider context of Turkey's bad modernity. For, as Bedii Usta and his son came to understand during one of their material gathering expeditions to the surface, it was not just Istanbul's fashions and so forth that were affected by the vicissitudes of history, but also the native gestures of the city's inhabitants. As the son relates to Celâl, 'the gestures our people used in the street began to lose their innocence' due to 'those damn films […] brought in from the West canister by canister to play in our theatres for hours on end' – 'each and every thing they did', Celâl continues, 'was an imitation' (*ibid*: 63). In, though, his commitment to preserve the native Istanbullu gesture in his art – where it becomes almost equivalent to the Brechtian *Gestus*, frozen, as it is, in the lost moment of its manifestation against a profane, postlapsarian backdrop of habituated gestures – Bedii Usta manages, according to Celâl, to preserve something of Istanbul's lost cultural authenticity, an 'essence' or 'mystery' 'that must now unfold' (*ibid*: 64). And upon visiting the atelier and seeing the mannequins for himself, Celâl discovers that the secret they harbour is precisely that of his own 'true identity', a discovery which provokes a highly affective, highly charged elegy to the losses wrought by history:

> They were deities mourning their lost innocence, they were ascetics in torment, longing but failing to be someone else, hapless lovers who'd never made love, never shared a bed, who'd ended up killing each other instead. They, like me, like all of us, had, once upon a time, in a past so far away it seemed like heaven, caught by chance a glimpse of an inner essence, only to forget what it was. It was this lost memory that pained us, reduced us to ruins, though we still struggled to be ourselves (*ibid*).

In one of the most striking instances of overlap or entanglement between the Galip narrative and Celâl's columns in *The Black Book*, Galip, in Chapter Seventeen ('Do You Remember Me?'), visits the atelier earlier described by Celâl. Part of the long process of his *Bildung*, this visit, whereby he witnesses and experiences first-hand the otherwise mostly

abstract content of Celâl's column, signifies Galip's gradual internalization of his cousin's perspectives on Turkish modernity and its repression of its Ottoman, Islamic heritage, and foreshadows his later adoption of Celâl's identity and vocation. Thus literalizing the narrative conceit of tracing Celâl's steps, of walking in his shoes, Galip, with the aid of his guide, Bedii Usta's grandson, discovers an 'underground city' of mannequins, a last refuge of history in amnesiac times (*ibid*: 189). As the guide explains, each incarnation of Istanbul, 'Byzantium, Vizant, Nova Roma, Anthusa, Tsargrad, Miklagrad, Constantinople, Cospoli, Istin-Polin', 'had beneath it the underground passages in which the previous civilization had taken refuge', leading to 'an extraordinary sort of double city […] with the underground city ultimately wreaking revenge on the overground city that had supplanted it' (*ibid*: 191). Realizing, the guide continues, that 'our history could only survive underground', his father and grandfather used the 'underground roads strewn with skeletons' surrounding their house to 'create citizens who carried their histories, their meanings, on their faces', to, with the aid of their 'knowledge of the letters', 'etch meanings onto the faces of [their] mannequins that were no longer to be seen in our streets, our homes, or anywhere in society' (*ibid*). While only studying the mystery of the letters himself later, in Part Two of novel, Galip, as he absorbs his guide's lecture and gazes on these petrified remnants of history, including a mannequin Celâl already lost to Istanbul's underworld, is led towards a series of reflections with profound consequences for his *Bildung*:

> Once upon a time, they had all lived together, and their lives had had meaning, but then, for some unknown reason, they had lost that meaning, just as they'd also lost their memories. Every time they tried to recover that meaning, every time they ventured into that spider-infested labyrinth of memory, they got lost; as they wandered about the blind alleys of their minds, searching in vain for a way back, the key to their new life fell into the bottomless well of their memories; knowing it was lost to them forever, they felt the helpless pain known only by those who have lost their homes, their countries, their past, their history. The pain they felt at being lost and far from home was so intense, and so hard to bear, that their only hope was to stop trying to remember the secret, the lost meaning they'd come here to seek, and, instead, hand themselves over to God, to wait in patient silence for the hour of eternity (*ibid*: 194).

