

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Maya Kesrouany

Date

Stranded in Arabic:
Tales of the Novel in Translation

By

Maya Issam Kesrouany
Doctor of Philosophy

Comparative Literature

Elissa Marder, Ph.D.
Advisor

Deborah Elise White, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Geoffrey Bennington, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Roger Allen, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

Stranded in Arabic:
Tales of the Novel in Translation

By

Maya Kesrouany,
M.A., American University of Beirut, 2005

Advisor: Elissa Marder, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In Comparative Literature
2011

Abstract

Stranded in Arabic:
Tales of the Novel in Translation
By Maya Kesrouany

This dissertation examines the history of the translation of the European novel into Arabic from the middle of the 19th century until the 1930's primarily in Egypt and Lebanon. It studies the complex exchange in this particular context of translation under different forms of British and French colonization and under Ottoman rule, reading four such performances of translation into Arabic closely: Buṭrus al-Bustānī's 1861 translation of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Muṣṭafa al-Manfalūṭī's 1923 translation of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788) and his 1915 adaptation of François René de Chateaubriand's *René* and *Atala* (1802), Muḥammad al-Sibā'ī's 1912 translation of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and finally Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal's 2-volume biography of Jean Jacques Rousseau, published in 1921 and 1923. The dissertation argues that the novel in Arabic cannot be read except through the complex exchange that happens in the translation of the European text into the Arabic context. Re-reading canonical mappings of the development of the novel, my dissertation also seeks to use the context of translation into Arabic to uncover some of the assumptions of Western genealogical accounts of the novel. Moreover, in exposing these assumptions, "Stranded in Arabic" works to unveil some of the intricacies of the translation process and to show how such particular moments of adaptation into a foreign language can help us rethink the concept of genre and reception much more broadly, across and in spite of national boundaries. The Introduction lays out a general historical map of the movement of translation and then takes up particular theories that speak to the complexity of the translation of the novel into an Arabic context. The following chapters place each translator in a particular socio-historical setting and then read his translations closely in comparison with the British and French originals. Every chapter concludes on the particular borrowings and form of each translation and the insight those provide into the originals and into the novel as a genre.

Stranded in Arabic:
Tales of the Novel in Translation

By

Maya Kesrouany,
M.A., American University of Beirut, 2005

Advisor: Elissa Marder, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In Comparative Literature
2011

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would have been impossible if it were not for a number of people who at times believed in it and me much more than I believed in either. Today, as I look at it complete and finished, faces and names come to mind whose brief mention here is entirely inadequate, although necessary. First of all, I would like to thank my committee and my dear professors, who stood by me and loved my work throughout. Dr. Elissa Marder has continuously inspired me and restored my faith in my own capacity as a thinker and a writer; Dr. Deborah Elise White has pushed me in ways and directions that made my entire project possible; Dr. Geoffrey Bennington's comments have compelled me to think outside of inherited frameworks to pull extremely different worlds together in my dissertation. And a special thank you to Professor Roger Allen at the University of Pennsylvania, for his dedication, his patience, and his passion for Arabic Literature. His guidance has been indispensable to this project and to my work in general.

I am infinitely grateful to Alian Teach, the academic administrator of the Department of Comparative Literature, who has helped me with everything, from the moment I arrived at Emory from Beirut until graduation.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my parents for their consistent love, support, faith and patience through very trying times; my sister for her constant presence and the unconditional and unlimited support that she always gave me, even when we were thousands of miles apart; my brother whose presence in my life has inspired me to grow in every way. I would like to thank my friends for their unbroken faith in me, and my boyfriend for his patient love.

And lastly, I can only hope that my dissertation will speak to the multiple uprisings taking place in the Arab world today and will contribute to some form of a deeper understanding of a complex history of occupation, translation, and resistance.

Contents

Introduction: Hybrid Souls: The Translator's Debt	1
Chapter One: Stranded in Arabic: <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> in Beirut	48
Chapter Two: In the Name of the Idiom: Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī's Task of Translation	105
Chapter Three: A Tale of Three Cities: London, Paris, Cairo	193
Chapter Four: <i>Tarjamah</i> as Debt: Haykal's Love of Rousseau	274
Conclusion	362
Bibliography	389

Introduction

Hybrid Souls: The Translator's Debt

He who has missed out on translation knows not what travail is:
None but the warrior is scorched by the fire of war!
I find a thousand notions for which there is none akin
Amongst us, and a thousand with none appropriate;
And a thousand terms with no equivalent.
I find disjunction for junction, though junction is needed,
And terseness of style when the context calls for
Elaboration if the purpose is to be attained.

Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq¹

People of Egypt: You will be told by our enemies, that I am come to destroy your religion. Believe them not. Tell them that I am come to restore your rights, punish your usurpers, and raise the true worship of Mahomet. Tell them that I venerate, more than do the Mamluks, God, His prophet, and the Koran. Tell them that all men are equal in the sight of God; that wisdom, talents, and virtue alone constitute the difference between them. ... But God is just and merciful, and He hath ordained that the Empire of the Mamluks shall come to an end. Thrice happy those who shall side with us; they shall prosper in their fortune and their rank. Happy they who shall be neutral; they will have time to become acquainted with us, and will range themselves upon our side. But woe, threefold woe, to those who shall arm for the Mamluks and fight against us! For them there will be no hope; they shall perish. ... O shaykhs, judges and imams, officers and notables of the land, tell your people that the French also are sincere Muslims; the proof of it is that they have occupied great Rome and ruined the papal seat which was always urging the Christians to attack Islam, and from there they have gone to the island of Malta and expelled from it the Knights of Malta who used to claim that God wanted them to fight the Muslims.

Napoleon Bonaparte, "Speech to the Egyptians," 1798

Historical Beginnings

On one of his ships conveniently named *L'Orient*, Napoleon Bonaparte brought a printing press to Egypt in 1798. In *Tārīkh al-tarjamah fī Miṣr fī 'ahd al-Ḥamlah al-Faransiyyah* [The History of Translation in Egypt in the Time of the French Expedition] published in 1950, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl lists three names for

¹ I am indebted to Pierre Cachia for including this quote in his book *An Overview of Modern Arabic literature* (35) published in 1990, and the quote is from 'Imād al-Ṣulḥ's book *Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq: Atharuh wa 'Aṣruḥ* [Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq: His Influence and his Time] (Beirut: an-Nahār, 1980), 144.

the seafaring printing press: the “Arab Press,” the “Army of the East’s Press,” and the “Press of the Sea Army” (35). On board *L’Orient*, while at sea, the press started printing Napoleon’s Arabic declaration to the Egyptians (35). Interestingly, the first press publication in Egypt is the declaration of Napoleon, and the press printed the documents literally in the in-between, at sea, not in France and not yet in Egypt.²

In his declaration to the Egyptians, Napoleon made a promise in another tongue to safeguard the religious beliefs of the people he planned to invade. He also made a threat to those who would refuse his help. Napoleon’s word to the Egyptians is both a promise and a threat, both made in a necessary relationship to translation. After all, the declaration in which Napoleon announces himself a devout Muslim is written in a language he could not speak, and he also had a translator with him at all times. The promise made to help liberate the Egyptians from the oppressive rule of the Mamluks is made possible in and on French terms: the allegiance to France is the precondition for the liberation of the people.³ His speech met with severe scepticism. In his famous study *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* originally published in 1962, Albert Hourani analyzes the speech of Napoleon as thus:

On the morrow of his occupation of Alexandria, Bonaparte issued an Arabic proclamation. It began with the traditional Muslim invocation—‘In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate; there is no god but God, He has no offspring and no partner.’ But the next phrase invoked a new principle: this proclamation, it declared, was issued by the French Government, which was

² That the first performance of translation takes places in the in-between is very significant, as I will continue to show, to the history of translation (and particularly of the European novel) into Arabic.

³ In the short while that Napoleon was in Egypt, he started several municipal institutions all over the country. Most important was the Institut d’Égypte of French scholars, of which he became president and gave himself the title of academic. The Institut had a tangible effect on the history of the country, whereby the French invader became at the same time the legislator who created a library, a health service, a botanical garden, an observatory and a museum. The French scholars devised an English-French dictionary and put together an Egypto-Coptic-Franco Calendar. Also, with the introduction of his own printing press, Napoleon supervised the publication and distribution of two journals in Cairo. Both compiled and edited by the Orientalist, Jean Joseph Marcel, the first, *Décade égyptienne*, concerned itself primarily with literature and political economy, and the second journal entitled *Courrier égyptien* took up mainly political issues (Jak Tājir 8).

‘built on the basis of freedom and equality.’ He then proceeded to apply these principles to Egypt. (49)

Hourani notes that the proclamation is already implicated in an inevitable relationship to translation.⁴ The speech, which begins with a familiar Qur’ānic invocation, soon elicits the principles of a Revolutionary France, and those same alien principles, completely uprooted from their original context, are then applied to Egypt. Jak Tājir in his famous study *Ḥarakat al-tarjamah bi-Miṣr khilāl al-qarn al-tāsi* ‘*ashar* [The Movement of Translation in Egypt in the 19th Century], published in 1945, confirms that Napoleon’s declaration was indeed the first document to be printed by an

⁴ Burcu Gürsel’s 2008 dissertation “Invasive translations: Violence and Mediation of the False-colonial, France and Ottoman Egypt (1780-1840)” (University of Pennsylvania) studies the speech of Napoleon to the Egyptians in relation to the figure of the translator as it develops from late eighteenth-century France and Ottoman Egypt, to what she names “a false-colonial relationship between the two:”

the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), and the various “Egyptian” schools of translation in Paris in the 1820s-30s (Oriental studies, Egyptology, and the Egyptian school). Toward the end of the eighteenth century, I argue, translation became a problematic political framework in both Revolutionary France and Ottoman-Mamluk Egypt, where the translator was conceptualized as a figure of political mediation, empowerment, and privilege. In the context of military invasion and of subsequent colonialist politics of repression in both France and Egypt, however, the translator’s privilege was redefined as a depoliticized and subservient expertise—a process in which the translator was both complicit and disillusioned. (3-4)

Gürsel traces the development of the figure of the translator in Revolutionary France and Ottoman Egypt, before and after the Napoleonic invasion, concurrently to show overlaps in ideological considerations of the role of the translator on both sides, and how this overlap gets exacerbated in the actual encounter between the two. As such, she studies

the new subject position of the translator as he is bereft of his sense of political mediation and power, and grows attached to a professional work ethic of *translating the radical other* as the new locus of his privilege. The writings of the founding fathers of Orientalism, Egyptology, and the Egyptian translation-Westernization movement (Silvestre de Sacy, Jean-Francois Champollion, and Rifa’a al-Tahtawi, respectively) show that theories of literary and cultural translation are largely inflected by the translator’s sense of the nature and extent of his own political influence in the world. (5; emphasis original)

In comparing the figure of the translator in France and Egypt before Napoleon’s invasion, Gürsel reveals a “cultural affinity that *predates* the invasion” rather than considering the invasion as “a watershed and an originary moment in terms of its impact on the Middle East and the history of imperialism” (7). As such, Gürsel treats the Napoleonic occupation as a “stillborn, [...] staged as a strategic, short-term monopoly of Egypt’s available resources rather than realized as a long-term colonial presence” (9). Any consideration of the event of the coming of Napoleon must necessarily take up the three-century long Ottoman colonization of the Middle East before its brief three-year encounter with France (9). Gürsel’s dissertation continues to explore this figure of the translator in France and Egypt and the encounter in a false-colonial relationship between the two through close readings of the literature of Constantin-Francois Volney, (*Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte; Les mines; Leçons d'histoire; 1785-95*), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī’s history of the Napoleonic invasion, *‘Ajā’ib al-’āthār* and others.

Egyptian press (4).⁵ Defeated by Nelson at the battle of the Nile, Napoleon returned to France in 1801 and took his printing press with him. However, the influence of the printing press, journals, and other institutions that he set up persisted and became increasingly effective with the rise of Muḥammad ‘Alī to power as governor of Egypt and Sudan in 1805, and particularly after 1811, when the Mamluks were eliminated in a famous incident at the Citadel. And while the British colonial presence would dominate Egyptian political life from 1882 until 1952, it is the French texts that Napoleon began introducing in translation that would have the most tangible effect on the political, social and cultural constitutions of the country.⁶

In *Tārīkh al-tarjamah wa Ḥarakat al-thaqāfah fi Miṣr fi ‘Aṣr Muḥammad ‘Alī* [The History of Translation and the Movement of Education in Egypt in the Time of Muḥammad ‘Alī] published in 1951, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl describes Muḥammad ‘Alī’s devotion to translation, and particularly the translation of the French sciences into Arabic. Although up until then the Italian language and sciences had had the biggest impact on Egypt, the coming of Napoleon changed the foreign language of

⁵ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl maintains that it is generally agreed that the first printing press in Cairo was established in 1822, although it might actually have been much sooner than that (*Tārīkh al-tarjamah fi Miṣr fi ‘ahd Muḥammad Alī* 195).

⁶ Although the extent of the influence of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt is a matter of some debate among critics, I believe that it initiated (with the printing press as the ideal metaphor) a very complex and historically prolific movement of translation that cannot be ignored in the study of the nation’s developing literary sensibilities. In *An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature* published in 1990, Pierre Cachia includes a chapter on translation and adaptation in Egypt between 1850 and 1914. He contends that even though the French army was resented by the Egyptians:

Nevertheless, to a leavening of open-minded men they had given a glimpse of a way of thinking and acting that bore the stamp of power and seemed to promise all manners of worldly benefits. It is no accident that the next ruler of Egypt, Muḥammad ‘Alī, set about creating an Army on the French model, and he brought about far-reaching changes which he perceived to be necessary to such an Army. Besides, the association of Western ways with power and success first demonstrated by Bonaparte’s forces were all too soon to be confirmed, as virtually every part of the Arab world fell under the sway of one Western European nation or another. (29)

In the *Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, originally published in 1983, Matti Moosa writes that until 1882, the Syrian immigrants concentrated on translating French fiction “because of their long-standing cultural relationship with France” (98). The translation of British fiction increased after 1882 and came from two sources: “the Syrian immigrants who had been trained at the American University in Beirut, and the Egyptian students who had graduated from schools under British control” (99).

choice to French. As early as 1809, Muḥammad ‘Alī would send Egyptians on missions to France and ask them to come back with as many French books as they could carry. Al-Shayyāl lists the impressive number of 600 books brought into Cairo all at once in 1809 (46). He continues:

We’ve already mentioned the year 1811 as the year of the massacre of the Mamlukes, which is considered the definitive boundary between two periods: the preliminary period of Muḥammad ‘Alī – in which he did his best to destroy all the obstacles that came in his way – and the age of reform; and we also mentioned that Muḥammad ‘Alī considered that his means to achieve reform was copying [i.e. translation] from the West.⁷ (70)

The idea was that if they could copy as accurately as possible from the Western texts that were being brought into the country, then they could imitate them closely in the social, military, judicial, and soon literary spheres and achieve the same level of modernization in Egypt. Al-Shayyāl notes that most of the translations were done for scholastic and pedagogic purposes, to be taught at schools, and in 1835, Muḥammad ‘Alī established the famous School of Languages [*Madrasat al-alsinah*] for the sole purpose of teaching foreign languages. Rifā‘ah Rāfi‘ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801-1873) headed the school till his banishment in 1850. Jak Tājir divides translation under Muḥammad ‘Alī into 3 periods: the first beginning with what he calls the new age (presumably 1811 or so) until 1830. This first phase mostly involved using translation to establish schools and provide them with foreign textbooks in translation. In this first phase, the emphasis was on graduating more translators, so less on actual translations, and more on language training (25). The second phase, extending between 1831 and 1835,

⁷ Many critics locate the beginning of the modern around the rise of Muḥammad ‘Alī to power. The question of what constitutes modernity, and especially literary modernity, is indeed a very complex one in this context. In my future work I would like to study the moment of the modern in relation to how the translations that were done presented modernity on the one hand, and in relation to the beginning of Arabic literary criticism on the other, especially with the publication of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn’s *Al-Shi‘ir al-Jahilī* in 1926 in which he named his object of study *adab* or literature for the first time. Note that the idea of literary criticism also came in translation. Pierre Cachia, for example, mentions the important 1876 translation of parts of Boileau’s *Art Poétique* by Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Jalāl (80).

involved sending more missions to Paris under the obligation to translate. Muḥammad ‘Alī considered translation as an actual debt; he would send the students on these missions on the condition that they would translate whatever they were reading at the time (26). Slowly Egyptians started replacing foreign teachers and the year 1835, which marks the opening of the School of Languages, also marks the beginning of Tājir’s third phase. When the Khedive ‘Abbās came into power after Muḥammad ‘Alī and his son, he exiled al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and restricted the movement of translation (72). While in exile in Sudan in 1851, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī translates Fénélon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* in what is considered to be the first introduction of the novel form into Arabic. He gives his translation a traditional title, made up of two rhyming parts, *Mawāqi‘ al-aflāk fi Waqā’i‘ Talīmak* [The Positions of the Planets in the Events Concerning Télémaque] and renders the whole text in Qur’ānic saǰ‘ or rhyming prose.⁸ The translation was published in Beirut in 1867.⁹

Translation of the European Novel into Arabic

Although the movement of translation was mostly concerned with transmitting scientific, legal and military documents at the beginning, soon enough al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s translation of Fénélon initiated an intense preoccupation with the translation of literary texts, a preoccupation that continued well into the 20th century.¹⁰ My

⁸ In *Ṭaṭawwūr al-riwāyah al-‘arabiyyah al-ḥadithah fi Miṣr (1870-1938)* [The Development of the Modern Arabic Novel in Egypt (1870-1938)], ‘Abd al-Muḥsin Ṭāhā Badr considers al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s translation of Fénélon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* the first novelistic activity in Egypt in the nineteenth century (57) although it is not really concerned with the novel form as such but rather with symbolism and autobiography.

⁹ However, with the coming of Ismā‘īl into power, the translation movement continued more intensely than before (Tājir 84), with the years 1880 until 1899 marking the most prolific movement of translation yet (113).

¹⁰ In his book *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*, originally published in 1982 (I am using the 1995 edition), Roger Allen writes that the translation of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was not as influential in the history of the Arabic novel as his work in translation and with the press. As head of the School of Languages, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and his pupils translated Voltaire, Montesquieu and others. But it was really the translations of Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Jalāl (1929-1898), his most devoted pupil that

dissertation is mainly concerned with the translation of French and British literature into Arabic, from the 19th century up until the 1930's. However, it is not entirely accurate to call these texts translations; most of them are complete adaptations of the original texts that do not mention the original title or author. The content of these translations also greatly diverged from that of the original, sometimes in slight ways and sometimes in drastic ways that would make it impossible to identify the original text at all. And even those texts that pretend to some kind of faithfulness to the original rewrite it in subtle ways so as to make it relevant to the translating culture's background.¹¹ I consider them "hybrid texts," in that they draw on the Western originals but also maintain a sense of authorial entitlement and manipulation, a power attributed mainly to the education and whims of the translator.¹² In my dissertation I

started an interest in the translation of fiction. Jalāl also "egyptianized" a lot of the content of the actual originals, thus paving the way for the work of imitation in the translation of the European novel into Arabic (21).

¹¹ M. Peled in "Creative Translation" writes that Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ganī Ḥaṣan's book *Fann al-tarjamah fī al-adab al-'arabī* (published in 1966) [The Art of Translation in Arabic Literature] "has suggested four reasons which compelled the translators to deviate from the original texts: to avoid hurting national feelings, to avoid hurting religious sensitivities, to avoid disrespect for *moeurs* and to avoid disrespect for morality" (135; emphasis original).

¹² The work of other scholars on the subject of translation into Arabic has been very helpful to me. I mention a few names here: Sasson Somekh's 1981 article "The Emergence of Two Sets of Stylistic Norms in the Early Literary Translation into Modern Arabic Prose" is a close study of the translation styles of Buṭrus al-Bustānī and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. Its conclusions on the influence of translation on the development of Arabic literary styles have been tremendously helpful to my dissertation. The work of Elizabeth Holt particularly on the 19th century Arab readership of the new genre of the novel in her 2009 article "Narrative and the Reading Public in 1870s Beirut" has also helped me consider the context of reception of most of the novels that came in translation as well as those that were native expressions. I also mention the work of Shaden Tageldin who in her forthcoming book also approaches the historical and cultural significance of these translations and shows through some close reading their influence on the Arab translators. Her book, *Disarming Words: Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt*, forthcoming from the University of California Press (2011), analyzes the French and British colonial occupations of Egypt and examines the ways in which Egyptian intellectuals became so taken with the work of translation that they came to identify completely with Empire, an identification which disabled any form of resistance on their part and made them into willing subjects. I also mention Carol Bardenstein's *Translation and Transformation in Modern Arabic Literature: The Indigenous Assertions of Muḥammad 'Uṭmān Jalāl* published in 2005 in which she studies the Egyptianizing effects of Jalāl's adaptations of French plays and novels. Finally, I would like to mention Kamran Rastegar's *Literary Modernity between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions in the nineteenth-century Arabic, English, and Persian Literatures* published in 2007 which studies translation and travel in an attempt to evaluate the influence of the Arab authors on European literature and vice versa. In my future work, I would like to study this movement back and forth between the Arab world and Europe as well as the metaphors of travel and translation in particular contexts to map

study four performances of novel translation very closely in order to evaluate the forms of these hybrid texts in relation to a history of the (Arabic) novel that considers its origin to be in translation.

The debate on the relationship of these translations to the origination of the novel form in the Arab world has been long and remains ongoing. Most critics such as Matti Moosa, Pierre Cachia, Tāhā Badr and others contend that the novel came into Arabic mainly through the translation of Western fiction.¹³ Other critics argue that the novel is just a development of Arabic traditional narrative, as the Arabs were always drawn to prose. In his 2002 article entitled “Early Precursors to the Egyptian Novel,” Saad Elkhadem writes:

The contemporary Egyptian novel owes its existence to two literary sources: the traditional narratives that were created in Egypt in the nineteenth century ... and are related to old Arabic literary forms such as *qasas* and *maqamah*; and the flawed translations, defective adaptations, and slavish imitations of European novels and romances that were done by a group of (mostly Christian) writers/translators who immigrated to Egypt from Lebanon and Syria in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ (23)

out the importance of this exchange to literary genealogies and historical accounts of the origin of the novel.

¹³ Abd al-Salām al-Buḥayrī maintains in his book *Athar al-Adab al-Faransī ‘ala al-Qiṣah al-Qaṣirah* [The Influence of French Literature on the Short Story] that the native Arabic story was mediated completely by the encounter with French literature (72). Just like the medieval romance cannot be considered the origin of the French novel, so al-Buḥayrī considers that the *maqāmah* cannot be an origin for the modern Egyptian story, even if the former had a formal and not content-based influence on the story (80-81). Even the tale of *A Thousand and One Nights* is not a precedent for the modern Egyptian story, as only the French influence introduced complicated, yet tightly-knit plots and developed characters. In discussing some of the translations of the European novel, al-Buḥayrī concludes that there was a persistent sense of alienation from the milieu that carried through from the translations to the Arabic story, as for instance in the use of foreign characters in local contexts (180).

¹⁴ Saad Elkhadem revisits these claims in his 1985 book *History of the Egyptian Novel: its Rise and Early Beginnings* and in his earlier 1982 article entitled “The 19th Century Popular Arabic Novel: A Survey.” In his more recent 2002 piece “Early Precursors to the Egyptian Novel,” Saad Elkhadem lists the following authors who were extremely popular with the translators at the time: Works by Walter Scott (e.g., *The Talisman*, trans. Ya‘qub Sarruf, Alexandre Dumas (e.g., *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, trans. Najib Haddad; *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*, trans. Bisharah Shadid), Victor Hugo (e.g., *Les Misérables*, trans. M. Hafiz Ibrahim), Charles Dickens (e.g., *A Tale of Two Cities*, trans. Muḥammad al-Siba‘i), W.M. Thackeray (e.g., *Henry Esmond*, trans. and abridged by Wahbi Mus‘ad, who claimed its authorship), Leo Tolstoy (e.g., *Resurrection*, trans. Rashid Haddad; *Family Happiness*, trans. Bibawi Ghali), Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (e.g., *Paul et Virginie*, trans. Uthman Jalal) and others were translated, abridged, and imitated several times by different writers/translators. (27)

Others such as Sabry Hafez and Maḥmūd Taymūr maintain that the Arabic novel is a product of the interaction between the traditional narrative forms and the translations. While my dissertation engages this debate on origins, it is also concerned with the particularities of every performance of translation as revelatory of both the original text and the target language and context. My dissertation re-evaluates dominant accounts of the teleological development of the Arabic novel from the hybrid perspective of these particular translations and from the unsettling perspective of translation in general. Before delving further into this question of origin, it is important to understand, even if sketchily, the choice of texts to be translated and the form of these hybrid texts.

Even though my dissertation studies the novel in translation mostly in Egypt, it does not adopt an Egyptocentric perspective in the study of the history of the Arabic novel. In other words, my attempt to reassess popular narratives about the origins of

Henri Pérès in his 1937 *Le Roman, le Conte et La Nouvelle dans la Littérature Arabe moderne* also contends that the novel came to Egypt in translation and had no relation to the local narrative forms. He compiles a detailed list of the names of the French authors whose works were extremely popular in translation at the time such as Bernadin de Saint-Pierre, Chateaubriand, Paul Bourget, Henri Bordeaux, Benjamin Constant, Francois Coppée, Alphonse Daudet, Alexandre Dumas père, Alexandre Dumas fils, Victor Hugo, Alphonse Karr, Alphonse de Lamartine, Guy de Maupassant and others. All these authors were translated around the same time with little or no attention given to the literary distinctions in style and language. The titles of the translations are completely different from those of the originals. Pérès also includes a list of adaptations that make no reference to the originals at all, and he includes al-Manfalūṭī's adaptations of Chateaubriand as examples. 'Aydah Ibrahīm Nasīr's book *Ḥarakat Nashr al-kutub fī Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Tāsi* ' *Ashar* [The Movement of the Publication of Books in Egypt in the 19th century], published in 1994, has been tremendously helpful to me as it shows that the translations were in fact more popular than other traditional narratives that were being published in Cairo in the 19th century.

In his famous 1961 *al-Qiṣah fī-l-adab al-'arabī al-ḥadīth (1870-1914)* [The Story in Modern Arabic Literature (1870-1914)], Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm begins by listing all the names of the journals that included novelistic writing and a number of the most popular translations at the time (7-21). I will not list them again here, but I just want to mention that he includes Ernst Rénan and Eugène Sue in the list. He also mentions that *Atala* and *René* were translated at least 3 times before al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation: the first time in 1882 by Jamīl Nakhleh al-Muddawar in Beirut; the second is a translation of *Atala* only by the famous Farah Antūn; and the last translation of both *René* and *Atala* is by the equally famous Lebanese novelist Marūn Abbūd in 1919 in Lebanon. Al-Najm's and Pérès's lists include names of authors from all over the Arab world and not just from Egypt. However, most of these translators moved to or published their works in Cairo at some point. For a more general record of the publications of the 19th century in Cairo, see 'Aydah Ibrahīm Nasīr's extremely helpful book *Ḥarakat Nashr al-Kutub fī Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Tāsi* ' *Ashar* [The Movement of Publication of books in Egypt in the Nineteenth Century] published in Cairo by *Al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmah li al-Kitāb* in 1994.

the Arabic novel does not intend to displace this origin to Egypt. However, because Cairo in particular experienced French, British and Ottoman domination and because it was always the destination of intellectuals in the region, it presents an interesting starting point for the study of the translation of the novel into Arabic in particular. For example, as Saad Elkhadem and Matti Moosa relate in their respective works, the Syrian (including Lebanese) intellectuals of the 19th and early 20th century escaped Ottoman oppression and fled to Egypt. Due to their western-inflected education, as most of them were Christians who studied at the hands of missionaries in Syria, they were drawn to European literature and performed many translations.¹⁵ Elkhadem writes that the immigrants published their prolific and extremely popular adventure stories and romantic tales, and

...although the Egyptian writers of traditional works were enjoying a small readership, the Syro-Lebanese writers/translators (who – with the exception of a few authors such as Jirji Zaydan and Khalil Matran – were ill trained and of limited talent), succeeded in controlling the mass literature market with their suspenseful stories and entertaining romances.¹⁶ (“Early Precursors” 26 – 27)

In *Taṭawwur al-Riwāyah al-ḥadithah fī Miṣr (1870-1938)*, Ṭāhā Badr categorizes the novels published in Egypt between 1870 and 1938 into three currents: the first one includes the didactic novel and the novel of entertainment popular from about 1870 until 1919. He considers the novel of entertainment to be a direct result of the failure

¹⁵ In *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*, Roger Allen describes the shift to Cairo especially at the end of the 19th century as a consequence of the Lebanese massacre in 1860 and the code of censorship imposed by the Ottomans in Syria. The British in 1882 had decreed a law that protects writers against censorship and as a result, the Cairene climate proved to be much more welcoming to intellectuals from all over the Arab world (21; 24). They also established many daily newspapers such as *al-Ahrām* (1876) and *al-Muqāṭam* (1889), or weekly magazines and monthly periodicals such as *al-Muqāṭaf* (transferred from Beirut to Cairo in 1884), *al-Hilāl* (1892), and *al-Jāmi‘ah* (1899).

¹⁶ Ṭāhā Badr, Saad Elkhadem and Henri Pérès list the names of some of the most famous serialized publications that included novelistic fiction, translated and otherwise, such as *Muntakhabāt al-Riwāyāt* (Selected Novels, 1894), *Silsilat al-Riwāyāt* (Novel Series, 1899), *al-Riwāyāt al-Shahīrah* (The Famous Novels, 1901), *Musāmarāt al-Sha‘b* (People’s Entertainment, 1904), *al-Fukahāt al-‘Aṣriyyah* (Contemporary Humor, 1908), *al-Musāmarāt al-Isbu‘iyyah* (Weekly Entertainment, 1909), *Musāmarāt al-Mulūk* (Kings’ Entertainment, 1912), *al-Musāmarāt* (The Entertainment, 1921), and *al-Nadīm al-Riwā‘ī* (The Narrative Confidant, 1922).

of the ‘Urābī Revolution (1879-82) against British colonialism and the public’s resulting desire to read more translations to escape sordid reality. Thus the entertainment novel includes the adaptations of foreign novels in translation, and thus, Badr concludes, based on the cheap quality of these renditions, and from the end of the 19th century and up until the Nationalist revolution of 1919, the novel was not admitted to be a worthy literary form. In this early phase of translation there was an interest in detective fiction, and in Victor Hugo, Sir Walter Scott, and William Thackeray—as well as in Romanticism understood in a shallow and simplistic sense, because these authors turned to romantic literature believing it did not involve analysis (129). This period of translation was marked by the absence of the name of the original author and removal of many “unfamiliar” details of the original, like dialogue. At this point, the translations did not yet contribute to the formation of a national sense of self. Rather, Badr notes that the introduction of foreign words and texts produced an expression crisis whereby the knowledge of the precise reference of words [*dalālah*] became less certain.

In this trajectory, after the entertainment novel came the artistic novel (1920-1938), which came into being particularly after 1919, and under the influence of two translations: Goethe’s *Werther* and Dumas’ *La Dame aux Camélias*. The last two translations introduced the middle class hero into literature. The artistic novel was more realistic in its depiction of Egyptian reality and Badr includes Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī, Mahmūd Taymūr and ‘Īsā ‘Ubayd in this current (220). Under the aegis of translation, importantly of romantic and realist European fiction in tandem, the writers of the artistic novel experienced a real crisis in trying to relate their novelistic imagination to a dire political situation. Badr writes that these authors lost hope due as a result of the unbridgeable gap between the aesthetics and the politics of the novel, one that

becomes mostly apparent in the romantic translations in the period between the two wars (such as Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt's 1925 translation of Alphonse de Lamartine's *Raphaël*). Badr maintains that these translations had no real influence on the development of the novel in Egypt and the Arab world since they failed to address the Egyptian socio-political milieu.¹⁷

The final current is what Badr names the novel of subjective translation written between 1920 and 1938, and he includes Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī, and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm in this category. Badr detects in these novelists' work a disjuncture between the real and the ideal (what it is and what it should be). This type of novel capitalizes on the prominence of the subjective authorial self, but Badr does not address the development of this self in relation to the authors' own relationships to translation. After all, Haykal wrote a book on Rousseau; Ḥusayn translated French literature prolifically; and al-Māzinī translated collections of English fiction by Oscar Wilde, John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells to name just a few (Moosa 116-17).

¹⁷ In her 2004 book *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt, 1880-1985*, Samah Selim writes that the popularity of the entertainment novel (the romances and policies in translation) worked against what intellectuals considered the moral function of narrative at the time. While these popular narratives seduced the masses through what Selim names "the formal act of deception" the new fiction, or the artistic novel as Badr calls it, actually promised both social and individual truth—so realism came to represent the "formal mechanism for rendering this paradoxical identity between fiction and truth" (65). The popular translations or adaptations capitalized on a familiar oral tradition. Selim continues:

A particular pair of assumptions about the form and function of modern fiction underpin Badr's analysis of the recreational novel as an underdeveloped or intermediate genre. The first has to do with the contemporary hegemony of realism as an aesthetic ideology while the second revolves around the ontology produced by nationalism, which requires the outside world, the individual's environment, his "reality", to fit into the discursive parameters generated by the idea of nation. Badr identifies the "escape" from Egyptian "reality" as the single most salient fracture at the heart of the recreational novel. (68)

For the writers of the artistic novel, any association with oral literature remained a sign of decadence. However, Selim continues to argue, as I will show more clearly in the analysis of al-Manfalūṭ's translation of Chateaubriand in chapter two, that the writers of the artistic novel also experience a failure to bring the background to life. Badr continues to explain that the preoccupation with faithfulness to realism in the artistic novel brought about a situation in which the character of the masses was presented as diseased, and that of the narrator as perpetually outside the story. Thus both came to exist independently of the event of the story, which consequently becomes merely incidental and has no bearing on the development of character at all (Badr 246).

Badr's entertainment novel, the liberal translation of European detective and romantic literature, does not fit into a teleological mapping of the development of the Arabic novel. Rather, its relationship to translation seems tangential to the maturation of the novel, and Badr capitalizes more on the traditional forms and local conditions in his articulation of the genealogy of the early Arabic novel. Jak Tājir agrees with him that "one of the faults of the translated novels was that their translation wasn't literal" (150). A close examination reveals that most of these "entertainment novels" were free and defective translations of popular European novels and romances.¹⁸ Some of these translations were complete adaptations that did not mention the original's title or author; others mentioned the original author but completely changed the title; others completely changed the content and still others claimed to be translations of European texts when they were really native and original imitations of the new genre of the novel.¹⁹

¹⁸ In his 1979 piece "Creative Translation: Towards the Study of Arabic Translations of Western Literature since the 19th Century," M. Peled refers to Anwar al-Jundī's book *Taṭawwūr al-tarjamah fi al-adab al-'arabī al-mu'āṣir* (published in Cairo but no date of publication available) [The Development of Translation in Contemporary Arabic Literature], in which al-Jundī distinguishes "three phases of development in modern translation." According to al-Jundī, as Peled summarizes, [t]he first phase is the purely scholarly one, which is considered valuable and dignified. The second phase, referred to as "the perverted" (*al-marbalab al-munbarifah*), is the one in which "the tendency to please the readers by translating exciting stories became predominant." In this phase not only was the selection of stories bad, according to al-Jundi, but also "a distinct deterioration in the quality of translation had taken place." The third phase is marked by the return of a serious approach, similar to the one shown by the translators of the first phase, both in selecting the material to be translated and in the quality of their work. Actually, this description is not chronological but evaluative. The phases here defined are not consecutive but mostly concurrent. (Peled 129)

All the critics agree that most of these translations were defective, in the sense that they were inaccurate and they continuously deviated from the details of the original. Most of them made no mention of the original novels' authors or titles.

¹⁹ Pierre Cachia writes that:

Between translation, adaptation, and imitative creation the dividing lines are often very difficult to detect. At one end of the continuum, the original authorship was not always acknowledged, even when the translation was published in book form. At the other end, some budding writers found it easier to break into print if they presented their effusions under such a vague label as 'freely translated.' All this bears witness to the dynamics of a situation in which the taste for narratives of a Western type was growing by leaps and bounds. Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī (b. 1905) records the fact that by the middle of the twentieth century at least 10,000 titles are known to have been translated. (107)

However, in his 1993 book *The Genealogy of Arabic Narrative Discourse: A Study in the Sociology of Modern Arabic Literature*, Sabry Hafez relates the choice of translations to the developing sensibilities of the reading public. For that reason the traditional literary taste of the period dominated the first phase of translation and the texts translated were those that appealed to the conservative sentiments of the reading public. However, with fast-spreading urbanization and the marked change in the experience of space and time, there was a growing realization that the traditional form was not enough to mediate experience anymore. Slowly the translated text came to embody all that the traditional could not possibly contain or convey. Hafez divides this change into two phases of translation: the early phase involved more appropriation of the foreign text in an attempt to domesticate the form and make it more palatable to an Egyptian readership that was entirely unfamiliar with European literature. This phase covered the last decades of the 19th century. However, with the turn of the century, translation slowly became more literary and there was less stylistic interference in the text (90).

So, in the last decades of the 19th century, translations of European literary works tended to Egyptianize or Levantize the forms and contents of the original works. Pierre Cachia also maintains that these early translations were “reflections of prevailing standards” (36). He continues:

Thus in the translations produced in the nineteenth century, even when the story line was fairly faithfully maintained, elaborately rhyming titles bear witness to the persistence of the stylistic preferences of previous centuries. A good illustration is *Paul et Virginie*, the climax of which has the heroine on a ship that is foundering within sight of shore, but refusing the chance of being saved by a sailor because she literally would rather die than take off her voluminous skirts; this was translated three times, and in ‘Uthmān Jalāl’s (1829-98) version it becomes *al-Amānī wa l-Minnah fī Ḥadīth Qabūl wa Ward Jannah* – literally *Longings and Bestowal* or, more freely: *Hope and Fulfillment in the Story of Qabul and Ward Jannah*, here used as proper names, but also carrying the signification of ‘Acceptance’ and ‘Garden Rose.’ Not only are the protagonists given names that are phonetically close to the

originals yet recognizably Arabic ... but the text is in rhymed prose throughout and studded with verses and philosophical reflections
 ... At the other end of the spectrum are adaptations so free that a later critic was to say that most of the writers of the first quarter of the twentieth century were 'creators when translating, and translators when creating.' (36)

This domestication of the foreign was done for two purposes: the first falls in line with the European pedagogical program in the Levant which aimed at transmitting and establishing European culture within (if not in place of) the local; and the second caters to the general attitudes of the reading public, which was thought to be "unprepared" for the complexities of these originals (Hafez 85-88). The textual space created by these "inferior" translations became "the battleground for subjugating the language and techniques of traditional narrative to the dictates of the new narrative discourse" (89). Hafez contends that these translations mostly altered the representations of time and space in the originals so as to avoid dealing with the "complex process of individuation" (89), a process which was avoided in preference for the representation of the general public over the desires of the individual. However, due to such manipulation and to the subjugation of traditional forms to the demands of the new genre of the novel, even these so-called "inferior" translations are not so inferior after all. Considered as "failed" translations, these texts are nonetheless crucial to any understanding of the history of the Arabic novel as their very "incompetence" as translations becomes the condition for their new representational techniques and creative appropriation.

With the turn of the century translations became much more faithful to the literalness of the originals; these were performed by translators who were not trained in Classical Arabic literature and thus their styles were "far removed from conservatism" and were, "because of their reading and cultural formation, in keeping with the dictates of modern narrative discourse" (Hafez 90). Moreover, in their literalness, these

translations transformed the nature of narrative in the Arab world into a particular discourse with a set of distinctive elements.²⁰ The translation provided a space in which the “new” experience of space and time could be articulated in ways that didn’t run against established literary norms. Hafez maintains that the translated text was mostly regarded as a completely new form that was not native to Arabic literature (108). The number of translations increased almost exponentially to the extent that Muḥammad ‘Alī published a letter in which he declared the most read forms of literature at the end of the 19th century to be the *maqāmāt* and the translations (110).

The Old and the New: Local Narrative Forms and Translation

However, in *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse*, Sabry Hafez also reminds us that Napoleon did not walk into a vacuum, and that at that time in Egypt, there had already begun a kind of cultural and political revival.²¹ Most critics of

²⁰ In his 1994 article “The Transformation of Reality and the Arabic Novel’s Aesthetic Response,” Hafez draws a similar distinction between the Arabic novels of roughly the first part of the 20th century and those of the second. In the period extending from the 1900’s until the 1960’s, writers took up Western literary narrative forms primarily to herald their vision of Arab modernization and secondarily because the Arab literary tradition lacked an exclusively narrative form to be imitated (96). These Arab writers’ works “were concerned not with conducting any dialogue with their Arabic cultural tradition but with a break from it, and aspired to establish a completely new tradition” (97). However, and in stark contrast to the first period, the second period was concerned with engendering “a vigorous dialogue with the Arab classical tradition” (97). The writers of this period saw the 1967 defeat as the end of the project of Westernization (98) and a call for a return to Arab cultural roots. Hafez argues that from the beginning of the twentieth century and until the end of WWII, Arab identity fashioned itself in terms of its struggle for independence. The dominant view of national selfhood then was rooted in tribalism, and the “national self was then the most cohesive, for it defined itself as a collective and monolithic entity in contrast to a clearly foreign ‘other’” (94). The second period (which extends from the 1960’s till the present moment) is in stark contrast to this earlier tribal/rural model, which “has given way to one which is generally urban and quasi-modernistic” (94). When the “other” against which national selfhood held itself cohesively disappeared, “the collective consciousness was replaced by a more individualistic one, and cohesion tended to be confined to small groups rather than vested in the community at large” (94). Individualistic consciousness implied that each emergent socio-cultural group developed a sense of its own identity, one that is constituted by its difference from others. The tension intensified between the disparate Arab groups particularly after “Egypt’s defeat in the 1967 war [,] which opened the floodgates of doubt and self-questioning” (95). In 1977, Egypt (the leading Arab country) was forced out of the Arab League and “[a]t the same time, the destruction of that other old center of Arab culture, Beirut, started, in 1975, with the Lebanese civil war” (95).

²¹ Few critics agree with Hafez on this point. The literature on the history of the cultural movements in Egypt in the 18th century is quite scarce, and most critics confirm that little is known about the period in question. Anwar al-Jundī in his book *al-Adab al-‘arabī al-ḥadīth fī ma ‘rakat al-muqāwamah wa-l-ḥuriyyah wa-l-tajamu‘ (1830-1959)* (1959) [Modern Arabic Literature in the Battle

Arabic Literature agree that under Ottoman rule for almost 400 years, the Arab world from about the 15th century began experiencing a decline, or what is known as *Inḥiṭāt*. After the French invasion, however, these critics maintain that Egypt experienced a revival between the years 1798 and 1914, a period known as the *nahḍah* or Arab Renaissance.²² Although my dissertation is not primarily concerned with the veracity

of Resistance, Freedom and Rally (1830-1959)] mentions the Wahhābī movement at the end of the 18th century as one such example of a budding resistance to Ottoman rule. However, he also confirms that the real effort at resistance was instigated by the French invasion when the people of Egypt actually fought the French army in the streets, demanding they leave Egypt. Peter Gran in his *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, however, contests the claim that capitalism came to Egypt via colonialism. In his 1979 book, Gran re-examines the relationship between the West and the Middle East through re-situating the roots of the Industrial revolution and its dependence on Third World countries in the 18th century. As such, his book seeks to reexamine the dominant non-dialectical movement of culture, “that is, history perceived to be an undifferentiated totality in which there are no overlapping or interpenetrating areas of influence” (“Introduction to the Original Edition” li). He continues that the most damaging consequence of such an approach to history is “the belief that the rise of the West implies a decline of an ‘Other.’ This model of cultural study crystallized in the early colonial period, 1750-1850” (li). Such a reductive interpretive theory of history as a rise and decline fails to provide “adequate paradigms for the study of the long centuries separating the Arab Golden Age of the tenth century and the modernization of the nineteenth century” (lii). Gran continues that this model also obfuscates the relationship of trade between Europe and the Middle East as “[t]he type of market which the industrial world required would not have come into existence without transformations in the countries of the third world—the creation of new social classes and the mutation of old ones.” (lii) In studying the cultural and material life of Egypt between 1760 and 1840, Gran shows how the particular context of Cairo shows it had its own roots for its modern capitalist culture with which the West engaged and did not initiate in the 19th century. For instance, he writes that “the total number of books and the range of subjects covered appeared to be vastly greater in the later eighteenth century than in the well-known reform period of Muhammad ‘Ali in the nineteenth century” (lii). The titles of these works did not really explain the content and Gran argues that these were really methods of disguise, disguising a new body of thought (liii). He gives the example of the ‘*ulamā*’ of al-Azhar and their sponsorship of the “revival of *Ṣuḥfī ṭuruq* (mystical confraternities) and pioneered methods of cross-class communication, trying to stabilize the lower classes, who were beginning to rebel as their situation deteriorated” (liii). He argues that their works were firmly rooted in an understanding of class structure. Thus, instead of approaching Arabic cultural history in terms of a decline that lasted until the end of the 18th century and which ended with the coming of Napoleon, Gran suggests that:

The same events can be situated in a more integrated framework. Travel literature, consular reports and general works in economic history suggest that towards the middle of the eighteenth century France became increasingly interested in Egypt as a source of grain ... Egypt also became attractive to France as a market for her finished goods. It is at this point that the modern world market began to have a direct impact. This impact fostered a commercial revival and encouraged growth of a new and increasingly non-Egyptian class directing an export-oriented economy. The period of Muhammad ‘Ali is thus basically a continuation of trends which began in the eighteenth century not a rupture with some millennial past. (liv)

²² Generally, the traditional view of the *nahḍah* maintains that the period extends from 1798 (the coming of Napoleon) until 1914 or so, and it marks an awakening from the age of decadence. In *Al-ittijihāt al-fikrīyah ‘ind al-‘Arab fi ‘aṣr al-nahḍah (1798-1914)* [The Intellectual Currents of the Arabs in the Age of the *Nahḍah* (1798-1914)], Alī al-Muḥāfazah argues that the main factors behind the *nahḍah* were actually foreign and imported into a largely dysfunctional context. Historically, Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt came at a time when the ruling Ottoman Empire was in a state of disarray. Thus, al-Muḥāfazah capitalizes on the Napoleonic invasion, the scientific expeditions to

of such labels and historical paradigms, I consider that translation as a process complicates the naming of both periods of decadence and of awakening. The period of renaissance or awakening is traditionally considered to have been occasioned primarily by the coming of Napoleon and the contact with Western literature and sciences. Not much is known about Arab cultural production in the period between the 13th and the 18th century, and more recent studies have shifted the paradigm of decadence to one of exploration of the lives and literary work of Arabic-speaking writers in the previously mentioned period, one which Roger Allen names the “post-classical” period. In the introduction to the 2006 book *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, Roger Allen explains that the term post-classical is meant to refer to the centuries between 1258 and 1798 (the latter being the date of Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt), which have been consistently labeled the “Period of Decadence” (5). The “post-classical” period, roughly extending between 1150 and 1850, is understudied and usually referred to by the stigmatic title of the “age of decadence”, or “*aṣr al-inḥiṭāf*” (1-2). Allen explains:

However in the case of the Arabic and Islamic heritage, the application of this label to a substantial segment of the cultural production of the region seems to have resulted in the creation of a vicious circle, whereby an almost complete

Europe and the Christian missionaries that came to the Arab world in trying to map out a rather complex context in which an Arab renaissance was slowly crystallizing. The role of the press is significant in that it mediated a relatively sharp shift in the relationship of the Arab writer to the Arabic language. The relationship to the language of course carries with it the relationship to the literary heritage as well as to the religious tradition. For one thing, in the nineteenth century we begin to see for the first time in the Arab world the emergence of the word “nation” and with it the sentiment of “nationalism.” Rifā‘ah Rif‘at al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was actually the first writer to start talking about the nation and national citizenship. He tried to construct a definition of nationhood based on the perimeters of the nation (which were elusive in themselves because there were no independent nation-states then). Another factor that Ali al-Muḥāfaẓah lists as a major contribution to the coming about of the *nahḍah* at the time is translation. He doesn’t address the implications of the movement of translation in depth. A similar approach to the *nahḍah* is found in Anīs Al-Nṣūlī’s *Asbāb al-Nahḍah al-‘Arabīyah fī al-Qarn al-Tasi‘ ‘Ashar* [The Reasons Behind the Arab Renaissance in the 19th Century] originally published in 1985. George Antonius in his study of the *nahḍah* entitled *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1946) as well as Albert Hourani in his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* both relate the *nahḍah* directly to changes in literary sensibilities and the writing of fiction, locating the impetus of the *nahḍah* particularly in the fictional texts of Salīm al-Bustānī, Rifā‘at Rif‘ah al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Jurjī Zaydān and Faraḥ Antūn.

lack of sympathy for very different aesthetic norms has been converted into a tradition of scholarly indifference that has left us with enormous gaps in our understanding of the continuities involved. (2)

Similarly, in the introduction to the book *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350-1850* published in 2009, Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart contest the view of the editor of the 1992 volume on *Modern Arabic Literature* [M.M. Badawi] in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature that the Arabs experienced a decline as of the sixteenth century (1). By the second half of the fourteenth century, and after the prolific literary movement of the early Abbasid period, the context of Arabic literary production had experienced important developments in geo-political circumstances and religious institutions that affected the production and the corpus of Arabic literature (4). However, and throughout, the literary production of the Arabic-speaking regions did not decline; poetry remained the most popular vehicle of literary expression in the centuries under study, and “much poetry came to be self-referential or self-consciously intertextual, referring to earlier well-known poems” (6). The editors also mention the important emergence of colloquial forms, much earlier than the contact with European fiction: “By the fourteenth century, the existence of colloquial, or mixed formal-colloquial poetic sub-genres had become a topic treated by literary theorists” and this environment occasioned the emergence of oral epics like *A Thousand and One Nights* and popular romances (7). The editors argue against the view that contact with European literatures occasioned an end to the supposed period of decline. They contend that the decline paradigm went well with the European project: “The trajectory of decline exhibits a clear inverse correlation with a traditional periodization of pre-modern and modern European history that suggests ascendancy: dark ages, middle ages, renaissance, Enlightenment, industrial revolution, modernity and so on” (8). In such a narrative, the West emerges as the

ultimate agent of historical change. On the other hand, indigenous writers also adopted the decline paradigm wherein the age of decadence is made into the antithesis of the awakening or the *nahḍah*, and the editors claim that it is strange that such binaries became domesticated in a colonial struggle. However, Arab nationalists probably used them to attribute cultural stagnation to a despotic Ottoman rule and to use Western discourse to serve their own political agendas (8), as we will see most clearly in the case of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal.²³

Roger Allen also brings up the self-orientalization of the intellectuals of the *nahḍah* by citing the example of Aḥmad Amīn (1886-1954) who wrote: “The doors to the Islamic world were closed after the Crusades; parts of it began to consume others. Muslims simply marked time ...” (qtd. in Allen 2). Allen contends that this view represents that of the majority of Western and Middle Eastern scholars who “found themselves confronting all the dilemmas implicit in a process of cultural transformation that accompanied and followed the rapid importation of Western ideas

²³ The problem of the periodization and role of the *nahḍah* is most helpfully illustrated in Abdallah Laroui’s 1974 book *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism*, translated by Diarmid Cammell and published in English in 1976. In his book, Laroui uses the phrase the Second *Nahḍah* or awakening that comes up in a book by Jon Kimche entitled *The Second Arab Awakening* (New York, 1970) to make a distinction between the first *nahḍah*, marked by the coming of Napoleon, and the second *nahḍah* which takes place around the years 1963-1965. While in the first *nahḍah* the intellectuals adopted Western ideology quite full-heartedly and obliviously, Laroui maintains that the second *nahḍah* was marked by an ideological awareness:

It was after the obtaining of political independence, the coming to power of a provincial petite bourgeoisie, the appearance of an “unattached” Arab intelligentsia of Palestinian origin whose literary production, published in Beirut, were disseminated throughout the Arab world, that the conditions were realized for the emergence of a “second degree” awareness; that is, the Arabs became aware of their thinking as ideological thinking. A general frame of reference was achieved that at once struck a fatal blow at provincialism, the objective basis of first-degree thinking. (90)

Laroui continues that the “rethinking that took place after the Arab Nahda—is perhaps the real beginning of a truly adult thought that is wary of its own tendencies and for the first time unfolds outside tradition, in the sense that it does not regard its backwardness as a virtue” (91). Laroui’s work is very insightful and rightfully presents the *nahḍah* as a continuous process rather than a discontinuity or rupture in a history of oppression and domination. However, in my own work, I place less emphasis on what the intellectuals were ideologically aware of and more on what the language of their texts has to say about this relationship to Western ideology. In other words, although I certainly view the *nahḍah* as a perpetual process of dialectical awakening, in my own work I examine the use of language and particular word choice in fictional adaptations to understand such a process as one that is continually being written and rewritten in translation.

and values to the colonized countries of the Middle East” (2). The rapid Westernization of the East also implied the importation of Western models of thinking; as such, the compilation and elaboration trend so popular in the anthologies of the Abbasid period and afterwards, came to be regarded disdainfully through the lens of Western Romantic and post-Romantic thinking. The comparison to Western models also made it so that Classical Arabic rhetoric became associated with artificial exaggeration (11). Thus, in this narrative, the contact with the West enabled the revolution in the Arabic language and arts of expression more generally, and while Allen does not dismiss the importance of this cultural confrontation, he still points out “the – hardly trivial – fact that the state of our information concerning the indigenous literary culture makes the view one-sided” (15). He continues that the period covered by the book *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* is usually ignored and “also vaulted over in order for the newly revived litterateurs of the nineteenth century to find inspiration in the glittering age of some nine of ten centuries earlier” (15).

This is not deny, of course, the powerful and determining influence that Napoleon’s printing press had on the Arab world as a whole. Rather, the literary forms that were popular and constantly transforming over a period of seven centuries are significant in that they will remain in dialogue with the interest in translation that began with the coming of Napoleon. Egyptian intellectuals were trying to revive the tradition in an attempt to reassert a sense of national identity under the oppressive rule of the Turks. However, they were also looking to the West for new paradigms that could help them define a new sense of nationalism and serve their own political agendas. The interaction between the tradition (as it is imagined and approached under occupation) and the translations in this struggle to define a sense of national identity only becomes more complex in the following decades of the 19th century with

the increasing self-orientalizing tendencies of scholars like al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and later Aḥmad Amīn and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn who returned to Egypt fully entrenched in Western ideology, which they proceeded to implement in creating this particular version of their pre-history and “decadence.”²⁴

Translation indeed becomes the catalyst that both exposes and problematizes this self-orientalization of Western-educated intellectuals, and my dissertation aims to study the instance of translation as catalyst in the particular adaptations of some of these well-known thinkers. While the contact with Western literature introduced new genres into Arabic literature, it also occasioned a return to the traditional narrative forms that were popular in the Arabic tradition. And even when the rhetorical preoccupations of poetry seemed inadequate in the confrontation with the new narrative in translation from the West, the older narrative forms such as the tale, the *Sīrah*, the *Ḥadīth*, the *Riḥlah*, the *umthūlah*, and most importantly the *maqāmah* provide some ground in the continuing development of an Arabic prose tradition. The *maqāmah* is a short episodic tale that has a picaresque element to it and involves traveling from one city to the next. It has a narrative frame within which one narrator tells the adventures of a protagonist, a roguish figure who lures people with his beautiful language into giving him money. The *maqāmah* is highly rhetorical and

²⁴ Mehmet Akif Kirecci’s 2007 dissertation entitled “Decline Discourse and Self-Orientalization in the Writings of Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Ziya Gökalp: A Comparative Study of Modernization in Egypt and Turkey” (University of Pennsylvania) considers the titular authors’ internalization of the decline discourse as determined by a European model of modernity imposed on Egypt. In this narrative, as Kirecci writes, the Abbasid period (750-1258) came to be considered the golden age, followed by a period of decline until the French invasion of Egypt in 1798, which marks the *nahḍah* or awakening (3). In such a schema, for instance, Kirecci considers al-Ṭaḥṭāwī to represent not an Egyptian renaissance but a “transitional stage in the formation of the decline discourse in the modern era, and perhaps one of the first in a series of *self-Orientalizing* intellectuals” (7-8). Kirecci combines Said’s theory of Orientalism with Michel Foucault’s analysis of discursive formations of power to argue that “the decline paradigm that springs from orientalism exerts a deeper power through *self-Orientalizing* intellectuals, and their discursive formations” (15). The purpose of *self-Orientalism* is “not acceptance of the West in its own right, but rather a wilful locating of the self (and, by extension, all aspects of one’s native region) below the dominating Other. It is a conceptual and epistemic structure whose existence subjugates the subject” (26).

written in rhyming prose, *sajʿ*. Its structure is mostly a parody of usual settings in which rhetorical language is used religiously (both in a literal and a figurative sense).²⁵ The 19th century witnessed an intense revival of the *maqāmah* especially in the works of the Lebanese Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and Naṣīf al-Yazījī. The appeal of the form was twofold: first, in the encounter with the French and under British rule, Classical Arabic poetry proved less than sufficient in expressing the condition of occupation that these intellectuals found themselves in. Second, the heavy influx of translated texts confronted these intellectuals with the invasion of other languages. The *maqāmah*, as the only familiar narrative form that emphasized linguistic experimentation, seemed to be the next best thing.²⁶ One of the most famous modern revivals of the *maqāmah* is Muḥammad al-Mawaylīḥī's *Ḥadīth 'Isa ibn Hishām* (published in book form in 1907), in which a revived Pasha and a protagonist go around Cairo implicitly critiquing the legal, judicial and other systems. This particular

²⁵ In his famous book *The art of Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamādhānī as Picaresque Narrative*, published in 1985, James T. Monroe describes the subversive potential of the *maqāmah*:

The whole point of this extravagant diction is that it serves to draw attention to an ironic contrast, on the linguistic level, between what is being said by the characters, and what is being done by them ... Not only are the many allusions to the Koran and the Hadith perverse, inasmuch as a holy text is being invoked in support of deceitful practices. (96)

Earlier in the book, Monroe reads the *maqāmah* as a response to other literary genres: “[T]he *maqāmāt* were conceived by their inventor, al-Hamadhānī, at least in part, as a response to several noble genres of Arabic literature, among which I would like to single out prophetic traditions (*Ḥadīth*), and epic/romance (*sīra*)” (20). As such, the *maqāmah* is always more preoccupied with its form than with its content. Monroe quotes Sir Hamilton Gibb's definition: “The Assembly is a kind of dramatic anecdote in the telling of which the author's object is to display his poetry, his eloquence, or his learning, and with this view the subject is continually subordinated to treatment, the substance to the form” (88 qtd. in Monroe). The *maqāmah* importantly uses the language of high literature to describe the everyday life of rogues.

²⁶ The epilogue from Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq confounds both the return to the *maqāmah* as a preoccupation with language and the problems of translation into Arabic. The correlation between the return to the traditional form and the influx of translation is exacerbated by the Arabic language which was seen to have remained stagnant for centuries. I will return to this problem of the modernization of the Arabic language, but for now I want to point to the incompatibility between the new forms and the traditional use of Arabic rhetoric. Especially in the case of al-Shidyāq's famous modern *maqāmah al-Sāq 'ala al-Sāq fīmā huwa al-Fāryāq*, first published in 1855 in Paris, it was already clear that the older narrative forms and styles could not provide adequate means of literary representation in modern times. Pierre Cachia presents this new dilemma rather eloquently when he writes that *al-Sāq* is “neither a condemnation of ornate writing, nor an imitation of Western practice. Least of all is it a concession to half-educated readers. It is rather that, unlike his immediate predecessors, the writer now had something novel to say, and the very nature of the exercise imposed upon him a functional style” (47).

maqāmah is considered by some critics to be the traditional narrative expression that comes closest to a native Egyptian novel.²⁷ Roger Allen makes that point in his 2001 piece “Literary History and Generic Change: The Example of the *Maqāma*.” “while Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal’s novel *Zaynab* (1913), upon which a considerable literary-historical burden has been loaded as a ‘first,’ does indeed have an Egyptian setting and does discuss contemporary social issues, al-Muwaylīḥī’s work antedates it in both regards” (8). Indeed Allen insists that the *maqāmah* did not breathe its last with the coming of the European novel in translation, but that it persisted in “spirit,” with a handful of Arab novelists still experimenting with its use of irony and humor. Allen importantly concludes, “While the natural processes of generic change proceed, the ongoing challenges of ‘modernity’ seem to guarantee that writers will continue to feel that anxiety of influence as the spirits of al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī, and al-Muwaylīḥī peer over their shoulders” (13).

While Allen rightfully concludes that the “spirit” of the *maqāmah* continues to inform the novel in the Arab world, other critics refute the relationship of influence between the two genres. In the *Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* originally published in 1983, Matti Moosa declares on the first page of the book that it would be “equally

²⁷ In his 2008 article published in the journal *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Mohamed-Salah Omri describes *Hadīth*’s important place in the history of the Arabic novel as such:

The history of the Arabic novel gives *Hadīth Isa ibn Hisham* a prominent position in the canon, where it is considered the fulfillment of a “bridging function” between *adab* and the novel (Allen, *Arabic* 30) as well as an “early form of the Egyptian novel” (Moosa 106). For al-Muwaylīḥī, the use of *maqamah* reflects, in formal terms, the dilemma expressed in the content of his book: namely, what to take and what to reject from the invading culture of the West. This is the dilemma of *al-nahda* (nineteenth-century renaissance) intellectual period, where the use of traditional local narrative convention meant a meaningful engagement with the past and a way of keeping it alive. ... The book stands as the expression of an emergent nationstate: it uses the state’s icons, its geography, and its specific social concerns. For this and other reasons, al-Muwaylīḥī’s book gained considerable popularity.

Maḥmūd Taymūr in *Révue de l’académie arabe de Damas* (1926) wrote:

If we wish to talk about modern narrative style, we find only *Hadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām*. If we want to someone a good book to read, there is only *Hadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām*. And, if we wish to boast about our narrative literature, there is only *Hadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām* ... It is the first work to appear in contemporary narrative literature which is worthy of being placed with complete impartiality in the front rank of our narrative writings. (qtd. in Roger Allen *A Period of Time* 95)

presumptuous” to consider the tale or the *maqāmah* as the ancestor of the modern Arabic novel. In line with the more traditionalist critics of the *nahḍah* that I mentioned earlier, Matti Moosa also considers that Arabic literature was exhausted by the beginning of the 19th century, and unlike Hafez, does not locate any sign of revival prior to the coming of the French and the rise of Muḥammad ‘Alī to power in 1805. However, Moosa, like Roger Allen, also considers al-Mawaylīhī’s “modern” *maqāmah* to be “the closest approach of the native tradition to the Europeanized long narrative; for [its] representation of life in Egypt in the last century is realistic; and [its] characters are finely delineated, as was never the case with old maqamas” (2). In his 1992 book *A Period of Time: A Study and Translation of Hadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām by Muḥammad al-Muwaylīhī*, Roger Allen argues that even though *Hadīth* is not a prototypical novel because its characters are flat types, and its occasion for narrative event is very tenuously established, it nevertheless comes close to the genre in its realistic representation of Egypt. In the introduction to the book, al-Muwaylīhī writes:

Even though the narrative itself is presented in an imaginary and figurative form, it is also a true picture which has been dressed up in an imaginary garb, or rather a fantasy shaped in a realistic form. We have used it to comment on the morals and conditions of present-day people, and to describe the faults of various classes of people which should be avoided and those qualities which should be maintained. (Allen 103)

The opening sets the scene for both, the new form and its relation to older more traditional forms; of course here it is rendered in *saj‘* to recall the *maqāmāt*, but the tombstone that opens the book and releases the Pasha, coupled with the dream setting that envelops the rest of the story, announces the coming of a new form of fiction.

While Moosa considers the Lebanese Salīm al-Bustānī’s *Hiyām fi Bilad al-Sham* (1870) as the first Arabic novel (197), he maintains that the first native Egyptian novel does not appear until the first quarter of the twentieth century “when

conditions to its emergence were finally more favorable” (20).²⁸ Moosa’s view is clearly obfuscated by unclear national definitions in the emergence of the genre of the novel across the Arab world. Pierre Cachia also considers that the “mature” Arabic novel appears after the 1930’s.²⁹ Although both these critics, along with Ṭāhā Badr, consider the role of translation, they dismiss the actual translations as constitutive of the genre of the novel because all three restrict the definition of the novel to 19th century European realist fiction. I will return to the problematic of origin and influence in the conclusion, but for now I would like to emphasize that the translation paradigm that I have chosen to work with makes it impossible to dismiss the translations of the Arabic novel so easily. Rather, my focus on translation will help reassess some of the assumptions of the famous critics of the Arabic as well as of the European novel.³⁰ Of course these views, as I will show throughout the dissertation

²⁸ Although the influence of such translations cannot be ignored, some contemporary Arab writers are reluctant to accept the position that “the art of the Arab novel and short story is one foreign import which the Arab world slowly adopted, among many other novelists from Western culture at the beginning of our reactivated, socio-political movements in the middle of the nineteenth century” (Moosa 91). For instance, Moosa maintains (with Pierre Cachia) that although the fiction of Salīm al-Bustānī and Jurjī Zaydān (both heavily influenced by translation) can indeed be considered native Arabic novelistic writing, the traditional narrative forms cannot because causality and character were alien to an Arab narrative tradition. Also, most of the writers of the *nahḍah* agreed that translation was necessary for the evolution and development of the Arabic novel. For instance, the famous Yaḥya Ḥaqqī says:

There is no harm in admitting that the modern story came to us from the West. Those who laid down its foundation were persons influenced by European literature, particularly French literature. Although masterpieces of English literature were translated into Arabic, French literature was the fountain of our story. (qtd. in Moosa 93)

Also, the famous translator and editor Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt contends:

If we translate into Arabic the scientific, artistic, and literary masterpieces of English, American, French, German, Russian, and Italian writers, these masterpieces will soon become part of our scientific and literary structure, which we shall cherish, preserve, and then add to, as did our ancestors, who translated the sciences of the Greeks, Indians, Jews, Syrians and Persians into their language. (qtd. in Moosa 116)

²⁹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī in his 1972 book *Al-Juhūd al-Riwā’iyyah: min Salīm al-Bustānī ila Najīb Maḥfūz* [Novelistic Efforts from Salīm al-Bustānī to Najīb Maḥfūz] considers the work of the Lebanese Salīm al-Bustānī to pioneer the novel in the Arab world because he pursued the same didactic ideas he developed in his first novel *Al-Hiyām fi Jinān al-Shām* (1873) in all of his fiction; however, *Al-Hiyām* remains loosely connected and lacks real description of the status quo (30).

³⁰ As I mentioned earlier, in my future work I would like to consider the very tangible influence that various forms of traditional Arabic narrative have had on the beginnings of the European novel. Again, using translation as the ultimate paradigm in which to consider such borrowings, I do not

and mostly in the conclusion, have been and continue to be contested in recent scholarship. My point, however, is not to side with any interpretation of the rise of the novel, but merely to point out that all these paradigmatic approaches to the history of the novel in Arabic only consider translation tangentially. I mean that they also describe the importance and breadth of the movement of translation into Arabic, but none consider the particular mutations of genre in every instance, in relation to the modernization of older forms and the domestication of newer ones. My dissertation also aims to refute and contest some of these claims that I have laid out in the introduction, but it does so through a close reading of translations and adaptations of the novel to make particular conclusions about the assumptions of literary histories in general and those of the Arabic novel in particular.

Translation: Method and Conclusions

Although the discourse on translation and particularly translation in a colonial/postcolonial context is rich and diverse, my dissertation is primarily informed by the conversation between Walter Benjamin, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida and Lawrence Venuti. The context of the translation of the novel genre into Arabic is particularly interesting for several reasons. For one, most of the Arab world in the period under study in this dissertation was under at least two forms of colonial rule, with the occasional interference of a third. Egypt, for instance, was under a faltering Ottoman rule when the French came in 1798 only to be defeated by the English who took over in 1882. As has been shown, the history of translation into Arabic during this period (roughly from the middle of the 19th century and until the 1930's) is extremely

believe in a myth of origins and firstness; rather, my work would examine such exchanges as closely as I have in this dissertation to evaluate critical gestures in the establishment of genres and by extension disciplines, such as the discipline of Comparative Literature which continuously relegates Arabic literature to the domain of area studies.

complex. The first phase of translation was motivated by a desire for reform, but the first adaptation of a novel, al-Taḥṭāwī's *Mawāqī'*, was motivated by a political critique of the oppressive rule of the Khedive 'Abbās. Thus while the French soldiers of the Napoleonic invasion left because the French fleet was destroyed, the lingering influence and promise of translation that Napoleon initiated gained more momentum after Muḥammad 'Alī's succession to power in 1811, and even more after the return of al-Taḥṭāwī from Paris in 1831.³¹ The translation of fiction began as political critique, then turned into a form of escapist entertainment after the failure of the

³¹ Al-Taḥṭāwī's famous 1834 travel narrative *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz* [The Purification of Gold in the Summary of Paris] is also very important to the history of the novel in Arabic. Throughout the text, al-Taḥṭāwī's experience of Paris is haunted by a tangible strangeness. He describes what he sees in full, palpable details from the Parisians' eating and dress habits to the promiscuity of the women. And although he issues the occasional judgment, his concern is clearly to maintain the strangeness of his descriptions. For instance, the promiscuity of the women soon turns into his description of the liberated French woman who becomes a remarkable object of observation and study, and one that he fully intends to translate as is into Arabic. It is in such moments that the travel narrative puts forth a theory of translation based on a fundamental and ordinary reciprocity between languages. Al-Taḥṭāwī writes,

When somebody thoroughly studies any language, he in effect becomes familiar with another language. By this I mean that if something is translated and explained for him, then he is able to take it in and to compare it with his own language. Moreover, he may have already known these things before and thus he increases his existing knowledge, then, he can study it and suppress that which reason does not accept. Why not, since knowledge is a natural disposition? (Newman 184)

If knowledge is a natural disposition, then by some curious form of a transitive rule, the disposition towards translation becomes natural as well. Naturally, then, if al-Taḥṭāwī were to translate from French, which he is already familiar with, given his deep knowledge of the Arabic language, his translations would transmit the content of the original intact. Simply put, since he is so deeply learned in his own language he can understand any new tongue as if he had always already known it. But, one is compelled to ask him at this point, what about the language of the text? The image of gold that comes up in the title returns at this point in his narrative, again in a moment of anxiety about possibly succumbing to the seduction of the French language. So, he poses another interesting question, "There is no doubt that the language of the Arabs is the greatest and the most splendid of languages. But is it because it is pure gold that whatever imitates it is mere tinsel?" (192) In other words, even if translation is always possible and indeed necessary and even if the content is completely transferrable, the Arabic language is still superior, like his account of Paris, written in Arabic. However, despite the superiority of Arabic, his text confirms that Arabic (or gold) can indeed be mimicked, and thus so can the French language. In this theory of translation as complete transfer from one linguistic medium to another, the French novel can become a completely Arabic text, to the extent that the name of the original author would not matter as much. Note that al-Taḥṭāwī's curious performance of translation sets the tone for the rest of the translations of European novels into Arabic which look less and less like the originals, make no mention of the original author, and coalesce into a strange hybrid form that is neither European nor Arab. But that is precisely why al-Taḥṭāwī's work is so significant. It is because even in 1834, and as a religious Imam, he could still imagine a form of translation that would be completely open and uninhibited in the face of the other. In my future work, I would like to consider the encounter with Europe in the travel narrative in relation to European authors' encounter with Egypt as vital to any consideration of the development of the genre of the novel in the Arab world.

‘Urābī Revolution against the British occupation in 1882, and then into the ultimate reference in the articulation of a new national identity. However, in the earliest stages, the choice of novels to be translated was quite random and the purpose was not solely for entertainment. Some of the Syrian immigrants, for example, translated Sir Walter Scott because they believed that the historical novel could begin to tell the story of the Arab nation, thus giving the people a common background that could identify and empower them at the same time.³² The example of Jurjī Zaydān’s twenty one historical novels is most illustrative here. In his famous historical novels, Zaydān would use historical material and produce novels that were based around the reality of the historical event and not ones that rewrite it.³³

Moreover, the hybrid form of these translations is particularly significant in that the discourse on national identity is informed by a subversive adaptation of Western fiction, an adaptation that many of the critics and literary historians name as a failure. The translations fail to reproduce the originals intact; they also fail to carry the real import of Western revolutionary literature. Famous writers of the early 20th

³² In my dissertation, I consider the discourse on national identity to be largely dependent on the rise of the novel in the Arab world. The critical discourse on the relationship between the novel and the nation is long and rich, and the most important example is Benedict Anderson’s 1983 book *Imagined Communities*. In my own work, I have consulted the insights of literary and cultural historians who consider the novel coming in translation to have enabled the emergence of a discourse on the nation and national identity in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world.

³³ Under the influence of Walter Scott, Zaydān’s fiction presents the destiny of characters as one inextricably bound to the determinism of historical events. Matti Moosa in *Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* writes that

Zaydān saw fiction as subservient to history, and not vice versa, a mistake he accused Western writers of ... Zaydān’s main concern, however, was to relate history as it really was within the context of the novel form ... [He] does not identify those Western writers whom he believed to have “subordinated” history to fiction; he may have meant, among others, Sir Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas père ... Because his basic task was to portray the past faithfully, Zaydān was very concerned with historical facts, and went as far as documenting his sources. He also began each novel with a chapter explaining the historical events relative to the work. (198-199)

The romance element of his historical fiction was always subordinated to the event, even though he was one of the authors most attracted to the romanticism of Walter Scott, but he feared that the conflation of the historical and the fictitious would confuse the Arab reader as to the authenticity of historical events.

century such as ‘Īsā ‘Ubayd and others were alarmed by this failure to the extent that they would try to produce their own versions of Western realist or romantic literature and fail even more profoundly to relate this new fiction to the Egyptian reality. How do we read this failure? Is it a failure inherent in the work of translation or a result of this particular context?

Although in the chapters of my dissertation, I do not refer directly to the work of Benjamin, de Man, Derrida and Venuti, all four thinkers have informed and guided my close readings of the originals and their translations in the attempt to evaluate the particularities of every performance of translation as a unique and powerful failure in its own right. In his famous 1923 preface to the translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens*, Walter Benjamin describes a translation as part of the “afterlife” of a text in such a way that it informs the history of reception of the original. In a sense then the translation is not secondary or derivative, but a viable and important text in its own right. It must remain as close to the original as it possibly can. Many readers misinterpret the literality in Benjamin’s definition of the task of translation as a mere copying of the original, as it is, into the target language.

However, the imperative to be literal does not imply that the translation must be a perfect copy or reproduction of the original text at all. Benjamin explains, somewhat obscurely, “Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another” (79). In other words, the translator must make changes to the translating or target language so it approximates the original’s intended meaning as closely as possible.³⁴ However, Benjamin continues that a literal reproduction of the syntax of the original

³⁴ Benjamin quotes Rudolf Pannwitz to support his argument: “Our translations [German ones], even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English.” For Pannwitz the translator “must broaden and deepen his own language with the foreign one” (81).

would render the translation incomprehensible and that as such “translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate anything, from rendering the sense” (78-79). It is not the object or the word itself that must be reproduced as it is in the translation, but the intended effect or meaning of the original word must carry through in the target language. As a result, task of the translator “consists in finding that intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original” and his/her translation “instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language” (79).³⁵ This may be achieved, says Benjamin, by the literal rendering of words and not sentences. This famous ideal of pure language, some fantasy of a language that is immediate in its signification, promises linguistic

³⁵ The domestication of the original according to the demands of the target culture and the consequent foreignization of the reader in the process are best described in Lawrence Venuti’s *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* originally published in 1995. Lawrence Venuti argues that since the seventeenth century, translation theory has been shaped by the imperative that the translator should completely efface himself so as to hide the traces of any work of translation from one language into another. The success of the translator has thus been measured against the extent to which the translated text reads as though it was originally written in the target language. The compulsion to remove any trace of foreignness constitutes what Venuti names “domesticating translation.” On the other side of the spectrum is what he calls “foreignizing translation” which is more bent on revealing the foreignness of the original text in the target language. The idea of a foreignizing translation comes from Friedrich Schleiermacher’s famous 1813 essay “Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens” (“On the Different Methods of Translating”) in which Schleiermacher proposes two opposing choices in the work of translation. In his essay “The Misery and the Splendor of Translation,” Jose Ortega y Gasset summarizes Schleiermacher’s essay as such:

One should note, in any case, that what is essential concerning the matter has been said more than a century ago by the dear theologian Schleiermacher in his essay ‘On the Different Methods of Translating.’ According to him, a translation can move in either of two directions: either the author is brought to the language of the reader, or the reader is carried to the language of the author. In the first case, we do not translate, in the proper sense of the word; we, in fact, do an imitation, or a paraphrase of the original text. It is only when we force the reader from his linguistic habits and oblige him to move within those of the author that there is actually translation. In his opinion, the translator either ignores the original author and works on attracting the reader, or he ignores the reader and works on remaining close to the original author’s word. True translation, in Schleiermacher’s view, is the first; mere or interpretation or *dolmetschen*, is the second. (*The Translation Studies Reader* 60)

I will return to the contextual repercussions of translation as either a domesticating or foreignizing performance in every individual chapter. In the introduction, I only want to set up the complex relationship between the translation and the original and Benjamin’s essay establishes the equal importance of both texts rather the superiority of the original to a derivative.

totality and the recuperation of the loss of any meaning.³⁶ Although the Arabic translations do not always preserve the original's mode of intention, they still must be considered as primary texts that can inform the afterlife of the original. Moreover, Benjamin's task of the translator has informed my own in this dissertation, as all the translations from Arabic are mine and are almost unfailingly a literal rendering of the words of the original texts.

However, few translations would stand the test of Benjamin's task of translation/ translator. In reading Benjamin's essay, Paul de Man concludes that the translation is always secondary to the original and as such can never do what the original did and remains an inevitable failure. In his posthumously published 1983 lecture "Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator,'" Paul de Man writes that "the translator, per definition, fails. The translator can never do what the original text did. Any translation is always second in relation to the original, and the translator as such is lost from the very beginning" (33). De Man continues to say, however, that this failure is not a human one but rather a failure of language (35), thus placing this failure outside of the agency of the translator. Because of the always already present disjunction between the signifier and the referent, translations can

³⁶ Moreover, Benjamin continues to affirm that the relationship between the translation and the original changes over time because "in its afterlife [...] the original undergoes a change. Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process" (80). Consequently, the language of the translator also changes over time as Benjamin says "the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well" so "what sounded fresh once may sound hackneyed later" (80). To some extent then, Benjamin lays emphasis on the contexts of the original and the translation as the language of both transforms over time. This is extremely true of the translation of the novel into Arabic: for instance, we find that the early translations of Chateaubriand's *René* and *Atala* towards the end of the 19th century are much more faithful to the originals than al-Manfalūfī's adaptation of the stories in 1915. Moreover, in the particular case of Classical Arabic, we also begin to see the introduction of the colloquial into Arabic literature especially in the reproduction of the dialogues from the original novels. Also the use of the colloquial was a matter of some debate that I would like to get into in my future work, as it is clear in the history of the development of the Arabic language that the translations of the novel encouraged the use of the colloquial instead of the Classical in fiction. Benjamin continues, "This, to be sure, is to admit that all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages" (75).

never really hope to refer back to an origin but must remain “wandering, an errance, a kind of permanent exile” (44). Benjamin’s task of the translator, in de Man’s reading, becomes an obligation to “to give up in relation to the task of refinding what was there in the original” (33). In a sense, the original would then be made to give up its own “desire to say something, the need to make a statement” (34). De Man implicitly puts Benjamin’s task of translation to test when he critiques the equivalence assumed in the performance of translation.

He writes that “from the moment that a translation is really literal ... word by word, the meaning completely disappears ... there is also a complete slippage of the meaning when the translator follows the syntax, when he writes literally ... And to some extent, a translator ... has to be literal” (41). To translate literally is to “disrupt the ostensibly stable meaning of a sentence and introduce in it a slippage by means of which that meaning disappears, evanesces, and by means of which all control over that meaning is lost” (41). To perform a literal translation is to presume that language produces meaning in a transparent way such that what is said in one language can easily be equal to an expression in another since all languages are assumed to reflect objective meanings that in the world outside language. On the other hand, the translation for sense implies that all languages have similar ways of producing meaning, just in different styles. He proceeds to show how this kind of translation is done, wherein one selects a word or sentence from the original text and then reproduces it in the way he or she wants. Because translation is ultimately an “intralinguistic” practice which means it “relate[s] to what in the original belongs to language, and not to meaning as an extralinguistic correlate” (36), if the translation fails to produce meaning it is only because the original has failed before it. De Man implies that the meaning of the original is lost and thus continues to say that

translation “disarticulate[s] ... undo[es] the original ... reveal[s] that the original was always already disarticulated” (36).

For instance, Benjamin contends that in poetic translations the original grows into a state of maturity in its *Nachereife* [afterlife]. De Man “translates” the *Nachereife* into death. He says “the translation belongs not to the life of the original, the original is already dead, but the translation belongs to the afterlife of the original, thus assuming and confirming the death of the original” (36). Thus the failure of all translations is rooted in the original itself since translations

reveal that their failure, which seems to be due to the fact that they are secondary in relation to the original, reveals an essential failure, an essential disarticulation which was already there in the original. ... They read the original from the perspective of a pure language (*reine Sprache*), a language that would be entirely freed of the illusion of meaning – pure form if you want; and in doing so they bring to light a dismemberance, a de-canonization which was already there in the original from the beginning. (36)

In an act of usurpation, the “translation canonizes its own version more than the original was canonical” (35). The translation becomes canonized while the original loses its status and its meaning, and the translation implies that the original never really said anything, and thus it had already experienced a failure to articulate meaning. As such, de Man concludes that if the original is always in a state of permanent exile, then the language of the translator is only doubly so “for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled ... what is to be one’s language is the most displaced, the most alienated of all” (44).

Although de Man’s reading of Benjamin sounds somewhat idealistic, it has been extremely helpful to my own readings in my dissertation. For one, the failure that de Man keeps describing recalls the labelling of these early Arabic translations of the novel as failures. However, in light of de Man, one can begin to see that this failure, as an ultimate failure of language, can be very helpful to rethinking failure in

this particular context not as a negative lack, but as an essential failure of signification. As such, the Arabic language contracts this failure and exacerbates it as we will see particularly in the moments of adaptation of the original texts. Moreover, in revealing this failure, the Arabic translations perform a conscious act of usurpation: as I have already explained, most of these translations do not name the original author or title and thus canonize their own version more so than they do the original. And finally, de Man describes the introduction of “slippage” into the sentences of the original. In every translation I have studied, such slippage makes possible both the work of translation and the adaptation of the *new* genre of the novel.

In his somewhat different reading of the same essay by Benjamin, Jacques Derrida finds in the lethal form of de Manian translation an actual curative possibility rather than a final death sentence on the original. Although both de Man and Derrida agree that the “original” is not fully present to itself as an original, and that the problem of “translation” is also the problem of language and signification more generally, in Derrida’s reading, the task of translation is both a debt and a responsibility to the other, thus creating an ethical imperative to the relationship between the translator and the original text. As part of the afterlife of the original, the translation must guarantee that the original “live more [plus] and better, beyond the means of its author” (214). Unlike de Man, Derrida bases the relationship between the original and the translation on differences rather than similarities. He writes that “a translation weds the original when the two adjoined fragments, which are as different as possible, complete each other to form a greater language, in the course of an afterlife [*survie*] which changes them both” (224). Like de Man, Derrida recognizes that the translation points to a failure in the original, but this is a different kind of failure. According to Derrida, the original requires completion because “originally it

was not there without fault, full, complete, total and identical to itself. From the origin of the original-to-be-translated, there is exile and fall” (222). The translation adds to the original by taking directives from it (222). This does not imply that the original and the translation will resemble each other. The translation, rather, leaves the original intact and presents itself as different from it and original in its own right. Only as a complete original can the translation add anything to the original itself, which is already incomplete on its own as it refers to other texts as well to make its own meaning. As Eve Tavor Bannet explains in her reading of Derrida’s essay in her 1993 piece “The Scene of Translation:”

This means that “originality” is always already divided from itself-since it is only as a translator that every supposed creator originates, fails, falls, and calls for translation in his/her turn. And it is through the supplementation and completion of an original text that the translator “extends, enlarges, makes grow” (222) at the same time enriching and changing his/her language and culture through the in(ter)vention of a text which in turn calls for translation and for the supplementation, completion, and add-jointing of other texts. (587)

Derrida’s emphasis on difference rather than similarity between the translation and the original has certainly enriched my own readings. Thinking the relationship between the original and its translation as one of supplementarity has helped me put the history of the European novel in conversation with that of the Arabic novel, rather than considering the second as a derivative of the first. But by far, the most helpful aspect of Derrida’s reading of Benjamin is the former’s questioning of the originality of the origin in translation. By displacing the primacy of the origin as a beginning, identical to itself, Derrida’s reading has shaped my re-evaluation of the Arabic novel’s tales of origin, particularly those that dismiss the translations as tangential to the mature form of the Arabic novel as we have come to know it today. As I mentioned earlier, I will return to this problem of origin in more detail in the conclusion to my dissertation.

Thus when de Man reads translation as a harbinger of death, Derrida reads it as a promise of growth and life. Also, what de Man reads as a permanent exile of the language of the translator, Derrida reads as change in the language and culture of the translating language through the interference of a text that demands to be translated, and thus to be supplemented by a translation. De Man reads the inevitable failure of translation as a death sentence on the original while Derrida reads the failure or incompleteness of both the original and the translation as a promise for both: in complementing each other, some notion of the complementarity between languages can take shape. However, both critics take away the agency or role of the translator and relegate the relationship between the translation and the original to the realm of language. De Man's inevitable failure has informed my readings of each one of the four translations in my dissertation. I examine the ways in which the translation fails to render the meaning of the original and thus casts the meaning of the original in question at the same time. However, in reading the relationship between the original and the translation, my argument in every chapter depends on Derrida's idea of complementarity such that every translation informs our reading of and assumptions about the original novel as well. The translations under study are imitative translations to the extent that they subversively imitate the original, even when some of them claim to be metaphrastic or word-for-word renditions of the original. I focus on moments of subversive imitation as important moments of failures in the de Manian sense, moments that reveal the incompleteness of the original but only to add to and enrich our reading of it.

In my dissertation, I have also found the work of Lawrence Venuti indispensable to a real understanding of this relationship between the translation and the original in the particular context of translation into Arabic. In a chapter in his 1995

book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* entitled "Simpatico: Translation as a Process of Interpretation,"³⁷ Lawrence Venuti argues that if translation is considered as a derivative, then it will always be on the losing side of an idealistic equation figured in a Platonic metaphysics... as the copy of a copy (290).³⁸ Language as already a failed copy of reality becomes a double failure when the translation tries to copy a failed reality into its different, but equally failing, linguistic register. However, Venuti maintains that such dismissal of translation relegates it to the outskirts of every discipline, minimizing its impetus and power as a literary agent on its own. From the idealistic readings of de Man and Derrida, Venuti provides a transition through the particular examples of translation performances to the question of the role of the translator and the cultural context that forms the background to the translative exchange. In *The Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti writes:

Although ... translation [is] the site of multiple determinations and effects – linguistic cultural, ideological, political –... the translator always exercises a choice concerning the degree and direction of the violence at work in his practice. ("Invisibility" 19)

This is not to say that the conscious performance of the translator is the final measure for this translative exchange; rather, the consideration of the background can throw some light on the inevitable failure of the translation and the complementarity between the original and the translation. In turn, such contextual mapping can help

³⁷ The chapter was initially published as an independent essay of the same title in the journal *Sub-Stance* 65 (1991): 3 – 20.

³⁸ Venuti explains:

Because transparent discourse is perceived as mirroring the author, it values the foreign text as original, authentic, true, and devalues the translated text as derivative, simulacral, false, forcing on translation the project of effacing its second-order status with a fluent strategy. It is here that a Platonic metaphysics emerges from beneath romantic individualism to construe translation as the copy of a copy, dictating a translation strategy in which the effect of transparency masks the mediations between and within copy and original, eclipsing the translator's labor with an illusion of authorial presence, reproducing the cultural marginality and economic exploitation which translation suffers today. (*The Translator's Invisibility* 289 – 290)

explain the relationship of translation to the complex process of the formation of national discourses of identity.

In “Local Contingencies: Translation and National Identities,” published in the anthology *Nation, Language and the Ethics of Translation* in 2005, Lawrence Venuti relates the formation of nationalist identity agendas to the politics of translation. He writes that whether the translating nation decides to preserve or erase the differences of the original texts in translation, “in both cases the differences of the foreign texts are exploited to construct a national identity that is assumed to pre-exist the translation process” (178). He quotes from Jacques Derrida’s 1992 “Onto-Theology of National-Humanism (Prolegomena to a Hypothesis)” to explain that “nationalist thinking rests on a circular logic: the nation, imagined to be a homogeneous essence, must be constructed, but the construction is understood as ‘a recourse, a re-source, a circular return to the source’ (Derrida 12)” (178).

Venuti continues to relate the circular logic of the nation, whereby a discourse on the nation becomes a reality that is constructed on and refers back to the discourse that created it, and says “[n]ationalist translation agendas depend on the same circularity: the national status of a language and culture is simultaneously presupposed and created through translation” (178). In the context of the translation of the novel into Arabic, Pierre Cachia argues that the imagined source of the West became abstracted into the ideal entity that is simultaneously an origin and an entity to emulate. For instance, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn’s infatuation with Western language and philosophy went so far as for him to proclaim in his 1957 *Mustaqbal al-thaqāfah fi Miṣr* [The Future of Education in Egypt] that Egypt really belongs to Europe and thus Latin should be taught at all Egyptian schools. Moreover, the concept of nation was produced in Arabic through translation. Both Buṭrus al-Bustānī in Lebanon and

Rifā‘ah Rif‘at al-Ṭaḥṭāwī in Egypt began speaking in the name of and in an address to the nation as a result of their Western training and prolific translations of Western texts. Thus in this particular setting, the coming of the concept of “nation” in translation displaces the origin even further away, and it remains at least doubly removed in the construction of nationalist identities in the work of most of the writers I discuss in my dissertation. I will develop the evolution of this concept of nation that remains, like de Man’s language of the translator, in “a permanent condition of exile,” from the work of Buṭrus al-Bustānī to the translation of Muḥammad al-Sibā‘ī and finally in the complex thought of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal.