The epiphanic impact of their experiences of Bedii Usta's mannequins on both Celâl and Galip, as well as Pamuk's concern to formally superimpose their accounts of these experiences onto one another, should by now be evident. The effect on Galip's intellectual and perceptual horizons may be immediately discerned in the following 'Galip' chapter, Chapter Nineteen ('Signs of the City'), as detailed above ('It was perhaps possible to look into the faces of his fellow citizens and see in them the city's long history', etc. (*ibid*: 218)). I now turn to Part Two

of the novel to continue tracing Galip's *Bildung* and discovery of vocation with reference to the imagery of the face as foreshadowed in the passages cited above, and as pertaining to his analyses of Sufi and Hurufi doctrine.

Early on in Part Two, bringing to culmination a discussion of the varied Turkish figures that have scattered his columns, Celâl quizzically asks his readers 'Have you seen all these faces? Have you noticed that, in some strange way, they all look alike?' (*ibid*: 269). He then announces a new focus for his investigations into Turkish cultural history, a project for which the reader of *The Black Book* has been prepared by Celâl's previous columns, and which is consequently taken up by Galip and the novel itself: 'From now on I shall devote myself utterly to the hidden poetry of our faces, the terrifying secret that lurks inside our human gaze. So be prepared' (*ibid*). In the immediately following 'Galip' chapter, Chapter Twenty-Four ('Riddles in Faces'), Galip, now living in Celâl's abandoned apartment in Nişantaşi seeking clues to his cousin's whereabouts, takes this cue and starts attempting to decipher the faces in Celâl's vast, thirty-year collection of yearbooks, photograph albums, and newspaper clippings. Although Galip vaguely senses in the faces 'a melancholy that Celâl had expressed so often in his columns', 'a story heavy with terror and memory', through these first untutored forays, they quickly close up to him, becoming 'as anonymous as the physical descriptions on identity cards: random arrangements of noses, eyes, and mouths' (*ibid*: 281, 280, 282-3). At this dark moment when, feeling 'the indifference of a man who has been divested of his memories, his hopes, his very future', 'life had nothing more to offer him', Galip turns again to Celâl's archive for guidance, this time to his cousin's 'books, treatises, and clippings on Hurufism' (*ibid*: 293, 294). This is because Hurufism, an obscure Sufi sect whose central doctrine of 'the mystery of letters' Galip had earlier encountered in passing, promises significant new insight into 'the meanings in faces' (*ibid*: 293).

The Hurufi sect, as Galip discovers, was founded by one Fazlallah of Astarabad (or Fażlu l-Lāh Astar-Ābādī), a fourteenth century Persian mystic who, after a late adolescent spiritual awakening prompted by a nomadic dervish's recitation of Rumi, abandoned his duties as a judge, his family, and his hometown to follow the Sufi path as an itinerant religious seeker. During his travels, which saw him make Haj to Mecca twice before temporarily settling in Isfahan in central Iran, he experienced a series of richly symbolic and prophetic dreams about figures like Solomon, Jesus, and Muhammad. In one such dream, which Pamuk makes sure to mention, he

was visited by a dervish who later actually appears, claiming that he had dreamt Fazlallah also. During the actual visit, Fazlallah and the dervish sat together leafing through a book and 'saw their faces in the letters', then, on looking up, 'saw the letters of the book in each other's faces' (*ibid*: 297). Proclaiming himself a prophet, a messiah, Fazlallah accumulated a following of seven disciples in Isfahan, and set off to preach that, in Pamuk's words, 'the world […] was awash with secrets and that the only way to penetrate these secrets was to penetrate the mystery of the letters' (*ibid*: 298).[8]