Venuti uses Anthony Easthope’s 1999 book *Englishness and National Culture* to bring together nationalism and subjectivity “in a synthesis of poststructuralism and psychoanalysis” (179). Venuti traces the complex dynamic of self-recognition in the discourse of the other in the performance of translation. He writes that “[t]ranslation can support the formation of national identities through both the selection of foreign texts and the development of discursive strategies to translate them” (180). The choice of the text-to-be-translated can either be based on a perceived similarity in the social situation of the origin and target cultures; or on its theme which can contribute to the “creation of a specific discourse of nation in the translating culture;” or finally on the possibility of translating the foreign text with a discursive strategy that is popular in the translating culture. Venuti continues:

Such translation practices form national identities through a specular process in which the subject identifies with cultural materials that are defined as national and thereby enable a self-recognition in a national collective. The fact that the materials at issue may include forms and themes, texts and cultures that are irreducibly foreign is repressed in a fantastic identification with an apparently homogeneous national identity. The irreducible foreignness of these materials may actually result in an intensification of national desire: in this instance, whatever linguistic and cultural differences may be communicated by a translation elicit a desire for a unified nation that the translation cannot fulfil by virtue of those very differences. (180)

The complex process of identification mapped out by Venuti is thus articulated in relation to the “irreducible foreignness” of the text to be translated. In the context of the Arabic translations, this process is further complicated by the even more problematic relationship to this foreignness. Some of the early translations in Arabic especially announced their status as translations but made no reference to the original authors or titles. Others masqueraded as translations when they were in fact native novelistic texts to avoid censorship. As I said earlier, the choice of translations was quite random at the beginning, as these were intended to provide entertainment for the masses that felt alienated from Classical Arabic literature (most of them were completely unfamiliar with Classical literature or indeed had almost no access to it) in a time of occupation and failed revolutions. Later on, and around the turn of the twentieth century, translation begins to partake more directly in a nationalist discourse wherein the promise of producing fiction à la Rousseau, Voltaire, Balzac and Zola became the possibility of constructing a national literature and identity. These hybrid translations in the Arabic context thus complicate Venuti’s analysis; however, the idea that the nation came to be produced in translation and through the work of translators is extremely relevant, even when the translators were not consciously or deliberately creating a nationalist discourse. Venuti remarks in this context that “[t]he formation of national identities can remain unconscious because it occurs in language that originates elsewhere, in the subject’s relations to others, but that the subject perceives as his or her own self-expression” (180).

In this sense, the work of Derrida and de Man on translation has been indispensable to me. While my dissertation carefully considers the historical, political and cultural context of the translation of the novel into Arabic, it reads the particular performance of translation in each chapter as disruptive of the language of the original

primarily because of the intralinguistic relationship between the translation and the original, such that the relationship between the two is never dependent on the whim of the translator but on a complex linguistic exchange that eludes stable reference to extra-linguistic realities and becomes the catalyst for remarkable changes in the original that become tangible in its translation into Arabic.³⁹ Venuti concludes, “The identity formed by such translations could only be hybrid, not simply national, but imperial, not simply classical ... but also modern and Western to some extent” (190).

Finally, my approach to translation in a colonial context is also a consideration of its subversive potential through mimicking the original to create such hybrid identities that remain powerful mostly in hovering in-between two nations, two cultures and two languages, but never really settling in either.⁴⁰ At the very beginning

³⁹ Venuti provides a very helpful analysis of translation of Western texts in China at the end of the 19th century. Such translations of Western texts were intended to encourage resistance to Western imperialism. In the process, a relational national identity emerges, one which hovers between reference to the Chinese background and a valorisation of all things Western. Venuti writes that this “relational identity, always fundamentally differential, shaped through a distinction from the other on which the identity is nonetheless based, might be either exclusionary or receptive” (187). The example of China parallels the Arabic one in the 19th century, only the early Arabic translations were intended more as a means of escaping sordid realities than encouraging resistance at the time. However, in both cases, it becomes clear that the initiative to rewrite foreign texts as expressions of native desires can only get stuck in the same circular logic that establishes a nation: “In using translation to form national identities, the translators expose the contradictory conditions of their nationalist agendas. ...the translating can only return to the identity that it is said to create” (188). Venuti carries this idea through in establishing a relation between such nationalist agendas and the institution of a nation more generally. He writes:

Nationalist agendas in translation involve the conceptual violence that occurs whenever the unity of a nation is proclaimed, whether at its founding moment or subsequently in its cultural and political institutions. An assertion of national unity fictively creates that unity in the very process of asserting it by repressing the differences among the heterogeneous groupings and interests that comprise any social collective. (189)

What ends up happening is that through these translations, primarily selected by an elite class of intellectuals, the translating culture comes to adopt and assert a homogeneous identity when none is to be found. In my future work, I would like to study such a complex correlation between the institution of a nation and the creation of a nationalist identity discourse in translation more thoroughly, studying the relationship between the violent moment of the institution of a nation to the violence of translation as a performance of textual violation.

⁴⁰ Homi Bhabha in his “Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse” from his book *The Location of Culture* originally published in 1994 (reprinted 1995), has been extremely helpful to me in thinking about the subversive potential of mimicking the colonial discourse. Bhabha writes that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (86; emphasis original). Because of this unattainable desire for the other as the same, the discourse of colonialism is inevitably constructed around ambivalence and because the “excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the

of the introduction, I mentioned that Napoleon's declaration to the Egyptians was printed on board one of his fleets at sea, literally in-between two places. I will continue to show in the rest of my dissertation how this position of the in-between authorizes these hybrid translations and not necessarily as conscious rewritings or imitations of an original, but more importantly as inevitable products of the subtle differences and gaps that define the relationship between an authoritative, originary text and its derivative, secondary translation.⁴¹

In her 1992 piece "The Politics of Translation," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak continues a conversation she had in 1990 with Michèle Barrett about the responsibility of the translator. In the section of her essay entitled "Translation as Reading," Spivak asks how a translator is supposed to attend to the specificity of the language she or he is translating when we know that "there is a way in which the rhetorical nature of every language disrupts its logical systematicity. If we emphasize

same, but not quite) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. By 'partial' I mean both 'incomplete' and 'virtual'" (86). This same desire becomes "the basis of mimicry" and "articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical differences that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority" (88). Mimicry capitalizes on what seems to be similar but is in reality entirely different. As such, in articulating the ambivalence of the colonial authoritative discourse, mimicry also exposes its weaknesses and disrupts it, in much the same way de Man describes the translation's interruptions of the original.

⁴¹ Although the texts I am working with are not exactly post-colonial texts, my project is nonetheless in conversation with postcolonial theory on translation. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, the editors of *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* published in 1999, relate the colony to translation in the introduction to the book ("Introduction: Of Colonies, Cannibals, and Vernaculars"): "For Europe was regarded as the great Original, the starting point, and the colonies were therefore copies, or 'translations' of Europe, which they were supposed to duplicate. Moreover, being copies, translations were evaluated as less than originals, and the myth of the translation as something that diminished the greater original established itself" (4). Maria Tymoczko's chapter entitled "Post-colonial writing and literary translation" draws helpful parallels between the two:

The two types of textual production converge in many respects; as the metaphor of translation suggests, the transmission of elements from one culture to another across a cultural and/or linguistic gap is a central concern of both these types of intercultural writing and similar constraints on the process of relocation affect both types of texts. (22)

Such a coeval consideration of the two types of textual production forms the background to some of my thinking on translation as a subversive tool of rewriting the original, both as translation and as colonial presence.

the logical at the expense of these rhetorical interferences, we remain safe” (398). Of course being safe is not necessarily being ethically responsible towards the other text. Although Spivak is mainly discussing the responsibility of translating third world (postcolonial) literature into English, her conclusions can be just as applicable to this specific context of translation into Arabic. Spivak maintains that even though it is always possible for rhetoric or figuration to interrupt the logical meaning of any text,

[y]et in translation, where meaning hops into the spacy emptiness between two named historical languages ... The experience of contained alterity in an unknown language spoken in a different cultural milieu is uncanny. Let us now think that, in that other language, rhetoric may be disrupting logic in the matter of the production of an agent, and indicating the founding violence of the silence at work within rhetoric. Logic allows us to jump from word to word by means of clearly indicated connections. Rhetoric must work in the silence between and around words in order to see what works and how much. The jagged relationship between rhetoric and logic, condition and effect of knowing, is a relationship by which a world is made for the agent, so that the agent can act in an ethical way, a political way, a day-to-day way; so that the agent can be alive, in a human way, in the world. Unless one can at least construct a model of this for the other language, there is no real translation. (398 – 399)

And so the first task of the translator is to

surrender to the text. She must solicit the text to show the limits of its language, because that rhetorical aspect will point at the silence of the absolute fraying of language that the text wards off ...translation is the most intimate act of reading. (400)

Thus, for translation to be possible at all, the silence of rhetoric has to come through in the translating language and not be sacrificed at the altar of logic. In other words, the task of the translator begins precisely where intelligibility encounters its limits, when sentences begin to elude making perfect sense, and particularly at the moment when the translator can lose himself or herself in the interruptions of rhetoric. As such, translation becomes a way to approach the limits of our own identity narratives as well, as translation is also reading, and reading is the way we live our lives as we read the world around us as text. Spivak writes, “One of the ways to get around the

confines of one's identity as one who produces expository prose is to work at someone else's title, as one works with a language that belongs to many others" (397). Spivak's description of translation as an intimate form of reading forms the backbone to my close readings in every chapter, and especially chapter four where I actually treat translation as an act of reading intimately, one that comes to structure the relationship of the authoring self to an imagined origin, an imagined other.

Moreover, in my own role as translator, I have chosen to remain closer to rhetoric than to logic. All the translations in the dissertation are mine, and they all sound somewhat awkward in their English constructions because I deliberately reproduced the Arabic sentences as they are in English. My task of translation, however, is not meant to make a statement on how translation from Arabic to English should take place. Rather, my intention was to engage the reader as faithfully as I could in the translations I chose to work with. Sometimes the task proved rather difficult, and at some points even impossible, as some of my translations actually make little to no sense. However, I am convinced that for the purpose of the study of the translation of the novel into Arabic, such close attention to the language of the translations is most helpful to understanding the complex exchange between the original and the translating cultures.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter one entitled "Stranded in Arabic: *Robinson Crusoe* in Beirut" focuses on the 1861 translation of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in Lebanon by the famous lexicographer Buṭrus al-Bustānī. The chapter follows al-Bustānī's prolific career and especially his contribution to the emergence of a nationalist discourse in Lebanon (part of Greater Syria at the time), and places this contribution in conversation with

his translation of Defoe's novel, which he intended as part of the new curricular program at the New School (*al-Madrasah al-Ḥadīthah*) he headed. The chapter carefully studies al-Bustānī's subtle changes to the original and re-evaluates his claim to absolute fidelity and literality in an attempt to uncover subversive moments of adaptation. Such appropriative gestures in the adaptation of the original novel, as I will show, are not merely "unintentional" criticisms of a political system but also an important domestication of the form of the novel.

Chapter two studies Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī's translation of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788) and his adaptation of François de Chateaubriand's *René* and *Atala* in 1915, especially in relation to al-Manfalūṭī's devotion to French romanticism and his theories on language and signification. The first translation refers to its original author and departs from the original text in obvious ways while the second translation is a complete adaptation that combines the two stories together into one short story and makes no reference to the original author or texts at all. I also place al-Manfalūṭī's understanding of romanticism in conversation with the reforming intellectuals' devotion to French realism and naturalism to complicate the relationship between translation and reference in the novels under study. The chapter concludes on al-Manfalūṭī's significant contribution to the Egyptian novel of the early 20th century.

Chapter three examines Muḥammad al-Sibā'ī's 1912 translation of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Again through meticulous close reading, the chapter traces what becomes of the original's metaphorical logic in the interruptive sentences of the Arabic translation (as they continually stop to comment on the original's ideas or explain them in footnotes). The chapter studies the interruptions in the original's work of metaphor and considers how these in turn interrupt the

inherently repetitive structure of both fiction and revolution. As such, the chapter concludes on al-Sibā'ī's borrowed revolutionary rhetoric, one that remains stuck in translation.

Finally, chapter four indirectly engages Spivak's imperative that the translator should submit to the text in an intimate form of reading. In this final chapter, I approach translation as an intimate conversation between Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal and his hero Jean Jacques Rousseau. I study Haykal's biography of the life of Rousseau written in two volumes (published in 1921 and 1923) and then Haykal's 1913 novel *Zaynab*, importantly considered by some critics as the first *mature* Arabic novel. I also discuss Haykal's 1933 book *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature] in relation to his "translation" of Rousseau and the making of a national literature.

In the conclusion, I return to the question of origins and genealogies that I brought up earlier by assessing the possible influence the translation of the European novel has had on the Arabic novel, and by using translation as the ultimate paradigm that displaces any notion of an original origin or a first "Arabic" novel in re-evaluating popular approaches to the history of the Arabic novel.

Chapter One

Stranded in Arabic: *Robinson Crusoe* in Beirut

O, poor Robinson Crusoe, / How could you possibly do so?

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

I, Robinson Crusoe, being at this time in perfect and sound mind and memory, thanks be to God therefor, do hereby declare their objection is an invention scandalous in design, and false in fact; and do affirm that the story, though allegorical, is also historical; and that it is the beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortune, and of a variety not to be met with in the world.

Daniel Defoe, *Works*, 3: ix

In 1861, amidst a raging civil war in the mountains of Lebanon, a famous Lebanese intellectual and political activist known as Buṭrus al-Bustānī interrupts his prolific political writing to translate Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* into Arabic. Under Ottoman rule, Lebanon had not yet come into the borders that define it today. Rather, the country was divided under confessional affiliations, wherein one's sense of national identity was inextricably bound to one's religion. Curiously, in his political writings at the time, Buṭrus al-Bustānī would call for a "nationalist" sentiment that would bring the Lebanese people together. However, this nationalist feeling would not be predicated on a claim to land or definitive borders but rather on what seems to be an idealist conception of nation as unbounded home. It is unclear what constituted the grounds for al-Bustānī's conception of nationalism, but one place one could start looking is in his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Buṭrus al-Bustānī, born in Beirut in 1819, studied English with the American missionaries in Beirut in the 1840's. While he was helping the American missionary Eli Smith to translate the Bible into Arabic, al-Bustānī was also toiling over his own translation of *Robinson Crusoe*. The translation was published in 1861 in Beirut, and

he named it *Al-tiḥfah al-Bustānīyah fī al-Asfār al-Krusoeiyah*, which translates as “The Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels.” Like Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s (1801-1873) classical *Mawāqī‘ al-aflāk fī waqā’i‘ Talimāk*, al-Bustānī’s translation also has a title with two rhyming parts (Bustānīyah and Krusoeiyah).⁴² However, unlike the original title, “*The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*,” the new title refers to the name of the new author or, in this case, translator.

Al-Bustānī translates the novel during the civil war between the Drūz and Christians which had begun in 1860. A very moderate political thinker, al-Bustānī was simultaneously publishing a political journal known as *Nafīr Sūriyya* [the Trumpet of Syria].⁴³ In his journal, he included several drafts of what he called “*waṭaniyyāt*,” a word which is difficult to render in English. *Waṭan* is nation or homeland, and the suffix “*īyyāt*” indicates that these writings are musings of some sort on the state of the nation. At this point in Lebanese history, Lebanon was still part of Greater Syria and not its own independent being or nation as al-Bustānī referred to it. The country as a whole, under Ottoman rule, was divided according to confession or faith and not according to demarcated regions. Thus, as I mentioned earlier, community affiliation and identity were linked to religion rather than nationality.

Al-Bustānī was also writing during a period that has since been termed the *nahḍah*, implying a cultural revival. Critics generally agree that this period extended from the mid-19th century until the early decades of the 20th century.⁴⁴ A pillar of the

⁴² As I mentioned in the Introduction, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s translation of Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* is considered the first translation of the novel form into Arabic.

⁴³ I am grateful to Stephen Sheehi for bringing my attention to al-Bustānī’s political journal *Nafīr Sūriyya*.

⁴⁴ Refer to the Introduction for a detailed discussion of the problems associated with this historical label and periodization. For the purposes of this chapter I am not invested in the debate itself, but would merely like to emphasize that in the general movement of cultural revival, al-Bustānī played a major role.

Lebanese cultural revival, al-Bustānī insisted on instilling in people a love of their nation. He signed every “*waṭaniyyah*” with “*Lover of the Nation*” (*muḥibb al-waṭan*). We also find his signature, in another form, on his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*. In this chapter, I will read his signature on the literary translation in relation to the authoring of a sense of nation or *waṭan*. While most readers of al-Bustānī’s work pay more attention to the political writings, I want to examine particular moments in his translation of *Robinson Crusoe* to see how these trouble the relationship between the original and the translation and thus (perhaps unexpectedly) contribute to the definition of nation by undoing the very novelty of the original novel (considered by some critics as a prototypical and inaugural *English* novel). If the original novel is the inaugural text of an imperialist England,⁴⁵ whose nationalist sentiments are made possible because of and yet despite the nation’s borders (after all it is *England* that can travel anywhere), the translation rewrites this nationalism without recourse to—as well as outside of—these borders. The translation will speak to a nationalism *avant la lettre* so to speak, a nationalism before the border. In being copied in translation from the inaugural Western text, this nationalism is emptied out of the claim to land that is its original condition of possibility.

We begin to detect this rewritten nationalism in the translation’s erasure of the proper name of the original author. The anonymous signature on the *waṭaniyyāt* (although al-Bustānī’s name was mentioned elsewhere in the text), “*Lover of the Nation*,” persists in a different form in the translation. As mentioned earlier, the translation was completed in Beirut in 1861. In the translation, al-Bustānī presents the original editor’s preface as the translator’s introduction, thus replacing the anonymous

⁴⁵ In his essay “Daniel Defoe” published in 1964, James Joyce famously described Crusoe as a “true prototype of the British colonist. . . . The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe: the manly independence, the unconscious cruelty, the persistence, the slow yet efficient intelligence, the sexual apathy, the calculating taciturnity.”

editor with the named translator. We also find that the name of Defoe is missing. One is compelled to ask at the very beginning of the text: is it that the original text invites such an erasure of the name of its author, or is the removal of the name an act of usurpation here on the part of al-Bustānī?

I already mentioned that al-Bustānī names his translation *Al-tihfah al-Bustānīyah fi al-Asfar al-Krusoeiyah*, which translates as “The Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels.” The name of the translator is used in the title as an adjective, Bustānīan, which describes the masterpiece of Crusoe’s travels.⁴⁶ It is as though in the title itself, the translator becomes author, right before the reader turns to the next page and finds the “Translator’s Introduction.” The usurpation begun with the title of the text, continues with the “Translator’s Introduction,” and ends with the insertion of the translator’s name at the end of the text. I would like to read the erasure of the name of the original author in relation to al-Bustānī’s signature “Lover of the Nation.” Although I will not focus on the texts of the *waṭaniyyāt*, I believe that the substitution of the original author with the name of the translator has important consequences for al-Bustānī’s definition of *waṭan* or nation. The complex process of identification and substitution that takes place between the absent name of Defoe and the present name of al-Bustānī as translator (notably not as author) sheds light on al-Bustānī’s understanding of “national identity,” one completely mediated through translation.

⁴⁶ Al-Bustānī’s translation is more influential in the history of translation into Arabic than al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s who was more concerned with remaining close to the tradition of Classical Arabic. Sasson Somekh argues that the norms established by al-Bustānī’s translation were more influential in terms of setting the standards for translation into Arabic than were the translations of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. After al-Bustānī, there is a noticeable increase in the number of translators, mostly of Lebanese Christian origin, who specialize in translating fiction. Most of them settled and worked in Egypt in the last decades of the century to escape censorship, bringing with them “many [...] non-classical stylistic predilections” (“The Emergence of Two Stylistic Norms,” 199). Although their writing was first met with indignation by traditional Muslim scholars, their influence found its way to the new generation of Muslim writers who began to imitate their translations.

My concern, however, in this chapter is not al-Bustānī's identity politics specifically. I believe that al-Bustānī's conception of *waṭan* cannot be understood without reading his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*. I therefore focus on how the translation rewrites the inaugural status of the original text in translation, and thus succeeds in rewriting the original's nationalist sentiments. Al-Bustānī makes clear in the introduction that this is an educational endeavor and that the purpose of the translation is to teach something. The novel in translation made possible a different kind of education, and al-Bustānī understood that all too well. Although there is a body of narrative fiction in Arabic before the introduction of the novel, it's the form of the novel that enables al-Bustānī's educational project.

“I run over the whole History of my Life in Miniature:” The Novelty of Robinson Crusoe

The history of the critical reception of *Robinson Crusoe* concerns itself primarily with the “novel” form of the text. This novelty is almost always related to the novel's revisionary structure, in that Crusoe writes his adventures, and then rewrites them in a journal which is included in the body of the novel. The act of revision and rewriting (with all the details revised still included in the text) forms a retrospective account which enables Crusoe the narrator to describe Crusoe the character after the event. The retrospective account enables the narrator to have some control over the structure of the event; for instance, we find several moments in which an event that Crusoe intimates might happen actually happens. Thus the figural event, as it is given to us in the language of his account, comes to its literal fulfillment every time. In what follows, I will describe how this fulfillment is made possible by the revisionary texture of the novel. In the analysis of the Arabic translation, we will see

how the translation actually disables the original's temporal structure of figural prediction and fulfillment.

Robinson Crusoe begins with an editor's preface in which an anonymous editor claims to have stumbled on this "story of [a] private man's adventures" ("Preface"), and thus decided to share it with the world. The preface tells the reader how "the Life of one Man" is "scarce capable of a greater variety," and how that makes our hero into the exemplary man, representative of, if not every man, then the potential behavior of any man when he encounters "all the Variety of our Circumstances." In the epigraph above from Defoe's *Works*, we hear a sworn testimony by a certain "Robinson Crusoe" that this account is not only allegorical but also historical. The epigraph insists on the historicity of the account, its factuality. The editor continues to tell us that he believes "the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it." The claim to historicity cannot be divorced from the inaugural status of *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, the 'first' English novel.⁴⁷ The "beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortune, and of a variety not to be met with in the world" declares itself to be the first of its kind. Even if Defoe himself, as in the epigraph above, relinquishes authorship to a historical Robinson Crusoe, he is still fully aware that he is producing something entirely new, something novel.

The novelty of Crusoe in the English context is exacerbated in the translation into Arabic. For the first time, there was a narrative form which enabled the recording of a full life, thus offering the possibility of observing the development of a

⁴⁷ Ian Watt canonizes Defoe's novel as the first English novel in his 1957 treatise, *The Rise of the Novel*. The novel is considered an inaugural text that marks the beginning of a different type of fiction writing, and in that sense I am using the rather problematic adjective "first" here, which is really intended to emphasize its inaugural status and not so much its *first-ness*.

character.⁴⁸ In *The Rise of the Novel* published in 1957, Ian Watt reads *Robinson Crusoe*'s inaugural status in relation to the rise of individualism. He writes that *Robinson Crusoe* is "certainly the first novel in the sense that it is the first fictional narrative in which an ordinary person's daily activities are the centre of continuous literary attention" (74). There are several revolutionary qualities of this new kind of narrative qualities that play out even more forcefully in the body of the translated text. For one, the novel allows alternative views of presenting and viewing the world which, as I mentioned in the Introduction, clash with the teachings of the Qur`ān. Robinson Crusoe's story begins in an act of disobedience: he refuses his father's advice to remain home and assume the middle position in life (associated here with the English middle class). Crusoe disobeys a command that would forcefully "keep" him in a traditional plot, of the good son who obeys the father and remains at home to lead a mediocre life, one that would most likely not be remembered. Crusoe's story can only begin after he has disobeyed and thus freed himself from the law of the father.⁴⁹ In his own words, he "was inured to a wandering life" (*Robinson Crusoe* 297).

Not only does Crusoe get a chance to disobey and do things otherwise, but he also gets to keep a record of his life and adventures. Here is where the plot of the adventure thickens. The revolutionary form of Defoe's novel (or Crusoe's story) is

⁴⁸ As I will discuss more fully in the fourth chapter, Arabic literature does have a rich tradition of autobiography as the 2001 book *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, put together by Dwight Reynolds and Kirsten Brustad, clearly demonstrates. However, and in this particular context, I am interested in the importation of autobiographical writing of a fictional character within the text of the novel.

⁴⁹ In *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957) Ian Watt describes the difference between the old view and the new view in this way: "Until the end of the seventeenth century the individual was not conceived as wholly autonomous, but as an element in a picture which depended on divine persons [the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost] for its meaning, as well as on traditional institutions such as Church and Kingship for its secular pattern" (84).

not so much in the shipwreck itself as it is in the retrospective account, written always after the event, and placing the event in a different narrative. If we recall the opening claim of the editor in his preface to the novel, that there is no appearance of fiction in this text but only fact, how is it that the random events that lead to a shipwreck and then a rescue could come to be in a meaningful narrative that makes sense to both Crusoe and his reader? I will return to this point particularly in the context of the novel's ending, and how this ending is rendered in the translation.

In the "Preface" to *The Storm*, Daniel Defoe writes, "In many cases I shall act the Divine, and draw necessary practical inferences" (qtd. in Michael McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel* 85). *Robinson Crusoe* can be the first of its kind because Defoe can play God, perform the divine in his own words. This declaration is even truer of *Robinson Crusoe* than it is of *The Storm*. Michael McKeon's 1987 *Origins of the English Novel: 1600-1740* takes off from a Marxist reading of literary history and situates the novel's origin in the shift from aristocratic to middle class norms and values. In light of his Marxist tendencies, Michael McKeon reads Defoe's performance of the divine in the figure of the author precisely as the inaugural moment of the novel. He writes,

The result of the fetishization of Protestant allegory is that mysterious yet familiar thing, the novel. In these terms, the novel is the characteristically modern literary mode, because in laying claim to an utter self-sufficiency of meaning, its narrative enacts the drama of a deforming secularization, the imperialistic incorporation of spirit by matter. (312 – 313)

Previously in the book, McKeon reads this "fetishization" of allegory as a "literalization of the metaphor" that consists in "subjecting revelation to material tests of veracity" (81). *Robinson Crusoe* is an inaugural text not merely because it submits revelation to the test. The power of this novel lies precisely in what McKeon calls "literalization of metaphor." It is not merely that this novel interrogates what

constitutes revelation; it is that it comes to perform the work of revelation in narrative. In several key moments in the novel, we encounter narrative “signs,” as it were, of what will come to pass. Defoe is not just telling it how it is; rather, while giving the appearance of a factual account, his novel is telling it as it ought to be, and how inevitably it will be, since now the author can play God. Ian Watt detects this performance of literalization in the text itself in his reading of *Robinson Crusoe*.

In *The Rise of the Novel*, Watt writes that Crusoe learns the word “deliverance” at the very moment that narrator and character become one. Thus the word deliverance, signifying here Crusoe’s physical and spiritual salvation, becomes “literal” when the character has enough distance from the events of his life to become a narrator. Watt tells us that “deliverance” is “at the beginning of the movement of narrative ‘atonement,’ where character and narrator come together” and “can be seen in the ease with which Robinson will be able to distinguish between anguished past and contented present” (318).

Literally, the character internalizes the thought-process of the narrator, who is attempting, retrospectively, to control the narrative’s production of meaning. The novel begins with the account of the birth and origins of our main character Crusoe, an event of origin to which he could not possibly have been a witness. Some seventy pages into the account, we get the insertion of a different form, that of the journal, which recounts to us most of what we had read before, but now in a sequential form: “And now being to enter into a melancholy Relation of a Scene of silent Life, such perhaps as was never heard of in the World before, I shall take it from its Beginning, and continue in its Order” (63). He keeps going over his own history: “I run over the whole History of my Life in Miniature, or Abridgment” (196). In a sense then, we have a beginning that begins after the actual beginning of the novel’s text. We could

say something similar about its ending as well. Why doesn't the novel end with Crusoe's salvation? Why do we have to continue reading about what happens to him upon his return to England, and then about his re-return to the island? The several beginnings and endings in the novel resonate with what McKeon calls the "fetishization of Protestant allegory" or the work of allegory in general. Only the work of allegory here is fetishized to the extent that it is disabled. When the text can begin at least three times, and end with a non-return to the original homeland, the novel leaves us with no closure and no allegorical lesson to draw on. In his 1980 article "*Robinson Crusoe* and the Story of the Novel" Quentin G. Kraft explains that after the return to England,

it is as if there had been no religious plot at all. Of course Crusoe continues to moralize but in an automatic way and then not very consistently-which is to say, he forgets to moralize just when one would most expect him to moralize... as soon as he gets back to Europe, it is as if nothing had happened on the island to change him in any profound way. ...if it is a sin "not being satisfy'd with the station wherein God and nature" had "placed" him, then to be "inured to a wandering life" is to be hardened in sin. (546)

Kraft locates multiple endings in the novel (the spiritual salvation, the physical salvation, the actual ending of the book). These multiple endings of the novel are also a manifestation of the novel's neurotic repetitions of Crusoe's story. Most importantly, the return to the island after the rescue powerfully disables the work of allegory at the end of the novel, as I will show towards the end of the chapter.

In *Robinson Crusoe: Island Myths and the Novel* published in 1991, Michael Seidel brings back the significance of historical context and the trope of the island to Crusoe's politics of reading and writing on the island. Seidel relates the repetitive retelling and reframing of Crusoe's story to the inaugural status of the novel. Seidel argues that when Crusoe finally figures out how to make bread out of corn and says, "It might be truly said, that now I work'd for my Bread" (*Robinson Crusoe* qtd. in

Seidel 118), the symbolic is made literal (116). Seidel also singles out Crusoe's "conversational waystations" – such as "that is to say" or "as I might say" or "as I called it to my self" – to mark those moments in which he knows his phrasing is essential to domesticating and controlling his spaces on the island. Seidel continues to argue that this is how Crusoe literally came to read his island. Whenever an object becomes a part of a new design that Crusoe has for it, it gets a new name. He gives the example of Crusoe's description of his "house" on the island, which he first describes as "a Tent under the Side of a Rock, surrounded with a strong Pale of Posts and Cables, but I might now call it a Wall" (*Robinson Crusoe* qtd. in Seidel 120). When he digs through the rock and feels even safer, he changes the name again to "my Pale or Fortification" (qtd. in Seidel 120). Both the literalization of the symbolic and the performance of domestication (through language) on the island are made possible only in the form of the novel. Seidel writes:

Symbolic interpretation of any kind is fine and well, but it should take place in proper sequence, only after the realistic texture of the narrative is set carefully, painstakingly in place. This is what makes the novel as a genre distinctive, and this is what makes Defoe's role in inaugurating the novel with *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 so significant. (122)

In *Defoe's Narratives* published in 1975, John Richetti reads the development of Defoe's narrative structure as a struggle between a dominant Protestant education and a ruling capitalist desire. He argues that Robinson Crusoe's narrative is suspended between the two ideologies of capitalism and conservative religious ideology, but that Crusoe's consciousness of both liberates him from the dominion of either so that history becomes *his* history (14-15). Richetti gives the example of being trapped in the storm to explain how Crusoe's consciousness of both ideologies takes the form of control over the narrative flow. When in the storm, trapped between the waves and wandering aimlessly, Crusoe establishes a narrative point between the world of

experience (inchoate) and the controlled world of narrative: “What we read,” Richetti tells us, “is not simply the sequence but the sequence offering itself again and again as a partial description and evocation of the experience itself” (36). Thus the idea is to create enough control to read the world on the island in terms of language, and to be out of control enough to participate in the world. Richetti gives the example of the following figure of speech: “I saw the sea come after me as high as a great hill, and as furious as an enemy which I had no means or strength to contend with” (qtd. in Richetti 37).

Richetti reads this simile as “a way of figuring Crusoe’s refusal to overstep himself either in action or in language ... The figurative surface contributes to the deeper opposition between control and participation” (37). But it always comes around to Crusoe’s triumph over the outside in the order of his narrative, which, according to Richetti, moves from description to analysis and ends in a clarifying insight. Although this is merely one example of the novel’s work on the level of figuration, it explains how Crusoe uses language to control the world outside of his narrative. Later on in the chapter, I will explore what becomes of this work of figuration followed by literalization (through several examples) when in translation, and especially in al-Bustānī’s multiple poetic insertions that become yet another version of the rewriting process.

For Ian Watt, this work of literalization culminates in Crusoe’s internalization of sociopolitical authority on the island. He writes that “it is in this dimension of experience that Robinson’s eventual deliverance from the island depends upon the progressive literalization of relationships that at first were only figurative” (333). For instance, upon first encountering the footsteps, Crusoe is terribly anxious and momentarily thrown off by what seems to be a threat to his enclosed (and

domesticated) space. Slowly but surely, however, the footsteps lead us to the presence of the savages and eventually to the literal and figural “salvations” of Friday (from the savages and into the Christian faith). Friday then becomes the subject par excellence, saved by the king of the island Crusoe and loyal only to him. Watt maintains that the deliverance from the island can only happen when this sociopolitical authority is established and internalized, so that the stabilization of the outside reality can “efface” the subjective descent that Crusoe experiences up until the encounter with Friday (333).⁵⁰

I am not as confident as Watt that the outside and the inside can be so clearly demarcated in *Robinson Crusoe*. The work of figuration in the novel is so ubiquitous that the moment of narrative atonement that Watt locates in the conflation between character and narrator could be read as just another instance of the domestication of the world in the language of fiction. I mean that the stabilization of the outside is made possible by the “subjective descent” of Crusoe. It is not exactly accurate that the reader is made to forget the descent in the “triumph” of the stable outside. The novel seems to be in a continuous process of auto-revision, and while most critics would say this is due to the persistence of the tradition of spiritual autobiography in Defoe’s fiction, I think *Robinson Crusoe* is more concerned with staging the scene of its writing. The editor’s preface announces this preoccupation from the beginning: this is an account that was found the way it is. And the way it is, the novel’s very being, is determined by editorial revisions which (we are made to believe) the narrator-character Crusoe performed.

⁵⁰ Richetti agrees with Watt’s reading of the encounter with the footsteps: “What Crusoe must learn to do in this section is to repeat the stabilizing and possessive operation he has performed first upon himself and then upon his island, and now upon others, that is, upon society” (51).

What becomes of this revisionary texture of the novel when in translation?

Translation is an act of rewriting in itself, a rendering of an original in an alien tongue. The specific case of the translation of *Robinson Crusoe* into Arabic in 1861 is particularly telling of the performance of translation as rewriting. After all, the novel form was completely alien to the Arabic literary tradition. So the inaugural status of the novel takes on a different meaning in the Arab world. The authorship and the novelty of the inaugural English novel become even more complex when it crosses national and linguistic borders in translation. *Robinson Crusoe* was heavily translated: In “*Robinson Crusoe* as Myth” from *Essays in criticism* published in 1951, Ian Watt writes that there were around 700 translations shortly after its publication. In the specific case of its translation into Arabic, the novel is not traveling across European borders, but considerably farther away from home, much like Robinson Crusoe himself. In its journey to Beirut, Lebanon (then part of Greater Syria), the novel’s claim to universality and historicity is mired in a different history, and in a radically different language. It seems that al-Bustānī did not care for the “novelty” of the form he was translating. The novel would serve as a great pedagogical resource, no matter where it came from. The observation of an individual’s full life becomes the account of an education for al-Bustānī, a pedagogical transformation that may fill in the allegorical blank and provide the end of the story. If in the original text, the constant retelling of the story makes it difficult to divide the novel into the Aristotelian beginning, middle and end, the rewritings of the translation strive to give its reader closure. In good pedagogical spirit, the translation condenses the original in short poetic fragments that come at the end of every chapter division. The translation’s chapter divisions are also another effort to rewrite the structure of the original.

*Editor Become Translator*⁵¹

As I mentioned earlier, when al-Bustānī translates *Robinson Crusoe*, he renames the editor's preface as the "Translator's Introduction." In keeping with the removal of the original author's name, we encounter in the opening pages of the translation another removal, and this time of the anonymous editor who had "found" this text and deemed it necessary for publication. The original editor's preface begins by declaring that, "If ever the Story of any private Man's Adventures in the World were Worth making Publick, and were acceptable when Publish'd, the Editor of this Account thinks this will be so." On the other hand, the translator, whose name appears at the very end of the novel and in the rhyming title of the translation, opens his introduction quite differently:

And so, this pleasant [*latifah*] tale is the journey of Robinson Crusoe and the news of what he suffered from disasters and dangers on land and by sea, and what he created of tools and methods to enable his survival and to facilitate the acquisition of his leisure [*rafāhatihī*]. To Westerners, this story is one of the strangest, most amusing [*azrafahā*], and most enjoyable stories and it is different from all other stories in all these ways ... (ii)⁵²

It is clear from the onset that al-Bustānī is not interested in transmitting the original preface intact. In fact, the "Translator's Introduction" takes note only of certain themes of the original preface and presents those to an Arab audience, one entirely unacquainted with the novel form that Crusoe's adventures will assume.

The two main themes of the original preface that persist in al-Bustānī's introduction are the exemplary status of the tale and its credibility. The original editor

⁵¹ I am using the second edition of the translation, published in 1885, and which is a facsimile reproduction of the original manuscript of the translation that was published in 1861. According to the editor of the translation Yūsuf Qizmā Khūrī, the first Arabic translation of *Robinson Crusoe* was done by missionaries in Beirut in 1835, as they believed that the best way to educate the people was through fictional novels especially because, in their opinion, the Arabs loved adventure stories (*The Missionary Herald* Volume 26, 1830 and Volume 30, 1834) (3).

⁵² All the Arabic translations in the text are mine. Some of the sentence structure is awkward on purpose because I have tried to remain as close as possible to the language of the translation.

tells us that the story can easily be applied to the “Instruction of others by this Example” and that, by sworn testimony, “[t]he Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it.” The forceful claim that the “thing” makes no recourse to fiction is strange inasmuch as the text itself is constantly rewriting itself, for instance, in the journal entries. Because it is a retrospective narrative, most of the events are re-interpreted in retrospect, mostly being given a religious meaning in the larger context of Crusoe’s “spiritual” education on the island. We, the readers, are supposed to separate the revisions from the facts, because we are told the text is purely factual with “no Appearance of Fiction.”

Interestingly, when al-Bustānī starts listing the criteria that make this text different from others, he does not use the word “fact.”⁵³ Rather, he writes, “Firstly, the story is built on a right foundation and on sincere tales. Secondly, what it has of news and incidents is rationally plausible and literarily transmittable.” Al-Bustānī exchanges the word “fact” for the adjectives right, sincere, plausible and transmittable. If we take Ian Watt at his word, that Defoe’s novel inaugurates circumstantial realism, it would seem that al-Bustānī identifies the terms of this kind of realism as early as 1861. Al-Bustānī might not have been familiar with the form of the novel, but he certainly understood that the novelistic claim to historical factuality is not different from the claim to literary plausibility.

The next three qualities all take up the theme of instruction by example. The original editor continues to tell us that “the Improvement of it, as well to the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same.” In *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt writes that Crusoe’s realization of individual freedom

⁵³ Its status as the prototypical English novel is also here, interestingly, reflected in the translation, meaning that the criteria that determine its novelty are not to be found within the Arabic narrative tradition, and so the condition of the original novel’s “novelty” is also a matter of translation.

made Rousseau propose the book as ‘the one book that teaches all that books can teach’ for the education of Emile; Rousseau argued that the surest way to raise oneself above prejudices, and order one’s judgment on the real relationship between things, is to put oneself in the place of an isolated man, and to judge of everything as that man would judge of them according to their actual usefulness. (86; *Émile* 210/214)

It is not certain that al-Bustānī was familiar with the work of Rousseau, but he was certainly very interested in education and the value of this particular translation as a pedagogical tool. Al-Bustānī writes that the novel is one of the best books to be taught at schools, and if it is adequately cleaned up (the word is “*tahdhībiha*” in Arabic which literally means to make well-behaved), it would be more acceptable to the new readership of women.

The pedagogical value of the text seems to be taken at face value here, promising an educational content removed from the entanglements of context. The rest of the translation remains very close to the original text, an intimacy that allows for the work of substitution and that makes possible the identification between the English Crusoe and a random Lebanese citizen or vice versa. Al-Bustānī finds the text’s promise of instruction to be applicable in all languages and all over the world. Perhaps his thinking here is more in tune with Rousseau’s: a good education has to begin on an isolated island where one is literally compelled to fabricate the conditions of his or her survival and, in the particular case of Crusoe, to situate these conditions within a larger narrative of Protestant allegory in conjunction with British capitalism. What I find remarkably absent in the translation, however, is an interrogation of the original book’s relationship to British colonialism and expansionist politics. Al-Bustānī had taken up the Protestant faith at the time of the translation so one can understand how the construction of Protestant allegory in the translation remains more

or less intact.⁵⁴ However, the “Translator’s Introduction” makes no reference to the context of the original text, which had been published approximately 150 earlier.

The “Translator’s Introduction” ends with a reference to the context of the translation, which was completed in five months “filled with disturbances, worries and troubles.” Thus, the original context is displaced, and the context of the translation comes to define the historicity of both the original and the translated text(s). As previously noted, the translation was done in 1861 during the war between the Christians and the Drūz in the mountains of Lebanon. Al-Bustānī apologizes for any errors in his text, which includes simplification, and reminds the reader that time *should* be spent in doing beneficial work for the nation and for oneself. The “Introduction” ends with the first poetic insertion of the translation, which translates as follows, “And every man who is of no benefit to others/ his death or his presence makes no difference to me.” The definitive tone of this first poetic fragment reverberates throughout the rest of the translation.

Every chapter of the translation ends with poetic insertions of varying lengths that recapitulate the moral of the chapter and occasionally deliver harsh judgments similar to that of the introduction. In *Defoe’s Narratives*, John Richetti describes Defoe’s prose as moving from description to analysis and ending in clarifying insights. For example, Richetti writes that in the moments when Crusoe wonders why Providence would allow such a thing (the crash) to happen (47), he quickly follows it up with “But something always return’d swift upon me to check these thoughts” (47).

⁵⁴ In the introduction to the translation, the editor Yūsuf Qizmā Khūrī mentions that in the article “On Fictional Novels” published in 1898 (*Al-Mashreq* Volume I, page 655), al-Bustānī was attacked by the Catholic Church for adding parts to the translation that criticize Catholicism: “The translator of this book into Arabic has added to the original two pieces/parts with which he stabs the Church and praises the Protestant faith” (qtd. in Khūrī 4). But al-Bustānī’s translation is actually faithful to this line in the original: “I had rather be delivered up to savages, and be devoured alive, then fall into the merciless claws of the priests, and be carried into the inquisition” (297; original). We will see later, however, that he actually removed Crusoe’s major criticism of the Catholic faith that comes at the end of the novel.

Then Crusoe ends this rumination with a proverb: “All evils are to be considered with the good that is in them, and with what worse attends them” (qtd. in Richetti 39).

Richetti maintains that this narrative structure allows Crusoe to acquire a self that is within nature but beyond it, perhaps just like the proverbial insertions are inside the text but point beyond it, so that Crusoe’s spirituality is actually “a formalization . . . of his own masterful relationship to the environment” (39).

Although al-Bustānī’s poetic insertions also point outside the text while being a part of it, they have a different purpose from Crusoe’s proverbial insights. As I will develop in the next sections, these insertions exist independently of the paragraph. They literally stand on their own, and constitute the translation’s formal commentaries on the original novel. The text’s self-fulfillment of sorts in the literalization of metaphor takes on critical dimensions in these insertions. In what follows, I will trace how these poetic insertions slowly undo the work of figural fulfillment of the original, thus rewriting the temporal structure of prediction and fulfillment that governs the narrative logic and nationalist ideology of the original.

Fiction and Nation in Beirut, 1860-1870

When we first open al-Bustānī’s translation of *Robinson Crusoe*, we are surprised to find the frontispiece of the original publication included, with the name of Defoe nowhere on it.⁵⁵ Rather, the title page tells us that this account is written by Crusoe himself. Right across from the alien insertion of the English text of the title page, we find the table of contents which lists the translation’s 29 chapter divisions,

⁵⁵ Rather the original title page reads, “The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York. Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited Island on the Coast of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River of OROONOQUE; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck; wherein all the Men perished but himself. With an Account how he was at last strangely deliver’d by PYRATES. Written by himself.”

each with its own title. Of course the chapter divisions are not found in the original, which claims to be a “discovered” disorderly narrative of Crusoe’s life. The chapter divisions seem like a first attempt to control the shape of the narrative.

In her 2009 dissertation “Serialization and Silk: The Emergence of a Narrative Reading Public of Arabic in Beirut, 1870-1884” Elizabeth M. Holt describes the reading audience for fiction in Beirut in the 1870s. Her work is crucial to understanding the adoption of the novel form in Lebanon specifically and the Middle East more generally. She begins her piece by mentioning the Egyptocentric approach to the study of the novel in Arabic, wherein the beginnings of the novel in most studies of the Arabic novel are located in Egypt.⁵⁶ In an effort to combat this Egyptocentrism in the history of the Arabic novel, her work focuses on the reception of fiction in Beirut specifically in the 1870s, and she takes al-Bustānī’s son Salīm al-Bustānī as a particular case in point. At the time in Beirut, fiction was published serially in journals and Holt argues that the circulation of these journals helped create the bourgeoisie in Beirut, somewhat analogously to the role of the journals and journal reading in the creation of a European bourgeoisie. I am not entirely sure that the analogy is as straightforward as she presents it, but what she has to say about the role of fiction in Beirut in the 1870’s remains important to any understanding of al-Bustānī.

The period she is referring to is nine years after the publication of al-Bustānī’s translation. Al-Bustānī’s own translation came about in the midst of a raging civil war and so it has different preoccupations than his son’s famous 1870 novel, *al-Hiyām fī*

⁵⁶ Holt continues, “Another factor is the academic trend that takes Egyptian novels written around the turn of the twentieth century as the beginning of modern Arabic narrative. This article redresses this critical gap, tracing the production of a bourgeois reading class across the pages of these journals, and revealing the engagement of narrative published in periodicals of the period with this readership’s emergent narrative desires” (24).

jinān al-Shām [Love in Damascus Gardens]. Holt quotes Buṭrus al-Bustānī from his famous “*Khutbah fī Adāb al-‘Arab*” [Lecture on the Literatures of the Arabs] on the importance of these journals: “there is no doubt that journals [*jurnālāt*] are among the greatest means to civilize people and to increase the number of readers if they are used properly” (qtd. in Holt 29). It is clear that al-Bustānī’s pedagogical project, teaching the people through literature, motivates his infatuation with these journals. Holt argues that the fiction published in these journals in the 1870s directed criticism at the nation itself and enabled some form of auto-critique. However, Holt does not address the complicated process of identification that takes place between the reader and the character, one that would enable the mirroring between text and world. A lot of this fiction was translated or in the least very influenced by Western models, and such an influence works against simple identification.⁵⁷

Holt marks an important shift from the 1860’s to the 1870’s in Beirut, one which would help explain the difference between father and son:

Though Buṭrus al-Bustānī’s pamphlet-like publication *Nafīr Sūrīya*, appearing regularly in 1860 and 1861, addressed itself to “the sons of the nation,” the repeated call for unity in the wake of the events of 1860 suggests that divisions still ran deep. Arabic newspapers such as the Beirut-based *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*, the Istanbul-based *al-Jawā’ib*, and the Cairo-based *Wādī al-Nīl* were available and read in 1860s Beirut and its environs, yet the factionalized readership that Sulaymān describes, dependent upon the French press for news, represents a moment before the emergence of a locally based and imagined public sphere. (38)

So while Buṭrus al-Bustānī appeals to the sons of the nation, the translation of *Robinson Crusoe* happened before the formation of a local public readership that corresponded with a local Beirut bourgeoisie. Why then should this moment be significant when reading al-Bustānī’s translation?

⁵⁷ Like his father, Salīm also thinks that the novel has a very pedagogical goal. He writes, “we must show our faults and the faults of others for ourselves and for others by means of writing novels [*riwāyāt*], and show what is ugly and what is good by means of the description of the individuals whose stories we tell” (qtd. in Holt 37).

For one, it helps shed light on al-Bustānī's audience.⁵⁸ Clearly he intended the translation to be read in schools as part of his pedagogical effort to raise sons (and daughters) of the nation. The choice of *Robinson Crusoe* seems both intriguing and appropriate in light of its moment of publication, a time right before the formation of some (albeit tenuous) form of national consciousness in Lebanon. Yet the novel works under the assumption that the reading public will identify with the events and “learn” something from this text. What this something is will be the center of the rest of my chapter.

Double Citation

Elizabeth Holt quotes Buṭrus al-Bustānī's description of the storyteller walking the streets of Beirut in 1859, “one with a hoarse voice and a good memory who has memorized some of the tales from the stories of Sindbad the sailor and Banī Hilāl and what is most similar to those among the stories present in the book *A Thousand and One Nights*” (al-Bustānī 114) (qtd. in Holt 57). Holt continues:

Indeed, Yāghī points in his study of modern Arabic narrative to the manner in which “the spirit of *A Thousand and One Nights* was reflected in the adventures of *Robinson Crusoe*,” drawing a parallel between the circulation of translated versions of *A Thousand and One Nights* in Europe beginning in the early eighteenth century and the popularity of Defoe's novel in Arabic translation in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ (65)

⁵⁸ We can safely assume that the reading audience included at least al-Bustānī's students at *al-Madrasah al-waṭaniyyah* or the National School he established in 1863. It also probably included the missionaries in Lebanon at the time, and the many writers and readers of the journals. The novel was first published in 1861; then reprinted in 1885; and re-published in 1994, 109 years later.

⁵⁹ ‘Abd al-Rahman Yāghī makes this argument in his 1982 book *Al-Juhūd al-riwa'iyyah min Salīm al-Bustānī ila Najīb Maḥfūz*. In a similar vein, Roger Allen directs the reader of *The Count of Monte Cristo* to the enormous number of references it makes to the Sindbad cycle (in his 2000 piece “Sindbad the Sailor and the Early Arabic Novel”), a group of stories often associated with *A Thousand and One Nights*, as well as to other aspects of the collection itself (Holt 67).

It would seem that the journals employed a narrative structure of storytelling that was familiar to an Arab reading public, meanwhile incorporating elements from European models that resonated with the age.

The double citation is precisely in this parallelism between the popularity of the European translations of *A Thousand and One Nights* and the Arabic adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe*. Al-Bustānī imagined that the figure of the 19th-century Arab storyteller would be modeled on that of *A Thousand and One Nights*, as he was translating *Robinson Crusoe*.⁶⁰ Not only does the publication history of both suggest

⁶⁰ Most of the tales that make up *A Thousand and One Nights* were once orally recited. However, the actual relationship between the written manuscripts and the oral recitation is quite uncertain. In his 1988 article “The Arabian Nights: The Oral Connection,” Peter Molan argues that it is entirely possible that some of the tales thought to have been transcribed in print were never recited or performed, but rather put together by an author in an attempt to mimic the popular style of the oral storytellers. Edward William Lane, the English translator of *A Thousand and One Nights*, describes the relationship between the oral tradition and the use of printed stories in the context of the early Cairene storytellers. His famous account of Cairo in the early nineteenth century, entitled *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835*, was originally published in London by Charles Knight in 1836. All my references here are to the 2005 Cosimo Edition. Lane illustrates how public recitation of the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights* was a recognized and habitual tradition. He also mentions how the Cairene storytellers would depend on manuscripts for their oral recitations. Because the price of these manuscripts continued to increase, the number of these reciters of *A Thousand and One Nights* continued to decrease:

There is, in Cairo, a third class of reciters of romances, who are called 'Ana'tireh, or 'Anteree'yeh (in the singular, 'An'ter'ee); but they are much less numerous than either of the other two classes before mentioned; their number at present, if I be rightly informed, not amounting to more than six. They bear the above appellation from the chief subject of their recitations; which is the romance of 'An'tar (See'ret 'An'tar). As a considerable portion of this interesting work has become known to English readers by Mr. Terrick Hamilton's translation, I need give no account of it. The reciters of it read it from the book: they chant the poetry; but the prose they read, in the popular manner; and they have not the accompaniment of the raba'b. As the poetry in this work is very imperfectly understood by the vulgar, those who listen to it are mostly persons of some education. The 'Ana'tireh also recite from other works than that from which they derive their appellation. All of them, I am told, occasionally relate stories from a romance called “See'ret el-Mooga'hidee'n” (“the History of the Warriours”), or, more commonly, “See'ret Del'hem'eh,” or “Zoo-l-Him'meh,” from a heroine who is the chief character in the work. A few years since, they frequently recited from the romance of “Seyf Zoo-l-Yez'en” (vulgarly called “Seyf El-Yez'en,” and “Seyf El-Yez'el”), a work abounding with tales of wonder; and from “the Thousand and One Nights” (“El'f Ley'leh we-Ley'leh”), more commonly known, in our country, by the title of “the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.” *The great scarcity of copies of these two works is, I believe, the reason why recitations of them are no longer heard: even fragments of them are with difficulty procured; and when a complete copy of “the Thousand and One Nights” is found, the price demanded for it is too great for a reciter to have it in his power to pay. I doubt whether the romances of Ab'oo Zeyd, Ez-Za'hir, 'An'tur, and Del'hem'eh, are chosen as the subjects of recitation, because preferred to “the Thousand and One Nights;” but it is certain that the modern Moos'lims of Egypt have sufficient remains of Bed'awee feeling to take great delight in hearing tales of war.* (408-409; emphasis mine)

this affinity, but we also find this two-way influence persisting in the translation in what reads as a double citation, the narrative of the life of Crusoe is enclosed within yet another level of framed narration. The frame is none other than the persistence of the figure of *A Thousand and One Nights* storyteller in the rewriting of the inaugural English novel.⁶¹ This frame is precisely what I am referring to as a “double citation,” in that the translation itself is a citation of some form of the original and this citation is already inscribed within the tale structure of *A Thousand and One Nights* as the original citation.

The translation begins by saying “Crusoe told about himself, he said, I was born ...” [*Haka Robīnṣon ‘an nafsihī qāl ...*] while the original opens without the framing third person narrator. In the tradition of the *maqāmah* and the *ḥadīth*, al-Bustānī could not but begin with the verbs “*ḥakā*” to tell and “*qāl*” to say. The two verbs perform a double en-framing of sorts, of Crusoe the narrator, the teller of the tale, and Crusoe the character, the hero of the tale.⁶² In a sense, and in the effort to

It is unclear whether these manuscripts were literary transcriptions of earlier performances of imitations of such performances.

⁶¹ It seems, then, that the relationship between the novel and the Arabic tale is already one of translation, wherein the European novel was heavily influenced primarily by the French translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* by Antoine Galland, and then the Arabic novel in its turn was influenced by the European novel coming in translation. It is not within the scope of this chapter to address the significant implications for the history of the novel of this exchange in translation, but I will return to important exchange in my future work.

⁶² Two of the most famous forms of traditional Arabic narrative are *khbar* and *ḥadīth*. *Khbar* is literally a piece of news or information that is passed around orally and usually begins with the verb *qāl* or *ḥakā* (to say or to tell). *Ḥadīth* refers to reports about the statements or actions of the Prophet Muhammad, and usually begins with “*ḥaddatha*” in reference to the source who passed the story down. The *maqāmah* opens with the verb “*ḥaddathanā*” which means “he related to us.” In his 2005 book *Narrative social structure: anatomy of the Hadīth transmission network, 610-1505*, Recep Şentürk describes the social network through which *aḥādīth* (plural of *ḥadīth*) were passed on, a system known as the *isnād* system:

Hadith, the reflexive speech by which we know retrospectively what the prophet and what he did not say, constituted the impetus for a network of narrators. In an attempt to control fictive narrative, narrators of hadith from subsequent generations ensured that they learned the authorities through which the narrative had reached down to them. This stemma or chain of authorities came to be called the *isnad* (literally, ‘support’ or ‘backing’). (32)

So the chain of narrators is called *isnād*, while the narrative text itself is known as *matn*, and “[a]uthorities in the chain of narrative are linked to each other through reported speech until the chain

domesticate the form, the autobiographical gesture has to be curbed within the more traditional and familiar “*ḥakā*.” The verb “*ḥakā*” (significantly not “*ḥaddatha*” which is a Qur’ānic reference to the prophet addressing the congregation – “*majlis*”) creates the illusion of audience, but here with the obvious absence of the receivers of Crusoe’s “oral” narrative.

The verb “to tell” keeps resurfacing throughout the translation particularly in moments wherein the narrative reflects on its own order or lack of it.⁶³ The Arabic

reaches the Companion who narrates a brief story about the Prophet or a saying by him” (Şentürk 33). The *matn* is a short, non-sequential, disjointed and plot-less narrative, a form that guarantees its difference from mere *quṣas* or stories (35). In his book *Arabic Historical thought in the Classical Period*, Tarif Khalidi writes that the Qur’ānic term *ḥadīth* came to be associated with reporting the past, particularly in telling stories that pertain to the life of Muḥammad. Khalidi writes, “In the Quran, Hadīth has two basic meanings, story or parable on the one hand, and ‘speech’ or ‘report’ on the other” (18). Other similar narrative forms include *khābar*, which mostly takes the form of a parable. In a sense *ḥadīth* makes use of the form of *khābar* in transmitting news and stories about the Prophet; however, *ḥadīth* claims to be a completely truthful account, with no intention to provide its listeners with fictional entertainment. The *maqāmah* parodies the structure of *ḥadīth* by transforming the verb *ḥaddatha*, which promises the transmission of important information, into the verb *ḥakā* that introduces the tale of a rogue and a narrator whose sole purpose is to play on language so that it comes to transmit nothing. In his entry entitled “*Maqama*” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical period*, edited by Roger Allen and D.S. Richards, Devin Stewart describes the *maqāmah*’s play on language: “Perhaps most disturbing for most pious readers, the classical *maqama* suggests that language in general, and the Arabic language in particular, the language of the Scripture, can be put to excellent use as a means of deception, subterfuge and fraud” (154). By presenting a story with no point, the *maqāmah* mocks both transmission verbs of *ḥaddatha* and *ḥaka*. For the purposes of my dissertation, I will not fully engage in the structural discussion of earlier narrative forms but rather consider how elements of these forms get incorporated into the new form of the novel as appropriative gestures that rewrite both the new genre as well as the tradition. In the case of al-Bustānī, the tale of *A Thousand and One Nights* as well as the *ḥadīth* and *khābar* are clear influences on his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*; however, he still engages the new form on its own terms, so the insertions from traditional narrative (like the verb *qāl* and the poetic verses) become a means of making peace with a new narrative form that is coming in translation and wrapped in its difference from familiar narrative traditions.

⁶³ The frequent use of the verb “*qāl*” is a typical feature of Arabic narrative, whether originally in written form or transcribed from oral performance. In his 1988 article “*The Arabian Nights: The Oral Connection*,” Peter Molan writes,

In rereading portions of the *Arabian Nights*, my attention has been drawn back to a number of apparently anomalous words and phrases which occur in the MacNaghten edition of the work but which do not appear in the Būlāq edition. ... The use of the otherwise totally anomalous *qāla*, ‘he said,’ in the MacNaghten text suggests to me the phrase *wa-qāla al-rāwī*, ‘and the reciter said,’ of so many Arabic texts which we know to derive from oral sources. ... I would argue, therefore, that its use here implies that the MacNaghten text has been taken down from an oral reciter with the scribe inserting the common phrase and reminding us of the tale’s oral provenance. ... They [*qāl* and *wa-qāla al-rāwī*] are grammatically anomalous unless recognized as interpolations signaling the oral origins of the text. ... It might be argued, of course, that the phrase *wa-qāla al-rāwī* is inserted by a literate author or editor to give the tale a folkloric air. The use of the verb *qāla* alone, however (which is, at first reading, merely

translation is evidently uncomfortable with the original novel's preoccupation with its own logic of presentation. While Crusoe's effort in the original to order and re-order his text is a direct result of his attempt to make meaning out of seemingly random events, in the translation the continuous reference to revision becomes another occasion to insert the verb "*aqūl*" or "I say" to give the illusion of oral immediacy. For instance, Crusoe says, "To come then by the just Degrees, to the Particulars of this Part of my Story," after which he continues to tell us about the stories he told his friends in the Brasils (36-7). Al-Bustānī renders the original line as such, "So that I can get you [the reader] through the necessary order to the details of this part of my story *I say*" (37; emphasis mine) ("*fa likay aṣil bika bi al-tadrīj al-wājib ila tafāṣīl hadhā al-qism min qiṣatī aqūl*" (37)).

What I am identifying as unease with the repetitive references to the order of the narrative emerges most obviously in the translation of the part of the novel in which Crusoe decides to keep a journal of his life on the island. Perhaps the most palpable difference between the translation and the original is the insertion of poetic lines in the former. The curious form of these insertions could be seen as one way the translation makes its peace with this new form of narrative. The poetic fragments usually occur at the end of the chapter (with two exceptions when they are inserted in the middle) and condense the chapter into a moral or a proverb that the translator could not find in the original but would like to supplement it with. The idea of the

confusing), and the particular relationship of occurrence and nonoccurrence in the two editions seems clearly to militate against such an assertion. (193-194)

Peter Molan argues that such phrases as *qāla al-rāwī* ("the storyteller said") are "anomalous" or external to the actual narrative context in which they come up. They confirm the oral dimensions of the text, marking the end of the speech recited and the resumption of the voice of the storyteller as narrator of the tale. As such, it becomes possible to conclude that these phrases were used as markers for the reciter, telling him when to stop and when to resume.

supplement in this text is extremely important, as we begin to see in the completely adapted “Translator’s Introduction” and as we will see exaggerated at the end of the novel in the translator’s signature. Perhaps al-Bustānī read into Defoe’s relentless rewriting of his text a desire to insert these fragments and felt compelled to continue the latter’s work. The text of *Robinson Crusoe* does include several moralistic sentences, but the shape of the poetic insertions in the translation goes beyond mere moralistic advice to the reader. On the one hand, these insertions make the text more familiar to its Arab reader. On the other hand, they seem to comment on the text as whole, curbing narrative order by pointing outside the text, to an extratextual reality that is still embedded in language.⁶⁴

When we get to the journal, about one fifth into the novel, Crusoe tells us, “And now being to enter into a melancholy Relation of a Scene of Silent Life, such perhaps as was never heard of in the World before, I shall take it from its Beginning, and continue in its Order” (63). In the translation we read, “and my desire now is to mention in detail and order what has happened to me of miserable things that the world hasn’t heard anything like before” (63). Notice how the “melancholy Relation of a Scene of Silent Life” doesn’t make it at all into the translation. Rather, the desire to “mention in detail” is supplemented with the following poetic insertion: “And whoever still gets tempted by desire and youth will certainly be thrown down in regret” (63). (“*Wa man lā yazāl yanqād li al-ghayyī wa al-ṣibā sa-yulqā ‘alā ṭūl al-salāmah nādīman*”).⁶⁵ The morbid tone of the poetry predicts the translation’s refusal

⁶⁴ While it is true that in the Arabic context, these poetic “insertions” are not “extratextual,” but a reflection of the indigenous narrative tradition), in the novel in translation they assume a more appropriative role that remains extrinsic to the content of the new genre as such.

⁶⁵ “و من لا يزال ينقاد للغى و الصبا سيلقى على طول السلامة نادما.”

to reconcile the attempt to control the events retrospectively in narrative with the “way things happened.”

Soon after Crusoe mentions the melancholy relation that is to come, we read:

And now it was when I began to keep a Journal of every Day's employment; for, indeed, at first I was in too much Hurry, and not only Hurry as to Labour, but in too much Discomposure of Mind; and my journal would have been full of many dull things: For example, I must have said thus. Sept. the 30TH. After I had got to Shore, and escaped drowning, instead of being thankful to God for my Deliverance, having first vomited, with the great Quantity of salt Water which had got into my Stomach, and recovering myself a little, I ran about the Shore wringing my Hands and beating my Head and Face, exclaiming at my Misery, and crying out, I was undone, undone, till, tyr'd and faint, I was forc'd to lye down on the Ground to repose, but durst not sleep for fear of being devour'd. (68)

The act of writing a journal is an act of revision and rewriting. It might seem as if Defoe is offering us a mystic writing pad here, but the difference is that all the previous accounts are kept as they are in the body of the text. We are not left with traces of the narrative as it began to be related to us at the beginning before Crusoe finds God and allegorical meaning in the events of his life. On the contrary, we are reminded of the previous narration of that same event in light of the new one, as we see in the example above. This revisionary texture of the novel is not lost in translation; rather, it is continuously interrupted by the insertion of poetic fragments.

In the original, Crusoe continues to tell us:

...But having gotten over these things in some Measure, and having settled my household Staff and Habitation, made me a Table and a Chair, and all as handsome about me as I could, I began to keep my Journal; of which I shall here give you the Copy (tho' in it will be told all these Particulars over again) as long as it lasted; for having no more Ink, I was forced to leave it off. (69)

Clearly the journal is an attempt to control affect; in that sense it becomes a supplement embedded within the text of the novel. Moreover, in the quotation above, Crusoe tells us that now that he has fixed all his furniture around him and feels established in a home of some sort, he will give us a “copy” of the journal with all the

particulars retold in it. Repetition here is built into the very texture of the novel and we are condemned as Crusoe's readers to keep returning to the scene of (re)writing. As long as he is rewriting, we are rereading.

In the translation, we are not given a copy but rather an image or a picture, in Arabic *ṣūra*, of the text of the journal. We read, "And I have revised in it the mention of many of the issues that have come up so far, holding/ reigning it in and remaining faithful to the truth of the matter" (In the Arabic, this reads as: "*Wa qad rāja 'tu fīhī dhikr kathīr min al-qaḍāyā al-mār dhikrīhā, takbīlan lahu wa 'īfā'an bi-ḥaqq al-maṣlahah*") (69).⁶⁶ The choice of the word "*takbīlan*" is interesting insofar as it means to hold someone down and restrict movement. "*Maṣlahah*" also means profession and benefit. Thus for our translator, the journal is a further testimony (even if it is a controlled testimony) to the truth of the account and to its usefulness to the reader. Al-Bustānī reads the act of revision (one more layer of framing) of the account in the journal for exactly what it is, that is, an attempt to control, retrospectively, the world outside Crusoe's narrative. But he renders this obsession with control into the possibility of an education. The journal, which is meant to be a more immediate form of recounting the adventures of Crusoe on the island, is framed within a retrospective account that takes away from its immediacy. Organized by date and event, the journal wants to keep a detailed and organized record of the events of Crusoe's narrative. Presumably, the journal is the "earliest" layer of Crusoe's writing, but within the novel we read it later, after we have had some framing that controls how we read the 'immediacy' of the journal. The translation repetitively comments on the journal's attempt to reign down the narrative and give it a structure, thus emphasizing the

⁶⁶ "وقد راجعت فيه ذكر كثير من القضايا المار ذكرها تكبيلا له و ايفاء بحق المصلحة." 66

mediation of authorial intention and the lack of immediacy and thus ‘truthfulness’ of Crusoe’s account.

Figuring the World: Crusoe’s Kingdom of No Revolutions

Robinson Crusoe uses figurative language to predict and thus control the narrative flow. In the section on the “Double Citation,” I mentioned how with the introduction of the journal in the Arabic translation we read about the effort to control the narrative as it were, and to make it correspond “truthfully” to what really happened. This effort to control the production of meaning ties into the novel’s larger work of figuration, in that the presentation of a certain figure only anticipates its becoming literal in another section of the book. We find this early on in the narrative, written and rewritten retrospectively, when Crusoe tells us that on his plantation in the Brasils he “liv’d just like a Man cast away upon some desolate Island, that had no body there but himself” (35). The simile here predicts what will come to pass, of course given that Crusoe writes his narrative after the fact and then rewrites it in his journal. The literalization of the figural language in the text emerges as a means to control the production of meaning. In this section of the chapter, I will explore what becomes of this literalization when in translation.

The novel has to guarantee that the figural is eventually literalized so that it can domesticate the alien space of the island. The most obvious example of this occurs in the paragraph that describes Crusoe hiding in the tree when he first lands on the island. We hear that Crusoe had the best sleep of his life up on the tree (46); notably, this is the literalization of the earlier simile in which he perceives himself as a man stranded on an island. In the translation, we read about the best sleep of his life at the end of chapter four. In his 2002 article “Enclosures, Colonization, and the

Robinson Crusoe Syndrome: A Genealogy of Land in a Global Context,” Robert P.

Marzec names this need to enclose spaces and render them legible the “Crusoe syndrome:”

In order to cope with an entirely Other form of land than that to which he is accustomed, he introduces an ideological apparatus to overcode the earth. In this fashion, he can “quiet” his mind, relieve his anxiety, and resist the nightmare of actually “being there” on the island: the terror of inhabiting an Other space as Other. This “being in the tree,” a resistance to “being there” until the land is enclosed and transformed, is the structure of what I call the *Crusoe syndrome*.It was in the enclosure act that the ideology of imperialism became a material reality, with enclosures creating a new problematic that formed a nexus between the growing colonial cultural order, the domestication of foreign lands and peoples, monopoly capital, and the novel. (131; emphasis mine)

If we pursue the idea of the textual double citation that I discussed earlier, we find here that this textual enclosure begins to be enacted on the island to domesticate the alterity of this new space. It seems that at least on the surface level, al-Bustānī is not attuned to the colonial politics of this domestication whether on the level of language nor space. He renders this passage verbatim more or less, but he does insert another one of those curious poetic insertions. This particular line of poetry pits the figure of a free, flying bird potentially roaming the world unbound up against the figure of Crusoe finding shelter and the best sleep of his life in the tree on the island.

We read, “Magically a bird passed us by so I said to her, Bless you I wish I were you, bless you” (46) (“*Marrat bina siḥran ṭayrun fa qultu lahā/ ṭūbāki yā laytanī iyyaki ṭūbāki*”). The noun “*ṭayrun*” is morphologically masculine, but al-Bustānī uses it as grammatically feminine in this poetic line. The bird is addressed as a female. In the original novel, Crusoe hides on a tree in an image of a nesting bird which will soon extend its nest all over that part of the island. However, in the translation we hear how the bird wants to escape, roam around the world with no restrictions, and

curiously as a female.⁶⁷ It would seem that the poetic insertion at this point works against the original's work to domesticate the island, which aims to turn it into a rich premise for the work of figuration to come. For Crusoe to be able to use figurative language and guarantee its becoming literal at some point, he has to have control over the space he inhabits. In other words, he has to domesticate the island. He begins the domestication from up in his tree, where he tells us that even after the terrible crash, he was still able to get a good night's sleep.

The feminine bird in the translation, however, represents the fantasy of escape. If the feminine bird is a reference to the effeminized and invaded land, to the subdued colonized, she also becomes the fantasy of undoing imperialist domestication. The reference is counter-intuitive to the extent that one would expect the feminine to be relegated to the domestic realm. Yet this blessed feminine figure represents the outside, what is beyond the island, and thus ultimately what is beyond language on the island as well. She marks the non-bordered nation that al-Bustānī was imagining, the feminine space of the non-domesticated and non-literalized as it comes to pass on Crusoe's island.

The bird comes to the translated Crusoe in a dream, which itself extends a crucial topos in the original novel. In *Robinson Crusoe: Island Myths and the Novel*, Michael Seidel suggests that one should think of the impressions and the dreams in *Robinson Crusoe* as a model for reading the novel as a whole. Seidel locates the story of the novel's evolution in *Robinson Crusoe*, quoting James Joyce, "whoever reads this simple, moving book in the light of subsequent history cannot help but fall under its prophetic spell" (qtd. in Seidel 11). The character of Crusoe marks the

⁶⁷ The female bird can be read as a figure for the colonial subject and not for the colonialist, in that the feminized and invaded land (with its inhabitants) wants to be liberated from the violent clutch of the dominant invader.

displacement of the epic wanderer into a “localized fictional domain” (10) wherein the realism of the adventure becomes bound up not only with what happened but with what could have happened as well. Seidel quotes from the novel,

I spent whole Hours, as I may say whole Days, in representing to myself in the most lively Colours, how I must have acted, if I had got nothing out of the Ship. How could I not have so much as got any Food, except Fish and Turtles; and that as it was long before I found any of them, I must have perish'd first. (qtd. in Seidel 31)

The prophetic spell, the prediction of what is to come, is disabled in the figure of the feminine bird, whose blessedness resides precisely in her ability to escape the reality and its prediction. In that way, al-Bustānī disables the novel’s work of figuration and the Joycean prophecy that now with the novel, one can write both what happened and what could have happened.

Seidel continues that island life seems so real that Crusoe can imagine other versions of it. He then extends this idea into the way in which Crusoe imagines Friday before Friday actually arrives:

A native runs toward a grove; Crusoe shows him his ladder, makes him his servant; wants his services as a pilot to get him off the island. All this is very quickly disposed in the narrative as a dream, almost as if the fantasy has to run its course quickly so that its realistic fulfillment can take place sooner. (32)

In light of the multiple revisions and rewritings in the text, one can conclude that the recurrence of dreams and the realistic presentation of impressions make the impression just as real as the event. When Crusoe has his first dream, he hears a terrible voice calling on him to repent. We read about the following description of the man descending from heaven:

...his Countenance was most inexpressibly dreadful, impossible for Words to describe; when he stepped upon the Ground with his Feet, *I thought the Earth trembl'd, just as it had done before in the Earthquake* ... No one that shall ever read this Account, will expect that I should be able to describe the horrors of my Soul as this terrible Vision, I mean, that even whole it was a Dream, I even dreamed of those Horrors; *nor is it any more possible to describe the*

Impression that remain'd upon my Mind when I awak'd and found it was but a Dream. (88; emphasis mine)

An imagined account that nevertheless produces a real effect. The dream gives us a guide to reading the novel. Notice that in the previous quotation the realism of the dream refers to something Crusoe has encountered before, namely the powerful earthquake. The impression is so real that when he wakes up, he remains under its influence.

The impression becomes more and more indistinguishable from real events as Crusoe is about to encounter anything that is other to himself. Any confrontation with alterity or even the possibility of alterity can only take place if there is a pre-emptive impression of the encounter in a dream or otherwise. In a sense, the dream or the impression becomes another figural means of predicting what is to come and controlling it. When Crusoe is obsessed with conquering the Cannibals, he tells us that “[t]his Fancy pleas’d my Thoughts for some Weeks, and I was so full of it, that I often dream’d of it; and sometimes that I was just going to let fly at them in my sleep” (168-69). In the translation at the end of Chapter 16, when Crusoe has announced to us the arrival unto new scenes in his life (153), we get these lines of poetry: “Fate threw its arrows at me, but my heart was in a cover of leather, so that when the arrows hit me, their wood broke on the wood of my heart” (153) (“*Ramānī al-dahru bi al-arzā’i ḥattā/ fu’ādī fī ghishā’ min nibāli/ fa ṣirtu idhā aṣābatnī sihāmun/ takassarat al-niṣālu ‘ala al-niṣāli’*”). This poetic insertion occurs right before encountering the footprints. Even while the original text refuses to admit the extent of its anxiety about the impending encounter (the new scenes of life), the translation highlights this anxiety in what seems to be a critique of an insatiable individualism.

Entering unto new scenes of his life is far from happy because our (translated) hero has turned into the hardness of wood. The hardness can also be a protective

shield against the arrows of fate, but the fact that the speaker's heart is as hard as the arrows suggests a sense of renunciation, wherein the hero in translation is not looking forward to being molded by the new scenes of his new life on the island; rather, the conquest of the island that is so dear to the heart of Crusoe is lost on the hardened heart of the poetic speaker. Curiously the intense anxiety about the novelty and alterity of what is coming is rendered in terms of a fundamental weariness of life; so much so that it compels us to ask whether the fear of the other can hold anymore when one stops feeling completely human. This last poetic insertion is a direct criticism of the individualism that Watt celebrates in *Robinson Crusoe*. What James Joyce names "the manly independence" (25) of Crusoe becomes in the translation a crippling weariness. Al-Bustānī reads in the original novel what Crusoe, the prototypical Individual and Colonist, refuses to voice, namely the weariness of being alone, stranded on an island. The translation rewrites the triumphant "aloneness" of Crusoe, that which separates him from all the beasts and the savages, as a reality of desperation (and not supremacy) in the face of the unknown other.

The distinction between dream and reality when it comes to the other is rationalized in a moralistic commentary which anticipates how from this overwhelming fear of the savages, Crusoe will make his first friend. In other words, from this evil, he will be able to extract some good. Crusoe calls it an "Observation" to be made from his story, of which he can cite many examples in the "course of my unaccountable Life" (181). In the Arabic translation, the adjective unaccountable becomes "*gharībah*" which means "strange", and the original moralistic insertion is supplemented with another poetic fragment. This particular poetic insertion is rather morbid and underlines the instability of existence and the ultimate meaninglessness of existence: "For the world is mortal and has not stability, like a house made of spider

threads, and you should be content, you rational one, with mere livelihood, for my years are numbered and all who live in the world shall die” (179).

Thus while the original presents the reader with one of many observations to come on how to lead a better (more controlled) life, and how to expect good to come out of evil (particularly in this narrative of absolute control), the translation revises this moral, after including it, in a poetic fragment about transience and death. That life as we know it comes down to nothing speaks to a humility and a feeling of resignation on the part of the poetic speaker, in a clear critique of Crusoe’s vanity even when he wants to present himself as a humble Christian. When Crusoe continues to tell us about his fervid desire for a companion, al-Bustānī again rewrites Crusoe’s desire and inserts the following poetic lines: “And the self is desiring if you make it desire, and if you return it to what is only little, it is put at ease” (185). Significantly, this last poetic insertion recalls what Crusoe tells us at different moments in his narrative about leading a mediocre yet fulfilled life, about finding that middle ground. It is as though the translation, much as al-Bustānī says about the journal, carries the original’s effort to reign in affect more faithfully than the original.⁶⁸

In Crusoe’s dream of saving the savage, one cannot simply take him at his word since the retrospective narrative suggests that the dream might be one of the

⁶⁸ When Crusoe describes to us his desire for a Christian companion, he writes:

There are some secret moving Springs in the Affections, which when they are set a going by some Object in view, or be it some Object, though not in view, yet rendered present to the Mind by the Power of the Imagination, that Motion carries out the Soul by its Impetuosity to such violent eager embracings of the Object, that the Absence of it is insupportable. 188

Al-Bustānī translates Springs as “some machines which are like magic wheels that move on their own” (186). Crusoe continues:

Let the Naturalists explain these Things, and the Reason and the Manner of them; all I can say to them, is, to describe the Fact, which was even surprising to me when I found it; though I knew not from what it should proceed; it was doubtless the effect of ardent Wishes, and of strong Ideas form’d in my Mind. (188)

Al-Bustānī translates Fact as event or incident (*al-ḥādithah*) (186). Al-Bustānī doesn’t question the term naturalist as it comes up here, and it remains inserted in the text as a foreign reference for the readers to discern the meaning of on their own.

ways Crusoe uses to control the narrative and delimit its arbitrariness. When a year and a half passes before the dream can be realized he is in despair. Al-Bustānī adds the following poetic lines: “my fate fights me as though I were its enemy, and throws misfortune at me every day, and if I came up with something good, then fate comes up against it, and describes my miserable fate to me with another misery” (199). Again the translation debunks the myth of triumphant individualism as the latter performs figural domestication of the otherness of the island. When Crusoe authors (retrospectively) the success of his experience on the island, the translation makes fate into the author. No longer Crusoe, but now the new author, neutral “fate,” confronts al-Bustānī’s hero with one failure upon the next.

The dream is somewhat realized on the next page. He waits for part of his dream to come true, namely the part in which the savage would run towards his forest. Since he cannot rely on the other part of his dream wherein the savages do not follow him into the forest, he has to make sure this particular part gets rewritten so to speak. Soon enough when the escaped savage loses his followers, Crusoe tells us that he “did not let my dream come to pass in that Part, viz. That he came into my Grove for shelter” (205). In the translation we read, “And this is how I did not let my dream come to pass in that sense (or meaning)” (203) (“*wa hakadhā lam ada‘ ḥilmī yattim fī hadhā al-mi‘na*”).⁶⁹

Richetti argues that Crusoe reconciles the spirituality of Protestantism and the economic spirit of capitalism in his story, thus making History his (his)tory. This reconciliation makes it so that Crusoe is always in control of the event, even after the

⁶⁹ “Part” becomes “meaning” or “sense” in the translation in an interesting synecdoche or metonymy that connects part of the dream to the dream as a whole. I bring this up because the control over the novel’s figural language that Crusoe and Defoe exercise so carefully is bound to such divisions as “part” of a dream as opposed to something as open to interpretation as “sense.”

fact, in retrospective narration. But when what happened becomes as real as what could have happened, the retrospective narrative is enough to recuperate any loss caused by apprehension or miscomprehension in the moment. In this sense, there is always recuperation after any event, no matter how devastating or frightening it might be. The poetic insertions of the translation undo the fantasy of such a recuperation (even in the formal terms of a reordered narrative) by constantly referring back to the hopelessness of Crusoe's situation. Spiritually, there is no ultimate meaning in triumphing over the unknown that can be derived from Crusoe's adventures. Rather, the translation leaves us with a different spiritual lesson, namely the ultimate failure of insatiable individualism. Moreover, the restless spirit of capitalist expansion is depicted as weary and ineffectual. What comes across in the translation is the emptiness of the gesture of domestication.

Al-Bustānī's poetic insertions are conscious reflections on the original both in its content and its form. So far I have mentioned some examples of how they comment on Defoe's formal insertion of the text of the journal. But we find the most noteworthy example in the section where Crusoe first describes himself as absolute king of his island. Right after Crusoe talks about his strange-looking family sitting down to dinner, he depicts himself as absolute king of all his subjects, reigning over a kingdom in which no one is allowed to talk to him except Polly the parrot. The fact that only Polly can talk back to him is more than a reference to his kingdom of animals. Rather, it is a larger commentary directed at the status of language on the island. We will see later how this language (English in this context) will become the language that regulates the new "government" and legislates the constitution of citizenship on the island. Right after the presentation of Crusoe as ruler of his animal kingdom, we read in the translation the following poetic insertion that has to do with

the formal aspects of Arabic poetry (measurement of syllables in a line): “For he is the prince who is obeyed in nothing, just as *al-‘arūḍ* [the meter of Arabic poetry] has a sea [meter] with no water” (147) (“*fa huwa al-amīr wa lā ‘amrun yuṭā‘u bihi/ mithla al-‘urūḍ lahu baḥrun bilā mā*”).

“*Baḥr al-‘urūḍ*” (*Baḥr* here is used as a pun in that it means both “sea” and “poetic meter”) in one sense implies a poetic meter that measures the patterns of a poetic line’s syllables and identifies the pattern under a certain name. The rules of this process of syllabic measurement are entirely formal and non-referential (to the content). It seems that this last poetic insertion stages an empty formal impasse, as empty as the absoluteness of the king’s power. In line with the previous poetic verses that undo the myth of the individual, alone on a desert island yet soon become king, this particular poetic insertion clearly reflects the emptiness of the structures that Crusoe has to establish to become king. Whether sovereign over his kingdom of animals or people, Crusoe’s fantasy of absolute sovereignty is empty inasmuch as it creates its own condition of possibility, its own condition of reference, like the formal syllabic division of a poetic line. If this newly-founded sovereignty only exists insofar as it refers to its own superiority, then it labors within a law of translation that demands that the language of every individual is made to refer to the arbitrary rules of the language of the sovereign.

Thus, we are to read Crusoe’s dominion on the island in terms of an empty formal gesture. The poetic analogy is a direct commentary on the work of figuration in the text to the extent that the empty gesture of ruling over animals in a pretend kingdom is a mere echo of the formality of a poetic line which might have a figural sea but lacks any real water, or in this case any real reference. The translation thus highlights the emptiness of the formal gesture, slowly undoing the work of figuration

that is the premise of the original novel. For instance, when Crusoe begins to fantasize about being a slave owner in the Brasils as part of the process of drafting his life narrative (one of the ways he could have represented his life to himself), we read the following poetic lines in the translation: “I wanted to settle in every land, but I didn’t find a stable land (home) for myself. I obeyed my desires [the word is *maṭāmi* ‘in Arabic which connotes a certain degree of greed] so they enslaved me, and had I just been content, I would have been free” (194) (“*ṭalabtu al-mustaqirra bikul arḍ/ fa-lam arā lī bi arḍin mustaqirran/ aṭa ‘tu maṭāmi ‘ī fa-’ista ‘badatnī/ wa law innī qani ‘tu la kuntu ḥurran*”).⁷⁰

As readers of his journal, we know better than to believe Crusoe’s fantasy at face value. After all, when he was in the Brasils, he likened his existence to someone stranded on a desolate island, and when he is stranded on a desolate island, he fantasizes about owning a slave plantation in the Brasils. The poetic lines just mentioned recall this ambivalence, but they seem to suggest something more complex. If the emptiness of the formal gesture echoes the emptiness of the fantasy of absolute sovereignty, what then do we make of these poetic lines here?

Nation in Translation

In order to answer this question, I’ll move to the final part of the comparison between the original and the translation. I have mentioned sporadically that the translation seems to want to ignore the colonial politics of the original text, glossing over some of the more obvious comments on setting up home on the island and the Englishification, as it were, of Friday. It seems that the crucial question that needs to be addressed at this point concerns the definition of citizenship on the island. If

⁷⁰ “طلبت المستقر بكل ارض فلم ارى لي بأرض مستقرا اطعت مطامعي فاستبعدتني ولو أني قنعت لكنت حرا.”

Crusoe succeeds in domesticating the land, and is able to return, at least in the original, to the island still in a position of owner/ ruler, what then constitutes the terms of belonging to this land? Keeping in mind the last poetic lines I mentioned on the inability to settle down anywhere due to an insatiable, capitalist desire for expansion, I would like to explore how the original novel deals with the complicated question of nation.

Michael Seidel argues that Crusoe creates a form of international citizenship as a result of the economy he establishes on the island. Seidel gives the example of the English captain whom Crusoe saves from the mutineers on the ship. When the English captain first sees Crusoe, he wonders “Am I talking to God or Man! Is it a real Man, or an Angel!” (254). Seidel tells us that Crusoe’s self-identification is revealing: “I am a Man, an Englishman, and dispos’d to assist you” (254-55). Seidel continues: “Once an island sovereign, Crusoe now names himself citizen of his native land. In the name of legitimacy, he takes on national origin. When he returns to the civilized world he does so perfectly restored” (*Island Myths* 44-45). Seidel maintains that wealth becomes the definition of Crusoe’s sense of citizenship upon his return to England. Defoe establishes this definition “in placing Crusoe on the island during the historical Restoration only to restore him to England when that period ends” (47). Upon his return to England, Crusoe names himself Master, here of money and a considerable estate in the Brasils, “And in a Word, I was in a Condition which I scarce knew how to understand, or how to compose myself, for the Enjoyment of it” (qtd. in Seidel 46). What exactly are the terms of this citizenship? And how do these make it into al-Bustānī’s translation?

Let’s return only briefly to the beginning of the chapter, where I discussed al-Bustānī’s *Naḥḥ Sūrīyya*, in which he published his eleven *waṭaniyyāt* between

September and April of 1861. In the article “Inscribing the Arab Self: Buṭrus al-Bustānī and Paradigms of Subjective Reform” published in 2000, Stephen Sheehi reads the cultural context that motivates and determines al-Bustānī’s nationalist politics. Sheehi writes that al-Bustānī claims in *Nafīr* that the desire for knowledge creates cultural prosperity and begets “concord and unity” (10). During the writing of his *waṭaniyyāt*, al-Bustānī begins translating *Robinson Crusoe*. Sheehi argues that al-Bustānī’s national subject “is performative and constituted by the fact that his deeds, or misdeeds, literally enact the nation” (13). Sheehi continues that al-Bustānī’s theme of love of the nation is in reality a process “of identification and association where the native subject forms a cathexis with the nation, which in turn becomes subjectivity’s *raison-d’être*” (14). There is a second level to this process of identification which takes place between the lover of the nation and the European Self “that serves as a subjective referent for progress in the writings of al-Bustānī and others” (23).

Thus, according to Sheehi, when al-Bustānī set about defining nation where there was none, he could only do it in relation to European progress and in reference to a European Self. While I agree with this point generally, I think it is significant that al-Bustānī decided to translate *Robinson Crusoe* while producing his definition of the new citizen, the lover of the nation. In the least, the choice of the novel complicates the role of the European self in this definition of the nation. Holt makes a similar gesture to Sheehi when discussing the creation of a bourgeois readership in Beirut that is modeled on (and mirrors) a European bourgeoisie, particularly in the reading of the journals. In focusing on the translation of a literary text, I would like to explore the political premise of *Robinson Crusoe* in Arabic. I kept repeating at different moments that it seems that the translation wants to ignore the original novel’s colonial

politics.⁷¹ However, even if al-Bustānī was consciously less critical of the role of the Western model both on the literary and on the national planes, I believe the literary text presents moments of criticism primarily in some of the poetic insertions, the choice of Arabic words, and finally in the altered ending. For the rest of the chapter, I will try to read this political unconscious of the translation in an attempt to complicate al-Bustānī's identity politics and in the hope that such a reading might tell us something about the novel in Arabic.

Perhaps one of the most difficult themes of *Robinson Crusoe* is that of the homeland. Many critics, including Ian Watt and Michael McKeon among others, find that Crusoe's desire to roam the earth is a direct expression of the spirit of capitalism that had overcome England in the 18th century. Crusoe can make home anywhere, as Seidel has told us, as long as he's got the money. One of the most remarkable things is that the return to the island which in the original takes up the last two pages takes up just two lines in the translation. I will return to this point towards the end of the chapter. For now I would like to suggest that as literal as al-Bustānī desired his translation to be, 18th-century English capitalism did not and could not resonate with an Arabic context. Even if al-Bustānī was not primarily or obviously concerned with a critique of colonialism, he cannot remain truthful to the language of the original when it had to do with return to and domestication of the island as a second home. Something had to give.

⁷¹ This is not to say, however, that the translation is unaware of the colonial politics of the original. Rather, and perhaps primarily for pedagogical purposes, which constituted the terms of the original novel's translatability for an Arab audience, al-Bustānī did not want to point to the novel's relationship to colonial expansionism. While Defoe compares the savages to the Spaniards, al-Bustānī replaces the reference to what Christians are doing abroad to "*bāqī al-shu'ūb*" (the rest of the people). It is interesting that this reference to the dynamic and practice of colonization slips through the translation unheeded. Perhaps at the time al-Bustānī was still not acknowledging the missionaries' presence in Beirut, nor the persistence of the French influence in Egypt (which will soon be replaced by the English in a form of direct rule in 1882), as continuing forms of colonization.

Crusoe first sleeps in a tree, and Marzec argues that the enclosure of alien spaces makes it possible for Crusoe to begin articulating his narrative. In the original he describes his part of the island as follows. "...my own House, as I call'd it to my self, was a perfect Settlement to me, compar'd to that; and it rendered every Thing about me so comfortable" (111). This passage occurs after he wanders away from his part of the island and feels terrified to be away from his abode. He tells us that after this little "Journey," he finds it wonderful to go home (110), to his part of the island. In the Arabic translation, we read this same description as follows: "...my house and I used to call it my home, was to me a real abode and a stable nation/homeland (*waṭan*)" (110) ("*maskanan ḥaqīqiyyan wa waṭanan thābitan*"). Significantly, right after the establishment of his home, Crusoe finds the Bible, and then finds God.

Notice how in the translation of the previous line, "Settlement" is rendered as "house," "home," "abode," and "nation." Specifically, Crusoe's part of the island is a real abode and a stable nation, unlike al-Bustānī's native Lebanon. It is important that the idea of a familiar home is here described interchangeably as a stable nation. This is of course not the case for the original text which makes no reference to the settlement being a stable homeland. The word settlement if anything suggests building on a foreign land. Crusoe is not so concerned with nation; he is, nonetheless, all about the kingdom of subjects.