For Fazlallah, as H.T. Norris explains in his brief but richly detailed entry on Hurufism in Leonard Lewisohn's edited volume *The Heritage of Sufism* (1999), 'the key to open the seven[th] sealed book, the Koran, is a cabalistic system of letters that is expounded, by him, or by others, in the *Hidāyat-nāma*, the *Jāwidān*, and in the *Mahram-nāma*' – the key texts of the Hurufi tradition (Norris 1999: 92). The face of God – immutable, imperishable – is, Norris continues, manifest in man, 'the best of forms – *zuhūr kibriyā*', and is exactly replicated in the face of Adam (*ibid*). Further, the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet – the language revealed to Muhammad – and the 32 letters of the Persian alphabet – that revealed to Fazlallah (thus requiring him to account for four extra letters in the face) – are hidden in the face of man. Our two brow lines, four eyelash lines, and one hairline account for seven letters which, at the onset of puberty when, in Pamuk's gloss, our 'late-arriving' nose divides the face in two, are then doubled (Pamuk 2006: 297). Taking into account several 'real and imaginary lines', this number is doubled again, providing for 28 letters in the face, a number corresponding exactly and not coincidentally to Muhammad's 28 Arabic letters and to the number of God's attributes as revealed in the Koran (*ibid*). Thus divine truth – or God – can, in a sort of hyper-literalization of Emmanuel Levinas, be witnessed through the proper, esoteric interpretation of the letters in the face. For Fazlallah, the divine light shines through the face of man in the form of letters, and this comprises their mystery.[9]

As one might expect given his worship of 'letters, people, and idols instead of God', as well as his self-identification as the new Messiah, Fazlallah was imprisoned, sentenced, and

[8] For more detail on the life of Fazlallah, see Shahzad Bashir's monograph *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (2005). Apart from brief entries in resources like the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, this book provides really the only sustained introduction to Hurufism available in English, and brings to light a phenomenon that has previously been relegated to the margins of Islamic Studies.

[9] For more detail on Hurufi doctrine as pertaining to the mystery of the letters, see, again, Bashir (2005).

executed for heresy at the behest of the Miran Shah in Alinja, a town in what is now Azerbaijan, *circa* 1394 / 1395 (*ibid*: 298). Under the new leadership of the poet Nesimi (or Alī ʻImādu d-Dīn Nasīmī), his followers, feeling increasingly persecuted in Iran, emigrated to the momentarily less hostile climate of Anatolia, where their ideas took root and began to spread throughout the villages and towns of the Ottoman heartland. Their most significant influence was on the Bektaşi Order, a Shi'a Alevi Sufi order which, founded in the 13th century, was already widespread in Anatolia and the Balkans and continued to prosper among the Ottoman elites and peasantry alike until it was banned by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826 due to the objections of Sunni and more orthodox Sufi religious leaders. Although the Bektaşis enjoyed a brief public and popular resurgence during the Tanzimat, or reformation, period of the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19th century, they, like the Hurufis and the larger and more prestigious Nakşibendi and Mevlevi orders, were dealt a final blow soon after the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. After an initial attempt to incorporate the Sufi orders into the Republic by placing them under the administration of the newly established Ministry of Religious Affairs (which ensured their continued social and legal life while stripping them of genuine political participation – a form of laicism), the Kemalists, taken aback by the Sheikh Said rebellion of February 1925, were forced to take more drastic measures and formally abolished the orders later in the same year. The Sufi orders were thus driven underground, where many maintained a sizeable following and continued to function in a 'public secret' fashion, for much of the 20th century, and have only recently began to experience something of a resurgence of public presence under the revivalist or accommodationist policies of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*.[10]

To round off his readings of Celâl's materials on the Hurufis, Galip stumbles upon a treatise, published in 1962, by the unknown (and fictional) author F.M. Üçüncü, entitled *The Mystery of the Letters and the Loss of Mystery*. In this treatise, Üçüncü, after providing an account of Fazlallah, goes on to describe how 'the world was divided into two opposing halves' and that 'the East and the West were as different from each other as good and evil, white and

[10] For an introduction to the fate of the various Sufi orders in Turkey in the 20th century, see Ahmet Yükleyen's essay 'Sufism and Islamic groups in Contemporary Turkey' in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 4, Turkey in the Modern World* (2008). For a more detailed anthropological analysis of the practices of the Sufi orders, especially the Nakşibendi order, across the Ottoman, Republican, and contemporary eras, see Brian Silverstein's 'Sufism and Modernity in Turkey: From the Authenticity of Experience to the Practice of Discipline' in *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* (2007).