Crusoe only uses the adjective "national" when he is describing the crimes of the savages against each other. He depicts the crimes as follows,

they were National, and I ought to leave them to the justice of God, who is Governour of Nations, and knows how by National Punishments to make a just Retribution for National Offences; and to bring publick Judgments upon those who offend in a publick Manner, by such Ways as best pleases him.
(173)

Al-Bustānī translates the adjective “National” as “*jinsīyyah*” which is a very interesting translation as it refers to citizenship, to sex or gender and to kind. Specifically, “*jins*” means gender, sex or kind. Why is it that these crimes are described as national in the first place?⁷² What is it to Crusoe’s mind that makes the savages into a nation, and thus their cannibalism into a national crime? And, more importantly, why does national get translated as “*jinsīyyah*” and not as “*waṭanīyyah*” for that matter? We know that the latter is one of al-Bustānī’s favorite words and one that he is was using to describe his own musings on the Lebanese nation. The poetic insertion which follows this line in the translation is, for the first time in the entire text, addressed to the feminine: “You want to reach the high positions cheaply but you will be stung by bees’ needles on your way” (172) (“*turīdīna idrāka al-ma’ālī rakhīṣatan/ wa la budda dūna al-shahdi min ibar al-naḥli*”). We also read that Crusoe is “*muntaṣiban*” which literally means “erect” on his knees praying to God to save him.⁷³

The multiple sexual references here to being stung by the bee’s needle and then to being “erect” on his knees in prayer are not random. Coupled with the use of

⁷² Crusoe interrogates his desire to hurt the savages at different points in the novel. Here is the most famous one:

But it occurred to my thoughts, what call, what occasion, much less what necessity I was in to go and dip my hands in blood, to attack people who had neither done or intended me any wrong? who, as to me, were innocent, and whose barbarous customs were their own disaster, being in them a token, indeed, of God's having left them, with the other nations of that part of the world, to such stupidity, and to such inhuman courses, but did not call me to take upon me to be a Judge of their actions, much less an executioner of His justice - that whenever He thought fit He would take the cause into His own hands, and by national vengeance punish them as a people for national crimes, but that, in the meantime, it was none of my business - that it was true Friday might justify it, because he was a declared enemy and in a state of war with those very particular people, and it was lawful for him to attack them - but I could not say the same with regard to myself. These things were so warmly pressed upon my thoughts all the way as I went, that I resolved I would only go and place myself near them that I might observe their barbarous feast, and that I would act then as God should direct; but that unless something offered that was more a call to me than yet I knew of, I would not meddle with them. (232)

⁷³ In Arabic, the adjective “*muntaṣib*” or erect does not have to have the same connotations as the English word, but in this particular context, the bee’s needle and the eroticized language of stinging cannot but suggest a sexualized connotation of the word.

the word “*jinsīyyah*” (which also means sexual and is the current standard term for “nationality”) and the address to the feminine, the reader is left to wonder if this is the text’s (unconscious) response to colonization as invasion. Crusoe declares that God is the absolute sovereign, the “Governour of Nations” as he tells us in the previous quotation. And yet it is clear throughout the novel and especially in the section that follows that Crusoe makes himself into the only moral compass and ethical reference as the new absolute sovereign of the new kingdom. When he observes the cannibals’ “barbarous feast,” he says that he “would act then as God should direct” (232) as he waits to hear a call from God. The sexual references to being stung intend to force Crusoe to revise his declared position as man of God, and man *as* God. The figure of the observing man, waiting for a call from God to invade the barbarous feast, is recast as a warning of being invaded or stung himself, as he stands erect praying for the call. The figure of the feminine (previously in the bird) returns here and marks yet another place of rewriting the dominant masculine, who in wanting to invade is threatened by a feminine invasion. In allowing the re-inscription of the omnipotent masculine within the threatened feminine, the feminine spaces in the translation enable a perspective from an outside of the world of Crusoe, a commentary from beyond, as it were, not from the divine, but from the womb.⁷⁴

Another place where the reader of the Arabic translation can detect a critique of colonialism is right after the dialogue in English between Friday and

⁷⁴ The use of the adjective “National” in the original novel is not really peculiar given that Defoe’s 18th-century conception of nation could very well be equated with a tribe as well as with a nation-state. However, writing his translation in the 19th-century, al-Bustānī is clearly more anxious about the use of the word and its rendition in Arabic. Al-Bustānī has to be sure to differentiate the Lebanese ‘others’ from the savage ‘others’ met with by Crusoe. Thus the savages are a “kind” while Lebanon strives to be a “nation.” The potential feminization of the Lebanese position as a kind is thus a threat to al-Bustānī nationalist stance, which – like the modern (nineteenth-century) English – wants to belong to what the nineteenth-century would call a “nation” and not a “kind” (or tribe) of colonized in this particular case.

Crusoe, which Defoe includes in a dramatic insertion to emphasize Friday's broken yet comprehensible new language. In the Arabic translation, we read the following poetic insertion at the end of the dialogue: "The more languages one acquires the more useful he becomes, and he finds much more help when in difficulty, so hurry towards memorizing languages, *for every tongue is in reality a human being*" (214; emphasis mine) ("*bi qadr lughāt al-mar'u yakthuru naf'ahu/ wa tilka lahu 'inda al-shadā'id a'wānu/ fa bādir ilā hifzi al-lughāt musāri'an/ fa kul lisān bi al-haqīqah insān*"). The instruction of Friday is one of the most telling moments of Crusoe's politics of domestication on the island. The translation develops this instruction in the English language into what reads as part of a politics of resistance rather than as one of submission (a word that comes up when we first encounter Friday who is instructed in submission and subjectivity, being a devoted subject to his master).

The poetic insertion reads this humanization in the instruction of a dominant language as a means of being useful and finding help when you need it. Earlier some of the translation's poetic lines suggest that trying to control the narrative and make sense of events on the island take away from the humanity of the hero (whose heart turns into wood). The definition of human here is bound to the acquisition of a foreign tongue. Perhaps al-Bustānī does intend these poetic lines to place more emphasis on Crusoe's "rightful" instruction of Friday, but the lines still articulate what Crusoe kept to himself in his own journal; namely, that the instruction of Friday is also his humanization. The humanization of Friday would also make him into a legal subject of Crusoe's kingdom. Here is how Crusoe describes himself as King of his own island:

My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry Reflection, which I frequently made, How like a King I looked. First of all, the whole country was my own meer Property, so that I had an undoubted right of Dominion. Secondly, my People were perfectly subjected: I

was absolutely Lord and Law-giver - they all owed their Lives to me, and were ready to lay down their Lives, *if there had been Occasion of it*, for me. It was remarkable, too, I had but three Subjects, and they were of three different Religions. My man *Friday* was a Protestant, his Father was a *Pagan* and a *Cannibal*, and the *Spaniard* was a Papist. However, I allow'd liberty of conscience throughout my Dominions: But this is by the Way. (241)

In this kingdom, three religions co-exist peacefully with the Catholic Portuguese and Friday (who has learned Crusoe's Protestant Faith) and Friday's father who is a pagan. Now he is actual King of subjects not just a lord with no subjects who can speak to him except his parrot Polly. In the context of the translation, one can detect the appeal of the English text to al-Bustānī as a neutral text of sorts, pertaining to none of the local sects directly, but rather able to mediate the possibility of this new Lebanese nation he imagined his work would bring into existence. In the re-imagined Protestant nation on the island, al-Bustānī located the possibility of a new national Lebanese identity, one that would cohere in relation to the "nation" of Lebanon and not in relation to sectarian or tribal affiliations.

Crusoe tells us that this religious co-existence is mentioned just "by the way" and that somehow it is an intrusive insertion. In the Arabic it is described as a "*ḥāshiyah*" (a marginal comment, a stuffing of sorts) which is not important enough to interrupt the conversation ("*muqāṭa 'at al-ḥadīth*") (234). We have an image of a nation in translation here with Friday as the interpreter to his father and the Portuguese boy who spoke Friday's language). One might think that al-Bustānī would spend more time here emphasizing this point, since after all he was preaching his own version of co-existence and tolerance in his homeland. It is convenient that Crusoe only mentions this co-existence in passing, as an afterthought that does not require too much interruption of the narrative flow. And al-Bustānī seems to emphasize the same point in describing the comment as a form of "stuffing," an extra, a paratext (much like his poetic insertions) that has no place in the life of Crusoe on the island. In the

original novel, Crusoe tells us that all the people on the island need to swear by the Holy Sacraments and the Gospel “to be true to me.” As readers, we become witnesses here to a typical moment of translation as perjury in that the subjects on the island have to swear on a law and a text that are not theirs.

Co-existence is regulated by the law of the King. As long as they can all swear on the Holy Gospels in the language of the King, they are all Subjects who can co-exist on the island and under the same King. Robert P. Marzec describes this performance of translation in nationalist terms: “Only from within the pale of enclosures does Crusoe establish a relation to the land, a relation that is at the same time paradoxically not of the land, for the land must become English land before he can connect to it in any substantial fashion” (131). Friday now occupies the position of translator, enabling communication among the people on the island in what I would describe as a nation in translation. It is a nation in translation because its very being is constituted within the oath of translation. All of the subjects on the island have to translate their faiths and languages into those of the king in swearing on the Holy Gospels. The oath is thus not in their own language, but it is one which ensures their belonging to the island and to the king as his subjects.

Although al-Bustānī calls this description of language on the island a “stuffing,” an excess so to speak, the nation in translation that emerges here can only come together under a previous banner, namely the poetic lines in which al-Bustānī compares the sovereignty of the king to an empty formal gesture. In this “*ḥāshiyah*,” Friday emerges as the primary figure of this new nation, for even though he swears on the law of the king and translates all languages on the island into that of the king, he is the condition of possibility of this nation or kingdom. In a sense, sovereignty has to depend on that which is outside itself, the translator who can ensure that the sovereign

can be and remain sovereign.⁷⁵ The fantasy of absolute sovereignty is then merely a fantasy, and al-Bustānī's "*ḥāshiyah*" like the rest of his translation stands as a testament to that.

The idea of the island being a nation in translation complicates al-Bustānī's politics of identification with the West. For if the island itself recognizes that it comes together under the banner of translation, it allows room for difference within itself. I mean that even if all the subjects on the island have to swear by a law that is not theirs, they still come together as different entities under one law. In the original, and despite Crusoe's efforts, the figure of Friday the translator is so necessary to the constitution of sovereignty on the island that the fantasy of absolute sovereignty is impossible. The translation takes account of the impossibility in its revision of the ending.⁷⁶

The translation completely changes the ending of the book. Until now, I have been focusing on the poetic insertions and some curious choice of words in the translation because for the most part al-Bustānī's language remains faithful to the content of the original. But the oath of faithfulness is strikingly broken three times in the text of the translation. First in the adapted title which includes al-Bustānī's and not Defoe's name; second, in the "Translator's Introduction" which was originally the "Editor's Preface;" and finally, in the changed ending of the novel where we barely hear about Crusoe's return to the island, and we are given a long poetic insertion on

⁷⁵ It is important to note that in previous poetic insertions it was the figure of the feminine that constituted the outside of the text. In the future, I would like to pursue this possible correlation between the feminine as a space outside and a space of revisionary appropriation and the figure of the translator.

⁷⁶ Translation also enables this persistence of difference in the changing roles and personalities Crusoe assumes on the island. Crusoe becomes Commander of the island (267) in the war against the mutants on the British ship (*ḥikmadār* in Arabic 259) and Crusoe remains hidden from them as the ultimate untouchable, then he pretends to be the *ḥikmadār*'s representative with the multiplication of personalities and titles.)

the ills of restlessness. Then we are left with the signature yet again of the translator, reported to us in the third person and followed by a record of the moment of publication of the text.

Towards the end of the original text, we hear briefly about Crusoe's travels through France, with his fortunes safely around him. After mentioning the Widow who was his principal guide in matters of money, there is a paragraph in the original which is absent from the translation; it explains why he cannot go back to the Brasils unless he "resolv'd to be a Sacrifice to my Principles, be a Martyr for Religion, and die in the Inquisition; so I resolv'd to stay at home" (303). Thus, the accusations waged against al-Bustānī for his translation being against the Catholic Church are invalid since he omits this major paragraph in which Crusoe presents himself as a (potential) Protestant martyr. We also do not read in the translation about the specifics of his business deals and what he made out of selling his estate in the Brasils.

Moreover, the following paragraph is removed from the translation:

Any one would think, that in this State of complicated good Fortune, I was past running any more Hazards; and so indeed I had been, if other Circumstances had concurr'd. But I was inur'd to a Wandering Life, had no Family, not many Relations, nor however rich had I contracted much Acquaintance. (RC 302)

These lines that tell us about his strong inclination to see the island again are rendered in one line in the translation as such:

and though I hold sold my estate in the Brasils, yet I could not keep the Country out of my Head, and had a great Mind to be upon the Wing again, especially I could not resist the strong Inclination I had to see my Island, and to know if the poor Spaniards were in Being there, and how the Rogues I left there had used them. (RC 304)

And even though I sold my properties in Brasils I could not get the country out of my mind not to kick off the strong inclination I had to see my island. (*Al-Tihfah* 293)

We hear about his settling in his homeland and marrying. Crusoe makes a promise to his nephew to travel with him again in 1694. The translator tells us that all will be mentioned later in the second part of Crusoe's journey. Then we have a longer paragraph, which seems to be an elaboration on the previously removed lines:

Any one would think, that in this State of complicated good Fortune, I was past running any more Hazards; and so indeed I had been, if other Circumstances had concurr'd. But I was inur'd to a Wandering Life, had no Family, not many Relations, nor however rich had I contracted much Acquaintance.

The original ends with the anticipation of Crusoe's return to the island and then summarizes his new adventures with the Spaniards when there, urging the reader to purchase volume two of the novel. The actual return is removed from the translation and replaced by a paragraph which elaborates on Crusoe's propensity for a wandering life. Here is the paragraph:

And the proverb that says old habits die hard was never truer of anyone as it was of me. For whoever reads my story might think that my natural inclination for travel and wandering might have weakened or gone completely after all the hardships and dangers I encountered in my travels. My reader might also suppose that now that I am sixty-one years old I must be more inclined to settle down and stay at home. And that I should not want to travel anymore especially for more money, because I had plenty of it and more that I needed to fulfill my needs and those of my family. But all of this was not sufficient for me to expel this strong inclination for travel that became with me like a chronic disease or a fifth nature (meaning sense). My inclination was so strong that I dreamt about traveling all the time and talked about it all the time, and could not talk about anything else, so much so that those in my company would get bored of my speech and I used to feel that because I couldn't stop myself from talking about it. And this will become clearer in the second part of my travel account. (294)

The paragraph is then appended with the following poetic lines:

Enemies cannot hurt an ignorant man, as much as he can hurt himself, and the Shaykh doesn't leave his morals behind, until he is buried in his tomb, and if he gets scared he returns to his ignorance, and in deep sorrow, returns to what set him back. Whoever you educate in his youth is like a stem which is nourished with water when planted in the ground, until you find him rich in leaves and fresh, after you have seen it all dried up before (294) (*"mā tablughu al-a'dā' min jahil/ ma yablughu al-jahil min nafsihi/ wa al-shaykh la yatruku akhlāqahu/ ḥatta yuwārā fī thurā ramsihi/ idhā 'ir'awā 'āda ila*

jihlihi/ kadhī al-ḡanni ‘ād ila naksihi/ wa inna man addabtuhu fī al-ṣiba/ ka al- ‘ūd yusqa al-mā’ fī gharsihi/ ḥatta tarāhu muwarraqan naḡiran/ ba ‘d al-ladhi abṣarta min yabsihi’’).

These are arguably the most charged lines of the entire translation, and they appear on the final page right before the concluding signature of the translator. In line with his pedagogical project, al-Bustānī concludes his translation with a projected teleology of an education that takes its leave from a Crusoeian ignorance (potentially Crusoe’s fatal sin, and not his restlessness). However, al-Bustānī’s projected pedagogical teleology would eradicate the faults of youth, using the example of Crusoe’s deadly fault, his restlessness. Thus the translation presents the original novel as a failed *Bildungsroman*, although the text of the translation will be used as a primary text in al-Bustānī’s National School. In other words, the final poetic lines suggest that this education would be in the anti-example of Crusoe.

Finally, the translation ends with the signature of the translator, reported to us in the third person:

Its translator, editor, and publisher, poor Buṭrus al-Bustānī says of the English original, that the first part of the *Tihfah* was done and that god-willing the second part will follow and take up Robinson’s return to the island and then his travels to China and other places. The last day of its editing and putting together was the fifth of April in the year 1861 in the protected city of Beirut and thanks be to God first and last. (294)

In the signature, the translation becomes the original, and the translator is the author of *Al-Tihfah*. We are compelled to ask if the word ‘translation’ encompasses what al-Bustānī has done not least because his work represents itself as part of a larger ‘original’ project. Interestingly, the signature itself is presented to us in the third person as well, so that the name of al-Bustānī comes up as a reference here, replacing and effacing the name of Defoe which appears nowhere.

In 1919, and on the occasion of the bi-centenary of the publication of *Robinson Crusoe*, Virginia Woolf wrote that the book “resembles one of the

anonymous productions of the race itself than the effect of a single mind” so much so that “the name of Daniel Defoe has no right to appear on the title-page”.⁷⁷ There are many ways to read Woolf’s dismissal of the name of Daniel Defoe, a dismissal that she intends as praise of the novel. On the one hand, the novel *Robinson Crusoe* came to embody the spirit of colonial expansion and in that sense could be described as the “effect of a single mind,” namely that of a budding British imperialism. On the other, the novel also came to be considered an inaugural text of the new genre of the novel, particularly the first Anglophone novel. Thus the name of its maker is superfluous, not replaceable, but certainly excessive to the content of the book. Al-Bustānī translates Woolf’s dismissal of Crusoe into more than a performance of appropriation, wherein he makes himself into the author of *Al-Tiḥfah*. Rather, al-Bustānī makes this dismissal the premise of his translation so that he can rewrite the novel of English imperialism as the story of the Lebanese citizen making a nation where there is none. But this nation would be written precisely over the effaced the name of Defoe, and by extension of English imperialism, as we find particularly in the rewritten ending.

The original novel’s ending does not end the novel at all. Rather, it looks forward, outside the text, to its sequel, to the novel to come that would tell of Crusoe’s return to the island (always as king). The translation longs for an ending. And so it inserts one, a moralistic one about how one should settle down. An ending, in other words, that resists the most pervasive legacy of capitalism, restlessness. If al-Bustānī can make the novel end, then he can also do away with the restlessness, and bring into Arabic a *bildungsroman* of Crusoe’s life that ends with a lesson learned and

⁷⁷ Her essay is entitled “Defoe” and included in *The Common Reader: First Series* online at *eBooks@Adelaide*, and accessed on 20 Oct. 2009 at the following link: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91c/chapter9.html>.

a moral to live by. In *Island Myths*, Seidel makes a very insightful comment on how *Robinson Crusoe* is written after the Glorious Revolution of 1699 but claims to have been written before it. Crusoe returns to a revolution-less England, but he also returns to a thriving capitalism that not only justifies his year of seclusion on the island but also demands his return to it. He has become a citizen of the world, who can author his own kingdom and can choose to do away with revolution, even though Defoe was a supporter of the spirit of the Glorious Revolution in its time.⁷⁸ In this context it is necessary to return momentarily to Ian Watt's description of Crusoe's daily activities: "profit is Crusoe's only vocation, and the whole world is his territory" (*The Rise of the Novel* 67).

The specter of the revolution, nonetheless, haunts Defoe's novel in its devotion to beginnings. If Crusoe learns anything from his adventures, it is that he can go anywhere and start anew, and this new start could still replicate old structures he's used to so long as it is always possible to begin anew. What becomes of this fantasy in the translation? What do we make of the altered ending? The original novel stages two different endings, one where Crusoe is rescued from the island and the second where Crusoe sums up his eventual return to the island. In the translation, we hear

⁷⁸ Christopher Hill in his 1980 article "Robinson Crusoe" writes that Defoe the radical translated the democratic revolution from the political realm directly into the novel:

With some exaggeration we could see Defoe the radical as an isolated survivor: his ship had foundered, and if any of his comrades had survived he had lost contact with them. He had to make do as best he could with what he could salvage from the wreckage. His personal isolation was partly his own fault: but there were social reasons for the political impotence of ex-radicals. The settlement of 1688 had established the rule of a corrupt Parliament, representing the men of property, over a corrupt society: this is the age of *The Beggars' Opera*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Jonathan Wild*, and Edward Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters*. Yet what alternative was there? Given the illiteracy of the majority of the population, their dependence for political ideas on landlords, employers, parsons, there was no possibility of instituting real democracy. Even if manhood suffrage could by some miracle have been introduced, it would have been more likely to lead to a restoration of the Stuarts than to a just and equal society. Maintenance of the revolution settlement of 1688 and of the Hanoverian succession of 1714, Defoe thought, was necessary to prevent a restoration of absolutism and clerical tyranny: only so could an England be preserved in which men of the middling sort go about their business freely. The gentry were an incubus in this society, as gentlemen officers were a nuisance to tarpaulins on board ship; but any possible alternative to gentry rule would be something worse. (13-14)

about the return only briefly but are left with another one of al-Bustānī's famous poetic insertions, this time a longer insertion that reflects formally on the return as it tries to re-inscribe it within a non-return. I mean by formally that these poetic insertions are also seen as ends in themselves, and the one that ends the translation seems to suggest that this is the "proper" way for the novel to end, because it should have ended with the rescue.

If the translation is so intent on a non-return to the island, does it succeed in disentangling the politics of identity from the politics of expansionism and profit in the original? I mentioned at some point that this kingdom on the island takes the form of a nation in translation in which the three different religions co-exist under the sworn testimony on Crusoe's Gospel. Even if the idea of a nation in translation appealed to our translator, the non-deterred and always possible return to the island resonated with a colonialist politics al-Bustānī was not keen on adopting.

In "*Robinson Crusoe* as Myth," Ian Watt writes that *Robinson Crusoe* which is clearly a work of fiction claims a "real" status through the over 700 versions and translations of Defoe's novel. The status of the fictional in the text is established only in relation to the historical. I mean that the novel's "fictional" depiction of the adventures of a seafaring Englishman who makes home on a deserted island is made possible only in relation to the spirit of expansionist capitalism in England at the time. This prototypical novel marks the hiatus where the historically real and the fictionally envisioned intersect. The curious case here is that this translation is not a conscious rewriting but intends to be a literal translation. Yet the translation's efforts to mirror the original in its historicity can only go so far. The ending of the translation includes the signature of the translator (presented in the 3rd person) and the date of the publication of the text.

We already know from the “Translator’s Introduction” about the context of the translation: it was written amidst the raging sectarian battles in Lebanon in 1861. Al-Bustānī inserts his own brand of historicity in the translation, thus disabling the original’s unquestionable power to domesticate the world in language. The translation makes the original respond to the possibility of the kingdom on the island undoing itself, perhaps not in a revolution, but in a failure of translation. Like the war-torn Lebanon that forms the context of the translation, the nation in translation can only exist if translation as complete reproduction in another language (with no remainder) fails. One place to detect this failure is in the attempt to translate the island into a familiar language of domestication. The failure also assumes the form of the impossible unification of the different subjects on the island under a foreign law, or under a law of the master that is nonetheless necessarily a law of translation. After all, it takes Friday to make communication on the island possible at all. By inserting the translation’s own historicity within the signature of the translator (who again assumes the status of original author), al-Bustānī interrogates *Robinson Crusoe*’s recourse to fiction to establish its own historicity. The failure of translation undoes the comfortable correlation between the historically perceived and the fictionally imagined. Now the novel testifies to a civil war which resembles nothing of the harmonious co-existence under Crusoe’s law, and to a nation in translation making itself within an always already divided sovereignty and outside of any defining borders.

Chapter Two

In the Name of the Idiom: Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī's Task of Translation

Our Lebanese brothers in Egypt and in America opened the windows of Arabic literature onto Western literature, so they showed us arts of expression and faces of art that we don't know in Arabic literature, but it was for the most part awkwardly constructed, rendered in distorted forms, and we put it back together And here it was that the style of al-Manfalūṭī shone at its brightest and rose in the literary firmament the rise of an expert, perfect style and rang harmoniously in the ears of literati. Readers saw the writers of this new art in a way they had never seen them before . . . in the superficiality of journalistic writing and the weak styles of translated texts. So they craved it just as homeless wanderers crave the only sweet source they find . . .

Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt, *al-Risālah* 9 (1937)⁷⁹

In 1937, Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt looks back longingly to the work of the famous Egyptian “translator” of the early twentieth century, Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876 – 1924). Al-Manfalūṭī's “translations” of French literature are more appropriately termed adaptations, as he was not familiar with the source language and he significantly manipulated the content of the original. In this particular chapter, and in the context of al-Manfalūṭī, translation becomes a performance of appropriation that does not pretend to any fidelity to the original text. Most of al-Manfalūṭī's adaptations make no reference to the original text or its author. In that sense, in the epigraph, al-Zayyāt distinguishes between the popularity of al-Manfalūṭī's writing and the proliferation of contemporaneous translations. The Arabic noun that he uses in Arabic to describe these translations is “*rakākat*,” which is somewhat difficult to

⁷⁹ Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt was the editor of the famous journal *al-Riwāyah* [The Novel] which included serialized translated novels and which was published over 2 years, from 1936 to 1937. In 1937, he started the journal *al-Risālah* which took up issues of literary criticism. This epigraph is taken from the 9th issue of *al-Risālah*, in which al-Zayyāt nostalgically remembers al-Manfalūṭī's adaptations of romantic novels. Interestingly, the word “*al-hiyām*” which I translated as wandering can also mean passionate, ardent love and the “sweet source” could either be the source of water in the desert or the loved one. In either case the new art of fiction coming in translation, and in the name of al-Manfalūṭī, is described as an object of deep longing and desire.

render in Arabic, implying weakness or brittleness, and even thinness. Thus while these translations were “thin” and not substantial enough to engage their apprehensive audience, al-Manfālūṭī’s work provided the reading audience with what it needed, a stimulating object of desire that could anchor the readers in their endless wandering, as the punning simile at the end of the epigraph tells us. Interestingly, al-Zayyāt seems to forget that al-Manfālūṭī was relying on French texts to write his own fiction. Al-Manfālūṭī was a curious sort of “translator” who did not read or write French, and most of his translations are actually renditions of someone else’s oral translations of the original texts, as these were dictated to him.⁸⁰ Even though he didn’t speak or read French, he would base much of his own work on French fiction that was read to him. Al-Zayyāt’s convenient forgetting resonates with al-Manfālūṭī’s curious performance of translation as fundamentally a complete appropriation of the original. For instance, most of his adaptations make no reference to the original author at all, as we will see in his adaptation of Chateaubriand’s *René* and *Atala*. Thus, at first glance, it seems completely inappropriate to call al-Manfālūṭī’s adaptations translations.

However, it might be useful to consult the work of Lawrence Venuti, especially in *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* originally published in 1995, to justify why al-Manfālūṭī’s adaptations can still be considered a form of translation. Lawrence Venuti argues that since the seventeenth century, translation theory has been shaped by the imperative that the translator should completely efface himself so as to hide the traces of any work of translation from one language into another. The success of the translator has thus been measured against the extent to which the translated text reads as though it was originally written in the

⁸⁰ There is a massive amount of literature on the difference between translation and paraphrase. However, for the purposes of my dissertation, I am considering al-Manfālūṭī’s adaptations as performances of translation in the broader sense of translation as copying ideas and themes from another language and across cultural borders.

target language. The compulsion to remove any trace of foreignness constitutes what Venuti names “domesticating translation.” On the other side of the spectrum is what he calls “foreignizing translation” which is contrarily intent on revealing the foreignness of the original text in the target language.⁸¹ Al-Manfālūṭī’s adaptations can be considered translations to the extent that they are simultaneous performances of both domesticating and foreignizing translation: the adaptations speak to an Egyptian readership about themes that are completely alien to it. They still maintain, albeit a very tenuous, relationship to a source language and an original text as they are clearly not native expressions, and they adapt the original text to a completely foreign context altering its references and idiomatic structure to produce their own. As I will continue to show, however, these interventions into the original text produce al-Manfālūṭī’s own idiomatic translations, texts that translate a foreign idiomatic structure into Arabic and remain as such neither fully foreign nor fully Arabic texts.

Al-Zayyāt falls into al-Manfālūṭī’s trap and presents him as the hero of novelistic fiction in the Arab world, a prophetic figure of sorts that made possible the kind of fiction that was to come after him and that would be definitively *Egyptian*.

⁸¹ The idea of a foreignizing translation comes from Friedrich Schleiermacher’s famous 1813 essay “Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens” (“On the Different Methods of Translating”) in which Schleiermacher proposes two opposing choices in the process of translation. In his essay “The Misery and the Splendor of Translation,” Jose Ortega y Gasset summarizes Schleiermacher’s essay as such:

One should note, in any case, that what is essential concerning the matter has been said more than a century ago by the dear theologian Schleiermacher in his essay ‘On the Different Methods of Translating.’ According to him, a translation can move in either of two directions: either the author is brought to the language of the reader, or the reader is carried to the language of the author. In the first case, we do not translate, in the proper sense of the word; we, in fact, do an imitation, or a paraphrase of the original text. It is only when we force the reader from his linguistic habits and oblige him to move within those of the author that there is actually translation. In his opinion, the translator either ignores the original author and works on attracting the reader, or he ignores the reader and works on remaining close to the original author’s word. True translation, in Schleiermacher’s view, is the first; mere or interpretation or *dolmetschen*, is the second. (*The Translation Studies Reader* 60)

Contrary to al-Zayyāt, many of al-Manfālūṭī's contemporaries perceived him as a "bad" translator, primarily because he chose to translate sentimental, escapist French fiction and not because he could not read French. Even his contemporaries did not address his writing as a form of translation; rather, they read it as his own original work and found it to be alarmingly disengaged from the reality of Egyptian politics post the 1919 revolution.

Al-Manfālūṭī was educated at al-Azhar, the famous Egyptian mosque that graduated many Egyptian Muslim scholars. He received a very traditional education with an emphasis on emulating the language of the Qur`ān and delivering the perfect form of Classical Arabic.⁸² Interestingly, al-Manfālūṭī's contemporaries and the critics who came after them dismissed his work as mere escapist entertainment literature despite the fact that al-Manfālūṭī made it his life's work to rewrite the education he had received. In the epigraph above, al-Zayyāt also comments on the newness of al-Manfālūṭī's writing. Al-Zayyāt recognizes that al-Manfālūṭī overcame the pitfalls of literal translation and produced the "new art" (of narrative fiction) in a form the public craved.⁸³

⁸² Al-Manfālūṭī was sent to al-Azhar at the age of 12 and spent 10 years studying there. In 1897, he was imprisoned by `Abbās II for one of his poems. Al-Manfālūṭī was an avid supporter of the reformist ideas of Muḥammad `Abduh and took his side against the Egyptian government. In 1907, he started publishing articles in the newspaper *al-Mu`ayyad*, which were then collected under the title *al-Uṣbu`iyyāt* and finally as *al-Nazarāt* in three volumes, and published in 1910, 1912, and 1920.

⁸³ Al-Manfālūṭī's work sparked an important debate in the early 1920's on the possibility and purpose of translating European literature into Arabic. In 1921, the weekly Egyptian newspaper of *Al-Ahrām* featured a debate between two of the most prominent intellectuals of the time: Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Maṣṣūr Fahmī. The heated, publicized and almost aggressive feud took place over questions of literary form in particular and literary aesthetics in general. The debate was over the translations of al-Manfālūṭī. Maṣṣūr Fahmī was a professor of philosophy and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn a professor of Arabic literature. The issue at hand was al-Manfālūṭī's most recent translation/adaptation of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, under the title *Al-Shā`ir* (The Poet). According to the article in *Al-Ahrām*, the real problem in this debate was the question of literary "renovation." The article maintains that Ṭāhā Ḥusayn was the proponent of renovation and called for a "new" national literature; on the other hand, al-Manfālūṭī was a symbol of all things traditional. Interestingly, in the debate, Ḥusayn dismisses translation as an impossible task, one that reduces the value of the original to the mere aspect of another linguistic medium. This reduction, he maintains, denies the original literature all its real worth. Maṣṣūr Fahmī, a professor of philosophy, praised the book while Ṭāhā Ḥusayn criticized the conversion of dramatic verse into the prosaic language of a novel. The debate is recorded by Yūnān

Al-Manfalūṭī's harsh critics dismissed his work as "romantic." The adjective "romantic" seems to be in reference to what they understood to be romanticism, and particularly French romanticism with which al-Manfalūṭī was clearly infatuated. However, and upon closer reading of this adjectival accusation, we find that their understanding of romanticism is defined only inasmuch as it is *not* realism. Al-Manfalūṭī's critics found that in the thrust of the 1919 revolution and in the march for the crystallization of a national art, Egyptian authors should resort to (French) realism and forgo the escapist tendencies of romanticism. Needless to say, these critics were conflating sentimental escapism with romanticism, and in this sense, Chateaubriand was a romantic, and Hugo a devout realist. In reading these early translations, one is continuously reminded that the terms realism and romanticism as we have come to know them today (be it that they still are debatable terms) are not exactly what these authors had in mind.

In this chapter, I will focus on the definitions of realism and romanticism as these coalesce in the work of al-Manfalūṭī and others. I am primarily interested in how al-Manfalūṭī produced his own brand of romanticism in translation and how his romanticism enables him to imagine a prophetic vocation for the Egyptian author that is resonant with that of the Prophet Muḥammad, only with a secular twist. To understand the premise of the accusations against him, we need to understand his poetics of translation, which begin to take shape in the introduction to a collection of philosophical musings published under the title of *al-Nazarāt* or Contemplations. *Al-Nazarāt* is a three-volume collection of al-Manfalūṭī's political and literary articles. In this chapter I am mainly interested in Volume I which was published in 1910, and particularly in the introduction to the volume in which al-Manfalūṭī lays out his task

Labīb Rizq in his article "Duel of the masters" published in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, No. 442: 12-18 August 1999, and available at the following link: <weekly.ahram.org/1999/442/chrncls.htm>.

of translation. His poetics of translation, and by extension his brand of romanticism, were formative for the adoption of the novel form in Arabic literature in ways that none of his contemporaries could foresee. Before discussing his poetics of translation, I would first like to describe the reception of al-Manfalūṭī's fiction and the place it is allotted in the development of Arabic fiction.

Failure to Read or to Engage?

In the wake of the 1919 revolution, the popularity of al-Manfalūṭī's work sparked a significant debate in which romanticism and realism were seen to be polar opposites of a literary spectrum. In *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse: A Study in the Sociology of Modern Arabic Literature* published in 1993, Sabry Hafez traces the movement of narrative in the Arab world meticulously, documenting it in historical data that would be very hard to locate anywhere else. Hafez states that in the early decades of the twentieth century, Arabic fictional writing relied heavily on elements of Romanticism that were imported mainly from French and Russian literature through translation.⁸⁴ In reading the fiction of the early twentieth century, one hesitates to conclude so categorically that this body of work relied on French and Russian romanticism. For one thing, the authors of this body of fiction had conflated romanticism and realism because European romantic and realist literature was being translated at the same time. Realism and romanticism seem to have been in a state of

⁸⁴ Hafez repeatedly invokes the "new" in relation to the development of narrative in the latter half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century. Although I am thoroughly indebted to the literary history of Arabic narrative that he maps out in his book, I find that in most of his analysis he brings European literary criticism of narrative to bear on the Arabic narrative of the period. He discusses the native narrative tradition but does not address how that interacted with the narrative fiction that came in translation; rather, he treats these two kinds of narrative in isolation. His detailed historical and bibliographical references are invaluable to my work; however, in this chapter, I would like to read the translations closely enough to derive from them the popular definitions of romanticism and realism, the conflation of the two, as well as the narrative shape that these translations assumed between the two existing narrative poles of the translated and the native.

constant exchange in the fiction of the Arab writers of the early 20th century. Hafez does not fully establish or define these terms in trying to give shape to this early body of narrative fiction: it remains unclear what he means precisely by R/romantic or R/realist characteristics. However, he assures us that al-Manfalūṭī is a champion of romanticism and acknowledges that these “romantic” authors struggled with domesticating the imported aesthetics of European romanticism.⁸⁵

Hafez singles out the persistence of a didactic strain in these early Arabic romantic works, a persistence which seems to remain under the banner of traditional, didactic narrative forms. He tells us this didacticism begins to border on sentimentality in the work of the famous Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī from *al-Nazarāt* or Contemplations (Vol. I published in 1910 and Vol. II published in 1912) to the later *Al-‘Abarāt* [Tearful Lessons published in 1915]. We recall that in the translation of *Robinson Crusoe*, Buṭrus al-Bustānī felt compelled to insert moralistic poetic

⁸⁵ One of the pioneers of the early Arabic novel who was also immensely drawn to European romanticism is the famous Syrian Christian Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914) who founded the journal *al-Hilāl*. He produced twenty-one historical romances. Critics’ opinions vary on Zaydān’s status as a true novelist, because in almost all his historical romances, he is more concerned with the teaching of history than the development of character or plot. The love-interest in his novels remains contrived and although the historical plot holds the story together, his historical fictions fall short of being complete novels. In *Ṭaṭawwūr al-Riwāyah al-Ḥadīthah fī Miṣr*, Ṭāhā Badr categorizes the fiction of al-Manfalūṭī under the heading of the Novel of Entertainment, popular mainly between 1870 and 1919. In this literary map, Badr considers the work of Zaydān to be the mediator between the entertainment fiction of al-Manfalūṭī and the emergence of the artistic novel with Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal. Badr considers the entertainment novel to be a direct result of the failure of the ‘Urābī Revolution (1879-82), which, according to Zaydān’s *Tārīkh Adāb al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah*, produced and increased the desire to read more translations to escape sordid reality. In his famous historical novels, Zaydān would use historical material and produce novels that were based around the reality of the historical event without rewriting it (90-91). Under the influence of Walter Scott, Zaydān’s fiction presents the destiny of characters as one that is bound to the determinism of historical events. Matti Moosa in *Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* writes that

Zaydān saw fiction as subservient to history, and not vice versa, a mistake he accused Western writers of ... Zaydān’s main concern, however, was to relate history as it really was within the context of the novel form ... [He] does not identify those Western writers whom he believed to have “subordinated” history to fiction; he may have meant, among others, Sir Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas père ... Because his basic task was to portray the past faithfully, Zaydān was very concerned with historical facts, and went as far as documenting his sources. He also began each novel with a chapter explaining the historical events relative to the work. (198-199)

The romance element of his historical fiction was always subordinated to the event, even though he was one of the authors most attracted to the romanticism of Walter Scott, but he feared that the conflation of the historical and the fictitious would confuse the Arab reader as to the authenticity of the novels’ historical accounts.

insertions that functioned simultaneously as part of the text and as paratext. In being part of the text, they came to comment on the events and rewrite them in the form of moral advice to the reader. As paratext, they would point outside the parameters of the text to an extratextual reality that could be that of 19th century Lebanon and not 18th century England. Al-Bustānī's didacticism made possible the adaptation of Crusoe's story to an entirely different context.

In other words, didacticism created the space for reconciliation between an imported French romanticism and an Egyptian background. Hafez maintains that al-Manfalūṭī's brand of romanticism reconciled the form of his work with the social and political circumstances of the time in its persistent didacticism.⁸⁶ Although Hafez does not explain this reconciliation, one of my concerns in this chapter is the form of the aphoristic short story that al-Manfalūṭī adopts in his translation of Chateaubriand. Al-Manfalūṭī fuses *René* and *Atala* in one of his stories included in *Al-'Abarāt* entitled *Al-Shuhadā`* ("the Martyrs"). I will return to the relationship between the form of the translation and didacticism in the analysis of the translation.

For now I am more interested in Hafez's argument that didacticism was the result of these early authors' desire to bring their narratives closer to reality. The authors of the early 20th century relied on what Luṭfī Jum'ah called "*madhhab al-ḥaqīqah*," or the way of the truth, even though it was becoming clearer at the time that

⁸⁶ At this point in Arab literary history it was difficult to imagine any autonomy of literature or of art in general. Even though the *maqāmah* as a narrative form concerned itself primarily with linguistic play and not with plot, it is not entirely accurate to say that the *maqāmah* was used as a call for the autonomy of art in the Arab world. The modern *maqāmah* certainly concerned itself with linguistic change and the modernization of the Arabic language but not with the liberation of art from reality in the same way that the Modernists in the West understood the movement of art for art's sake. While the Modernist impetus in European countries was beginning to call for a radical detachment of art from the world, Arab writers of the novel felt they needed to maintain a tight relation to the world around them and contribute to it by trying to reform it. This sense of urgency resulted in a disjuncture between the medium and the message and impeded the development of narrative into its own literary category. In some works like Muṣṭafa al-Rafī'ī's *al-Masākīn* [The Poor, 1917], this disjuncture rendered the work closer to a fictional essay than to a short story. The disjuncture also resulted in a noticeable disjointedness in the literary work and left it always short of a convincing whole (Hafez 143).

Arabic literature did not have the necessary means to represent things as they are. The main problem was in the Arabic language: good *adab* (literature) was written in Classical Arabic, in emulation of the language of the Qur`ān. However, representing a reality of occupation required a more earthy form of the language, one that would forsake tradition for the sake of accurate representation. Representation of the real would necessarily cause a crisis in Arabic expression simply because the language did not have the right words to reflect the modern world outside. Suddenly the Arabic language had to stop speaking in ornamental puns but to say it as it is.⁸⁷

Thus, one way to compensate for this lack of correspondence between the demand for a different form of Arabic and the changing Arabic reality was to intersperse the text with moral advice. Hafez argues that the lack of the skill to

⁸⁷ I am not assuming here that the Arabic language did not have the means to modernize itself in the face of colonial invasion and rule. In his 1970 study *The Modern Arabic Literary Language: Lexical and Stylistic Developments*, Jaroslav Stetkevych discusses the important principle of analogy, or *al-qiya's*, in the development of the Arabic language. He writes that the most significant contribution of *al-qiya's* to the development of the language came about in the work of the two philologists most representative of this principle in the study of the language, Abu `Alī al-Fārisī and `Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, and in

their having placed the language under the creative and molding authority of reason, delivering it from the exclusive domain of tradition where the attitude of man to his language could only be that of blind submission and pious reverence. This constructive role of the *qiya's* and the intellectual openness of its defenders will be one of the most precious heritages and attitudes taken over by the men of the *Nahḍah*. These men were deeply inspired and guided by this heritage in their efforts to revive and modernize the Arabic language. Thus, the analogical method, in its different aspects, has been discussed and applied by men of the *Nahḍah* like Jurjī Zaydān ... and others. (5)

According to Stetkevych, the Arabic language grew and continues to do so both by derivation from Arabic roots (*al-ishtiqāq*) and by assimilation of foreign words (*al-ta`rīb*). Such a view, very popular with the *nahḍāwī* authors clashed drastically with the more traditional, Qur`ānic approach to the immutability of the Arabic language (6-7). I am not assuming in this part of my chapter that the modernization of the Arabic language was made possible only by the contact with Western languages in translation. However, I am considering the important impact of the language of European fiction, its simpler diction and representative dimensions in dialogue, characterization and setting, on the Arabic language. Pierre Cachia describes in his book *An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature* the turn away from mere rhetoric in the 19th-century as a result of the desire to produce Egyptian and Arabic novels that would make use of an Arabic language closer to the reality of its speakers and readers. He writes, the new elite was ripe for an aesthetic reorientation. The pendulum was swinging away from the formalism of the previous age, and the handiest alternative models came from France and England. It is no wonder that the chord that was the most insistently struck in Arab hearts was therefore a romantic one ... The demands of style were not forgotten, but the effects now sought were not ornamental but emotional. (50)

In this sense, I consider that the European novel in translation facilitated the grounding of Classical Arabic and paved the way for a kind of Arabic that would make fictional representation possible.

reproduce reality in writing signifies that this new independent discourse of narrative fiction has not yet been established (144). It is also important to note, however, that this “new” narrative was struggling to find its place between two existing poles: the traditional and the translated. Thus, this lack of skill not only signifies that a native form of Arabic novelistic narrative had not yet come into its own.⁸⁸ It also gives a sense of what this narrative was up against and why it developed the way that it did. In other words, the lack is indicative of an incommensurability between the imported techniques and these writers’ political and literary agendas.

Al-Manfālūṭī’s performance of translation as complete appropriation is his own way of dealing with this incommensurability. We will see later in the chapter that his form of translation as appropriation also takes up the problematic of the untranslatable, in the sense that there are aspects of the original text that just cannot be rendered in Arabic the way they are. If we disregard the untranslatable in al-Manfālūṭī’s writing, and by extension his understanding of romanticism, we misread the significance of the latter’s form of translation. For instance, Hafez argues that al-Manfālūṭī’s work, like that of the other romantics of his time, missed the potential for revolution inherent in French Romanticism. Hafez believes that these authors should have taken up French romanticism in their struggle with the political and social forces around them, mindful of the 19th-century revolutionary potential of romanticism. This potential inherent in French Romantic literature, he continues, would have been enough to achieve their project of liberation (it is not entirely clear if he means in the writing or on the streets).⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Unlike the tale of *A Thousand and One Nights* and the *maqāmah*, this new novelistic narrative had to represent a unified plot and world with fully developed characters.

⁸⁹ However, Hafez’s reading insightfully points to the disjuncture between form and content in the work of al-Manfālūṭī whose writing oscillated somewhere between narrative fiction and reformative essays. In the context of al-Manfālūṭī’s work, Hafez locates the disjuncture in the use of

These early romantic authors might have misread romanticism in the way that Hafez seems to understand it; nonetheless, this misreading does not necessarily have to be recognized as a failure.⁹⁰ Rather, translation in this context confronts us with the fact that even if the content can be translated fully and transmitted as is, the context is impossible to transfer. Hafez appears to be arguing that a better translation of the European text would have led to more productive revolutionary consequences; however, his narrative relies on a literary history that doesn't recognize the complex role of translation in it. Nonetheless, Hafez still assumes that the birth of a national, revolutionary literature would have to, in the least, begin in translation. After all, it is the promise inherent in the French literature that will, presumably, carry its revolutionary potential to Cairo. Because al-Manfālūṭī's translations appropriate the original so that it can easily be forgotten, it becomes possible to consider translated texts as original national expressions. But this beginning⁹¹ in translation is almost thoroughly forgotten after the 1919 revolution in Egypt, when a movement started from the lower social strata to retrieve some sense of authenticity in art.⁹² The most

ornate language that seems more bent on bringing out the author's style rather than on delivering faithful characterization and elaborate action (147).

⁹⁰ The disjuncture is also a trace of the incommensurability I mentioned earlier. Hafez maintains that translation plays a significant role in the maturation of Arabic narrative by contributing to the language of narrative in such a way that experience itself becomes the event of the fiction, and not just its description. This shift happened mainly through the translation of Russian literature: the main figure here is Khalīl Baydas who translated Alexander Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter* and started a prominent journal *al-Nafā'is* in 1908. Baydas began to reorganize the translated narrative and that signals the first stage of writing one. He expressed the tension between the theoretical understanding of the nature of narrative discourse and its realization (154) in *Masāriḥ al-Adhān* [The Theatres of the Mind]. As a result of this tension, there was a growing desire among the readers of this narrative for a new form of knowledge that can mediate the experience in and of itself. The mimetic begins to play an important role in fulfilling this desire.

⁹¹ Of course al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and 'Uthmān Jalāl and others began translating much earlier. What I mean by "beginning" here is more of a general reference to how the beginning of the novel (the importation of a Western form) came in translation, even though it remained in conversation with native narrative forms throughout.

⁹² Muḥammad Taymūr in the 1920's represented this new spirit in the literary scene and began to experiment with the form of narrative by combining different stories and breaking with the episodic structure of the *maqāmah*. His adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's "Moonlight" aimed at egyptianizing

influential manifestation of this movement to reunite life and art in Arabic literature was the group known as the New School Group (*Jamā‘at al-Madrasah al-Ḥadīthah*). Mahmūd Ṭāhir Lāshīn was the main figure behind the creation of the New School which began to come together in 1917 in Cairo, originally as a reading group.⁹³

Soon the group’s ambition became to articulate and propagate a new literary sensibility related to the ethos of the *nahḍah*. The New School capitalized on the decisive role the *nahḍah* as a movement of (political and social) rebirth could play in legitimating the political role of the literary author. Basically, the school hoped that in voicing a new literature they could carry the revolution from the text into the streets. In terms of the development of narrative, however, the New School revolutionized the relationship between language and the representation of the real. One of the major figures of this movement was ‘Isā ‘Ubayd who was the only member of the group to insist on maintaining the use of *fuṣṣḥah* (Classical Arabic) in narrative. ‘Ubayd vehemently adopted the mimetic strategies of French realism in his own fiction, and in that sense ‘Ubayd is not a typical representative of the aesthetics of the New School Group.⁹⁴

the narrative to the extent that it overlooked the metaphorical structure of the original text (Hafez 164). His translation signals the birth of some form of national literature and the incompatibility between this form and its historical context.

⁹³ The group also read translations from various national traditions: from the French, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Rimbaud; from the British, Scott, Carlyle, Dickens; from the American, Poe and Twain; and from the Italian, Dante, Boccaccio and Pirandello. Then they returned to Russian literature and contributed to the translation of several of Dostoevsky’s work.

⁹⁴ On the other hand, according to Hafez, the other members of the New School advocated a shift away from the mimetic and mechanical transmission of reality and ushered in a dialectic interaction between the literary work and its context (216). Over the years, the New School was able to establish themselves as a literary school mainly through the publication of their journal *al-Fajr* which was directly concerned with the relationship to tradition and the possibility of constructing a native modernity. Coexisting with the New School were two influential literary groups that were involved in modernizing and changing literary sensibility at that time: the first aimed to establish an Egyptian Renaissance in thought and literature on the basis of European civilization and rationalism (that is, Hellenic culture and the achievements of the French intellectual establishment), and integrate these new trends from occidental culture into the Arabic literary tradition in a way which would create a new culture. Among the leading figures of this group were Aḥmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid (realistic narrative literature), Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (*Zaynab*), Ṭāhā Husayn, and Aḥmad al-Da‘īf. The second was

However, his very articulate theory of realism polarized the debate between romanticism and realism in the early Arabic novel. ‘Ubayd’s elaborate treatise on the form and function of narrative fiction condemned al-Manfalūṭī’s sentimentality because the latter creates an unbridgeable gap between imagination and reality. ‘Ubayd laid emphasis on the psychological exploration of characters and translated Arab literary realism as “*madhhab al-haqā’iq*,” or the way of realities (or truths).⁹⁵ Again the reader is reminded that this is ‘Ubayd’s own brand of realism, as he put it together from his reading of French and British literature (he mentions Zola, Balzac and Dickens). ‘Ubayd’s attack on al-Manfalūṭī explains what ‘Ubayd understood to be realism and how al-Manfalūṭī adapted romanticism. Pitting these two polarized definitions of realism and romanticism against each other, I hope to show that while ‘Ubayd’s realistic project fails to engage the Egyptian background, al-Manfalūṭī’s work signals a form of failure that engages the background more truthfully, even if it has no mimetic quality.

‘Ubayd lays out his realist manifesto in the introduction to his first volume of short stories, *Iḥsān Hānim* (1921), in which he describes the realist method as such:

The purpose of fiction must be the investigation of life and its sincere portrayal as it appears to us. [The writer must collect] the greatest number of observations and documents so that the story becomes a kind of “dossier” in which the reader can peruse the history of an individual’s life or a page from that history. The writer uses this individual history as a means of studying the secrets of human nature and the hidden recesses of the obscure human heart ... For the function of the writer is to dissect the human soul and to record his discoveries [in writing]. (9)

the group of al-Dīwān with its heavily Anglo-Saxon background and leanings. The eminent members of this group were al-Māzinī, al-‘Aqqād, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Shukrī, ‘Abbās Ḥāfiẓ and Muḥammad al-Sibā’ī (299).

⁹⁵ Eventually through the translation of Russian literature, Aḥmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid coined the term “*adab qaṣaṣī wāqī’ī*” (realistic narrative literature).

‘Ubayd’s understanding of realism is thus based on mimetic expression, wherein the author documents the minute details of an individual’s life. In other words, this realism is based on direct observation and assumes no mediation. In his own fictional work, ‘Ubayd is so concerned with documenting reality in the vein of Balzac and Zola that he falls short of engaging the reality of the Egyptian milieu. What we witness in his performance of realism is the failure of realism in translation. His realism is not mimetic as it is in the Western tradition; rather, he seems to be depicting a static environment that exists outside of both the authorial voice and the narrated tale. The tension between the form of narration and the reality of the narrated signals a disjuncture between the author and his writing on the one hand, and the author and his background on the other. In other words, ‘Ubayd is so bent on delivering as many realistic details as possible that the narrative voice stands at a clear distance from what it is describing. The narratorial voice is so detached that it begins to judge the background and dictate the behavior of characters. This disjuncture becomes manifest in ‘Ubayd’s project, even though in his introduction to *Iḥsān Hānim*, which reads more like a realist manifesto, ‘Ubayd declares that his writing is going to be a “sample of national literature.”

In his criticism of al-Manfalūṭī and his work, ‘Ubayd singles out the reliance on the imagination as the Egyptian author’s single most detrimental characteristic. Because al-Manfalūṭī is not trained (perhaps by his Azharite education) for literary observation of details and psychological probing of characters, he fails to endow each of his characters with a uniquely distinguishable self. Thus, for instance, in his translation of Bernadine de Saint-Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* (1923), al-Manfalūṭī pays more attention to the setting of the lovers’ encounter than to its private and intimate details (3). ‘Ubayd continues that the Egyptian writer exaggerates the beauty of the

natural scene because he is unable to get in touch with some ideal of inherent beauty, a kind of beauty that ‘Ubayd finds in the attention to detail (4-5). ‘Ubayd’s fear of romantic idealism revolves around how al-Manfalūfī’s characters are condensed into ideals of human feeling and not developed realistically.⁹⁶

Idealism worried ‘Ubayd, who felt that in the thrust of the revolution only realism would be an adequate narrative method, even if it were imported from the Western literature he was reading (7). It seems, though, that the realism that ‘Ubayd was calling for remained imported from Balzac and Zola. In other words, his realism remains stuck in translation. For ‘Ubayd, the intellectual revolution that followed the 1919 Revolution in Egypt promised liberation from the shackles of the canon, “because the Renaissance usually follows the Revolution and is its natural consequence” (10). ‘Ubayd capitalized on the notion of revolution in articulating a new narrative poetics for the Egyptian novel. He believed that the revolution would destroy the literature of the canon and would resemble “the revolution of Victor Hugo against institutional literature, and the one Zola called for against Idealism and in favor of adopting Realism as the literature of tomorrow” (11).⁹⁷ He bases his own literary model on the French revolution and its aftermath, and believes that the context can be transposed as is into Arabic. Even in ‘Ubayd’s manifesto, realism and

⁹⁶ In this context, ‘Ubayd gives the example of al-Manfalūfī’s rendition of the character of Estephan in his translation of Alfonse Carr’s novel *Sous Les Tilleuls* (1917?).

⁹⁷ The language of dialogue presents a problem to him because of the difference between the written and the spoken: if we use the first, it comes off inauthentic. If we use the second, we take it out of the tradition of Arabic literature. ‘Ubayd calls Maḥmūd Taymūr’s use of the colloquial “extremist” and “dangerous” because ‘Ubayd is adamant on salvaging the Arabic language and on keeping Egyptian literature within Arabic literature. He finds the middle ground and uses a language which is free of complicated linguistic structures and which includes some spoken expressions in it (16). The problem of choosing the right kind of language in fictional writing represents the technical difficulties in preserving realism. To carry French realism as is into Arabic, the authors are obliged to resort to colloquial dialogue. However, due to their classical education, they believe that literature written in dialect is not “good” literature. This problem continues most interestingly in the work of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, who advocates the use of the colloquial in his early writing (as in *Zaynab*) as the only way to author a national literature, but renounces the use of the colloquial in favor of the literary a few years later.

romanticism in the French tradition get conflated, and Hugo and Zola come to champion the same things. ‘Ubayd seems to have understood romanticism to be a sentimental preoccupation with far-off places. Such a definition of romanticism would make al-Manfalūṭī, at least on the surface, the ideal target of ‘Ubayd’s critical pen. ‘Ubayd’s “failed” realism reveals that there are constitutive and not merely contingent technical issues of realism that determine its failure to be copied as an autonomous aesthetic in translation. For instance, while realist methods can be copied, they are not universal and cannot be isolated from their immediate context. This context is precisely what remains untranslatable. Thus, even with his best realist intentions, ‘Ubayd’s failure to write the great Egyptian realist novel is a failure to recognize that translation is not merely an element of the story, but rather the key to it.⁹⁸

In “The Narrative Craft: realism and fiction in the Arabic Canon” published in 2003, Samah Selim writes that the narrator of the New School’s fiction is an individual standing outside of the collectivity, observing it and critiquing it from a distance (112 – 3). However, ‘Ubayd’s narrator stands so much outside of the collectivity that his characters become mere types in a larger project of social criticism. If al-Manfalūṭī produced ideals, then ‘Ubayd manufactured types. His writing is not constitutive of a narrative subjectivity, not only because of his rendition of characters as unrealistic types, but also because the narrative voice itself remains very distant and quasi-scientific. The narrative does not present the voice of an observing subject that is engaging with his/her surroundings; rather, what comes across is this infinite abyss between the telling of the story and the reality to which it refers. What I am describing as his failed realism manifests itself primarily in the

⁹⁸ ‘Ubayd evidently held foreign literature in the highest regard and believed that its structures and styles need to be emulated if Arabic literature is to reach any level of elegance and earn recognition as a “worthy” body of literature (12).

disjuncture between the telling of the tale (the realist form) and the referential world that forms its context. As a result, his realist project fails to author the nationalist literature he had imagined.

Samah Selim also maintains that the act of narration itself became this slippery relationship between the narrative subject and the abstract collectivity defined as “society” (114). It is this very abstraction that comes through ‘Ubayd’s writing and renders it in a sense more “escapist” than the translations of al-Manfalūṭī. ‘Ubayd approached the collective as an amorphous mass that could be condensed into recognizable types. Perhaps ‘Ubayd’s association between the undifferentiated collective and the narration of the nation repelled his reading audience: the new nation that figured into his writings seemed more alien than the islands that al-Manfalūṭī’s characters inhabited. His concern with the realistic representation in excessive detail rather than faithful engagement of the new Egypt betrayed his Western education and alienated him from the Egyptian milieu he struggled to bring into existence in his stories. In other words, ‘Ubayd’s writing remains exiled from the very milieu it purports to speak to and about.

Thus, while he berated al-Manfalūṭī’s importation of Western themes into the Egyptian context, ‘Ubayd insisted on mimicking the form rather than the content of Western novels (Hafez 13). ‘Ubayd naively assumed that the use of the realist method to tell Egyptian stories would make his literature into the prototypical national literature he was calling for. Yet the tension between the shape and the content of the novels resonated with the tension between the theoretical framework of his realist project and its narrative application. As ‘Abd al-Muḥsin Ṭāhā Badr argues in *Taṭawwur al-riwāyah al-‘arabiyyah al-ḥadīthah fī Miṣr (1860-1938)* [The development of the modern Arabic novel in Egypt (1860-1938)] published in 1963,

‘Ubayd was so preoccupied with the presentation of details and the psychological evaluation of his characters that his writing resembled social analysis more than authentic representation.⁹⁹

Another major problem that ‘Ubayd had with al-Manfalūṭī was the latter’s popularity. Ṭāhā Badr writes that the most popular form of narrative in circulation in Egypt at the time was that of entertainment fiction (mostly in the form of adapted translations from the French). Badr categorizes al-Manfalūṭī’s fiction under this brand of narrative, namely entertaining fiction with a hint of didacticism. Badr conveniently leaves out the problem of borrowed authority; since this fiction was almost always translated, its authority was on hire from the original texts. Sabry Hafez argues that the incompatibility between form and historical context results in “artificial authority” (169). Hafez and Badr dismiss these early entertaining adaptations of Western

⁹⁹ A brief analysis of ‘Ubayd’s short story “*Iḥsān Hānim*” reveals this tension in his writing. “*Iḥsān Hānim*” is only nine pages long, almost a short exercise in which ‘Ubayd tried to put his theory of realism to the test. The story begins with a close description of Iḥsān’s appearance, with special attention to her dress and her posture. She is writing a letter to her friend Dawlat to explain to her why her husband left her: “For you to know the reasons, you should know the old and modern influences that make up my personality” (1). This line does not read like a line from a novel; rather, it sounds like the “dossier” of analysis that ‘Ubayd described in the introduction. Iḥsān reminds Dawlat that they used to read the novels of the existentialists with their portrayals of idealist marital love and relationships (2). It was this reading that instilled in her the desire for pure love, and yet her particular situation compelled her to accede to a forced marriage: “Our fathers don’t know pure love”, she tells Dawlat, and are ignorant of our modern psychology (3-4). Iḥsān issues a long sigh as she wonders when the revolutionary spirit of the younger generation of women will deliver them from the confinements and expectations of the old age and liberate them from Eastern traditions (4-5). Perhaps the most powerful paragraph in this short account is Iḥsān’s allusion to her sexuality when she tells Dawlat that she has learned to give herself pleasure (6). Iḥsān concludes her letter by telling Dawlat that her resort to ideals has kept her from leaving her husband, despite her unhappiness and despite his abuse (7). First, ‘Ubayd’s mention of the ideals propagated by existentialist literature performs a double gesture: on the one hand, these ideals introduce alternate ways of thinking about marital and sexual relationships; on the other, they also become escapist vessels when Iḥsān recounts that it is her adherence to these ideals (and ironically not to the tradition) that enables her to stay her ground. Second, while his realistic style follows the character closely and is faithful to the conditions of her situation, the deliverance of the problem of the plot seems less genuinely Egyptian. The scene resembles moments of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* and Zola’s *La Bête Humaine*, yet what kind of Egyptian woman would Iḥsān Hānim represent? She is educated enough to have read French existential literature. The narrator follows her so closely that she does not come alive as an individual character but rather as a flat, two-dimensional illustration. In her description, the reader finds the disjuncture between fiction and truth artificially remedied through excessive details and psychological probing. The character becomes the patient, scrutinized and dissected under the eyes of the omniscient narrator/author.

literature as symptoms of a failure, one that has no real relation perhaps to the story of the Arabic novel. What if, though, instead of dismissing this failure, we were to read it as constitutive of this story of the Arabic novel and of the history of the novel in general?

Samah Selim elaborates on Badr's reading of the popularity of translated (entertainment) fiction as a symptom of the masses' desire to escape the sordid reality of occupied Egypt. Within this polarization between popularism and political engagement, Selim argues that the popularity of some narratives (romances and *policiers* and such) worked against what the reforming intellectuals of the New School understood to be the moral function of fictional narrative in general.¹⁰⁰ So while these popular narratives played on "the formal act of deception" to seduce the masses, the new fiction actually promised both social and individual truth—so realism came to represent the "formal mechanism for rendering this paradoxical identity between fiction and truth" (111-2). In other words, the New School Group's "new" fiction made a historical claim to truth in the novel. Why is one form of deception better than the other?

In *Taṭawwur al-riwāyah*, Ṭāhā Badr breaks down the literary history of the Arabic novel from 1860 until 1938 into three categories. Badr traces a preliminary genealogy as well as a structure for the stylistics of novelistic writing in Egypt. He articulates this genealogy in terms of a movement from the didactic novel as exemplified by the translation of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī; to the entertainment novel as typified by the work of al-Manfalūṭī; and finally the artistic novel as represented by the works of 'Īsā 'Ubayd and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal. In the first phase from 1870 to 1919, the Didactic Novel and the Novel of Entertainment were the two most popular forms of

¹⁰⁰ The most famous were the serializations of the stories of Arsène Lupin and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*.

fiction. Badr considers the novel of entertainment to be a result of the failure of the ‘Urābī Revolution (1879-82) and the consequent desire to read more translations to escape sordid reality. From the end of the 19th century and up until the Nationalist Revolution of 1919, the novel was still considered a bastard and inferior literary form. This inferiority inevitably pushed authors to entertainment literature, from sentimental escapist to detective fiction, because at least this kind of translation would sell copies.¹⁰¹ However, the subversive potential of that model went unnoticed, mostly because it was based on a form of translation of Western literature.

This early moment of the translation movement was marked by the absence of the name of the original author and the removal of many details from the original, like dialogue. Moreover, there was no development of a national sense of self in this early body of translated fiction, but there was a notable introduction of foreign words into the Arabic text. These insertions produced what Badr calls a “crisis in expression” whereby the precise reference [*dalālah*] of a word to a thing became obsolete. Al-Manfalūṭī actually addresses this crisis in the introduction to his book *al-Nazarāt*. The crisis in expression, according to Ṭāhā Badr, is due mainly to the Azharite education of the authors. Given that education was confined within the walls of al-Azhar, the learning of language was restricted for the purpose of Qur`ānic interpretation and not for the purpose of expression. Eventually the Azharite education became entirely divorced from contemporary reality.¹⁰² As it provided its students with no training for

¹⁰¹ For instance, Badr maintains that in the early phase of translation, writers translated Romantic fiction mostly because they believed it did not involve analysis—thus, ironically, they did not translate François René de Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël (Badr 129).

¹⁰² In his famous autobiography *Al-Ayyām* [The Days], originally published in three volumes in 1933, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn explores this alienation from contemporary reality in his own education at al-Azhar. In Part II of the book, for instance, we return to the boy’s life at 13 going to al-Azhar, as he explores the place through sounds that always end up hurting him as he tells us (134). At al-Azhar, he experiences an existential crisis that soon gets linked up with a devotion to literature (262). But this is a different engagement of literature, one that is refused by the Azharite *Shaykhs*: the narrator tells us, “and he had no hope left except in the study of literature which it is about time now that we address and

the modern world outside its walls, the Azharite education left writers with a paralyzed expression (13). The rest of the people, who were not privileged enough to receive the Azharite education and found it to be too detached from their reality, radically separated from Classical education. They turned away from the Arabic canon and turned to popular oral literature like romances instead. In this historical set-up of the book, it is clear that Ṭāhā Badr considers the novel a mere consequence of a hasty affair with the West.

The popular novels, what Badr calls recreational novels, employed the structures of romance and epic. At this point in his analysis, Badr points to a remarkable paradox but leaves it unexplored. He writes that even though the translated stories were set in distant places, they still sounded more real than the traditional literature and were thus more appealing. Badr only labels this body of literature as mere recreational fiction because it is *not* realistic. Samah Selim argues that Badr's categorization of entertainment literature is made possible by the hegemony of the New School Group's realist agenda in the first decades of the 20th century:

A particular pair of assumptions about the form and function of modern fiction underpin Badr's analysis of the recreational novel as an underdeveloped or intermediate genre. The first has to do with the contemporary hegemony of realism as an aesthetic ideology while the second revolves around the ontology produced by nationalism, which requires the outside world, the individual's environment, his "reality," to fit into the discursive parameters generated by the idea of nation. Badr identifies the "escape" from Egyptian

its far-reaching implications in the life of the boy" (275). The space of literature becomes one of many possible interpretations that would make it possible for him to deliver his world and be heard: "And so our hero connected to literature in this disturbed, compounded way, and combined in himself bits of this mixture of Arabic and poetry" (280). Then we begin to read about his revolt against the *Shaykhs* and the old by imitating poetry and significantly taking pleasure in reading the translations he had in his possession at the time and in strict hiding—books translated for entertainment (297-8): "They used to marvel at what they found in them [the translations] of pictures of life that go against what they know in their countryside and their cities" (298). The second part of the book ends on a note of struggle between the old and the new, valorizing everything modern because the modernists use life itself as the raw material for their poetry and not rhetorical constructions of their own wandering imaginations (326-327).

“reality” as the single most salient fracture at the heart of the recreational novel. (117 – 118)

In *Taṭawwur al-riwāyah*, Badr pinpoints 1919 as the seminal date from which the new national subject emerges in Egypt with a radical consciousness of his or her individuality and the historical specificity of his or her social environment. He does not mention, however, that Haykal’s *Zaynab* was written in 1913, and he also considers all recreational fiction to be politically unmotivated. The literary history he maps out reproduces a Western paradigm of the history of the novel in its correlation between realism and the maturation of the novel. The hegemony of realism reduces recreational fiction to mere escapism instead of determining the appeal of this escapism in relation to the political reality of post-revolution Egypt. Such a reduction condemns al-Manfalūṭī’s work to mere entertainment literature and takes away from the political promise of his brand of romanticism.

For instance, Badr argues that it is only with the artistic novel that the individual begins to have a relationship to place in Arabic fiction for “the goal of the artistic novel is to express the writer’s perception of the world that surrounds him. For this reason, he turns his attention to reality and does not rely on ‘inspiration’ [*al-ilhām*]” (198). What Badr reads as attention to reality, Samah Selim finds to be a complete detachment. Samah Selim’s main argument is that although ‘Ubayd meant his dossier to be about an objective and scientific method of representation,

realism in *Nahdawi* fiction encoded a specific social ideology, a specific set of social attitudes towards class, gender and culture as they were in the process of being instituted. These attitudes were naturally centered and produced in colonial Egypt, but they were also immediately and universally recognizable features of a social modernity and of a modern novelistic language located in nineteenth century Europe.¹⁰³ (123)

¹⁰³ Mahmūd Taymūr’s *Rajab Efendī* (1928), written from the perspective of an omniscient narrator, following ‘Ubayd’s project, and in the preface, Taymūr writes: “*Rajab Efendī* is a contemporary Egyptian tale with a simple subject that is nonetheless frequently repeated in our daily life. I have tried to analyze the psychological state of a number of members of our middle and base

The persistence of the features of a European social modernity is one way to explain the disjuncture between the form and the content of early Egyptian fiction. However, it is not just that the elements of an alien modernity are reproduced in a colonial Egyptian context; it is also that the authors imported a form that is the product of a clearly European historical moment. The realist techniques of representation are copied into the Arabic context without any consideration that the original context cannot be reproduced in translation. They remain wrapped in their own alienation from the receiving culture and slowly undo their own realistic prerogatives.

Al-Manfālūṭī is accused of being a writer of sentimental, escapist fiction because he chose to adapt novels that always took place somewhere else. However, in varying the context, he does not assume that the context of the realist aesthetics can be reproduced intact in a different language, as does ‘Ubayd. In choosing such remote settings, al-Manfālūṭī’s translations or adaptations of Chateaubriand and Bernadin de Saint-Pierre do not fall into the pitfalls of realism in translation. While Badr pits “*ilhām*” or inspiration against the ethos of realism in the history of the Arabic novel, al-Manfālūṭī’s recreational literature uses *khayāl* or imagination to produce its own unique form of translation. Al-Manfālūṭī uses *khayāl* to imagine a kind of literature

classes [*al-ṭabaqāt al-haqīrah*], and to lift the veil from one aspect of their environment, the story is thus a page taken from our social and psychological existence” (1928, 3). Rajab, unlike Salwa, is a pure type made up of mere exteriority, an undifferentiated individual that just renders the pathology of the lower classes (a bestial one à la Zola—Badr describes it as “anomalous” or “eccentric” (252)). As Samah Selim describes in her article “Fiction and Realism in the Arabic Canon:”

Rajab’s dark and inscrutable descent into madness and murder is explicitly associated in the novel with the sinister art of the popular tale. The dramatic turning point in Rajab’s obscure psychological crisis comes immediately after Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahab al-Makki’s cryptic tale of the mystic and the black cat, a story whose narrative structure is markedly different from the clinical, descriptive and ‘realistic’ technique used by the narrator of the novel itself. This story within a story is important because it juxtaposes and frames an example of ‘bad narrative’ within ‘good narrative,’ thereby pointing to the corrupting effects of the former on the unstable minds of the lower classes. The framed story structure was a pervasive and central convention in popular Arabic narrative—*One Thousand and One Nights* being the most famous example—and its absence in realist fiction is significant, pointing as it does to the social and narrative anxieties of writers bent on creating a new representational language. (126)

Selim’s reading establishes the favored correlation between popular narrative and social pathology.

that takes off from translation as a performance of appropriation but returns to reflect the concerns of the new Egypt. In the rest of the chapter, I will explore how his form of translation comes to produce a new authorial function that supersedes that of the New School writers but stands in a dialectic relation to it.

The term *khayāl* as it emerges in al-Manfalūṭī's work remains to some degree untranslatable yet it authorizes al-Manfalūṭī's definition of translation. We will witness in al-Manfalūṭī's work a form of translation that recognizes its own impossibility, and yet simultaneously confronts its necessity. In bearing witness to the originals, al-Manfalūṭī's translations overcome the paradoxes of an imported realism that assumes we can conveniently reproduce European realist aesthetics in Arabic literature.

Prophetic khayāl and Idiomatic Translation in al-Nazarāt

Suspiciously echoing the opening lines of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (published posthumously in 1782), the introduction to the first volume of *al-Nazarāt* published in 1910 opens with an address to the reader who wants to emulate the writing of al-Manfalūṭī. From the onset, al-Manfalūṭī inserts himself into a literary history that heeds his work as an original model to be imitated. He advises the reader to not submit to slavish imitation claiming that what has enabled his own originality is his weak memory. He writes:

What was helpful to me was my weak memory and its inability to retain but little of the things I read that passed me by, for I used to read in what has been published and its rules of composition whatever God willed me to read. Then I would quickly forget it and all that would be left in my memory was the beauty of its traces ... and its musicality. (5)

The opening claim to a weak memory places al-Manfalūṭī not only in the lines of great literary writers, but also among the prophets. The first pages of the introduction

include a list of names of famous canonical Arabic authors, and although he does not openly declare the intention behind such a list, al-Manfālūṭī insinuates to his reader that he belongs to this list and transcends it at the same time. In “La Littérature selon Manfālūṭī” published in 2003, Boutros Hallaq writes that al-Manfālūṭī declares himself chosen by God because of his weak memory. He places himself in the Islamic tradition that valorizes the illiterate prophet. We already know that al-Manfālūṭī was not well-versed in any languages other than Arabic, so the weak memory highlights the originality and truthfulness of this new literary prophet whose acquaintance with French Romanticism must necessarily be prophetic. Hallaq writes that the theme of a weak memory, in a text full of literary clichés, «indique que ce n’est pas l’accumulation du savoir reçu des anciens qui justifierait les prétentions du narrateur, mais plutôt quelque chose venu de plus loin, ressortant au divin » (141).

Translation, rather than the divine, becomes this “loin” from which al-Manfālūṭī derives his prophetic supremacy. We recall that the New School Group soon forgot that the origin of the nationalist literature they were working towards was in translation. Al-Manfālūṭī does not make that same mistake. However, he situates his own task of translation so that instead of being derivative and secondary, it actually comes to author the newness of his own work. The claim to prophecy highlights the newness of al-Manfālūṭī’s work which labors under the sign of permissible theft, or a justified form of plagiarism wherein what remains with him from the original text are mere traces to be rewritten. These traces then become the premise of his rewritings, which as we will see later in the translations, come to claim the status of originals. Ṭāhā Badr wrote that the skepticism of the New School Group’s writers towards romanticism was because of *ilhām* or inspiration as a form of

deception. But al-Manfālūṭī uses translation to replace *ilhām* with *khayāl*, or imagination.

Khayāl establishes al-Manfālūṭī's claim to prophecy as it allows him to transcend the given text and to present something coming to him from afar, from an other origin.¹⁰⁴ His Azharite education confirms the haunting presence of the sacred text. The major presence of the study of the Qur'ānic text in the curriculum of al-Azhar explains al-Manfālūṭī's continued preoccupation with the prophetic. However, in replacing the divine with the translated text as displaced origin, al-Manfālūṭī translates the sacred into the secular. In other words, this new form of prophecy is not divine at all. Rather, as we will see, it usurps the position of the prophet for its own political ends, which include rewriting the received original texts. His translations thus become secularized texts that empty the sacred forms of prophetic writing and reinscribe them within a new politically-motivated prophetic mission. The secular text will provide a revolutionary temporality that enables the new prophet (al-Manfālūṭī) to maintain complete access to both the original and the translation simultaneously.

Khayāl enables the birth of this new kind of writing and make room for the inspiration that will come to him as though from the divine. However, this new displaced source of inspiration is none other than the translated text, which taints the newness of al-Manfālūṭī's fiction like an originary trace. The New School Group's writers should not have been so concerned with the threat of divine inspiration as they should have been with the complex dynamic of translation that al-Manfālūṭī lays out in the introduction. In many ways then, the word *khayāl* which I have just translated

¹⁰⁴ The claim to prophecy is far more complex than I have room to develop here as it belongs to a history of Qur'ānic writing. I will confine myself in this analysis to the particular manifestation of this new prophetic vocation in the work of al-Manfālūṭī. My concern is primarily with how this prophecy finds its application in a secular practice of literary writing through the medium of translation.

as imagination remains somewhat untranslatable in his text. I call it untranslatable because *khayāl* will bring imagination and translation together to articulate a new definition of authorship. Throughout the text of his introduction, it becomes more and more difficult to distinguish between imagination and translation as these intersect in the term *khayāl*.

One of the functions of *khayāl* in the work of al-Manfālūṭī is to enable a departure from the self, a Romantic ideal of transcendence. He writes that in the process of writing, he “felt as though I had exchanged myself for another . . . a weird state the like of which I had never experienced anything like before, so I started to see things in a different way than I had before”(6). He continues, “it seemed to me [*khuyyīla ilayya*] that I had moved from this world that I was in to another one of history’s transient worlds, and so I witness [*ashadu*] with my own eyes those beautiful epochs” (7). The translation of “*khuyyīla*” as “seem” is hardly accurate. This ambiguity is one of the ways in which *khayāl* remains untranslatable in the text: “*khuyyīla*” is the passive form of the verb “*khayyal*” or “to make believe, suggest”. He is made to believe that he is being transported into another time. The verb “*ashhadu*” means to witness, so not only does this transportation come to him (from the outside and not necessarily only from the divine as Hallaq maintains), but he is also a direct witness to it.¹⁰⁵ The author is now both a prophet and a visionary, witnessing different

¹⁰⁵ The verb “*ashhadu*” is also the first word of the Muslim *Shahādah*; it means “to know and believe without suspicion, as if witnessed.” The component of witnessing is very important in establishing the authenticity of the creed and the promise. The *Shahādah* is the Muslim declaration of faith in the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muḥammad as His prophet.

epochs and transmitting his visions in writing.¹⁰⁶ Somehow the translated text will come to figure as the displaced source of the impression.¹⁰⁷

Significantly, what most advocates of realism missed is that al-Manfālūṭi uses his new definition of author as visionary and witness to rewrite the education he received on the hands of the Azharites. He tells us that the Azharites intervene between him and his love of literature as a father intervenes to control the appetites of his son (10). In chapter one, I mentioned that the beginning of Crusoe's story can only happen in an act of disobedience of the father. When he disobeys his father's command and leaves the homeland, he can have a life less than ordinary. Again with al-Manfālūṭi we have an act of disobedience that authors fiction and fosters originality. When he is describing his oppression by the traditional Azharites, he says that they can only understand the Qur`ān through literature because curiously literature would guard against *al-ta`wīl* or multiple interpretations of the Qur`ān scripture. When the tight bond (he actually uses the word knot),

that joined words to their meanings became loose ... every word had possibly infinite meanings in their [the Azharites'] opinion, so that not one of them

¹⁰⁶ Boutros Hallaq reads this symbolic vision or « voyage » as a possible remnant of pre-Islamic literature—the terms of this symbolic vision (« voyage ») could be situated at the end of the Abbasid period.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Manfālūṭi describes his pleasure and ecstasy due to this fictional deportation into another world (9). The undertones to this description are clearly sexual. The possible reasons behind his crying are: recognizing mercy in others, life as *mawāṭin* (plural of *mawṭin*—homelands—note the difference in the use of the word here from al-Bustānī and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī), and all the beauty of the world expressed in *Adab* (literature) as the explosion of hearts “which ran down the eyes of the criers with their tears, and lifted from their chests with their sighs/exhales” (20). The exaggerated emotion and crying repelled most critics as it seemed excessive. Buṭrus al-Bustānī explains al-Manfālūṭi's infatuation with tears in *Uḍabā` al-Arab* (1937):

Al-Manfālūṭi cries in his social meetings and ... in his stories. Crying became one of the costumes of modern literature in which the writers and poets pictured the writing of European naturalists and were so taken by it because they saw it as appropriate to the spirit of the East in its lack of freedom ... and in the dissolution of its morals and the spread of corruption in its midst so al-Manfālūṭi in his tears did not depart from the rule of his contemporaries except that he over-cried and exaggerated his weeping and his pessimism ... till he became the messenger of death. (qtd. in 'Uwayḍah 173).

negated the other's interpretation, and the fortified boundary between truth and figuration/metaphor, and truth and the imagination [*khayāl*] dissolved. (12)

The Azharites reduce text to mere language rules in the hopes of finding the perfect form of Classical Arabic. Their reduction of the text to mere language games dissolves the boundary that keeps truth and figurative language at a safe distance and ensures that the one isn't contaminated by the other. Al-Manfālūṭī's skepticism of figurative language returns towards the end of the introduction in his close readings of some poetic lines. I will return to this skepticism later, but for now I am more concerned with the "bad" brand of *khayāl* that emerges here.

What is it that distinguishes al-Manfālūṭī's prophetic use of the imagination as truth from the Azharites' erroneous conflation of the two? Later on in the introduction, he tells us that he has never written a truth not tinged with imagination, nor has he ever relied on the imagination devoid of truth. He uses his prophetic *khayāl*, as it enables him a kind of vision not afforded to the regular person, to produce truth in a guise of imagination that appeals to the reader. Thus, imagination only serves to make the message more transmittable, but *khayāl* ensures that the message communicated is truth itself. Al-Manfālūṭī writes that his brand of *khayāl* "has the greatest influence on the make-up of human society and makes it possible to make society conform to the image the imagination produces of it" (41). Thus, ultimately the prophetic author, due to his access to *khayāl*, presents this image of human society, and then the society conforms to this image. This analysis sounds somewhat totalitarian in its language of conformity to a fabricated design. And it very well could be. But I think that al-Manfālūṭī's main fear, in an erratic time of wars and occupation, was that language might lose all reference and, by extension, literature all practical and political significance. He might have been accused of being an escapist,

but a closer examination of his theoretical writings reveals that he was anything but escaping. Under Ottoman and British colonial rule, and with the tangible influence of the French, how does an author write when language betrays him at every step? When meaning can so easily be influenced by the language of an occupying presence, how does one ensure that the language he or she speaks is his or hers?

His concern with the dissolution of the bond between words and their intended meanings, and the consequent dissolution of reference, is anchored in his social critique. Once words lose immediate reference, the social landscape would experience severe confusion and human relations would no longer be functional.¹⁰⁸ Al-Manfālūṭī was writing in a time of British colonialism and Turkish domination and thus he locates this threatening confusion particularly in the invasion of foreign languages. An advocate of translation, al-Manfālūṭī still found that foreign languages need to be taken up in moderation so that the Arabic language does not succumb to the demands of the foreign tongue.

Just as the Azharites' emphasis on language dissolves the relationship between words and meanings, so literal translation inserts a foreign, alien body into the translated text and undoes the unmediated relationship between word and meaning. He uses the word "*mutarjim*" or translator in both senses of translator and interpreter. Al-Manfālūṭī has a very radical view on literal translation in that it could potentially bring about the nation's doom [*halāk*]. As the anointed one, the prophet of this new literature, al-Manfālūṭī gives his thanks to God first and to *Adab* (literature) second for saving him from this doom.

¹⁰⁸ This may seem to be an emphasis on presence and an Arabic form of logocentrism. However, one needs to remember that al-Manfālūṭī is relying on a completely different tradition and thus a different linguistic model that is based on Islamic philosophies of language. Thus, al-Manfālūṭī's theory of reference cannot offer itself to a deconstructionist critique.

He only reads what he can understand because he recognizes that complex language and difficult structures reveal an author's inauthenticity. At this point, al-Manfālūṭī resorts to his understanding of romanticism to present his problematic of translation in an odd parallelism. Just as language is meant to be a transparent representation of the idea, the original texts are merely the primary material that needs to be reworked so the translation can shine through. The original, like the linguistic vehicle, is then merely an empty shape that carries the idea for the translation to write it like it should be written. He compares convoluted and complex forms of expression to bad, literal translations which don't consider the particularities of the Arabic language. Al-Manfālūṭī uses the adjective "bad" to refer to literal translations that transmit the original content as is and do not take heed of the demands of the receiving language. The bad writer tries to dress up his inadequate thoughts with complicated structures, just like "a foreigner who thinks that the Arabic language is a matter of letters and words, and doesn't know anything else of the language, so he speaks something that sounds like literal translations into Arabic" (13). Al-Manfālūṭī's similes are quite telling of the paradigmatic consideration of translation in his work. He substitutes translation for expression so that a bad translation is none other than a weak form of expression and vice versa.

The bad translator (according to al-Manfālūṭī's definition) blames the untranslatability of modern thoughts into Arabic (in the Arabic it is "*al-khayālāt al-ḥadīthah*," which literally translates into modern imaginations) on the inability to find the appropriate linguistic dress or clothing in the Arabic language that could contain the original's ideas. Al-Manfālūṭī continues,

As though he [the translator] thinks that meanings and thoughts are plans and sections, and bows and arrows, this is for the East and that for the West ... But he is a translator who found these meanings in his foreign language attached to their original clothing, and when he wanted to relate these meanings to the

Arabs, he was unable to remove the clothing off of the original language so he copied it as it is except for exchanging one letter for another and one meaning for another. (14 – 15)

These bad versions of translators only transmit the thoughts of others and are not true to their own expression—but for al-Manfālūṭī the *mutarjim* most often represents the one who lets himself be contaminated by foreign languages while trying to find the same words or expressions in the Arabic language. Bad translations into Arabic are those that remain too close to the originals and thus polarize the duality of East and West. Keeping the two traditions at such a clear distance hinders the contamination of one by the other and thus limits expression. Literality in translation disables the process of finding the right idiom in the Arabic language that could contain the ideas of the original and reproduce them fully in the Arabic text. Al-Manfālūṭī thus puts forth his own version of idiomatic translation as the good kind of translation, the one that will ensure that the receiving language is not merely a vessel carrying the ideas of the original. Idiomatic translation, as an extreme form of Venuti’s “foreignizing translation,” licenses al-Manfālūṭī’s complete adaptations of the source text as he renders it in the Arabic idiom, ignoring the particularities of the original text’s verbal structure to produce its “meaning” in a completely Arabic idiom on the level of both content and sentence. Rather, idiomatic translation guarantees that the translation could be read as an original product of the target language. Al-Manfālūṭī certainly achieves that in his own translations, which ironically carry idiomatic translation so far that the name of the original author slips out of the text so that the text can be as authentically Egyptian as possible.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Al-Manfālūṭī’s work of translation is certainly very subversive. It is not a mere domestication of the original, as Schleiermacher would have it. Rather, what I am calling idiomatic translation here is a full taking on of the original text in an attempt to rewrite it so as to make it speak to an entirely different tradition, culture and language. In his 1994 *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha describes the relationship between translation and postcolonial literature beautifully as such:

We should remember that it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible

We can conclude then that this new author is a figuratively exilic figure who leaves his self behind and floats across different historical epochs. He is also simultaneously a “bad translator” as seen by other writers in his time inasmuch as his new vocation necessitates a breach in the contract of translation. Although al-Manfālūṭī is keen on maintaining the solid relationship of direct reference between the word and its meaning, his form of idiomatic, non-literal translation demands no reciprocity between translation and original. Non-literal translation becomes the condition of possibility for the figure of the exilic author who is able to leave the body behind when overcome with *khayāl*. Al-Manfālūṭī turns his doctrine of unfaithful translation into a sophisticated theory of writing as an unmediated and direct correspondence between sound and meaning. In the same introduction to Volume I of *al-Nazarāt* published in 1910, he writes:

And here I am in the hands of this dark, creepy world, the world of truth and pain, so I look at it with the look of a confused stranger to a country [from ‘*ālam* or world to *balad* or country] he has nothing to do with and no home in, so I see its shame and its evils and the darkness of its ambiance ... and I saw the disconnection of names from what they name and the ensuing confusion between them, and the bewilderment of borders and indicators of places and positions *until something invaded that world that wasn’t there before, and something left it that wasn’t meant to leave...* (22; emphasis mine)

The figuratively exilic author is supplemented here with the figure of the stranger. It’s not just that the author leaves the world behind; it’s also that he becomes a stranger to it, with severed connections to the homeland. Being removed from the world gives al-Manfālūṭī the necessary distance to see the world for what it really is, with all its

to begin envisaging national anti-nationalist histories of the ‘people.’ And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves. (38-39)

In the introduction to my dissertation, I described the importance of this in-between space for the movement of translation into Arabic. In the particular context of al-Manfālūṭī, the quotation from Bhabha is particularly poignant as his form of idiomatic translation maintains a sense of alterity from the European text and the Arabic tradition at the same time.

evils. Perhaps the most threatening evil is the weakened relationship between word and its reference. However, the distance does not imply disengagement.

Even though al-Manfālūṭī presents himself as a metaphoric stranger to his homeland, his critique of literal translation is socially and politically motivated. Literal translation, in subduing the Arabic language to the language of the origin, threatens the relationship between words and their meanings. For one, copying European ideas in the original sentence structure into Arabic does not engage the receiving context or the Arabic language. The *nahḍāwī* authors misread al-Manfālūṭī's sentimentalism as completely detached from the real world. Al-Manfālūṭī's vision needs a certain communal setting that can receive it. According to Hallaq, Arabic prophetic literature insists on a deep-seated rootedness in a certain culture –“some kind of real experience of place”- which is indispensable to the one called on to be the mouthpiece of the prophetic (142). The definitive social setting ensures that the vision will correspond to a recognizable reality. If al-Manfālūṭī's truth that is part a divine design loses its real correspondence, there will be what Hallaq describes as an inversion of value. For instance, al-Manfālūṭī gives the example of *al-ta`wil* or multiple interpretations of the Qur`ān as a symptom of this inversion because in such a scenario religion is subdued to other than its natural end which is immediate communication. Once the natural tie between language and reference is severed, the symbolic order, and by extension the social order, are completely perverted.

Earlier in his diatribe against the traditional Azharites, al-Manfālūṭī begins to articulate a sophisticated theory of translation, in which he dismisses literal translations as inadequate. He brings together the criticism of literal translations and the possibility of infinite interpretations under the same heading. According to al-Manfālūṭī, one has to find a form of translation that would delimit multiple

interpretations of any text and thus put an end to the confusion created by broken signs. The way to do so, however, is restricted to figure of the exilic author, clearly here al-Manfālūṭī. *Khayāl* provides the author with an externality to any particular situation and thus offers him full view of the object of description. The author, as I mentioned earlier, has to occupy a certain distance from the object of description, the world of truth and pain in this case, to avoid being confused by the loss of reference.

Al-Manfālūṭī elaborates on this point:

It occurred [*khuyyila* here] to me—because of the proximity of my age to what I was seeing—that I was seeing something bizarre, or a strange scene, or as if, as I used to think, the world of the imagination [*khayāl*] that I was in was a true picture of the world of truth and of the reality that I was transported into, so I was troubled by the great difference between the two worlds, and I sent out a word followed by another as the someone breathing sends one breath after the next, or a sad man moans. Some people read what I had written and called it writing [*kalāman* implies discourse] ... until they named me *kātib* [writer/author]. (23)

Khayāl enables the transportation of the author into a world of truth, one which in this scene co-exists with the real world outside of the literary vision. The time of narration or enunciation, as al-Manfālūṭī continuously uses the word *kalām*, and the object of description coincide absolutely in his vision, with no temporal delay in the construction of the linguistic description. There is no gap between the vision and its narration in language, and thus there is the illusion of transparent rendition of the image in linguistic signs because in al-Manfālūṭī's work, the sign is not broken. The two worlds, that of the vision and of the reality outside, stand side by side for the visionary author to compare. Al-Manfālūṭī describes the difference between the two worlds as a strange scene. The strangeness of the scene echoes his own estrangement from the world of reality. We remember that earlier, he portrayed himself as a stranger to this world because his *khayāl* enables him to be transported through time, or, as we see here, to hang suspended in time.

Boutros Hallaq argues that in *al-Nazarāt* the time of narration is immediately followed by the time of interpretation. Hallaq mentions that al-Manfālūṭī calls narration “*ifdā*”, which literally means communicating a secret rather than expressing a thought. The interpretation of the secret, as Hallaq tells us, comes from a third party that reads al-Manfālūṭī’s work as *vraie parole* or what he calls *kalām*. Then the interpretation earns him the title of author. Hallaq concludes from this description a definition of *Adab* as al-Manfālūṭī understands it:

l’adab déjà constitue (la littérature) aboutit tout logiquement a l’adab en cours de constitution, ou l’adab produit donne lieu a l’adab se produisant. L’adab produit l’adab. C’est un univers autonome qui ne renvoie qu’a lui-même. Ce monde clos se trouve ordonne a une mission Il s’affirme aussi en s’alimentant des épreuves surmontées qu’impose le monde extérieure. (139)

Hallaq reads in al-Manfālūṭī’s rebellion against traditional Arabic literature a call for an autonomous literature. He maintains that al-Manfālūṭī’s preoccupation with the contingency of the moment of writing makes the world of his literature autonomous and self-referential. This autonomous world affirms itself in overcoming the limitations that the outside world imposes. Accordingly, Hallaq concludes that the conception of literature as prophetic announces the emergence of the “me” and the authorial “I.” Moreover, al-Manfālūṭī’s vision of a literature of individuation constitutes a complete rupture with the dynamic of *nahḍāwī* social realism.

Having access to two worlds simultaneously, or hovering, as it were, over the border that separates the two, is related in his text to Western modernity. It is not clear to what extent al-Manfālūṭī consciously made those links, or if for the most part, the writing just came out, word after word, as he tells us. Soon after he describes his access to both worlds, al-Manfālūṭī assigns himself a prophetic vocation, the responsibility to reveal to people the corruption of the world and to expose evil for what it is. He continues,

I was subjected to several of the judgments of the age and its pronouncements, compelling me to become either an atheist in my religion or hateful of my homeland/ nation, so I managed – and people had already embraced all they could of this Western modernity [*madaniyyah*] – to sit on one side of it. (26)

The duality of worlds translates here into a duality of choice for the prophetic author. Being confronted with the impact of Western modernity, the author has to strive for that delicate position between preserving his religion and language while maintaining contact with the Western idiom. Al-Manfālūṭī chooses to sit on one side of Westernization and not embrace it in its totality. He doesn't tell us exactly which side he sits on, but he continues to develop this position, again, in the language of translation. He gives the example of a wealthy Egyptian man who hires a European servant. The Egyptian master starts to feel inferior to the European servant because he does not speak his language, while the European servant does not speak the master's language. The Egyptian, on the other hand, must know his language and the language of his slave. There is a reversal of a Hegelian master-slave dialectic here, with the Egyptian master become slave and the European slave become master. This reversal is predicated on language; after all, the inferiority of the master is his non-knowledge of the slave's language.¹¹⁰

Al-Manfālūṭī translates this reversal into the context of *adab*. If the acquisition of a foreign tongue serves only to communicate with the masters, then “the writer becomes a mere maker not a writer, and a translator not a speaker [*qā'il*]” (28). The *qā'il* (writer as speaker) would avoid such a pitfall of translation only in finding the perfect form of original expression, even when the idea comes in translation. Kāmil Muḥammad 'Uwayḍah in his 1987 *Muṣṭafa Luṭfi al-Manfalūṭī, ḥayātuhu wa adabuhu*

¹¹⁰ Shaden Tageldin in her 2004 dissertation entitled “Disarming Words: Reading (Post)Colonial Egypt's Double Bond to Europe” studies the complex linguistic exchange between the colonizer (French and English) and the colonized (Egyptian) and argues that the colonized was so seduced by the language of the colonizer that even in native expressions, the colonized would speak to the master's language and not to his own.

[Muṣṭafa Luṭfi al-Manfālūṭī, His Life and Literature] maintains that al-Manfālūṭī's thoughts are organized and connected to such an extent that they never shock the reader. He describes a kind of formalism that keeps "thoughts" sequential and causal on the surface of the text. Al-Manfālūṭī's obsession with finding the perfect form, 'Uwayḍah argues, results in an extreme externalization of emotion so that the subjective is portrayed as a shared objective reality. 'Uwayḍah gives the example of al-Manfālūṭī's eulogy of Jurjī Zaydān in which the structure of the text clearly emulates the rhythmic divisions of *saj'*, or Qur'ānic rhyming prose. 'Uwayḍah includes the following excerpt, "*Ra`aytuka ya bunayya fī firāshika 'alīlan fa jazi 'tu, thumma khiṭtu 'alayk al-mawt fa fazi 'tu*" (qtd. in 'Uwayḍah 41). The line translates as follows: "I saw you, my son, in your bed ill, so I panicked, and I feared for your death so I got scared." In the original, you can hear the rhythmic divisions that echo Qur'ānic rhyme in the repetitive "ka" and the "tu" sounds that end the verbs in the line, creating the effects of rhyming prose. Thus al-Manfālūṭī uses Classical formal techniques to mitigate the intensity of the emotion and present it in a recognizable form that could bring a community of readers together over a shared tradition. The formal rhyming scheme, for instance, is not meant to detract from the meaning, but to objectify the meaning in a form that resonated with al-Manfālūṭī's readers.

Al-Manfālūṭī wants to find the perfect form of expression in the *bayān*, the classical form of Arabic writing of which Qur'ānic discourse is the model [*mubīn*]. He uses the classical forms to bring the traditional and the native tradition together in ways that were impossible for the realists. In this section, al-Manfālūṭī describes the *bayān* as in sync with the movement of the soul:

And the *bayān* is not a commodity that gets passed around by traders from one market to the next...but a natural movement of the soul that sends forth its traces spontaneously without any embellishments and no artificiality, like the rising of the sun and the echo of a voice. (29)

Al-Manfālūṭi's major concern in his battle against the Azharites is to liberate Arabic literature from its devotion to the perfect form of an untouchable, classical Arabic language to a preoccupation with form. He describes the *bayān* in the same language that he uses to describe translation: "And the *bayān* is not the insertion and the removal of words, and not the entrance of one letter and the exit of another, but it is in composition and harmony and unison [*insijām*]" (31). Like a good translation, the perfect *bayān* is not about the re-arrangement of words but a matter of putting things harmoniously together, so that words remain slaves to meanings (33). However, the perfect form is in the composition. 'Uwayḍah argues that the sequential formalism of al-Manfālūṭi's work remains on the surface and that his preoccupation with harmonious composition leaves his most subjective thoughts completely exteriorized. 'Uwayḍah, however, concludes this from al-Manfālūṭi's articles and not from his adaptations of European literature.

Perfect *bayān* is again described in the language of speech, just like *kalām* or discourse (as speech) comes to mean writing in the work of al-Manfālūṭi. There are three kinds of speech: the speech of the tongue, that of the mind, and that of the heart (34-5). The first kind of speech is the lowest one because it is completely artificial and devoid of real sentiments. The speech of the mind is completely externalized and used to entertain the reader. Al-Manfālūṭi tells us that looking at it is like looking at something that's entirely alien to him. He gives seven examples of poetic language that he qualifies as the speech of the mind. Then he reads these lines as a warning against the misleading references of figurative language.

For instance, he includes the following lines as examples: "And when the belly of the earth grew too tight to hold spirits after their death, they made the atmosphere your grave and they made up for burial clothes [what the dead in the

Islamic tradition are wrapped up in before burial] with a dress of soil” (39). Al-Manfālūṭī analyzes the line as follows: “For none of that really happened, because the grave doesn’t get tight for anyone, and the atmosphere is never a grave, and the man is still crucified not buried, and is still naked, not clothed in burial cloth” (39). This criticism of figurative language provides the alternative to the realists’ intent devotion to realistic details as the only access to the real. Al-Manfālūṭī is suggesting here that language should enable a direct access to the essence of the thing itself. The real is not in the decorative details, as al-Manfālūṭī assures us in this part of his introduction. Rather the real is in finding a form of language that disappears in reference to the thing itself, so that we do away with misleading figuration and have contact with the essence of the thing and not merely with its linguistic attribute.

The criticism of the speech of the mind falls in line with al-Manfālūṭī’s skepticism of language games in general. His issue is not so much with figurative language as it is with reference. Al-Manfālūṭī’s underlying fear is that words might come to be permanently severed from their intended meanings. His presentation of the author as a prophetic visionary relies on the privileged position he can occupy in hovering between two worlds, the real world and that of *khayāl*. The access to both worlds simultaneously enables the author to use words in their correct references, with no room for multiple interpretations. Because the world of the imagination coincides with the real world for the prophetic author, he is able to translate one into the other with no suspicious overspill. Moreover, the translation would only expose the shortcomings of the real world and offer up a better version of it in the mirror of prophetic imagination.

I mentioned earlier that the ongoing fantasy for al-Manfālūṭī is the coincidence of the time of enunciation and the enunciation itself so that there could be

no doubt about what is being referred to in the moment of speech. This would be prophetic writing, one that does away with mediation through *khayāl*. Hallaq writes that “le temps de l’énonciation énoncée coïncide avec le début de la vision” (143). I used to think and then I saw—this structure according to Hallaq allows a movement from a sensorial materialistic vision to one which penetrates into the essence of things through *khayāl*, which Hallaq also leaves untranslated in his article.

The final and most refined speech is the Speech of the Heart, which is entirely unmediated and involves the direct presence of the author. Al-Manfālūṭi tells the reader that he will recognize such a speech (again *ḥadīth* here is intended to also mean writing, since speech and writing will coincide in al-Manfālūṭi’s vision of prophetic authorship) when:

you see that the veil of words has become so thin in your hands in light of the meaning that it dies out ... *like how the surface of a mirror dissolves or dies or disappears in the hands of the one who is looking into it*, and all he sees is his picture tilted in his hands, with no board and no glass there. (40; emphasis mine)

This last simile is perhaps the most telling of al-Manfālūṭi’s theory of expression. The medium of expression, here the veil of words, will disappear because the meaning is so transparent. The interesting part of this theory, however, is in the second half of the sentence. The medium of veiling words is likened to the reflecting surface of a mirror; just like the words disappear in relation to the meaning, the reflecting surface also disappears in relation to the object, so that the image reflected coincides absolutely with the thing itself through the power of *khayāl* and the externalization that it enables its author.

What we see emerging here is not merely a theory of expression, but also a theory of imitation. The introduction opens with the address to the reader to not imitate but create. The dispersed references to the bad kind of literal translation are

also an effort to liberate the original from the confines of its own language when in translation into Arabic. If the word as mere image and the thing coincide absolutely, just like the words and the meanings are supposed to, then the copy is nothing other than the original and vice versa. Imitation becomes identity. Thus, al-Manfālūṭī, contra the New School writers, locates the real in the essence of the thing itself and access to that real through the *khayāl* of the prophetic author. One could hypothesize that al-Manfālūṭī's wariness of language games and excessive realism is really a fear that those would reproduce the powerful structures of the colonizer's language as such in Arabic. *Khayāl* provides access to a reality that is more real than what can be delivered in realistic attention to detail. After all, *khayāl* affords the author a position outside the immediate context with simultaneous access to the world of the translation and that of the original. This revolutionary temporal structure, a position occupied outside of real time but that enables full view of the real time of the original and the translation, determines al-Manfālūṭī's politically-motivated task of translation. This task of translation becomes an imperative demand to rewrite the original so that the translation can usurp its position, not necessarily in an act of subversion. Rather, in remaining faithful to the prophetic author, this form of translation is politically motivated to the extent that it disables easy appropriation, which qualifies 'Ubayd's realism. Al-Manfālūṭī is critically aware of the untranslatability of context, and his awareness will become clearer in the analysis of the translations. Moreover, the new prophetic position of the author takes off from a specific communal setting, as Hallaq tells us. Al-Manfālūṭī's rewriting of classical forms also takes heed of the receiving community of readers and purports to render the subjective as a shared objective reality. Thus, it is inaccurate to dismiss his translations and his task of translation as apolitical. In 1910, al-Manfālūṭī authors a form of idiomatic translation that can

guarantee in the least an original Arabic, novelistic expression. In the rest of the chapter, I will explore how this theory of idiomatic translation plays out in his own translations of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* and Chateaubriand's *René* and *Atala*.

Becoming the Prophet: Instances of Idiomatic Translation

In 1923, al-Manfalūṭī translated Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* into Arabic under the title *al-Faḍīlah, aw Paul wa Virginie* [Virtue; Or Paul and Virginie]. In 1915, he rewrote François René de Chateaubriand's two novellas, *René* and *Atala*, into one aphoristic short story entitled *al-Shuhadā`* which translates as martyrs, but also carries the connotations of witnessing in the root verb *shahad* ("to witness"). The translation was included in a collection of stories under the title *Al-'Abarāt* [Tearful Lessons]. While the first translation refers to its original author, the second completely forgets Chateaubriand. I have chosen these texts because they perform al-Manfalūṭī's task of idiomatic translation differently. The adaptation of *Paul et Virginie* remains close to the events of the original, but adds moralistic commentaries in the form of extended dialogue or narratorial introspection (and not in separate poetic insertions as we saw with al-Bustānī's translation of *Robinson Crusoe*). Al-Manfalūṭī's additions provide criticism of Western colonialism and put forth his own theorization of the figure of the storyteller. As we will see, he alters the ending and emphasizes the frame of the tale at the expense of the actual events so as to re-position the figure of the storyteller from within an Arabic tradition. However, what emerges in his rewriting of the storyteller figure is also a rewritten (and inverted) Scheherazade, namely a storyteller who tells the story in order to die and rather than to live. The rewritten Scheherazade resurfaces, in a different way, in his adaptation of

Chateaubriand's novellas. *Al-Shuhadā`* takes up both the teller of as well as the witness to the story under the sign of incest. Although the adaptation makes the two heroes into first cousins and not siblings, it yokes the fate of René to that of Atala in an incestuous performance; by which I mean that the translation condenses the two tales into one, fusing details from the first with details from the second, to produce an appropriative performance of translation that can be described as incestuous. I will discuss below the ramifications of this formal incest, as it constitutes a fusion of two forms, in detail in relation to the history of publication of the original novellas and in relation to the translation's inverted Scheherazade. In what follows, I will read al-Manfalūṭī's translations closely to uncover how his performance of idiomatic translation re-inscribes this foreign body of literature within the prophetic new literature of Egypt as he imagined it in *al-Nazarāt* (1910).

Paul et Virginie on Egyptian Shores

In 1784, Bernadin de Saint-Pierre published *Études de la nature*, from which he initially removed *Paul et Virginie*, but then republished the novel in the fourth volume of *Études* in 1788. In 1789, the first separate edition of *Paul et Virginie* was published, and Bernadin de Saint-Pierre became a committed member of the popular assembly in his district. Published in the year of the 1789 Revolution, *Paul et Virginie* shies away from the popular literary style of the time and hearkens back to the classics. A novel of sentimental escapism authored in the shadow of the revolution, al-Manfalūṭī's choice of it for his translation gives credence to the accusations of his critics, namely that he chose to translate novels set in far-away places that have no

immediate bearing on the Egyptian situation.¹¹¹ However, we will see how al-Manfalūṭī rewrites this tension between escapism and direct engagement with historical context in his translation. In other words, he understood that *Paul et Virginie* is not escapist in the least, even though it chose a remote setting from the Paris of 1789.

In the “Préambule” to the luxurious edition (l’édition de luxe) of the novel published in 1806, Bernadin de Saint-Pierre writes that the novel’s distance from its political present allows him to create characters like those of the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*: “J’ai déjà un Nestor dans le vieux Dominigue, et un Ulysse dans mon jeune voyageur.” He also writes that “La Forme est tout, le fond est peu de chose” (122).

Bernadin de Saint-Pierre’s work wants to show the readers

qu’il y a une Providence que se manifeste aussi bien au milieu du désordre de nos sociétés, que dans l’ordre de la nature. Je venais de traverser des temps de révolution, de guerre, de procès, de banqueroute, de calomnies audacieuses, de persécutions sourdes, et d’anarchie en tout genre, lorsque Bonaparte prit en main le gouvernail de l’Empire. (154)

In this particular novel, he has described « le bonheur de deux enfants élevés au sein de la nature, par des mères infortunées; j’essaierai de peindre le bonheur durable d’un peuple ramène a ses lois éternelles, par des révolutions » (159).¹¹² If in the years right

¹¹¹ In his 1979 article “Creative Translation: Towards the Study of Arabic Translations of Western Literature since the 19th Century,” M. Peled quotes from al-Manfalūṭī dedication to *Al-Faḍīlah*:

I admire in the young man courage and daring, and in the young woman-good manners and shyness. For courage in man is the foundation of all other qualities and a woman's shyness is her real beauty. I therefore dedicate this story to the young men and women of Egypt, so that they may derive from it, each group the quality I like seeing in them most, and thus lay their lives and future on the foundation of virtue as did Paul and Virginia. (qtd. in Peled 148)

Peled continues to say that al-Manfalūṭī

had no interest in Saint Pierre's longing after an ancient order, nor could he get excited about the ideal of a small rural society, which in Egypt held no attraction for the aspiring young. But he found it exciting to use a well known Western work for the purpose of encouraging adherence to traditional values of manhood and womanhood, deprecating at the same time Western villainy. He reconstructed the work accordingly. (148)

¹¹² Bernadin de Saint-Pierre writes in the 1806 « Préambule » : « Le globe est un vaisseau céleste, sphérique, sans proue et sans poupe, propre à voyageur, dans tous les sens, dans toute l’étendue des cieux. Le soleil en est l’aimant et le cœur ; l’océan est le sang dont la circulation le rend mobile » and all other planets’ « sphères, diversement inclinées vers le soleil, sont dans les mains de la

after the 1789 revolution, Bonaparte caused the apparent disorder in nature, and by simple deduction in society, then Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's novel is a reminder that through revolution, society could actually return to its eternal, natural laws. The story of Pierre and Virginie will bear witness to this return.

J. Van Den Heuvel writes the "Préface" to the 1974 Livre de Poche edition of the novel in which he quotes Pierre Trahard, a renowned editor and reader of the novel, that when the book was published, «Non seulement la France, mais L'Europe pleura » (qtd. in Heuvel 12). The reception of the novel inaugurated sentimentalism. Moreover, multiple translations and imitations of *Pierre et Virginie* appeared right after its publication. For a book with such an important publication date, a book that is released with the revolution, *Paul et Virginie* is set in a remote location, purposefully severed from the political havoc ravaging the streets of Paris at the time. Its appeal seems to lie in its remoteness from Paris. The idea was to come up with a new form of literature, one that would domesticate the exotic because as Heuvel writes "cette nature demande à être rendue avec un art si nouveau, [et] [Bernadin de Saint-Pierre] le reconnaît lui-même, que 'les termes n'en sont pas encore inventés'" ("Préface" 16). The newness of the novel's language remains a promise in the translation. The promise of beginning a new form of literature, and of beginning anew on an island, forms the background of the prophetic ambitions of al-Manfalūṭī.¹¹³

Providence come ces cylindres de musique dont il suffit de relever ou d'abaisser les axes de quelques degrés pour en changer tous les concerts » (162-163). With time tempests brought France and England physically closer to each other and after interminable wars, the English and the French saw their interests reunited like their territories (166). This globe is to be shared by les hommes semblables for whom it was made (166), and the women "posèrent les premières bases des lois naturelles" (169). Women help maintain the order « malgré les lois politiques, les lois fondamentales de la nature » (170). The new moral law that will govern man now in this post-revolution world is the same one that created all of the mechanical laws of nature and perfected them: "Heureux ceux qui, forts de leur conscience première, ne cherchent l'auteur de la nature que dans la nature même, avec les simples organes qu'elle leur a données!"

¹¹³ What survives most powerfully in the Arabic translation is this idea of creation—the novel as a beginning bears the promise of creation of a new world, not merely a perspective on a different

Bernadin de Saint-Pierre made the exotic familiar (“Préface” 16), and the characters of the novel remain importantly exilic figures who were forced to leave their homeland because of social persecution. Marguerite and Madame de La Tour “faisaient porter les noms de Bretagne et de Normandie a de petites portions de terre ou elles avaient semé du blé, des fraises et des pois » (243). In a novel so aware of colonial expansion and slavery, *Pierre et Virginie* does not shy away from the attempt to translate Paris into the wilderness of the island (l’île de France). Heuvel argues that the novel seeks to establish correspondences between heaven and earth (19), and that its intense preoccupation with establishing harmonious correspondences runs parallel to its “rêve d’identité absolue entre deux êtres” (18).¹¹⁴ The novel’s ultimate fantasy, Heuvel continues, is to break the barriers between two selves and re-inscribe difference within an economy of the same. In this sense, the incestuous thematic of the relationship between Paul and Virginie is not a call to communal understanding through similarity (in this utopian new world on the island); rather, the dream of absolute identity seeks to overwrite the excess of difference and to make this world

world but an actual new world—which is in contrast with the fundamental view of Islam of the world as already complete and thus requiring no additions or appendages. In *Beginnings* published in 1975, Edward Said writes that Arabic novel came almost entirely in translation. While I do not completely agree with his conclusion, his description of the desire for an alternative world as “inimical to the Islamic world-view” is extremely important to the study of al-Manfālūfī’s contribution to Arabic fictional narrative:

The Prophet is he who has completed a world-view; thus the word heresy in Arabic is synonymous with the verb ‘to innovate’ or ‘to begin.’ Islam views the world as a plenum, capable of neither diminishment nor amplification. Consequently, stories like those in *The Arabian Nights* are ornamental, variations on the world, not completions of it; neither are they lessons, structures, extensions, or totalities designed to illustrate either the author’s prowess in representation, the education of a character, or ways in which the world can be viewed or changed. (Said 81)

¹¹⁴ V. Den H. gives the following quotations as examples of this fantasy of total fusion in the supreme harmonies of nature and the dream of absolute identity between two selves to break the barriers between two consciences: “Fruits d’un amour également infortuné;” leurs mères les “mettent ensembles dans le même bain,” les couchent “dans le même berceau.” Moreover, the narrator compares Paul et Virginie to:

deux bourgeois qui restent sur deux arbres de la même espèce, dont la tempête a brisé toutes les branches, viennent a produire des fruits plus doux, si chacun d’eux détache du tronc maternel, est greffe sur le tronc voisin ; ainsi ces deux petits enfants, privées de tous leurs parents, se remplissaient de sentiments plus tendres que ceux de fils et de la fille, de frère et de sœur, quand ils venaient a être changes de mamelles par les deux amies qui leur avaient donné le jour. (qtd. in «Préface» 17).

identical to paradise where all things would coincide as manifestations of the same. Al-Manfalūṭī picks up on the theme of incest but thematizes it on the level of form. The figure of the storyteller in the translation will come to bear witness to the persistent threat of difference between self and other, East and West, the European novel and the Arabic tale.

It is not entirely accurate to call al-Manfalūṭī's *al-Faḍīlah* published in 1923 a translation. For one, we know that al-Manfalūṭī didn't speak or read French that well and that the novel was read to him (in an oral form of translation) by some of his friends. Al-Manfalūṭī decided to translate the novel 4 years after the 1919 revolution in Egypt. Although he does adhere to the general plot of the original, al-Manfalūṭī renders his own text recognizably different from Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's masterpiece. However, as I explained in the introduction to the chapter, I am still considering that his adaptations constitute a form of translation in their attention to the idiomatic structure of the original and its translation into the target language. I would describe *al-Faḍīlah* as an idiomatic translation because of al-Manfalūṭī's persistent search for the right idiom in Arabic to carry through a clearly European thought.¹¹⁵

Although al-Manfalūṭī emphasizes the pure relationship of the word to the thing itself in the introduction to *al-Nazarāt*, he still maintains that his form of idiomatic translation, the attempt to adapt the text to the target culture while maintaining a necessary sense of alienation from it, demands a contagion between languages. In other words, both the original and the target languages must be influenced by idiomatic translation. In his own translation of *Paul et Virginie*, al-

¹¹⁵ It is interesting to look at what al-Manfalūṭī finds untranslatable in the original and what he transmits intact. For instance, he delivers proverbs as they are, but reworks all the sections that deal with Virginie's virtue.

Manfālūṭī performs this contagion of languages in his quest for the ideal Arabic idiom that could carry the meaning of the original French novel. One way that he renders his translation idiomatic is in the organization and rearrangement of scenes. Al-Manfālūṭī divides the novel into chapters and names the first chapter, for example, “The Island of Maurice” (Mauritius) which begins with a description (and naming) of the island, while the original begins with a reference to the two cabins of the women in the middle of the scene, centering the reader’s or viewer’s perspective. The translation then describes the small number of black people dispersed on the island’s mountains as slaves to the European colonialists before it introduces us to the cabins. Thus, one way that the translation is idiomatic is in how it anchors the whole tale in a criticism of colonial exploitation.

The original novel opens with the narratorial “je,” a speaker similar to Ulysses wandering in unknown lands. We are then introduced to the frame tale which includes the body of another cited tale. Basically, the frame tale includes the narrator and the old man exchanging a story about the two cabins abandoned in the middle of the scene. The actual story exchanged is the cited tale. The conversation between the narrator and the old man is first placed in quotations and then the story itself is left outside of any identifiable markers so as to blend with the rest of the text. The frame tale is reminiscent of the structure of *A Thousand and One Nights* and the citational model that al-Bustānī relied on in his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*. While al-Bustānī inserted a third-person voice into his translation, in an attempt to re-inscribe his storyteller into an Arabic tradition, al-Manfālūṭī will privilege the frame tale to the content of the novel but present us with a completely new figure of the storyteller.

As soon as we enter the space of the original novel, we notice a conspicuous doubling which Bernadin de Saint-Pierre wants to render in terms of absolute identity

and coincidence (the two cabins; the two women; Dominique and Marie; Paul and Virginie drinking the same milk) (212 – 213). The symmetry seems to want to create a sense of wholeness, a paradise on earth, an Adam and Eve with two of everything. We remember that, upon first seeing Paul's garden, the old man (as narrator of his own story) admires Paul's arrangement of the trees so that the whole can be seen at a single glance (239). The arrangement into a whole recalls Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's claim in the "Préambule" "qu'il y a une Providence que se manifeste aussi bien au milieu du désordre de nos sociétés, que dans l'ordre de la nature» (154). His novel, in other words, would *perform* this Providence. The novel would then reproduce a certain order that resonates with the natural order, just like we are told that Paul's amphitheater of green does not deviate from the design of Nature: "ainsi chaque végétal croissait dans son site propre et chaque site recevait de son végétal sa parure naturelle" (240). The rivers are like «larges miroirs qui répétaient au milieu de la verdure les arbres en fleurs, les rochers, et l'azur des cieux» (240). In the opening pages of the original, we seem to walk into a self-duplicating scene, a world of reflections which doubles and folds back into itself. The idea is to present the world of the story as a self-sustaining universe with its own Adam and Eve and potential to start a new world. Nature comes through as a figural fold of sorts, presented to the reader in a language of reflection that appears natural to it. For instance, the old man tells Paul that the latter's amphitheater of green is set up just as nature would have it, so that the design is made invisible more or less.

However, in this self-duplicating and enclosed space, we hear about colonial exploitation (both in the original and then in an exaggerated form in the

translation).¹¹⁶ Although the novel wants to produce a self-sustaining world, the historical reference to colonialism on the island reveals the persistence of a third presence that inserts itself between the corresponding doubles. Al-Manfālūṭī's attraction to this novel might lie in this aspect of its description, wherein the language that describes the space of the text is made to seem transparent. The contained world of the novel doubles back on itself between the reflecting rivers as mirrors, thus delineating the space of the tale to be told. The translation translates this spatial frame into the temporal exchange between the narrator and the old man so that the frame comes to subsume the narrative. It opens with the background of colonialism that forms the context of the encounter between the old man and the narrator, who are placed in the forefront before we hear about the other characters of the story. The idiomatic translation of the novel translates the figural fold of the natural background into the relationship between the storyteller and the narrator within which the critique of colonialism assumes center-stage.

In the second chapter of *al-Faḍīlah* entitled “*Al-Shaykh*” or “The Old Man,” we are introduced to the old man who tells our narrator the story. In the original we have a narratorial “I” telling us the story; in the translation we don’t encounter the “I” in the opening pages. Rather, we begin to hear in chapter two the story of the old man directly. The only way we hear about the narrator is in the dialogic verb “*qultu*” which is the first-person active form of the verb “to say.” The details of the original remain

¹¹⁶ The space of doubling remains marked by the specter of a third. One place we can detect this persistent specter is in the multiple references to slavery on the island. The narrator is lost near the mountain of the Three Breasts (Trois-Mamelles), but in this utopia there are slaves and slave plantations. The historical intervention of colonization in this seemingly ahistorical space that holds the two cabins threatens the novel’s fantasy of absolute identity. Another threat to the principle of identity that dominates the setting of the novel is the threat of incest, or at least of symbolic incest in the case of Paul and Virginie. They are raised as siblings and then fall in love. As we will see later, the death of Virginie becomes the scapegoat for this doubling. If Virginie loses her virginity to Paul, difference would be introduced and would disturb the principle of identity.

in the translation but they are reworked and refitted within a larger commentary on European culture (as colonizer). Thus the world of *al-Faḍilah* exists only in the dialogue between the two characters. The story of the two families on the island is rewritten in such a way that it is subservient to the frame tale, and the frame tale comes together within a powerful criticism of European colonialism.

In the translation, the criticism of Western ideals translates into the fabric of the novel's language. For instance, when the old man is telling the narrator about the happiness of the two women in the cabins despite their miserable poverty, al-Manfālūṭī writes that the only stories Europeans want to hear about are those that resemble the lives of "the heroes of the novels that you read" (17). To establish the verisimilitude and appeal of his account, al-Manfālūṭī adds the previous line which suggests that the only stories that have a European audience are those of wealthy novelistic heroes. Consequently, the account of our two heroines might fall on deaf ears because they're not wealthy and are insignificant in view of other novelistic plots.

When the narrator asks the old man to tell him the story of the people on the island, al-Manfālūṭī adds to the dialogue of the narrator:

Yes sir, I confess that we the Europeans don't know the meaning of happiness except in the ways you have described! ... And we are not impressed with a story unless its heroes are those of cruel kings, and blood-shedding dictators! ... But we cannot listen ... with pleasure and content to the speech of the poor and the miserable! ... No matter how cruel the human heart gets, and no matter how lust devours its feelings and being, a wind of divine instinct will blow its way, refresh it and wake its feelings, so the heart could return to itself a little, and understand that there are kinds of happiness in the world that it knows and is familiar with ... so tell me your story sir, for I am merely a desperate poor man who was let down by happiness when he demanded it from cities and present times [*hawāḍir*] So he [the old man] placed his hands on his wrinkled forehead as though he was looking for some old memories between its plies ... And he began talking to me saying ... (18)

There are absolutely no markers to set apart the speech of the narrator from that of the old man, and at several key moments in the translation (like this one) they seem to blend into each other indistinguishably. Although the language of this passage borders on sappy sentimentalism, and even though many claim that al-Manfālūṭī's writing is thus reductive, Manfālūṭian romanticism is nonetheless framed by a tangible political critique. In the original, both the old man and the narrator are European; in the translation, al-Manfālūṭī adds this passage to tell us that the narrator is European but that he also speaks the language of the old man. As we can see, the frame of the exchange between the two is a critique of European modernity which has failed to provide the narrator with happiness. He has come to find it in the simple tale of the old man, away from the sway of the modern, and on this island which exists (almost) outside of modern time. Thus al-Manfālūṭī's romanticism is grounded in a critique of European modernity which is also threatening to consume Egypt. The story will help the heart return to itself, to its original state before modernity and to its simple demands out of life.

The story, however, can only be told, heard and read in one way. In the chapter entitled "Happiness," al-Manfālūṭī links happiness directly to reducing the number of interpretations (*al-ta`wīl*). Because in the world of *Paul et Virginie*, God is everywhere, the book of nature is open and unmediated and requires no interpretation. In other words, there is only one way to tell this story, and happiness lies in that self-sufficiency, in the figural fold that ensures that the story (like the nature that frames it) folds back into itself with no remainder. In the original novel, we read that for the characters on the island religious faith is completely intuitive: "car leur théologie était toute on sentiment, comme celle de la nature, et leur morale toute en action, comme celle de l'Évangile" (251). This line becomes in the translation:

They didn't care to understand [nature's] meanings, nor to penetrate its secrets, as though they felt themselves above of all of that with what God had given them of an instinctual and simple faith that doesn't require any explanation or clarification. (72-73)

Conveniently, al-Manfālūṭi removes the comparison to Evangelism. If the word of God is clearly reflected in nature, why would one need the work of Evangelists?¹¹⁷

The recurring insistence on keeping East and West separate where it counts (like in the threat of missionary work) is fully developed in the section on Paul's reading of novels. As opposed to the Classical texts which encouraged his idealization of Virginie, the novels offer Paul a realistic presentiment of how the city (of Paris) will change her.¹¹⁸ In some of the novels, he saw how betrayal was treated cynically as a joke, and "comme il savait que ces livres renfermaient des peintures assez fidèles des mœurs de l'Europe, il craignit que la fille de madame de la Tour ne vint à s'y corrompre et à l'oublier ses anciens engagements » (307). In the translation, when Paul is planting the seeds that Virginie sent him from Paris, we read:

They only survived for a little while until they withered out and disappeared, either because they were dead with no life in them, or because the soil wasn't conducive to their growth, *or because East is East ... and West is West! ...and it is impossible that the two should mix and mingle, and partake in the same system, and in the same life ...*
... And he used to read in novels the tales of deception and betrayal that the novelists tell about women and say to himself: maybe that sinister society will

¹¹⁷ In the section on the missionary priest who comes to give advice to Helen to send her daughter away in the translation, we find an indictment of the figure of power in a colonial regime: "and he is one of those deceitful pretenders whom the colonial governments use to invade weak hearts and win them over without bloodshed and spending money! ... and who are always in the surroundings of the colonial rulers to aid them in their habits of occupation and invasion" (102).

¹¹⁸ We read:

Aussi aucun livre ne lui fit autant de plaisir que le Télémaque, par ses tableaux de la vie champêtre et des passions naturelles au cœur humain. Il en lisait à sa mère et à madame de la Tour, les endroits qui l'affectaient davantage: alors ému par de touchants ressouvenirs, sa voix s'étouffait, et les larmes coûtaient de ses yeux; Il lui semblait trouver dans Virginie la dignité & la sagesse d'Antiope, avec les malheurs et la tendresse d'Eucharis. D'un autre côté, il fut tout bouleversé par la lecture de nos romans à la mode, pleins de mœurs & de maximes licencieuses; et quand il fut que ces romans renfermaient une peinture véritable des sociétés de l'Europe, il craignit, non fans quelque apparence de raison, que Virginie ne vînt à s'y corrompre et à l'oublier. (299-300)

corrupt her and change the direction of her good life, making her forget her promises and her vows and her compelling oath that she took between my arms to not replace me with another brother. *And the human spirit as Rousseau says is a mirror which reflects different pictures and colors! ... and one—as Maupassant says—is the product of the environment in which he lives.* (129; emphasis mine)

The names of Rousseau and Maupassant that appear in the translation exist nowhere in the original, so the line that divides East and West in the first part of the previous quotation is soon blurred. Echoing Rudyard Kipling (although I am sure al-Manfālūṭī never read “The Ballad of East and West” published in 1895), al-Manfālūṭī’s idiomatic rendition of Paul’s scene of reading performs the theorization of untranslatability in *al-Nazarāt*. Remember that the “East” in this scene is really L’île de France. The seeds that Virginie sends Paul will never grow in Eastern soil because they are of Western origin. However, Paul’s reading reveals to us that Rousseau and Maupassant were right. The combination of Rousseauesque spirit (as a mirror held up to the world) and Maupassantian naturalism is a symptom of untranslatability in al-Manfālūṭī’s own text. In simple terms, the reference to Maupassant might suggest that for Western seeds to grow in Eastern soil, one would have to change the environment in the East to resemble that of the West. The reference to Rousseau suggests a spirit that can wander the world unrestricted by polar boundaries. Both references are meant to explain why East and West shall never meet; curiously though, the explanation itself is based in a meeting of the two since we need the references of Maupassant and Rousseau to understand the East in its difference from the West.

The curious insertion of the names of Rousseau and Maupassant is further complicated by al-Manfālūṭī’s appropriation of the original text. After all, the original novel is written by a French man. When al-Manfālūṭī produces his translation, the novel begins to speak from the East as Egypt, namely from al-Manfālūṭī’s own particular position as Egyptian author. What enables this spatial mobility is the

temporal transportation of the authorial figure that al-Manfālūṭī develops in *al-Nazarāt*. We remember that in *al-Nazarāt*, the exilic figure of the author was able to witness different historical epochs from the present moment of narration. We encounter this figure in the section of the original *Paul et Virginie* in which the old man describes the inscriptions he made on the surfaces of the monuments. We read the following about the inscriptions in the original:

il me semble alors qu'une voix humaine sorte de la pierre, se fasse entendre a travers les siècles, et s'adressant a l'homme au milieu des déserts, lui dise qu'il n'est pas seul, et que d'autres homes dans ces mêmes lieux ont senti, pense, et souffert comme lui: que si cette inscription est de quelque action ancienne qui ne subsiste pas, elle étend notre âme dans les champs de l'infini, et lui donne le sentiment de son immortalité, en lui montrant qu'une pensée a survécu à la ruine même d'un empire. (242)

The same lines read as such in the translation:

There I felt like I had moved from my present into my past, and that I was living in those ancient times with my fathers and grandfathers, talking to them and listening to them, and revealing to them my self [*afḍī ilayhum bi-dhātī*], and hearing them reveal their selves to me, so I spend an hour in that conversation, and then I go about my business with my self over-pouring with the feeling that the human self is immortal and doesn't succumb to the pretensions of time, and the years and days cannot mar its image. (66)

The idea of immortality in the engraved inscriptions certainly appealed to al-Manfālūṭī, and the one thing the reader notices in the rendition of the French passage is the insertion of the “I” in the translation. In the original text, the human voice emanates from the rock because it connects the present to the past and creates a sense of human fellowship. In the translation, the authorial “I,” in the voice of the old man, replaces the inscription that connects then to now. Al-Manfālūṭī replaces the inscription with the revelation of the self: in the contained world of the story, the authorial self looms large beyond the inscriptions that mark the world of *Paul et Virginie*. We witness a conversation across the ages between the authorial self and its ancestors while we and the author remain anchored in the present moment of narration. This passage in the translation echoes the figure of the author in *al-Nazarāt*,

particularly in its access to different time periods and historical epochs while remaining anchored in the present.¹¹⁹

When the old man engraves the quotation from Horace on the rock *La Découverte de L’Amitié*, Virginie complains to him that she would prefer that he had written: “Toujours Agitée, mais Constante.” The old man responds to her by saying that such an inscription would be more relevant to matters of virtue, and so Virginie blushes. In the translation, this line is rendered as such: “But that is only said in a situation where virtue [*al-faḍilah*, the title of the book] is being urged” (67). Although this exchange between the old man and Virginie is brief, it is far from trivial. After all, the translation calls itself *al-Faḍilah* or *Virtue*.

In the original novel, we read that Virginie “se sentait agitée d’un mal inconnu” (266) and “L’infortunée se sentait troublée par les caresses de son frère” (268). Virginie, the virgin, is troubled by something she cannot name, a desire for her brother Paul. In the translation we get a side comment in parentheses divulging the “real” problem to us, which is that Virginie has fallen in love with Paul: “(And love if it enters the heart of a girl for the first time transports her from the life of happiness and joy to a life of worries and troubles)” (85). But it is not entirely accurate to say that al-Manfālūṭi completely diluted the sexual nuances of the original. Rather, the fuss over Virginie’s virtue persists in the translation’s preoccupation with storytelling.

Virginie’s virginity (like Scheherazade’s) is the condition of the story.

Virginie as the virgin provides the story with its plot: she is sent away to Paris to get a

¹¹⁹ The line in the original: “L’idée me vint de graver une inscription sur la tige de ce Roseau” (242) becomes in the translation: “And for that reason I was extremely passionate about engraving words and etching them on whatever I found of branches and trees, rocks and pebbles, and everything I passed on my way that I loved and thought worthy of eternity” (67). In the original the line comes before the part on how the inscription creates a sense of historical fellowship, while in the translation it comes after al-Manfālūṭi’s musings on the transportation of the self through time. The old man in the original novel decides to engrave an inscription because it (rather than its author) creates a sense of continuity with the past.

better education and to guard against the loss of her virginity. The old man, as the figure of the storyteller, can read the agitation of Virginie as her own unwritten story, the real reason she needs to leave the island so as to remain pure. In some sense, Virginie comes to represent the fantasy of an untouched “East,” a virgin land that can still provide the site of storytelling in the tradition of *A Thousand and One Nights*. The virgin East can also still provide the story itself, one of its kind, given in the immediacy of its own context of narration. I believe that the fantasy of virginity and the unharnessed womb (it is no coincidence that Le Repos de Virginie is the only patch of land left entirely uncultivated) translates into the fantasy of writing a tale like no other, unmarked by anything else, and of starting something new. It is this promise of finding the new language of post-revolution romanticism that makes it into al-Manfālūṭī’s theory of translation as rewriting.

Al-Manfālūṭī dedicates a whole chapter to Le Repos de Virginie. He calls it “*Makhda ‘ Virginie,*” which literally translates into the sleeping area of Virginie. As the only uncultivated area of this utopia on the island, Le Repos comes to signify the origin of the world, time before Time, time in the womb (68 – 69). This uncultivated space bears the promise of beginnings for al-Manfālūṭī, the origin of a story that hasn’t yet been told, and the fantasy that he will tell it in his own translation. Only a few pages later in the original novel, the old man intervenes with his own commentary on the children and their happiness. In the translation his interruption is conveniently placed in a frame:

And here the old man sighed deeply and threw a distant, cold look into the distance as though he were looking at a ghost coming his way! ..So I looked in the direction he was looking in and found him staring at the spot then called ‘*Makhda ‘ Virginie,*’ and he mumbled as though talking to himself... (70)

The old man looks in the direction of le Repos and mumbles to himself. The ghost coming his way is the ghost of the story he will continue to tell, coming his way from

the resting area of Virginie. The origin of the story is in the resting place of the virgin—the uncultivated repos of Virginie. At the very end of the translation, al-Manfālūṭī inserts a chapter which he calls “The End” and in this chapter, the young narrator goes looking for the old man after he has finished telling the story only to find him dead in his cabin. Thus the ghost coming towards him from the Repos is both that of the story and of his impending death and return to the womb of the earth after the tale has been told. While many readers might dismiss this last chapter as another manifestation of al-Manfālūṭī’s infatuation with tears, the unspoken promise of Virginie’s virginity and the death of the old man (after the telling of the tale) point to a nuanced appropriation of romanticism. As we read in *al-Nazarāt*, *khayāl* provides the author with an exteriority to the scene of narration or translation and, by extension, access to the world of the story and the world of its narration simultaneously. The author can thus stand outside the tale and tell us about the death of its storyteller (through the figure of the narrator). The death of the virgin becomes both the occasion for as well as the end of the story: Virginie drowns, swallowed by the womb, untouched. Her unspoken story becomes the burden of the old man, who had sensed her agitation once upon a time.

Before Virginie is swallowed by the waves, she has a vision of the waves swallowing Paul. In the translation, al-Manfālūṭī gives her the prophetic use of *khayāl* as it was developed in *al-Nazarāt* in the scene of the performances. The family on the island used to put on various performances, which initiate the work of both foreshadowing and identification (wherein the audience identifies with the characters played). Virginie is the one most sensitive to what these performances (particularly that of Paul drowning) foreshadow: “Mais Virginie à cette vue jetai des cries perçants, et disait que ces jeux-la lui faisait grand-peur” (255). In *al-Faḍilah*, we read:

As though she could see into the future, from behind the veil of the unknown, a scary sight that terrorized and annoyed her, so she kept saying to herself: ‘It occurs to me while I am looking out at the raging, restless sea that I see between every two waves a dug grave.’¹²⁰ (76)

The famous image of the *tombeau* that opens (*la baie du Tombeau*) and closes (the burial of Paul) the original novel finds its way into Virginie’s vision in the translation. Virginie becomes the feminine prophet, a visionary virgin, who performs al-Manfālūṭī’s theory of the prophetic author.¹²¹ In her vision, she foresees the drowning and describes it in a paradoxical analogy that makes no logical sense. The dug grave is seen between every two waves: but between the devouring waves, no grave can be dug. Here lies the paradox: the waves, in their shapeless movement, seem to be swallowing one another all the way to the shore. Yet, our feminine prophet, can see a dug grave between them. The figure of the dug grave in the waves forms a figural abyss whose very impossibility structures the tale. Virginie speaks to us from the grave which envelops this story from the onset. I mentioned that the tale opens with a grave scene and closes with another mention of the grave, and in between we have the body of the virgin drowned in the grave of the water. She sees the grave that will end the story and relates the prophetic vision to the reader in an impossible figural construction. The figure of the feminine visionary is already condemned to an effacing death scene, to drowning with no trace of a body.¹²² The promise of her

¹²⁰ The entertaining performances of the family are included in the translation but the reference to the pantomime as the language natural to everyone is removed. However, it is somewhat performed in a dialogic insertion and we hear Virginie talking to herself in a quoted form of free indirect discourse.

¹²¹ Al-Manfālūṭī was an avid supporter of women’s rights and called for reforming the position of women in the new, post-revolution Egypt and according women privileges similar to those of men.

¹²² The author as we recall from *al-Nazarāt* is also capable of shedding his body and objectifying his “self.” In *al-Faḍīlah*, when the characters are all watching the sunset, we read about the effects of the (almost sublime) scene on their consciousness: “so we stop in awe of the terrible sight, stunned ... as though we had been transported into another world of the worlds of abstract souls filled with wonders and strange sights. Then we would return to ourselves and bid each other farewell!” (78).

virginity guaranteeing the story is condemned from the beginning. In other words, she is no Scheherazade. She does not guard her virginity so as to survive; rather, she has no control over the storytelling situation but receives visions (as does our prophetic author) of what will come to pass. Her virginity is the condition of the story, but importantly not of *her* story.

What emerges here is the reality of the storytelling at the expense of the reality of Virginie's story. The story coming from a distant source needs to be told, despite what happens to its heroes. This preoccupation with the reality of the storytelling comes up again in the context of Madame de La Tour's identification with Ruth of the play is rewritten in the translation to emphasize that (the good brand of) *khayāl* is none other than reality:

As soon as she reaches with her imagination the happy ending that concludes that novel, she calms down a little ... In conclusion, we used to enjoy on that day all that happy people in their clubs and societies [enjoyed] ... with no difference between us and them except that *we do not decorate the stages that we move on with false, mendacious pictures of the ocean and the shore and the sand ... for all that was present to us in our hands was a reality not a fantasy [haqīqatan la khayālan].* (77; emphasis mine)

Al-Manfālūṭī continues with the reality of the storytelling in the dichotomy he establishes here between good *khayāl* and bad *khayāl*. The artistic performances of the city (and by extension of Europe) rely on the bad form of *khayāl*, the kind that needs decorating images to create an effect. The kind of *khayāl* involved in the performances of the characters on the island is good inasmuch as it blends in with the background. In other words, the frame that separates the stage from the performance, and the tale from the background, dissolves. This is al-Manfālūṭī's own fantasy, and one not very far from Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's, that the world of the story would fold completely onto itself and offer the reader not a version of reality, but reality itself. In the process, the frame will become the tale.

Thus while the realists dismissed al-Manfālūṭi's work as escapist, it would seem on reading his translation of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's novel that al-Manfālūṭi was deriving his own definition of realism. Al-Manfālūṭi's infatuation with romanticism is really an infatuation with the reality of storytelling as an alternative access to reality. I mentioned earlier that the last chapter of the translation hearkens back to the structure of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, inversely though. While Scheherazade had to tell her stories to stay alive, the old man tells his story so he can die (180-181). The original novel ends with the following lines: «...comme un voyageur qui erre sur la terre où je suis resté seul. En disant ces mots, ce bon vieillard s'éloigna en versant des larmes, et les miennes avoient coulé plus d'une fois pendant ce funeste récit » (377). There are no markers that differentiate between the speech of the old man and that of the narrator. The old man, who spends most of his story talking about the need to leave the city behind, ends his account by comparing himself to a homeless traveler.

Throughout the novel, and in his attempt to write the modern epic, Bernadin de Saint-Pierre uses the figure of the epic wanderer to create the fantasy of beginning anew. In this sense, the old man's experience resembles Robinson Crusoe's early settling on the island. The difference, however, is significant. Crusoe finds himself alone on a desolate island and writes his life narrative explaining how he was able to domesticate the unfamiliar space into his very own kingdom. The old man, on the other hand, encounters an odd-looking family of two women with two children who are raised as siblings and then fall in love, but a family that has established its own society in a European colony. The old man, in other words, exists as a witness to the story of other wanderers, who in this case are social rejects who have come to the

island to live outside the law of the city. When he is done bearing witness to their story, the old man (of the original novel) walks away from the young narrator in tears.

In the translation, al-Manfālūṭi adds a final chapter in which the narrator is unable to overcome the sadness of the old storyteller. He describes the old man as an empty skeleton through whose bones the wind is blowing, and the narrator can hear the echoes of the wind beating against the fragile bones. On hearing the echoes, the narrator decides to go to the old man's house, and he descends the stairs leading to the house as though he were descending into a tomb to find the old man dead in his bed. The narrator of course loses himself in his own tears, and we read these poetic lines: “*wa lā ‘ayn illā wa hiya ‘ayn min al-bakā; wa lā khadd illā li al-dumū ‘i bihi khadd*” (181). The Arabic line plays on the different meanings of the words: *‘ayn* (eye) and *khadd* (cheek). The translation sounds something like this: “And there is no eye but an eye injured from crying; and there is no cheek but one wounded by tears.” In the Arabic, the adjectives “injured” and “wounded” are not necessary because the writer puns on the two words eye and cheek in Arabic. There could, however, be only one way to read this line.

Al-Manfālūṭi ends his translation with an exaggerated poetics of tears, one that makes him less appealing to the realists of his time. In *al-Nazarāt*, he explains that tears enable a sense of human fellowship, of feeling with others, and we encounter the tears here in the scene of the young narrator weeping over the lonely death of the storyteller. At the risk of reading too much into this ending, I think that it is related to al-Manfālūṭi's portrayal of storytelling throughout his translation. The death of the storyteller luckily does not mean the impossibility of the story. The story still gets transmitted thanks to the visionary qualities of the new prophet. The storyteller is dead; long live the new prophet. Or something like that. The appeal of the death of the

storyteller, and we find a more exaggerated form of death in al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation of Chateaubriand's *René* and *Atala*, is in the room it makes for the new prophet who can be a witness to this death. In the final part of the chapter, I will explore this figure of the author as witness in *Al-Shuhadā`*.

The Secret Told: Bearing Witness to Chateaubriand

The new prophet as witness takes on radical dimensions in al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation of *René* and *Atala* entitled *Al-Shuhadā`* which translates as the martyrs. As I mentioned earlier, the root verb "*shahada*" also carries the connotation of witnessing, and the term martyr itself in Arabic also conveys a relation to the idea of "serving as witness to the faith." In this sense, I am considering the title *Al-Shuhadā`* to refer to the problematic of witnessing, and, as I will continue to develop, this will also be a prophetic form of witnessing that transforms the religious connotations of the term to a secularized conception of the function of fiction. Thus from the very beginning, the translation is preoccupied with the problem of witnessing. Al-Manfalūṭī completed this adaptation in 1915, and critics disagreed for a while about whether to consider it a translation or not. Recent criticism identified the piece as a rewriting of *Atala*, but I will argue that it is a rewriting of *Atala* à la *René*. Earlier, I described this performance of translation as incestuous in that it treats the problem of incest (symbolic or real) in both stories on the level of form. The translation itself combines the two stories together, conflating their problems of incest as well as their tragic secrets, to produce a tale in which the new author figures as the only possible witness to the story. This formal incest will become clearer soon. For now it is important to mention that the publication histories of both novellas are also largely determined by the theme of incest.

François René de Chateaubriand intended the two stories of *René* and *Atala* to serve as demonstrations of Christian thought in *Le Génie du christianisme* published in 1802.¹²³ Originally they were composed as parts of his longer work on American Indians, *Les Natchez*. *Atala* had already been published separately in 1801 and went through five editions in that year. *René* was published a year after in *Le Génie* and then the two books were published together in 1805. The two novellas are intertwined in both their publishing histories and recurring characters. In *Atala*, Chactas tells his story to René, and in *René*, René tells his story to Chactas and le Père Souël. However, the two stories share more than a few resemblances. We find it difficult to read the one without the other, and indeed, it is *René* that makes it impossible to read *Atala* on its own terms. In his article “How Not to Speak on Incest: *Atala* and the Secrets of Speech” published in 2002, Luke Bouvier describes the “‘incestuous’ influence of *René* on the critical reception of *Atala*” in that Amélie’s “*criminelle passion*” (190) for her brother René and her saint-like death in a monastery resemble the chaste death of *Atala* to escape her passion for Chactas. Bouvier suggests that the incestuous relationship in the first novella creates “an analogous structure of incest in the case of *Atala* and Chactas,” even though the two characters are not really siblings.

¹²³ In his defence of the book in *Le Génie*, Chateaubriand writes,

Quand on trouve dans un auteur une circonstance qui ne fait pas beauté en elle-même, et qui ne sert pas qu’à donner de la ressemblance au tableau; sic et auteur a d’ailleurs montrer quelque sens commun, il serait assez naturel de supposer qu’il ne fait que rapporter une chose réelle, bien qu’elle ne soit pas très connue. Rien n’empêche qu’on ne trouve *Atala* une méchante production ; mais j’ose dire que la nature américaine y est peinte avec la scrupuleuse exactitude. C’est une justice que lui rendent tous les voyageurs qui ont visité la Louisiane et les Florides. Les deux traductions anglaises d’*Atala* sont parvenues en Amérique ; les papiers publics ont annoncé, en outre, une troisième traduction publiée à Philadelphia avec succès ; si les tableaux de cette histoire eussent manqué de vérité, auraient-ils réussi chez un peuple qui pouvait dire à chaque pas : ‘Ce ne sont pas la nos fleuves, nos montagnes, nos forêts ?’ *Atala* est retournée au désert, et il semble que sa patrie l’ait reconnue pour véritable enfant de la solitude. (qtd. in «Préface de 1805, *Atala – René*» 56)

Chateaubriand’s defence of the novel is curiously a defence of its verisimilitude. He attests to the realism of the accounts of both *René* and *Atala* through the popularity of the English translations in America. The reality of the two stories is reduced to the verisimilitude of the background, the description of the American desert.

In the rest of the chapter, I will read al-Manfalūṭī's aphoristic rendition of *René* and *Atala* in relation to the incestuous influence that the first novella has on the second. I am not interested in the history of incest and the beginning of culture, however, as much as I am in the performance of translation itself being incestuous in the aphoristic translation (and combination) of the two stories in *Al-Shuhadā`*. This performance of incest on the level of form, I will argue, allows al-Manfalūṭī to present his new prophetic author as the only remaining witness to the story who will also become the bearer of the secrets of incest in both texts.

Almost Incest: Atala and Chactas

Al-Manfalūṭī's *Al-Shuhadā`* certainly resembles *Atala* more so than *René*. However, the specter of incest in *René* that haunts the reading of *Atala* persists, albeit differently, in *Al-Shuhadā`*. In a sense, that is why I am describing the translation itself as incestuous. When Luke Bouvier claims that the history of the reception of *Atala* is dictated by the incestuous relationship between René and Amélie, in *Al-Shuhadā`* we encounter a literal performance of the influence of *René* on *Atala*. The translation (incestuously) combines the two novellas replacing the main character of Chactas in *Atala* with an anonymous (white) hero who resembles René. I will return to the details of the translation in the final section of the chapter. For now I am interested in the "almost incestuous" relationship between Chactas and *Atala*, a relationship that alarms the reader only in its resemblance to the incestuous relationship between René and Amélie. The strange thing is, however, that Chactas and *Atala* are in no way blood-related. We remember a similar tale of symbolic incest in *Paul et Virginie* that also determined the shape of the story, in that the virginity of the Virginie is to be maintained even if it demands her death.

Chactas and Atala run away together to escape the Muscogulges, the Native American tribe which had captured Chactas. However, it is only when they meet Le Père Aubry on their final stop that the story comes into shape and particularly at the point when the reader learns that Atala has a secret. The specter of *René* tells us that the secret might be a story of incest, like that of Amélie. However, after Atala takes the poison and is on her deathbed, we learn that the issue of incest (at least as far as Atala is concerned) is only tangential. On her deathbed, Atala confesses that her real father is the Spaniard Lopez, who incidentally is Chactas's father-figure. Lopez was the one who took Chactas in and took care of him (without converting him into Christianity) towards the beginning of the novel. When Chactas leaves the Spaniard Lopez in search of his real, "Indian" roots, he falls prey to the Muscogulges. Thus, the novella comes into being because of Chactas's betrayal of the desire of the symbolic father. He disobeys and is taken to his death. Although he escapes the tribe, his punishment for disobeying will turn out to be much more severe: he will watch the woman he loves die because of him.

When Atala tells them that she is the daughter of Lopez, Chactas cries out, "O ma sœur! ô fille de Lopez!" (142). Luke Bouvier describes their love affair as "symbolic incest," specifically at the moment when le Père Aubry intervenes to calm them down and "impose the prohibition on incest" (229). Bouvier quotes Aubry's speech:

Je ne vous parlerai point des mariages des premiers-nés des hommes, de ces unions ineffables, alors que la sœur était l'épouse du frère, que l'amour et l'amitié fraternelle se confondaient dans le même cœur, et que la pureté de l'une augmentait les délices de l'autre. Toutes ces unions ont été troublées. (144)

The «*unions ineffables*» are ineffable precisely in civilization. For civilization to be possible at all there must be a prohibition on incest. Thus when it comes into being,

civilization cannot speak that which makes its origin possible. This is where the paradox lies, and in the particular case of *Atala*, it is made all the more interesting when this prohibition on incest is imposed on two non-siblings. For le Père Aubry to start his own miniature Christian civilization, he has to impose the prohibition on all those *outside* the borders of his Christian community. In a sense, the love affair of Chactas and Atala has to be translated into the borders of this new community to be legible to him at all. So he imposes a prohibition where none is needed.

Bouvier reads the paradoxical moment of incest that emerges here in light of Derrida's thinking on the supplement. As that which can never be spoken, incest comes to mark an invisible limit of sorts that marks the shift into civilization. In this sense, it is not a passage, but an imaginary limit, that which cannot be spoken (and can never happen for civilization to be possible) but at the same time that which distinguishes civilization from its other. I am interested, however, in how Bouvier translates this idea into what he calls a "linguistic incest" in *Atala*.

Bouvier concludes that incest then denotes some form of an "'originary taint' of sameness that subverts the very possibility of any original purity or chasteness" (229). The case of *Atala* is striking here as her life at the moment of birth is made possible in and guaranteed continuity through the vow her mother takes. On her deathbed, her mother fears that because she had a child out of wedlock with the Spaniard Lopez she would be condemned to hell. So, upon the birth of her child, she imposes a vow of chastity on her daughter that would make up for the mother's sin. The vow of chastity that the mother imposes on her daughter will also be the cause of *Atala*'s death. Bouvier asks, "How else to conceive of a primordial vow of chastity that paradoxically comes to poison her existence, both literally and figuratively?" (230) In light of this paradox, Bouvier reads *Atala*'s name as a "strange linguistic

taint” which brings together the two words “*fatal*” and “*natal*” (235-236; emphasis original). Atala is born under the fatal vow of the mother, a vow that condemns Atala either to virginity or death. It is not just Atala’s body that is poisoned to death, but also her speech, which is tainted from the beginning by the voice of the mother speaking the unspeakable vow. Atala is the fruit of her mother’s love-affair with the white, Christian Spaniard Lopez. While giving birth, the mother speaks a vow through the lips of her unborn child. Atala will compensate for her mother’s sin by not losing her virginity, and by transmitting the mother’s secret in her own untouched body. Thus, her mother’s compensation for her own conversion into Christianity condemns Atala to eternal virginity. If Atala breaks the vow, the mother’s sin would never be atoned for. In this transgenerational transmission of a secret, from the mother to the daughter, Atala will become the necessary sacrifice. Atala is the recipient of a secret that is importantly not her own but that condemns her to death. She inherits a language that she was never present to, as the vow was spoken on the mother’s deathbed and on Atala’s birth day. Although the secret is not given directly to Atala, she still has to bear witness to it through the promise of her virginity. In *René*, we also encounter a secret of incest that condemns René’s sister Amélie to a silent death.

In a similar way, one can think of translation as an inheritance of a language that is not one’s own. Al-Manfalūṭī inherits the tales of René and Atala and uses his form of idiomatic translation to bear witness to their secrets. In *Atala*, there is a temporal lapse between the speaking of the secret and its communication, and in *René*, we discover the secret of Amélie in a posthumous letter that she sends René. Atala is not there for the original speaking of the vow and learns about it afterwards. René learns the secret of Amélie after her death. There is also a temporal gap to the translation, as it is completed more than a century after the publication of the original.

Al-Manfalūfī's translation bears witness to the novels of Chateaubriand in the shadow of the Egyptian revolution; however, the translation still transmits the secrets of the original texts. In his own form of inheritance, his story *Al-Shuhadā`*, al-Manfalūfī collapses the secret given to Atala and the secret of Amélie that cannot be spoken.

However, even in fusing the stories together and bearing witness to both their secrets, the translation still needs the figure of the virgin as the ultimate condition of the story. In other words, like Virginie and Amélie, Atala becomes the scapegoat, the sacrifice that ensures not merely the salvation of someone else but the possibility of telling their stories as well. After all, the story of Atala exists because of the vow that she does not take herself. Interestingly, and against the familiar pattern of *One Thousand and One Nights* in Arabic, the sacrifice of the woman in all three works that al-Manfalūfī translates present the figure of an inverted Scheherazade, a silent secret-holder, whose speech condemns her to death.

What interests me in Bouvier's reading of Atala is what he calls a "linguistic incest" that relies on the similarities between words that almost sound the same to produce oblique signification. Bouvier maintains that such oblique signification must be prohibited so that normal signification between words is not disrupted. In this sense, the myth of an originary purity of words is dismantled because words could come to mean otherwise especially when they could sound the same. Bouvier writes, "oblique signification speaks of the impossibility of an illusory purity or originary 'chasteness' of words, disclosing the 'incestuous' secrets that words may always potentially harbor in their very materiality as signifiers" (239). Chactas's inability to detect this oblique signification in the words of Atala blinds him (both figuratively as well as literally in his old age) to her real secret. Bouvier tells us that Chactas is unable

to grasp the ‘incest of words’ staged by Chateaubriand’s writing, to discern the secrets of Atala, whom he calls ‘un être incompréhensible’ (116). It is a kind of writing, ultimately, that speaks obliquely of the deceptive appearance of ‘linguistic purity’ itself, of the treacherous dangers nurtured by even the ‘calmest’ and ‘purest’ of words, by the name that signifies the very epitome of purity and chasteness, ‘Atala.’ (240)

The “incest of words” stages the tragedy of Atala who remains buried in a secret that can only be spoken too late. The threat of the resemblances of words runs parallel to the threat of incest. What is remarkable is that le Père Aubry translates Atala’s unspeakable into the prohibition on incest where no real incest takes place. Aubry wants to convert Chactas into Christianity, thus expanding the Christian civilization he is building on the mountains. The daughter of a Spaniard, Atala is automatically a sister in this Christian community. Chactas isn’t until he converts. Thus, interestingly, the incest would logically begin when Chactas becomes a Christian brother too, but Père Aubry sanctions this form of “incest” (as symbolic as the other one) within the borders of a Christian community.

What emerges here is none other than a contract that Bouvier is right to read as one between words and signification. We recall that on Crusoe’s island, all the inhabitants had to be sworn in, under the law of the king (on the English Bible), and that such an oath on the Holy Book taken by a “savage” can only be a contract in translation. Paradoxically, translation is necessary on Crusoe’s island to guard against oblique signification: this is a form of translation that flows in one direction from the king to his subject to ensure that the words of the king would never get tangled up in oblique signification. In the case of Atala, Chactas fails to read this contract as provided by Chateaubriand the author. Chactas fails to detect the possible incest of words and Chateaubriand’s story comes to bear witness to this failure.

And so will *Al-Shuhadā`*. In the 1910 introduction to his first Volume of *al-Nazarāt*, I argued that al-Manfalūṭī devises a secularized approach to language based

on a sacred model. He maintains that the prophetic author has access to an immediate relationship between the sign and the thing, so that in his vision of the world, he can penetrate into the essence of the thing itself. Al-Manfalūṭī presents this vision of essence not in a totalitarian gesture of subduing all other interpretations, but in a warning against the state of a colonial society under the confusion of names. He believed that a theory of language as a theory of essence would guard against infinite interpretation, misleading signification that could confuse the colonized in his or her engagement of his or her own language. The short story with the title that translates as Martyrs and carries the connotations of witnessing will bear witness to the possible deception of words that emerges in Chateaubriand's writing under the law of translation. Just as Crusoe's subjects take an oath in translation, and thus an oath tainted from the onset by an irreducible incommensurability, *Al-Shuhadā`* stages the incest of words within a contract of translation. However, this contract is in this case necessarily breached. This is where the plot thickens. Al-Manfalūṭī's rendition of *Atala à la René* in Arabic *incestuously integrates* the two novellas under the law of translation and not signification. When Chateaubriand's writing is preoccupied with the incest of words and the always possible errance of signification, al-Manfalūṭī's story takes up the incest of storytelling and the necessary obliqueness of translation. Because in al-Manfalūṭī's performance of idiomatic translation, the translated text is always different from the original, *al-Shuhadā`* can bear witness to Chateaubriand's fear of the confusion of signification. *Al-Shuhadā`* understands that translation like signification does not guarantee fidelity to the original or to meaning. However, in bearing witness to this fear, *al-Shuhadā`* will also rewrite it.

Talking to Stone: René's Story

Published in 1802 in *Le Génie* under the title of “Vague des Passions,” the tale of the conflicted René left a remarkable trace on the story of al-Manfalūṭī. The influence of *René* on *Al-Shuhadā`* is remarkable in many ways, perhaps the most striking of them being how the original text transmits its own unspoken secret, its story of incest, to the Arabic adaptation. *Al-Shuhadā`* takes up *Atala* on the level of plot, but it abstracts a René-like character in the place of Chactas and reproduces the mal de siècle in the philosophical musings of its hero. I will get to the details of the translation in the final section, but for now I would like to focus on the unspoken secret of René the character which translates on the level of narrative into an unspoken yet transmissible content of storytelling. I would like to show how this transmissible content (still rendered in the form of a secret) survives in the Arabic adaptation.¹²⁴

The story of René is set in 1725 and is framed as a confession. René suffers from a «*vague des passions*» and is confessing “*les sentiments secrets de son âme*” to Père Souël and Chactas in the form of a narrative. The hero incarnates a crisis of an idealist subject across a history that is itself in crisis.¹²⁵ The “*vague de passions*” is

¹²⁴ I am grateful to my professor Elissa Marder who pointed out to me in a class on 19th-century French fiction that the secret of *René* is that of being an impossible witness to the Terror. Elissa Marder believes that the text of *René* is marked by an originary traumatism, in the sense that it carries the affect of the Terror even though it is set in a time before the event. Her reading has inspired my own in this section on the unspoken yet detectable content of the secret of *René*, both as an impossible witness to the Terror (as it is set before the Revolution) and as a tale of incest.

¹²⁵ In *La Poétique du vague dans les œuvres de Chateaubriand : vers une esthétique comparée* published in 2007, Ádám Anikó locates in the aesthetics of Chateaubriand's novels a «*crise du roman*» where we find «l'abandon du romanesque, la réduction de l'élément dramatique du récit au profit de l'analyse du sentiment» (156-57). Anikó maintains that Chateaubriand assumes history as “son propre temps personnel” (10) and articulates the mal de siècle as such:

C'est ce fait justement qui place l'auteur de l'*Atala* dans une position à partir de laquelle les horizons de l'avenir se déplacent vers la passe, d'une part pour comprendre son présent qui est une intention conforme à celle des Lumières et d'autre part pour survivre à ce moment présent qui annonce déjà le mal du siècle, le vague des passions. Comme si notre poète marchait sur son chemin le dot tourne en avant. Il avance mais tourne les yeux en arrière.

nothing other than the desire to roam in the void where the yearning self would not encounter any object. The reader detects (as in a case history) the affect that is not communicated verbally in this text and never reaches articulation. René describes his condition as follows:

On m'accuse d'avoir des goûts inconstants, de ne pouvoir jouir longtemps *de la même chimère*, d'être la proie d'une imagination qui se hâte d'arriver au fond de mes plaisirs, comme si elle était accablée de leur durée; on m'accuse de passer toujours le but que je puis atteindre: hélas! je cherche seulement un bien inconnu, dont l'instinct me poursuit. Est-ce ma faute, si je trouve partout des bornes, si ce qui est fini n'a pour moi aucune valeur? La solitude absolue, le spectacle de la nature, me plongèrent bientôt dans *un état presque impossible à décrire*. Sans parents, sans amis, pour ainsi dire seul sur la terre, n'ayant point encore aimé, j'étais accablé d'une surabondance de vie. ... Il me manquait quelque chose pour remplir l'abîme de mon existence: je descendais dans la vallée, je m'élevais sur la montagne, appelant de toute la force de mes *désirs l'idéal objet d'une flamme future; je l'embrassais dans les vents; je croyais l'entendre dans les gémissements du fleuve; tout était ce fantôme imaginaire, et les astres dans les cieux, et le principe même de vie dans l'univers*. (316)

René's description of his own malaise takes up the language of impossibility as its condition of articulation. The mal of René is "*impossible à décrire*." The vague that envelops our hero is articulated from the very onset in the language of the unintelligible murmur. The repetition of the murmur throughout the text suggests from the beginning of René's récit a certain in-transmissible quality that does not find expression in the harmonies of the natural scene. The two witnesses to René's story

Chateaubriand vit alors l'Histoire comme une source de ses souffrances de dimension universelle et personnelle à la fois. (11)

The crisis of history thus becomes the crisis of the subject stuck between the Enlightenment and the present of Romanticism, and the crisis of the subject becomes the crisis of the novel as well. Anikó suggests that Chateaubriand deals with the crisis by making History his own personal account or experience, as he walks into the future with his head facing the past. Thus if Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* inaugurated sentimental escapism, Chateaubriand's work published a few years after makes sentimentalism a concern with the individual's sentiments and own personal history in the fight against a subsuming History in the wake and aftermath of the Revolution. We notice that the two translations engage sentimentalism in the way that its author resorts to it. With *Paul et Virginie*, al-Manfalūṭī reads into the escapism a more faithful engagement of the political condition of Paris because it allows the author enough distance from the event to see it in its entirety. With *René* and *Atala*, al-Manfalūṭī had to represent subjective encounters with history to an Arab audience that has never been exposed to this form of subjective consciousness, wherein the character examines his or her thought-process and represents his or her sentiments so vividly. In a way his translations remain stuck in this *mal de siècle* that is not properly his and not an effect of his own history. The crisis, nevertheless, makes it into his adaptations differently as I will continue to show.

harmoniously blend into the aestheticized background that opens the story —“Les Apalaches qui se dessinaient comme des caractères d’azur” (314) — but René himself is set at a distance from this background. Interestingly, *Al-Shuhadā`* which translates as the Martyrs also carries the connotation of witnessing as I have already explained. As such, the title plays on the status of Père Souël and Chactas as both listeners to and victims of the story. The *gémissements* that haunt René’s narrative signal an unspoken something that nonetheless leaks out of his story. Towards the end, even the narrative situation seems to contract the illness of the ineffable in René’s story, at which point as we will see the background is no longer picturesque.

The ultimate secret is the incestuous affections of Amélie for her brother. Amélie becomes the sacrificial figure, the one that has to die so that René’s story can be a story at all. Amélie joins the monastery and then catches a “*maladie contagieuse*” and passes away. However, she contains her secret in her body, and it secretes from the grave in the letter that she sends her brother and that he reads only after the event of her death. The speech of Père Souël at the end cannot even contain the narrative of Amélie, even though he inserts her story into an economy of good Christian ethics when he declares that for Amélie to die to the world, “il fallait qu’elle passa a travers le tombeau” (337). In *Le Génie*, Chateaubriand writes, “Au reste, les discours du père Souël ne laisse aucun doute sur le but et les moralistes religieuses de l’histoire de René » (qtd. in the 1802 « Préface » 61). But even though Amélie claims in her letter that «L’excès même du sacrifice ... sert à me rendre quelque paix» (332), the Christian narrative cannot contain her secret and the reader knows better than to believe that the death of Amélie signals the death of her secret.

Fifty years after the narrative of René, the narrator returns to the site of the storytelling and points to the silent rock that marks where René once sat telling his

story, and replaces the narratorial “je” of his account with the impersonal, narratorial “on dit que.” The narrator says,

On dit que, pressé par les deux vieillards, il retourna chez son épouse, mais sans y trouver le bonheur. Il périt peu de temps après avec Chactas et le P. Souël, dans le massacre des Français et des Natchez à la Louisiane. On montre encore *un rocher* où il allait s’asseoir au soleil couchant. (344; emphasis mine)

The rock, which will return differently in the adaptation of al-Manfalūṭī, is a figure of silence that is supposed to bear witness to the story that was told here once upon a time. We never learn who this strange narrator is and how he or she came to hear the story of René, particularly because the narrator tells us that René and his listeners were massacred soon after. The rock stands there as a reminder that a story was told that fell on now-dead ears. And yet we hear about it. While in *Atala*, Chactas survives to tell us about what happened, in *René* the “on” narrates the tale to us after all its witnesses have perished.¹²⁶

The narration becomes like a “maladie contagieuse” because we only get to read Amélie’s words in the letter after her death. Thus, on the level of structure, the secret does not remain buried with her but seeps out of the grave and contaminates the narrative situation. Al-Manfalūṭī will convert this image of the grave into two very powerful figures: one of being literally buried alive and another of burying one’s self in a self-dug grave. The figure of the silent rock at the end as an un-inscribed monument persists in the speech of the main character at the end of the translation. In the final section of the chapter I will explore how these images persist in the translation and rework the themes of the original texts.

¹²⁶ Elissa Marder believes that the narration in itself becomes a “maladie contagieuse” because the impossibility of the secret takes nothing away from its transmission.

Incestuous Translation: René, Atala and the Prophetic Author

Earlier I described al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation of *René* and *Atala* as aphoristic. The adaptation is actually about 24 pages; thus, it is aphoristic not so much in form as it is in content. As I already mentioned, Luke Bouvier writes that *René* has an incestuous effect on the reading of *Atala*. It seems that al-Manfalūṭī, after hearing both stories read to him, was attuned to this narrative incest of sorts because his adaptation of the two stories is a fusion of the tales of René and Atala, who are presented, conveniently, as first cousins in *Al-Shuhadā`*. This short piece is extremely complex and performs al-Manfalūṭī's theoretical musings on translation in a much more nuanced way than the translation of *Paul et Virginie*. Towards the end of the analysis of *al-Faḍīlah*, I concluded that the text rewrites the subtle relationship in the original novel between storytelling and death. The death of the old man (the storyteller in *Paul et Virginie*) makes room for the emergence of the prophetic author, the author as witness to the story. The situation of paradoxical witnessing in *Al-Shuhadā`* will be resolved in the figure of the prophetic author, who will come to bear witness not just to the content of the secret but also to its transmission.

As we will see, it is not just that the two characters are martyrs to love in the adaptation, but that the adaptation creates a very complex dynamic of witnessing, wherein the author, the characters and the readers become (necessary) witnesses to the original tale. In *René*, we leave the text with the figure of the silent rock and a neutral "on" pointing to and marking the original site of narration/storytelling. We are left to wonder how the tale made it to us at all, when all the characters (telling it and bearing witness to it) are dead. In *Al-Shuhadā`*, the passing on of the tale is a preoccupation that announces itself before the beginning of the text, in the title. The death of the storyteller here, as in *Paul et Virginie*, appeals to al-Manfalūṭī, and he uses his short

adaptation of the two stories to develop his own account of the writer as witness to this death.

Before addressing the actual content of the adaptation, I want to return briefly to the form of the aphorism. In the first chapter, I argued that the poetic insertions in al-Bustānī's translation of *Robinson Crusoe* function as paratexts, moralistic insertions that are in the text but point outside of it. These paratextual insertions revise the text of the original, in a way, bringing the storyteller back into the tale of Crusoe's capitalist experience on the island. They reclaim the voice of the storyteller who will find a moral in every story to give to the reader. In al-Manfalūṭī's *Al-Shuhadā`*, we do not have these poetic lines that clearly deviate (at least formally) from the text of the original narrative. We do, however, have several moralistic insertions (spoken by the main character who is modeled on René but remains unnamed in the text) that condense the tale of the wanderer into anchoring tidbits that make the text of *Al-Shuhadā`* aphoristic. The removal of the name of René and the insertion of the name of his uncle Raphaël usurps the authority of the tale of René making it that of the anonymous hero, who will never be named and thus can easily be forgotten. And the end of the story leaves us with the voice of a third-person narrator, the prophetic author, who can bear witness to what happens after the death of all characters in the story.

In *René*, Amélie dies of a “maladie contagieuse:” the Mother Superior of Amélie's convent “contenait le récit des derniers moments de la sœur Amélie de la Miséricorde, morte victime de son zèle et de sa charité en soignant ses compagnes atteintes d'une maladie contagieuse» (324). Because Amélie buries her secret in her body, it seems that its non-utterance produces this illness and causes her death. The contagion in this case is because the secret seeps out anyway (in the letter she sends to

René and in the space of the novel), and just because incest is ineffable does not take away from the secret's transmission. After all, we the readers will know what went down at the end of the story. The "maladie contagieuse" seems to refer to this inevitable contagion of narrative: narration is contagious and Amélie's revelation will infect her brother, and us, wherever we are, reading their story.

Al-Manfalūṭī transforms the contagion of narrative, developed in the context of the incestuous relationship between the siblings, into the contagion of translation, the precondition for the telling of this and any other narrative, after the death of the storyteller. Earlier I said that we can think of inheritance as an inheritance that is not temporally present to its inheritor, but that this particular translation as a form of inheritance still transmits the secrets of the original texts. The contagion of narrative, the prerogative to tell the story and narrate the secret, becomes the contagion of translation in this case. In translation, like in the necessary transmission of the secret, the origin is always already at a remove. If signification can miss its object, then translation can miss it twice: the original's signification undergoes another distancing from its target in the translation into another language, when it also enters another system of signification. What Bouvier reads as the originary taint of linguistic incest becomes in al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation not the result of the errance of signification in general, but a condition of translation. In a way, translation and signification become almost synonymous, as they both do not guarantee reaching their target source. However, in *al-Nazarāt*, al-Manfalūṭī warns us about the threat to stable reference. In this situation, however, translation would set the limit to the errance of signification through the figure of the prophetic author who has access to the thing in itself and is not deluded by multiple references and multiple interpretations. Thus the necessary errance of translation becomes the condition of a limit to the errance of signification.

Al-Manfalūṭī treats translation hermeneutically, meaning that translation is interpretation and since the prophetic author can tell a story the only way it can be told, the necessary conclusion is that the original *needs* the translation. And not any translation; rather, it requires the translation of the new prophet who can deliver it the way it should have always been delivered.

Thus I propose that al-Manfalūṭī's "translation" of the stories of Chateaubriand is in itself incestuous. If, as Luke Bouvier maintains, *René* has an incestuous influence on the reception of *Atala*, then in *Al-Shuhadā`*, al-Manfalūṭī carries this incestuous influence a little too far and makes the adaptation of the two stories an incestuous combination of both and revealing that the original is already tainted by the translation. The original needs the translation to achieve its own prerogative, namely to guard against the errance of signification, the linguistic incest that determines the fate of *Atala* from natal to fatal. This incestuous performance of translation makes translation the condition that limits the errance of signification: as the only correct way to render the story, translation becomes the limit to infinite interpretations and the slippery reference.

If incest is what cannot be spoken of because the creation of culture demands its silence, how can we read a form of translation that takes up incest in its very structure and becomes a performance of incest? One way we can read the silence is in the removal of the original author's name. Al-Manfalūṭī's readers suspected that *Al-Shuhadā`* was a translation, yet it did not seem necessary to say of what. The main character, modeled on René, resembles Chactas and falls in love with someone who resembles *Atala*. Yet the main character is French and goes to America to find his French maternal uncle who had disappeared there a long time ago. The contagion of languages in translation assumes a relationship of incest here wherein the adaptation

plays with resemblances to such an extent that it no longer has to claim any relation to the original texts at all. However, the figure of the prophetic author that emerges in this dynamic has revolutionary consequences for the history of the novel in Arabic. If al-Manfalūṭī inherits the novel from Chateaubriand in translation, he succeeds in re-inscribing the crisis of the European idealist subject within an Arabic tradition of writing. Significantly, in about a decade's time, Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal will return to that same re-inscription in an attempt to write the novel of Egyptian consciousness. Al-Manfalūṭī's brand of romanticism succeeds in inserting subjective consciousness into Arabic fiction and will thus be avidly picked up by later revolutionaries, like Haykal who is credited with writing the first Arabic novel. The revolutionary potential of the figure of the prophetic author as witness, as we will see in chapter four, will be fully reclaimed by Haykal.

Al-Shuhadā` opens with a realistic description of a poor French widow who takes up several menial jobs to support her son, a description very à la Maupassant. The widow of *Al-Shuhadā`* remains unnamed in the story, and the only character who is named (almost at the very end of the story) is her brother who left France for America 20 years ago before the story begins. Importantly, the brother's name is Raphael.¹²⁷ Again, as in *René*, we have a sister looking for her missing brother and pining for him in his absence. The missing brother in *Al-Shuhadā`* is modelled on the Spaniard Lopez in *Atala*. The widow hasn't heard any news of her brother in 10 years, and we read that she longs for him like a cow longs for her offspring (30). Twenty years after the brother's disappearance, the widow is still crying in the dark every day

¹²⁷ The Egyptian author Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Zayyāt who translated Guy de Maupassant's stories in the 1930's also translated Lamartine's *Raphaël* in 1925. The popular translations of Maupassant in the 1930's in Cairo are contemporaneous with the equally popular translations of al-Manfalūṭī. As I discussed in the introduction, this contemporaneous popularity points to the conflation of romanticism and realism in Arabic fiction of the early twentieth century.

wondering about the fate of her brother, until her son discovers her crying one day. Aspiring to be a painter, the son decides to go to Washington to participate in a painting contest and then find his uncle. In Washington, he wins the award for best painting, a rendering of the farewell scene between him and his mother. Soon after, he decides to go look for his uncle. At this point, the story is interrupted by the first aphoristic insertion, related to us by the narrator. The aphorism sounds something like this: Oh, how time lures man with false hope back into its vicious cycle, like a prey led to the slaughterhouse.

Right after the aphoristic warning, our hero falls prey to a tribe of Negroes who imprison him for a whole year in a dungeon underground. The figure of the tomb seeps into the translation from the original texts (especially that of *René*) and becomes a powerful trope that enables the work of aphorism. While trapped underground, our hero was:

... wandering aimlessly like a confused soul in the darkness of the graves. As soon as he figured out his place in the darkness, he walked in the raging battlefield [*mu 'tarak*] searching for his self and feeling for it with his hand until he heard the rattling of the chain wrapped around his feet, and he found it while exhausted from the walk and the search, so he fell on himself weeping.
(35)

In the original Arabic, repetition of the “s” sound in the previous quotation reproduces the murmur of the original text. In the original, the line reads as follows “*sami ‘a šalšalat al-silsilah*” and translates into “he heard the rattling of the chain.” The reproduction of the murmur in the body of the translated text seems intent on emphasizing the emptiness of the tomb. The actual, physical tomb or underground dungeon in which they keep him transforms figuratively into the character’s detachment from the self. Although the crisis of the idealist subject who is troubled in the very core of his being is a common figure of French romanticism, it finds no precedence in Arabic literature. Al-Manfalūṭī was not just reproducing the murmur, in

other words. He was inserting into the body of Arabic fiction the experience of splitting from one's self, a splitting that makes it into the narration of a story. The formalization of subjective content into an externalized reality takes on a different aspect in his fiction.¹²⁸ Here the externalization of the self as an object to be encountered in the void lays emphasis on the self, as a separate and individual consciousness dealing with its surroundings.

We recall that in *al-Nazarāt*, al-Manfalūṭī criticized the speech of the mind in the following poetic lines: “And when the belly of the earth grew too tight to hold spirits after their death, they made the atmosphere your grave and they made up for burial clothes [what the dead in the Islamic tradition are wrapped up in before burial] with a dress of soil” (39). Al-Manfalūṭī's concern here is that the lines could not have a logical referential meaning in the world because the atmosphere could never literally be a grave. It seems that al-Manfalūṭī's issue is not so much with troping as it is with false reference. Luke Bouvier's reading concluded that Chactas's punishment was due to his inability to detect the obliqueness of signification. Al-Manfalūṭī uses his translation of romantic tropes to put forth a more severe criticism of oblique signification. For instance, he transforms the figure of the all-consuming grave to two actual burial sites in *Al-Shuhadā`* (the dungeon and the widow's self-dug grave). Even the externalization of the self would be better described as a literalization of the figurative.

Moreover, al-Manfalūṭī uses this literal figure of the grave to present a literal portrayal of the splitting of the self. This splitting takes on extreme manifestations in the writing of al-Manfalūṭī wherein the character literally searches for his “self,” an externalized and almost objectified presence in the darkness of the tomb. We read that

¹²⁸ Uwayḍah brings up this formal externalization of subjective experience in the context of al-Manfalūṭī's political writings.

“there was no connection or link anymore between himself and himself.” He begins to feel like a phantom (perhaps another literalization of the vague that haunts René), while the mother in Paris digs an actual grave for her son in the living room as she wonders where in the belly of the earth he is (38).

The hero of *Al-Shuhadā`* is soon saved by a very beautiful white ghost, described in the translation as a white Negro, or a pagan who worships God. Clearly the white heroine is based on the character of Atala who saves Chactas from the wrath of the Muscogulges. The moment that marks the beginning of the performance of incest in the translation is the exchange of liquids with the white Christian Negro when their tears merge. The girl turns out to be his cousin and we find out that the name of his uncle—the first name that emerges in this book—is Raphaël (46 – 47). He looks at her the way a photographer looks at a statue “until he felt a warm tear drop down from her eyelid unto his face, and it flowed in the tear track carved on his cheek, and so a similar tear descended from his eye, met hers and they mingled together.” He reads the exchange of fluids as a binding commitment (42).

When she falls in love with him, she experiences bodily thrills similar to those of Atala (and Virginie). In the translation, like the original, there is also a case of failed reading: when she reads the thrills to be a sign of sickness when they are actually the result of her desire for her cousin. We hear the first mention of the secret in her prayer as she holds the cross:

Then she started mumbling in incomprehensible words as though she were calling out to someone who was absent, asking for his forgiveness from a fault that she incurred on him once, and asking for his help with a fate she doesn't know. (43)

After she confesses her love for him, she screams out, “What Mother!” (45). Then she tells him her story (like that of Atala) and her mother's vow: “And devote yourself to the Virgin in a vow of chastity undone only by death” (47). In telling the story and

quoting her mother's words, we hear the first mention of a name in *Al-Shuhadā`*, the name of Raphaël her father. We also learn about the illicit love affair between him and her mother in addition to his eventual murder. At this point, she calls the hero "a brother to me" (47), takes the poison and dies. The specter of the mother's words taints Atala's being and remains unspoken. However, in the translation, the specter of the secret of the vow becomes a literal address here to the mother, a scream that is overheard by the hero who now becomes a witness to her secret.

The promise of successful witnessing forms the background of al-Manfalūṭī's romanticism. Just like the specter of the mother is replaced by a literal address, so the figure of the silent rock that ends the story of René and represents the paradoxical narrative situation of a story passed on without witnesses returns differently in *Al-Shuhadā`*. Al-Manfalūṭī bases his adaptation of (primarily French) romanticism on a re-contextualization of famous romantic tropes. For one, the "vague de passions" is transformed into a physical encounter with an objectified self. Moreover, the character morbidly narrates how the interference of tradition dictates the journey of life from the darkness of the womb to that of the monastery to that of the tomb. And we read: "And since when was the dumb animal and silent matter, you cruel dictators, of more importance than the speaking human being and more deserving than he of the grace of love and life?!" (50). The "silent matter" (*al-jamād* in Arabic translates as that which stays still and has no life in it) replaces the figure of the rock in René. The narrator accuses organized religion (and the Law in general) of condemning man to silence and limiting the narration of individual narratives. In the translation, the figure of the rock appears in the speech of the main character in his attack on organized religion. Organized religion, a direct reference to the Azharite education, denaturalizes love and makes it into a prohibition. According to al-Manfalūṭī, we

learn to love God through our encounter with love in all of his creations (49). Thus, the rock as the neutral site that is the only witness to René's story in the original is taken up in the speech of the main character in an attack on how dictated religious dogma silences one's story and takes away his or her right to love.

At this point in the translation, al-Manfalūṭī returns to some of the romantic imagery that he explores in Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's novel. The image of nature as a mirror returns here in the appropriation of Chateaubriand: "This beauty shining in the sky of the universe and on earth, in the speaking and in the mute, the moving and the still is but a clear, pure mirror in which we see the face of the Lord shining and glowing" (51-52). In the section on *al-Faḍīlah*, I argued that the reflecting surfaces in the text come to contain the narrative in such a way that the storytelling situation would be restricted within the borders of the tale and there would be no overflow and no room for many interpretations. In bringing back the figure of the mirror and inserting the figure of the rock as silent matter in the speech of the character (rather than having it stand on its own in the text), al-Manfalūṭī's adaptation attempts to contain the seeping of the secret that contaminates all the witnesses to René's story.