black, the angels and the devils' (*ibid*: 303-4). Drawing on the evidence of great historical events such as Alexander cutting the Gordian knot, the Crusades, Hannibal's passage across the Alps, the Islamic victories in Andalucía, and Mehmet the Conqueror's triumphant entry into Constantinople, 'the winning side' in any historical period, Üçüncü argues, 'was the one that succeeded in seeing the world as a mysterious place awash with secret and double meanings' (*ibid*: 304). Given that Hurufism – which provided the means to see mystery – had 'vanished from the earth' at the onset of Turkey's Republican era, 'the world', he continues, 'had lost its mystery, just as our faces had lost their letters' (*ibid*: 305). Üçüncü, thus identified with Celâl's / Galip's fanatical Islamic Revivalist caller Mehmet in Part Two of the novel as explained above, calls for a revival of Hurufism in Turkey to redress the woeful historical defeat of the East: 'it was on Turkish soil that the Messiah who would become the saviour of all the East would make His appearance, and it therefore followed that, in preparation for that day, if they were to recover the lost mystery, His future followers should begin by establishing correspondences between faces and the new Latin alphabet that Turkey adopted in 1928' (*ibid*: 317).

It has been important to dwell momentarily on Üçüncü's treatise in order to highlight a key polarity Pamuk devotes much of Part Two to delineating – that between Mehmet / Üçüncü and Celâl / Galip. On the one hand, Üçüncü's reading of Turkey's bad modernity leads him to demand, in effect, an Islamic revolution founded on a revival of Hurufi mystery – a form of political neo-Ottoman revivalism. On the other, Galip's reading of the history and theories of Hurufism provides him the means of entry into his own hitherto repressed cultural identity, the key to interpreting 'the letters in his face', a development simultaneous with and constituting the foundation of his discovery of writing as vocation (*ibid*: 321). Realizing at this precise moment in the narrative that *Milliyet* had already reprinted all of Celâl's previously published columns during his absence, Galip, having seen that 'his face was a sheet of paper covered in writing, an inscription riddled with secret signs', 'wrote' (*ibid*: 322, 325). Channelling Celâl, he writes the first of a series of columns which, reproduced verbatim in the following chapter, is then published under his cousin's name and which continues and extends Celâl's project. He opens this first column with the words, '*I gazed into the mirror and read my face*' (*ibid*: 326 / 334). This opening signifies Galip's adoption of Hurufism not just as a means of reading his identity, but also, as with Pamuk, as a content to be inscribed in the form of writing (as opposed to that of direct political engagement), and thus memorialized or revived culturally under the amnesiac

conditions of Turkish modernity. In other words, the content of Galip's column, thus coterminous with that of *The Black Book* itself, signifies what I have been calling the political aesthetic of cultural neo-Ottoman revivalism. As Galip puts it in the novel's closing chapter (Chapter Thirty-Six, 'But I Who Write'), when, constituting a dialectical synthesis of the hitherto separate but intertwined 'Galip' and 'Celâl' strands and chapter styles, he finally becomes the first person and narrator of his own narrative, 'writing', 'writing', 'writing' is 'the only consolation' for the losses of Rüya and Celâl, for those wrought by history (*ibid*: 461).

Conclusion

In a remarkably clear-sighted recent article for *Comparative Literature*, Robert Weninger takes issue with David Damrosch's claim that 'World literature is writing that gains in translation', that 'we need to look at the ways [in which] the work becomes reframed for in its translations and in its new cultural contexts' (Damrosch 2003: 228, 24; cited in Weninger 2010: 318). While, Weninger concedes, 'This is all fair and good' for the 'subject specialist' who is already a native speaker of or highly proficient in the source language of a given translation, he then raises an important question about 'the more common state of affairs': 'What pitfalls do we face when we can't read the foreign text […] and when we can't know how to assess its original context' (*ibid*: 319). Weninger concludes that 'the actual practice of reading, doing, or teaching world literature [in translation] remains fraught with problems':

> We face the issue of over-thematizing world literary texts to the detriment of their contextual specificity. We will never be able to resolve the problem of translation for those languages we do not know. We face the perennial danger of universalizing. And […] we are invariably forced into a double exercise in reductionism and essentialism, with world literature being reduced to a number of volumes in translation (*ibid*: 333-4).