Towards the end of *Al-Shuhadā`*, when the main character realizes that the girl is dead, he apologizes to the priest, kisses her on the mouth, and the narrator tells us that he releases his soul into her body. In the hour of the death of the two witnesses or martyrs, the old woman dies as well, back in Paris, and one of her neighbors comes to put her in the hole, described as the open grave that she had dug up in anticipation of the death of her son. She scatters a handful of dirt over the widow's body and sends a tear over the dirt. The narrator leaves us with the following words, "Those five feet make up the distance that separates life and death" (53). The old widow places herself in the grave instead of mourning the other. In a prophetic gesture, she digs up the

grave anticipating the death of her son (and her estranged brother). However, her propheticism makes her an absent witness to their deaths and turns her into a martyr. Her inability to mourn the death of the other forces her into the grave she had dug in anticipation of that death. She literally inhabits the grave of the other; since she cannot bear witness to that death, her body in death becomes the witness to the absented dead. Her death substitutes for that other death that she can never witness.¹²⁹

Interestingly al-Manfalūṭī's story leaves no witnesses either, but it names itself "The Martyrs" and remains implicated in a necessary and deadly form of witnessing. It seems that the adaptation realizes its position as a witness to Chateaubriand's text, and by extension as an engaged witness to the secrets of René and Atala. *Al-Shuhadā'* is an engaged witness because it responds to the original texts' demand for a witness. Again we have an anonymous narrator that tells us about the death of both characters at the end of the translation, but instead of the impersonal "on," we have an omniscient narrator reporting to us the death of the hero and the widow and telling the reader that the difference between life and death is 5 feet. The strange insertion of an omniscient narrator alerts us to the conflation of romanticism and realism in the texture of the early Arabic novel. While thematically the translation engages romanticism, formally it treats romanticism realistically. I mean that it isolates the elements of romantic literature and re-inscribes them within a realist aesthetic. More importantly, the individual "I" as it emerges in the theoretical and fictional writing of al-Manfalūṭī will prove to be formative for future Arab revolutionaries in particular,

¹²⁹ The figure of the martyr, as the absent witness who dies with the other, has important political consequences for the revolution of Arabic literature as we will see in chapter four with Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal. The original's demand for a witness translates into a politics of martyrdom in the shadow of the Egyptian revolution. This form of martyrdom, of filling in for the death of the other, will become the task of literature with later revolutionaries. Haykal comes to bear witness to al-Manfalūṭī's work in a way that the latter's contemporaries couldn't. Haykal's inheritance of the figure of the prophetic author and the function of literature take off from al-Manfalūṭī's engagement of witnessing and martyrdom in *Al-Shuhadā'*.

and the revolution of Arabic literature in general. In his adaptations, al-Manfalūṭī succeeds in articulating a subjective authorial function, not merely as prophetic but also as individual. Strangely enough, al-Manfalūṭī was frowned upon by his contemporaries for producing a kind of literature that is too romantic to be effective on the social and political spheres.¹³⁰ They accused his fiction of being escapist. However, a closer examination of al-Manfalūṭī's poetics of translation reveals a subtle politics that seeks to empty the romantic gesture and create a hybrid form which in supposedly copying French romanticism is most successful at rewriting it.

¹³⁰ It is not within the scope of this chapter to address al-Manfalūṭī's political writings directly, but rather to deduce a political agenda from his romantic musings. However, most of his writing on revolution takes place between 1921 and 1923, the most famous piece being the "Egyptian Cause." The article describes the coming of the revolution as the beginning of a storm and it would seem that the role of the prophetic author would be to render the storm's power when everyone else is in awe of it.

Chapter Three

A Tale of Three Cities: London, Paris, Cairo

When I was acting, with my children and friends, in Mr. Wilkie Collins's drama of *The Frozen Deep*, I first conceived the main idea of this story. A strong desire was upon me then to embody it in my own person; and I traced out in my fancy the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest. As the idea became familiar to me, it gradually shaped itself into its present form. Throughout its execution, it has had complete possession of me; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it myself. Whenever any reference (however slight) is made here to the condition of the French people before or during the Revolution, it is truly made, on the faith of trustworthy witnesses. It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book.

Charles Dickens, Preface to the First Edition of *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859.

Revolutionary action explodes with the same force and the same facility as the writer who has only to set down a few words side by side in order to change the world. . . . Literature contemplates itself in revolution, it finds its justification in revolution, and if it has been called the Reign of Terror, this is because its ideal is indeed that moment in history, that moment when 'life endures death and maintains itself in it' in order to gain from death the possibility of speaking and the truth of speech.

Maurice Blanchot, "Literature and the Right to Death," 1948.

Originally published in 1859, *A Tale of Two Cities* announces on its very first page that its actual context is "the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five" (13). However, right before this last contextualization, the narrative voice reports that "the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only" (13). In other words, the novel opens with an announced temporal gap between the context of the story, the French Revolution, and the writing of the novel, 19th-century England, but this gap is soon bridged in a

relationship of comparison, a superlative kind of comparison. The “present period” supposedly points to 1859, but the possessive pronouns of the last quotation are confusing at the least. The “its” of the noisiest authorities refers to the present period, while the second “its” in the sentence refers to the second period, namely the one of the actual story, the time around the French Revolution, several decades earlier. Such a confusing use of pronouns strangely opens one of the most famous English historical novels. It is strange precisely because the novel purposefully narrates the history of the revolution always in a relation of superlative comparison to the present moment of writing; it is either a better time or a worse time, but in any case, it is a relevant time, so relevant indeed that one can only read this past in the present moment of the novel.

The reader is then instructed from the onset that at least the temporal reference of this novel is always going to be elsewhere, neither completely then nor now, but importantly elsewhere between these two historical moments. The narratorial “we” in the opening sentence, “we had everything before us, we had nothing before us” complicates this reference even further. In the epigraph included above, Dickens writes that the novel came out of a performance of a Wilkie Collins novel. The idea for the novel, then, came from the performance and not the reading of another work of fiction. The performance allows Dickens to imagine himself in the place of his characters and their suffering “as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself.” He then confirms that whatever reference is made to the revolution is “truly made, on the faith of trustworthy witnesses” in the hope “to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that time,” although of course he will not write something worthy enough to compare, in any superlative fashion, to the philosophy of

Thomas Carlyle's famous *The French Revolution* published in 1837, which provides the historical documentation on which *A Tale of Two Cities* was based.¹³¹

The historical references to the events of the revolution are actually in line with the philosophy (and not just the account) of Mr. Carlyle. The idea for the novel came out of a performance of another novel. Dickens claims to have completely experienced the revolution in writing about it. And finally the novel opens in a logic of comparison that intentionally makes it difficult to tell the "then" of the revolution from the "now" of the writing. This logic combined with all the other conclusions that determine the reader's entry into the world of the novel attest to one thing: the reading of the novel demands an unstable and relative approach to reference.¹³²

This unstable and possibly always elsewhere reference of *A Tale of Two Cities* also invites its translation into even the most distant of contexts, particularly the

¹³¹ Dickens was also stylistically influenced by Carlyle's *French Revolution: A History* (originally published in 1837). In her 1991 book *A Tale of Two Cities: Dickens's Revolutionary Novel*, Ruth Glancy notes that Dickens not only took the stylistic aspects of Carlyle's book but also adopted its historical perspective: "Dickens followed Carlyle closely, both in the chronology of the events of the Revolution and in his descriptions of the major historical events. He was selective, of course, in his portrayal of the Revolution, using only those scenes that bore upon his plot" (6). The relationships between Dickens and Carlyle on the one hand, and *A Tale* and *French Revolution* on the other are very complex and not the subject of my dissertation. I bring up the reliance on Carlyle's account simply to emphasize that Dickens adopted Carlyle's stylistic treatment of the revolution and not just the latter's historical account of it. Carlyle's account is full of historical errors that Dickens makes use of in *A Tale* such as the detail that only seven prisoners were released from the Bastille on the day it was stormed. The inaccuracies and fictional attributes of Carlyle's account then serve as the historical documentation of *A Tale of Two Cities*, thus exacerbating the problem of the instability of reference.

¹³² Many critics such as George Levine and John Kucich debate Dickens's very tenuous relationship to realism. For the purposes of this chapter, I will not engage in that debate but merely point out how this particular novel complicates its relationship to realistic representation. Dickens's metaphors in the novel produce this instability and relativity in reference that are then even further complicated in the translation. I am indebted to Fatima Muhammad Muhaidat for pointing out John Glavin's 1991 book *After Dickens: Reading, Adaptation and Performance* in her 2009 dissertation "A Tale of Two Cities in Arabic Translation." I quote John Glavin as she cites him in the third chapter of her dissertation:

He elides writing for sense into the sheer play of sound ... This inimitably rich play of Dickensian signifiers is always in riot against the constraining claims of the signified, the signs in gleeful revolt against the demands of written representation ... Hence those most characteristic features of Dickensian prose: onomatopoeia and paronomasia; parataxis rather than conventional syntax; the increasingly audacious manipulation of the fragment as opposed to the grammatical unit; a rhythm so regular it frequently approaches blank verse, and a persistent reluctance to generate any form of coherent reference. (qtd. in Muhaidat 18)

Thus even Dickens's desire to create rhythm in his writing also destabilizes reference in the world of his novels.

Egyptian one at the turn of the twentieth century.¹³³ In 1912, Muḥammad al-Sibā‘ī (1881-1931), a well-known Egyptian translator and writer who was heavily influenced by British fiction and philosophy, introduced Dickens for the very first time into Arabic. Al-Sibā‘ī was born in Cairo where he remained until his death in 1931. He was a prolific and respected translator who translated Thomas Carlyle’s *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (1840) in 1930, Herbert Spenser’s treatise *Education* (1861) in 1908, Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1912 and *A Christmas Carol* in 1920 among others. In 1957, his son Yūsuf al-Sibā‘ī, a famous contemporary novelist, collected a hundred stories translated by his father from English, French and Russian and published them in a collected volume. The last publication reignited interest in the work of Muḥammad al-Sibā‘ī.

Al-Sibā‘ī’s translation of *A Tale of Two Cities* was published in three parts in 1912, and it constituted the first encounter between the average Egyptian reader and the famous English storyteller. There are not many critical works that deal with the translation methods of al-Sibā‘ī, but he was considered to be a very rigorous and serious translator by both his contemporaries and those who came after his time. The famous novelist Ibrahīm ‘abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī writes the introduction to al-Sibā‘ī’s first (not-translated) book, *al-Ṣuwar* [Pictures] written in 1908 and published in 1909. Al-Māzinī maintains that although al-Sibā‘ī was the editor of the newspaper *al-Jarīdah* run by the revolutionary Aḥmad Luṭfī al-Sayyid at the time, the former was merely interested in translation and not in politics, and he lists al-Siba‘ī’s translation

¹³³ In her dissertation “*A Tale of Two Cities* in Arabic Translation,” Fatima Muhammad Muhaidat describes how the original novel is itself concerned with the problem of languages and translation. She examines 6 translations of the novel into Arabic, *not* including al-Sibā‘ī’s version. Her study is very important as she studies the translation of words and structural elements meticulously and comments on the accommodations of the Arabic language particularly in the case of Munīr al-Ba‘albakī’s famous 1959 translation of the novel. In my future work, as I describe in a footnote later, I would like to read al-Sibā‘ī’s and al-Ba‘albakī’s translations side by side to examine some of the most important differences between them.

of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, Lord Byron's "Childe Harold" and FitzGerald's "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" as some examples.

Al-Māzinī describes al-Sibā'ī's dedication to reproducing the original as it is in Arabic, although the latter never consulted an Arabic or English dictionary:

Most of the time he would be very picky about what to translate, such that everything that he transmitted into Arabic was brilliant [European] literature that he loved and worked with, and for that reason, *he would forget himself when he was translating, and it would take over him, and he would indulge completely in it so he would give it his heart and his mind altogether, and then extract one of his exemplary pieces with his own personal stamp of fidelity and precision.* And it was very rare that he would change the original, or ignore a part of it, and if he did adapt the original, which was very rare, his adaptation would mostly be done because the Arabic phrase that came to him charmed him with her beauty or her strength and took over his core, so that he could not get rid of it, for he was an artist who was enraptured by eloquence... (8; emphasis mine)¹³⁴

Al-Māzinī insists on the fidelity to the original in al-Sibā'ī's translations. However, when seduced by the eloquence of an Arabic phrase, al-Sibā'ī breaks his vow to precision and loses himself yet again, but this time in the Arabic language.

Interestingly, al-Māzinī describes the process of translation in this case as an experience of loss of self. Al-Sibā'ī in this scene of translation "loses" himself in the original text. This loss of authorial self of the translator produces the most faithful of translations, according to al-Māzinī. From this forgetting of himself in the process of

¹³⁴ In 1959, the Lebanese lexicographer Munīr al-Ba'albakī published his very famous translation of *A Tale of Two Cities*. His is a complete translation, entirely faithful to the language of the original as it was not intended for school students. Many critics say that al-Ba'albakī based his translation of the novel on that of al-Sibā'ī although he completely changes the form of the language. In her detailed study of al-Ba'albakī's translation of Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, Fatima Muhaidat points out that al-Ba'albakī's "use of Standard Arabic comes from his convictions that it can express meanings to all speakers of this language both within the Arab world and outside it" (Muhaidat 29). Al-Ba'albakī also compiled the first English-Arabic dictionaries, *Al-Mawrid* Dictionary and *Al-Mawrid* Encyclopedia (published in 11 volumes), which were completed after the publication of his translation. Al-Ba'albakī's translation is quite literal, keeping very close to the structure and language of the original. As such, it is concerned with the singular translation of the word itself. Thus, we find a lot of the original English words included in the Arabic translation such as "*doozēna*" for "dozen" and "*inchat*" for inches. In my future work, I would like to read the two translations side by side in relation to how they engage the language of the original on the one hand, and the description of the revolution on the other. Al-Ba'albakī's translation is importantly written after the 1952 Nasser Revolution in Cairo.

translation, al-Sibā‘ī delivers his own “personal” stamp of fidelity. However, this fidelity is compromised in some situations, particularly when the Arabic phrase fails to carry the import of the original one. In such cases, even though al-Sibā‘ī still loses himself in the translation, he deliberately searches for the ideal Arabic expression and such a quest inevitably results in adapting certain parts of the original texts. In other words, as I will develop in this chapter, even al-Sibā‘ī’s most sincere efforts to transmit the original intact are thwarted by the almost unconscious deference to the phrase.¹³⁵ In this particular translation, al-Sibā‘ī’s dedication to fidelity in translation is particularly compromised in his adaptations of the metaphors of *A Tale of Two Cities*, when, for example, the Arabic phrase falls short of creating the resonances of the original text.

Al-Sibā‘ī writes a critical introduction to *Qīṣat Madinatayn* in which he describes this particular translation as,

[t]he third [of his publications] of the seeds of merit that we will we not hesitate to transmit despite the waterless sterility of this soil [reference to Egypt], with its dried up wealth and the lack of any hope for us to see the planting we’ve done with our hands turn ripe ... yielding us its fruits. We had assumed that that will be the day when God will blow spirit into this nation and transform this grave that people call Miṣr [Egypt] into a country in which you encounter living people who think and reason and not mere vegetation in the image of humans who only grow and die ... so that if God were to blow life into this dead people, the sun of feeling and emotion would shine on our buried seeds, creating around them a virtuous soil of mercy. And then the rains of humility and tenderness would come down on it, feeding its roots and growing its branches, giving it its verdure back, and making it yield fruit. (1)

Al-Sibā‘ī adds a third temporal and spatial context to the original, namely 1912 Cairo. So far I have only discussed the shifting temporal contexts of the original, but the title of the novel already invokes the spatial one. The tale will move between London and Paris. In the opening to al-Sibā‘ī’s text, the translation itself is described as a seed that

¹³⁵ It is unconscious precisely to the extent that he loses himself in the work.

will be planted in the soil of Egypt, although this dried up soil is not very yielding. The seed of the translation will eventually grow into a tree with strong roots and will bear and yield fruits. The translation is the seed; Egyptian readership (and by synecdoche Egypt as a whole) is the soil; the impact of the translation is the resultant tree in this case.

Thus, in addition to the new temporal dimension of 1912 Egypt, al-Sibā'ī adds another spatial aspect to the novel as now it will refer to London, Paris and Cairo, the new soil to be planted.¹³⁶ But he also intends this novel to shake people up and bring them back to life; however, this “terrible” time of the Revolution is not necessarily a period that Dickens’ novel wants to revive, at least not in its consciously and deliberately chiseled plot and language.¹³⁷ Al-Sibā'ī reads an invitation to action, or

¹³⁶ Thomas Carlyle in his famous *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (a series of lectures delivered between 1837 and 1840, published in book form in London by Chapman and Hall Ltd. in 1869) writes:

All Life is figured by them as a Tree. Igdrasil, the Ash-tree of Existence, has its roots deep-down in the kingdoms of Hela or Death: its trunk reaches up heaven-high, spreads its boughs over the whole Universe: it is the Tree of Existence. At the foot of it, in the Death-Kingdom, sit the three *Nornas*, Fates--the Past, Present, Future; watering its roots from the Sacred Well. It's “boughs,” with their buddings and disleafings? --events, things suffered, things done, catastrophes, -- stretch through all lands and times. Is not every leaf of it a biography, every fibre there an act or word? Its boughs are Histories of Nations. The rustle of it is the noise of Human Existence, onwards from of old. It grows there, the breath of Human Passion rustling through it;--or storm tost, the storm-wind howling through it like the voice of all the gods. It is Igdrasil the Tree of Existence. It is the past, the present, and the future. Considering how human things circulate, each inextricably in communion with all ... I find no similitude so true as this of a Tree. Beautiful; altogether beautiful and great. (24-25).

Al-Sibā'ī translates parts of *On Heroes* and then writes his own version of it called the *Abṭāl Miṣr* [Heroes of Egypt] which he publishes in 1922. The botanic imagery in the introduction to the translation of Dickens echoes Carlyle's “Tree of Existence” as quoted above. I will not address this complex borrowing in the context of this chapter, but will come back to this borrowing of the tree model from Carlyle in my future work.

¹³⁷ In the *Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, published in 2000, Franco Moretti describes the relationship of the English novel to revolution. He writes that English heroes, as opposed to the French ones, hate being acted on by the world and see in that a betrayal of their true identity. Thus in English fiction, particularly of the 18th and the 19th centuries, there is a clear attempt to combine a democratic stability, intended to contain the effects of the openness of fictional narrative. In this combination, there is a taxonomy that confines every individual to his or her particular slot in the world (195). Moretti continues:

At the core of the English novel, we find the same ideological doubling that pervades 18th and 19th century England, tendential universalism in the legal-political domain, and a subservience to the principle of status within civil society—what makes their coexistence possible is not an exposition of conventionality ... but rather taking to task anything that deviates from everyday conventions and common sense. (196-7)

perhaps to a performance similar to the one that inspired the novel in the first place, in the words of the tale he translates. It is this reading, or misreading, that I am interested in exploring in this chapter.

Al-Sibā'ī's *Qiṣat Madinatayn* remains utterly faithful to the chapter divisions and content of the original. In this sense, it is closest to Buṭrus al-Bustānī's translation of *Robinson Crusoe* in 1867. The novel was translated and published in three parts, all in 1912. The first part contains all of Book I and some chapters from Book II; the second has most of Book II; and finally Book III was published in a third and independent part. The version of the translation that I am working with, which to my knowledge is the only one available, stops at Chapter 9 of Book III. The translation does not include the last 6 chapters of the original and thus remains unfinished. It is unclear why the translation is unfinished. However, the absence of the ending from the manuscript of the translation, even if it is not determined by the conscious volition of the translator, makes *Qiṣat* into a different novel than *A Tale of Two Cities*. It constitutes a radical departure from the original precisely because it does not include the ending, even if it is difficult to determine today why the ending is missing from the 1912 text. Whatever the reason, this chapter will treat the absence of the ending as suggestive of al-Sibā'ī's appropriation of the original text, whether this absence was intentional or not.

This tension is remedied through the use of the comic element, which counterbalances the taxonomic by inserting into it some universalism and tolerance (199). Whoever yearns for status conversion in the world of the English novel is perceived as a taxonomic anomaly—a “monster inside an unyielding system” making narrative possible (201). As such revolution came to be considered as continuity of an almost originary “way of the world” and not as a sign of rupture and change:

It is as if the term ‘revolution’ were still chained to its etymon (which is quite plausible, in a century so fascinated by astronomy): a return back, ‘full circle,’ to the original spot. The politico-institutional break is not legitimated as a break – but as the supreme act of legal continuity, and of respect for the rules of the game. (211)

As I will continue to show in the rest of the chapter, the relationship to revolution that Moretti describes here is definitive of *A Tale of Two Cities*, even in the moments when the narrator sympathetically portrays the demands and desires of the oppressed revolutionaries.

Nur Sherif in her 1974 book *Dickens in Arabic (1912-1970)* writes that unlike the other translations of historical novels at the turn of the twentieth century, al-Sibā'ī's rendition of *A Tale of Two Cities* remains very close to the original text and "to the spirit of the work that its literary [as opposed to pure entertainment] value is preserved" (5). Sherif suggests that the translation was intended to be part of the English curriculum at select schools in Cairo (6). Sherif makes this last conclusion based primarily on the fact that the translation includes a chapter summary at the end of every chapter. She continues,

Good though the translation may be, it is not, however, without its weak points. There are inaccuracies, omissions, an occasional failure to find 'le mot juste' in Arabic and, as a result, a tendency to paraphrase, particularly metaphorical language, and to use a rather stilted Arabic and a cumbersome vocabulary which the translator finds it necessary to explain in footnotes. But this, one must remember, was the style of the age and is not altogether amiss in a historical novel which is itself sometimes written in a stilted language. In spite of these shortcomings, the translation is on the whole clearly by a writer who was sufficiently aware of the literary value of the novel to realize that he should not allow himself the liberty to tamper with the original. (6)

Sherif's commentary on the translation is important inasmuch as it reveals the context which received the first Dickensian appropriation in the early decades of the 20th century. The popularity of the other "historical" novels in translation (the most popular being those of Walter Scott) was primarily due to the entertainment promised by the serial publication of these translations. Al-Sibā'ī's interest in Dickens, however, was essentially pedagogical. Sherif notes that the inclusion of chapter summaries at the end of every chapter is a clear sign that al-Sibā'ī intended his translation to be part of Egyptian schools' curricula. But, although he omits and paraphrases, in Sherif's view, he still did not really "tamper with the original."

But he did. Sometimes in more subtle ways than others, similar to al-Bustānī's appropriative gestures, al-Sibā'ī finds ways to inscribe the text within the address to the Egyptian people that he lays out in the introduction. Thus, paraphrasing the

metaphorical language of the original novel, which produces its entire meaning in the realm of metaphor, is a clear departure from the original. Sherif points to the most important ways in which al-Sibā‘ī adapts the original text, and he does so in a very educated manner. For example, the footnotes often contain poetic lines that include the words he is trying to define in the text. In other words, he establishes connections with and references to other Arabic literary works (almost à la T.S. Eliot) to place the novel in a familiar tradition that could very well have produced it. The language of the translation is complex and, to say the least, painfully difficult to get through. Throughout the text, al-Sibā‘ī includes a copious amount of definitional footnotes that explain every word, back to back, in the translated line above. The heightened concern with rhetoric and the Arabic idiom is clearly a sign of anxiety in confronting the British text.

In addition to the possible pedagogical value of the English original, al-Sibā‘ī is also drawn to its engagement of translation on the level of form and content. For instance, on the level of form, Dickens renders some of the speech of the French characters such as the Defarges in Frenchified English, inserting French words and structures into their speech. He translates French expressions and grammatical sentence structure literally, such that the French characters speak in French idiom but use English words in strange constructions like “How goes it?” and “Behold the manner of it.”¹³⁸ On the level of the content, the main characters of the book are always already in a relationship of translation. Dr. Manette and Lucy are originally French citizens. Lorry took Lucy to England when her father was imprisoned and she was raised there as an Englishwoman. Charles Darnay is a professor of languages and a translator, as well as the nephew of the French Marquis whose murder will set the

¹³⁸ These two examples are also given by Ruth Glancy in her book *Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities: A Sourcebook*.

revolution in motion. Little Lucy speaks the languages of the two cities as they blend on her tongue (“as the little Lucie ... chattered in the tongues of the Two Cities that were blended in her life” (210)). In other words, the novel already lends itself to translation as its main protagonists are constantly moving between London and Paris, English and French. Al-Sibā‘ī adds Cairo and Arabic to his own translation of the novel. In the rest of the chapter, I will explore this last gesture, the adding of a third context, and the ways in which it demands a stunting of the work of metaphor in the original.

The Translator’s Word

One of the most distinctive attributes of al-Sibā‘ī’s translation of Dickens is the critical introduction he adds at the beginning of the text. Unlike al-Bustānī’s introduction to his translation of *Robinson Crusoe*, this critical text treats the literary elements of fiction in a vocabulary that wasn’t too familiar to an Arab audience at the time. Nur Sherif makes the same observation in her book. She points to the remarkable appreciation of the novel and its meticulous analysis in the introduction, concluding that al-Sibā‘ī clearly knew the genre he was working with very well (6). In 1912 in Cairo, his analysis of the formal elements of the original novel is certainly noteworthy as the novel was still more or less a new genre.

After calling attention to the potential function of this translation, namely to instill life in the people of Egypt, al-Sibā‘ī writes that this particular Dickensian novel is exceptional and in a sense atypical because its story is superior to its style.¹³⁹ For

¹³⁹ Al-Sibā‘ī was not alone in calling attention to the novel’s atypicality. The critical reception of *A Tale of Two Cities* is especially important to understanding the critical approaches to the novel even today, as most critics find it easier to write and make conclusions about the rest of Dickens’s oeuvre and to mention *A Tale* as an example of some Dickensian trait or another rather than treat it fully as an independent work that speaks to Dickens’s style more generally. *A Tale of Two Cities* was considered the least typical of Dickens’s work from when it was first published until the 1980’s. Critics

instance, Dickens inserts foreign words into his novel but does not allow these words to overtake the English text (10). In other words, al-Sibā'ī claims that even though Dickens inserts some French words and renders some of the dialogue of the French characters in awkward English, he still finds a way for his novel to remain English, a tale about an English family and how it is affected by the events of the French Revolution. Although he does not explain it as such, it would seem that al-Sibā'ī is saying that Dickens was well aware that his novel could stop being about England and its superiority to revolutionary France, and so he made sure that the use of foreign words and expressions was reduced to the creation of “local color,” rather than a real representation of France and its revolutionaries.

Although he does not name it as such, al-Sibā'ī detects a fear of contamination by another language in the original novel. The threat of the French language becomes associated throughout with the threat of everything French, and particularly the French Revolution. In describing the revolution, the story itself risks contracting the

find it difficult to place this particular novel as it is a historical novel which renders the events of Revolution in a fictional story about a family and a love triangle. The novel lacks the familiar Dickensian humor and the usual variety of characters. In the 1920's, J.W.T. Ley, an early Dickensian scholar, called it “an almost humorless book; by no Dickensian standard can it be judged: it stands apart” (qtd. in Ruth Glancy, *Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities* 54). In *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* published in 1971, the editor Philip Collins writes in the introduction to the section on *A Tale of Two Cities* that the novel “has been little discussed by critics” (421). He continues that “[f]or no other novel have I filed fewer reprintable discussions.” Critics were mostly hostile to the book when it first came out, considering it a mere “experiment” and an unsuccessful one at that. In her 2006 Routledge literary guide, *Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities: A Sourcebook*, Ruth Glancy offers a helpful summary of the critical reception of the novel that I draw on here. In 1859, the well-known Victorian critic Sir James Fitzjames Stephen published a review of the novel in which he completely dismissed it as an inadequate historical novel. According to the *Eclectic Review of Great Expectations* in 1861, “*A Tale of Two Cities* pleased nobody,” and that sentence gets passed down to consecutive generations of readers and critics (Glancy 53). In 1979, David G. Tucker begins to change the direction of the general appreciation of the novel when he describes it as “favorable” and “laudatory” (Glancy 53). In the 1980s literary criticism finally started to acknowledge the strengths of the novel and critics like Taylor Stoehr in the 1965 book *Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965, 1-33) reads a scene from the novel as exemplary of the novel's “ultra-Dickensian” qualities (qtd. in Ruth Glancy 54). Stoehr's reading emphasizes the novel's memorable style and language, as opposed to the conclusion of notable Dickensian critic John Gross that the novel's style is “grey and unadorned” (54).

fever of the revolution and transporting it to England. Dickens is aware of this potential threat throughout, even though he continually tries to curb it within the triumph of the private, domestic realm. In his 1988 book *Darwin and the Novelists*, George Levine writes that *A Tale of Two Cities* “in its own melodramatic way ... affirms the quotidian over the revolutionary” (260). Levine continues:

The great heroic final act of the novel is a further diversion from the revolution. Dickens constructs a new kind of heroism out of a domestic rather than a political story, and Carton’s self-sacrifice is imagined as a way to avert the catastrophe of the world-historical destroying the private history. ... To be sure, Dickens writes with compassion of the suffering and oppression of the French poor and with savage bitterness at the reckless and self-indulgent cruelty of aristocracy. But placing the Defarges at the center of the revolution turns it into a mindless vengeful energy of precisely the sort that will be regardless of all domestic and personal values: they are to be seen as more frightening even than Monseigneur and the corrupt aristocrats. Dickens’s narrator knows better than the revolutionaries for he has the Uriel-like distance that allows him to see how things are related. (260-61)

Dickens was well aware that the French Revolution could very well elicit the same fever for rebellion in the English poor. Accordingly, *A Tale of Two Cities* exhibits a clear anxiety about the French Revolution and its possible spill across borders and into English soil. The novel is not concerned with the representation of a historical event as much as it is with the representation of a threat. Thus although Dickens is momentarily sympathetic with the French poor, he remains as wary as ever of the irrationality of revolution and its possible stifling of the domestic. I will return to the novel’s complicated relationship to the revolution in more depth later on in the chapter; for now, I would just like to note that the wary use of French in the novel is also a reflection of its wary approach to the revolution.

In his effort to reign in the influence of all that is French in his novel, Dickens uses French words and grammatical structures only intermittently and mainly in the speech of the Defarges and never in the actual language of the narrative voice. In other words, the novel’s “frenchified” moments of dialogue occur only sparingly in

the dialogue of the most irrational and cruel characters. Dickens's fear of the revolution is also a fear of the French language and of his own text contracting the fever of the French idiom. Earlier I pointed to the novel's intense preoccupation with translation in the figures of Darnay and the Manettes. *A Tale of Two Cities* seems to take up the family's movement between London and Paris more intently than the family's relationship to France and the French language. In this sense, the preoccupation with the two languages on the level of content (and not form) is another sign of the novel's unstable relationship to reference. Taking place between the two places and between the two languages, the events of the novel remain in a sense in translation, and the reader has to keep track of the traveling in the dark that constantly moves characters across the two cities.

Al-Sibā'ī is clearly attuned to this possible contamination by the French language, as his own translation is inevitably contaminated by the English one, and the French one in translation into English. Although he comments on how Dickens does not let the French idiom take over, he uses a curious image of sailing to describe Dickens's relation to the French language. He says that Dickens anchors his novel somewhere in English soil (but under water) and then loses himself in the sea of French (across the water from London to Paris). So the novel is anchored in England but is still seduced by the sirens of the French language and of French soil. Importantly, al-Sibā'ī describes the novel as anchored in English soil under water, near English land but technically at sea. But Dickens does find a way to contain this wandering, al-Sibā'ī confirms: he begins writing with a premeditated ending, the big finish of the execution of Sydney Carton, an event that determines the flow of the narrative from the beginning of the novel to its end.

Interestingly, al-Sibā'ī compares this premeditated ending in a necessary beheading to the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*. He then continues to explain that in all his other novels, Dickens would come up with a title as he went along but this particular novel, and especially its ending, had to be carefully planned from the onset. In a sense, al-Sibā'ī is saying that the novel can only begin when it has already ended, as its entire plot is determined by death at the guillotine in the thrust of the revolution. It is stuck in a narrative it has already told and one that moves inevitably towards its moment of death and substitution, the unforgettable replacement of Darnay by Carton. Al-Sibā'ī continues to describe the position of the reader with respect to this particularly pre-determined ending of *A Tale of Two Cities*. In reading the other serialized novels of Dickens, the reader would be placed in a threatened position,

an awkward position similar to that of Scheherezad in *A Thousand and One Nights*. But in *Qiṣat Madinatayn* [reference to the original *A Tale of Two Cities* here] the author had another purpose or plan in mind so that he limited the purpose and named the object that he was marching towards ... so his story came out harmoniously and strongly connected and well-woven. (20)

Scheherezad told stories to delay her death sentence and was capable of reverting it at the end. In his other novels, Dickens does not prescribe an inalterable death sentence and so the reader, like Scheherezad, would continue to read the tale (in fear over his or her own life) and always uncertain of the ending. In this particular novel, however, the reader is at ease from the beginning, at least in relation to the novel's ending. The novel will end in death by the guillotine, a clear statement on the inevitable and all-consuming violence of the revolution.

The reader, al-Sibā'ī tells us, is also continuously involved in the performance of the revolution. It seems that al-Sibā'ī did not really make a distinction between the novel about revolution and the French Revolution itself: he seems to have taken the

original novel's declared instability of reference to heart. In being about the revolution, the novel sets its reader at ease from the onset that it will end, and it will end in death. There is no Scheherezad fantasy here of a never-ending fiction that can begin and end as it pleases to perpetuate the life of the storyteller. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, the revolution means that the novel will end in death, and at the guillotine it will stop, al-Sibā'ī tells his reader. As a tale of revolution, Dickens's novel addresses all the people (19). Thus the reader is anyone and everyone, a spectator at the performance of the novel, the performance of the necessary sacrifice involved in the revolution.

In this performance, there is a noticeable and dominant dynamic of identification that al-Sibā'ī describes as almost contagious. The characters are real, as real as we are, and their world is exactly like ours (13). The novel is mostly successful because of the identification it presents between Dickens and his characters as well as between the characters and the readers (23). The use of the first person pronoun "we" (an echo of the "we" that opens the original novel) is remarkable here as al-Sibā'ī seems to relate the performative aspect of the play, which renders everyone a spectator to the tale, directly to translation. Because the novel makes of every reader a spectator, the realism of the characters comes to reflect the Egyptian reader as well. In other words, al-Sibā'ī finds in Dickens's novel a potential mirror he can hold up to Cairo and the Egyptians. Just as the opening lines of the novel draw a comparison between revolutionary France and 19th-century England, so al-Sibā'ī finds that the world of the characters in the novel is so realistically drawn that it could very well come to reflect that of 1912 Cairo. The identification with the world of the novel and its displacement into the context of the translation is telling of al-Sibā'ī's particular role as spectator and translator. *A Tale of Two Cities* interrogates its own shaky

relationship to realistic and historical representation intermittently throughout the text. For the most part, this interrogation comes up in elaborate metaphors that deal with the unreliability of legal language and the figure of the spy. I will examine the adaptations of such metaphors of representation more closely in the rest of the chapter. I hope to show how the translation's rewriting of the figural language of the original exposes some of the original novel's own assumptions behind telling the story of the French Revolution.

Al-Sibā'ī becomes a particularly important witness to the original's story of revolution because he reads the tale of the two cities from the perspective of a third city and a third language. Heavily influenced by the events and philosophy of the French Revolution, Egypt was under the British mandate in 1912. At the beginning of the chapter, I described the logic of comparison that places the novel not then and not now, but importantly somewhere in-between. The reader, in this in-between, looks for the meaning of the novel somewhere else, displaced in comparisons and references that only get exacerbated in the translation into Arabic. Al-Sibā'ī thus becomes the reader-translator in the in-between, reading about the French Revolution in the language of an English, bourgeois liberal. And while al-Sibā'ī expresses nothing but admiration for the original novel, his own adaptation will assume the position of the reader as a third, responding to the original from the in-between. This response takes the most conspicuous form in the translation's discomfort with the original novel's heavily metaphorical language.

In translating what he considered to be a great historical novel, al-Sibā'ī was still keenly attuned to the novel's displacement of the events and meaning of the French Revolution into other times and other places. He points to the performative aspect of the novel that makes it possible for all readers to find resemblances between

themselves and the novel's characters. Thus, combined with the performative aspect, the novel's multiple metaphorical displacements of meaning do not find their literal reproductions in the translation even when al-Sibā'ī tries hard to transmit the meaning of the original intact. For instance, the original's metaphoric production of meaning is interrupted and literalized in some moments in the translation, particularly in copious footnotes and authorial intrusions in parentheses. At other moments, the translation produces a different set of metaphors to explain something that the original only suggests or even does not mention at all. Moreover, all historical references, and particularly those that open the original novel, find their detailed explanations in the footnotes in the text. The footnotes sometimes explain the original event, but in other places in the translation they also refer to similar moments in other works of Arabic literature, thus consolidating the novel's place in Arabic literary history.

The translation's intense preoccupation with footnoting and explaining the metaphors of the original novel is particularly poignant in the context of the original novel's meta-textual preoccupation with its own realistic project, of its own precarious relationship to revolution, and of its unresolved fear of substitution. Because the Arabic translation takes such close heed of the word itself, its reader experiences a loss in the text's production of meaning on the level of metaphor. We notice this loss, for instance, in the voice of the narrator in the translation. The translation produces the historical event of revolution devoid of the moralistic commentary of the original narrator, whose distance from the revolution is an effort to present it as a past event that the English reader can learn from. In the rest of the chapter, I will examine particular moments in which such metaphors are adapted in

the translation to understand how the Arabic translation rewrites some of the original's anxieties and underwrites its metaphorical logic.¹⁴⁰

Trapped in a Myriad of Reflections: The Law of the Narrator¹⁴¹

The reader of *Qiṣat Madinatayn* encounters this anxiety about reference in the very first pages of the translation. The tale that is meant to revive Egypt is burdened from the onset with multiple historical references and explanations in footnotes. For instance, the narratorial translator explains in footnotes who the kings and queens involved are (2). He also mentions the news of the American Revolution coming in in 1775 without commenting on its potential import. He describes the trees that make up the boards of the guillotine as remembered by the black pages of history. The two figures of the Woodman of Fate and the Farmer of Death are explained in parentheses in the text and in footnotes. In the summary of this chapter, all metaphors are explained and the references (historical and otherwise) are made clear (5).¹⁴² Thus

¹⁴⁰ In the introduction to his translation, al-Sibā'ī admits that the original novel does not treat revolution as a whole, and it especially ignores the philosophical drive of Rousseau behind it (20). However, al-Sibā'ī's main historical reference remains Thomas Carlyle's *French Revolution* and he compares the historical events of his *Qiṣat* to the former. Although he criticizes Dickens's lack of holistic analysis of the French Revolution, with the French philosophy that acted as the main drive behind it, al-Sibā'ī uses an English text against which to determine the authenticity of Dickens's account.

¹⁴¹ As I mentioned earlier, Dickens's relationship to realism is very complex and has been a topic of continuing debate in Dickens studies. For the purposes of this chapter, I will not participate in that conversation; rather, I will explore how the novel produces its own conditions of legibility in some famous metaphors that engage realistic representation. However, my intention is more to reveal how these images of realism make it into the translation and how they become tied up towards the end of the novel with the ultimate substitution between Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton at the guillotine. In other words, I am less concerned with the realism of Dickens's oeuvre and more interested in questions of witnessing, spectatorship and sacrificial substitution in relation to the novel's realistic enterprise, and in how these questions emerge in the metaphorical language of the original and then in the adaptations of the translation.

¹⁴² For instance, the expression "The dead is back to life" that comes up in the conversation among the travelers is again explained in the summary which reveals that the translator already knows the meaning of the expression although he doesn't fully explain it to the reader (12).

from the beginning, the reader detects the text's anxiety about its own relationship to historical reporting, a relationship already determined by the original and mediated in translation.

In his book *The Historical Novel* originally published 1937, Georg Lukács dismisses *A Tale of Two Cities* as a terrible example of the genre. His main argument is that the novel turns the Revolution into a "romantic background" for its own tale-telling purposes rather than placing characters in a genuine historical moment (243). Lukács writes that "Dickens, by giving pre-eminence to the purely moral aspects of causes and effects, weakens the connection between the problems of the characters' lives and the events of the French Revolution" (243). Championing literary realism, Lukács maintains that historical novels must create a historical consciousness in their characters and then instill one in their readers. As such, he cites Sir Walter Scott's novels as the best examples of the genre while Dickens's novel fails precisely because it remains too concerned with the private lives of the characters to make any larger commentary on their roles as public types that reveal the interconnected-ness between the events of the Revolution and the fate of the people. He continues that history in *A Tale of Two Cities* falls victim to a "latent tendency in Dickens to separate the 'purely human' and 'purely moral' from their social basis, and to make them, to a certain degree, autonomous" (244).

In her 2005 article "On Terrorism and Morals: Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*," Frances Ferguson argues against Lukács's reading of the novel maintaining that Dickens was not "sacrificing the political to the individually and domestically moral but was instead wrestling with his newly discovered sense of their extraordinary interconnections" (52). In the new world of Dickens's novel, separating the domestic from the public had already become impossible and so, as Ferguson

argues, Dickens is not merely concerned with having characters voice their differentiated class consciousnesses as representatives of the times. Rather, Dickens is trying to understand how “we can conceive of our own actions if we cannot think of our actions as expressing either our individual wishes or the interests and wishes of a group with whom we consciously and specifically identify” (52). In other words, the world of the novel is determined by unreliable human relationships that demand constant rearrangements of class and other polarities. As such, *A Tale of Two Cities* is a most faithful depiction of the times. Ferguson does not distinguish between the time of the Revolution and the time of the writing of the novel, however. She continues:

For whereas Lukács stresses the importance of the historical novel with its representation of dialogue, its understanding of class consciousness, and its ability to introduce historical personages while saying “and you are there,” Dickens’s novel understands historical consciousness differently. Against a history that redeems the limitations of individual action by granting it meaningfulness only as a metonymy for collective action, he sets a history that causes pain by rendering its principal characters ineffectual. (59)

Daniel Stout in his 2007 article “Nothing Personal: The Decapitation of Character in *A Tale of Two Cities*” writes that “it is also the case that the Lukácsian imperative already carries within it a concept of individual agency that the Revolution, as Dickens (and, as it turns out, Robespierre) sees it, works to dismantle” (30).

Both Ferguson’s and Stout’s readings of the lack of agency in the novel render al-Sibā’ī’s choice of text even more problematic. Curiously, and at least in its introduction, the Arabic translation approaches the original novel as a promise of positive revolutionary change and of triumphant individual agency. After all, al-Sibā’ī writes that he hopes the translation will make the Egyptian soil richer and enable it to yield fruit again by instilling life into the people of Egypt who have become as stagnant as the dried up soil. If the characters remain ineffectual in a history that happens in spite of them, where then in the novel does al-Sibā’ī locate any form of

agency that would bring the Egyptian nation to life? Ferguson gives multiple examples of this loss of agency in moments when the characters cannot speak what they mean; like Lucy's testimony in the first trial of Darnay, Dr. Manette's written testimony indicting Darnay in his second trial despite the former's objections and so on.¹⁴³ Ferguson comments on how the legal language, for instance, makes it impossible for the characters to express their own wishes as those are always mediated through the impersonal language of the law (the Revolutionary tribunal being equally representative in this case of the "new" law).

While I agree with Ferguson's reading of the novel's complex relationship to a history without any form of agency, I believe that Dickens's purposefully ineffectual characters are also a means to stop the contagion of revolution. The real problem behind Lukács's dismissal of the novel as a bad example of the historical genre is a misreading of the intentions of the novel in my opinion. The novel did not intend to report the history of the French Revolution. Rather, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens tries to contain the revolution in a story, in a moral lesson of sorts that can instruct the

¹⁴³ Interestingly, Ferguson places her reading of the impossibility of willed action in *A Tale of Two Cities* in conversation with criticism of the novel genre in general as being either concerned with psychology or with action. Ferguson locates the revolution of the *Tale* in its creation of a third category of the novel. She writes:

Whereas Franco Moretti has argued that attending to more literature and more globally defined literature will help us see that the psychological novel is less important than the novel of action, *A Tale of Two Cities* almost makes us want to identify a third sort of novel - one with precious little psychology or action. Darnay cannot do what he means to do - that is, fully renounce his patrimony and distance himself from both his ancestral holdings and his father's and uncle's deeds. Lucie cannot do what she clearly means to do - testify in favor of Darnay. And their inability to deliver on their own wishes finds extreme expression in Dr. Manette's fugue states: while Lucie repeatedly faints (when Darnay's fate is being debated in his English trial and when he is arrested after his earlier release from the Bastille), her father is more often and more seriously overborne by the world. (65)

This description of the novel as a third kind is very important for my chapter in which the presence of a third term (whether a third city, language, or narrator in translation) becomes the translation's most subversive adaptation of the original. Daniel Stout in "Decapitating Character" comments further on the uniqueness of the style of the novel. He writes:

So while much of the theory and history of the novel genre has focused on its capacity to represent private subjectivities and individual consciousness, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, individuals function less as harbors for idiosyncratic depths than as allegories for groups. And once we begin thinking of *A Tale of Two Cities* as a novel more interested in what individuals might represent than it is in representing individuals, we can also begin to see the different demands it places on our critical models. (34)

reader in the destructive force behind the revolutionary impulse. The omniscient narrator, always at the right kind of distance from the event, is constantly putting the scene in perspective. The distance from the event enables the narrative voice to guard against contamination and maintain its moralistic voice throughout the text of the novel.

In Egypt and the rest of the Arab world, the novels of Walter Scott, which Lukács champions as exemplary historical novels, were very popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Jurjī Zaydān and others eagerly imitated them and produced a series of historical novels that were meant to teach the Egyptian reader his or her own history. However, when al-Sibā'ī decided to translate *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1912, he knew he wasn't going to introduce the reader to the French Revolution. He already criticized the novel's lack of perfect treatment of the revolution, at least in the philosophy behind it. Rather, al-Sibā'ī reads the original novel in relation to death in revolution. He singles out this particular Dickens novel as different from the others precisely because it tells the reader from the onset that it will end in death and thus the reader is not placed in the awkward position of a Scheherezad. The reader is then watching the performance of revolution awaiting the death sentence as he or she reads through the novel's rich dialogue and melodramatic language. Al-Sibā'ī chooses this novel to instill life in Egypt, but not through a recounting of French history. Rather, in translating a novel that stages the revolution as it is represented in fictional language, al-Sibā'ī wants to engage the reader precisely in the fiction itself. The translation's copious footnotes are meant to give the reader a foothold in this world he is walking into, but not to instruct him in any kind of historical lesson. The real intention of the translation is to engage its reader in its fiction and to deliver this form of (historical) fiction on as real a platform of participation as that of actual history. Thus rendering

the revolution twice removed, once through the voice of the original narrator and then through the voice of the translator, *Qisat Madinatayn* performs its own novelistic manipulation of the event of Revolution as it is represented in the original novel. The translation detects the original narrator's distance from the event and the implicit fear of contamination that determines the ending of the novel. Thus the translation continuously rewrites the distance of the original narrator and puts the novel itself, and not the revolution, on stage as the ultimate event. And it does that in recasting the original's metaphorical representation of the French Revolution. As such the promise of life that al-Sibā'ī finds in this particular novel and its translation is a promise of the power of fiction to narrate history, and deliver it differently. The Egyptian reader can learn from the example of the French Revolution and *A Tale of Two Cities*; he or she can learn to not repeat the repetition inherent in revolutionary moments and in fiction that promises to deliver the violence in metaphorical language.

In his 1988 article "Metaphorical Representations of the French Revolution in Victorian Fiction," Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador examines the use of metaphorical language to describe the French Revolution in three Victorian novels, John Sterling's *Arthur Coningsby* (1833), Anthony Trollope's *La Vendée* (1850), and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). In his analysis of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Rosador concludes that Dickens' ultimately naturalistic portrayal of the history of the revolution as one of natural determinism or evolution encounters another sacred historical narrative in several allusions in the novel, a sacred narrative that seeks to override and overwrite the naturalistic one in its use of metaphor:

Measured against this norm of sacred history, the French Revolution is, in all these novels, as in *A Tale of Two Cities*, like its emblem, the Carmagnole, nothing but a "fallen sport" (307). The French Revolution presented as natural history stands revealed as the work of fallen man, corrupted to such an extent that a cataclysmic purging and a sacrificial death can provide subdued hope—

a hope expressed through one individual's vision that memory, the memory of one surviving human family, preserves. (20)

Rosador argues that after 1863, the recourse to metaphorical language in Victorian novels begins its slow undoing in the confrontation between those who say and those who do. As such, according to his analysis, Dickens and the others “fail and become the victims of those who act. What begins to emerge here is the dichotomy of fact and fiction, art and politics, writing and doing, with which our century has been much obsessed” (21). In his translation of the novel, al-Sibā‘ī is acutely aware of this dichotomy and of the original's gap between metaphorical language and concrete action. In re-casting the event of Dickens's revolution through the rewriting of the original novel's metaphorical language, al-Sibā‘ī attempts to bridge this gap in his translation. In literalizing some of the metaphors of the original and rewriting others, al-Sibā‘ī intends his translation to bring the people of Egypt to life again, to produce some semblance of human agency even in a destructive history of revolution. And perhaps this newfound sense of agency would remain bound to the promise of fiction and to an imaginary and imagined participation in political history that would not be violent and would not reproduce violent repetitions inherent in revolutions.

Placing the novel on stage to engage the reader in the dynamic of novelistic representation, the translation parades the dichotomy of fact and fiction by rewriting the metaphorical logic of the original. As such, the translation seems to want to reveal the prominence of the metaphorical layers of the novel and expose how these can contaminate the translation's own language, as much as it tries to remain literal and limit the possibly infinite meanderings of fictional meaning. While the familiar Arabic story would be short and mostly plot-driven, this particular novel about revolution, beginnings, and endless repetition, is potentially unending. The translation would thus somehow have to impose closure on the original. In what follows, I will read how the

translation renders the first trial scene of Darnay with the mirror placed over his head. As a metatextual moment, the scene gets rewritten in subtle ways in the translation so as to delimit the multiplication of reference produced by metaphorical structures of meaning.

In the translation of the first trial of Darnay in chapter 2, book II, the scene of the execution is described as a performance in which “the desire of the eyes of the people and the interest of their gaze was that body that they wanted to see ruined and mutilated” (79). In this scene, there is a mirror placed on top of the head of the accused. In the original, we read the following description:

The accused, who was (and who knew he was) being mentally hanged, beheaded, and quartered, by everybody there, neither flinched from the situation, *nor assumed any theatrical air in it*. He was quiet and attentive; watched the opening proceedings with a grave interest; and stood with his hands resting on the slab of wood before him, *so composedly ...* Over the prisoner’s head there was a mirror, to throw the light down upon him. *Crowds of the wicked and the wretched had been reflected in it, and had passed from its surface and this earth’s together. Haunted in a most ghastly manner that abominable place would have been, if the glass could ever have rendered back its reflections, as the ocean is one day to give up its dead.* Some passing thought of the infamy and disgrace for which it had been reserved, may have struck the prisoner’s mind. *Be that as it may, a change in his position making him conscious of a bar of light across his face, he looked up; and when he saw the glass his face flushed.* (71-2; emphasis mine)

The composed accused flinches when he becomes aware of the reflections over his head. The mirror is meant to reflect light down on him and single him out as the main performer. The mirror, however, also reflects the faces of the crowds of villains who have been in the court, and the suggestion is that it also captures the faces of the hordes of witnesses/ spectators who come to court for the thrill of the performance.¹⁴⁴

Thus the mirror records all the faces that have ever been in the court and on trial (and

¹⁴⁴ Although the passage suggests that the mirror reflects the criminals who were previously accused and stood in that spot before Darnay, the reference to the “crowds” reflected in the mirror could suggest that the crowds of spectators are included in these reflections. The description of the crowds at the court and the position of the mirror over the head of the accused throwing light down on him make it difficult to imagine that only the heads of the guilty are reflected in it.

have now died) and possibly the faces of those present at this particular trial. The mirror holds within it the faces of all those crowds that it has reflected over the years, and the narrator tells us that the place was thus haunted by all those faces trapped under the surface of the mirror. When the accused is made aware of the reflecting surface, he is no longer composed.

The mirror is a famous figure of realist fiction, as in the image of the mirror in Stendhal's famous 1830 novel *Le Rouge et le Noir*. This particular mirror in the courtroom scene is clearly not just a reflecting surface. Like some kind of a mystic writing pad, it traps all the faces that have come across it underneath its surface, and the narrator wittily describes a sense of resulting haunting. The one person who is meant to be highlighted by the reflected light of the mirror is also the one unaware of its presence. In a sense, the crowds gazing at the accused hungry for his death are gazing at their own deaths as well, for when they look at the accused, they're also looking at the mirror, which then records the images of their faces and leaves them trapped in there, awaiting their own deaths.¹⁴⁵ The moment the accused realizes that he is not the only object of the gaze, he loses his composure and flushes. There is a reflecting surface behind him that not only places him in the middle of the gaze of the crowd but makes it so that they're looking at infinite reflections of themselves and others beyond the actual figure of the accused, who becomes a mere focal point. The mirror, then, in no way promises an accurate portrayal of the courtroom scene. Rather, it records the faces of the wicked and functions as an inanimate witness, a secular object that bears

¹⁴⁵ A few pages before this particular scene of the trial, we read one of the passages most telling of the novel's treatment of death:

But, indeed, at that time, putting to death was a recipe much in vogue with all trades and professions, and not least of all with Tellson's. Death is Nature's remedy for all things, and why not Legislation's? Accordingly, the forger was put to Death; the utterer of a bad note was put to Death; the unlawful opener of a letter was put to Death . . . (56)

The rather comic tone of this presentation of death is ultimately what motivates the trial scene and most of the novel. Death has become too available, too common as a solution, and thus the law becomes representative of the right to kill as a solution to disobeying the law.

witness to a trial that is, as we will see, already implicated in reflections and doublings in the figures of Darnay and Carton.¹⁴⁶

In the translation, we read:

And the accused knew that the people were picturing him hung and torn up but he remained composed and courageous, reassured, and his insides didn't move or beat in light of his overwhelming situation and his poise was not artificial and his calm not forged. And he was listening quietly. Listening to the opening sentence with interest. And he had put his hands on the board of wood in front of him and he was so steadfast that his hands did not budge at all ... And over the head of the accused was a mirror that would reflect the light on him and there were always drawn on the surface of the mirror the mean people and then soon their image is removed from off of its surface and that of the world and *maybe then the accused thought about the problem of placing the mirror where it was ...* so the accused made a movement with which he felt the fall of the light ray on his face so he lifted his head and when he saw the mirror the blood rushed to his face. (80 – 81)

The translation relocates the moment when the accused becomes aware of the position and function of the mirror. It actually explains that there is a problem in the first place, and the problem is related to the reflected faces that appear on the surface of the mirror only to disappear soon after, and the insinuation is that they disappear in death. Also the translation makes it seem that all the faces of “mean” people are recorded in the mirror, and not just those of the accused and the guilty who are on trial. In a sense, the translation points to the immutability of the position of the accused as the focal point of the gaze of the crowds. The spectators come and go, and

¹⁴⁶ The resemblance between the two characters is constantly thrown in doubt, as the obvious differences between the two from the beginning until the end of the novel are revised. Frances Ferguson writes:

Even as we wonder if Manette really knew that Charles Darnay was an Evrémonde on the basis of his recollection of how Charles's father and uncle looked two decades earlier, we can see that the brilliance of Dickens's decision to make Darnay and Carton resemble one another lies here - in the depiction of the difficulty of linking morality with claims about the accuracy of one's perceptions of the world. (66)

The resemblance makes it difficult to locate morality as an absolute ideal, as the perception of look-alikes already makes it impossible to tell which character is moral and which is not. In a sense, the morality of both is continuously placed in question, with the somewhat surprising triumph of Carton's at the end who converts from a drunkard to a sacrificial figure placing Darnay's life ahead of his own. Ferguson maintains that even resemblance in this novel is not a sure thing as the one who sees the resemblance between the two characters in the first place is none other than the sneaky lawyer Mr. Stryver, so again the resemblance is mediated to us in the deceptive language of the law.

their reflections in the mirror deepen their gaze, but the performer remains in some sense in that immutable yet necessary position of the one condemned by the gaze of the spectator.

In pointing to and explaining the problem behind the position of the mirror, the translation highlights the wavering claims to realistic representation in the original novel. It mostly points to the moralistic voice of the authorial narrator whose voice comes to be replaced by the inanimate figure of the mirror in this scene. The mirror reflects the court-scene in the same panoramic way the narrative voice is supposed to. What then becomes of the narrative voice in this scene? Is the mirror, as the inanimate and ultimate figure of witness, to replace the language or reflect the already distorted perspective of the omniscient narrator? The narratorial voices of the novel vary from the moralistic authorial narrator who remains at a clear distance from the event, to the more engaged narrator who comes close to the rioters but then retreats in fear, and to the narrator who speaks in philosophical musings and moves in and out of the novel at his own leisure.¹⁴⁷ The narrator in translation is continuously skeptical of the

¹⁴⁷ In the article "Dickens's Attitudes in *A Tale of Two Cities*" published in 1970, Sylvère Monod shows how the narrator of *A Tale of Two Cities* zooms in and out of narrative spaces throughout the novel, mostly maintaining the authorial position of omniscient reporter. However, he continues that in other places in the novel, the narrator speaks through other characters and he gives the example of the trial reported "through Jerry Cruncher's imperfect perceptions" (496). Monod detects a strong satirical strain in this method which reveals the confusing language of the law, especially through the "dull and ignorant brain" of Jerry Cruncher (496). The narrator of *A Tale of Two Cities* also shifts his point of view in the same scene from one character to the next. Monod gives the example of Barsad's visit to the wine shop where we hear about the encounter from Madame Defarge's point of view, but also through the consciousness of Barsad as the narrator feels free to move in and out of all these characters and perspectives at once, "so as to leave no psychological corner in the dark." "The other element that varies," Monod continues, "is the degree of the narrator's personal involvement in the tale" (496), from the de-personalized "this history" of the opening of the novel to the occasional use of the philosophical "I" "used for general statements, not in order to convey any impression of the narrator" (497). However, Monod points out that the "all of us" and "some of us" of book 3, chapter 6, are more interesting, for instance in the line: "In seasons of pestilence, some of us will have a secret inclination to die of it. And all of us have like wonders in our breasts, only needing circumstances to evoke them" (qtd. in Monod 497). In such moments, the "author (rather than the narrator) seems to be indulging in introspective analysis under the guise of omniscient generalization" (497). Despite the varying forms that the narrator's voice assumes in this novel, the reader never has real access to any of the characters.

movement of the original narrator. In the translation the multiple narratorial voices that emerge in Dickens, from the characters' to the moralist's perspectives, are condensed in the voice of the skeptical reporter. For instance, in the translation, all the original metaphors that refer to the omniscience of the narrator are made to refer to the only omniscient Author, God, thus reframing the relationship of the novel to sacred history within a different gesture, a reference to *Allāh* or al-Sibā'ī's Muslim God who is authoring the law in this case and determining the perspective of the witnessing.

Later on in the trial of Darnay, the voice of the prosecutor and that of the narrator overlap especially and importantly on the subject of Darnay's spy and the spy's heroism. The voice of the narrator that opens chapter 3 of Book III is rendered in the same exact tone in the body of the translation. The narrator speaks from the position of the prosecutor on the virtues of the patriot Barsad, the servant of Mr. Darnay who decides to tell on Darnay's secret business back and forth between France and England. The translation presents the patriot as "the nation-loving hero" (82). In the original the interrogation scene is presented as follows:

Had he ever been a spy himself? No, he scorned the base insinuation. What did he live upon? His property. Where was his property? He didn't precisely remember where it was. What was it? No business of anybody's. Had he inherited it? Yes, he had. From whom? Distant relation. Very distant? Rather. Ever been in prison? Certainly not. Never in a debtors' prison? Didn't see what that had to do with it. Never in a debtors' prison?—Come, once again. Never? Yes. How many times? Two or three times. Not five or six? Perhaps. Of what profession? Gentleman. Ever been kicked? Might have been. Frequently? No. (75)

The reader can certainly detect the humor in Dickens's description of the interrogation of the witness. The entire trial scene borders on the absurd and as Dickens's readers we are all too familiar with his parodies of the law in most of his fiction, most notably in *Bleak House*. The indefiniteness of the answers is meant to destabilize the category

of witness, but the hope is that the omniscient narrator can always provide a sense of anchoring stability for the reader. Thus while the reader is made to grimace at the ridiculousness of legal language, he or she must believe in the “truthfulness” of the novel’s account, not necessarily on the level of event.

In the translation this interrogation takes the form of a long, quoted, and very theatrical dialogue. Interestingly, towards the end of the dialogue, the quotation marks are replaced with parentheses, as theatrical side-comments. In the original, the narrator explains that Barsad swears “again and again” that he has not been employed to lie about Darnay’s questionable political involvements. In the translation, we get a theatrical moment in a distinctly third person moment of narration, when the narrated oath is delivered to us in parentheses as though it was part of the interrogation, but an oath delivered in the third person nonetheless. We read that Barsad “(swears on oath time and again)” (88).

Although an oath cannot technically be delivered in the third person, the only access we have to Barsad the spy’s word is through the translation’s parenthetical delivery of the oath. The oath given to the reader in translation confuses the original’s conflation of voices. In this particular scene, the narrator impersonates the prosecutor and is extremely close to the event of the trial and to the surface of the mirror that does not reflect him. The translation calls attention to the clearly dialogic aspect of the oath, enveloped in a different voice than the one taking it, in a different language and an even more distant voice. However, the oath is set in parenthetical markers that remind the reader that it is the speech of someone else, and the markers are meant to guard against complete appropriation of the voice of the other character in a moment of oath. Almost the entire reported speech of the original novel is rendered in quoted dialogue in the translation. In that sense, the quoted dialogue and the parentheses

disable the claims of the original narrator's voice and its ability to impersonate any of the characters while remaining invisible throughout.

The figure of the spy in this trial scene is also a manifestation of the role of the narrator in *A Tale of Two Cities*. The narrator, as the invisible spy, can inhabit not just the private spaces of the characters but their bodies as well. Thus the recurrent figures of spying all culminate in the figures of the spies Roger Clay and John Barsad towards the end of the novel.¹⁴⁸ In other words, the figure of the actual spy becomes a meta-textual moment in the novel that reflects on the position of the narratorial spy, slipping in and out of bodies and spaces with utmost ease. For instance, soon after the interrogation scene, the narrator tells us:

Any strongly marked expression of face on the part of a chief actor in a scene of great interest to whom many eyes are directed, will be unconsciously imitated by the spectators. Her forehead was painfully anxious and intent as she gave this evidence, and, in the pauses when she stopped for the Judge to write it down, watched its effect upon the counsel for and against. Among the lookers-on there was the same expression in all quarters of the court; insomuch, that a great majority of the foreheads there, might have been mirrors reflecting the witness. (80)

The mirror placed over the head of the accused encounters the mirrors of the faces in the crowds, as faces take on the expressions of other faces. In this scene of mirroring reflections, faces become reflective surfaces that do not bear their own expressions but only the aspects of the face of the witness. In addition to being the possible objects of the mirror, as it records the faces of the wicked in the courtroom, the spectators of the trial also take on the aspect of the anxious witnesses, in Dickens's well-knit metaphor of theatrical performance and spectatorship.

Earlier I mentioned how al-Sibā'ī wants to engage the reader in the performance of the fiction of revolution and in the novel as fiction by literalizing and

¹⁴⁸ One demonstrative example of spectral presence in the novel is the corpse-digging side-job of Jerry Cruncher as Resurrection-Man, and at the end of the chapter I will return to the importance of this scene in the Arabic translation.

changing the metaphorical structures of the original and inserting guiding footnotes. The theatrical undercurrent that structures the mirror scene intersects with the role of the narrator to further elucidate such a performance in fiction. This parodic courtroom appears as the site for the performance of a play. The performance becomes a meta-textual moment in which the novel reflects on its own tenuous relationship to realistic representation. Dickens's acute sense of humor intentionally exposes the ridiculousness of the legal system and the eye witness account, particularly when Darnay's look-a-like Carton disables all the previous speeches and speculative evidence in another reflection, this time a direct encounter between faces as mirroring surfaces ("Loitering on the way out of court not being allowed, Jerry heard no more: but left them—so like each other in feature, so unlike each other in manner—standing side by side, both reflected in the glass above them" (85)).¹⁴⁹ The translation renders the previous passage as such:

The actor if he comes to an exciting, suspenseful part of the novel/ story and all eyes are on him, then on the faces of the people without even noticing would be the same meaning that is drawn on his face. And when the girl was giving her testimony, intense pain had tattooed her forehead with the look of pity and worry so that that look spread on the foreheads of the people everywhere so that most of these foreheads became mirrors representing the girl. (94)

The translation actually inserts the words "novel" or "story" into the scene of the performance of the trial. The theatricality of narration in the original novel becomes a central preoccupation of the translation wherein the performance of the trial comes to comment on the novel itself. The performance demands that the readers/spectators mirror the sentiments of the main actor on the stage. The main actor, in this scene, is

¹⁴⁹ However, the narrator is quick to tell us that the resemblance between the two was not so final after all:

Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness, when they were compared together, had strengthened), that many of the lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would hardly have thought the two were so alike. (*A Tale of Two Cities* 78)

actually a witness, and in a sense a chief spectator herself. The awkward translation of the previous lines from the original signals that the original is preoccupied with the scene of its own narration and transmittal, like a contagious reaction that tattoos the foreheads of the spectators at the court, or ours, the readers of this novel. The translation boldly points to the “novel” or “story” element of this scene of reflections and identifications and explains that the foreheads mirror the girl’s pain and so represent the girl. The word for represent in the Arabic text is “*yummathilūn*,” which literally means they “act” or they “represent.” The translation finds in this scene of the mirror in the court-scene a figure for its own engagement of the form of the novel and the kind of revolution it would create in Egypt. The actual mirror, as well as the foreheads functioning as mirrors, comes to perform substitution in fiction, wherein a character fills in for a real person in the events of the tale. This is precisely the revolution in and of fiction that al-Sibā’ī finds in *A Tale of Two Cities*. The theatricality of narration in the figure of the inanimate witness, the mirror, becomes revolutionary precisely to the extent that in this performance, everyone represents everyone else and acts accordingly. Such theatricality in narration can also come to tell the tale of Egypt in the translation as the new tale of three cities.

The introduction of Sydney Carton is the culmination of this meta-textual moment. In the original, the narrator tells us:

Allowing for my learned friend’s appearance being careless and slovenly if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise, not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were thus brought into comparison. . . . My Lord inquired of Mr. Stryver (the prisoner’s counsel), whether they were next to try Mr. Carton (name of my learned friend) for treason? But, Mr. Stryver replied to my Lord, no; but he would ask the witness to tell him whether what happened once, might happen twice; whether he would have been so confident if he had seen this illustration of his rashness sooner, whether he would be so confident, having seen it; and more. The upshot of which, was, to smash this witness like a crockery vessel, and shiver his part of the case to useless lumber. (81 – 82)

The first person pronoun of the speaker, which represents the ironic conflation of the voices of the narrator and the lawyer into one voice, is unabashedly prominent in the original scene but completely removed in the translation:

And with what appeared on *his* legal friend of the traces of neglect in his dress and chaos in *his* aspect and also the signs of addiction to alcohol and engrossment in unemployment, there was between the two men such resemblance that it amazed upon comparison all those present for the hearing. ... So the judge asked Mr. Stryver (the name of the lawyer) if he were asking the court with this act to double the accusation of treason on Mr. Carton (the name of his legal friend) as well? My Stryver said no. But he would ask the witness *if it weren't in God's power to duplicate appearance and repeat the image as things and acts are repeated, and had he seen this overwhelming evidence that is hard to break or brush over before this hour, would he still have dared to say with his own complete will that he was that sure of the truth of his testimony?* ... The result was the dismissal of the alibi of the witness and the tearing up of his testimony in every possible way. (97; emphasis mine)

Most of the original passage is actually paraphrased with extra commentary. The first thing the reader notes is the removal of the first person pronoun of the narratorial voice. In other words, the engaged narratorial voice reporting the trial scene in the original through the ironic layering of the voices of the narrator and the lawyer becomes the detached voice of a removed and distant narrator in the translation, who wants to present the scene in an objective and scientific “legal” tongue and in the third person pronoun. In other words, the reporting narrator of the translation actually assumes a conclusive legal language that the original novel parodies. The tone of the translation is more assertive and definitive in presenting the likelihood of the resemblance between two random characters, because God would have wanted it to be so. The translation seems heavily bent on reminding the readers that the two characters are not the same but merely resemble each other. The previous court scene with the famous mirror image over the head of the accused is teeming with multiple reflections and reflective surfaces bouncing off of each other. The introduction of Carton is the penultimate moment of this scene of dizzying resemblances, and the

translation's emphasis on the pre-determined resemblance but not coincidence of the two characters seems to occasion an opening in the original's world of reflections in the trial scene which becomes a kind of a hall of mirrors, wherein the mirror, the inanimate witness to the trial, keeps record of all the faces that have been there and reflects the faces that are there in the said trial at the same time. The translation's language occasions a break in the hall of mirrors and world of reflections in the original novel, one which is also exacerbated by the introduction of God as the penultimate and only credible witness. The secular, inanimate witness of *A Tale of Two Cities* is usurped by the role of God the Creator in the translation.

In this scene of the law, and the law on trial to some extent, where witnesses and the accused reflect each other, and the great performance recalls the fabricated world of a novel, al-Sibā'ī breaks the chain of duplication by pointing to an extreme origin outside the text, to God the creator. Again the look-alike Carton is introduced here to begin the work of substitution which takes place in the realistic mechanisms of novelistic representation, as the language of the novel promises to reproduce the world in its details. The original's "what happened once, might happen twice" becomes a question of whether "God's power to duplicate appearance and repeat the image as things and acts are repeated" could reveal the error of the witness's human judgment. The final simile of comparing the smashing of the witness to the smashing of china is absent from the translation.

The scene of the trial creates a sense of unreality that hovers over the rest of the novel. In Book II, chapter 7, in describing the entourage of the Monseigneur back in Paris, the narrator tells us that "[t]he leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance upon Monseigneur" (112). Al-Sibā'ī translates the line as follows, "And there wasn't in those groups one person who had not been disfigured

by the leprosy of lying and falsehood” (143). In *Dickens and the Twentieth Century* published in 1966, John Gross writes a chapter on *A Tale of Two Cities* in which he relates the reflections in the mirror scene (particularly in the line “Haunted in a most ghastly manner that abominable place would have been, if the glass could ever have rendered back its reflections, as the ocean is one day to give up its dead”) to the general sense of unreality that haunts the entire novel: “Reflections, like ghosts, suggest unreality and self-division, and at the end of the same day ... [i]n front of the mirror, Carton thinks of changing places with Darnay; at the end of the book, he is to take the other’s death upon him” (190). In his essay, Gross contends that the many ghosts and images of death and being buried alive (bearing in mind that Dickens’s original title for the novel was ‘Buried Alive’) that haunt the text reveal the impossibility of resurrection or redemption. And he gives several examples from the text (like the released prisoners of the Bastille who are not overjoyed at their own rescue) as proof of the novel’s obsession with a sense of unreality and haunting that can only lead to death.

While I agree that the sense of unreality is also a premonition of the inevitability of death, I think that there is more to the sense of unreality in Dickens’s novel. Dickens’s multiple narrators in coming close to and staying distant from the object of description also comment on the relationship between realistic narration and the work of substitution. As doubles, Carton and Darnay are also a metaphor for the work of realistic substitution in fiction. For the one to live, the other must die; for the representation to seem real to the reader, the real person in the world must be made absent. Interestingly, death as the condition for realistic representation also resonates with the ideology of the revolution wherein the one becomes the many with no particular distinctions between the individuals involved.

In the previous analysis, I have tried to show how al-Sibā'ī's translation, although in a devoted effort to transmit the original intact, alters the meta-textual moments in which the original novel interrogates its own scene of representation. From the figures of the spies, to the paralysis and absurdity of the legal system, to the reflecting surfaces of people's faces, the translation is heavily preoccupied with explaining and documenting the meanings of all the metaphors of the original text. The translation wants to transform the metaphors (and in some cases literalize them) in order to generate a more active relation to the revolutionary impulse. The multiple insertions in the form of parentheses, footnotes, and additional descriptions reveal an intense feeling of anxiety on the part of the translator who could not help but intervene to stop the ramblings of metaphor.

The possibly infinite reflections in the court-scene echo the destabilizing logic of comparison with which the book begins and with which it will tragically end. The possibly infinite reference of metaphor runs parallel to the multiple reflections in the mirror. For the mirror in *A Tale of Two Cities* does not really report on the scene of the trial, which remains not fully documented in the novel, but traps images of faces on and beneath its surface. In a sense, it keeps a log of the faces that have been through there, importantly placing them over the head of the accused and allotting them the same fate in an eventual, senseless death. The mirror thus provides further commentary on the purpose of a realistic narrative and on the impossibility of telling it like it is, because the mirror will reveal what a human witness, even the all-knowing narrator, could not possibly see. Later on in the novel, this fear of the infinite repetition of images in reflections culminates in the fear of revolution as a contagious outbreak that can make its way across borders (from Paris to London). Because the revolution is motivated by the equality among the revolutionaries, it becomes

associated with the multiplication of the image in the mirror and in realistic representation. One of the ways in which Dickens tries to reign in this contagion is via the figure of the narrator whose moralistic interventions are meant to be a form of engagement. The narrator's intended recuperative presence does not just entail a sense of involvement in the event; rather, this particular form of presence involves speaking to the vaster human repercussions of sanctioned death (the guillotine and the Terror). The translation dismantles this last form of narratorial presence by continuously breaking the referential world of the narrator and pointing elsewhere beyond the original text and its logic of comparison, giving the text an almost divine foothold and a sense of stability that is determined by God and not by the narrator.

In the scene of the courtroom, we learn that the world is determined by the word of the spy, that figure lurking in the dark recording the "truth." This truth is easily upset, however, by the look-alikes and by the reflections. The similarities between the images create a cyclical sense of repetition that cannot be broken, much like, as we will see, the violence of the revolution. The similarity between all the people in the revolution, for instance, make it impossible for Lucy to elicit the compassion of Madame Defarge, because at the end, Darnay is not different from his aristocratic family, even if he returned to Paris to save the man who works for his family and not his family inheritance. But al-Sibā'ī reads the meta-textual moment in the trial scene, and understands not only the impossibility of breaking the cycle of violence but also the impossibility of breaking out of a realistic narrative. If the narrator can come so close to the event so as to become contaminated by it, how can the fictional narrative ever reach a conclusive end? How do we ensure that the

repetition inherent in the structure of revolutions and in that of fiction can ever be stopped?¹⁵⁰

The effort to contain the narrative which has suddenly slipped out of the hands of the narrator is exaggerated in *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which the position of narrator is clearly one of moralistic historian who is telling us what happened in the past and has thus already ended at the time of narration. For instance, we read the following narratorial stance at the beginning of Chapter XV of Book III, “The Footsteps Die Out Forever:”

Along the Paris streets, the death-carts rumble, hollow and harsh. Six tumbrils carry the day’s wine to La Guillotine. All the devouring and insatiate Monsters imagined since imagination could record itself, are fused in the one realisation, Guillotine. And yet there is not in France, with its rich variety of soil and climate, a blade, a leaf, a root, a sprig, a peppercorn, which will grow to maturity under conditions more certain than those that have produced this horror. *Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious license and oppression over again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.* (362; emphasis mine)

In one of the most distinctly moralistic moments of the novel, the narrator arrives at a theory of history derived from the inevitable threat of repetition in revolution.

Violence breeds violence, and the cycle will only repeat itself under similar circumstances. The image of the seed of oppression recalls the seed of the “Translator’s Word” that opens *Qiṣat Madinatayn*. But here the image of the seed is a negative one, in a theory of history as endless repetition of violence in reaction to oppressive social structures. The natural imagery that al-Sibā‘ī posits in his introduction to the translation is here implanted in the social realm. The idealistic tone of the “Translator’s Word” is thus brought down to social reality in *A Tale of Two*

¹⁵⁰ Daniel Stout in “Nothing Personal: Decapitating Character in *A Tale of Two Cities*” maintains that the novel replicates

what de Tocqueville calls ... ‘the similarity of institutions.’ The similarity between the aristocracy and the Republic that replaced it lies in their identical commitment to a naturalized political order, in which rights are ordained by—and only by—birth. This version of entitlement will be described by the novel’s most antirevolutionary character, the Marquis d’Evrémonde, as ‘natural destiny.’ (34)

Cities, wherein the image of the seed will not yield the fruit of revolution as al-Sibā‘ī would have it, but would repeat the violence inherent in revolution because revolution is not natural here; it is a historical uprising against oppressive social structures. The voice of the *engagé* narrator, the moralistic commentator who can come dangerously close to events and then easily disentangle himself from them, is remarkably absent in the translation. Of course the chapter from which this last quotation is taken is not included in the translation I am working with, but al-Sibā‘ī nevertheless rewrote the image of the seed in his introduction and left it there. And the translation, as it stands now as an incomplete text, presents the seed in natural botanic imagery that signals life and rebirth, rather than perpetual violence occasioned by revolution and by the incessant return (and regrowth) of oppressive structures. When Sydney Carton is introduced, I remarked on how the translation pulls out of the world of replicas in a reference to God the ultimate creator of these images. The translation also removes the moralistic tone of the narrator and renders most moments of his intimate and personal involvement in events in the third, distant narrative voice of a reporter. The last quotation, although absent from the translation, speaks to the novel’s entrapment in reflections both in the world of its own fictional tale and in its portrayal of revolution. In the next section, I will read specific moments of the description of the revolution and its violence in the translation to try and ascertain whether al-Sibā‘ī maintains the absence of the moralistic narratorial voice throughout and whether the absence of the final chapters could actually be read as a broader gesture of omission on his part. This gesture would seek to break out of the cycle of repetition that *A Tale of Two Cities*, despite its best efforts in the final sacrificial scene, remains trapped in.

The Revolution Begins, as Planned

The event in *A Tale of Two Cities* is carefully premeditated, especially when it is the revolution.¹⁵¹ The narrative voice preempts the coming of the revolution in a figural language mostly set off by the work of metaphor. These figural predictions substitute the work of metaphor for the real thing, at least before the real event actually takes place. In this sense, the narrative strategy of containment, like that of *Robinson Crusoe*, serves to literally keep a lid on things, and to imagine some form of control over the event most representative of collective madness, the revolution.¹⁵² Perhaps the most famous such figural prediction happens in chapter five of Book I with the spilling of the wine on Rue Saint Antoine. The original narrator, in an eye witness tone, reports:

...and a gloom gathered on the scene that appeared more natural to it than sunshine. The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a nightcap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger

¹⁵¹ In his 1940 review of Dickens's novel entitled "Charles Dickens," George Orwell writes: The one thing that everyone who has read *A Tale of Two Cities* remembers is the Reign of Terror. The whole book is dominated by the guillotine — tumbrils thundering to and fro, bloody knives, heads bouncing into the basket, and sinister old women knitting as they watch. Actually these scenes only occupy a few chapters, but they are written with terrible intensity, and the rest of the book is rather slow going. (Orwell's review of Dickens is available online at http://orwell.ru/library/reviews/dickens/english/e_chd)

¹⁵² In his 1986 book *The City of Dickens*, Alexander Welsh reads this form of control in the novel as a commentary on what Dickens understood to be poetic justice. He quotes from a letter Dickens wrote to the novelist Bulwer-Lytton about *A Tale of Two Cities* in which Dickens writes that he has never respected "that canon of fiction which forbids the interposition of accident in such a case as Madam Defarge's death. Where the accident is inseparable from the passion and emotion of the character ... it seems to me to become, as it were, an act of divine justice" (qtd. in Welsh 124). Welsh explains, "Madame Defarge is damned because a Madame Defarge deserves to be damned; and that as long as the novelist has control over events, she shall be damned in art" (124). Welsh continues that Dickens makes us forget that there are more people as blameless as Darnay who meet such fates in the Revolution because the "suspense of the action has been built up entirely around the expectation and doubt that Lucie and Charles will be saved ... the fiction [Dickens] has composed tells us to be happy that those who are elected are indeed saved" (128).

dipped in muddy wine-lees—BLOOD. *The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.*¹⁵³ (37 – 38; emphasis mine)

The final line of the previous quote points to the revolution to come, when the spilled wine would become blood. In the translation we read this section as follows:

[T]hen the darkness of loneliness thickened on the place and was more befitting of the place than the light of the sun. And the wine was red. And the narrow road in the area of Saint Antoine was dyed in its red where the wine had spilled. And so were many palms and feet and soles and faces dyed with it too. And so were the edges of the wood logs that the hand of the sawman had abandoned. And the forehead of the woman with the child was dyed too when she wrapped the handkerchief (that she had dipped in the wine) around her head a second time. And the mouths of those who had rushed to the pieces of the cask were polluted so that they looked like the mouths of wild, preying wolves. And from amidst the crowd a tall joker [the exact word here is *al-majān* in Arabic which also refers to a promiscuous person] arose with his face polluted and on his head a saddlebag that he had made into a hat that revealed more of his head than it covered and he wrote with his finger covered in muddy wine on the wall those two words: rents-blood. *It is as though God had willed it that the time was to come when the other wine (blood) will be shed so that many men would be dyed by its redness.* (36; emphasis mine)

Some of the words like nightcap are explained extensively to an Arab reader who is not familiar with such a thing. However, the word in Arabic that al-Sibā‘ī uses for “stain” is “*ikhtaḍaba*” meaning “to be dyed in,” emphasizing an active decision to take on or be completely immersed in a new color, whose traces might outlive those of a regular stain. The verb soon becomes to pollute, however. The mouths are polluted and not merely stained by the red. The people look like preying wolves and the tall man (whose inscription on the wall reveals the metaphor of the wine as blood)

¹⁵³ Taylor Stoehr in 1965 *Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965, 1-33) reads this particular scene as exemplary of the novel's “ultra-Dickensian” qualities (qtd. in Ruth Glancy, *Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities: A Sourcebook* 54). Stoehr devotes his reading to the prominence of the object in the Wine spill scene, concluding that a close reading of the scene reveals that: “even in the delineation of character Dickens depends on the physical setting, the *mise-en-scène*, the concrete object, for his favorite effects ... it is the objects that have character ... In other passages the people derive much of their special kind of life from the things which invariable accompany them” (qtd. in Glancy 70). He continues to write that the “‘unnecessary details’ and ‘needless ramifications’ fill up this world, and whether needless or not they constrain and determine action as the pebbles of a gravelly soil at once guide and hinder the searching roots” (qtd. in Glancy 71).

is described as a promiscuous being rather than merely a joker. The other wine, the blood, would spill on the streets because God had willed it that the time for such spill had come. Again in a reference to God, al-Sibā‘ī undoes the logic of comparison that enables the work of metaphor in the novel. The metaphor of the spilled wine is explained and then referred to the intervention of God, not the figural language of the narrator. A few pages later, the original continues with the following premonition:

For, the time was to come, when the gaunt scarecrows of that region should have watched the lamplighter, in their idleness and hunger, so long, as to conceive the idea of improving on his method, and hauling up men by those ropes and pulleys, to flare upon the darkness of their condition. But, the time was not come yet; and every wind that blew over France shook the rags of the scarecrows in vain, for the birds, fine of song and feather, took no warning.
(39)

The time of the revolution “was to come,” and more precisely the time of the guillotine was to come. The time was not here yet, and as hard as the wind of the revolution blew, those who were threatened by it still clung to power. The translation changes the tense of the promised time, the time to come, as such:

And the time *had come* when the people of that street, the hungry and the emaciated, were contemplating the light of the street lanterns and thinking of adjusting its work and improving its ways such that they would hang some people instead of these lanterns *so as to make out of their crucified bodies another kind of lantern that sheds light over the darkness of their suffering, but the time for that hadn't come yet*. France was then a field with rich, luxurious birds ... and its scarecrows (the plural of scarecrow and it means a statue of wood and cloth to scare off birds so they fly off the tree branches to safe-keep its fruits and the general public calls it the father of winds) the hungry, wasted people in its ragged clothes. And these birds were not afraid of the scarecrows, nor did they heed them. In vain the winds blew on France would shake the *aṭmār* [the verb *ṭamara* means to bury and hide, and the noun *aṭmār* means the ragged clothing of the poor; however, it can also refer to landfills that are being buried and filled] of these scarecrows but the birds with the beautiful singing and elegant feather did not pay attention and did not care.
(39)

The first thing the reader notices is the lengthier rendition of the original passage.

More importantly, the time for the revolution, in the translation, has already come.

For a very astute translator, it is difficult to imagine that the change in the tense of

such an important passage is merely fortuitous. In the translation, the time had already come and was not still to come. The hungry people are already contemplating how the lanterns work, and al-Sibā‘ī explains the original metaphor fully and elaborately in his translation. The people will hang other people instead of the lanterns, and not the rich, but the poor and hungry people will be hung up, and their crucified bodies (a Christian image perhaps suggesting a sacrificial status of the hung poor) would become a different kind of lantern, shedding light on the darkness of their own miserable conditions (39). In a curious insertion, the previous metaphor of the poor people as scarecrows is further elaborated. France is a field of rich birds, and the scarecrows, as explained in the parenthetical note, are the poor people. Their *aṭmār* are constantly blown in the wind but the rattle does not succeed in warning the rich birds. The word *aṭmār* refers to threadbare clothes of the deprived and as a verb, *ṭamara* implies to bury something and hide it so it is no longer recognized or found.¹⁵⁴ The perhaps unintentional duality of the meaning of this last word emphasizes two things: first, the premonition that the poor in the field will soon take over the whole of France, and second, the people as scarecrows are buried alive and as such have become indistinguishable. Thus when Defarge tells Gaspard to stop writing on the walls with the wine, saying “name the wine wine, and don’t go beyond that” (40), al-Sibā‘ī seems to take that warning to heart. The narratorial voice of the translator seems to internalize this call to render meaning literal and to (mis)read the work of metaphor in the original. However, unlike Defarge who is trying to suppress the

¹⁵⁴ In a footnote in chapter 15, book II of the translation, when we read about how the coins of Mme Defarge are distorted and disguised (and have thus become unrecognizable) in a similar way to the people who are represented as coins to be exchanged, al-Sibā‘ī explains that the original narrator intended to describe the people of that neighborhood “and he likened them to coins because God made them and their image like the maker of coins manufactures his coins” (55). He also gives the grammatical functions of words in the sentence to explain to the readers how to read without inflections in the text. He misreads the metaphor and leaves out the important part on the habitual and indifferent exchange of one coin for another.

metaphorical insinuations of the spilled wine, the translation literalizes metaphor to make the revolutionary meaning more explicit.

The fear of metaphor, in al-Sibā'ī's translation, is also a fear of the loss of singularity and individual identification. In the moment of revolution, and under the threat of losing the singular in the name of the collective, al-Sibā'ī finds the most threatening metaphors the ones that reduce the human to the same. In Chapter 9 of Book II, he continues to rewrite the figural language of the original in the description of the Marquis and his impending death, which will mark the beginning of the revolution.¹⁵⁵ Al-Sibā'ī writes that the Marquis's face is "like the mask sculpted

¹⁵⁵ Garrett Stewart reads this scene in his 1984 book *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* in relation to Dickens's use of apocalyptic time in the novel, and particularly to how Dickens uses syntax to create a relationship of continuity between the life and death. He relates the assassination of the Marquis directly to the execution of Carton who becomes "scapegoat of the Terror." He analyses the death scene of the Marquis as such:

With the Marquis's affectless sly ferocity and his heart of stone, it is only appropriate for prose to discover him unruffled by death, yet already stiffened in its aftermath. The word death is never mentioned, but the Gorgon of the ancestral mansion has found "the stone face for which it had waited through about two hundred years" (II, ch. 9) ... The marquis's face never more than a fine mask, the "it" to which it has degenerated is merely the epitomizing gist of its living nature, rigidified from within, until now, not by fear but by callousness. The final word in that serial syntax ["petrified"] replaying the murder thus negotiates by ambiguity another familiar Dickensian interval (here only by retrospect and implication) between vanishing life and finality. *The idiomatic reading of "petrified" in which an extremity of feeling would bring on a catalepsy of terror, a normative human reaction in the face of this sudden mortal violence, seems immediately absorbed into and ruled out by the more literal understanding of the term.* The moral rigor mortis of the aristocracy is thus prolonged uninterruptedly into death from a life of chilling hauteur. The ultimate stylistic effect achieved by the reiterated severance of the "it"—stony face detached from stabbed torso—is to offer up the Marquis, as inaugural victim of the Terror, to that epidemic of decapitation that will be rife in the land with the coming of la Guillotine. (84; emphasis mine)

The literal meaning of the word "petrified"—turned into stone—which the passage also plays on extends the same qualities of the aristocracy from life into death. Stewart reads death as the beginning of apocalyptic time in the novel. Throughout he argues that Dickens uses the images of flooding and drowning to create an effect of the Flood from Genesis:

With the return of the marquis to a stone-cold gargoyle in the dead edifice of his world, Dickens begins the transformation from historical time into apocalyptic time, the fixation of the former with moribund stasis along with the release of the latter into a set of images derived from the Flood in Genesis. This is the ultimate manner, too, in which the first dramatic death scene in the novel is channelled directly into, and filtered clean by, the sacrificial (and literal) decapitation of the hero, Carton, where the apocalypse images of the flood that follow from the marquis's murder are internalized as the private mind's "drowning" vision. It is a vision compressed and, in the hero's access to narrative grace, prophetic. (85)

Stewart traces how the metaphor of the flood is internalized in the figure of Carton the ultimate sacrifice and who extends this idea of apocalyptic time, of a time that doesn't stop, beyond death in the novel. In my future work, I would also be interested in placing Stewart's reading in conversation with

around the aspect of a human face” (162), rewriting the original’s description of the face “like a fine mask.” At this point in the original, the Marquis is described as “a refined tiger” that “looked like some enchanted marquis of the impenitently wicked sort in story.”

Al-Sibā‘ī also comments on the popularity of this figure in stories, and the novel continues with its meta-textual critique particularly here in its description of the world right outside the Marquis’s castle. We read in the original:

The stone faces on the outer walls stared blindly at the black night for three heavy hours; for three heavy hours, the horses in the stables rattled at their racks, the dogs barked, and the owl made a noise with very little resemblance in it to the noise conventionally assigned to the owl by men-poets. But it is the obstinate custom of such creatures hardly ever to say what is set down for them. (131)

The fear of the erasure of the singular takes on another figure of an inhuman witness in this context. The translation de-personifies the statues into images of faces that overlook the darkness rather than actively stare at it. The description in the translation continues as such, “The owl emits a sound that is antagonistic to what the poets describe her voice to be in their poems. But this is the manner of this stubborn bird to refuse to recite what the poets compose for her” (170). The reader cannot read past the significance of this last line for the translation process in general. The image of the stubborn owl is a significant paradigmatic figure for the translator, who in this case might be expected to render the original as it is but nonetheless refuses to. The owl which refuses to mime the voice attributed to it by the poets parallels the figure of the translator (here particularly al-Sibā‘ī) who refuses to mime the metaphors of the original text. At the risk of reading too much into the metaphor, suffice it to say here

the reference to *Allāh* in the translation in a broader study of the uses of Christianity and Islam in both texts.

that the meta-textual description of the marquis as a tiger-like figure in stories compels the reader to stop momentarily at the figure of the owl that refuses to recite what the poets have composed for her and echo the voice they have given her.¹⁵⁶

Figure Fever: Contagious Metaphor

In Chapter 16 of Book II, the narrator zooms out quite dramatically to a view of the whole of France. Interestingly, in this move away from the particular sites of action in the novel, the narrator can see all of the previous metaphorical details as parts of the larger fabric of France and of the world at large. In the original, we read:

Chateau and hut, stone face and dangling figure, the red stain on the stone floor, and the pure water in the village well—thousands of acres of land—a whole province of France—all France itself—lay under the night sky, concentrated into a faint hair-breadth line. *So does a whole world, with all its*

¹⁵⁶ The translation continues to be preoccupied with the figure of the owl which refuses to simply mime the voice of the European text but wants to produce its own. As such, the text is full of footnotes that refer to Arab poets and Arabic literature in an attempt to recast the role of the translator as more than a transmitter and more like the subversive owl. For instance, in the scene when the people of the village are gathered around the fountain, looking depressed but in arms, the narrator tells us what is going to happen again in figural language. The narrator asks,

What did all this portend, and what portended the swift hoisting-up of Monsieur Gabelle behind a servant on horseback, and the conveying away of the said Gabelle (double-laden though the horse was), at a gallop, like a new version of the German ballad of Leonora? It portended that there was one stone face too many, up at the chateau. The Gorgon had surveyed the building again in the night, and had added the one stone face wanting; the stone face for which it had waited through about two hundred years. (133)

In answer to the question about the meaning behind the gathering of the armed people, the narrator provides a figural answer. The translation of this answer is as such:

the meaning of this is that a new stone face had been added to the faces of the statues and the head of the ghoulish that had visited the castle that night had come again and added to the stone faces of the place a new face—the one that the castle had been waiting for since its initial building—for 200 years. (172)

The face of course is that of the Marquis, which looked like a mask that had turned to stone in a moment of fear. Notice that the inter-textual reference to Leonora is removed from the translation and is rather compensated for at different moments with references to poetic lines of famous Arab poets. The footnotes in the translation are rich in poetic lines, some attributed to authors and others freestanding in the text. There are also two poetic insertions in the actual text of the translation. Similar to al-Bustānī's numerous poetic lines in his translation of *Robinson Crusoe* which undo the figural work of the original, the poetic insertions here recall possible relationships between this translated text and some famous Arabic authors such as Ibn el Rūmy, one of al-Sibā'ī's all-time favorite poets as well as explain the metaphorical references of the original in familiar poetic figures. There is a knife in the figure's body with the following inscription on the stilt: "Drive him in the most violent of ways to his grave – this is from Jacques" (172-3). In the translation, this last line is rendered in massive font.

greatnesses and littlenesses, lie in a twinkling star. And as mere human knowledge can split a ray of light and analyse the manner of its composition, so, sublimer intelligences may read in the feeble shining of this earth of ours, every thought and act, every vice and virtue, of every responsible creature on it. (178; emphasis mine)

The “sublimer intelligence” of the narrative voice in this particular moment compares the distant view of France to an even further paradigmatic view of the whole world. Such philosophical musing on the part of the original narrator takes off from the moment of the revolution but then speaks to a philosophical condition of man. This move out of the narrow corners of the text to a spatial position outside of earth mirrors al-Sibā‘ī’s own references to God, which are intended to break the metaphorical (textual) logic of the original novel. However, in this particular example when the original narrator leaves the site of the tale to a distant point from which he can speak of the world as a whole and not just of Revolutionary France, we read in the translation:

And in the time we are talking about the castle and the hut and the stone face and the hanging ghost and the painted room and the crystal eye and the level, vast land and the open welcoming field and the great region and foreign kingdom [footnote: France] all in the heart of the thick dark of the welcoming night ... had dwindled as though into a thread or a hair. And so the huge world and all that it is in it big and small is realized in that captivating planet and contained by that shaky, blinking star. And as human science with all its despicable limitations can analyze the common thing and know its constitution so can the divine mind ... read in a dull flash this whole sphere on whose edges we stand [he uses the word *adīmiha* for edges, and the word *adīm* refers to the outlines that appear from the heaven or the earth from a distance] and every thought that goes through a person’s mind, or is emitted by any tongue, or made by any hands. (73)

Clearly the paraphrased translation of the original passage is remarkably complex. It is hard to say whether al-Sibā‘ī actually misunderstood the image of the original, or if he intended to extend the position of the all-knowing narrator to its limit and transcend it to God or the divine mind, the Absolute omniscient narrator. The difficulty lies in identifying the planet which he describes so intensely. It seems as

though the world which is contained and realized in this captivating planet is somewhere while earth is somewhere else. The planet contains all that belongs to this world, even in a blinking star, which might seem small but in reality holds this world within it. Thus while the original narrator speaks metaphorically of how tiny planets can contain whole worlds, the narrator in translation restricts this metaphor to the realm of our world and our earth. He continues to tell us that human knowledge will always be inadequate and fall short of a full understanding of this planet. In other words, the mean human sciences can understand light, but they can never assume a position distant enough to understand the world and all of human action. The “sublimar intelligence” of the original is the divine mind of the translation.

The point of this adaptation of the position of the narrator is less al-Sibā'ī's religious orientation and more a radical interrogation of the assumptions of the narrative voice in Dickens' novel. The original narrator, blatantly associating himself with the sublimer minds that can see a world in one glance from the right kind of distance, can also contain all the metaphorical logic of the text in this view from the outside. All the metaphors that are combined in his field of vision (the castle, the blood stain, the stone face, the dangling figure) are thus placed within the control of their creator and given their ultimate meaning in that respect. The narrator can read all the thoughts and movements of the characters in the world of the novel, as though that world existed in thread-view independent of his intervention in it. Al-Sibā'ī's narrator in translation, on the other hand, strips the former of his privileged omniscience.

The translation actually begins with “in the time we are talking about,” already placing the extended image of the all-knowing narrator, who is on the brink of zooming so far out into the galaxy, in a specific context. It also displaces the distant position of the narrator into that of the divine, godly mind that will always outdo the

mean human sciences, and the narrator's license to walk in and out of narrative landscapes. In other words, the characters in the novel are not the people of the world, and the perspective of the novel is not that of the whole world, and the work of metaphor has a creator and as such can be infinitely interrogated and interrupted.

However, the metaphorical logic of the original proves to be contagious. A few pages after the previous quotation, we read one of the famous speeches of Madame Defarge:

“I tell thee,” said madame, extending her right hand, for emphasis, “that although it is a long time on the road, it is on the road and coming. I tell thee it never retreats, and never stops. I tell thee it is always advancing. Look around and consider the lives of all the world that we know, consider the faces of all the world that we know, consider the rage and discontent to which the *Jacquerie* addresses itself with more and more of certainty every hour. Can such things last? Bah! I mock you.” (180)

The translation of this paragraph inserts a lot of details to emphasize the coming of death and not just that of the revolution. There are multiple staccato lines inserted, all meaning that every journey has a destination and every path an end, and the coming of death, which might seem slow, is actually always in a hurry. Then there is the insertion of this curious metaphor: “like the sun which you might think is standing still, but it is really devouring the center and most of the open space and folding the embroidered dress of the sky” (77). This particular metaphorical insertion is remarkable in that again it moves the narrative to a point outside the narrative, but this time not to a religious perspective. The sun which might seem still is actually eating up all of outer space and folding the sky into the image we perceive of it. The sun, which renders all things on earth visible, renders this comparison between death and the sun legible as well. The light of the sun also renders all metaphors in that sense legible and possible. It is not the perspective of the narrator that sheds light on the events of the novel, instructing the reader in life lessons derived from the example of

bad revolution; rather, the sun as the natural source of light makes such a perspective and any consequent instruction possible at all.

Thus, al-Sibā'ī begins to insert his own metaphors into the body of the translation in addition to multiple footnotes to explain the original's metaphors. For instance, in the highly idiomatic translation of the beginning of Chapter 21, "Echoing Footsteps," al-Sibā'ī inserts many footnotes to explain the grammatical inflections of the sentences so as to render the ideas legible. In the original, for example, we read the following descriptive allusion to Lucy's hair: "Even when golden hair, like her own, lay in a halo on a pillow round the worn face of a little boy" (210). The sick boy, whose hair is like his mother's, appears to have a golden halo around his head as he is slowly waning. In the translation, we read the following:

And when God dictated that hair like her hair would lean on the pillow, shining like a twinkling planet, surrounded like a halo a face that resembled the moon in the last days of the lunar month eaten and one that disease had insisted on so it turned it from the pink of roses to the yellow of saffron. (127)

There is clearly a poetic exaggeration of Lucy's sorrow here. Like the twinkling star that holds a whole world in its dull light, her son's hair (much like her own) shines on the pillow. It enshrines a face that resembles a moon. The exaggerated rhetoric is not unfamiliar to classical Arabic literature, in which al-Sibā'ī is thoroughly trained.

However, one cannot help but notice the return of the figure of the star which is reminiscent of the narratorial distance from the event of the novel, a distance that makes it possible to place the event in a moralistic narrative. The face now twinkling like a planet in the distance is meant to rewrite the initial distance of the original narrator who is able to see the whole world condensed into thread-view and into a planet in his line of vision. The thread-view of the narrator links all the events of the novel together in a moralistic lesson about history and personal tragedy, for in this chapter the description of Lucy's own personal tragedy is coupled with the public,

political event of the revolution budding in the street of Saint Antoine. Al-Sibā'ī retorts to the image of the planet because the original novel combines the two tragic events: the sorrow of Lucy over the loss of her son and the string of deaths initiated by the rampant violence of the Revolution.

At the end of the section and in a clarifying footnote, we read “all this description points to the fact that the parents had a boy and he died young.” The difference in the explanation of this metaphor is that here, al-Sibā'ī is explaining metaphorical references with more metaphors, and then adding footnotes to explain his own metaphors. The reference to the disease that killed Lucy's son is not fortuitous as there is clearly an identifiable form of contamination in al-Sibā'ī's text as well. Curiously, now al-Sibā'ī is condensing the original whose descriptions he has exaggerated in his own translation.

The echoes that Lucy hears in this chapter are of footsteps, ones stained in blood and far away from her house back in England. The translation reads:

God did not separate this time from the wild, crazy, footsteps coming down and respecting whatever life they wanted and getting rid of another when they wanted and getting dyed in blood so that nothing could remove that dyed, bloody stain – these were the footsteps that rose madly in Saint Antoine as far away as possible from the group sitting by the dark window in London. (133)

There is a footnote inserted before “respecting” in reference to the scarecrows, which only come up in the following paragraph. While this may be a mere typo, it is nevertheless an interesting one because it appears as a random attempt to interrupt and control the flow of the narrative. The footnote explains that the revolutionaries resemble the scarecrows in trying to scare off the princes. However, the paragraph right after describes the scarecrows rioting the next day in Paris. And this paragraph is so difficult to understand in the translation that al-Sibā'ī feels compelled to define

almost every other word in a footnote, and the reader is compelled to wonder why the translator would use such difficult language (133).

It would seem then that the original's descriptions of the (coming of) the revolution necessarily contaminate the translation and particularly its narrative voice, who then complicates the presentation of events even further with obsessive insertions and explanations. In this context, I would like to examine this contamination in the translation of the passage of Chapter 24, "Drawn to the Loadstone Rock" in which the Monseigneur and the native British orthodoxy describe the revolution as the

only harvest ever known under the skies that had not been sown—as if nothing had ever been done, or omitted to be done, that had led to it—as if observers of the wretched millions in France, and of the misused and perverted resources that should have made them prosperous, had not seen it inevitably coming, years before, and had not in plain words recorded what they saw. Such vapouring, combined with the extravagant plots of Monseigneur for the restoration of a state of things that had utterly exhausted itself, and worn out Heaven and earth as well as itself, was hard to be endured without some remonstrance by any sane man who knew the truth. (235)

In one of the rather rare moments in the novel, the authorial narrator seems to sympathize with the revolutionaries.¹⁵⁷ The account of the inevitable eruption of the revolution as it is the result of a history of oppression is rich in Dickensian humor. However, the insistence on the "truth" behind the revolution is not entirely a humorous gesture. The translation of the last passage is completely idiomatic, and relayed with heightened emotion. The translated passage is made up of short sentences rendered in rhymes and creating a rhythmic pattern to the description of the revolution. Al-Sibā'ī paraphrases:

as if those shrewd people didn't look at the revolution but as an infant in the womb of time so they see her coming and behind her the curtain of the

¹⁵⁷ The debate on whether Dickens is ultimately sympathetic to the revolution or not continues until today. I will address some of it through an analysis of the final scene of the novel later on in the chapter. For the purposes of the discussion here, however, I am not interested in Dickens's politics per se as I am in how *A Tale of Two Cities* occasionally appears sympathetic with those trapped in a system of oppression.

unknown as though they didn't take what they saw and got familiar with seeing in the newspapers seriously. (171)¹⁵⁸

The translation continues describing the exile, the Monseigneur, who was still promising to wreak havoc and torture on the low bastards and to throw them down from the highest heights so that they would know no way to rise up ever again. He wanted “to restore to the old and the young what the mob has destroyed and maybe he felt that it would be restored anew what had been ruined and had ruined the earth and almost the sky.” The translation highlights the naivety of the Monseigneur in his conviction that he could still put a halt to a kind of death that will not stop spreading. The dramatic passage is then appended with the following poetic line on the regretful youth: “after that age came days that dragged them/ and flew off with that previous kind of living like a mythical bird [the suggestion is that this kind of bird has no recognizable body and is thus unknown and cannot be found]” (171).

Such “lies and delusions ... that don't find a way to reach the sane” make up the buzzing thoughts in Darnay's mind. The translation, like the original, brings us back to the particular urgency of Darnay's condition, as he mulls over returning to France to help the innocent servant of his family who has been arrested by the revolutionaries. However, the elaborations of the translation make it difficult to distinguish between the crushed hopes and dreams of the Monseigneur and those of the revolutionaries. The Monseigneur's naïve fantasy of returning to a time before the Revolution are clearly mocked in the translation; however, in the poetic insertion, the people dragged into this kind of life (of perpetual chaos and death) seem to be the revolutionaries themselves, and the lies and delusions also concern their aspirations and hopes for the revolution. In this moment, al-Sibā'ī seems more like Dickens, in

¹⁵⁸ “كأن المتبصرين هؤلاء لم ينظروا الى الثورة وهي بعد جنين في بطن الدهر فيروها قادمة ستر الغيب وكأنهم لم يسجلوا على الصحف ما رأوا وأنسوا.”

approaching the revolution as a cycle of repetitive violence. But *Qiṣat Madinatayn* is more preoccupied with the violent repetitions of fictional representation of revolution. After all, *Qiṣat* stages the original novel's representational language as its ultimate event, and not the French Revolution. Although *Qiṣat* wants to render the original's revolutionary impulse more positive and more explicit for a Cairene reader, it nevertheless contracts some of the original's wariness of revolution and treats it in different metaphors, as becomes apparent in the next section.

Contracting the Revolution

The reference to the disease that destroys Lucy's youth returns in another destructive contamination, namely death in Revolution. The translation contracts its own destructive contamination in its inserted metaphors and excessive explanations in footnotes. However, it also contracts the original's anxiety *about* contamination. For instance, in the translation of Chapter 4 of Book III, we read that one rioter has contracted a form of madness (*lawthah*) from the age itself, a time when madness seems more like reason, "so that some of those wretched brats would rush to the guillotine as though longing for it, infatuated by it and yearning for it" (39).¹⁵⁹ In a footnote, al-Sibā'ī defines *lawthah* as a "confusion in the brain that approximates a condition of madness" (39). The wretched brat does not run to his death in an attempt to show off, but because he has contracted the madness of the age. The time of the

¹⁵⁹ In the original novel, we have the following description, without any reference to the longing for the guillotine:

Doctor Manette did not return until the morning of the fourth day of his absence. So much of what had happened in that dreadful time as could be kept from the knowledge of Lucy was so well concealed from her, that not until long afterwards, when France and she were far apart, did she know that eleven hundred defenceless prisoners of both sexes and all ages had been killed by the populace; that four days and nights had been darkened by this deed of horror; and that the air around her had been tainted by the slain. She only knew that there had been an attack upon the prisons, that all political prisoners had been in danger, and that some had been dragged out by the crowd and murdered. (267)

Revolution is comparable to the times of plagues when the contaminated would crave the curing medicine. With its strange and almost cryptic qualities, the Revolution “hides what it hides until it can extract findings from the facts and so reappear, and from the incidents, find someone to spread it so it can spread” (39).

The Revolution is described as an epidemic, and the cure is the guillotine. In other words, the translation seems to be echoing the underlying conviction of the original that the repetitive cycle in Revolution as in death is unbreakable. The original novel imagines that the end of the fever of the revolt lies in death by the same instrument that defines this revolt. The original novel describes the feverish revolution as such:

There was no pause, no pity, no peace, no interval of relenting rest, no measurement of time. Though days and nights circled as regularly as when time was young, and the evening and morning were the first day, other count of time there was none. Hold of it was lost in the raging fever of a nation, as it is in the fever of one patient. . . . And yet, observing the strange law of contradiction which obtains in all such cases, the time was long, while it flamed by so fast. . . . these things became the established order and nature of appointed things, and seemed to be ancient usage before they were many weeks old. Above all, one hideous figure grew as familiar as if it had been before the general gaze from the foundations of the world—the figure of the sharp female called La Guillotine. (270 – 271)

In one of the most critical passages that reflect the novel’s attitude towards the revolution, the moralistic narrator emerges most strikingly. The disengaged narrator who slips out of the immediate context of the novel and of the revolution with such ease attempts to make up for some of this disengagement in moralistic sentences that address the unfair deaths and out-of-control violence of the revolution. In this newly established order, time can no longer be measured because it is consumed by the fever of a nation as it is with a patient stricken with fever. The analogy between the nation and the patient is one of the subtle ways in which the narrator mourns the death of singular individualism at the hands of the Revolution. In the heat of the Revolution,

the new order that lies outside the familiar measurements of time appears to be the natural way of things. Now the “ancient” is merely a few weeks old, but the relationship to a past that precedes the violent rupture of the revolution is completely severed. These lines are rendered as such in the translation:

And the current of elimination took off without slowing down or calm or truce or peace or mercy and no account of the bitterness of tomorrow and the measurement of time was forgotten in the boiling of the fever of the people as it is forgotten during the burning fever of the individual ... and the strangeness of the paradox was that time in its forward pouring was perceived as slow and waning ... and the incidents appeared as old as the universe and still a part of the system of things and a pillar of the skeleton of the world when they had only been around for weeks. And among such things, a terrible figure/ person [the word is *shakhṣ* in Arabic, which can also refer to a statue] that had become very familiar emerged as though it had been an object of sight for everyone since the beginning of time – but it is the feminine figure/ person that is very well-sharpened and goes by the name of the ‘Guillotine’. (45)

The translation clearly exaggerates some of the implicit references of the original novel in more complex metaphors. For instance, the opening sentence “there was no pause” of the original description is here given a subject, namely the current of elimination. The current took no heed of the future repercussions of its unstoppable flow. The passage in translation elaborates on the condensed ideas of the original one explaining the strange familiarity of the new order of things in another curious image, “a pillar of the skeleton of the world,” which suggests that the new way of things seems constitutive of how the world has always been. The strangeness of this metaphor is that it is followed with the avowal that one of those permanent things is the figure or person, as *shakhṣ* in Arabic can mean both, of the feminized Guillotine. In other words, al-Sibā‘ī detects in the words of the original moralistic narrator a hint of determinism: the new order of things, which has become so familiar that the recollection of any another order has become impossible, is more than a consequence of the time. In a sense, once the Revolution unleashed itself, there would be no end to it and no possible way of containing it and this very possibility is part of

the skeleton of the world. It is always possible that the revolution might erupt, and it is then inevitably the way of the world that the revolution would get so normalized that it would seem like the world has always been and can always become this chaotic.¹⁶⁰

The fear of revolution as an always possible, unstoppable current, an open event that will eventually consume everything around it and spill over from France to England, is a fear of contamination.¹⁶¹ Al-Sibā'ī capitalizes on this fear in his own translation, which is also afraid of being contaminated by the original text. After all, translation is a sure way to contract the fever of the other text, especially when the translator wants this particular novel or seed to revive the stagnant Egypt that lies before him. But such a revival demands that the translation contract the fever of uncontrollable revolution if it is to stage and rewrite the representational language of the original. In other words, for the revival to be possible, and for the seed of the translation to grow in the sterile soil of Egypt and bring its people to life, it would

¹⁶⁰ Alexander Welsh in *The City of Dickens* describes the Victorian reference to “Time” with a capital “T” which is usually personified in relation to the terrifying portrayal of time in the book of Revelation. Dickens’s references

are to the end of time, time coming to a stop ... The apocalypse involved does not have to be a very specific event, or closely tied to the forecasts of Revelation. Whether it derives from satire, renaissance, allegory, the Puritan tradition, or all three, the threat and satisfaction inherent in time coming to an end stand in answer to an even less tolerable idea of historicism: the thought of time reaching endlessly before and after human life without stop. (214)

Thus the desire for a narrative end, and Welsh continues that in Dickens, the “end of narrative time is celebrated by the triumph of the heroine of love and truth; and the institution of the hearth itself, over which the unchanging heroine presides, in an inner fortification of timelessness” (216) and

In a phrase from Dickens’s mature historical novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, ‘Time ... never reverses his formations.’ A prospect of irreversible time, however, merely renews and strengthens the desire to make an end, and a few pages later Sydney Carton assures the young seamstress who accompanies him to the guillotine that they are going to a place where there is ‘no Time.’ (217)

I will analyze this need for an ending in the final section of the chapter, and particularly in relation to the translation’s absent ending.

¹⁶¹ For instance, only a few pages later, when Charles is declared innocent (in the first trial in Paris) and that declaration is presented as some form of group catharsis, the translator adds the following line to the original: “until the current of the river on whose sides the terrible accident happened kept rising up and then falling down as though it got contaminated from its shores and contracted a madness” (66). The cathartic mad performance of the people infects the river as well.

have to contact the madness of the revolution so as to expose it in its fictional representation. The revival of Egypt would have to begin where the Revolution ended, *after* the structure of repetitive violence has been continuously interrupted in *Qisat Madinatayn*. In the translation, the *lawthah* or the madness of the revolution is described more as a contagious illness than a political cure to a stagnant people because the contaminating revolution takes no heed of the individual or the particular as everyone meets the same fate. Thus the translation itself has to become particular, different from the original, and in interrupting the metaphorical logic of the original, it can possibly do so. The revival then would have to emerge from this now Egyptian tale of three cities. The greatest example of that is the story of Charles Darnay, who in trying to rescue his family's loyal servant is arrested and not given a chance to explain his particular situation. Dickens presents this last example as the inevitable outcome of a revolution that is set forth in the name of the all the people, and Darnay is doomed to a fate of death at the guillotine with no hope of changing his predetermined sentence.

The only way such change is possible is in the sacrificial role of Sydney Carton. In the final part of this chapter, I will examine some of the moments in which the original novel presents the sacrificial figure of Sydney Carton to find out what becomes of such moments in translation. The theme of substitution and sacrifice can shed light on al-Sibā'ī's particular performance of translation, even if his text does not include the last 6 chapters of the original. I hope to show through a close reading of some instances that the translation articulated the promise of revolution differently for the Egyptian nation, and this promise was precisely the promise of fiction.

Not Quite Yet: Al-Sibā'ī's Problem with the Novel's Ending

A Tale of Two Cities repetitively interrogates the category of the individual. Dickens's narrator remains critical of both, the bourgeois individualism of England, and the erasure of the particular under the revolution in France. At some points, the narrator clearly sympathizes with the poor and the wretched of France, but certainly at others, he is cruel in his portrayal of the blood-thirsty revolutionaries. One of the most telling moments of such ambivalence towards the individual comes up early in chapter 3 of book I:

*A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every beating heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it! *Something of the awfulness, even of Death itself, is referable to this.* No more can I turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved, and vainly hope in time to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the book should shut with a spring, for ever and for ever, when I had read but a page. It was appointed that the water should be locked in an eternal frost, when the light was playing on its surface, and I stood in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; *it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life's end.* In any of the burial-places of this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them?¹⁶² (21; emphasis mine)*

¹⁶² In his 1986 study *The City of Dickens*, Alexander Welsh reads the “Night Shadows” passage in the context of the problem of interment in England in the 19th-century. With the growth of the population came the increase in the number of the dead and the consequent lack of burial ground in the city of London. In 1852, a Necropolis company was established that opened a cemetery outside of London. The company went bankrupt after three years, and the only remaining solution was intramural internments. Welsh writes that “the controversy over intramural internments ultimately established [...] that the city was already a kind of necropolis” (63). Welsh reads the “Night Shadows” passage in this context, concluding that

Dickens stresses his conviction of the final “secret” or separateness of human beings, intensified by their isolation in the great city. But it is noteworthy how rapidly this separateness is referred to the separateness of death, and how death is regarded in this context with finality, as destruction or the stopping of time for each person. Along with the thought that the living of the city are already dead is the possibility that the dead are painfully alive—or not dead enough. (64)

The moment is both beautiful and singular, as it involves the first person narrator who otherwise makes a few appearances in the text of the novel. However, even this “I” is not necessarily personal but more philosophical, as it travels through the cities and muses on the inaccessible secret of every one of its inhabitants. The choice of words in the passage from the “wonderful fact” to the “awfulness of Death” makes it difficult to pinpoint the real attitude of the narrator towards the individual secret. At the beginning of the passage, the secret seems to be a positive symbol of the unique individualism that distinguishes every member of the society from all the others. However, a sense of premonition soon takes over the passage when the secret becomes associated with the completely unknowable that separates people and leaves them impenetrable and unrecognizable to each other as they would be in death. And even more, the secret leaves them further obscured from and unrecognizable to the novelist trying to record their lives.

The individual secret has been interpreted in several ways. In “Alternatives to Bourgeois Individualism in *A Tale of Two Cities*” published in 1990, Cates Baldrige reads the previous passage as a cautionary tale of the doctrine of the individual. He locates a “subversive subtext to the narrator’s middle-class horror at the collectivist Revolutionary ideology” arguing that Dickens understood that the Revolutionary regime offered “alternatives to the social relations undergirding those aspects of Victorian England that he also thoroughly despises, and that because of this an undercurrent of sympathy makes its way into the text” despite the obvious moments of hatred towards the Revolutionaries (634). Baldrige insists that the Night Shadows passage offers a critique of Liberal individualism, and that this critique returns at different moments of the novel; however, the figure of the sacrificial Carton disables such a critique and solidifies Dickens’s scorn of Revolutionary ideology. Baldrige

argues that even when it seems that Carton and Darnay “transcend those traditional barriers which wall off the inviolable individual from all his fellow beings, [...] this merging of a single discrete self with one other deflects a broad social goal of the Revolution into the realm of private psychology” in a continued attempt to thwart the revolutionary practice it seeks to mimic in a private relationship (641).

Carton and Darnay cease to be two separate entities and merge into one (646-647); however, even though Carton overcomes the limitations of the bourgeois self and becomes the other in Revolutionary spirit, “the Revolution’s insistence that the same is to be done for all men meets with nothing but scorn” (647). Baldrige continues that Carton ends up safekeeping the

safety of Liberal society (in the form of the Darnays, Manette, Lorry, and Pross) by temporarily violating one of its fundamental tenets. To put it another way, Carton can only make the world safe for discrete subjects by temporarily ceasing to be one himself and thereby blocking the plans of a regime bent on abolishing the entire concept of the discrete subject forevermore. (647)

In other words, in a subversive gesture, Carton briefly adopts the doctrine of the Revolution only to save liberal individualism. Baldrige describes how the name of Carton will haunt generations to come as the individual who made that sacrifice to save the private realm from being consumed by the political. In other words, Carton will stop the chain of the anonymous proper name of Jacques from infiltrating English family life.

Other critics consider the sacrifice of Carton, however, to be already implicated in the ideology of the Revolution. For instance, Daniel Stout finds that the family structure in the novel is inseparable from the all-consuming structure of the social which is not concerned with the details of personhood at all. Thus, Stout considers that Dickens’s famous “flat characters” are actually quite representative of a

time when the distinctions of the individual disappear in the name of an identified group:

In this novel, the fact that life has been borrowed is so prevalent that even nameless border officials know it. When Charles returns home to France and is told that “his cursed life is not his own” (392), the Revolutionary official does not mean that Charles is only pretending to be “thicker than a gramophone record,” but he does mean something that Charles had already begun to understand even in England—that his life has been and remains only on increasingly tenuous loan.

Stout continues that the novel’s general interest in plots is not an indication of a desire “to bring private stories to light, but rather [...] the sign that stories are no longer individual properties” (38). This crippling and all-consuming sense of loss of agency is perpetuated through the social structure from the aristocracy to the revolutionary tribunal as Stout confirms that the “sense of being the agent of a plot that did not begin and will not end with you is not, however, limited to Charles’s sense of his aristocracy” (39). Stout compares the ineluctability of family to Robespierre’s idea of equal citizenship, equal as a matter of birth and as such unavoidable, in the similarities between two of the most opposite characters: Madame Defarge and the Monseigneur d’Evrémonde, who “understand themselves as familial representatives rather than discrete individuals” (39).

In the translation, the individual secret is “misunderstood,” at least in the terms that Dickens intended for it. The general condition of inaccessibility of the other is treated only in relation to death in the translation, thus rewriting the background of bourgeois individualism that structures the comparison between London and Paris in the original novel:

One of the strangest things is that every person in his appearance and composition is a hidden secret from the rest of the people and is a moral and a lesson. If you were to visit the great cities in the night, every house would have a closet closed up on its secrets that doesn’t offer the passer-by any glimpse of what’s inside it ... rather, every chest from the hundreds of thousands of these chests is from some of the faces a hidden secret from his

neighbor and the one nearest to him, and this by God is a wonderful thing when a person sees a shadow in the awfulness of death and its splendor and so help me, my friend has died and I cannot look into the pages of his life that have been folded closed, and its lines have been blocked. And so help me my lover has died and my eye cannot find a way to that far, big sea on which every time I would throw my glances out of inspiration, sneaky sparkles of thought, I would see in its hidden insides [*damīr*] the treasures of the soul and riches of the spirit. God has judged that this book should be closed all of a sudden and I have not yet finished one page of it, and God judges that that sea must be blocked by ice as the rays of my thoughts ran on its surface, so I stand bewildered by its surface ... my friend has died, and what a shame, and my neighbor has died and my lover and soul-mate have died. Was their death an increase of their mystery and the continuation of the hiding of their secret that was in them and that I carry in my ribs till the end of time? And do you see among the inhabitants of the graves someone with a more mysterious secret and a thicker veil than the city's own inhabitants, if the torrents of life were to flow through them and the waves of worry and movement were to push through them? (12 – 13)

The translation of the famous “Night Shadows” passage only exacerbates the narratorial confusion of the original. Al-Sibā‘ī certainly inserts a lot more emotion into his adaptation and decorates it with the onomatopoeic sound “*ya lahfī*” which literally translates into “my lovelorn,” but which expresses a condition of being overcome with emotion. He also inserts words that signify sorrow and regret like “*ya asfāh*” which literally means “what a sorry thing it is” that his friend has passed away. The opening “wonderful fact” becomes “one of the strangest things” and every individual “profound secret” of the original is also a moral and a lesson in the translation. The explanatory additions clearly reflect al-Sibā‘ī’s anxiety towards the metaphorical language of the original.

For example, when in the original every house and room harbor secrets, in the translation, the figure of the closet holds the secrets behind its closed doors. The secrecy of and the distance between individuals, the ultimate impossibility of knowing the other, are compared to the awfulness of death in the original. The inaccessibility of every individual secret is as wonderful and as awful (in the sense of awe-inspiring) as the irretrievable loss of a loved one in death. In the translation, the inaccessibility is

“by God, a wonderful thing.” But the image of death is literalized in the translation to explain away the metaphorical allusion of the original to death as the condition of separation that already inflicts the inhabitants of the city. This is no metaphorical death; in the translation death is real as an end, and the shadow implies the actual death of the other, and it is God who has determined and authored this death.

In the original passage, we read that the secret of every individual is as inaccessible as the depth of the sea, and the narrator is standing in ignorance on its shores.¹⁶³ In the translation, the sea comes up twice, and is literally described as a surface on which the thoughts of the narrator tread. The original’s metaphor of the “depths of unfathomable water” becomes the “wide sea” of the translation. The buried treasures of the original are explained as the treasures of the soul and riches of the spirit in the translation. In the first reference it is unclear if the hidden insides are that of the sea or of his lover who has died. The word in Arabic that describes the inaccessible insides is *ḍamīr*, which also means conscience as well as personal pronoun (such as “I,” “you,” and “he”). Thus the choice of the word is remarkable in that it personifies the sea in giving it a conscience on the one hand and on the other hand, giving it personal pronouns, the loved ones found in its depths. The lover is impenetrable now in death, as the deep sea that the narrator flashes his thoughts upon in moments of inspiration, glancing at the treasures of the souls, presumably underneath the surface. The second reference to the sea is closer to the original’s

¹⁶³ Garrett Stewart in his 1984 book *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* reads the references to the images of water and drowning in *A Tale of Two Cities* as a metaphorical rewriting of the Flood in Genesis. He follows the metaphor of the flood from the wine cask scene to the lamps as “dim wicks” that “swung in a sickly manner overhead, as if they were at sea” (I, ch. 5) and concludes that “[f]rom that point on the metaphor rarely lets up” as the images of literal water give way to the metaphor of water (85).

description, but again it is God who has judged that the surface of the sea be too frozen to be accessed.

The last lines of the paragraph bring up metaphorical waves of anxiety and movement in reference to a third kind of sea. The original passage ends with the equal inscrutability of the dead, the narrator and every other sleeper or inhabitant of every town. The narrator claims he would carry the secret of every individual secret in him till the end of his life. The philosophical “I” is clearly the authorial “I” here, a witness to and preserver of the uniqueness of every individual in the novel, even if it has no direct access to the individual secret.¹⁶⁴ The translation, however, promises to carry the secrets of the loved other in the ribs of the narrator and poses two curious questions to the reader at the end. Does death make individuals more mysterious than they were when they were alive? And are the dead buried in graves more mysterious than the living with the waves of anxiety flowing through them?

The translation of the passage sounds like an explanation not to a naïve reader, but certainly to one who is unfamiliar with the doctrine of bourgeois individualism. For one, the context of English bourgeois idealism that forms the background of the original quote remains untranslatable in the Arabic context. In 1912, ideas of the prominence of the individual and his or her entitlement to the privacy of a secret life would find few resonances in Cairo. Even though some of the later thinkers of the *nahḍah*, like Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal and Ibrahīm ‘abd el-Qādir al-Māzinī would

¹⁶⁴ In “Alternatives to Bourgeois Individualism in *A Tale of Two Cities*” Cates Baldrige refers to Catherine Gallagher’s reading of the importance of the role of the narrator in the world of *A Tale of Two Cities*. In her article, “The Duplicity of Doubling in *A Tale of Two Cities*” (1983), Gallagher argues that Dickens exaggerates the inquisitiveness of Revolutionary ideology only to sanction his own invasive role as novelist. Consequently, she considers the previous passage on the individual secret as a license for the novelists who are necessary in the modern world so that society can battle the scarcity of knowledge of its individual members. In other words, she reads the passage as an entirely positive statement on the recuperative role of the Victorian novelist (Baldrige 635).

come to champion the subjective individuality of the artist, when this particular translation was published, the average Egyptian reader would not have taken this kind of individualism or “novelistic subjectivity” for granted.

In a sense, the rhetoric about the collective body of the revolution might well find more resonance in the Egyptian milieu, as the translation was done after the 1881 ‘Urābī Revolution, but certainly before the Nationalist Revolution of 1919.¹⁶⁵ The opening passage of the critical introduction to the translation, the one which calls the Egyptian people back to life through botanic imagery, suggests that al-Sibā‘ī was much more interested in a collective, revolutionary uprising than a celebration of individual differences. But al-Sibā‘ī was drawn to the passage nonetheless, and the multiple references to the sea cannot help but recall the earlier reference to the sea in the introduction, when the original novel was throwing its anchor somewhere in the sea midway between France and England.

The image of the sea in the previous adaptation suggests that the translation wants to anchor the book for the last time, and this time in the seas of Egypt. The poetic exaggeration of the wide, deep sea with all the unique souls buried beneath it highlights the figure of (translated) narrator, as he or she grazes the surface to get a glimpse of what is underneath the surface, in moments of inspiration. Inspiration is a very important doctrine for Muslim writers, as I have discussed in the context of the literature of Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī in chapter two. I will not develop the reference to inspiration in much detail here as it is a passing reference, but it still suggests that the figure of the narrator in translation has a different kind of access to

¹⁶⁵ In her 2004 book *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt 1880-1985*, Samah Selim contends that it wasn’t until 1919, until the Nationalist Revolution against British occupation, that the first formations of subjectivities in fictional characters begin to appear.

what is hidden. This access is divine in some ways, but it is nonetheless an access that promises to find something when penetrating the unfathomable depths of the sea which engulfs all of mankind. And what it finds is a poetics of mourning a loved one: God, of course, has decided that the lover's time is up, and the translated lines mourn the death of a loved one rather than the impenetrability of bourgeois individuality. The secret individualities of the members of every household make up a wonderful fact to reflect upon in the encounter with death. It is not that the secrets are wonderful, but that in the moment of death, predetermined by the ultimate Author, the narrator realizes the loss of the loved one in a wide sea whose frozen surface cannot even be grazed. The concluding line of the translation also draws attention to the dead living, who recall the introduction yet again, and the opening lines which call the people of Egypt, the buried alive, much like Dr. Manette, back to life.

In his 1984 book *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* Garrett Stewart relates the multiple references to the images of water and drowning in the novel to an apocalyptic portrayal of time wherein Carton's death "by symbolic drowning does in fact miraculously, if at one level deceptively, baptise Carton: the name of the man Darnay from whom he dies" (88). In this substitution between the two characters:

What follows is a typical Dickensian survey of the future fortunes of his cast internalized, as if it were the "sublime and prophetic" insight of his dying hero. Yet his visionary coda retains also its aura of a textual prototype, as we will see, the moment of death discovered virtually to novelize its own succession in the vanishing interval of last consciousness. When Carton tells Lucy earlier in the novel, "I am like the one who died young," he adds, "All my life might have been" (II, ch. 13). Indeed, Darnay is the living embodiment of what he might have been: alter ego of Carton's emotional desuetude in life, projected continuation of his identity across the defied severance of death. With any meaningful past only faintly conjectural, Carton has at least in death earned the right to have his legacy appear before him with the strange declarative certainty of the (the paradox seems inescapable) prophetically remembered. This unprecedented shift in perspective, in the distended interval of annulled consciousness, is the ultimate metastasis or "remove" of mortal

transition in Dickens: the instantaneous break from time redirected into an unbroken futurity rhetorically set forth. (89)

The moment of death, and loss of consciousness in death, is thus novelized into a prophetic textual event that continues beyond mortal death in the novel. Stewart also brings up the narrative of the future that Dr. Manette envisions from his cell while he is still imprisoned and in which he sees his daughter and her child and Carton's impending sacrifice before even meeting them. Stewart maintains that the images of drowning and the self-consciousness of Carton's own perpetual symbolic drowning

is layered yet further with this access to the future as a virtually narrative feat, almost as if the hero had "been allowed to write down" his consolatory thoughts after all. These thoughts are crouched like all fiction in the self-confirming authority of pure invention. What rumor assures us—the rehearsal of life in drowning—here becomes in the other sense of preview or try-out the only real life there is for the hero to rehearse. ...It is the final decorum of the novel as record, however, fictional, that the generations availed and so evoked by Carton's sacrifice do not outdistance the time elapsed between the Revolution and Dickens's writing of the novel in the middle of the next century. Even within the myth of clairvoyance the authority of fiction, like the authority of deathbed revelation, is held to the precincts of retrospect. (92)

The death scene is "also a study in the rhetorical power as well as the implementation of death in narrative" (95). After all, the execution of Carton is inscribed in the novel as a rhetorical sacrifice that begins to be authored at the beginning of the novel and as such "takes us back to the first chapter of real plot, after the introductory vantage on the times, a plot that knows itself as plot, for Mr. Lorry is repeatedly described there, with a pun on mail-coach ticketing, as the 'passenger booked by this history' (I, ch. 2)" (95). Stewart then extends Carton's death to the engaged reader as well, because the hero's end is drenched in the language of resurrection and articulated in terms of narrative prophecy always available in the future for any reader. The tale Carton could not tell is precisely the one the omniscient narrator steps forth to narrate. In his non-uttered thoughts at the end, which the narrator tells us would have been "prophetic, they would have been these," Carton uses (or would have used) the first person

pronoun and the present tense to imagine/ foresee his own continuity beyond death as for instance when he describes Darnay as “a man winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the light of his.”¹⁶⁶ Stewart argues that the recourse to the first person pronoun and the present tense engage the reader in a fictional death by proxy as the novel ends with

a parable of the fictional death sentence and its resonance, acknowledging those “booked” heroes who die for us at the arm’s length of aesthetic distance. When history, made present to us on that road out of Paris by the shifting grammar of tense, further includes us by the encompassing grammar of number [the numbers of the executed as they are shouted out loud by the revolutionaries watching their deaths], Dickens has more self-consciously than in any other of his novels inscribed that narrative place, the safe and sometimes curative space, of fictional substitution and catharsis—the dying that is far, far better in art. (96-97).

It should come as no surprise then that the original title of *A Tale of Two Cities* was supposed to be “Buried Alive.” John Gross argues that this obsession with death is also the main reason behind the many doubles in the novel, as these try to rewrite the

¹⁶⁶ The novel ends with the unuttered thoughts of Sydney Carton that are nonetheless recorded by the narrator:

“I see Barsad, and Cly, Defarge, The Vengeance, the Juryman, the Judge, long ranks of the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of the old, perishing by this retributive instrument, before it shall cease out of its present use. I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people rising from this abyss, and, in their struggles to be truly free, in their triumphs and defeats, through long years to come, I see the evil of this time and of the previous time of which this is the natural birth, gradually making expiation for itself and wearing out.

“I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see Her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see her father, aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace. I see the good old man, so long their friend, in ten years' time enriching them with all he has, and passing tranquilly to his reward.

“I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of their descendants, generations hence. I see her, an old woman, weeping for me on the anniversary of this day. I see her and her husband, their course done, lying side by side in their last earthly bed, and I know that each was not more honoured and held sacred in the other's soul, than I was in the souls of both.

“I see that child who lay upon her bosom and who bore my name, a man winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the light of his. I see the blots I threw upon it, faded away. I see him, foremost of just judges and honoured men, bringing a boy of my name, with a forehead that I know and golden hair, to this place—then fair to look upon, with not a trace of this day's disfigurement—and I hear him tell the child my story, with a tender and a faltering voice. It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.”

final sentence they have already been dealt. There is the famous double of the cities, the languages, and of course the main characters of Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay. Several critics like Catherine Gallagher¹⁶⁷ and others treat the theme of the double in the novel as essential to how the novel produces its meaning.

As a double of the original, the translation also participates in the structures of doubling that inhabit *A Tale of Two Cities*. If we consider the double as a death sentence in the original novel, wherein one has to die for the other to live, we can start to consider this double as death as the figure of a kind of original translation. This “original translation,” as the double of the original and a double in death, would thus imply that the original is dead and announce itself as an original in its own right. The translation as double of the original in this context plays up the constant presence of a third term both in the original and in a more exaggerated fashion in the translation. In the original, the narrator functions simultaneously as a third and as a first. I mean that the narrative voice in its different guises (as omniscient, narratorial, philosophical, and *engagé*) figures as a haunting presence in the original, always present to document and witness any moment. While the narrative voice mediates the whole novel (and in this sense is the first and final frame), it certainly haunts the text in detectable ways, such as when the events start taking on a life of their own and the narrator intervenes to slow them down or comment on them. Thus the many doublings in the novel already include a third term that mediates them and clearly determines their existence as doubles. As a double of the original, the translation picks up on this persistent presence of a “third” in the multiple references to God, the movement between the three cities (London, Paris, Cairo), and the interplay between the three languages involved (English, French, Arabic). The haunting narrative voice of the

¹⁶⁷ See Catherine Gallagher, “The Duplicity of Doubling in *A Tale of Two Cities*,” *DSA* 12 (1983):125-45.

original is constantly rewritten in reference to God in the translation as it starts to report the events in Arabic. The translation continuously highlights the third term as the residue of the original novel's obsession with doubling, and although the translation does not include the final scenes of the original novel with the substitution between Darnay and Carton, the reader can still detect the translation's preoccupation with the third term particularly in its introduction, its multiple references to God, and in moments when the original is preoccupied with deaths and burials. As a conclusion to this chapter, I will focus on one such moment in particular to gesture towards what becomes of the doubling and the sacrificial substitution of the original novel even if the translation acts as a double in death, thus performing one of the structuring themes of the original text and leaving out the last 5 chapters of the original.

The most haunting and compelling meta-textual moment that evokes the presence of a "third" counterpart to the many doubles is the grave-digging scene in chapter 14 of book II. The chapter begins with a description of the procession of Roger Clay, the spy. Thus from the onset, the dead to be buried in this scene is the spy, the figure of the third par excellence. Dickens gives some of his best criticism of the chaotic crowd in the opening description of the procession, when he tells us that "a crowd in those times stopped at nothing, and was a monster much dreaded" (159). For lack of any better idea, the crowd takes up the suggestion of some other "brighter genius" to follow the hearse to its destination while rejoicing. One of the first people to follow the hearse is Jerry Cruncher, who hides his face when passing Tellson's bank and continues to follow the hearse to the gravesite.

That same evening, Mr. Cruncher makes plans to meet up with a fisherman-friend to dig out the body of the recently buried Roger Clay and sell it to scientists. Mr. Cruncher tells his wife that he is going fishing. His son follows him in the night

and when Cruncher and his friend meet up with a third fisherman, the boy almost imagines that the first friend had actually split in two:

Within half an hour from the first starting, they were beyond the winking lamps, and the more than winking watchmen, and were out upon a lonely road. Another fisherman was picked up here—and that so silently, that if Young Jerry had been superstitious, he might have supposed the second follower of the gentle craft to have, all of a sudden, split himself into two.

In the translation, the narrator tells us that had the boy been superstitious, “he would have considered that there was no third person [there is a footnote here explaining that the third was completely there and an active companion] but that the second friend had split into two halves and each one was a man” (48). Of course when they dig up the coffin, they find it empty and the figure of the haunting spy is literalized in this scene into one that has resurrected from death to continue haunting the others in the novel. After this scene, the boy Jerry is followed, or feels as if he were followed, by a ghost.

As a spy himself, young Jerry interrogates the original narrator’s claims to omniscient reporting. For one, Jerry, as the figure of the third following his father without the latter’s knowledge, recalls the narrator who in this case is also spying through Jerry’s eyes on Cruncher and the other Resurrection-men. However, Jerry’s performance of the reporting spy reveals the ultimate unreliability of reference. Jerry imagines that the third fisherman is actually another half of the second one. The narrator tells us that Jerry is not superstitious and thus he shakes off the illusion of the splitting, but he does feel, nonetheless, as we are told again, as though he is being followed by a ghost.

This scene is very significant as a meta-textual moment in which the theme of omniscient narration (first in the figure of the inanimate mirror as witness and now in the spy) materializes into the image of the fisherman splitting into two people. For

one, Jerry performs the role of the spy, one of the main themes of the novel. As a spy, however, he is unsure of what he sees (as we are told by the ultimate spy, the narrator). This uncertainty recalls the opening of this chapter where I discussed the novel's at best shaky relationship to reference. He thinks he sees a splitting of one man into two, another comment on the famous theme of doubling that carries through the whole novel. But the doubling in this case turns out to be an actual presence of two separate fishermen (who remain unnamed). However, as the narrator tells us, Jerry leaves the scene feeling haunted by a ghost, the presence of a third. The third can most obviously refer to the narrator who is following Jerry, but the haunting presence seems to be a result of the excesses of the scene as well. After all, Cruncher and his friends are digging up a buried body of a famous spy, and little Jerry is spying on their illegal, secretive removal of the spy's body from the earth. Moreover, all the characters become witnesses to the absence of the body of the spy.

We remember that the translation is constantly preoccupied with putting the novel on stage, revealing its subtle dynamic of representation and undermining its assumptions of omniscience. Earlier I discussed Garrett Stewart's reading of the novel's final death/ substitution scene in his book *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* in which he recasts Carton's multiple references to resurrection into a form of narrative prophecy that is "made available there far into the future" (96). This narrative prophecy of the Resurrection-Man Carton, who is able to see beyond his death and thus bridge life and death in his vision of the future communicated to the reader in the present tense of narration, extends fictional death to the reader by proxy, as Stewart explains:

When history, made present to us on that road out of Paris by the shifting grammar of tense, further includes us by the encompassing grammar of number, Dickens has more self-consciously than in any other of his novels inscribed that narrative place, the safe and sometimes curative space, of

fictional substitution and catharsis—the dying that is far, far better in art. (96 – 97)

The curative power of the novel is in its setting up of fictional death by proxy, by relaying to the reader the possibility of reading about death in revolution and not experiencing death on the streets. This is not an aestheticized death, but it is also not a real death. The reader is the third in this context as well, outside of the world of the novel but called on to respond to the novel's staging of fictional death in the figure and speech of Carton.

I would extend Stewart's reading of the fictional death by proxy occasioned by the speech of Carton to the translation's preoccupation with the presence of a third. In the translation, al-Sibā'ī inserts a footnote to explain to the reader that the third fisherman in the grave-digging scene was actually a real third presence. The translation seems to dilute the metaphor of the haunting spy that emerges so powerfully in the original. The translator is eager to explain to his Egyptian readership that Jerry is not really superstitious and thus he does not actually witness a splitting, although he feels haunted on his way home. The doubling or splitting that does not really take place is a broader commentary on the theme of doubling and substitution in the original novel. In this particular scene, digging up the body of a treacherous spy for financial gain becomes a problematic of witnessing and doubling more generally. The spy Jerry and the spying narrator witness what might have been a splitting of two unknowns, as both fishermen remain anonymous. The narrator, of course, is more knowledgeable than poor little Jerry who feels haunted afterwards, but the narrator's musing on the possibility of a split is not fortuitous.

In this case, the split would be more in line with the Revolutionary doctrine and its multiple Jacqueses and anonymous characters. While the original novel entertains the possibility of this splitting into more indistinguishable figures, the

translation is quick to insert an explanation on behalf of Dickens, that the splitting was not actually real. Thus in a sense, the translation recuperates any damage or loss that results from the previous scene although it does not necessarily champion the individual over the collective at all. But it would seem that the translation picks up on the contamination that threatens the structure of the original. In the previous quotation, as in the “Night Shadows” passage, *A Tale of Two Cities* contracts the fever of the Revolution, particularly in the realm of substitution between individuals.

To limit the effects of such contamination, the original novel begins to turn Sydney Carton from a useless drunk with a seemingly coincidental resemblance to Darnay into its ultimate protagonist. However, to do so, the novel has to emblematically convert his resemblance into a barrier against future contamination. In other words, the doubling in this case needs to be given ultimate sacrificial meaning that would *not* make it possible for everyone else in the society to double as someone else, but merely for the reader to imagine a fictional death from the comfort of his or her own reading place. And so Carton starts praying and reciting Scripture, but not just because he is a sacrificial Christ-figure. As death approaches, Carton gains a unique insight into the world and his own life. His sacrifice is done in the name of a unique love and not in the name of the whole. For the love of Lucy Manette, Carton relinquishes his own right to life and the possibility of his taking the place of Darnay if the latter were to be killed. In the final scene, Carton holds the hand of the seamstress and tries to calm her down as they both walk towards their imminent deaths, and the seamstress tells him, “‘You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant’ ... She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it” (365). Carton becomes a Christlike sacrificial figure most dramatically here as he comforts the seamstress and we hear the promise

of the gospel: “I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (367). And the narrator concludes the messianic description of Carton with, “They said of him, about the city that night, that it was the peacefullest man’s face ever beheld there. Many added that he looked sublime and prophetic” (366).

Cates Baldrige argues that even though Sydney Carton takes the place of Charles Darnay, and even though the two selves momentarily merge, Carton’s sacrifice is really a confirmation of the triumph of the individual over the anonymous whole. In “Nothing Personal: The Decapitation of Character in *A Tale of Two Cities*,” Daniel Stout goes against Baldrige’s reading. He argues that in the execution scene, all differences between characters disappear and all we hear are the numbers which “specify, but they are neither driven by characterization nor open to it. A scene that seems designed to confirm the importance of the personal concludes by asserting its irrelevance” (29). After all, the seamstress is but an obvious stand in for Lucy.

The version of the translation I am working with, and which to my knowledge is the only one available, does not include the ending of the original novel; it stops at chapter 5 of Book III with Darnay being accused in the courtroom. The absence of the ending seems strange precisely because al-Sibā‘ī is a very calculating and precise translator and he mentions the ending in the introduction to his translation. For most of this chapter, I have tried to show how the translation rewrites the metaphorical logic of the original text even against al-Sibā‘ī’s most sincere vow to fidelity. The ending of the original novel, as I have tried to explain briefly above, transforms the character of Carton into a unique individual whose sacrifice salvages the Victorian doctrine of individualism and thus cannot be subsumed by the general collective drive of the revolution. The translation has no such aspirations. As I mentioned earlier, it is

hard to say why the ending is missing. It could be that the final chapters got lost over the years, but that is unlikely because all of al-Sibā'ī's other translations have been preserved in full. The version I have used in this chapter is the only one available anywhere, and it ends on the right side of the book, with an empty side on the left. If al-Sibā'ī just stopped translating the book, one would have to ask why.

Al-Sibā'ī certainly has big hopes for his book as we see in the critical introduction to the translation, where we are told that the novel will bring the Egyptian people back to life. As I mentioned earlier, the choice of *A Tale of Two Cities* as a manifesto for the revolution in Egypt is a strange one in the least, seeing as the original novel struggles with its own attitude towards the revolution and wants to ward off the contracting of any form of revolutionary fever. I have shown how the translation literalizes the figure of the anonymous other in the "Night Shadows" passage into the figure of the loved one whose death is determined by God and whose real absence is only felt in death. The translation's obsession with explanatory footnotes also seeks to disable the metaphorical logic of the original novel. The question remains, however, what becomes of the work of substitution in the translation since it never ends? We never read about the transformation of Carton into a Christian sacrificial figure (although we do learn about his Scriptural prayers in the translation).

Earlier in the analysis of the grave-digging scene, I emphasized how the translation uses footnotes to confirm the actual presence of a third figure and delimit any confusion. Moreover, the translation adds at least three third terms to the original; the new city of Cairo, the new language Arabic, and the new translating narrator who constantly rewrites the omniscient claims of the original. The inserted third terms justify the translation's multiple footnotes and explanations as well as rewritings, as

now the novel is made to speak to a third city in a third tongue and through a third narrator. In a sense, the theme of doubling and substitution applies to the relationship between the novel and the translation as well, in that the translation is a double of the original and tries to replace it. As a double, and in calling attention to the presence of the third perspective, that of the narrator become translator become reader, the translation performs, to some extent, the double as death theme of the original.

Al-Sibā'ī's translation might not want to necessarily kill off the original but it is subversive in the sense that it definitely wants to rewrite it. The translation detects the original novel's confusion towards the role of the individual and its contamination by Revolutionary ideology despite its narrator's constant dismissal of the bloodthirsty French mobs. In rewriting most of the metaphors of the original novel that demonstrate its claims to omniscient representation and the prominence of individualism, the translation relentlessly points to the confusions of the former and fails to provide the ending precisely because it finds the sudden heroism of Carton strange and inappropriate to the rest of the novel. Because the translation rewrites the original's fascination with doubling as a necessary preoccupation with a third, the substitution at the end of the novel remains both illegible and impossible in an Egyptian context. This impossibility is not merely because the Christian connotations of the former remain difficult to render in translation into Arabic, but also because of the haunting presence of the third that the translation picks up from the original and that makes substitution and resolution in this case impossible. In ending with the indictment of Darnay, the translation seems to lean more towards revolutionary ideology, but that is not to be taken too literally. Rather, the translation seems to find resolution in substitution to be impossible and ending with Darnay on trial, the translation purports to stop the work of substitution before it has even begun. By

putting the novel on stage, the translation undoes the work of substitution but still celebrates fictional contamination, or what Stewart names “fictional death by proxy.” The translation also wants to replace the real world of the reader with the world of the fiction of the Revolution, thus keeping the violence trapped in the pages of a book and making sure it does not spill onto the streets. I would say that the translation translates the fictional death by proxy into fictional life by proxy, relaying to its reader that he or she can live the events of the novel but not experience any form of death, fictional or otherwise. But in engaging the reader in the fiction, the translation wants to make the novel as a genre into a real platform for political participation and into a promise of life and rebirth for a stagnant nation. In other words, the translation remains more faithful to the original’s opening lines than the original itself. When the original novel begins in a confusion of reference that warns the reader from the onset that nothing can be ultimately verifiable in the course of events, it ends in a very conclusive death that champions the triumph of Victorian England over Revolutionary France in a final tipping of the superlative comparison that opens the book. The translation remains faithful to the opening promise of *A Tale of Two Cities*, a promise against final answers and definitive positions. And thus, al-Sibā‘ī was faithful to the original novel after all.

Chapter Four

Tarjamah as Debt: Haykal's Love of Rousseau

The soul which is happy and contented with such *imān* [faith] finds its fulfillment only in the search for the secrets of the world, the laws of the cosmos, and the pattern of the universe—all to the end that it may consolidate its communion with God. The means it employs for its search is scientific investigation, rational analysis, and consideration of all that is in creation. That is precisely what the Qur'an calls for and what the early Muslims practiced. That is the scientific method currently pursued in the West. The purpose of such pursuit, however, differs in Islam from western civilization. In the former, its purpose is to enable man to make the pattern of God in the universe the law and pattern of his own existence. In the latter, the purpose is to exploit the knowledge of cosmic laws for the material benefit of man. ... Islam therefore regards the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the universe as a human duty, a duty incumbent upon all men as individuals as well as groups. Mankind must therefore seek this spiritual perfection even more conscientiously and systemically than it has sought to understand the nature of material things, and it ought to use the secrets of the material world and the laws and pattern of the universe as a means to attain spiritual perfection rather than as a means for achieving material mastery over things.

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *Ḥayāt Muḥammad* [The Life of Muhammad] (1934)

Egypt teeters back and forth even today, as in the past, between the Arab and Western mentalities, one of them winning at one point, the other later on. When the Western mentality triumphs, the liberal idea is reasserted, scientific ideas are published and spread about, and culture is influenced by these ideas in various institutes of learning, even the religious institutes. When the Arab mentality triumphs, then sentiment takes over and dominates arbitrarily, the power of the past is revived, and culture is influenced by these ideas in various institutes, even in the secular university.

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *Mudhakkirāt fi al-Siyāsah al-Miṣriyyah* [Memoirs of Egyptian Politics] (1951-1953)

In the introduction to the third edition of his famous *Zaynab* published in 1929, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (August 20, 1888 – December 8, 1956) writes that he first published his novel in 1913 in Cairo under the pseudonym of an unnamed

Egyptian farmer.¹⁶⁸ He relates the story of the novel's composition, which began in Paris in April of 1910 (7) and ended in March of 1911 with a large part of the novel written in London, another in Geneva, and the rest in Paris. At the time, Haykal was a law student at the Sorbonne in Paris, and he returned to Egypt with his doctorate in 1912. Haykal writes that he was proud of the novel (which he does not label a novel but rather a story or "Scenes from and Manners of the Egyptian Countryside") upon completion, believing that with it he had paved the way for something new in Egyptian, notably not Arabic, literature. In Cairo, however, Haykal represses this pride: practicing the profession of the law made him hesitant to publish the story of which he was once so proud. He writes, "And the more months I spent at my new job [practicing law], the more hesitant I became that the label of storywriter/ novelist would overcome the title of lawyer" (7).

Finally in 1913, Haykal submits his manuscript to the Jaridah Press in Cairo, but postpones the inclusion of his name till later. The novel is first attributed to an anonymous Egyptian *fallāḥ*, which could refer to both farmer and peasant. Haykal chooses this particular pseudonym because, as he continues to tell us, he identifies with the farmer who is treated as an inferior by the wealthy class of Egyptians. In 1929, and after the end of World War I and with the rise of the nationalist movement in Cairo, Haykal reprints the novel with his name on it and includes an introduction in which he defends the book as an accurate portrayal of the dreams and spirit of youth, "of this determination that knows no impossibility but knows how to overcome every hardship ... and makes every imaginary thought into a reality" (9).

¹⁶⁸ There is some confusion as to when the novel actually appeared in print, and opinions vary between 1912, 1913 and 1914. I am basing my dates on Hamdi Sakkut's book *The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends from 1913 to 1952* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1971), where he maintains that the novel was published in 1913 (12).

Confident in his new profession as a writer of fiction, Haykal takes the promise of imaginary thought much further when in 1923, he writes a very different kind of book; namely, a biography of Jean Jacques Rousseau. His book entitled *Jan Jak Rousseau* was published in two parts, the first in 1921 and the second in 1923. Haykal's study of Rousseau, written 9 years after the publication of *Zaynab*, is a remarkably different gesture from that of the novel. While he is completely ashamed of the novel, he feels much more confident with this new project which presents itself as the *true* account of the life of a well-known philosopher of revolution. In his book on Rousseau, Haykal presents the life of the historical Rousseau in a fictional frame that delivers Rousseau as a novelistic hero. Because his intention is to write the life of Rousseau, Haykal was understandably less shy about claiming this book than he was about *Zaynab*, and he did not hesitate to print his name on the front page. The idea was to present the life of Rousseau as a model prophet, whose philosophy can also enlighten the Egyptians in their own endeavors to create a nation of their own. While Haykal the young lawyer denied his own relationship to his novel *Zaynab* despite its immediate success, his new hero Rousseau could not stop talking about himself. "In telling the story of my travels," says Rousseau, "as in travelling, I never know how to stop" (*Confessions* 167). Yet Haykal was fascinated with Rousseau. In his biography of the dreamy philosopher, Haykal introduces Rousseau as the new hero of Egypt in an effortless gesture of translation.

Jan Jak Rousseau was the first of a series of biographies that Haykal began writing after *Zaynab*. In 1929, he published *Tarājim miṣriyyah wa gharbiyyah* [Egyptian and Western Biographies] and then in 1934 *Ḥayāt Muḥammad* [The Life of Muhammad]. In Arabic, the word *tarjamah* refers to both a translation and a biography. A biography, in other words, is the translation of someone's life by

someone else. In *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, Dwight Reynolds and Kristen Brustad define *tarjamah* as biographical notice, interpretation and transformation into another medium (language). In the Arabic tradition, *tarjamah* often referred to an amalgam of biography and autobiography (42). Most of authors of *tarājim* included their literary work in the text because a *tarjamah*, like an interpretation of the Qur’ān is never complete and fully accurate. As Reynolds and Brustad explain:

In a lengthy medieval Arabic *tarjamah*, however, the basic historical information was often combined directly with the with the biographer’s (or autobiographer’s) selection of the subject’s best poetry, letters, and bon mots; the subject’s life story and literary production were thus often represented side by side. (43)

As such, the *tarjamah* mixes autobiography and fiction, as it includes an (auto)biographical section usually rendered in the third person pronoun and then some examples of the author’s literary works.

The word *tarjamah* is also used to emphasize the written dimension of autobiography—that is, the translation of the author’s life into written text. In 1485 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, one of the earliest writers of autobiography in Arabic, situated his *al-Taḥadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh* [Speaking of God’s Bounty] in a tradition of Arabic autobiographical writing. Reynolds writes that al-Suyūṭī “does not use a noun for his concept of autobiography but rather a verbal expression, *tarjamat nafsuhi* or *tarjamah li-nafsihi*, which... signifies ‘to compile a titled work/ entry on oneself’ or ‘to translate/ interpret oneself’” (2-3). The motivation behind writing an Arabic autobiography is not repentance or confession as it is in the Western tradition, but rather an expression of gratitude to God for all his blessings. Reynolds and Brustad discuss a long history of Arab autobiography read according to Western definitions of the genre and quote Franz Rosenthal’s famous 1937 piece “Die arabische

Autobiographie”: “The autobiographical tradition in Islam is bound less to personality than to the subject matter. The experiences of the individual, as such, do not offer the incentive for their being communicated, but rather do so only through their generally applicable pedagogic content” (qtd. in Reynolds and Brustad 23). In this sense, Western criticism of the Arab autobiographies finds the recourse to the third pronoun in some of these texts to be a complete departure from the primary concern of autobiography in general, namely the communication of inner meaning through insight into the subject’s inner personality and thought (23).

In contradistinction to this “inner” component of Western autobiography, the Arabic examples in the genre posit an external relationship to God as their condition of possibility. The Qur’ānic imperative to speak of one’s bounty forms the premise of the genre of autobiography in Arabic. In 1546, another famous Arab autobiographer Ibn Ṭūlūn al-Dimashqī argues, as Reynolds and Brustad summarize, that it is “‘better’ that someone else writes one’s biography than to write a text about oneself ... not from a historical, factual point of view, but from a moral or ethical point of view; it spares the author the temptations of pride or arrogance and being accused thereof” (67). Combined with Rosenthal’s previous criticism of the lack of personality in Arabic autobiography, the previous quote explains why autobiography in Arabic is most often read under the umbrella of other genres like the story, novel or historical narrative.

The imperative to write autobiography as biography, and thus the implication of the third person in speaking of the first, continues only too subtly in the *tarjamah* as biographical notice. In other words, the preference for *tarjamah* over autobiography does not remove the autobiographical but is meant to distance the authoring self from being too engrossed in its own personality, an engrossment which

would then take away from its gratitude to God. A *tarjamah* of someone's life would provide

a key to the person, a clarification, an attempt to label and explain his or her actions and accomplishments ... Curiously the portion of the *tarjamah* for which the least articulated terminology developed was the opening narrative segment, which provided the historical 'life story' of the subject ... Here a sharp contrast with the western tradition becomes quite clear, for it is only the 'life story' that is generically labeled and developed in the western tradition as auto/biography. In the West, it is relatively rare for this narrative to be coupled directly with a person's literary, artistic, or intellectual output In a lengthy medieval Arabic *tarjamah*, however, the basic historical information was often combined directly with the with the biographer's (or autobiographer's) selection of the subject's best poetry, letters, and bon mots; the subject's life story and literary production were thus often represented side by side.¹⁶⁹ (43)

The 'life story' of the subject of auto/ biography is thus less significant than the subject's own words in the tradition of Arabic life writing. The *tarjamah* as both a biography of someone else's life and a translation of that person's words constitutes the life of someone as example, as the prophet Muḥammad was and continues to be for the Muslims. Usually these *tarājim* are of Arab thinkers and figures; the second meaning of the word *tarjamah* as a translation becomes thus more complex in the *tarjamah* of the life of a French writer.

The duality of the meaning of the word *tarjamah* as translation and biography becomes particularly interesting in *Jan Jak Rousseau* because Haykal's text of the life of Rousseau is replete with quotations from the latter's works, all in translation and only some in identifying quotation marks. Thus Haykal remains true to the Arabic

¹⁶⁹ I am not entirely convinced that Western autobiographies did not include the autobiographer's own work, as many 19th-century editions often combined autobiographical and biographical notices with the literary works as in Mary Shelley's edition of Percy Shelley's writings and others. I am also quite certain that Haykal was familiar with such texts. However, Arabic autobiography shied away from making a claim to the authorial presence of its author, and thus the autobiographer himself or herself would absent himself or herself in the third person and then include a sample of his or her own work as further guide to the life narrative included in the *tarjama*. Although the subject of my dissertation is not immediately concerned with an exploration of the two traditions of Western and Arabic autobiography, it is important to hold on to this distinction from the onset as it will make the form of and incentive behind Haykal's life of Rousseau much clearer throughout the discussion.

tradition of biographical writing in that he brings the two meanings of the word together in his rendition of the life of Rousseau in such a way that his reading of Rousseau becomes inevitably a form of translation. *Jan Jak Rousseau* is a translation in at least two ways: on the one hand, it includes multiple citations of various works by Rousseau in translation. On the other, the book translates the life of Rousseau into the figure of a possibly Egyptian (notably revolutionary) prophet who will guide Egypt into victory against the oppressor.

This particular characterization of Rousseau as the redeeming prophet of Islamic Egypt transforms Haykal's book from a biography to what I would describe as a novelistic translation or appropriation of the life of Rousseau, with the citational moments in the text appearing in the form of a continuing dialogue between Rousseau and Haykal. Haykal's gesture goes beyond mere appropriation of the life of Rousseau to an Egyptian cause. After all, Haykal himself was quite elitist and had no affection or hopes for the masses to rise up in struggle. In other words, Haykal's book, although rich in detail about the life and works of Rousseau, serves rather to write up the character of a fictional Rousseau, and in the moments when the historical Rousseau comes up in the references to some incidents of Rousseau's life as they are narrated in his *Confessions*, the book is quick to judge him and dismiss his flaws. The life of Rousseau will become the novel of Rousseau, and in my opinion, a more successful novel than *Zaynab*.

In his 1979 article "Love, Passion and Class in the Fiction of Muhammad Husayn Haykal," Charles D. Smith describes how Haykal's Western education convinced him that he was one of the elite meant to guide Egypt to its liberation and that this liberation would have to be based on a Western scientific way of thinking. Smith explains:

[Haykal's] assumption was based on two factors which would reappear in various guises in his fiction: his view of himself as a true Egyptian, a *fallāh*, of rural peasant stock uncorrupted by foreign influences, particularly Turkish; his image of himself as an intellectual by virtue of his exposure to Western ideas and education which were the keys both to Egypt's national development and his own personal freedom to act within Egypt. These preconceptions involved an idea of mission in that Egypt would not survive in the Darwinian sense if political and intellectual leadership was denied the Western-oriented elite. Conversely, this messianic aspect contained definite assumptions concerning the people to be led. Egypt's progress depended on the masses, bound to customs imposed by outmoded religious precepts, being elevated to levels of perception enabling them to act as free individuals, approaching if not equal to the elite ... This attitude towards the masses contained within it a definite feeling of alienation in the positive sense of intellectual superiority, an assumption of separation which should be maintained to preserve the elite from harmful contact with the people. (250)

Haykal's positive sense of intellectual superiority is thus grounded in his Western education, and in many ways in his relationship to Rousseau. In his book, *Islam and the Search for Social Order: A Biography of Muhammad Husayn Haykal* published in 1983, Charles Smith continues to associate this elitist superiority with the correlation Haykal makes between the beauty of art, freedom and progress. Smith explains that in his article "The Beauty of Freedom," Haykal builds the foundation for freedom of thought on the meaning of beauty. Smith continues that in another article, Haykal "began by declaring that 'Man is free by nature, civilized by disposition ...' and continued in neo-Rousseauian terms that once science and education established a basis for progress, 'man cannot help but return to his natural state of freedom and civilization'" (40).

When in Paris, Haykal continued to think about the relationship between the elite and progress in Egypt, and Smith quotes from Haykal's 1909 diary on how the elite would:

...leave the living world for the inspiration of the spirit [where] they regained their normal state and rediscovered the realities of life, displayed in such an imaginative manner ... that they denied it was their own discovery and said it was inspired by God. They said this because they believed it, not to make others follow their beliefs. This is what I understand by the word *al-wahy*

[revelation, inspiration] which comes in those hours when man escapes into himself away from the burdens of the world. In these hours the soul reaches truths which I, with my soul enclosed in my body, in a world poisoned by imperfection and corruption, cannot. Inspiration is the attainment of greatness by the soul in its being freed from the material so that it can reach the truths residing in the interior of the world... (qtd. in Smith 42)

Haykal continues to express his fear that in entering the *jism* or body of society, he would somehow be pricked by the thorns that cover the social body (43). Smith argues that Haykal's book on Rousseau is a symptom of this previous anxiety; his fear that the social structures would defeat him rather than be changed by him (56). As such, Smith reads the two volumes on the life of Rousseau as a string of contradictory analyses of the French thinker that reflect Haykal's own issues rather than Rousseau's thought. Rousseau's Eastern-inspired thought, as Haykal contends, with its preference for spirituality over and against a stifling materialism seemed to be just what the world needed after WWI (Smith 57). Rousseau embodied the possibility of a progressive Egypt that would not experience the social divisions of Western civilization: after all, Rousseau provided a non-religious, Eastern-inspired model that valorized modernity.¹⁷⁰ But, Smith tells us, the treatise on Rousseau failed to

¹⁷⁰ Haykal's thought on spiritualism is complex and changes radically over the course of his career. In his 1974 book *Four Egyptian Literary Critics*, and particularly in the section on Haykal, David Semah calls attention to the shift in Haykal's thought from his Pharaonic phase to his Islamic phase, noting that there was a transition period between the years 1929 and 1932, after the writing of the book on Rousseau and before the publication of *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature] in 1933 (100). In the Pharaonic phase, Haykal urged Egyptians to let go of the Arabic-Islamic past and reclaim a sense of distinct Egyptianness by turning to the Pharaonic history:

Subsequently he realizes that Islamic tradition was too deeply rooted to allow the emergence of a culture that was outside the Islamic framework. He now claims that the rational and technical aspects of Western civilization have failed to destroy the spiritual aspect, in other words, that the Greek element has not succeeded in overcoming the impact of Christianity. In this context he likens Islam to Christianity, and the Pharaonic past to the Greek. It is obvious, then, that in both cases he is drawing an analogy with the West, but his notion of Western civilization has been considerably modified to accord with his recent inference that religion is always an essential ingredient in the making of a new culture. (97)

Haykal's change of heart appears most clearly, according to Semah, in his 1928 article with the rather long title "The Culture of the East – When Will it be Reborn in order to Dissipate the Darkness of Western Civilization?" in which he argues that even Western scientists are now in agreement that every culture "must possess a soul (*rūh*) and faith (*īmān*)" (98). Semah, however, locates Haykal's final and complete break with his Pharaonic phase in his book *Thawrat al-Adab*. Clearly Haykal's relationship to Rousseau mediates this change in thought, but as Semah somehow suggests in the previous quotation, the turn to Islam remains ambiguous and driven more by the difficulty of reconciling the Pharaonic

articulate what Haykal wanted to find in Rousseau. Quoting Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, Smith writes that Haykal lost sight of his reader as he wrote only for himself, thus failing to harmonize his emotional and critical responses to Rousseau (58). These contradictory reactions to Rousseau form the premise of Haykal's *tarjamah* in which the rewritten Rousseau, as hero of Haykal's new novelistic enterprise, will come to author the life of the elitist Haykal, the intellectual revolutionary who in staying off the streets will be Egypt's only hope of liberation.

As I already mentioned, the word *tarjamah* could refer to an autobiographical biography (including the words of the original author as well as his biographer's); however, Haykal will push that definition to its limit as he writes the life of Rousseau over the unwritten details of his own life. Interestingly, in Haykal's new novel, biography, autobiography and translation become inseparable and consequently crucial to any mapping of the rise of the novel in Egypt. Haykal's life of Rousseau will come to define the spirit of a national literature (and the novel in particular) as mired in that necessary translation of the Egyptian self into a European other, and vice versa. In what follows, I will explore this form of translation of the life of Rousseau into a novelistic hero, significantly not the hero of his own life but, potentially, of Egypt. Haykal turns Rousseau's meticulously drawn self-portraiture into the new prophetic vision of a Cairene hero. In Haykal's reading of Rousseau, through a very intimate form of translation, the prophetic visionary who appears in the work of Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī becomes the novelistic hero leading the Egyptian revolution.

phase with an Islamic country than from a genuine religious conviction. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will not address this complex shift in detail but merely point to its importance to situating Haykal's work on and relationship to Rousseau.

*Auto-biography: tarjamat al-nafs ‘alā hawā al-ākhar*¹⁷¹

In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal undertakes the difficult task of translating the revolutionary self of the *Confessions* into the heroic character of a political tale and the persona of a new social prophet.¹⁷² Haykal dedicates his book to the free Egypt that he imagined had come into being after the 1919 Nationalist Revolution in Cairo.¹⁷³ The dedication also includes an admonition to the readers of the new republic: one must perform the “correct” ideas of the prophet Rousseau in order for the new republic to be liberated from British and other forms of colonial rule.

¹⁷¹ This subtitle literally translates into: “translation of the self according to the other.” But the word *hawā* implies the desires and preferences of the other as well. Moreover, it can also mean “love.” The subtitle is thus meant to emphasize the complex back and forth in the writing of biography in the Arabic tradition in general, and in Haykal’s case in particular.

¹⁷² I call it revolutionary in the sense that Rousseau’s *Confessions* certainly initiated something entirely new in the tradition of autobiography as he had inherited in from St. Augustine. The revisionary self, always casting its own assertions in doubt, is revolutionary to the extent that Rousseau was not confessing anything in his memoirs. Rather, he was aware that he was producing something entirely new, imagining his life in several other fictitious scenarios that in promising to reveal more about the autobiographical self end up confirming the very impossibility of autobiographical writing.

¹⁷³ Although my dissertation is concerned with the promise and representation of revolution in the history of the Arabic novel, I will leave a thorough exploration of the 1919 Revolution for future work. For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to mention that the 1919 revolution was a bourgeois phenomenon that was non-violent and based on the European education of its bourgeois, spirited leaders. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski in their book *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900—1930*, published in 1986, describe the intellectual upsurge of the 1920’s as a direct result of the Revolution of 1919:

An important feature of the Egyptian zeitgeist of the 1920s was the idea that Egypt was experiencing “revolution.” As we have already noted, the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 hardly merits comparison with classical modern revolutions. But in considering images, it is perception rather than reality that is the critical issue; and here there is little doubt that in the 1920’s many Egyptians, both intellectuals and others, firmly believed that they had just witnessed “revolutionary” events and were living in a “Revolutionary” age.

To that extent, the revolution was an empty performance, based on the ideals of the French Revolution and of the first 1881-1882 ‘Urābī Revolution that had also failed to overthrow the yoke of British colonialism. In this empty performance of revolution, empty precisely to the extent that it was a mode of being or viewing the world rather than the way the world actually was, the protests of 1919 were presented as having recreated the Egyptian people as a single, homogeneous national body struggling for a common goal. Egypt itself was made not an abstraction but a living reality that transcended the factional loyalties and interests of its inhabitants and infused each of them with the same spirit. (84-85)

The Revolution of 1919 was thus “intimately connected with the aspiration of Egyptianist intellectuals to create a new and revolutionary collective image for their country” because new images were required to “complement the political image of a new Egypt created by the Revolution” for

[o]nly such a comprehensive and integrated collective image ... would transform the Egyptian understanding of all aspects of their national life [and] could succeed in dissociating Egypt from the false Ottoman-Islamic past and in restoring its genuine Egyptianist quality. (88)

Notably, the failure of the 1919 Revolution did not shake down Haykal's conviction that things could still be otherwise, that a (non-violent and ultimately aesthetically-motivated) revolution was possible. Rousseau's ideas would provide the premise for and ensure the perpetual success of an Egyptian revolution precisely because the revolution of Rousseau's thought lies in its conviction that the old must be destroyed and the new installed in a return to nature (vii).¹⁷⁴ Haykal admits that this idea which mobilized the French Revolution is not originally Rousseau's. However, in Haykal's view, Rousseau's style of writing (words coming from the heart rather than tied down by formal constraints) immortalized the idea in his name.

Haykal continues to declare the purpose behind writing the book: the point is not to expose the life and thought of Rousseau; rather, as an Egyptian first and an Easterner second:

I would like to show the people of Egypt and of the East an image of vitality that arose in the West. Perhaps showing it can reveal a possible relationship between the East and the West based on sincere and mutual understanding, and not just on the terms of a brutal, controlling power. It can also reveal similarities, even if few, between heroes there and here. (x-xi)

Although he doesn't name his book a translation as such, Haykal is essentially laying out a problematic of translation that will come to define his relationship to Rousseau. He follows the previous quotation with Rudyard Kipling's famous, "The East is East, and the West is West, and never shall the twain meet," without mentioning the name of Kipling.¹⁷⁵ Haykal contests this impossibility, insisting that the route to such a meeting begins in an accurate and correct copying of the lives of heroes (presumably

¹⁷⁴ I will come back to the complexity of this return to nature as Rousseau lays it out and Haykal mistranslates it in his *tarjamah*.

¹⁷⁵ The adaptation of this line from Kipling also comes up in al-Manfalūfī's translation of *Paul et Virginie*. However, in al-Manfalūfī's text, the line suggests that this encounter is always impossible. Haykal will use his form of translation of the lives of heroes to suggest that through the characterization of heroism, we can ultimately create a meeting point for the East and the West.

both Eastern and Western). Haykal calls this process *al-naql* which literally translates into “copying.” “*Naql*” is also regularly used with the meaning of “translation,” while “*tarjamah*” also includes the idea of interpretation in the sense of simultaneous transfer of words and sense from one language to another. Perhaps this meticulous relaying of the lives of heroes would even provide an antidote to the impossibility of perfect translation.

One such meeting place is the life and works of Rousseau, who appeals to his biographer because, as Haykal reads him, Rousseau’s thinking (particularly on nature) sounds almost Eastern and Rousseau was able to depict the poverty and quasi-madness of his times as no other writer could. These two traits guarantee that Rousseau, in Haykal’s reading, will provide the grounds for a possible equal communication between the disparate East and West, and thus an authentically intimate conversation between Haykal the Egyptian hero and Rousseau the European one.

Rousseau’s (unspoken) promise to the Egyptian nation lies precisely in his insistence on a return to the simple harmony of the natural world, a time before the superfluous possibilities of the modern. In other words, Haykal romanticizes Rousseau into the pre-modern heroic prophet that could importantly take away all the excess spilled unto Egypt as a result of modern life, modern use of language, and modern thought. Haykal reads Rousseau as in a sense anti-modern, taking the latter’s promise of a “Return to nature” as a figure for Egypt returning to an imagined pre-colonial self, but one that remains paradoxically implicated in Western thought. After all, Haykal was convinced that the only way to the modern was through the Western sciences and philosophy that he was reading. Like Rousseau whose return to nature is not literally a return to a pre-social state, Haykal is equally troubled by the promise of

return and translates the confusion in the promise of return to a pre-modern state in curious ways in his book, as I will continue to show. Moreover, Haykal finds Rousseau's doctrine of return to be spiritual and hence Eastern in its origins: "Rousseau's way of thinking could almost be Eastern," he writes in the introduction, "for it is a form of reverence of nature and the faith that it is the origin of good and every blessing in life" (xiv). There is a difference, however, between Eastern and Western thought: the ancient thinkers and prophets of the East believe in the same things as Rousseau does, especially in nature being an ultimate source of good; however, while Rousseau advises the enjoyment of life's pleasures in moderation, Eastern thinkers advise abstinence from all the pleasures that anchor one in the material world. In the introduction, Haykal insists on Rousseau's Eastern-inspired thought, drawing attention to a kind of continuity between Arabic philosophy and spirituality and Rousseau's anti-social, pre-modern imagined state of nature. As such, and by translating Rousseau in the text of the *tarjamah*, Haykal is able to inscribe his own proper name as an Egyptian back into the words of Rousseau. This inscription suggests a gesture of usurpation that opens the text of the "accurate" copying of the life of Rousseau into Arabic.

The text itself is a very strange product of this promiscuous affair with translation. Haykal begins by clearly distinguishing between his voice and that of Rousseau, but this effort to keep the two prophets apart soon dies out. For most of the text, the reader cannot tell when Rousseau's words begin and when Haykal's interpretations end. Haykal begins to examine the life of Rousseau through the *Confessions*, making little to no reference to historical data outside Rousseau's narrative. The reliance on the *Confessions* as history is significant not only in that we know that Rousseau was not entirely truthful in narrating his life, but also because

Haykal did not care.¹⁷⁶ The point was not accuracy after all. *Jan Jak Rousseau* is adorned with multiple quotation marks that often begin only to begin again and never meet an end pair.¹⁷⁷ The reader is left to wonder throughout the text if he or she will finish knowing anything about Rousseau at all or if indeed he or she is there to encounter Haykal himself.

The text of the *Confessions* already invites the rewriting of the life of Rousseau, as he continuously tells the reader that his life could have been otherwise. Rousseau warns the reader before really delving into his history and keeps deferring the beginning of his life story:

Before I abandon myself to my fatal destiny, *let me turn for a moment to the prospect that would normally have awaited me...* Nothing suited my character better, nor was more likely to make me happy than the calm and obscure life of a good craftsman... I should have passed a calm and peaceful life in the security of my faith, in my own country, among my family and friends. *That was what my peculiar character required...* I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good workman, a good man in every way. I should have been happy in my condition... Then, after a life — simple and obscure, but also mild and uneventful — I should

¹⁷⁶ The truthfulness of Rousseau's account is indeed a very complex topic and one that has been treated meticulously by Paul de Man in *Allegories of Reading*, in the chapter on the *Confessions* entitled "Excuses" (*Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven: Yale Press, 1979, 278 – 302). In "Excuses," de Man reads the incident of the stolen ribbon as particularly demonstrative of Rousseau's relationship to truth on the one hand, and the *Confession's* relationship to referentiality on the other. Rousseau, who has stolen the ribbon, accuses Marion of being the thief when the investigation into the theft is taking place. According to de Man,

Marion just happened to be the first thing that came to mind; any other name, any other word, any other sound or noise could have done just as well and Marion's entry into the discourse is a mere effect of chance. She is a free signifier, metonymically related to the part she is made to play in the subsequent system of exchanges and substitutions ... But if [Marion's] nominal presence is a mere coincidence, then we are entering an entirely different system in which such terms as desire, shame, guilt, exposure, and repression no longer hold. (288-289)

De Man continues to argue that the text of the *Confessions* becomes a machine of sorts that posits the excuse (Rousseau's excuse for having wrongfully accused innocent Marion) and it slowly undoes the system of signification and reference to act as a grammar, a structure independent of referentiality to the world. As such, the excuse no longer merely makes up for a "lie," but makes possible a system of meaning that disables any reference to the logic of the outside world, and in that sense, the lie is no longer a lie since the referential matrix that would determine it as a lie has been removed. De Man's argument is complex, and I will not go through its details here. I will mention, however, that his reading of the *Confessions* as a machine positing a non-referential system is very important to how Haykal reads Rousseau and to his presentation of Rousseau as a fictional character in yet another life account, in another language and an entirely alien form, that of the traditional Arabic *tarjamah*.

¹⁷⁷ Even if some of these oddly unclosed quotations are the result of a printer's errors, the larger sense of confusion between the two voices—Haykal's and Rousseau's—remains.

have died peacefully in the bosom of my family. Soon, no doubt, I should have been forgotten, but at least I should have been mourned for as long as I was remembered. But instead....what a picture I have to paint! (50-51; emphasis mine)

The “peculiar character” that Rousseau lays out early on for his reader requires constant rewriting, refiguring, re-situating. Jean Starobinski in his 1988 book *Jean Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* writes that the discovery of the self in the *Confessions* coincides with the discovery of the imaginary, and he quotes, “it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my existence” and “I became the character whose life I was reading” (qtd. in Starobinski 7). Thus, Rousseau frames his *Confessions* within the logic of fiction, in the sense that an event can always be rewritten or re-imagined in its moment, or after its passing, in the language of his text. The burden, then, falls on the unassuming reader.

In a declaration of good faith, Rousseau addresses the reader from the onset:

I must present my reader with an apology, or rather a justification, for the petty details I have just been entering into... Since I have undertaken to reveal myself absolutely to the public, nothing about me must remain hidden or obscure. *I must remain incessantly beneath his gaze*, so that he may follow me in all the extravagances of my heart and into every least corner of my life. Indeed, he must never lose sight of me for a single instant, for if he finds the slightest gap in my story... he may wonder what I was doing at that moment... I am laying myself sufficiently open to human malice by telling my story, without rendering myself more vulnerable by any silence. (65; my emphasis)

The passage seems anxious not to let the reader imagine everything, not to let there be any blank spaces for the reader to fill in. Rousseau seems to want to keep himself before the reader’s gaze so as not to let the reader make things up. But the reader is compelled to read beyond the general paranoia that governs the text of Rousseau throughout. The *Confessions* opens with the imagination of a different life and the promise to fully succumb to the gaze of the reader. These two details do more than warn the reader not to take Rousseau’s word too seriously. The always possible re-writing of the character of Rousseau soon develops into the almost necessary re-

naming of Rousseau. In playful gesture, Rousseau tells us how he changed his name into the anagram Vaussore de Villeneuve to mask being a Parisian from Geneva, or a Catholic in a Protestant land. He also writes that he must fill in the proper name of the poet Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, for whom he is sometimes mistaken, and become Rousseau the second after him (153). He must fill in the place of Anet for Maman when Anet is absent (198). Of course the most famous re-naming episode is that of Dudding the Englishman.

As Rousseau begins to develop affections for Madame de Larnage on his journey to Montpellier, the inevitable moment of introducing himself comes up. He reports:

As our intimacy grew it was necessary to speak of oneself, to say where one came from and where one was going. This embarrassed me, for I knew that in polite society and with fashionable ladies the very word convert would ruin me. *I do not know what freak decided me to pass myself off as an Englishman.* I announced myself to be a Jacobite, and they believed me. I gave myself the name of Dudding, and they called me M. Dudding. ... Luckily no one thought of questioning me about the English language, of which I did not know a single word. (237; emphasis mine)

Rousseau easily assumes a different name and an alternate identity when the situation seems to demand a disguise. This ease with which he passes himself as another coincides with the other life he could have lived, the fantasy of the other Rousseau he could have been. Slipping in and out of names and identities, Rousseau does more than literalize the role of a fictional character. He opens his name and his life up for incessant rewritings and makes possible an infinite chain of substitution that spills out of his text unto the *tarjamah* and contaminates the reader as well.