In this and the previous chapters, I have argued that non-universalizing, non-reductive, and non-essentializing close readings properly attentive to the contextual specificity of a given translation are indeed possible, even necessary, if we take a more sociological rather than a purely linguistic approach to translation, as Damrosch, Lawrence Venuti, Pascale Casanova, and even Franco Moretti have all, with various qualifications and theoretical nuances, at least partly suggested. This involves what I have called a foreignizing reading strategy which fully pays

heed to the processes, neo-Orientalist in the Middle Eastern case, by which a foreign text is produced, circulated, and received, via translation, into the space of another culture, and which, against the domesticating techniques of publishers, critics, and so forth, aims to revive its difference or otherness through dedicated and thorough-going attention to its contexts of origin in the source culture. Regarding Pamuk and *The Black Book*, I have shown through just such a reading that this novel's Anglo-American domestication in terms of the familiar aesthetic category of postmodernism has obscured key elements of its engagement with local and national Turkish history, especially that of the Ottoman, Islamic heritage, and has moreover reconstructed its very form to suit international or cosmopolitan values and needs vis-à-vis the Middle East. The *Künstlerroman* narrative arc of *The Black Book*, comprising a fulfilled identity quest via the discovery of writing as a vocation of cultural revivalism rather than a postmodernist destabilization of identity, historical truth, and / or religious truth, reflects Pamuk's unique negotiation of both 'Eastern' and 'Western' influences on Turkish modernity and 'Eastern' and 'Western' influences on novelistic form. Against appropriations of Pamuk as a cosmopolitan writer of 'World Literature', his local, and real, contribution to world literature may thus be defined as the invention of cultural neo-Ottoman revivalism as form.

In times when strained political relations between Anglo-America and the Middle East are culturally manifest in a global literary industry that either neglects Middle Eastern writers who inscribe 'controversial' (anti-imperialist, Islamic revivalist, etc.) values and need or lauds those who reproduce dominant (anti-dictatorial, anti-patriarchal, anti-Islamic, etc.) values, it seems to me the unique responsibility of world literature as a practice and as a discipline to foreignize our understanding of the region and its writers. When we do so, we may realize that the profoundly humanist and historically sensitive values that underpin the actual form of a novel such as *The Black Book* are not so different from our own.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have endeavoured to show how neo-Orientalist discourses of politics, gender, and religion in the Middle East undergird material practices of producing and reading translated and anglophone Middle Eastern literatures in Anglo-American cultures. I have also tried to show how, by reshaping Euro-American aesthetic forms, Middle Eastern novels in English engage neo-Orientalism and open a space of mediation between 'East' and 'West' as conventionally defined. Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Time of White Horses* writes Palestinian colonial history, the *Nakba*, and exile into the historical novel, and, inscribing the crisis of Palestinian representation, signifies the impossibility of aesthetic resolution without the national resolution of return. Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* appropriates the dictator novel for Libyan political experience, thus commodifying such experience for ready Anglo-American consumption through form. Yasmin Crowther's *The Saffron Kitchen* revises the postcolonial novel of migration to inscribe an Islamic feminist approach to gender relations in Iran, thus counters dominant representations of women's subjugation under Islam. And Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* traverses the postmodernist novel to inscribe cultural neo-Ottomanism as a uniquely Middle Eastern literary form.

Together, these, and many other, Middle Eastern novels in English comprise a unique and highly valuable variant of the global novel, and must be taken into account in emergent cartographies of a world literary system. Demanding a recalibration of postcolonial and world literature theory, the Middle Eastern novel in English, its form and politics, its mediations of 'East' and 'West' in our geopolitically charged landscape of world literature, might be fruitfully approached through post-Orientalist comparatism as a new critical methodology. In detailing such an approach, I hope in this thesis to have contributed to an enhanced understanding of cultural difference in an increasingly complex world.

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