In *Dudding: Des noms de Rousseau* published in 1991, Geoffrey Bennington relates the multiple names of Rousseau to his authorial signature. In reading the Dudding episode, Bennington concludes that even though the verb “to dud” does not exist in the English language,

tout Anglais entend immédiatement sous ce nom l'adjectif (nominalisable) argotique 'dud' (origine inconnue), qui signifie, entre autres, faux (au sens de la contre-façon), contrefait (au sens de la contre-façon). ... une activité qu'on baptisera 'dudding.' (55-56)

The name thus triggers a relationship to falsehood in the listener's mind. Under this false name, the falsely ill Rousseau also finds himself as he tells us that Madame Larnage gave him the confidence to be himself (qtd. in Bennington 57). What he finds in this episode is actually *jouissance*, which as Bennington tells us becomes associated with death in Rousseau's account (58). With Madame de Larnage, he experiences *jouissance* for the first time before dying.¹⁷⁸ Bennington argues that this *jouissance* is only possible under another name, and that "Rousseau serait peut-être mort en jouissant, mais on peut dire qu'il ne cesse de jouir encore dans ce dédoublement dont Dudding nous donne l'exemple le plus spectaculaire, mais qui a vrai dire, on le vérifiera peu à peu, n'est autre que l'écriture en général" (60). As long as Rousseau can write things down, he can continue to re-experience *jouissance*. But this *jouissance* is already implicated in a form of death for two reasons: on the one hand, he can only experience this *jouissance* under the name of another and not his own (his own death is somewhat of a pre-requisite). On the other hand, this *jouissance* is something he had never felt before and was happy to feel with Madame de Larnage

¹⁷⁸ We read in Book VI of the *Confessions*,

I may say, indeed, that I owe it to Mme de Larnage that I shall not die without having known sensual delight. If what I felt for her was not precisely love, it was at least so tender a return for the love she showed me, there was so hot a sensuality in our pleasures and so sweet an intimacy in our talk, that it has all the charm of passion without that delirium which turns the head and makes enjoyment impossible. I have only felt true love once in my life, and that was not for her. I did not love her either as I had loved Mme de Warens; and it was for that reason that I was a hundred times more successful in our intercourse. With Mamma my pleasure was always troubled by a feeling of sadness, by a secret oppression as the heart that I had difficulty in overcoming; instead of congratulating myself upon possessing her, I would reproach myself for degrading her. With Mme de Larnage, on the other hand, I was proud of my manhood and my good fortune, and abandoned myself joyfully and confidently to my senses; I shared the sensuality I roused in her, and was *sufficiently master of myself to look on my triumph with as much pride as pleasure, and thereby to derive the wherewithal to repeat it.* (241; emphasis mine)

before leaving this world, as he tells us. In other words, the name Dudding and writing in general demonstrate that in writing, Rousseau or the name of Rousseau the writer, dies every time, making possible the erasure of singularity and making the false name into the condition for experiencing *jouissance*.

Bennington locates this threat to the singularity of Rousseau's name also in the latter's reading. He quotes the following passage from the *Confessions*:

As I read each author, I made a rule of adopting and following all his ideas without adding on any of my own or of anyone else's, and without ever arguing with him. "Let us begin," I said to myself, "by collecting a store of ideas, true and false but all of them clear, until my mind is sufficiently equipped to be able to compare them and choose between them." This method is not without its drawbacks, I know; but it helped in attaining my object of self-tuition. After I had spent some years never thinking independently, but always following the thoughts of others, unreflectively, so to speak, and almost without reasoning, I found myself equipped with a great enough fund of learning to be self-sufficient and to think without the help of another. Then when travelling and business made it impossible for me to consult books I amused myself by going over and comparing what I had read, by weighing everything on the scales of reason, and by sometimes passing judgment on my masters. I did not find that my critical faculty had lost its vigor through my having begun to use it so late; and when I published my own ideas, I was not accused of being a servile disciple, or of swearing 'in verba magistri.' (Book VI; 226)

It is impossible to determine, after reading this passage, which parts of the *Confessions* include Rousseau's own original ideas and which parts are his borrowings from other thinkers. Bennington maintains that the difficulty is really in distinguishing between other writers' words and Rousseau's own words in the text of the *Confessions*,

entre ce qu'on cite et ce qu'on signe, que le fantasme de se suffire a soi-même (qu'on dira volontiers le fantasme rousseauiste par excellence) est démenti par le texte même qui le raconte, et que ce qu'on pourra espérer cerner comme la 'pure singularité' de l'écriture de Rousseau composera toujours avec une masse d'autres énoncés portant autres signatures. (66)

In other words, Bennington describes Rousseau's text as already erasing the boundary between quotation and signature, an erasure that Haykal's rewriting of the life of

Rousseau openly performs. The *tarjamah*, in other words, which already invites such a co-existence of citation and quotation, is doubled in the case of Rousseau. In the particular case of *Jan Jak Rousseau*, the boundary between Haykal's and Rousseau's words is already implicated in a non-boundary between Rousseau and the writers he read in forming his own thought.

The inevitable threat to the singularity of the signature and œuvre of Rousseau is a consequence of this always possible death in writing, wherein the always possible return to *jouissance*, for instance, can happen in writing and under the name of another. The name of another is Dudding, but is also the list of authors Rousseau read and "quoted" without quotation marks. Haykal also erased his name, intentionally, when he first published *Zaynab*. In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, he will not need to literally remove his own proper name. But he will sign his name over the name of Rousseau, because Rousseau has already invited him to do so. In this way, Haykal can assume the name of Rousseau and a version of the character of Rousseau that fits into an Egyptian agenda for liberation. In other words, Rousseau can become the new prophet of Egyptian revolutionary politics because he so easily announces himself to be an Englishman, and continues to correspond with Madame de Larnage under the pseudonym and signature of a Monsieur Dudding.

But beyond mere substitution, the text of the *Confessions* also contaminates Haykal's writing. The *tarjamah* of the life of Rousseau, already skirting dangerously between a biography and a translation, slips into the realm of autobiography. This form of autobiography, however, is nothing like that of the *Confessions*. Haykal's inscription of his own life and times and thought in the body of his *tarjamah* of Rousseau seems as if almost completely unintentional. His lapses into rather harsh criticism of the person of Rousseau read like intimate moments of reprobation of a

loved one. But Rousseau's genius in capturing the spirit of his time is Haykal's genius in re-casting Rousseau as part of the background of World War I. Thus the text of the life of Rousseau in Arabic blends biography, autobiography and translation in such a way that it opens itself up to a novelistic reading of the friendship between Haykal and Rousseau, and to a re-imagination of a different, other history of Egypt.

Filling in the Blanks (and Missing Quotation Marks)

Haykal writes that Rousseau's fictions are variations on what Rousseau would have liked to be (I, 132), this other life he always imagined for himself as the unwritten premise of his *Confessions*. However, this "other" life is pitted against the fate of becoming a writer. Rousseau describes this fate in his first encounter with the question: "Has the progress of the arts and sciences contributed to corrupting or purifying morals?" When Rousseau reads the question, he tells his reader, "I beheld another world; I became another man" (328) because "from that moment I was ruined" (328) and "[a]ll the rest of my life and of my misfortunes followed inevitably as a result of that moment's madness" (328).

The moment's madness is also its entry into the world of the reader. In Book IV of the *Confessions*, Rousseau tries to lay down the conditions of legibility of his text:

I endeavour in all cases to explain the prime causes, in order to convey the interrelation of results. I should like in some way to make my soul transparent to the reader's eye, and for that purpose I am trying to present it from all points of view, to show it in all its lights, and to contrive that none of its movements shall escape his notice, so that he may judge for himself the principle which has produced them ... *His task is to assemble these elements and to assess the being who is made up of them. The summing up must be his, and if he comes to wrong conclusions, the fault will be of his own making.* (169; emphasis mine)

Unlike the earlier passage from the *Confessions* which clearly reveals Rousseau's anxiety about how his text will be read, here he places the burden of reading directly on the reader. The task of the reader, therefore, is to "assemble" the being of Rousseau, much like the reader of a novel assembles the character of its hero(ine). In this sense, I am comparing the *Confessions* to the text of a novel. Not only does the main character here continue to re-imagine himself in various fictitious situations, but he is also the product of his reader's imaginative powers.

However, this early attempt to define the text's genre takes a more radical novelistic turn when the text progresses. Rousseau warns his vigilant reader:

The further I go in my story, the less order and sequence I can put into it. The disturbances of my later life have not left events time to fall into shape in my head. They have been too numerous, too confused, too unpleasant to be capable of straightforward narration... Now my story can only proceed at haphazard, according as the ideas come back into mind. (574)

Earlier in the text, halfway between the earlier passage and this last revelation, Rousseau complains that his memory continues to fail him because he is compelled to commit things to writing. We read, "memory only serves me for so long as I need to rely on it; as soon as I commit its burden to paper it deserts me; and once I have written a thing down, I entirely cease to remember it" (328). And then towards the end of the *Confessions* again: "I was, owing to my poor memory, always fated to remain in that happy state of knowing little enough for everything to be fresh to me" (592).

Rousseau's "poor" memory serves at least two purposes in his text. On the one hand, it renders his account less reliable in its information, leaving the text open for its reader to assemble the life and character of Rousseau and even to doubt the content he gives him or her. Although Rousseau repeatedly promises to tell all, he knows he will not really do so. The reader of the *Confessions* is all too familiar with the

paranoia that haunts Rousseau throughout his life and compels him to turn all his acquaintances into sworn enemies and himself into the constant victim. Rousseau leaves the matter of his character in the hands of the reader only too carefully. At the end, the text of the *Confessions* demands that it remain open, despite all its details. And Rousseau experiences this demand as he is finishing his book and tells us that he is slowly losing control of the narrative. The lack of order in narration as the text progresses is not unfamiliar to autobiography in general. In his famous 1983 “Autobiography as De-Facement,” Paul de Man writes that, “The interest of autobiography... is not that it reveals reliable self-knowledge—it does not—but that it demonstrates in a striking way the impossibility of closure and of totalization” (71).

This openness of the text of the *Confessions*, its resistance to totalization, confuses the reader as well, who is asked repetitively to assemble the character of Rousseau and is suddenly told he/she cannot do so. Rousseau ends his *Confessions* with the promise of a sequel, and the confidence that the sequel will begin to end things. Of course the sequel is never written.¹⁷⁹ Haykal, as a vigilant reader of the memoirs of Rousseau, is thus left without closure as well. But Haykal’s assembled Egyptian prophet cannot be open-ended. The figure of the new prophet needs to promise its followers some tangible form of consistency and a final result. So Haykal writes the novel of the life of Rousseau, inscribing his hero into the age Rousseau belonged to, and explaining away Rousseau’s paranoia and inability to end his text as an ultimate result of the circumstances of his life.

In other words, in Haykal’s text, Rousseau’s appeal to poor memory becomes indirectly the promise of prophecy. Mustafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī opens his book *al-*

¹⁷⁹ I mean that although the *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, 1776-1778*, published posthumously in 1782 and *Les dialogues, Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* (1776) were published later, an actual sequel to the *Confessions* in the same tone and covering another period of his life in as much intimate detail was never completed.

Nazarāt with a similar appeal to a poor memory, but in his text, it serves as *proof* of prophecy. In Rousseau's text, poor memory is rather an inevitable consequence of becoming a writer: writing things down makes it possible to forget them, and also makes possible re-experiencing them in writing rather than in memory. Haykal will curb this inevitability, this threat of complete openness, in the text of his *tarjamah* which binds the words of Rousseau in quotation marks and in a narrative that *repetitively tries to end* in the figure of the new prophet of Egypt.

However, while the non-closure of the *Confessions* forces Haykal to find a way to end the text, the adapted speech of Rousseau in the body of the *tarjamah* and the open-ended quotation marks reveal an inevitable contamination in translation. This contamination is precisely what I am calling a novelistic translation of the life of Rousseau. One of the ways in which Haykal tries to curb the openness of the *Confessions* is in contextualizing it in a historical narrative that also resonates with the historical moment of the writing of the *tarjamah*. The novelistic *tarjamah* of the life of Rousseau rewrites the latter's life into a story of Haykal's times and contextualizes Rousseau's choices within a narrative that he does not write, particularly that of historical 18th-century France as well as post-World War I Egypt. I will return to this specific inscription of the history of Egypt into the text of *tarjamah*. For now, I am interested in how the *tarjamah* tries to rewrite the life of Rousseau in a narrative that begins and ends, but finds that it continually fails to do so and has to start again every time. As Ṭāhā Ḥusayn said, after all, Haykal wrote this book for himself, as a personal endeavour to reconcile the public role of the prophet with the necessary isolation of the intellectual (qtd. in Smith 58). In this sense, it is most productive to imagine that Haykal was trying to write a novelistic *tarjamah*, in which he remains in dialogue

with his main character and in which he could make his character into a hero of a *bildungsroman*, albeit an Egyptian one.

This novelistic reading of the encounter between the *Confessions* and the *tarjamah* finds its most telling moments in the non-cited speech of Rousseau in Haykal's work. The most promising example is perhaps when Monsieur d'Aubonne tells Madame de Warens that all the young Rousseau can aspire to become is a village priest and Rousseau confides in us in one of the most telling moments of the *Confessions*:

In me are united two almost irreconcilable characteristics, though in what way I cannot imagine. I have a passionate temperament, and lively and headstrong emotions. Yet my thoughts arise slowly and confusedly, and are never ready till too late. It is as if my heart and my brain did not belong to the same person. Feelings come quicker than lightening and fill my soul, but they bring me no illumination ... Ideas take shape in my imagination with the most incredible difficulty. ... During this stir of emotion I can see nothing clearly, and cannot write a word; I have to wait. ... If I had known in the past how to wait and then put down in all their beauty the scenes that painted themselves in my imagination, few authors would have surpassed me. (112 – 113)

When Haykal translates this previous quotation, he reads this last moment as justification of Rousseau's social awkwardness and shyness in public (I, 26 – 27). Rousseau, as Haykal explains, did not know how to speak to any society he found himself in. He was a loner, who preferred silent life amidst nature to human society and companionship (27). In one of the many intimate dialogic moments in the *tarjamah*, Haykal explains why Rousseau was the way he was by diagnosing his behaviour as a manifestation of socially awkward genius. Haykal creates his fictional Rousseau based on the characterization of the socially awkward genius, whose split self as it appears in the previous quotation is merely a result of exceptional intelligence. Later on, Haykal will say for Rousseau, "But he has an excuse that forgives him this and any other trespasses, and that is the gift of genius" (I, 102). What I am describing as the novelistic form of the *tarjamah* begins here and continues

throughout to invite such re-contextualization of the life of and times of Rousseau into the historical moment of the *tarjamah* and its author who is also attempting to understand contradictions in his own thought on the public role of the recluse intellectual. The narrative of the awkwardness of Rousseau forms the premise for a historical story of Egypt, and Haykal begins with the previous cited quotation and carries on with a string of excuses that he continues to make for his hero.

Thus when Haykal later reports Rousseau's abandonment of his children to social institutions, he tells us that Rousseau almost had no choice since he was a bastard himself and the closest figure to a parent that he had was also his lover (I, 62). At this point in the text, we are no longer referred to the source of the citations, which begin to look like isolated islands in the body of the *tarjamah*, identified by quotation marks, but floating in the longer text of the narrative of Haykal and not the life of Rousseau. For instance, Haykal now tells us about the promiscuous adventures of Rousseau and reports that the age itself forced Rousseau into these multiple relationships with women. "We follow Rousseau's intellectual writings," Haykal reminds us as he begins to narrate the history of absolute-rule 17th-century France, when the people had no real political presence or choice (I, 64). In this narrative, Descartes' revolution did not intend to nullify the existence of God, Haykal reassures his wary reader, but merely to re-enforce literature's plan to overcome the limitations of idealism. The novels of the 17th century had mere symbolic types and representative ideas and not real characters (I, 65 – 66). The eighteenth century soon dawned with its rebellion against the Church and philosophical idealism, and the socially awkward Rousseau finds himself writing in this milieu.

In an interesting typo on page 71, in mid paragraph, we read Haykal's summary of Rousseau's natural philosophy interrupted by a wandering quotation

mark that has no origin. Haykal writes, “And he decided that our selves are corrupted inasmuch as our sciences and arts progress in the direction of perfection” (I, 71; emphasis mine). Significantly, the lonely sealing quotation mark is followed by how Rousseau uses the example of the Egyptians to demonstrate the happiness of the natural state.

In the second epigraph to the chapter quoted above, Haykal is confident that the Western arts and sciences are superior to the native ones and promise modernization and progress. Interestingly, in this book, he takes up Rousseau as perhaps evidence of this promise of progress, but Rousseau himself writes against that promise in his work. So Haykal is compelled to resolve this paradox by literally translating Rousseau’s natural philosophy into Egyptian terms. He has already told us that Rousseau’s thought is Eastern in its turn away from the corruptions of the social and its turn inward towards the self in its natural state. Now Haykal writes that in his effort to prove that the progress of the arts and sciences has infinitely corrupted us, Rousseau turns to the example of the Egyptians.

Importantly, the moment that Rousseau begins to write his *First Discourse* is also the initial moment of madness, according to his *Confessions*, that initiates him into the world of writing. Haykal translates this moment right before he describes Rousseau’s wariness of the arts: “And the moment I read this issue I saw another world and I became another man ... And when I got to Vincennes I was in such a state of excitement that it made me dizzy” (I, 69-70). Haykal relays this whole experience in quotation marks, as the faithful translation of the words of Rousseau when he first began writing. However, he does not address the moment’s madness at all; rather, Haykal reads Rousseau’s wariness of the progress of the arts and sciences as a direct result of the latter’s social awkwardness. And he explains that Rousseau was wary of

excess and believed, as I previously quoted, that “our selves are corrupted inasmuch as our sciences and arts progress in the direction of perfection” (71; emphasis mine). And to explain the measure against such corruption, Haykal reports that Rousseau uses the example of the ancient Egyptians, yet again re-inscribing Rousseau’s life and thought it in the text of Egyptian history.

The madness of the moment comes up only in a severe judgment on Rousseau. In one of the few moments of pure aggression in his *tarjamah*, Haykal blatantly attacks Rousseau’s character:

And there is no doubt that the son of nature is none other than the spontaneous, lustful, selfish, weak Rousseau who is incapable of following any law except the one that inspires his heart at least momentarily. He is that old bum, who knows very little about social life and is extremely timid. And this socialism based on the natural order is based on what he saw in the Swiss villages, and this simple natural philosophy is what the imagination of the common man identifies as the enemy of luxury, this common man who is a great admirer of his simple life, which the general opinion dismisses as inferior. (I, 72)

Haykal seems to share Rousseau’s ambivalence about the return to nature, only he maps it onto his judgment of Rousseau himself. What form does this return take for Haykal, since he seems to associate here with Rousseau’s selfish lust? I will come back to this “return to nature” later on in the chapter, particularly in Haykal’s own project for a return as he maps it out in his famous 1933 book *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature]. The previous retribution of Rousseau is recovered a few pages later in a staunch defense of the popularity of Rousseau’s work despite his multiple enemies. However, it is worth pausing momentarily at the anger in Haykal’s tone in the previous quotation. Perhaps his frustration with Rousseau here is twofold: on the one hand, Haykal wanted to believe that the European arts and sciences could save Egypt from its miserable decline. On the other hand, Haykal was skeptical of Rousseau’s autobiographical drive which compelled him to derive his philosophy

from his own life and experiences. As an Egyptian first, as he tells us in the introduction, Haykal is wary of the self as origin, as the discourse on the self is neither familiar to him nor trustworthy. How can the questionable character of Rousseau be an example of prophecy and promise for the Egyptian nation?

There is one more reason, one that Haykal does not include in his text, for this staunch attack. In a process of selective translation, Haykal quotes only the part on Egypt as the school of the world, cradle of civilization, from the *First Discourse*, but omits the derogatory reference to the Muslim. In describing the decline of European civilization, Rousseau writes:

Europe had relapsed into the Barbarism of the first ages. A few centuries ago the Peoples of this Part of the World, which is today so enlightened, lived in a state worse than ignorance. I know not what scientific jargon more contemptible still than ignorance had usurped the name of knowledge, and stood as an almost insurmountable obstacle in the path of its *return*. A *revolution* was required to *return* men to common sense; it finally came from the quarter from which it was least to be expected. *The stupid Muslim, the eternal scourge of Letters, caused them to be reborn among us.* (6; emphasis mine)

Even though Haykal does not openly comment on this derogatory dismissal of the stupid Muslim, who was the impetus behind the revolution of European man, he is otherwise inexplicably hostile to Rousseau when describing the latter's *First Discourse*. The "revolution" and promised "return" of Rousseau's *First Discourse* are nonetheless retained, despite the non-cited translation of Rousseau's dismissal of the Muslim, and by extension, Haykal himself. But since this opening moment of the *First Discourse* promises a return to a form of natural origins, and this return is communicated in relation to the stupid Muslim, Haykal finds himself constantly returning to it. Haykal spends most of his *tarjamah* trying to understand this kind of return to one's self or a form of (natural) origin, while at the same time trying to

contextualize this return in an Egyptian narrative that would not dismiss Islam and Eastern thought.

In this section of the *tarjamah*, Haykal inserts his own commentary in-between quotations from Rousseau, and his voice seems to blend almost indistinguishably with that of his French hero, making it very difficult for the reader to tell the one from the other (I, 74). The passage that is included between two quotes paragraphs is the following:

And the same has happened to Rome, Constantinople, and every nation that has been exposed to the germs of the arts and sciences as it did to Egypt and Greece. If the great men of these nations were there when greatness was measured by remaining in the arms of ignorant nature, and they saw what became of their nations today, they would turn their faces from them and disappear in misery. (74)¹⁸⁰

Haykal then tells us that Rousseau's solution is a return to one's self, in a turn away from the corruptions of the social, because one must "listen to the voice of his own

¹⁸⁰ This is the original passage from the *First Discourse*:

Look at Egypt, that first school of the universe, that climate so fertile under a bronze sky, that celebrated country, which Sesostri left long ago to conquer the world. It became the mother of philosophy and fine arts, and, soon afterwards, was conquered by Cambyses, then the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and finally the Turks. Look at Greece, once populated with heroes who twice vanquished Asia, once before Troy and then again in their own homeland. The early growth of literature had not yet carried corruption into the hearts of its inhabitants, but progress in the arts, the dissolution of morality, and the Macedonian yoke followed closely on one another's heels, and Greece, always knowledgeable, always voluptuous, always enslaved, achieved nothing in its revolutions except changes in its masters. All the eloquence of Demosthenes could never reanimate a body which luxury and the arts had enervated. It was at the time of Ennius and Terence that Rome, founded by a shepherd and made famous by farmers, began to degenerate. But after Ovid, Catullus, Martial, and that crowd of obscene authors, whose very names alarm one's sense of decency, Rome, formerly the temple of virtue, became the theatre of crime, the disgrace of nations, and the toy of barbarians. This capital of the world eventually fell under the yoke which it had imposed on so many people, and the day of its fall was the day before one of its citizens was given the title of Arbiter of Good Taste. What shall I say about that great city of the Eastern Empire which by its position seemed destined to be the capital of the whole world, that sanctuary for the sciences and arts forbidden in the rest of Europe, perhaps more through wisdom than barbarity? Everything that is most disgraceful in debauchery and corruption—treasons, assassinations, the blackest poisons, and the even more atrocious combination of all these crimes—that's what makes up the fabric of the history of Constantinople; that's the pure source from which we were sent that enlightenment for which our age glorifies itself. (3-4)

conscience” (I, 75-76). At this point, Haykal no longer tells us which Rousseauian text the quotations are from.

He does, however, remark in an address to the reader, that there is a lot of strangeness in Rousseau’s idea of a return to one’s self. It is a strange idea, because ultimately Rousseau will call for equality in the social sphere, Haykal tells us. So how is one to retreat into himself? Haykal is then eager to reassure his reader that once Rousseau returned to himself, he found that the only way to explain himself was in the *Dicourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men* [Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes], or the *Second Discourse*.

Rousseau soon finds that Haykal’s diagnosis of him is true: Rousseau’s frustration with his own meager living motivates his criticism of the arts and the sciences. So he finds himself calling for a state of equality among men precisely as a result of his inward turn.

A Strange Affair

When describing Haykal’s writing of the *Second Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men*, Haykal notes that it is “strange how much Rousseau exaggerated and indulged in the idea” (I, 94). Haykal is constantly aware of the strangeness of the origin of Rousseau’s ideas. For instance, when in the woods of Saint Germain, Rousseau begins his speech on inequality, he declares that he is making no recourse to history, but rather “delivering himself to his imagination” (Haykal I, 90). Rousseau declares that he is doing away with all irrelevant facts, and looking at things not as historical facts but as working hypotheses. Since men lie, Rousseau will find the truth inscribed on the text of nature that does not lie. In other words, Rousseau’s philosophy promises to come from fiction. Again he is the

character and the origin, and yet again Haykal is suspicious of this origin (I, 94). What is the working hypothesis behind the return to the origin as a return to the natural?

And why does Haykal keep describing the hypothesis as “strange”?

Rousseau announces his call for a return to some form of a natural state of being, one unmarked by the social.¹⁸¹ Jean Starobinski quotes Rousseau on the imagined state of nature as a necessary measure to judge the present moment (16):

It is no light enterprise to separate what is original from what is artificial in man’s present nature and to obtain sure knowledge of a state that no longer exists, that may never have existed, and that probably never will exist, yet about which we must have sound ideas if we are to judge our present state satisfactorily (*Origin of Inequality*, qtd. in Starobinski 16)

The imagined natural state that figures into this return to an origin of some kind is really a fiction, one devised by Rousseau to establish the premise for this call for a return. The same logic actually governs his description of himself as well. Despite his short memory and his constant daydreaming, Rousseau still has access to his “original self” precisely because he claims he cannot remember. His access to his real original self is immediate in other words, articulated always in the present moment of narration. Starobinski writes that Rousseau “had only to describe himself, to know

¹⁸¹ The idea of nature as some form of originary goodness, the nature of man before all instruction and social formation, remains compelling yet paradoxical in all of Rousseau’s work. It seems that the concept of nature that he puts forth takes off, necessarily, from a human education in the social spheres. This cyclical tale of origins forms the background to his contradictory ideas and the frenzy which dominates *Émile* in particular. For instance, Rousseau writes that

The natural man is complete in himself; he is the numerical unit, the absolute whole, who is related only to himself or to his fellow-man. Civilized man is but the fractional unit that is dependent on its denominator, and whose value consists in its relation to the whole, which is the social organization. Good social institutions are those which are best able to make man unnatural, and to take from him his absolute existence in order to give him one which is relative. (*Émile* 5)

While only a moment before, he had said, “We are born weak, and stupid and destitute of everything” (2). Human nature does not come from “the hand of the Author of Nature” as does matter (1); human nature is the realization of moral ideals that are realized only as a result of virtuous action of the will. Rousseau’s entire fantasy of the ideal political state, the polis, rests on his conviction that the general will is not at war with individual and personal wills precisely because it is a direct result of a universal conscience that tells man right from wrong. For the purposes of this chapter, I am not interested in Rousseau’s definition of the natural as much as I am in his pedagogical plans for the education of *Émile*, to which I will return later and place in conversation with the multiple references to Robinson Crusoe and to Haykal’s insertion of the name of Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān as another model for someone educated in the woods, but in this case without a devoted mentor.

himself intimately, to get close to his own true nature through a process that was at once active and passive: exploring his inner nature and abandoning himself to reverie” (19). This immediacy, the access to the self and “truth” in the present moment of narration, is none other than a figuration of prophecy. Jean Starobinski describes Rousseau’s retreat into the forest as a sign of prophecy, as in this scene Rousseau is simultaneously within society and external to it. He describes, “If truth is to reveal itself, it must be lived by a ‘witness’” (43). Rousseau can be a witness to this truth because of the moment of madness in which he becomes a writer, as he describes it to us in the opening pages of Book VIII of the *Confessions*.

Rousseau is then witness to the necessity of a retreat into the self in its natural state as he imagined it would undo the confines of the social. Rousseau’s prophecy is his accidental witnessing of the truth as he retreats into nature and has a moment of double, split consciousness. Thus Haykal inadvertently finds his prophet, for Haykal does not note this immediacy as a sign of prophecy as does al-Manfalūṭī for instance. After all, Haykal is translating his prophet, and Rousseau proves to be a very tricky “original.” So Haykal performs his most significant pejorative adaptation of Rousseau when the latter retreats into his own imagination, away from the social, and into the isolating embrace of nature. In yet another confusing gesture, we read this line as translated from Rousseau: “The simple, similar, isolated life which nature has intended for us” followed with these lines, with no clear identification marks as to who is speaking after that sentence from Rousseau:

is not the best kind of life. But we must surpass it to the tribal life, before private property so that people can find equality, the bliss of ignorance, the stillness of the mind and the blessing of acceptance of what they have in their hands without thinking about the future. (I, 96)

Right before this final conclusion, we find another confusing quotation mark that ends a passage supposedly quoted from Rousseau on the constant state of nature, one

which is not susceptible to revolution because in this state, people are guided by a natural form of identification with the other. This kind of identification is not corrupted by the principles of ownership, but rather inspired by the equality of all those living in the natural state. Again we are not sure when the quote from Rousseau begins and the commentary from Haykal ends, but it is clear from the tone of the passage that Haykal finds solace in this return. After all, Haykal's own *œuvre* struggles with a return to some form of Egyptianness that is not derived from any external influence, even if it is shaped by it.

Charles D. Smith brings up Haykal's use of the word "spirit" as the signifier of this search for an authentic Egypt: spirit "signified the basis of a culture, defining its existence as a unique entity apart from whatever other cultures or influences affected Egypt" (97). In the context of this discussion, Smith brings up the biographies that Haykal wrote of Egyptian and European thinkers, arguing that the interpretation of this necessary spirituality in the definition of Egypt had to assume a new dualism: "It referred, as before, to the cultural heritage of each country, East or West; it also applied to the heritage of the East, the repository of the great religions of the world, which Haykal opposed to the materialistic West as he had in his study of Rousseau" (98). The East must then use its cultural spirituality to rid itself of Western social ethics as imposed by religions: If Christianity is the main reason behind the social issues in Europe, then Egypt does not have such a problem. After all, Islam has always been a social religion, so there is no separation between politics and religion that would allow one to control the other. Needless to say, Haykal wanted to ignore all the problems with the previous assumption, because he did want to free Egypt from its religious devotions in the social sphere and turn it into a completely secularized society. The study of Islamic culture, then, should not pose any threat to

Egyptian culture because as Haykal continues to argue in the late 1920's, "the revival of Egyptian or Islamic culture does not mean a return to their past ... nor a return to the spirit which produced and bore it. The purpose of reviving these cultures ... is to nourish the present and fortify Egyptian traits" (qtd. in Smith 99). However, Haykal will go back to a call for a return to a pre-modern state in the 1930's in *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature] as I will demonstrate later on. And his idea for a return remains in conversation with Rousseau's ambivalent return throughout.

Science, after all, could not promise complete knowledge as the epigraph from *Ḥayāt Muḥammad* confirms. The scientific method should be guided by the kind of spirituality that looks for patterns in the world based on a larger scheme of meaning. In this aspect, Rousseau fails, because even though he denies his devotion to God, he remains guided by his free Protestantism (Smith 59). Where my argument differs from Smith is in seeing Haykal as still ambivalently attracted to the figure of return. However, when Haykal writes of return, he is, as Smith argues, more focused on the Egyptian present and future than its past, and the past becomes idealized and abstracted in *Thawrat al-Adab*. Here is Haykal's own return to his construction of what constituted Islam, without its succumbing to the temptations of the unfulfilled appetite of the modern and its recourse to science to find complete human happiness. Islam becomes a form of openness in the way that it appears in the text of Rousseau's life, an open freedom of thought in the face of the other as well, a form of openness that Haykal despite his fondness of Western philosophy and science could not find there.

If Rousseau's origin is already mediated in a fiction, then Haykal's own version of this origin is at least doubly removed: he takes the idea from Rousseau and tries to rewrite it in terms of an Egyptian "spirit," but his idea is still one mediated in

translation. In other words, from Rousseau's description of these strange origins and returns, Haykal derives a problematic of translation that comes to define the relationship of most Arab modernists to Western literature. Haykal uncovers what had always been difficult to pinpoint for him and other intellectuals at the time, that the very premise of translation and the assumptions of the West in the East necessitate a riding over what made the East itself, or in this case at least Egypt itself. In writing the life of Rousseau, Haykal must be careful not to write over Egypt and this anxiety structures his whole text which remains replete with the contradictory emotions of his love affair with the French philosopher. In an ideal situation of no translation, Islam can promote scientific inquiry while maintaining a spiritual openness that guards against the prevalence of materialism, and as such Islam would require no help from French philosophy. But it does, and Rousseau is necessary to Haykal's vision of the new Egypt, even though Rousseau was moody, selfish, and inconsiderate. So Haykal has to find a form of translation that really is a combination of the best of both worlds. This form of translation would have to be the *tarjamah*, which would allow Haykal to filter the words of Rousseau through a rewriting and re-contextualizing of the latter's words in the voice of Haykal himself. In other words, this form of translation would demand that to some extent, Haykal would have to become Rousseau.

In this problematic of translation, recognizing the need for the other is one step towards understanding oneself. Haykal's ideas are not mere importations of European thought, but they perform the kind of translation that was inevitable and necessary for Egyptian thought post World War I. His ideas remain constantly in dialogue with the borrowed thought, recognizing the impossibility of imagining an Egypt devoid of European influence. Ironically, this is itself a version of Rousseau's problem as he at once invents and returns to "nature" or the "self" only to discover that they are

fictions that arise in the context of the very social progress that supposedly has corrupted them. Haykal's dialogue with Rousseau thus makes up the novelistic aspect of the *tarjamah*, and shows that fiction becomes the premise of this conversation in translation. The fiction also makes possible and necessary the assumption of another's name, and speaking in the name of that other, to an Egyptian cause. In the *tarjamah*, Haykal tangentially mentions Dudding as Rousseau's chosen English name.¹⁸² He reports the story of the fake name in narrating the adventures of Rousseau, and uses the episode to demonstrate Rousseau's occasional, bizarre playfulness. Although Haykal does not comment further on Rousseau's assumption of another's name, the text seems to internalize this doubling on two levels: on one, the othering of Rousseau's name will form the premise of Haykal's autobiographical criticism of the former. On the other, the replaceable proper name of Rousseau sanctions Haykal's almost too intimate relationship with the French writer and enables Haykal's presentation of himself in the figure of a translated Rousseau, the new Egyptian prophet. The always possible substitution of the proper name makes possible this gesture of usurpation in Haykal's text, of replacing the proper name of Rousseau with his own name.

In other words, the Dudding episode is internalized on the level of form in Haykal's *tarjamah* into the problem of the self authored as its potential other, despite the fact that Jean Starobinski insists that the language of Rousseau eschewed any form of otherness. Starobinski maintains that in the *Confessions*, language or writing becomes the immediate expression of the self (195). This immediacy is meant to guard against the threat of alterity, Starobinski continues. Rousseau aspires to total immediacy which would, in effect, abolish any otherness. Yet despite his best efforts,

¹⁸² Haykal refers to the name Dudding only once and as such, "And his name then was Dudding and it was the English name that he had chosen for himself" (I, 44).

as I have already shown, Rousseau's *Confessions* needs its other, as reader and in many ways, as writer. It invites constant rewritings because it recognizes the impossibility of telling a life and telling it all. Haykal responds to this invitation in his *tarjamah* as he rethinks the origin in Rousseau's work as one already mired in a form of translation between East and West. This origin in translation makes it possible for Haykal to imagine himself as Rousseau, and in that imagining, make Rousseau a possible friend or even a lover, for, as Haykal tells us, Rousseau wanted to be Julie.

Julie, or Rousseau otherwise

Haykal makes many allowances for Rousseau. At some point in his *Confessions*, Rousseau tells us that he is not making apologies, but merely relating his confessions. Haykal takes Rousseau at his word and believes the latter's avowal of good faith. After all, Rousseau is confessing not apologizing. Haykal's most memorable defense of Rousseau comes up in the context of Rousseau's last encounter with the aging Madame de Warens. Haykal quotes the scene of the encounter which begins with the arresting "I saw her ... but" (I, 102). The aging woman, no longer the model of woman and mother in Rousseau's mind, is slowly forsaken. Haykal translates:

'And that was the moment when I should have paid up my debt to her, leave everything and spend the rest of my days with her till her final hour, and share her fortune whatever that may be ... but I did none of that. And I felt that whatever bond we had between us was severed because now another bond with someone else distracted me from her.' That is the selfish, self-serving Rousseau. And he comforts himself in this moment like he always does, by saying that he has a good heart and cannot really commit any ill-doing. But he has an excuse that forgives him this and any other trespasses, and that is the gift of genius. For if genius was to question itself at every step, it would no longer be genius and then lose all its power ... The reader must see that Rousseau was still a poet more so than a thinker. For he wants to analyze the problem in all its aspects and arrive at a conclusion, so he begins with introductory speeches that he fills with excitement and power ... and this power concealed all other faults. (I, 102 – 105)

Haykal makes introductory speeches as well, and this last excerpt is none other than the introduction to *Julie*. Haykal continues with his own words: “and this power will only increase until it reaches its zenith when *Jan Jak* writes his novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, with which he brings romanticism to life and digs the first hole of the grave of Classicism” (I, 106). *Julie* is the culmination of this power, and of Jan Jak as well, whose first name stains the whole excerpt.

Haykal locates Jan Jak’s literary beginnings precisely in the figure of Julie, as character and as model of woman. Haykal describes Rousseau’s encounter with Sophie d’Houdetot, the wife of Madame D’Epinay’s brother, whose face was marked with smallpox scars. In other words, she was not beautiful in the typical sense, but Rousseau fell in love with her. Haykal translates (and comments):

‘I went back and I saw her and I was high on the love which didn’t rest on one person at first, then I stopped and I saw Julie’ – the fictional character that he is writing to – ‘represented in the person of Madame D’Houdetot and I forgot everything else except Mme. Houdetot dressed in all the meanings of perfection that my heart longed for in that moment.’ (I, 115)

The comment in between dashes is confusing inasmuch as I believe Haykal intended to say that Julie is the character Rousseau was writing, and not writing to. Moreover, he doesn’t stop the quotation marks and the only clue that these are perhaps not Rousseau’s words is in the verb ‘*yukātibuhu*’ which literally translates into ‘he was writing to,’ with the prefix “*yu*” referring to the absent Rousseau. Haykal extrapolates from Rousseau’s obsession with the figure of Sophie a whole theory of fiction:

And I don’t know if Rousseau’s love for Madame D’Houdetot is the love of a man for a woman or the love of a writer for whom he sees as an ideal of the person he would like to represent in his novel, an ideal which provides him with the richest material for his writing. For often the example (or the ‘model’) fills the writer’s or painter’s or sculptor’s heart and more often it becomes the basis for an amorous friendship that remains, despite all the love involved, only a friendship. And I believe that Rousseau’s affections for her were of that kind ... and what exists in the novel of the memories of their meetings together supports this idea in that the novelistic portrayal of these meetings

cannot be imagined in real life, and none such events occurred in any of Rousseau's other friendships with women. One can only find examples of such encounters in the novel *Julie*. (I, 115 – 116)

Haykal then quotes from the scene of the moonlight encounter from the *Confessions*, and I quote his translation: “And this was the first and only moment of its kind in my life ... and we spent two hours in a passionate and gentle conversation and she left that night from among the trees and from the arms of her friend as she came in, with her heart untouched and her body unharmed” (I, 116 – 117).

Interestingly while Sophie is the model for *Julie*, Haykal quotes from the *Confessions* and not from the novel when elaborating his theory of the model. He is, after all, writing the life and story of Rousseau. The ideal or the model, is importantly, never touched. The relationship, love-friendship, between the author and his ideal is never consummated. Just as Sophie leaves the forest encounter untouched, so the model Julie has to remain untouched by her creator and by his translator. In writing *Julie*, Haykal tells us, Rousseau becomes the author of an ideal, of the untouched, unmarked woman. But Julie is touched, at least in the context of the novel. Nonetheless, Haykal insists that she is an ideal untouched by her author, that she was discovered in his innocent exchanges with Sophie, and that after those encounters, it was impossible not to write *Julie*.

Julie as model is more than idealized, untouched woman; she is also always potentially real. In the preface to the novel, Rousseau is insistent on impersonating the editor of this collection of letters. Like Defoe in his preface to *Robinson Crusoe*, Rousseau confirms to his reader that he has found these letters and assembled them. Of course Novels are corrupt, and their readers are even more so. Rousseau maintains the editor's pretense while also acknowledging that *Julie* is a work of fiction. He actually indicts the maiden who decides to read this book, forcefully dismissing any

virtue she might have had as soon as she expresses interest in the novel. But now that she has already been contaminated by the desire to read the book, she should go ahead and do so and try to learn from the life of Julie.

Clearly Rousseau was no friend of women. His relationship with Thérèse Levasseur is ample proof of that. Jean Starobinski argues that Thérèse never posed a threat to Rousseau's self, because she was never enough for him to consider her a threatening other to his all-consuming sense of self (179). Thus she was the safe haven for him throughout his life as she never challenged his construction of his Self. In the second preface to the novel, "Conversations about Novels between the Editor and a Man of Letters," in which Rousseau as R is engaged in conversation with an anonymous N (who is suspected of being his publisher), Rousseau insists yet again that the character of Julie might have correspondence in real life but that he would never confirm that. N tells him that if this Julie is fictitious, then *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is a terrible novel.

Although Haykal does not openly address the controversy surrounding the genre of the book, he takes it up in his theory of the model. The model might thus be touched in her world, but the author does not touch her, nor does he consummate his love-friendship affair with her. In other words, it is always possible that she is real, and he thus cannot touch her, but can only be inspired to write her. She becomes the space for his own writing, the open-ended quotation mark of his text that can only begin with her life.

Julie as the open space, the quoted life of someone else that involves its author in an unconsummated love affair, makes it possible for Rousseau, and as we will see for Haykal as well, to write his own life, inadvertently as it were, inside the open-ended quotation marks. In Volume II of *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal confirms that the

strangeness of the novel *Julie* is none other than the strange script of its author's life, the other Rousseau, re-imagined (5). This weird, strange creature was so fond of himself that he only knew this self as primary material for his writing, and *Julie* is but one of these snapshots of his life (II, 10). The question of Julie's, and her maiden reader's, virtue is precisely that open space that enables Rousseau's novel to take form. The writing of the novel is thus paradoxically only made possible through the writing on the body or figure of woman. Julie will after all lose her virtue to Saint-Preux, marry the noble Wolmar, deceive herself into being happy, then realize she is not and drown in the lake "accidentally."

The woman as unmarked ideal returns to become the space that makes Haykal's writing possible, wherein the body of the woman needs to be raised above the masses to be made fit for the intellectual. Although Haykal criticizes Rousseau's dismissal of women towards the end of his *tarjamah*, he will later on take up this exclusion of woman and transform it into a necessary silence that comes to represent the silencing of the masses.¹⁸³ In this book, however, Haykal is interested in Rousseau's identification with the body of the woman, as Rousseau's whims resemble Julie's upon marriage (II, 31). This identification will make possible much of Haykal's own thought on the status and position of woman in society. And Haykal sarcastically muses at this point that there is no one more apt to send the letter of

¹⁸³ Haykal takes issue with Rousseau's unfair treatment of women, writing that "if Rousseau was accurate in his portrayal of the situation of women as he was in portraying that of man, we would have included the last section of *Émile* with what we have already exposed. But Rousseau was so adamantly against the freedom of women because he was too fond of them" (II, 179). Haykal insists on the equal collaboration between men and women and the equally important contribution of both to the advancement of science and civilization (II, 204), right before he makes another excuse for Rousseau with which he ends his *tarjamah*, "But even if we criticize the opinion of Rousseau on the education of woman, we do not tire of mentioning what we mentioned earlier. In the description of Sophie there are still traits to be admired, and the style with which these are described is always identifiably the style of Rousseau, that musical style that is exceptionally creative" (II, 202). It is clear from this quote that Haykal justifies the thought of Rousseau again by the aesthetic musicality of the latter's style. It is precisely this aestheticization that will carry on into the work and thought of Haykal.

virtue than the miserable, sinful Rousseau, who remained in a perpetual state of melancholy until he turned forty (II, 37).

As such, *Julie* the novel reaches a static aesthetic state and can have no ending action that resolves issues of virtue (II, 41). Julie's perfections, as such, can only be a fiction and Rousseau's identification with her remains a failure. Haykal tells us that only an ideal person would know such an ideal state in heaven, so all that remained was for the characters to be immortalized in this life, in this portrait Rousseau painted of them, and as such no ending remained for Rousseau. Haykal describes the novel as having no order and no organization but operating only on crisis and resolution: the creation of an unforeseen event that ends the life of the most dangerous characters—in other words, Rousseau imposes many formal demands on the content (II, 42). Rousseau leaves behind the novelistic craft and documents his dreams, feelings and illusions, but with no representation through repentance and compensation or recuperation of unprecedented events (II, 45).

Nonetheless, Rousseau's novels form the background for the possibility of any modern revolution. The live portraits of a "speaking nature" that call for a return to a love of nature, this harmony between the interior of the character and the outside world, were the primary driving force behind the revolution. Moreover, the musical style was the biggest factor behind the literary revolution caused by *Julie*, "a revolution indeed," replacing historical facts with description and analysis (II, 49). This Romanesque romanticism is only made possible by the subjective nature of Rousseau, "living in himself, by himself and for himself" (II, 50). It's Romanesque because the characters lived their lives romanescquely as if they, too, were novelists in the act of self-invention, exaggerating all emotions that pertain to them (II, 51). Rousseau himself is in the novel of love and illusion. The novel's fictional (masterful)

artifice is justified only by the amazing life of Rousseau (II, 53). At this point Haykal refers to Rousseau as Jan Jak, and writes that “things material and nonmaterial were covered in his mind by a screen of imagination so he renders the thing unusual and far from reasonably believable sometimes” (53 – 54).

So the world of Julie, the village of Clarens, which might be considered utopian¹⁸⁴, is actually only the static and suspended world of the novel which does not

¹⁸⁴ It is not entirely accurate to describe Clarens as a utopia as it is situated for the most part in an identifiable 18th-century Swiss context. In the world of Clarens, there are masters and servants, and men and women. Men and women, with their respective roles, are continuously differentiated in the novel. Men represent the productive rational force of market economy, and women embody natural abundance. But the role of the woman is in regulation. She has to regulate the man’s sexual (and other) intake. For instance, in Part I, Letter L, Julie describes what sounds like two kinds of love/ sexual relations, one sounds regulated and the other not: “The heart does not follow the senses, it guides them; it throws over their ecstasies a delightful veil. No, nothing is obscene except debauchery and its vulgar language. Genuine love, always modest, does not audaciously snatch favours; it timidly makes off with them” (113). It is not within the scope of this chapter to study these gendered relations and how they fit into Rousseau’s larger, imagined economy in the village, but suffice it to say that Julie, like Sophie in *Émile*, is a tool in the moral education of man and she has to experience her own pleasure within the restrictions of this education as well. One can clearly see the influence of this gender differentiation on Haykal’s *Zaynab*, in which Zaynab also becomes the scapegoat so that the normal status quo may continue without a threatening instability. In other words, the sacrifice of Zaynab, her marriage to a farmer, saves Hāmid from his own confusions about his own desire and role in society.

Clarens does have, however, utopian features such as a completely self-sustaining economy, in which the inhabitants live off of the land and desire only what they need. In Part Four of the novel, and in Letter X, we read the following description of this economy from Saint-Preux’s letter to Milord Edward:

Everything here is agreeable and cheerful; everything bespeaks plenty and elegance, nothing reeks of wealth and luxury. There is not a single room where one is not recognizably in the country, and where one fails to find all the conveniences of the city. The same changes can be noticed out of doors ... They follow the maxim of extracting from the land all it can yield, not to obtain a larger gain from it, but to feed more men. Monsieur de Wolmar contends that land produces in proportion to the number of hands that till it; better tilled it yields more, this excess production furnishes the means of tilling it better still; the more me and beasts you put on it, the more surplus it supplies over and above their subsistence. It is not known, he says, where this continual and reciprocal increase in product and labor might end. On the contrary, neglected fields lose their fertility: the fewer men a region produces, the fewer commodities it produces. It is the paucity of the inhabitants that prevents it from feeding the few it has, and the inhabitants of any area that loses population must sooner or later die of hunger. (364)

In Letter XI, Saint-Preux continues to describe the kind of labor they perform on the estate: “One works only in order to enjoy; this alternation of labor and enjoyment is our genuine vocation” (387). In Part Five, Letter II, he offers the most succinct description of Rousseau’s imagined utopia in Clarens:

The masters of this house enjoy a modest estate in terms of the notions of fortune that prevail in society; but ultimately I know no one more opulent than they. There is no such thing as absolute wealth. That word merely signifies a relation of surplus between the desires and the means of the rich man. One is rich with an acre of land; another is a beggar amidst his mounds of gold. Disorder and fancies know no bounds, and make more people poor than do real needs. Here the proportion is established upon a basis that makes it unshakable, that is, the perfect agreement of the two spouses. The husband has taken the responsibility for collection of payments, the wife directs their use, and it is in the harmony that reigns between them that the source of their wealth lies. (434)

pretend to refer to any reality in the world outside the novel. The natural economy that is established in Clarens, where Julie and Wolmar live off of their own produce and maintain the balance of things on the estate as they had received it, is where the action stops. Jean Starobinski argues that the fantasy of pure freedom of the self that appears in the *Social Contract* finds its application in *Julie*. He describes how in the *Social Contract* the self gives itself freely and loses itself in “narcissistic contemplation, But what it discovers is pure freedom, pure transparency, through its intimate association with other free and transparent souls, indeed with the ‘communal soul’” (97). Thus, in the world of *Julie*, it is enough for everyone to participate in the festival to feel or imagine that they are equal.¹⁸⁵ After all, equality for Rousseau, as Starobinski describes, remains a “collective state of mind” (100). In the second preface to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Rousseau writes that in small social groups,

styles as well as characters become more like each other, and that friends, confounding their souls, also confound their manners of thinking, of feeling, and of speaking. This Julie, such as she is, must be an enchantress; everyone who comes near her is bound to resemble her; everyone about her is bound to become Julie. (21)

The imitation of styles in a small social group is also the condition for society as a whole, and for Clarens as its own self-sustaining world. *Julie* as the applied world of the *Social Contract* includes egalitarianism as a performance and not as the real state of affairs, and this contradictory premise of equality manifests most prominently in the idyllic world of Julie.

Again the conditions of the utopian existence are based on a regulated relationship between husband and wife in their specific roles.

¹⁸⁵ The description of the festival is in Part 5, Letter VII of the novel when the fête de vendanges or the grape harvest is “a charming spectacle; everything conspires to give it a festive air, and this festivity becomes only the more beautiful upon reflection, when it occurs to us that it is the only one in which men have succeeded in combining the agreeable and the useful” (494). Saint-Preux continues: “You can scarcely imagine the zeal, the gaiety with which all this is performed. We sing, we laugh all day long, and the work goes only the better for it. Everyone loves in the greatest familiarity; everyone is equal, and no one forgets himself” (496).

Haykal reads this performance of abstraction in the figure of the model. The woman, as untouched model but necessary feminine space of the author's imagination, becomes the impetus behind Haykal's aestheticization of freedom and beauty in his own work. Haykal will take up this promise of performed rather than real equality in the rest of his oeuvre, as he will strive to fight for the masses but remain above them at the same time. In his novel *Zaynab*, however, Haykal's borrowings from Rousseau will reveal their limitations and become contradictory in the world of *Zaynab*, pointing to an inevitable failure of translation.

Zaynab, or Julie Otherwise

Haykal took up the utopian promise of a self-sustaining natural Clarens more seriously in his first novel, *Zaynab, or Scenes from and Manners of the Egyptian Countryside, by an Egyptian farmer*.¹⁸⁶ Charles D. Smith writes that *Zaynab* is actually the earlier outcome of Haykal's own friendship-love affair with Rousseau. In *Islam and the Search for Social Order*, Smith describes that Haykal found in Rousseau and others examples of authors whose representations of love challenged cultural ideals, and

[h]e argued that similar examples should appear in Egyptian literature, "presenting from the loves of heroes, what Shakespeare, Rousseau and Goethe perpetuated through the examples of Julie, St. Preux, and Werther." *Zaynab*, therefore, is not an interesting if clumsy effort by a young Egyptian to present a romantic story set in the Egyptian countryside as noted by many critics. Whatever its deficiencies in plot and narrative, it is essentially a moral statement in which Haykal tried to emulate his European model in a manner applicable to Egypt's social milieu. (48)

¹⁸⁶ The subtitle of *La Nouvelle Héloïse, Lettres de deux amants habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes* ("Letters from two lovers living in a small town at the foot of the Alps"), is markedly different from that of *Zaynab*, "Scenes from and Manners of the Countryside." Later on in the chapter, in discussing Haykal's relationship to Gustave Flaubert, I will argue that *Zaynab*'s subtitle is actually more an echo of *Madame Bovary*'s "Mœurs de province" or "Provincial Manners."

The influence of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* on *Zaynab* is clear in Haykal's preoccupation with the natural virtues of the countryside, the unmediated communication between the peasants, and the call for social equality (which he was very wary of). The practical impossibility of equality in the social realm finds its loudest echo in Haykal's first novel.

Published anonymously in 1913, *Zaynab* was clearly unfamiliar to its readers. The problem was not that it looked like a novel or that it was the first one at all; rather, it was different and challenging in a variety of ways. The book had philosophical musings, sexual intercourse in the Egyptian countryside, criticism of tradition and the veil, and introspective letters interrogating the detrimental influence of the status quo on love and marriage. In his introduction to the book, Haykal describes how his intense nostalgia for Egypt and his love affair with French literature occasioned the writing of *Zaynab*:

And I was extremely passionate then about French literature, and I only knew a little of it the day I left Egypt and all I knew were a few words of French. But when I started studying the language, I saw in it something other than I had seen in English and Arabic letters. I saw in it smoothness, ease and flow of style, and I also saw purpose and accuracy in expression and description, and simplicity in the phrase that doesn't come except to people who love what they want to express more than they love the words of their phrases. My passion for this new literature combined with my great nostalgia for home, and I started documenting all the memories of places and incidents and Egyptian portraits left in my soul. After not too many trials, I started writing *Zaynab*. I started it thinking I would stop at one short incident like the other stories popular at the time did, but I saw myself open up the space for her [*al-riwāyah* or the novel is morphologically feminine in Arabic]. And I saw Egypt fold and spread her scenes in front of me [note how the language is very sexual and Egypt as the object of his novel is a feminized entity that's conquered by his language]. And I felt a sense of pleasure followed by another every time I underlined an image of that home I longed for, and reviewed it and found that it translates [*tutarjam* in the present tense] from the truth that I find within me ... And the strange thing is that a strong feeling of lust took over me that I couldn't account for. (20 – 21)

The preface was added in 1929, when Haykal, after attaching his name to the book, thought it was necessary to contextualize the writing of the novel. Haykal tells of his love affair with French literature and how it is consummated in the writing of *Zaynab*. While the model in Rousseau's work remains untouched, *Zaynab* is implicated in a series of transgressive consummations. Haykal begins by describing his fondness of French literature in the language of love and though he does not directly claim that he will imitate French literature, he describes the writing of *Zaynab* in the language of orgasmic pleasure. First, the novel is the product of the combination of nostalgia and an infatuation with French literature. Second, when he was trying to write a short story about one incident as was the tradition in Egyptian storytelling at the time, he could not stop writing, much as Rousseau could not stop in his *Confessions*. Haykal says that the novel demanded her own space to grow and develop, and that Egypt began to fold and spread images of itself, like a promiscuous temptress, in that space.¹⁸⁷

The writing is then presented in the language of bliss, with one feeling of pleasure piling up on the next. And this orgasmic writing experience "translates" what he felt inside him. The translation from the inside out coincides with an overpowering feeling of lust. Thus we walk into a scene of seduction and consummation with the verb "translates" appearing as though out of context. The translation from the inside out, in a moment of pleasure and thus seemingly complete honesty, is also a reference to Haykal's relationship to French literature, and particularly his infatuation with the French phrase. *Zaynab* is a kind of translation, from the inside out, of Egyptian scenes in a borrowed French phrase.

¹⁸⁷ We notice a complete different use of the feminine in *Zaynab* from the feminine in the translation of *Robinson Crusoe* by Buṭrus al-Būstānī. In the latter, the morphological feminine is contrasted to the masculine gesture of domesticating the alien island, while in the case of *Zaynab*, the feminized novel is invaded by her author.

The translation from the inside out makes the protagonist Ḥāmid into Haykal's alter-ego as Smith and many other readers of the book describe him. Ḥāmid is the young educated Egyptian philosopher on a perpetual quest to find his place on the ground only to discover the intellectual must somehow remain afloat and untouched (uncontaminated) by the social sphere. Zaynab is the peasant woman, the *fallāḥah*, that he takes a liking to but realizes can never be with because she will never learn the difference between love and lust. Throughout the novel, Zaynab is idealized into a harmonious aspect of the background, the free-spirited natural beauty of the countryside, away from the deceptions of the social. For instance at the very beginning of the novel, we read this description of Zaynab the *fallāḥah*:

There was Zaynab at that age, with nature leaning towards her with the eye of a lover ... and she has taken from her surroundings what filled her heart with joy, and added to her beauty more beauty and gentleness, so Being fell more in love with her ... And every time one of them [Being and Zaynab] stole a look from the other, it went to the depth of the soul and the whole [being in general] made an impression on the heart of the girl ... (32)¹⁸⁸

But while Being is content to live in the present moment and not be lured by the promises of the future, the girl is soon seduced by a future promise of love. She wants to find a portion of the limitless whole that belongs to her, a human spirit to blend with hers (32). It is already clear from the language of this early passage that Zaynab is an abstraction of an ideal that Haykal wanted to find in the Egyptian countryside. Already in this passage he gives us a negative omen, telling us that something will come in the way of her quest for that human soul that is hers in this world. Zaynab is a tragic hero from the onset, and the philosophical language and musings of the narrator often make it difficult to read this book as a novel. Rather the text is a predetermined

¹⁸⁸ All my quotations are from Muḥammad Husayn Haykal's *Zaynab: Manāẓir wa akhlāq rifṭyyah*, published in Cairo by *al-Sharikah al-'Arabiyyah li al-Tibā'ah wa al-Nashr*, in 1958. All translations from the novel are my own. For another English translation of the novel, see John Mohammed Grinstead's translation (London: Darf, 1989).

portrait of the unlucky *fallāḥah*, who in her innocent quest for love, is punished severely by Being (and by the author) for being nothing more than a simple *fallāḥah*. She might feel the desire for love on an instinctual level, as she blends into the natural background, but she will never learn how to love the intellectual Ḥāmid. In other words, her social status has already dictated her fate.

In the novel, Zaynab develops relationships with three men. With Ḥāmid, she has a purely physical, flirtatious adventure. She finds the human spirit that would complete her own in Ibrāhīm, a peasant who is sent away to war in Sudan. And finally she is forced to marry Ḥassan, a well-off peasant. Unhappily married and longing for Ibrāhīm, Zaynab dies of consumption. Ḥāmid, on the other hand, visits the country from the city, bored and looking for something to jolt his being. He looks to Zaynab for this jolt back to life, or what he romanticizes into a harmonious and natural being with the world. His lust for Zaynab becomes the entire event of the novel, and Zaynab herself is a mere abstraction of the simple and “primitive” country people, who upon being kissed by Ḥāmid, acted “as if madness had overcome her and she had submitted to it ... nearly losing her senses” (95-96). He muses about his own desire and whether it is permissible or not to want the *fallāḥa*, but when she kisses him back the narrator tells us that “Ḥāmid understood none of this” (96). In his article “Love, Class and Passion in the Fiction of Muhammad Husayn Haykal,” Charles D. Smith comments on the scene of the kiss:

In other words he as the *fallāḥ*-intellectual is capable of passion but it is not the basis of his actions whereas this is made to be the case for the *fallāḥah*... Zaynab is continually trembling inarticulately when with Ibrāhīm as well as Ḥāmid, passion is associated with complete irrationality, something expected from a peasant girl presumably incapable of responding in any other way.
(252)

When Ḥāmid gives in to what the narrator describes as Zaynab’s forceful seductions, the narrator begins to undo the abstraction of the peasant girl. In other words, the fear

of contamination sets in. The scene of the writing of *Zaynab* can be consummated in an orgasmic union, wherein the invasion of the novel and by extension Egypt, allows the author to literally pour out his language from the inside out. However, when it comes to the real thing, to the intimacy with the actual *Zaynab*, Ḥāmid is afraid of contamination.

Ḥāmid begins to question his own “rationality” and the narrator tells the reader, “Whatever her allurements, how could he with his stature descend to that to which he descended. . . from the high heaven to the level of people who do not think. And, all of this with whom? With a simple working girl” (180-81). Although this passage impersonates the voice of Ḥāmid, it is evident to the reader that the narrator harshly dismisses *Zaynab* as a threat of contamination. Feeling guilty, Ḥāmid bathes himself in a canal to figuratively clean himself and wash the “sin” away. At this point in the narrative, women are figured as demons: Woman is “a devil, a snare into which men fall. She is pure evil designed to bring man down to earth from his heights of pride and greatness” (180). A couple of pages later, Ḥāmid confides in the reader that the erotic kiss with *Zaynab* stirred feelings in him he had never felt before, but that he must forget it as it is forbidden but “[t]ruly it was an hour in life not to be forgotten except by *experiencing it again*” (183; emphasis mine). Much like Rousseau’s description of the scene with Madame de Larnage, Ḥāmid’s last conclusion intimates that the pleasure of the forbidden must be experienced again, perhaps also in the realm of textual fantasy.

Later on in the novel, Ḥāmid is sitting under a tree and contemplating his own role in the world and its relation to the whole outside of him. He soon realizes that he is getting lost in pointless philosophical musings and looks to the objects surrounding him for a sense of anchoring in the real world of things. Of course the first such object

is Zaynab who passes by him carrying lunch to her husband in the field. The narrator tells us, in the voice of Ḥāmid, “Zaynab is married now which is why she protests when he reminds her of the past. But what does he care that she is married. He must take her in his arms and hold her to his chest and kiss every part of her body. No. He cannot stay away from her and he cannot possibly live without her” (248). However, this desire for the *fallāḥah*, which is none other than a desire for reality, is soon retracted even though Ḥāmid has intercourse with another *fallāḥah* in the field. He decides he must leave the countryside. Earlier in the story, in a very powerful scene, we read that Ḥāmid’s primal instinct resurfaces when he is admiring the natural landscape, and the natural scene is slowly internalized as Ḥāmid is about to become one with his surroundings (172-3). Of course that instinct is soon curbed and Ḥāmid remains very much apart from the natural landscape that only stands as a background to the intellectual musings and dilemmas of the hero. Sayyid al-Baḥrāwī in his 1996 book *Muḥtawā al-shakl fī al-riwāyah al-‘arabiyyah* [The Content of the Form in the Arabic Novel], argues that Ḥāmid’s problematic approach to nature is a result of mistranslation:

In this text there is a clear and important correlation between belonging and taking partiality to nature and the European philosophical treatment of this matter. It seems that sentiment or the instinctual feeling of natural phenomena (which is supposed to be spontaneous and instinctual and natural for any human) was for Ḥāmid a rational concept that is still in the process of being thought, for him of course, because it is a concept copied from European thought. We have previously noted Haykal’s inclination towards the theory of Rousseau on the struggle between nature and civilization [*al-madaniyyah*], such that Zaynab seems to partake of Haykal’s approach to nature in preferring it to society that seems oppressive and murderous of nature and man, but it is important to clarify here that this victory of nature is not the accurate understanding of Rousseau, who did not call for a return to nature as such; rather, it is Haykal’s understanding ... and for that reason (natural) love appears marred by Haykal’s understanding of class (which Rousseau considers unnatural) and blemished by an imitative mentality that follows foreign thought that is unrepresentative of the local experience of life. For Egyptian nature was available to the author, while the Egyptian society was and still is closer—especially in the countryside—to natural society, more so than French

society for instance, since it had not entered into the capitalist world yet. (145 – 146)

Al-Baḥrāwī continues that consequently, Haykal failed to produce a novel, and *Zaynab* remains a product of slavish imitation that in trying to be the Egyptian *Julie*, fails on all accounts of novelistic representation (148).

In the novel, the natural becomes associated with the irrational, and then the threat of both is soon contained in a romanticization of the natural world which the narrator calls the “other” world (177). This other world is none other than the world of *Zaynab* for only in the world of the novel can nature be re-figured into a contained paradise, minus the threat of sexual desire which threatens to spill over, contaminate the intellectual, and jeopardize the well-being of the social sphere. The innocence of the peasant girls provides the clean slate on which the intellectual is free to inscribe himself and this other world. The naïve working class women immortalize the memory of nature as a past child, when people did not struggle so much to hide what they wanted. Ḥāmid attacks the veil throughout the book; women should not be forced to wear any kind veil, but, paradoxically, his narrative makes them into abstractions in the world of the intellectual. In a sense, Haykal substitutes a figural veil for the material one in the text of the novel (198).

Even Ḥāmid’s momentary rational attraction to his cousin ‘Azīzah, the educated, veiled woman, soon wanes and he sets off on his travels to Europe again, still in search of that ideal love and non-traditional marriage of equals—though, finally, without the equality. Ḥāmid and ‘Azīzah’s relationship was already mediated through European letters. Importantly towards the end of the novel we have a proliferation of letters; for instance, we hear about learning love in translation in ‘Azīzah’s letter to Ḥāmid: “‘Azīzah knew nothing of the ways of lovers except what she had read in translated novels ... The moments she spent by herself, reading poetry

or letting her imagination take her wherever it pleased, were the closest she had come to experiencing love” (208). Love is experienced in a citational moment, in translation.

The citational model borrowed from translation is soon taken up formally in the text. At some point, Ḥāmid will tell us, as though in confidence and in-between parentheses what he really thinks about marriage: “(And I do not deny that until today I consider it a lack, especially the way it stands now, and I consider the love that is not established on and continued in love a cheap union)” (210). The letters, as the space of intimate citation, along with the parentheses and the reference to experiencing love in translation, suggest that the text of the novel is already implicit in a form of translation that it doesn’t openly confess to. For instance, the narrator tells us in a note in parentheses that all the letters between ‘Azīzah and Ḥāmid are copied from the latter’s journal in an attempt to establish the authenticity of the world of the novel (212)—a gesture that echoes that of Rousseau in the preface to *Julie*.

Importantly, these letters also take up most of the controversial issues that Haykal wants to explore in the novel. Perhaps the space of the letter in the body of the novel allowed Haykal to further establish the anonymity of the novel in 1913 and to distance the narrator from their formulations. The letters as compiled from the journal of Ḥāmid thus may be read as expressing the ambivalence of Ḥāmid, and not Haykal writing in Paris, towards the hypocrisy of custom, the “virtuous life” which is actually “inescapable death” (186). The central conflict of the novel is somewhere between Haykal’s conviction that this virtue was non-existent and his inability to escape its dictates nonetheless. Thus the novel ends with that conflict unresolved, at least in the case of Ḥāmid. Zaynab, on the other hand, is allowed more freedom. Haykal experiments with the character and body of woman yet again, when Zaynab engages

in an adulterous relationship with Ibrāhīm with whom she has found real *ḥubb*. But she outdoes Ḥāmid only momentarily, because like Julie, Zaynab realizes she cannot have it both ways. Like Julie, Zaynab fails of course.

The conflict then between her act of resistance to custom in the name of love and at the same time her failure to experience that love because of her social class is never resolved. However, it persists in the body of the novel, leaving its traces on the body of the nation as a whole. Charles D. Smith writes that Haykal believed that women epitomized the lower classes in general, because they are irrational and uneducated as well as enslaved to the tradition of arranged marriage (“Love” 251). Smith continues, “Only through the elevation of women could [Haykal] find a woman equal to him and could he achieve *ḥubb*, true love, which encompassed a sense of aesthetic appreciation, an enjoyment of beauty, and merging of two spirits rather than merely two bodies” (251). In this sense, Haykal’s treatment of Zaynab reflects the contradictory tensions in his approach to Egypt as a whole: on the one hand, he argues for freedom from social tyranny and condones adultery because it is an expression of *ḥubb*. On the other hand, the lower classes, including Zaynab, can experience such *ḥubb* if they are brought up to the levels of the intellectual (Smith 253). Smith concludes that “[s]uch an achievement will simultaneously solve the problem of the intellectual’s isolation while liberating society as a whole” but it demands that the intellectual maintain a distance from “women/ Egyptian society and leads from isolation because direct contact is destructive given women’s/ society’s irrationality” (253).

Thus the body of the woman in the novel provides the premise for the author’s imagination of an “other” world, in which sexuality is contained and the rationality of

the intellectual (as he borrows it from his French reading) reigns supreme.¹⁸⁹ This containment appears in the experience of Ḥāmid and in the moral insertions in the novel. Formally, the novel is interspersed with proverbs or *ḥikam* which deliver moralistic lessons in short staccato sentences. These condensed linguistic expressions or interruptions are meant to salvage any loss caused by desire on the level of narrative control. The sexual undertones of the preface describing the writing of the novel as intercourse are curbed in two ways: first, in Ḥāmid's resistance and eventual departure, and second, in moralistic proverbs that guard against the explosion of the frame that holds this *longer* story together. We remember that Haykal was very aware that he was writing a longer story that is not familiar to his Egyptian readership.

This obsessive desire to contain sexuality and salvage an ideal of virtue reveals the heavy influence of the *Héloïse* on *Zaynab*. Just like Julie, Zaynab marries the wrong man, and the man she loves leaves the country. Also just like Julie, Zaynab has to live around her lover Ibrāhīm with no real way of being with him. Julie's accidental death, drowning in the river, is also echoed in Zaynab's unexpected death of consumption. But by far, the most palpable influence of influence of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* on *Zaynab* is in the portrayal of the natural landscape. Even though for most of the novel the natural countryside forms the background to the intellectual introspections of Ḥāmid, Haykal translates the static world of the novel *Julie* into the

¹⁸⁹ Charles D. Smith argues in *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt: A Biography of Muhammad Husayn Haykal* that the best exposition of Haykal's views appeared in his article "Tarbiyat al- 'ātīfah: Atharuhā fi al-Ḥayāt wa Atharuhā fi al-Adab" [The Teaching of True Feeling and Sentiment: Its Influence on Life and Literature], in *al-Siyāsah al-Uṣbu'īyyah*, on March 8, 1930. Here Haykal argues that true love, *ḥubb*, is a quality necessary for achieving goodness in life in general and experiencing feelings of compassion and generosity which lead to social well-being. Control by passion means unethical unfeeling for others—*ḥubb* is about moderation and the control of sexual instinct. *Ḥubb* means sharing and social cooperation as well as aesthetic appreciation. Haykal associates *hawā* with the passions that might divert the attentions of the intellectual and in that sense he assumes that the role of the intellectual as leader with all of its self-importance is not unlike the central image of God and fear of *hawā* as diversionary, felt by medieval thinkers.

static natural background of *Zaynab*. Nature as it is in *Julie* is static, a changing perception of a stand-still world: In *Zaynab*, we read, “But the sky is blue as it is, not affected by his prayers nor softened by his misery ... and the truth is that matter doesn’t smile often but continues on its permanent cycle ... and man walks on it and works with it and it works on him and he has no control over it” (256). Clarens, as the romanticized and idealized world of the repentant Julie, a world held in suspension, is somehow translated into the Egyptian village, as the “paradise of the imagination and the dream” (*Zaynab* 92). Significantly, both Zaynab and Julie must die for this ideal world to be possible, much like the translated Virginie and Atala had to die for the world of al-Manfalūṭī’s novels to be possible.

The fantasy of a utopian village or island that figures prominently in Rousseau’s political and pedagogical project is translated in two ways in Haykal’s novel. On the one hand, the imagined world of the village or island becomes the fantasy of the Egyptian countryside, this place of purity from the injustices of the social where another kind of Egypt can be imagined with Haykal as its new leader. On the other hand, the idealized island or village of Clarens, for instance, is translated into a political narrative that understands, whether consciously or not, the repercussions of such idealization on Egyptian reality. Much as some of the poetic insertions in al-Bustānī’s translation of *Robinson Crusoe* offer a critique of colonial domestication, so *Zaynab* will interrogate the idealization of the natural.

The novel questions this idealization most forcefully in the aestheticization of nature in urban spaces, as when the narrator describes the “island” on the Nile to us. We read in a clear moment of authorial intervention, without the intervention of the voice of Ḥāmid:

[Ḥāmid] would walk by the big river as its quiet, peaceful waves rolled in with the current. All the other waves also poured in from over there, from the distal,

remote places that we hear about, then they blend until they pour in the great salty river. And to its side, the gardens and green lands and trees stretch. Here Ḥāmid once met one of his friends and they walked together enjoying the scent of this exquisite [the word in Arabic is *badī‘ah* which derived from *al-bidi‘* or creation] created island, organized by the hand of the oppressor in the time of oppression and now we, the grandchildren of the oppressed, enjoy it as our own. (140)

There is much to be said about the image of the river here in which all the streams, wherever they are from, blend together. Importantly, the figure of the river will become the main trope of Haykal’s book on the revolution of literature, as I will discuss in the next section. It is unclear what the island refers to specifically and which oppressor has created it (in 1913 Egypt had still been under various forms of French, British and Turkish rule), but the reference to an island in particular is significant. On the banks of the Nile, amidst the planted (not natural) landscape on the created island, Ḥāmid and the grandchildren of the oppressed dwell.¹⁹⁰ In other words, this particular island is placed in a political narrative of imposition on the natural landscape and on Egyptian land.¹⁹¹ Contrarily, Haykal’s own impositions on the

¹⁹⁰ It is unclear which island is being referred to here. There are a total of seventeen islands on the Nile. It is very possible that this reference is to Kitchener’s Island, or the Island of Plants, in Aṣwān, Egypt.

¹⁹¹ The problem of the “natural” in Rousseau is clearly a complex subject of ongoing debate. In this chapter, I am simply trying to understand what Haykal read the natural to be, and how his reading is necessarily related to the need for translation. I will quote at some length from Paul de Man’s 1979 book, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, and particularly the chapter on the *Social Contract* entitled “Promises” on the problem of the natural and the fictional in Rousseau, to emphasize two points: the theoretically political and the fictional, in de Man’s view, are almost identical in the work of Rousseau such that to use the excuse of the “fictional” as ultimately being made up and not realistically possible, in contrast to the realism of political theory, is rather tautological. The second point is that the use of the adjective “natural” is problematic in the least as for Rousseau the natural is never an absolute entity and remains communicated from within the social:

A first difficulty in the use of the polarity between the general and the particular will be lexicological and stems from the apparently inter-changeable use of the terms “natural” (as in religion naturelle, droit naturel, etc.) and “particular” or “individual,” both used in opposition to “civil” or “collective.” Rousseau follows common usage in speaking of natural law, natural religion or natural freedom (p. 293); he does not use “volonté naturelle” however, but would rather have chosen, in opposition to “volonté générale,” the term “volonté particulière.” Yet, taken literally, “particular” is clearly not the same as “natural”; if we say, for example, that the first part of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* deals with the particular, or individual, relationships between Julie and Saint-Preux in contrast to the second part which, at least at times, deals with public, collective relationships between the inhabitants of Clarens, it does not follow that, in the first

Egyptian countryside are not as unrealistic perhaps because he is an Egyptian and perhaps because the narrator tells us that Ḥāmid can try but nature will remain nature and will not respond to his abstractions.

The figure of the island, as it emerged in the translation of *Robinson Crusoe* as well, poses a threat as it remains entangled in a discourse of foreign invasion, a discourse that must continually be rewritten. Haykal's more successful rewriting of this figure of the island is definitely found in his treatise on Rousseau. *Jan Jak Rousseau* thus becomes a more successful novel, in my opinion, than *Zaynab* because it treats the theme of the island in relation to the complex dynamic of translation that emerges in the preface to *Zaynab* but remains in the body of the actual novel un-nuanced and written over the body of woman. In other words, the aestheticization of the natural landscape becomes an aestheticization that governs most of the novel in both the narrator's and Ḥāmid's approach to the Egyptian countryside. In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal similarly concludes that the aesthetics of Rousseau's style are the real drive behind the revolution (literary or political): Haykal says that the ideas of Rousseau became the Qur'ān of the revolution, as those were distinguished by the feverish style of the writing and not its content. In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal quotes

three books, Julie and Saint-Preux are in the state of nature as the term is used in the *Second Discourse*. A certain amount of confusion results from Rousseau's interchangeable use of "natural" and "particular," especially since his sense of the complexities of selfhood puts the individuals he portrays far beyond the simplicity of the state of nature. This is true of fictional entities such as the "characters" of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (if one wishes to consider them as such) as well as of actual human beings, including Rousseau himself, in the autobiographical writings. It would be absurd, for instance, to consider the *Confessions* as more "natural" than the *Social Contract* because it deals with individual experiences rather than with societies. The case of *Émile* is somewhat different, since the diegetic narrative is supposed to follow the history of an empirical human being from the start and along chronological lines. This forces upon us the contrast between a "natural" child and a corrupted citizen, an antithetical pattern of innocence and experience. The rhetorical mode of *Émile* produces the opposition between nature and society as a textual necessity. No such polarity functions in the *Confessions*, since Rousseau never claims to narrate anything about the child Jean-Jacques that is not directly remembered by him. He is thus at least twice removed from the preconscious condition of nature: the experiences of a highly self-conscious and "denaturé" child are told by the disfigured figure of a highly self-conscious narrator. (247-248)

one French critic on Rousseau's *Héloïse* saying: "The need to cry had not been satisfied since the time of Racine," and then Haykal elaborates:

The need for ladies and young persons, nay even of the old, for tears is one of the urgent needs of life ... it was necessary therefore for a writer [Rousseau] with a throbbing sensibility ... and plenty of tears to moisten this aridity with a new spirit that appealed to the heart and to shed his tears on [souls] which had become barren of [emotion] ... so as to restore them to their life and fertility. (unnamed critic, qtd. in *Jan Jak Rousseau* II, 60)

Rousseau was revolutionary precisely because his aesthetics made women and other young people cry, jolting them into reaction just as Zaynab jolted Ḥāmid into action. Thus, the revolution is in the kind of beauty that can instill emotion and elicit a reaction from the reader, as Muḥammad al-Sibā'ī had said of the revolutionary potential of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (as discussed in chapter three). The revolution of and in aesthetics is to become the discourse on revolution in Haykal's major treatise *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature] published in 1933.

Towards an Aesthetic of Revolution¹⁹²

In his discussion of the newness of *Julie*, Haykal writes that its musical style was the biggest factor behind the literary revolution it initiated. *Julie*'s revolution lies in replacing historical facts with description and analysis (49). Rousseau's revolution is in his musical style, a style Haykal finds so aesthetically pleasing that it could very well hide the controversial content of his work. In his *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature, 1933], Haykal continues to trace this aesthetic revolution in French literature and its translation not into but rather onto Arabic letters, as he will

¹⁹² Throughout his life, Haykal was ambivalent about his relationship to the French Revolution throughout his life, as we can especially see in his book on Rousseau where the revolution is both a moment of corruption and one of liberation that must be emulated to some extent. After the 1940's, when Haykal turns to Islam, he begins to emphasize the correlation between Islamic principles and those of the revolution and he does so consistently for the rest of his life. As Charles D. Smith summarizes, "Haykal proclaimed the Revolution's principles and ignored the sociopolitical circumstances to which they were opposed" (186).

reimagine Arabic literary history as a belated reproduction of the French one. Moreover, Haykal is not concerned with the translation of individual works of literature into Arabic; rather, he is interested in transposing literary and narrative methods of description into Arabic literature and thus changing the very aspect of Classical Arabic in the process. In a highly autobiographical style, he describes how French literature shaped not only the form of his novels, but also their scene of writing. After all, *Zaynab* was written in exile, and the rest of Haykal's oeuvre will maintain a strangeness of place. His treatise on the revolution of Arabic literature bears witness to this strangeness in its implicit insistence on translation.

The 1881 'Urābī Revolution and the 1919 Nationalist uprising form the background of Haykal's book. Throughout, however, it gets increasingly more difficult to tell the revolution on the streets from the revolution in the text. Haykal mentions sporadically that the revolution in literature is a direct consequence of the revolution on the street, but the more interesting and unspoken dimension of his book is in the reverse of this formula. Once literature made contact with the revolution, he tells us, writing came out of its exclusive barn (the reference here is definitely to al-Azhar) and began relating to people of all social levels. The "correct" Arabic language now has to be that of writing for and connecting with the masses (6). Herein lies the revolution of literature.

Towards the beginning of the book, Haykal asks: If Western literature has the Classics and Christianity and Descartes, "what literature or philosophy of the past must we be associated with if we want it to have the aspect of some civilization?" (11). Haykal will famously turn to Pharoanic history in his quest for an identifying origin. But before understanding this return to what he will consider a creative origin for modern Arabic literature, we must stop momentarily at this problematic of

translation that begins to emerge in the previous question and structures the rest of his book.

Haykal writes that Arabic literature needs to keep up with the sciences and philosophy of the West or else it will turn into a “literature of words [*alfāz*]” (32). In other words, contact with the body of Western literature will provide Arabic literature with a new style and a new form that are not based on mere rhetoric. After all, Haykal’s issue is primarily with the forms of Arabic literature like the *maqāmah* and classical poetry that place so much emphasis on language and fail to reflect reality outside the book. Haykal argues that contact with Western literature, however, will enable a more sincere engagement with reality, whatever this reality is supposed to be and however it is supposed to be represented. Now Haykal will not argue that this contact has to be pure imitation; nonetheless, he clearly maintains that contact with the modernity of the West will initiate the modern in Arabic letters. Moreover, the development of Western literature provides the link we need between modern Arabic literature and its past. Haykal writes, “The modern in Arabic literature are only the attempts to fill the void in the gap that separates our age from the golden ages of Arabic literature” (33). For Haykal the modern is the return to origins and the latter, just as paradoxically, is mediated by the encounter with Europe. Filling in this void is ultimately the work of translation, as Haykal understood it.

In effect, the modernity of Arabic literature (both in poetry and in prose) is tied to a more direct, concrete and sincere use of language:

So the language of literature has evolved, and now the language most capable of mixing with literature is the one that is transparent in the meaning and the images that it describes, intent on increasing their life and musicality. This transparent, enlightening, smooth language that does not block any of the beauty that the talented author wants to portray ... is considered like a garment and connects to the literature in enveloping it, till it becomes a part of the nectar of life that literature expresses. (38)

He continues, “but language is a living being that one should always commit to ... and committing to language in the context of literature must ensure that it is continuously refined to increase in fineness and that makes it more than just a garment” (42). In the least, this relationship between literature and language remains paradoxical in the work of Haykal. Language makes literature possible, and it must respond to the contingency of the historical moment. The essence of the literary (the “beauty” that the author aims to “portray”) resorts to language only as a cover or a mediating form, but then language *through* literature becomes a part of the life that literature reflects (37 – 38).¹⁹³ This ornamental relation of language to literature can be remedied precisely through recourse to simplicity of expression: the simpler the language, the more it becomes a part of the literature rather than an external appendage to it (like a dress) (42). Language then, as a mere garment, is supposed to envelop the text but to do so only transparently. In other words, the meaning takes primacy over the style. A clear departure from the tradition of Arabic literature that places more emphasis on rhetoric than content, Haykal’s revolutionary articulation in this context is anchored, interestingly, in his reading of Flaubert.

In this context, Haykal presents Flaubert as the exemplary author in his relationship to language. Flaubert, as his critics report, would spend days and weeks in search of the perfect word. When he was writing *Madame Bovary*, “and telling the story of the suicide of its heroine by drinking the arsenic, he could taste the poison in his mouth, and find for that experience accurate phrases that describe the meaning and depict it accurately” (Haykal 42). According to Haykal, it is as though the author himself tasted the arsenic with her. Haykal erases the boundary between the space of the fictive and that of the real in mapping out the relation between language and

¹⁹³ Haykal’s troubled relationship to the real in literary representation is most paradoxical in his minimal and awkward use of Cairene dialect in *Zaynab*.

literature: language re-enters the real world (in the experience of the writer) through the world of fiction (42).

Haykal reads this intimacy between Flaubert and his heroine as a consequence of the former's preoccupation with the perfect word. In coming that close to language, Flaubert becomes Emma (as he himself claims: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!"). But Haykal is not reading biographically here; rather, he qualifies Flaubert's style as musical, much as Rousseau's style was musical, and much as Haykal's writing is new. The transparency of the language makes possible the beauty that the author wants to portray, and such beauty would arouse emotion. Thus such transparency would not be content-based in a reference to the world outside, but only to the author's vision. The musicality of style, as I mentioned earlier, would aesthetically envelop the content and thus make it pleasant to the reader in its formal attributes.¹⁹⁴ This is precisely the "newness" of Haykal's contribution to Arabic literature: in importing realistic, yet aesthetic means of representation from French literature, Haykal's work promises to deliver a kind of musicality that is still faithful to reality, and the reality in this case would be none other than the author's own subjective vision of the world. The proximity to the perfect word, then, gives the literature its sense of reality. Thus while the revolution on the streets forces literature to change its relationship to language, the new literature constructs its own world out of this change. The new kind of literature and literary language, derived from what Haykal understood to be Rousseau's musicality of style, is referential and aesthetically musical at the same time. In other words, it comes out of the demand for a new kind of language, the musical language of the author, and from this new language which is already a distorted representation

¹⁹⁴ Haykal's description here makes it difficult to differentiate his own vision from what he considered to be the weakness of traditional forms like the *maqāmah*, namely its heavily rhetorical preoccupations. It would seem that Haykal wanted the new literature to depict Egyptian reality but to do so in a beautiful language that would express the subjective vision of its author and not merely reproduce external reality in fiction.

of reality, it comes to produce its own version of the real. This dedication to the real as derived from an aesthetic experience is then extended to the figure of the woman. I mentioned earlier that the subtitle of *Zaynab*, “Scenes from and Manners of the Egyptian Countryside” is also an echo of Flaubert’s subtitle of *Madame Bovary*, “Mœurs de Province” or “Provincial Manners.” Flaubert’s affair with Emma is reminiscent of Rousseau’s amorous friendship with the model. In a sense, the musicality of language in being a transparent garment of the content of the literary text is also a result of the relationship of the author with his female protagonist.

In Haykal’s reading of both Flaubert and Rousseau, the aesthetic appreciation of the text is also the aestheticization of the affair with woman. After all, the demonstration of the revolutionary and correct, as he tells us, use of language in literature is none other than Flaubert’s identification with Emma. In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, he also tells us that Julie is Rousseau, at least a scene of the many possible lives of Rousseau. For Haykal, *Zaynab* can never be a space of identification, and when she comes close to that, she becomes a demon, a threat of contamination that he must ward off at all costs. Interestingly, at the end of *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal berates Rousseau for his treatment of women in all of his work. Nonetheless, a few years earlier, in 1913, when he published *Zaynab*, Haykal could not conflate aesthetic love with physical love. In *Thawrat al-Adab*, he pushes the idealization of woman even further, and she literally becomes the example of the most perfect aesthetic use of language in literature. The social ethic of the revolution, as he understood it, as a language for all and that addresses all, is also the aesthetic feeling for the other as

woman, and woman as the ideal aesthetic text on which the huddled masses can be inscribed and aesthetically converted into the musicality of language.¹⁹⁵

Moreover, in the chapter entitled “Prose and Poetry,” Haykal develops this relation between the musicality of language and the mediation of experience in the terms of translation. Arabic language for Haykal falls short of translating a thought or a sentiment from the foreign word (45). In simple terms, contact with Western literature demands a new kind of Arabic language. Modernity and the contact with the West brings about this crisis in literature, and Haykal maintains that even the writers who claim to be traditionalists are touched by the experience of the modern “so that the new became part of their very nature, and the trace of the old that they presented became artificial and laborious” (46). When he declared his own novel “new,” he must have also meant that this kind of newness was an inevitable consequence of his own affair with the French idiom. The writers of the modern, on the other hand, find the new language incommensurate with the experience of the modern. When they try to express their feelings, they find the language inadequate and that’s because “modernization does not stop at the simplicity of language; it also takes up the process of research, the colors of sensation, and the degrees of feeling” (48). This experience demanded a “new kind of prose” (48). Even if this sense of the modern is contracted through contact with Western literature, and even if it remains to a large extent stuck in translation, it still calls for a new kind of Arabic literature.

The need to translate the modern becomes palpable, almost material, yet does not necessarily reach fulfillment. In his description of the “Art of Stories,” Haykal continues: “I felt that there are other meanings in this life than the ones people live by and make the purpose of their existence and the anchor of all their hopes; and I felt

¹⁹⁵ The earlier comparison of language to a garment or ornament can also be read as a reference to woman as the aesthetically pleasing ornament appended to the intellectual.

that the living existence of these meanings among us necessitates a continuous attempt to reach them” (66). As the most popular prose form in the Arabic tradition, the story is a history derived from the reality of life, as Haykal tells us (69). The reality of life, of course, is dependent on the imagination of the writer. Earlier in his example of Flaubert, Haykal writes that the devotion to the perfect word transforms Bovary’s life into Flaubert’s reality. In a similar vein here, Haykal muses on the story’s “reflection” of life, or its realism.

But this is no simplistic understanding of realism. Unlike Īsā ‘Ubayd, Haykal understands realism as a necessary engagement of a reality that remains in perpetual translation. He criticizes ‘Ubayd’s attack on al-Manfalūṭī, and confirms that al-Manfalūṭī was right to sense the need to turn to Western literature, romantic or otherwise. Haykal himself was devoted to romanticism, but he didn’t directly engage in the debate on the appropriateness of both to the Egyptian story. Rather, in *Thawrat al-Adab*, Haykal concludes that a novel must document the “history of the present” (69) and as such select a few important facts and present those in “styles affected by scientific principles.” He gives the demonstrative examples here of Zola, Flaubert, and Maupassant (71).

In this context, Haykal alludes to Realism and Naturalism, and their break with patterns of writing in France. But his allusion is only in passing, and he quickly moves to transposing that literary history as he has understood it onto the history of the Arabic novel. Thus, unlike ‘Ubayd, who believed the Egyptian novel can reproduce European realism, Haykal recognized the complexity of what he believed to a literary history perpetually stuck in translation. “We can say,” he writes, “that the story evolved in Western literature in a way that makes it represent its different epochs until the present one. If *we* had some stories that reflect the spirit of an age...”

(72; emphasis mine). Thus Haykal is not merely imitating Western stylistic techniques. Rather, he is trying to transpose a model of literary development onto the Arabic story. The result is quite unexpected.

The only example he can come up with is Ibn Tufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and how it reflected the liberal age (12th century) in which the author lived.¹⁹⁶ After that, the Arabic story begins to thrive off of myths. Powerful and creative as these are, they merely reflect a psychological condition of “the ages of deterioration” (73). He then gives the example of the *A Thousand and One Nights*: while mostly fictional and mythic, the stories include “correct observations” of everyday life (73). Although such myths are a reflection of an age of deterioration as he tells us, they still reflect a certain age and what it considers to be a source of truth.

Haykal then tells us that those last two examples might be the only Arabic stories that actually reflect the spirit of their times, and that storytelling today is trying to get its life back. However, he ignores all other literary forms that also tell stories, like for example the *maqāmah*. Haykal, however, wants to do away with the

¹⁹⁶ Ibn Tufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (which literally translates into “Alive, Son of Awake”) is considered a prototype of both the Arabic and philosophical novel. The novel was named after an earlier allegorical story by Avicenna (Ibn Sīna) in the 11th century. Samar Attar, in *The Vital Roots of European Enlightenment: Ibn Tufayl's Influence on Modern Western Thought*, published in 2010 discusses the novel's influence in detail on Arabic and Western philosophy, as it is considered a precursor of the European *bildungsroman*, as well as a major influence on Islamic philosophy and a prototype of the modern Arabic novel. Peter Heath in *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1992, studies the structure of the encounter between the soul and Active Intelligence, which Avicenna usually represents in the figure of Ḥayy. In this encounter the narrator and Ḥayy engage in conversation and the result is that

the soul turns away from its three earth-bound companions, the irascible concupiscent, and imaginative faculties, and reorients itself towards the realm of Intellect. Ḥayy need only describe this realm to foster this process; for once the soul is reoriented, it is filled with a compellingly powerful yearning to reclaim its heritage. (93)

The use of allegory and metaphor in *Ḥayy* is particularly important as it is less figurative and more expressive of the wonder of learning and epiphany. Of course Haykal's gesture of placing Émile in conversation with Ḥayy is complex and thought-provoking. Even though it is not relevant to my discussion of this encounter in this chapter, the conversation is central to my future work on figuration and the production of meaning in Arabic literature and the importation of metaphorical language from Western literature.

commitment to rhetoric which is exemplified by the *maqāmah*, and that appears to be the reason he dismisses it. For the text to be a story, in Haykal's view, it must always point to an idea and relate to an ideal that the author has, "even if the idea was inconsequential and the ideal lowly, they still *translate* the purpose of the storyteller" (73).

In a good story, the idea and the ideal (both entirely relevant entities) are prominent, as in the story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and Rousseau's *Émile*. He will return to this pairing of the two books in *Jan Jak Rousseau*. Interestingly in the last book, the comparison is between the methods of education, with *Émile* requiring a constant mentor, and *Ḥayy* being completely self-sufficient. In the particular case of the Arabic story, however, the situation is quite reversed. The Arabic story is in need of a mentor, its Western counterpart, because now it is coming back to life:

The story in modern Arabic literature is still for the most part inspired by the Western story, imitating it in its image, but not coming at the same time from an idea and an ideal that have moved the soul of its author. And if imitation is often the beginning of a resurrection [the word in Arabic is *ba'ith*, which can also mean regeneration and a sending or dispatch. Both meanings are highly significant in the context of imitation and translation, as the regeneration of the Arabic story is also a form of dispatch, assumedly, from its Western counterpart], and the imitation of Greek and Roman literatures was the beginning of a European renaissance in the 16th century, then the right kind of renaissance is the one that is based on the idea and inspired by an ideal. (74)

The regeneration of the Arabic story, therefore, is already involved in a process of imitation. The idea and the ideal, which translate the objective of the author, are also arrived at through imitation. This kind of imitation is also a sending off of the Arabic story, from its origin, which is a Western form. And this imitation will translate the unique idea of the Arab author. The complexity of this last sentence already reflects the complexity of this line of thinking. In an Arabic literary history already mired in

translation, Haykal maintains that the return of the Arabic story is a dispatch that comes about because of the imitation of a Western form.¹⁹⁷

The dispatch of the story happens in the figure of the river. Haykal continues his attempt to give shape to the modern Arabic story, but this time through relating his own stories about the Tiber, the Seine, and the Nile. This narrative opens the chapter of his book entitled “Nationalist Literature.” Haykal relates his experience on the river Tiber first, when he recalls the words of an English poet about the Roman who drowned in the river Tiber, either to kill himself or to escape from his enemies. Although Haykal repeatedly claims he does not remember the poem, he still quotes a translation of one line: “O Tiber, Our Father Tiber in whose glory the Romans bask, to you I give the life of a Roman and his war tools, take them today into your care” (108). Haykal admits that his bad memory of the poem prevents him from experiencing what the poet experienced in writing it.

But soon enough, on the river Seine, he partakes in the experience of the French poets and feels as if he has lived on the Seine for years, because he has read French literature, and feels as if he is experiencing the river firsthand. In 1929, when he returns to Egypt from Rome, he stands on the Nile and has an even more profound experience of identification, this time with his own history. The transposition from the Seine onto the Nile, much like that of French literary history to the Arabic one, is rather smooth in Haykal’s text and flows in the image of the river. This translation of

¹⁹⁷ Haykal lists several reasons for the deterioration of storytelling in the Arab world such as the lack of imagination and the vast difference between the language of literature and that of everyday speech. But the most important reason is the association of love with sexual desire (85). Because the Arabs did not approach love as self-denial and a striving for the good, they could not write stories. In the discussion of *Zaynab*, I described Haykal’s fatal idealization of woman (Zaynab dies of consumption after all) as the space that enables communication between the intellectual and the masses. In a sense, that idealization made Haykal’s novel possible, but the idea and the ideal there do not correspond to this idyllic understanding of *hawā*. Rather, they bear witness to its impossibility. In other words, the very detriment to the evolution of the Arabic story is an impossibility: the love that Haykal imagines will make stories worth reading is the very love he makes impossible in his writing.

poetic experience is, as he tells us, still grounded in a return to one's own roots and history. First the writer must reconnect with his own history, but the epitome of poetic inspiration, comes to those who are then able to "merge with the entire human soul ... in the unity of being" (113).

In the least, this merging in the figure of the flowing river is a strange gesture in the definition of a national(ist) literature. The translation of the poetic experience as such promises the writer an experience in language that he might never have in real life; nonetheless, this experience is just as real. Haykal asks, "How can one express a beauty that he has not felt, but only remembers it because someone else does, and feels it becomes someone else has felt it?" (113). Haykal has just told us that the highest form of inspiration is the one that begins from the national imaginary but then embraces the entire human soul, in the singular. He does not specify that this access to the whole happens through language. Rather, as he stands on the Seine, he can experience what the authors before him saw and felt and heard while there. Haykal seems to be implying that there is an impersonal whole that emerges from literature in all languages. This whole comes together from the particular experiences of other writers of other nations and all in translation.

Soon enough we begin to understand the purpose of this abstraction in his book. According to Haykal, the writer must begin with his own nation's history and then move on to an abstracted whole—one mediated through translation as he reports his own experience of this poetic whole in Arabic. However, the abstraction soon returns home, and particularly to the countryside, to the figure of the *fallāḥ(ah)*. After seeing the Thames and the Tiber and the Seine, the ancient farmer or peasant, *fallāḥ*, is moved in him (117) and he begins to see, hear and experience like the farmer. At

this point, and in a marvelous return, he becomes taken up with the beauty of the nation (118).

This return, though, is to an imagined, abstracted nation. Zaynab herself was an unrealistic product of this cycle: she is described in such idyllic language and portrayed in her search for her share of this impersonal whole Haykal has just described. The reader is compelled to ask at this point: Is this cycle, from the nation to the impersonal and back to the nation, the only way the landscape can be experienced? Haykal tells us how in Egypt he can read the literature of the West and the Arabs and he can be creative and inspired, and “remain after that and above it an Egyptian and more than an Egyptian; I remain a genuine *fallāḥ*, making sacred all there is in Egypt and its farms of beauty, and the Nile that has given Egypt life and beauty” (119). Clearly the figure of the *fallāḥ* is a romantic abstraction, a fictional role of authenticity that the author devises for himself. Soon enough, this return to Egypt becomes a return to Pharaonic history in a final answer to the original question: if the West has the Classics and Descartes, what then do we have? Interestingly, the revolution of literature lies in a return to an ancient and largely inaccessible past. This remains, however, an abstracted return to a fictionally re-imagined Pharaonic past.

Haykal implicitly tells us that the dialogue that was established among Arab authors since the 1881 revolution on whether this was the age of translation or of creation is about to find its answer. The stories of the Pharaohs narrated in the present would locate inalterable human qualities and beliefs that make Egyptians who they are today.¹⁹⁸ Basically, his whole idea in the *Revolution of Literature* is based on an

¹⁹⁸ He includes samples of his nationalist literature of the Pharaonic past at the end of his book. The most interesting one is that of “*Isīs*,” in which there are a group of brothers who go to the museum and stand in front of the statue of *Isīs*. The story of *Isis* and *Osiris* is then recounted in the present moment of narration, and the brothers muse on why these gods take on the forms of animals. The discussion then becomes about bestiality and its relation to Egyptian heritage. The Egyptian pagan heritage is then explained as the product of a superfluity in human characteristics: the Egyptians made

inevitable relation to the experience of translation, through which you can experience what someone else experienced anywhere else through reading, and then this experience paves the way for a return to the origin, a return that is already implicated in the poetics of a fiction. And the fiction itself remains in translation.¹⁹⁹

Thus, there is no return to an imagined origin unless this return is forged in translation. Revolution is figured in the terms of a return to a Pharaonic past, reconstructed through the filter of all the French authors Haykal identifies with when standing on the banks of the Seine.²⁰⁰ What form of translation then does this model of revolution as return offer? The impossible encounter between East and West is nonetheless an encounter that has already been determined in a way. Despite the differences between East and West, there would still be enough ground for a comparison in the form of a return to something familiar. Translation would then proffer the condition of this return to something similar, something already there in the history of the Arab people, even if this something similar is imagined. “And *The Education*,” which is what he names Rousseau’s *Émile*, Haykal tells us, “is the means of this return” (*Jan Jak Rousseau*, Vol. II, 62).

sacred in their gods whatever exceeded the goodness of humans. The purpose of the story is to confirm the continuity from the mythic past into an Islamic present.

¹⁹⁹ If Flaubert demonstrates the emptiness of the present moment in his novels, and Rousseau rewrites the past only in the present moment of narration, then Haykal is somewhere between the two extremes. He reconstructs the past in the present while pointing to the emptiness of this present moment in Egyptian politics in which no real project for progress has been reached.

²⁰⁰ In Raʿif al-Khūry’s important book, *Al-fikr al-ʿarabī al-Ḥādīth: athar al-thawrah al-faransiyyah fī tawjīhihi al-siyāsī wa al-ʿijtimāʿī* (Modern Arab Thought: Political and Social Vestiges of the French Revolution), published in 1943, Raʿif al-Khūry describes the appeal of the French revolution to Arab intellectuals as one of return. In his opinion, the similarities between the ideals of the revolution of equality and the stories of the *Sīra* (the sayings of the prophet) are uncanny. For instance, the 1908 Turkish rebellion against the Ottomans was based on the ideals of the French Revolution. The similarity is in the return to the idea of man as essentially good. According to his book, the Arabs must use the ideals of the French Revolution as they resonate with both Islamic and human ethical principles of a return to a state of equality among and freedom for all.

Accidental Education: Émile is no Fiction

In yet another judgmental moment, Haykal writes in the second volume of *Jan Jak Rousseau* that “Rousseau was not ethical by nature or by education. Rather, he was ethical by accident” (II, 58). The Arabic word Haykal uses for accident is *şudfah* which can also be translated as coincidence or chance. Rousseau is also “a moralist by accident” (II, 59). Rousseau’s ethical moralism lies in his call for a return to nature. He is an accidental moralist, according to Haykal, because his moralism grew out of the context of the publication of the *First Discourse*, when everyone read the return to the simplicity of the natural as an ethical prerogative, a return to a time before social corruption. In real life, Haykal is quick to remind us, Rousseau was not at all ethical. Haykal recounts that when Rousseau was responsible for the education of the Monsieur d’Epinay’s children, he ended up stealing wine and running away. “But despite all that,” Haykal continues, “he was a genius” (II, 59). Despite the fact that contingency was the condition of Rousseau’s moral and ethical agendas, namely the contingency of his first philosophical call for a return to nature and not that of his own life experience, Rousseau is still a hero. Contingency, after all, implies discontinuity, as the occasion of the moment elicits a response that is not the result of deliberation over time.

Haykal judged *Émile* to be Rousseau’s best work. In *Émile*, according to Haykal, Rousseau will finally put together his treatise on the return with no “fictional theories” (II, 57). While in his other works, Rousseau’s theoretical conclusions clashed with his practical concerns, in *Émile* Rousseau finally finds the harmonious meeting of the two. Perhaps Haykal thought so because *Émile* is Rousseau’s pedagogical project, the practical implementation of all his ideas in the education of Émile. But *Émile* is a novel, and Haykal seems to have purposefully ignored that

detail in trying to find Rousseau's redeeming work. Again, however, the real hero of *Émile* is none other than Rousseau: Haykal tells us, "And just as Saint-Preux was an image of Rousseau, so *Émile* and his mentor will both be images of Rousseau as well" (II, 60). He continues:

And just as Saint-Preux uses his deficiencies as a means to reach the epitome of virtue, so does Rousseau. And *Émile* will be an image of Rousseau in his youth and the education of *Émile* will be similar to that of Rousseau. *Émile* will become a virtuous man just like Rousseau. And there is nothing strange about that. Rousseau fancies himself to be the highest example of perfect perfection. (II, 60 – 61)

Despite the ironic undertones to the previous quotation, the outline of the pedagogical project is thus also an autobiographical *bildungsroman*. Haykal relentlessly points to the recurrent identification that Rousseau experiences with all his characters. In other words, Haykal is really saying that Rousseau could only write when he wrote himself. In a sarcastic sentence at the end of the previous quotation, Haykal insists that the premise of these autobiographical sketches is Rousseau's deluded self-perception.

Nonetheless, Rousseau's kind of education will guarantee a return to some natural ideal. Haykal translates the famous opening paragraphs of *Émile* on being born weak in the state of nature. The integration into society will be the means that man needs to strengthen himself and ensure his survival. Paradoxically, this education in the social sphere will better equip man for his return to the natural state.²⁰¹ Even though Rousseau writes towards the beginning of *Émile* that the best kind of social

²⁰¹ Moral education can begin at the age of 15 when the teacher can start teaching the pupil how to be in society and define his relations to others in the social sphere. For instance, in talking about *Émile*, Rousseau writes: "So long as his sensibility remains limited to his own individuality, there is nothing moral in his actions. It is only when it begins to extend outside of himself that it takes on, first, the sentiments and, then, the notions of good and evil" (197). But when in the social realm, this love of the self is extended to a feeling of compassion for others: "I am interested in [another] for love of myself, and the reason for the precept is in nature itself, which inspires in me the desire of my well-being in whatever place I feel my existence" (212). Thus, even though self-love is as natural as the instinct of preservation, love of others has to come with instructions. Other qualities like modesty which are not natural to the child have to be taught in the social realm as well (198).

setting is the one that “take[s] his absolute existence from him in order to give him a relative one ... with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole” (II, 39-40; emphasis mine), Haykal reads this relative existence as precisely the obstacle to his own role as intellectual. Rather, Haykal finds in Rousseau’s pedagogical project the means he needs to escape the homogeneity of the masses. He continues to elaborate on how society takes away one’s individuality and forces him or her to conform, as Rousseau has told him. The social personality is always a relative one which convinces the individual that he does not exist on his own and outside of the social realm. However, Rousseau’s project of a return would guard against this homogenization to some extent, for although the individual would have to be re-integrated into a social sphere, this society would be different than the older one. In this new society, after the return, one would not sacrifice his or her individual personality in the name of the nation. At least Haykal wants to argue as much.

Haykal then asks the reader: “Do you want proof of this from Rousseau?” (II, 63). The proof comes without quotation marks and the reader is left to wonder if Haykal is quoting, paraphrasing or commenting. He gives the example of the battle of Spartan men against the second Persian invasion of Greece in which the death of the Spartans was supposed to disappear in view of the final victory (II, 63-4). Although Haykal reassures his readers that Rousseau was skeptical of the absolute love of the nation, over and above that of the individual citizen, he is quick to point to the latter’s paradoxical relation to nationalism. Haykal writes, “Perhaps what we see of Saint-Preux’s wandering in Switzerland in the novel of the *Héloïse* points to Rousseau’s love of his nation” (II, 65). Then Haykal quotes in translation from the *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne, et sur sa reformation projetée* (1782):

Education must imprint all people in the frame of the love of the nation and direct all thoughts and tastes in such a way as to make them nationalist in inclination and desire and necessity. For that reason, the child must open its eyes first to its nation, and then see nothing else until he dies. And every sincere republican must breastfeed on the love of his nation as it mixes with his mother's milk ... this love is the foundation of his life, and if he were to be isolated, he would become nothing. And if he has no nation left, he has no existence. (II, 66)

Haykal also confirms that this previous statement on nationalism was Rousseau's opinion before and after *Émile*. And yet again, Haykal is quick to make excuses for Rousseau:

And we believe that Rousseau was a nationalist at heart. And he was not passionate about anything in his life as he was about his nation ... which is why it was strange that in his book on education he would attack a nationalist education ... *and we apologize for him that he wanted to build education on the rules of nature and nature has no identifying nation*. (II, 66 – 67; emphasis mine)

Even if Rousseau wanted *Émile* to return to some form of natural frame to complete his education, and nature knows no national preference, he believed at core that the love of the nation substantiates one's existence. Rousseau, who lost his mother when he was still an infant as he recounts in the *Confessions*, insists that the love of nation must be instilled in the child with its mother's milk.²⁰²

Education, Haykal continues, must be the imprint of the image of the collective on the individual, and such an imprint would guarantee that "as long as there are different, competitive nations in the world, the people of every nation must defend its borders and sacrifice all they have in this defense" (II, 67). Nationalism demands that the love of the nation must be superior to the love of the self. Any other thoughts on this necessary relationship of superiority are mere

²⁰² It seems strange that nature as originary mother is replaced by the mother's milk in the national context, particularly seeing that Rousseau did not really know his mother. Haykal must have found the idea appealing in principle at least: a mother would nourish the child with the nation's love and send him off to build the nation.

theories and abstract meanings that have entered today the realm of poetic imaginary and on which the hope of humanity rests in its movement forward and which rests on scientific proof derived from reality, and education must be an exact science far from illusion and imagination ... and the thought of an internationalism that'll destroy all borders and of a world that is a home to all people is still a hope we strive for, but we cannot take away from the pupil the knowledge of what things are really like with the presence of nations and their competition. (II, 68)

Here he gives the example of the failure of communism to unite all the workers of the world under its theoretical banner when World War I started in 1914, and when as a result, every citizen became dedicated to the defense of his own nation. However, ultimately, Rousseau's idea of the love of one's nation remains unattainable (II, 65) for two reasons. First, it remains abstracted from an emotion that begins at birth and then this emotion gets inserted into a social setting that demands simultaneous identification with and differentiation from the other. Second, the nation-less nature in which this education begins would have to return to the nation, and that return, Haykal surmises, remains highly problematic in Rousseau's work. On a practical level, the love of the nation must provide some basis for the identification process, but then the individual might have a varied understanding of his or her own commitment to the nation. Hence, *Émile* is not really free of the clash between the theoretical and the practical. The natural project for the education of *Émile* is necessarily beset with theoretical abstractions because, as Haykal reminds us throughout the text of the life of Rousseau, the French philosopher was too seduced by his own imaginative powers. When it came to the practice of such powers in his own life, Rousseau failed time and again.

Rousseau's failure makes way for Haykal's figure of the messianic, prophetic intellectual. Haykal argues that it is the duty of mature minds (the elitist intellectuals) to calm people down and lead the way, and the day when all borders will disappear and all languages and nationalities blend is far away (II, 69). In other words, the day

of Rousseau's natural education will never come. Haykal was writing his book against the background of rising fascism in Europe, and even though he makes no direct reference to the direction of European politics at that time, it is clear that there is an anxiety about the rising extremism in his book. For instance, he concludes that a world with no nations is impossible, although desirable, in practical terms because of a lingering threat to individuality. The motto of equality behind the French Revolution, which as he tells us came directly from Rousseau, can only be an empty promise, because whether it's 1789 or 1923, there is a threat to the individual and Haykal cannot have that threat subsume his own aspirations for a new Egypt. A necessary but empty promise, the idea of equality within and sameness across national borders makes the impetus behind the revolution aesthetic at best. Thus ultimately, on a practical level, the love of nation must overcome other identifications, but for Haykal, the nation remains the aesthetic entity he imagined he could shape into at least a theoretical entity for the people, once he was made prime minister.

As he told his reader in the introduction to the book, Haykal still promises a prophetic Rousseau that carries the hope of a liberated Egyptian republic. Haykal finds Rousseau's natural project for an education still nation-bound, as Rousseau always returned to his native country to imagine the world of Clarens or that of *Émile*. Haykal recognizes the paradoxical impossibility of Rousseau's natural education as a structural impossibility, yet another demonstration of the irreconcilability between Rousseau's thought and his reality.

So Haykal describes the impossibility of a real internationalism, of an absolute transcendence of national borders in a world dominated by war and colonial oppression. However, he does not believe that his construct of nation could exist without such international relations, and without the necessary process of translation.

After all, Haykal believed in the need to import Western literature and philosophy into Egyptian government. So he offers up the life of a prophetic Rousseau who remains a novelistic character in translation. The character of Rousseau as a figure rewritten in translation is most striking in the comparison between *Émile*, Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān, and Robinson Crusoe in *Jan Jak Rousseau*. The comparison ultimately points to the significance of context. Haykal calls Rousseau's attempt to manufacture a completely de-socialized being in *Émile* a delusion. Haykal writes, "Rousseau did not think about isolating his pupil like the isolation of Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān; rather, he let the mentor walk with his student amidst scenes from the social landscape" (II, 74). Later on in his book, Haykal refers the success of Robinson Crusoe and Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān, as opposed to the implied failure of *Émile*, to a problem of context. Both Crusoe and Yaḳzān work with what they have, that is the contexts of their scenes of isolation, to learn and indeed survive. But the point is not that they are isolated; rather, it is that they made survival possible from the contexts of their isolation. As Haykal confirms, "the isolated individual does not exist. For if Ḥayy and Crusoe were to be found together and were equally resourceful and strong and smart, the one would have shared all the blessings of life with his friend without attacking him" (II, 114).

The necessary presence of the collective, social body and the deterministic conditions of context are related to Haykal's broader political nationalism. In their 1986 book *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900—1930*, Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski describe how Haykal's "theory of the relationship between the environment of Egypt and the Egyptian nation which profoundly influenced later Egyptian territorial nationalism" (34). They describe Haykal's *tarājim* as direct products of his conviction that the actions of one individual "can be comprehended and explained only as representing part of collective historic

accomplishment of his group. History properly understood is the study of national cultural units, with the biographies of individuals ... of value only insofar as they reflect and personify the collective biography” (34). Haykal turned to the objectivist theories of Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828 – 1893) to study how human society is completely governed by the natural conditions that surround it:

Taine furnished Haykal with a comprehensive social philosophy capable of offering ‘objective’ foundations for the impulse driving him to create an Egyptian territorial nationalist theory. Now he could postulate the Nile Valley’s own race–milieu–moment as the primary and exclusive force that had formed the Egyptian nation and its distinctive personality. Moreover, through this philosophy Haykal could establish the relationship between the thought of an individual, such as Qasim Amin, and Egypt’s special environment. Thus he could demonstrate the intimate relationship between the territory and environment of Egypt, on the one hand, and the development of a specific Egyptian spirit or “mentality,” on the other. (35 – 36)

The isolation of the Nile River, in this scheme, gave it unique climactic conditions that combine both softness and conformism.²⁰³ Thus the Egyptian people, shaped by the conditions of the Nile, are both calm and tranquil but also conformist and obedient. Those who chose to rebel or to violate the order of the Nile were “destroyed or expelled from the Nile Valley” (37). Haykal’s deterministic view of society as shaped by its context, its climactic conditions, sounds an alarming fascist alert. However, it also points to his problematic relationship to nationalism and translation, and makes it impossible to read the first without the second. Rousseau can thus become a version of an Egyptian prophet precisely because Haykal believes in the importance of context, and if Rousseau can be rewritten into a fictional hero in an imagined social collective of revolutionary Egypt, then he could become Egyptian. In the quote earlier, Haykal writes that “if Hāy and Crusoe were to be found together

²⁰³ In my future work, I would like to examine the figure of the river as it comes up in Haykal’s fictional, political and literary writings as a figure of boundary. The river would create a boundary within which the Egyptian nation could be isolated and thus defined, while at the same time the river allows a transposition of experience from let’s say the Seine to the Nile in another problematic of translation that I pointed to earlier.

and were equally resourceful and strong and smart, the one would have shared all the blessings of life with his friend without attacking him” (II, 114). The same would then apply to Haykal and Rousseau, the isolated individuals who are still authoring the collective, social body from the depths of their own isolation.

The importance of the background in the stories of the three characters and their education points to the importance of context in translation as well. In other words, the stories of the three characters could be read as a metaphor for the process of translation, and particularly the translation of the character Rousseau into an Arabic context. Rousseau’s failure lies precisely in the fact that he could not apply the theoretical: his definition of nationalism remains abstracted and his text remains infused with contradictions that stem from the clash between his own character and the world, as he imagined it. After all, Haykal constantly reminds us that Rousseau preached a kind of virtue he did not have.

But Rousseau can become an abstracted prophet in translation, when all his failures are re-inscribed in the figure of the intellectual leading the nation out of its misery. The superior intellectual, also abstracted in Haykal’s presentation, would resolve the failure of the island education as model for a nationalist education. In Haykal’s view, context reigns supreme and must determine content. Thus, in a world like this one, Rousseau’s education without borders in a nature without nation is impossible even in theory. In the context of Haykal’s own text is an Egypt already implicated in a historical affair with French literature, Haykal will work with what he has, and in this particular performance of translation, the national boundaries determining national differences can be overcome. Just like Crusoe and Hıyy would work together, if they met, so Haykal and Rousseau will do the same.

Thus, the emphasis on context in the education of the island pupil is slightly further abstracted in Haykal's own performance of translation. In the *Revolution of Literature* (1933), Haykal the author was transposed in a poetic trance of sorts from the Seine to the banks of the Nile, and then from there to the Pharaohs.²⁰⁴ While the context of *Thawrat al-Adab* is necessary for its composition (it posits itself as a kind of revolutionary manifesto coming out of the 1881 and 1919 revolutions in Egypt), the book's heartfelt recommendation to imitate French realism and naturalism is a clear sidestepping of context. Even the paragraph quoted in the epigraph to this chapter openly recommends the imitation of Western sciences in the hope of achieving progress in the Arab East. But Haykal is not 'Ubayd: after all, Haykal was not a translator per se; rather, he translated the words of Rousseau, his fictional hero, into his own novel of Rousseau the new prophet. Thus his recommendation to imitate is not to be taken at face value, even against his own words. His abstractions of Pharaonic history and poetic experience in *Thawrat al-Adab* are definitely a consequence of the denial of context, but his abstraction of Rousseau coupled with his rewritten pedagogical project of *Émile* provides a final metaphor for the Arabic novel in translation.

²⁰⁴ Haykal's book on Rousseau came out roughly a decade before the *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature]. In the latter, the intellectual figure is "theoretically" transposed from one place to another by virtue of his poetic imagination. We recall, for instance, that Haykal could completely relate to the experience of the French writers standing on the banks of the Seine, by mere virtue of his poetic imagination. We know that in the Speech on the *Origin of Language* as well as in *Émile*, Rousseau develops the basis for pre-rational and pre-social pity as opposed to civilized pity. Although this discussion is not entirely relevant to Haykal's relationship to Rousseau in *Thawrat al-Adab*, it is important to mention that in the *Origin of Language*, Rousseau says that identification with the other human beings in a pre-social realm is important for communication to be possible at all. In *Émile*, pre-social pity makes us leave our bodies behind and identify with the suffering animal (223), while civilized pity allows us a form of empathy from a distance, feeling the pleasure of not suffering like that animal is (221). Identification through pain in its social aspects fails in Haykal's work as he is adamant on staying away from feeling for the *actual* peasant other. However, this identification takes on figurative dimensions that fail with Haykal as we see in his literary and theoretical writings, wherein he can identify with the dilemma of Hāmid but not that of Zaynab, and with the French authors but not the Egyptian people.

While Haykal refused to sign his name to *Zaynab* in 1913, he inscribes his name all over the figure of Rousseau in *Jan Jak Rousseau*. Not only does he insert his signature unto the body of the work of Rousseau as translated into an Egyptian context, but he also displaces the context of Rousseau's writing into that of 1920's Cairo. In narrating the event of the French Revolution as ultimately a moment of corruption that history chooses to remember as a lesson, Haykal names Jan Jak as its author (101-102). That moment of corruption is also the present moment of the book as well: in other words, Haykal confounds the moment of the French Revolution with that of World War I as it lingers in the background. In re-contextualizing the work of Rousseau, Haykal wants to correct the failure of Rousseau's theoretical style by some form of practical application of the former's ideas in the present. One of the ways for this application to be possible is in the sense of duty to the past. In *Jan Jak Rousseau*, Haykal insists, contra Rousseau, on the obligation to the continuity of the past (under the weight of tradition) (173). "But Rousseau has his excuse," he tells us, "for he considers the efforts of the past to be wasted efforts that have corrupted humanity" (II, 173). Again the conversation on the commitment to continuity with the past comes up in the context of the discussion of *Émile* and Rousseau's project for an education. According to Haykal, discontinuity with the past invites disconnection from reality and invites the student to live strictly in illusions that falter in the face of reality (II, 177).

However, Haykal's imagined return to the past, at least as exemplified in the *Thawrat al-Adab*, is in itself an abstraction from the present moment of writing. Rousseau's own rewritings of scenes of his life in the *Confessions* are all reconstructed in the present moment. So Haykal can claim continuity with a past when Rousseau adamantly denied one, but the past in Haykal's work remains, as it is

in Rousseau, re-constructed in the present moment of narration. In other words, Haykal's identification with and re-authoring of Rousseau did not guard against the effect of the latter: as though by some process of contamination, Haykal's work is perpetually shaped by his reading of Rousseau, and the relationship to the past in the 1933 *Thawrat al-Adab* is only one case in point. As though in acknowledgement of his own imagined relationship to the past of Egypt, Haykal then concludes that Rousseau ultimately fails because of his Christian background. In Islam, faith would enable a sense of continuity and encourage a search for meaning in the world that transcends the material. This search, in the case of Rousseau, remains lost in translation (I, 127).

Yet again Haykal makes excuses for Rousseau, in a final effort to redeem his French hero. Haykal excuses Rousseau here because few intellectuals are able to apply theory to life. And Rousseau's ultimate excuse is that he is able to leave the constraints of the material world behind:

We are forced to live under the rule of the environment against our own inclinations and desires, because the environment is where life is possible even though it is infested with corrupting germs. But we are not forced to think as does the environment. This is because humanity is able by great efforts to undo the shackles of thought and allow the thinker to go off into a world other than the material one that surrounds him and to organize in his head an image of life like he would want it to be, and create a logic for it ... but the thinker must have another life in his material existence (I, 141-42).

Haykal describes the failure of the intellectual's effort to reconcile theory and life in the first person pronoun, "we," thus initiating a string of identification that will ultimately seal his and Rousseau's fates. In other words, the "we" includes Haykal, who is operating under the sign of translation. Thus, in many ways, the failure of this reconciliation between theory and life is a failure of translation as well. And in this scenario, Rousseau becomes the ultimate demonstration of the failure of translation as a double failure of philosophy: Haykal identifies with Rousseau, and Rousseau cannot

make the reconciliation happen. Jean Starobinski also locates this failure of reconciliation in his book on Rousseau, but he writes that “[w]hen [Rousseau] presented himself the first time, he failed. Now he represents himself and he succeeds” (176). In other words, after the success of his literature, Rousseau succeeded in performing what he failed to present in the social sphere at least. Haykal was also fond of performing his intellectual role, and Charles Smith tells us that Haykal always made sure he had a public audience before he launched one of his political speeches (*Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt* 163-164).

Because Rousseau and Haykal are performers, it would seem like a better idea to watch or read about their performance rather than read their own words. As such, in *Émile*, Rousseau recommended *tarājim*, biographies of heroes, instead of history books, as the best means of education. In a *tarjamah*, as Haykal tells, the biographer

is intent on tracking the life of his subject at every period even those periods that the *mutarjim* [translator/biographer] would like to hide and render latent, but the subject leaves him no chance and no image except fully exposed to the critical eye, and he is very keen on people identifying him when he thinks he has disappeared from sight. (II, 103)

This last quotation sounds remarkably close to Rousseau’s own declaration at the beginning of his *Confessions* that he will expose himself fully to the eye of the reader. Haykal’s book on Jak Jak is a *tarjamah* doubly removed; first Rousseau writes his autobiography claiming he will present himself fully as an object of observation, and then Haykal rewrites Rousseau’s account in another *tarjamah*, including the latter’s words in translation. This form of *tarjamah* would rewrite the irreconcilability between theory and life and curb the possible contaminating effect of autobiography: the self in continuous revision.

Rousseau himself was all sorts of people, as Haykal tells us that Rousseau was the minister of Savoy calling for a natural religion; he was also *Émile*, Saint-Preux

and at times Julie; but most importantly, Rousseau was his own favorite example, “the natural man in his speech of inequality, that beloved image that Rousseau loved from all his heart, the image of his own self according to what he wanted it to be” (II, 132). The multiple representations of Rousseau in his self-portraiture are re-framed in Haykal’s *tarjamah* into a failed *bildungsroman*. In other words, *Jan Jak Rousseau* succeeds in being the novel of education that Rousseau could not write, at least in Haykal’s opinion. Rousseau famously wrote in *Émile*, “The real world has its limits; the imaginary world is infinite. Unable to enlarge the one; let us restrict the other, for it is from the difference between the two alone that are born all the pains which make us truly unhappy” (81). Haykal’s problem was precisely his inability to restrict the imagination, either in *Zaynab* (1913), or in *Jan Jak Rousseau* (1921; 1923) and certainly not in *Thawrat al-Adab* (1933). Rather, his imagination feeds his relationship to translation throughout his life, a relationship that became simultaneously necessary and impossible. His own particular performance of translation takes the form of a staunch aestheticization of freedom, love, woman, Egyptianness, and revolution.

Later on in his life, Haykal turns to Islam in his political fight to become prime minister. Charles Smith concludes Haykal’s life in the following lines:

His attraction to Western thought clashed with his recognition of the prevalence of religious feelings in Egypt; fulfillment of his ambitions required involvement in an urban society which could not erase images of a past, rural life in which security was guaranteed. ... Husayn Haykal died on 8 December 1956, in his sixty-eighth year, amidst the final European effort to control Egypt, the Suez invasion, when British and French troops landed in Port Said on 31 October in coordination with Israeli attacks. ... It was one final swing of a pendulum in which he found himself in death as in life suspended between ideas whose irreconcilability on an international scale was an epitaph for his own endeavors. (*Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt* 180)

It remains unclear to what extent he really embraced this religious turn and to what extent he performed it as a political ploy. The conclusion remains the same: Haykal

fails, and towards the end of his life, he caves in and gives up the fight. His failure is also a failure of reconciliation between the theoretical (as imported through his own brand of translation) and the political (as he performed in the public sphere). This failure is none other than a failure of translation, which comes about in the identification with the philosopher of contradictions, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Conclusion

In reading Walter Benjamin's essay on the task of the translator, Jacques Derrida concludes that if the original is dependent on the translation in a relationship of complementarity between languages, then "originally [the original] was not there without fault, full, complete, total and identical to itself. From the origin of the original-to-be-translated, there is exile and fall" ("Des Tours de Babel" 222). All four different performances of translation that I have studied in my dissertation have a problematic relationship to the original texts. In their different ways, all four performances interrogate the origin/ality of the original-to-be translated. In every individual chapter I have shown how such an interrogation can problematize any study of the genealogy of the Arabic novel. Al-Bustānī's translation of *Robinson Crusoe* alters the latter's status as original in at least two ways. On the one hand, the translation implicitly interrogates the critical assumptions behind the inaugural status of *Robinson Crusoe* as the "first" English novel. On the other hand, the translation also questions Crusoe's original position as the first King of his island. *Al-Tihfah al-Bustānīyah fī al-Asfār al-Krusoeiyah* ("The Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels") usurps Crusoe's role as ultimate ruler by placing more emphasis on the nation in translation on the island, and the necessary role of Friday as translator and mediator between the king and his subjects. The poetic insertions in the text of *Al-Tihfah* serve two purposes: first, they signal a persistent anxiety of influence in the adoption of the novel form in Arabic because traditional Arabic prose is known to include intermittent poetic fragments. Second, they continuously revise the generic assumptions of the original novel. For instance, whenever Crusoe's easy adaptation to the island comes up, the translation inserts poetic lines that undo such complacency and call attention to the difficulties involved in establishing a homeland and a sense of

“nation.” Al-Bustānī’s rewritings and poetic additions to the original also comment on the problematic making of nation in his native and diverse Lebanon, such that gradually the emphasis in his translation becomes more and more on the figure of the translator, rather than that of the foreign ruler, as mediator and enabler of the nation.

Al-Manfalūṭī’s adaptations of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* and Chateaubriand’s *René* and *Atala* deny their origin altogether. Parading as original texts in their own right, al-Manfalūṭī’s adaptations make it impossible to assess the originality of the origin and become demonstrations of a very complex relationship between signifier and referent in al-Manfalūṭī’s theorization of the role of *khayāl* (poetic imagination). The “translations” of al-Manfalūṭī are perhaps the most telling of the coming of the novel in translation into Arabic, in the sense that I develop in my dissertation. Labeled as escapist fiction, al-Manfalūṭī’s adaptations of the genre of the novel are an important statement on how the genre was received and understood in the Arab world, particularly by the writers of the *nahḍah*. As such, al-Manfalūṭī’s translative adaptations point to a necessary failure in the appropriation of the novel form and to the persistent sense of alienation from the genre that will remain definitive of the tradition of the Arabic novel as we have come to know it today.

Muḥammad al-Sibā‘ī’s translation of *A Tale of Two Cities* rewrites the original’s metaphorical structure in order to undo the work of predictive figuration and incessant repetition in fiction. Importantly, the translation as it is exists in publication today does not include the last 6 chapters of the original, thus placing Dickens’s conclusive sacrificial end scene, intended as a guaranteed closure to a tale about revolution, in serious question. Al-Sibā‘ī’s translation rewrites the Arabic novel’s relationship to revolution particularly in exposing the relationship between the figural language of representation in a novel and the reality of revolution as a political

term. Al-Sibā'ī's translation of *A Tale of Two Cities* points to an irreconcilability between the novel and revolution while, at the same time, suggesting that such an impossibility must be rewritten in the Arabic novel.

And finally, Muḥammad Ḥusayn's Haykal's intimate reading of Rousseau is perhaps the most problematic engagement with the question of origin. Rousseau's own thought on the origin of society remains entangled in his rather contradictory relationship to nature, culture and revolution. This already shaky relationship to origin becomes doubly problematic in Haykal's *tarjamah* of the life of Rousseau, confirming Derrida's sentence: "From the origin of the original-to-be-translated, there is exile and fall." Moreover, the writing of Haykal, as the author of what many critics have, for whatever reason, termed the "first" Arabic novel, *Zaynab*, illustrates most fully the repercussions of naming an origin in a teleological history of the Arabic novel when that origin is one that comes about and remains in translation.

How is it that *Zaynab* came to be considered the first Arabic novel? The orientalist Sir Hamilton Gibb, who in the 1920's was writing like Haykal for *Al-Siyāṣah al-Uṣbu'īyyah* magazine, wrote an article in which he claimed that *Zaynab* was the first "authentic" Egyptian novel.²⁰⁵ In his 2009 article "How *Zaynab* Became the First Arabic Novel" Elliott Colla presents the contextual factors that determined the canonization of *Zaynab* as the first novel in the Arab world. He explains, in the words of Mustafa Badawi, that "[*Zaynab*] is the first fully fledged novel of literary merit in Arabic" (qtd. in Colla 215). Such critical accounts of the history of the Arabic novel emphasize the originality of *Zaynab*, curiously as not derived from European themes, and Colla explains, "*Zaynab* is the unequivocal point of origin for the canon

²⁰⁵ H. A. R. Gibb, "The Egyptian Novel", *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 8/1 (1933): 1–22. Reprinted in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1962).

of *authentic* Egyptian novels” (215; emphasis mine). Of course the adjective “authentic” already places this history in conversation with the history of the European novel, which becomes the standard of authenticity against which every Arabic novel is measured.²⁰⁶

Colla maintains that the status of *Zaynab* as the first novel had almost nothing to do with its difference from other texts. Rather, there were many native novels and translations that preceded the emergence of Haykal’s novel. In 1929, when Haykal published the second edition of the novel with the introduction that I brought up in chapter four, the text’s originality came up in that it was considered “the first to treat the everyday life of the peasantry and the virtue of Egyptian women” (Colla 217). Colla continues that Haykal republished his novel in the middle of a parliamentary struggle and “a dramatic reorientation within his own party away from Pharaonist symbolism and towards icons of the peasantry” (218). The novel’s second publication also coincides with its adaptation into the first Egyptian film made with local Egyptian funds in 1930. Colla continues, “it is only here, 15 years after initial publication, that *Zaynab* was first hailed as a unique breakthrough in Arabic literature” (218).²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Of course the measure of authenticity is highly problematic especially in the context of the genre of the novel, which as a form continuously eludes categorical definitions. According to which definition of the genre one deals with, the decision of which Arabic text can be considered an authentic novel varies. For instance, most paradigmatic considerations of the novel in Arabic ignore Maḥmūd Ṭahir Ḥaqqī’s novel, *Adhrā’ Dinshwāy* (1906) which is by an Egyptian author and about Egyptian political reality. There is also Muḥammad al-Muwaylīḥī’s *Ḥadīth ‘Īsā Ibn Hishām* which I discussed in the Introduction and which presents a more accurate and critical picture of Egyptian society than *Zaynab*. As has become obvious, the problem of generic definition and the ascription of the title of novel are not fortuitous and the measures of authenticity vary according to national prejudices and literary sensibilities. My dissertation’s paradigmatic consideration of translation as a space of radical interrogation of both target and original cultures intends to open up and address these questions in the close consideration of Arabic textual adaptations of European novels.

²⁰⁷ Colla also relates the inaugural status of *Zaynab* to the critical discourse of the 1950’s in Egypt: Whereas critical discourse of the first half of the century was not concerned with creating rigid differentiations between literary genres, during the Nasserist period, the codification of sharp

Hilary Kilpatrick, Mustafa Badawi, and Ṭāhā Badr do not dispute the original status of *Zaynab*.²⁰⁸ Badr, for instance, in *Taṭawwur al-riwāyah al-Ḥadithah fī Miṣr (1870-1938)*, considers *Zaynab* the first “artistic” novel in Egypt. In my dissertation, I have tried to show how a serious engagement of the novelistic translations that were published before and after *Zaynab* can place the assumptions of such a teleological history of the Arabic novel in question. Also, the process of translation in itself makes it difficult to clearly separate between original and derivative as I have shown in the Introduction. If one were to ignore the role of these translations, as most critics do in dismissing them as defective failures, the question of the first Arabic novel would sound very different. However, my readings of the translations aim to bear witness to the consequences of dismissing other translated narrative forms that existed prior to the writing of *Zaynab* to the story of the Arabic novel.

Other recent critics of the Arabic novel share my concerns about ignoring other narrative forms (translations and otherwise) in the construction of a literary history of the Arabic novel. For instance, Samah Selim in *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt, 1880–1985* describes the problems with present paradigms of a literary history of the Arabic novel:

Accordingly [that is according to the popular teleological accounts], the novel emerges in the Arab world after a period of translation and assimilation of the nineteenth-century European novel, then gradually develops into a mature local form that properly corresponds to a canonical European one. Narrative genres that fall outside of the framework of this methodology become textually and historically problematic and are hence treated as perhaps interesting, but nonetheless abortive efforts to produce the novel genre in Arabic. Matti Moosa’s *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* is a good

generic distinctions became arguably the highest purpose to which nationalist criticism could aspire. (216)

²⁰⁸ See Hilary Kilpatrick, “The Arabic Novel: A Single Tradition” in the *Journal of Arabic Literature* (5: (1974): 93-107) and *The Modern Egyptian Novel: A Study in Social Criticism* (London: Ithaca, 1974) and Mustafa Badawi’s “The Background” in *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 1-24) edited by Mustafa Badawi.

example of this paradigm. Moosa explains the literary history of the Nahdah in terms of an East-West binarism in which modern Arabic fiction remains locked in the throes of an eternally frozen antithetical tension with superior European narrative genres. Popular theater and epic and the maqamah for example, dismissed as heterodox and archaic narrative forms that hamper the attempt to forge 'modern' genres, while the porous boundaries between all these and hybrid twentieth-century genres like drama, novel, and romance remain unexplored. On the other hand, novels that do not reproduce the recognizable, canonical structures of the European model are judged, in the previously quoted words of Sabry Hafez, to be products of 'the rudimentary treatment, narrow experience and deficient technique of the writer.' ... As an alternative to this paradigm, I have tried to explore the process of genre-formation as one that is embedded in complex and contested social ideologies and social experiences ... In generic terms, the history of the novel can thus be read as the history of a dialogue and a conflict between classes, discourses and ideologies. This is true of the European novel and even more so of the Arabic novel. When read in this way, the particularities of the Arabic novel's structural features acquire their own technical and social logic and 'deficient technique' or 'technical incompetence' emerge as a deliberate articulation of representational authority and autonomous creativity. (22-23)

In the chapter entitled "Novels and Nations," Selim explains how the national fiction that came together in the 1930's "was theorized and produced in direct competition with the serialized novelistic fiction and romances (*riwayat*) that had become tremendously popular amongst the new reading public." Against the popularity of these hybrid texts, these strange novelistic translations, "[t]he new critical concept of 'national literature,'" Selim continues, "was a pivotal element in the later development and canonization of the novel genre in Egypt" (61 – 62). Selim remarks that with the crystallization of the Egyptian bourgeoisie's sense of its own identity as a cultural and political vanguard, literature begins to explore its immediate milieu: "The novel now begins to be written and read as the mature expression of individual and collective identity. This is why Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal's novel *Zaynab* is considered to be 'the first' Egyptian – and indeed, Arabic – novel" (73). However, as Selim explains the canonicity of *Zaynab* is a direct result of the convergence of two dominant historical narratives: "the narrative of Egyptian nationhood and the European narrative of the history of the novel" (103). Thus the association between

the novel and the nation canonizes the authenticity of *Zaynab* as the first novel as it deals with the everyday life of the Egyptian farmer, even if Haykal is more preoccupied with abstractions rather than realistic documentation in the actual novel.

Still some other critics like Mohamed-Salah Omri in his 2008 piece “Local Narrative Form and Constructions of the Arabic Novel” take the argument a bit further and suggest that the study of other narrative genres co-existent with the novel can reverse the origin point of the teleological development of the Arabic novel. Omri writes that the focus on form will make such a reversal possible because “[l]ocal form, of which *maqamah* is one instance, provides the context within which the novel and the Arabic short story were understood” (259). Like Selim, Omri maintains that the “over-valorization” of the novel has made it so “that the study of modern Arabic narrative is dominated by a teleological vision of literary history, where the novel is perceived as the culmination of national aesthetic achievement” (249).²⁰⁹ Perceived as the perfect form, in a “victorious” history as Omri puts it, the novel became associated with modernity; in this formula, local form is considered as an obstruction in the trajectory of the novel and as a sign of the rejection of modernity (245).

Omri then turns to Franco Moretti’s 2000 essay “Conjectures on World Literature” in which Moretti describes the encounter between Western and “third-world” literatures. Omri quotes from Moretti:

²⁰⁹ Omri summarizes the general critical attitudes towards the novel as the new narrative form: Among Arab historians, there is a sense of faith in the novel as the perfect form for all nations and cultures, a marker of modernity and a sign of integration in world culture. Historians of Arabic narrative, whether writing in Arabic or in Western languages, tend to share the argument for the “victorious” history of the novel. Other critics trace the novel in the context of ambivalent nationalist projects, noting the contradiction between progressive politics, particularly nationalist resistance, and a conservative cultural outlook, which saw any close ties with or imitation of the West as going against the nation’s interests (Badr 201-10). Still others, alternately, accuse colonialism of hindering the development of the genre by interrupting the tendency in the colonies to emulate the West, thus leading “pioneering figures to mixing the Western novel with familiar forms in order to avoid being accused of straying from tradition” (Qaisuma 85). (245)

[T]he historical conditions reappear as a sort of ‘crack’ in the form; as a faultline running between story and discourse, world and worldview: the world goes in the strange direction dictated by an outside power; the worldview tries to make sense of it, and is thrown off balance all the time. (“Conjectures” 65)

The “crack” in the form is thus the result of historical conditions that create a tenuous relationship between the world and the prevailing worldview, let’s say, in an Egypt dominated by British imperialism while creating its own national literature at the same time. Omri suggests that instead of just considering the historical conditions as the principle agents behind the crack in the form, one should consider the role of local form, such as the *maqāmah*, as a generic convention in its own right that unsettles the balance between world and worldview (249).²¹⁰ By studying the role of other modes of expression such as poetry and its role in the rise of the Arabic novel, Omri hopes that there is a different way to read “third world literature” such that “the radical difference of these narratives lies not (or not only) in the ratio of the libidinal to the political, as Jameson puts it. Rather, the radical formal difference of novels ... lies in the ratio of the poetic to the narrative” (259). Trying to save the Arabic novel from the usual reductive political reading, Omri’s argument is inspiring and deeply thoughtful. However, his actual analysis rests on the postcolonial Arabic novel.

²¹⁰ Omri makes a very interesting case for the *maqāmah* as the local form that became the site of domestication of the new genre of the novel. Omri lays out a structural approach to the *maqāmah* according to its varying formal features à la Vladimir Propp, and mentions a few examples of early novels that incorporated elements from the *maqāmah* and as such were already short stories even before their authors encountered Guy de Maupassant. He writes that the form of the *maqāmah* was already associated with a certain vibrancy that guaranteed its continuing popularity. Because the *maqāmah* offered itself up as the perfect form for criticism of the status quo and the foreign occupying presence, Omri devises two roles for the form: “as a genre that was better suited to respond to the challenges posed by the European versions of the novel, and as the discursive strategy that was able to keep alive the Arab writers’ claim to ‘authenticity’” (259). The first is bound to the form itself and the second to its users in responding to European cultural threat. In his reading, *Ḥadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām* becomes the site of competition between new and older generic forms, “or, alternatively, a site where the novel is thought and domesticated” (259).

In my own work, although I believe that the *maqāmah* was extremely influential in the rise of the Arabic novel, I think of the paradigm of translation and the hybrid texts rather than actual local forms as occasioning a “crack” in the form as Moretti would have it. Samah Selim mentions the important role of the translated narratives to any study of the Arabic novel, but she also considers the socio-historical conditions as determinant of the emergence of the form in the Arab world. In my approach to the novel, I focus on form in translation and transformation in the complex relationship between the original and its translation. As such, even though I consider the role of local forms and of the socio-historical conditions that clearly influenced the adoption of the novel form, I focus more on reading the translations closely and intimately to evaluate how moments of adaptation can help us re-examine the named origins of teleological accounts of literary history.²¹¹

In “Creative Translation: Towards the Study of Arabic Translations of Western Literature since the 19th Century” published in 1979, M. Peled, for instance, while examining the movement of translation of the novel into Arabic, remarks that the early translators’ “infidelity” to the original gradually effected a change in literary

²¹¹ In “Translation and Literary History: An Indian View” (In *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, edited by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi and published by Routledge in 1991), Ganesh Devy argues for the significance of translation to the study of literary origins and literary historiographies. Because Western metaphysics has always treated translation as a form of exile symptomatic of a post-Babel crisis, translation has remained secondary in Western literary criticism which valorizes individualism and approaches translations with guilt over their secondariness to the originality of the originals. “The philosophy of individualism and the metaphysics of guilt,” Devy continues, “render European literary historiography incapable of grasping the origins of literary traditions” (182). Devy continues to explain the importance of translation to Anglo-Irish literature and maintains that “origins of literary movements and literary traditions inhabit various acts of translation” (183). He then turns to the ultimate question: where do we place translations in literary history? Using the example of India, Devy shows how for non-Western literature, originality is not such a primary goal, and in some sense most Indian classical literature is a form of translation from other or previous works. As I have tried to show in the context of the translation of the European novel into Arabic, Devy points to similar problems between literary history and translation studies when it comes to the relationship between origins and sequentiality. He concludes, “The point that needs to be made is that probably the question of origins of literary traditions will have to be viewed differently by literary communities with ‘translating consciousness’” (187).

taste.²¹² Eventually, this change in taste led to the ostracization of traditional Arabic literature and its relegation “into the realm of ancient classical literatures, to be studied now mostly for linguistic or historical purposes” (133). Between 1850 and 1940, the new kind of literature, namely fictional narrative entering the society via translation, completely replaced the literature of 13 centuries (133). Peled’s argument does not necessarily belittle the role of traditional local forms in the construction of the novel as he continues to point out that the tendency to integrate familiar literary trends “informed the translated works” (147), highlighting the primary role of reader reception in determining literary sensibilities. Sabry Hafez also argues that the literary preferences of the reading public determined the choice of translations. The significance of Peled’s argument is in the way that translation, in facilitating the change in literary taste, became an active agent in determining the rise of the Arabic novel as we have come to know it today. And the Arabs’ approach to Western literature was thus

based on these translations and insofar as any Western work inspired a reader or a generation the inspiration came mostly through its translated form. Consequently, no real understanding of the way modern Arabic literature has developed and the way the Arab concepts of modern poetics, or *ars poetica*, have been shaped, can be reached without a thorough understanding of the nature of these translations. (134)

²¹² In “Nation and Translation in the Middle East,” Samah Selim notes, however, that translation was different with the *nahḍāwī* writers of the 1930’s. For them, translation needed to be as accurate as possible, reproducing the original intact. He writes:

The Arab *Nahdah* (modern Renaissance movement) celebrated translation as the mechanism through which Arab societies would achieve enlightenment and modernity. Translation then became a jealously guarded zone, relying on new romantic concepts of originality, transparency and accuracy to establish the purity of its foundations. The purified modern languages and identities constructed through romanticism and nationalism were understood to be fundamentally incompatible with popular and pre-modern literary practice: the forgery, the adaptation, and the authorless, or multilingual text for example. Moreover, anything less than strict equivalence in the translation process was considered by *Nahdawi* critics and historians to be a form of textual *mutilation*. (9)

Of course no performance of translation can be entirely accurate; however, the *nahḍāwīs*’ project of translation occasioned the creation of an exclusive national identity that, as we saw with Haykal, excluded the masses.

In other words, these early translations cannot be dismissed in any mapping of the history of the Arabic novel.²¹³ They must be treated as texts in their own rights and not be measured against other standards, such as the European realistic novel, and must not be used in a teleological literary history that mirrors that of the Western novel. Rather, in considering the role of translation, we have to adjust our expectations of these texts and treat them as important forms in their own right. In effect they leave us with a reversal of origin indeed, in that it is now no longer *Zaynab* but rather a whole body of translated novels not really resembling the genre that come to claim their own place somewhere in the story of the Arabic novel. What then would this different literary history in translation look like? How do we read it? What happens if we change our perception of origin so that it is not identifiable in itself, but remains in the creative space between the translation and the original?

In “Literary History and the Arabic Novel” published in 2001, Roger Allen writes that a literary history of the Arabic novel written today would look very different from one written from the perspective of pre-1967 (205). He also brings up the unanimous agreement amongst many critics that the novels of Naguib Mahfuz prove, “[that] the European novel had thereby become a fully domesticated literary genre within the Arab world” (205). To question such a teleology, Allen returns to the example of the novelists of the 1930’s who, as he tells us, inherited “a process of novelistic development” that began during the *nahḍah* as a result of both, the encounter with the West and the return to an Arab-Islamic past. Allen continues:

²¹³ In “The Emergence of Two Stylistic Norms: In the Early Translation into Modern Arabic Prose” published in 1981, Sasson Somekh compares the translation styles of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and al-Bustānī and concludes:

As for prose, in view of the immense role that translated fiction played in generating a new type of original literature, it is possible, indeed imperative, to view translated literature as a fully-fledged component of the modern Arabic literary polysystem. Furthermore, in dealing with the language of fiction, it is only through studying the language of translated literature that we can document and comprehend the emergence of new stylistic types. (194)

One of the great problems connected with this approach to “the modern” in the Arab world context is that this retrospective process did not involve an engagement with the immediate past (which was, and often still is, regarded as a literary and cultural wasteland, tarred with that kiss-of-death epithet “decadent,” but rather a huge chronological leapfrog to an idealized “classical” era some seven centuries earlier. The ongoing effects of this process of retrospect on the emergence of “neoclassical” movements and on critical (and historical) attitudes to generic development have been profound and retain their ability to obfuscate and obliterate the investigation of possible continuities right up to the present. (206)

One of the negative consequences of such a retrospective literary history is the canonization of *Zaynab* as the first Arabic novel. Allen quotes from his essay included in *Modern Arabic Literature* (edited by M.M. Badawi and published in 1992) that *Zaynab*'s

significant advances in the treatment of social themes (especially the status of women within the family structure) and in the use of language need to be relieved of the burden of ‘firstness’ and placed within a broader historical and developmental framework. This notion that the Arabic novel ‘begins’ in 1913 is merely one of the problems associated with the retrospective matrix I have just tried to outline.²¹⁴ (212)

Bearing in mind that the *nahḍah* involved both the importation of Western forms and the revival of a past heritage, and that the early Arabic novels were read in a particular framework that valorized the role of the literary over and above the historical, Allen attempts to rethink the perspective of Arabic literary history, taking into consideration a number of formative factors. One is the lack of knowledge of the period extending between the 16th and the 18th centuries. Another is that the premodern Arabic narratives that were not written in Classical Arabic, like *A Thousand and One Nights*,

²¹⁴ Allen also suggests a different reading of the rewriting of traditional forms in the 19th and early 20th centuries such as Ahmad Fāris Al-Shidyāq's *Al-Sāq 'ala al-Sāq fī mā huwa al-Faryāq* and Muḥammad al-Muwaylīḥī's *Ḥadīth Isa ibn Hishām*. Such a different reading would make their rewritings of the *maqāmah* into “important attempts at combining autobiography and fiction (in the former case) and in utilizing a traditional picaresque genre (and its accompanying style) for some highly accurate social criticism (in the latter case)” to achieve a degree of “critical realism that was, in fact, not equaled until the novels of the 1930s” (212).

are not included in the canon.²¹⁵ And finally, the last factor is the variety of Arabic literature being produced today which demands a different approach to literary history, one that considers the specific features of the narrative tradition of every Arab country (213). Roger Allen lists some of the consequences of a literary history that ignores the role of the translations and other narrative forms in telling the story of the Arabic novel. In this new approach to literary history, every Arab country would have its own particular features that define its novelistic tradition.

In his 2007 article “Rewriting Literary History: The Case of the Arabic Novel” Allen develops his ideas further, pointing to the repercussions of an out-dated model of literary history that locates the *nahḍah* in the coming of Napoleon to Egypt in 1798:

The ascription of ‘firstness’ work and the total confusion in placing its antecedents into some sort of narrative categories or developmental sequence provide an excellent illustration of the consequences of the unbalanced picture presented by the failure of the scholarly community to come to terms with the nature of generic change as it was affected by attitudes to modernity and pre-modernity during the 19th century. (254 – 255)

Allen continues to examine other trends surging in recent research that show a different heritage for the novel: one being the concern with the immediate environment as in the Libyan novelist Ibrāhīm al-Kūnī’s desert-related figures in his novels (254); the second is the continuous return to Arab history, like introducing historical texts into the novel and returning to an Arab-Islamic history; and the third involves the different experiments in “transtextual and even trans-generic writing” (256) that compel us to re-examine the place of the works of writers like al-Shidyāq and al-Muwaylīḥī, for example, “and the widely variant text-types that they

²¹⁵ Considering the subversive potential of the novel in its valorization of pre-modern elements and distortion of bourgeois values, Moretti concludes that “the novel returns to be central to our understanding of modernity: not despite, but because of its premodern traits, which are not archaic residues but functional articulations of ideological needs” (“History of the Novel, Theory of the Novel” 10).

incorporated within their works—in the development of modern Arabic narrative—something that requires of us yet again that we re-examine the status of Haykal’s novel, *Zaynab*, within the broader developmental scheme of things” (257). Allen insists that even though the importation of Western literary genres is too important to ignore, the version of literary history of the Arabic novel that we have today is in the least inadequate, and more research is required so that this approach can be revised and can become more comprehensive in its study of generic changes and adaptations that have determined the shape of the novel in Arabic today (258).

While the study of generic adaptation and transformation is indispensable to the study of the modern Arabic novel, I am more interested in the importation of the genre in translation and consider the paradigm of translation as the new parameter for a literary history of the Arabic novel.²¹⁶ As such, I would not only suggest that the literary output of every Arab country be considered separately and according to its own stylistic and other particularities, but also that we rethink the relationship of

²¹⁶ The relationship between de-nationalization and translation is the subject of Emily Apter’s book *The Translation Zone*. In her book, Emily Apter contests monolingual complacency by way of Leo Spitzer and maintains that translation can aid the discipline of comparative literature in denationalizing literature. Apter cites Spitzer’s famous statement that “[a]ny language is human prior to being national: Turkish, French, and German languages first belong to humanity and then to Turkish, French, and German peoples” (qtd. in Apter 41). She capitalizes on Spitzer’s claim that the original language must remain part of the translation, so that there is always an inassimilable element of language in the act of translation. Apter maintains that this inassimilable element should be the categorical imperative of translation studies. She argues that comparative literature and translation studies should be commensurable and engage in a process of adequatio. Bringing translation studies and comparative literature together (basically making translation the fulcrum of comparative literature) would prevent “neocolonial geopolitics in carrying over the imperial carve-up of linguistic fields” so that we can rethink the relationship between language and literature. She writes, “Francophone might, then, no longer simply designate the transnational relations among metropolitan France and its former colonies, but linguistic contact zones all over the world in which French, or some kind of French, is one of many languages in play” (87). The zone of the title is not the property of a single nation nor an amorphous condition associated with postnationalism. A zone would mark critical engagement in what she calls translational transnationalism: translation among small nations or minority language communities and a cultural caesura “where transmission failure is marked” (5). Despite the necessary failure though, Apter marks the shift from textual fidelity to the original’s reproducibility. She turns to Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” and argues that the afterlife of translation is really some form of textual cloning with the idea of a “reproductively engineered original.” Here a translation grows itself anew – shifting the terms of translation studies from original and translation, to clone and code (with no original genetic code) (214). In this sense, she argues that everything is translatable when we let go of fidelity to the original and maintain the thinking of the zone of contact.

Arabic studies and the discipline of Comparative Literature, particularly through comparing stories about the genealogy of the novel in different places around the world.²¹⁷

In a very recent article “Theory of the Novel, History of the Novel,” published in 2010, Franco Moretti imagines such a comparative approach to the histories of the Chinese and the European novel.²¹⁸ He quotes from Kenneth Pomeranz’s *The Great Divergence*,

²¹⁷ My dissertation’s re-evaluation of genealogical accounts of the novel would hopefully also participate in the conversation on the relationship between Comparative Literature, Translation Studies, and Area Studies. As I already mentioned, Emily Apter’s *Translation Zone: a New Comparative Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006) has helped me re-imagine translation as fundamental to the discipline of Comparative Literature. Apter alludes to the term “contact zone” from Mary Louise Pratt’s essay “Arts of the Contact Zone”, in which she defines the zone as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.” A text produced in the contact zone “is heterogeneous on the reception end as well as the production end: it will read very differently to people in different positions in the contact zone.” Pratt wants to replace the idea of community (especially Benedict Anderson’s imagined community in which people imagine that their language unifies them) with the idea of a contact zone. The contact zone would focus on an undeniable power struggle that determines how language is received at the two sides of the zone. This difference in reception and production of a text in the contact zone is of course very helpful to my dissertation. The novel in translation can reveal something to us about the form of the novel in general, and that conclusion is made possible by holding on to the difference in production and reception that we find in the contact zone. Other scholars such as Shaden Tageldin in her 2010 article “One Comparative Literature? ‘Birth’ of a Discipline in French-Arabic Translation, 1810-1834,” in a special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies* entitled “Arabic Literature Now: Between Area Studies and the New Comparatism” and Samah Selim have also begun to re-imagine the relationship of Arabic Area Studies to the discipline of Comparative Literature.

²¹⁸ Franco Moretti also considers the relationship between world and national literature. He resituates the de-habituation of home in relation to what constitutes world literature in an effort to think literature outside the limitations of any national borders. In his 2001 article “Conjectures on World Literature,” he writes that “[w]orld literature is not an object, it’s a problem, and a problem that asks for a new critical method” (55). Moretti elaborates on this method in his study of the movement of the novel both temporally and spatially in *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*. Graphs allow us to approach the novel as a system of its genres and not a definitive, unique form in itself. Maps involve reducing a text into a few elements and abstracting them from the narrative flow to construct the new, artificial object of the map (53). The use of maps is to show how the force of large national processes alter narrative structures and reveal form “as a diagram of forces, or perhaps, even, as nothing but force” (64). And finally, trees provide a system of differences at the microscopic level that add up to something larger than any individual text, as for example, the genre, or the tree, of detective fiction (76). Here there would be no gap between the real object and the object of knowledge, and the genre in internal multiplicity no cannot be represented by an individual text (76). Moretti wants to think of the history of the novel more spatially than temporally “[b]ecause it is only in such a wide, non-homogeneous geography that some fundamental principles of cultural history become manifest” (90). According to Moretti, the tree provides the best model because it encompasses both. He ends the book with: “This perceptual uncertainty between time and (morpho-)space – this impossibility, in fact, of really ‘seeing’ them both at once – is the sign of a new conception of literary history in which literature moves forward *and sideways* at once; often more sideways than forwards” (91; emphasis

we should make our comparisons ... truly reciprocal ... that is, look for absences, accidents, and obstacles that diverted England from a path that might have made it more like the Yangzi Delta to Gujarat, along with the more usual exercise of looking for blockages that kept non-European areas from reproducing implicitly normalized European paths. (6)

Moretti continues quoting from Pomeranz to say that in such an approach, we should “view both sides of the comparison as ‘deviations’ when seen through the expectations of the other, rather than leaving one as always the norm” (qtd. in Moretti 6). Although the case of the Chinese novel is very different from the Arabic one, as in China novels were being written as early as the 16th century and did not come entirely in translation, we remember Lawrence Venuti’s argument about the 19th century Chinese novel that emulated the European novel in constructing a Chinese discourse on national identity.²¹⁹ For Moretti, then, to consider the parallel histories of the European and Chinese novels does not imply that the one did not have, at least at some historical moment, an influence on the other. Depending on the definition of the novel as a genre, the approach changes radically, but the conclusion is similar.²²⁰

James Monroe, Devin Stewart and others have studied the possible influence of the *maqāmah* on the European (especially picaresque) novel.²²¹ Of course the

original). In addition to reconsidering the parameters of the discipline of comparative literature, Moretti’s rethinking of literary history as a spatial movement helps me work out the movement of the novel from France and England into the Arab world. However, it is difficult to apply this model to the movement of the novel into Arabic: this is not only because what we are dealing here is a colonial context. What emerges in these translations is a complex dynamic of exchange that moves back and forth and fails to become entirely assimilated into the Arabic version of the novel; rather, the translations hover in-between two national languages and traditions.

²¹⁹ Refer to “Local Contingencies” as discussed in the Introduction.

²²⁰ For instance, Moretti points out that in this different approach to the histories of the novel, we find out that the novel in China was considered to be a serious artform that survived terrible censorship (6). On the other hand, in Europe in the 18th century, and due to an increasing obsession with market consumption, the novel was not treated as an aesthetic form (8). Thus the novel in China was circulated minimally and treated as a unique aesthetic object, while the European novel was heavily circulated and treated as a lower, commercialized form of literature.

²²¹ For the relationship between the picaresque novel and *maqāmat*, see James Monroe’s book *The Art of Badi‘ az-Zaman al-Hamadhani as Picaresque Narrative* (Beirut: American U of Beirut, 1983) in which Monroe lists an extensive bibliography on the subject (10-11). There is also Devin

influence of the translation of the *A Thousand and One Nights* on European fiction has also been an extensive subject of study. Although I am interested in this early exchange and its influence on the beginning of the European novel, I am also suggesting that the novel in translation into Arabic must not be approached in relation to an original (European text) and a derivative (the Arabic novel). Rather, in studying these translations closely, and understanding how they rewrote other local narrative forms, I suggest that we consider the two histories (of the European and the Arabic novels) as evolving in conversation. To do so, we must first note the differences in the contexts of the rise of each and then read the translation as a commentary on the original, one that makes it possible to interrogate literary genealogies, myths of origins as well as generic definitions more accurately.²²²

In her 2009 article “Nation and Translation in the Middle East,” Samah Selim argues for an interdisciplinary interaction between Middle Eastern Studies and Translation Studies that would take into consideration the specificity of the Middle Eastern context. She writes:

Venuti’s important argument (1998) for an ethics of translation that recognizes and preserves the specificity and singularity of the other takes on curious twists when applied to non-European languages like Arabic or Urdu, which are fully imbricated by the power relations that have structured imperial modernity. In the context of Orientalism and the history of violence, both discursive and real, that it has made possible, the line between foreignization and alienation, or “radical strangeness” (Jacquemond 1992:149), seems dangerously fine. (10)

Stewart’s “Classical Arabic *Maqamat* and the Picaresque Novel,” in the forthcoming book *Classical Narratives*, edited by Salma Jayyusi. Mohamed-Salah Omri also mentions more recent views such as Tarshuna’s *Les marginaux dans les récits picaresques arabes et espagnols* and Young’s *Rogues and Genres: Generic Transformation in the Spanish Picaresque and Arabic Maqamah*.

²²² For instance, in *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel*, Ali Jad notes that the vulgarization of the novel in England with its low-cost printing and material designed for a barely literate public took place in the 19th century and as such, it coincided with the coming of the novel in translation into Arabic. Ali concludes, in light of this comparison, that the novel was approached as a lowly form in the Arab world because of its vulgar reception in Europe and not necessarily because of its form (3).

Richard Jacquemond develops this idea of “radical strangeness” in his 1992 article “Translation and Cultural Hegemony: The Case of French-Arabic Translation.” To understand this strangeness in the translation of the Arabic novel, we would have to consider how the *rise* of the European novel and not just the European novel was translated into Arabic.²²³

If Matti Moosa reads the history of the Arabic novel within an East-West binary as Selim argues, then Ṭāhā Badr uses Ian Watt’s model to create a genealogy of the Arabic novel. In *The Rise of the Novel* originally published in 1957, Ian Watt writes, “The novel is thus the logical literary vehicle of a culture, which, in the last few centuries, has set an unprecedented value on originality, on the novel; and it is therefore well named” (13).²²⁴ Marked by a rejection of traditional plots, the novel is

²²³ In his 1998 book *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*, Franco Moretti comments on the multiple “rises” of the European novel. He writes that for most of the period of the rise of the novel (between 1720 and 1850) most European countries “import[ed] from abroad a large portion of their novels ... whereas France and Britain form a group to themselves, that imports very little from the rest of the European continent” because they produced so many novels that they didn’t need to buy them from other places (151). He continues that the rise of the European novel is actually represented in at least 3 rises, “the first around 1720-1750 (in the core: France, Britain, and a little later Germany); the second around 1820-1850 (for a half dozen countries or so); and a third one, later still, for all the others ... [w]ith France and Britain always in the core” (173-174). I am not assuming in this dissertation that there was one, à la Ian Watt. I am merely calling attention to the Arab authors’ and critics’ attraction to Watt’s model, in another appropriative gesture of translation. Rather, I would suggest that the multiple rises and theories of the various European novels also made it in translation into Arabic.

²²⁴ There are multiple accounts of the rise of the novel as a genre in Europe, but I have found the work of Ian Watt, Michael McKeon and Franco Moretti the most relevant to my own approach to the novel in the Arab world. Although I do not make direct reference to the book, Lenard Davis’s *Factual Fictions: The Origin of the Novel* has also indirectly informed my approach to the problem of origins of the novel. Lenard Davis writes that the novel has generally been studied under three models: evolution (Darwinian progression or maturation towards the form), osmotic (whereby the dominant themes of philosophy and culture are considered to affect narrative), and convergence (which considers that the origin of the novel is a result of all the narratives that came before it) (3-6). He chooses a model that relies on the work of Michel Foucault wherein the novel is seen as a discourse, “an ensemble of written texts that constitute the novel” and which “by no means includes only novels and literary criticism, but may include parliamentary statute, newspapers, advertisements, printer’s records, handbills, letters, and so on” (7). As such, I do consider that the various narrative forms circulating around the rise of the novel in Arabic are very important to the study of the novel and of the origins of literary histories more generally. Of course I am always infinitely indebted to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin whose thought on the novel has in many ways made my project possible. For instance, in *Problems in Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, originally published in 1929, Bakhtin writes: “every novel is a dialogized system made up of the images of ‘languages,’ styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language. Language in the novel not only represents but itself serves as an object of representation” (49) because polyglossia frees “consciousness from the tyranny of its own language ... Parodic-travesty forms flourish under these conditions, and only in this milieu are they capable

dedicated to what Watt names as formal realism in its attention to particulars and to details of characterization and background.²²⁵ Similar to the Arabic context, in the early English novel as Watt reads it, and even if the writers of this new fiction rejected the tradition of mixing poetry with prose, they were still expected to use language as a rhetorical interest in itself and not merely as referential: Watt writes, “The previous stylistic tradition for fiction was not primarily concerned with the correspondence of words and things, but rather with the extrinsic beauties which could be bestowed upon description and action by the use of rhetoric” (28). The formal realism of the new form of the novel is

[t]he narrative method whereby the novel embodies this circumstantial view of life may be called its formal realism; formal, because the term realism does not here refer to any special literary doctrine or purpose, but only to a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself.²²⁶ (32)

Thus in this history of the English novel, formal realism becomes a convention, which in turn becomes the grounds for the definition of the genre. For Watt, the rise of the novel coincides with the rise of bourgeois individualism, as the new form became the

of being elevated to completely new ideological heights” (61). These parodic forms also include what I am calling hybrid texts or translations. Bakhtin’s porous relationship between languages makes it possible to envision these hybrid novelistic forms flowing across national borders as well.

²²⁵ Watt gives the example of Defoe’s revolution: total subordination of the plot to the pattern of the autobiographical memoir which he parallels to the assertion of primacy of individual experience in Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* (15). Watt continues: “... the novel is surely distinguished from other genres and from previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualisation of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment” (18).

²²⁶ Importantly Watt locates the first appearance of formal realism in French literature: [T]he novel’s realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it. ... This, of course, is very close to the position of the French realists themselves, who asserted that if their novels tended to differ from the more flattering pictures of humanity presented by many established ethical, social, and literary codes, it was merely because they were the product of a more dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life than had ever been attempted before. (11)

However, Watt is then quick to dismiss the role of 18th-century French literature in the tradition of the genre because it remained too preoccupied with its rhetorical style while British fiction rose to the occasion of formal realism, with the rise of the middle classes.

vehicle for the expression of the Cartesian ego in fiction.²²⁷ In line with Watt's story of the rise of the English novel, Ṭāhā Badr also suggests that the 1919 Egyptian revolution which was followed by the creation of the bourgeoisie creates the occasion for the rise of the artistic Egyptian novel. However, Ali Jad in his 1983 *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel* contests Badr's claim. Ali writes, "The fact that 1919 coincided with the growth (not the rise) of the short story rather than the novel itself shows that the novel needed more than optimism and (rightful) pride in political consciousness and national solidarity to rise, grow and flourish" (16).

In *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt, 1880–1985*, Samah Selim also makes a distinction between the rise of the European and the Arabic novel. Selim argues that unlike the European bourgeoisie, the Egyptian was not hegemonic as a class. Rather, its coming together coincided with the rise of the masses and it remained challenged by a "politically conscious and insurgent mass of urban and rural poor, galvanized and radicalized by the experience of imperialism, the 'Urabi revolt and the British Occupation" (14). Selim continues:

At the same time, its position as a class within the larger economic and financial structures of world capitalism limited its ability to manufacture a solid national hegemony based on the same kinds of political and economic concessions reluctantly granted by the European bourgeoisies to their working poor. The Egyptian Revolution of 1952 accelerated and magnified this process. This historical dynamic is inscribed into the novel genre – and particularly the village novel – over the course of the twentieth century. The narrative self, in both its romantic and realist form, has constantly been beset by the consciousness of its own historical and discursive limits, its own irrelevance in relation to the sweep of history and the powerful, teeming presence of the masses of marginalized and silenced peoples that have laid powerful claim to this same history. (14)

²²⁷ Watt's contention that the novel was the form most expressive of the individual in Western bourgeois thought and thus comes into being alongside the bourgeoisie is also echoed by Mikhail M. Bakhtin's essay "Epic and Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981), 3-40; as well as Walter Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 83-109; and Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987).

This perplexing relationship to the masses is best demonstrated in the work of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal. The novel thus became a vehicle used to express the alienation of the Egyptian and Arab author. For the most part, the serialized translations became associated with the masses and with a vulgar literature, while the literature of the elitist, Western-educated bourgeoisie came to be identified as “high” literature.²²⁸

In his criticism of Watt, Michael McKeon in the *Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*, originally published in 1987, argues that the novel in England came out of the conflict between aristocratic ideology, progressive ideology and conservative ideology. In this conflict, traditional forms such as the “romance” remained important to the development of the novel. For McKeon, Watt’s gesture of dismissing the influence of the romance signals a fundamental theoretical inadequacy of the distinction between romance and novel, one that is then transposed into the study of the development of the novel in the Arab world. As the only generic convention of the

²²⁸ In his 2008 book *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern Egypt*, Richard Jacquemond describes the nationalist bias that determined the shape of the field of Arabic literature as we have come to know it today. Rejecting the relationship of other languages to the constitution of this field, nationalist criticism

Has neglected the question of translation, and has not examined literary exchange and its effects on the Egyptian field beyond the foundational period, when its importance in acclimatizing imported literary forms has been emphasized (this is with the exception of the somewhat vague study of “influences,” dear to the discipline of Comparative Literature). As far as literary production is concerned, this distinction, starting from a principle that makes belonging to a political community and the choice of language and the delimitation of a body of literary work equivalent, has produced a singularly truncated version of the genesis and structure of the national literary space. Since it is the whole of this space that is of interest here, and not a literary production in itself or for itself, it is the hybrid nature of this space that needs to be taken into account. (12)

Although my dissertation focuses mainly on the hybrid texts or translations hovering between two languages and traditions, Jacquemond extends this hybridity to the mapping of the field of Arabic literature in general. While Jacquemond locates the initial problem in the lack of the serious study of translation in the nationalist bias of Egyptian critics, he also faults the discipline of Comparative Literature for exasperating the exclusion of translation as the discipline is itself

[t]he result of the dividing up of literature brought about by literary nationalism. Because this discipline is the result of such a division, it has been unable to deal adequately with literary exchanges, such as those that take place through translation, or with the formation of dominated literary space on a wide scale. (109)

novel, formal realism does not validate the dismissal of the presence of the romance, for instance, in the new genre of the novel.

McKeon also argues that it wasn't merely the rise of the individual that inevitably produced the genre of the novel. Rather, the categorial instability about how to tell the truth in 18th-century England led to "rise of the novel." As such the novel itself also reflects this instability of social categories in its constant preoccupation with issues of virtue and the relationship between an external social order and the internal, moral state of its members. McKeon asks, "What kind of authority or evidence is required of narrative to permit it to signify truth to its readers? What kind of social existence or behavior signifies an individual's virtue to others?" (20). The generic influence of the romance and the instability of definitions associated with the rise of the novel are extremely important to the study of the Arabic novel coming in translation. In chapter two, I described the alienation from the form of the novel that some realist authors experienced in trying to reproduce the world around them in the language of narrative. Most of them ended up writing shorter stories and novellas rather than full-fledged novels to battle some of the instability that the novel seemed to encourage rather than delimit.

In *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* also originally published in 1987, Franco Moretti echoes McKeon's claim that the instability of the categories of truth occasioned the rise of the novel. Moretti maintains that the novel remains in the domain of everyday life and lived experience, which "excludes by definition both the crisis and genesis of a culture" (12). As such, the new form had to stay away from the representation of revolution "[f]or revolution represents 'the opening of a society to all its possibilities:' the 'promise of such

magnitude; that ‘has a birth but no end’” (23).²²⁹ Everyday life and revolution are incompatible: “this incompatibility also exists between revolutionary epochs and the narrative structures of the novel” which chooses “as a rule to pass over revolutionary fortunes in silence” (52). Moretti argues that Waterloo had confirmed that history could always come back and thus overcome the short circuit of the revolution. The way of the world, he continues, is that a Restoration is always possible, but this time around, it lacks any legitimacy (94-95). In the novel, human reality must necessarily perform on an imaginray stage so that it could still imagine what it might be able to be even when it is not. The disjuncture, between what is and what must be, finds its way into the Arabic novel. The alienation experienced by most of the early Arab authors and translators of the novel is due to the form’s problematic relationship to revolution. With the 19th century realist novel, Moretti writes:

There must be no justice in this world: a realistic story must be meaningless, ‘signifying nothing.’ ... The unhappy ending proves here to be the rhetoric-ideological foundation of 19th century realism. ... from Balzac on, novelists will strive to show that it is wise to lose faith in society’s professed values because reality works according to different principles, which are meticulously described in the course of the plot—Stendhal, Pushkin, and later Turgenev, all manipulate plot ... in order to break that faith. (120)

It is no surprise that the realistic novel was the most appealing to the young Arab authors. But Moretti notes that with the break from society’s professed values, the realistic novel developed a “narrative” attitude which renounced any claim to making meaning. After the Waterloo Paradox, where a restoration did take place but not in the world of symbolic values, a new political reality with weak legitimation strategies came into being. This discrepancy between what things look like and what they mean was aggravated in the translation of the novel into Arabic for many reasons. For one the Arab authors who inherited the novel in translation believed that realism could

²²⁹ He gives the example of Goethe and Jane Austen whose fiction reveals that the revolution could have been avoided, while with Stendhal and Eliot and Flaubert we miss the revolution entirely.

actually engage and effect revolution.²³⁰ However, the discrepancy highlighted by Moretti is also inherited, and as a result, the Arabic texts do not coincide with their purported representational aims and remain disjointed from the Egyptian background they set themselves against. Instead, they hover in a strange translative state, somewhere between reference to the object (itself divided between the original text and an 'extra' textual reality) and absolute detachment from it.

All the translations and their originals I have chosen to work with have some relationship to revolution, and almost always this relationship involves a failed witnessing. *Robinson Crusoe* returns to England just before the 1688 Bloodless Revolution, although the novel was written in 1719. Chateaubriand's *René* is set before the Reign of Terror, but is written after it and bears witness to it in subtle references. Thus, in different ways, both *Robinson Crusoe* and *René* involve failed witnessing of the British and French revolutions respectively. Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* is set during the French revolution, but much of its main action takes place in the domestic realm. Haykal engaged the revolution somewhat differently as his work involves a more immediate conversation with the main philosopher of the French revolution and considers the possibility of importing revolutionary ideals into the national literature of the new Cairo he had in mind.²³¹

²³⁰ Richard Jacquemond describes the turn to realism in Arabic literature especially after the publication of al-Muwayliḥī's *Ḥadīth 'Īsā ibn Hishām* and notes how this fierce turn to realist literature was a direct result of the Arab authors' fear of the imaginary realm of fiction (*Conscience* 88). Ḥilmī Badīr in his 1981 book *Al-ittijāh al-Waqi'ī fī al-riwāyah al-'arabīyah al-ḥadīthah fī Miṣr* [The Realistic Direction in the Modern Arabic Novel in Egypt] writes that the novel remained a strange form in the Arab world and was not clearly understood or received by the reading public (57). He attributes this persistent strangeness mostly to the theoretical understanding of realism, which remained not clearly or adequately developed as a concept in the Arab world (63) but mainly understood as a turn away from the use of the imagination (64). In the aftermath of the failure of the 1919 Nationalist Revolution, most authors turned to what they understood to be romanticism, namely a type of realism that turned towards dialogue and introspection (97).

²³¹ The famous Egyptian writer and critic Maḥmūd Taymūr wrote in his treatise on the story in Egyptian literature:

The birth of the modern Egyptian story was bound up with other new beginnings which equally encompassed the institutions of our social, economic, political, intellectual and

Is it then merely a question of influence? Do the disjuncture and the disappointment foundational of the form of the novel in Europe get passed on to the Arabic novel? Is it the almost formless form of the novel that invites this disjuncture between real and ideal, or is it the historical moment that occasions it? The purpose of this dissertation is not to answer these rather big questions. The purpose is also not a mere consideration of influence.²³² In *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel*, Ali Jad compares the translation of “local color” into the Arabic novel of the early 20th century. He writes that the European romantic interest in “local color,” which resulted in an inclement for the excesses of the exotic, became an interest in fictional illusion and detail in the work of the realists. However, for the early Arab realists, “local color” kept its interest in the exotic, “though oddly enough, the exotic in their case was supplied not by remote places and communities but by the all too familiar poorer classes of Egypt” (36). Jad describes how the familiar became alien in the importation of the novel form. Thus, à la Moretti, we find that in the story of the Arabic novel, there is no legitimating narrative for reality outside the novel or for the one inside the

cultural lives ... The outline and specificity of the Egyptian character were obscure, lost amongst foreign currents, and so all intellectual effort turned towards the reform and foregrounding of this Egyptian character and to the exploration of its strengths and capabilities in life. ... During this period, the nationalist forces were preparing to rid the country of the colonial yoke and to expel the foreign exploiter as a first step in the struggle for renewal and productivity. The new writers responded to the calls for modernization that demanded the creation of a properly Egyptian literature that would express Egyptian feelings and experiences in a narrative form modeled on western literature ... *And when Egypt's national revolution of 1919 ignited and the Egyptian character burst forth, shining, in all the various walks of life, the modern artistic story immediately responded, representing, describing and analyzing this authentic popular character which was born the genius and the child of the revolution.* (qtd. in Salam Semih “Fiction and Realism in the Arabic Canon” 206-7; emphasis mine)

²³² Of course translation did have a lot of influence on the shape of narrative in the Arab world. Samah Selim mentions the new construction of narrative subjectivity through character or narrator which “was a largely unprecedented feature in Arabic narrative before the end of nineteenth century” (*The Novel and the Rural Imaginary* 62). Jak Tajir in *Ḥarakat al-tarjamah fī Miṣr* summarizes Jurjī Zaydān’s list of the influences of translation on Arabic literature in his book *Tārīkh Adāb al-lughah al-‘arabiyyah* [History of Arabic Literature] (published in 4 volumes in Cairo from 1910 to 1913). Some of these include shorter sentences, simpler diction, and straightforward narration, less rhetorical use of language, a varying vocabulary and others.

novel either.²³³ The early Arabic novel coming in translation attempts to write the revolution although the European novel chose to overlook it. In translation, the European novel's distance from crisis gets rewritten as a failure, and as such the early novelists (and later ones as well) remain alienated from their generic form of choice.²³⁴

Translation becomes the perfect catalyst and metaphor for this alienation from the novel. In her article "Nation and Translation in the Middle East," Samah Selim describes how the debate on "free" and "faithful" translation is a reflection of the colonial dialect in the Middle East, one based on the notion of equivalence;

that is, the idea that modernity was the necessary affect of the gradual transplanting of European civilization – the end and object of history – into regional cultures. From liberal democracy to the novel, western knowledge and western humanism were viewed by both local reformist elites and

²³³ In his book *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, originally published in 1975, Edward Said maintains that the novel in modern Arabic literature is a product of the 20th century imitation of European novels. Although he mentions that it is not as simple as that, he leaves the argument there and continues to say that autobiography was also scarce in the Arabic tradition (81). Said is clearly working with Western constructs of the novel and of autobiography. I have tried to show that the remarkable adaptations of original texts and the struggle of the Arab realists who ended up writing much shorter novels than European realist fiction have created something original in its own right that is not a mere "imitation" or a failed one of European literature. Said continues his description of the European novel as such:

The demystification, the decreation or education, of illusions, which is the novel's central theme—and paradoxically, its own alterate theme—is thus an enactment of the character's increasing molestation by a truer process pushing him to an ending that resembles his beginning in the midst of negation. ... The incorporation of reality into the great realistic novels of the mid-nineteenth century is performed by converting figures of secular authority into forms of sociomaterial resistance faced by the protagonists. (94-95)

It is clear from Said's approach to the novel as a genre that he would condemn the early Arabic novels as failed imitations. The problem with this approach is that it ignores a whole cultural and historical context that determined the "copying" of the novel into Arabic. For one, the interiority that determines the structure of the European novel is markedly absent from the early realistic Arab novels as I have shown in chapter two. Such an absence, however, does not signal a failure to imitate the form, but rather a desire to interrogate the boundaries of the original form so as to make it correspond to an entirely different reality. To begin writing a genealogy of the Arabic novel, then, one would have to reconsider the terms that make up the genealogy of the European novel and proceed differently, in keeping with the previously mentioned desire of Arab novelists.

²³⁴ In *Al-Riwā'ī wa al-Arḍ* (1981) [The Novelist and the Earth], Ṭāhā Badr writes that the Arab authors would try to apply ready-made solutions to solve the problems of an entirely different context. In importing such alien solutions, the position of the Arab author became very awkward as he was suddenly at odds with the world he was in, a world he felt deeply connected to. But his thoughts remained very alien to his own reality, so sometimes he would force ideas from his own tradition education onto his writing. Badr seems to be describing a condition of schizophrenia experienced by these Arab authors (40).

European specialists as a series of fixed and ideal forms to be acquired and reproduced in the backward target culture through 'innocent' translation.

Curiously, the movement of translation into Arabic assumed that the origin, identifiably the West, can be translated into that of the Arab narrative of modernity. In the particular case of the translation of the European novel into Arabic, as I have tried to show, an original sense of alienation is introduced into the Arabic novel and which then gets exacerbated in the actual translations in various ways. In effect, translation defines and determines these authors' alienation and their texts' perpetual hovering in-between two languages and two places.

The origin of the original-to-be-translated, as Derrida wrote, was already in exile from itself; thus, in the translation of this origin into yet another imagined origin of the history of the novel in Arabic, it becomes almost impossible to find an origin for a legitimating narrative for the story of the Arabic novel. In my dissertation, I have tried to tell that story as one that is implicated not only in structures of power but also in the treacherous process of translation, which makes no guarantees either to the original or its translation. However, in this new narrative of the Arabic novel, one would have to re-imagine the origin of the Arabic novel and the novel more generally so as to place all such genealogies in conversation.

Bibliography

- Allen, Roger. *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*. 1982. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- _____. *A Period of Time: A Study and Translation of Hadīth ‘Īsā ibn Hishām by Muḥammad al-Muwaylīhī*. New York: Ithaca Press, 1992.
- _____. “Sinbad the Sailor and the Early Arabic Novel.” In *Tradition, Modernity, And Postmodernity in Arabic Literature: Essays in Honor of Professor Issa J. Boulatta*. Eds. Kamal Abdel-Malek and Wael Hallaq. Leiden: Brill, 2000. 78 – 85.
- _____. “Literary History and Generic Change: The Example of the *Maqāma*.” In *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth Volume I: Hunter of the East, Arabic and Semitic Studies*. Ed. Ian Richard Netton. Leiden: Brill, 2000. 3 – 15.
- _____. “Literary History and the Arabic Novel.” *World Literature Today* 75.2 (2001): 205 – 211.
- _____. “The Post-Classical Period: Parameters and Preliminaries.” Introduction. *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*. Ed. Roger M.A. Allen and Donald Sidney Richards. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 1 – 24.
- _____. “Rewriting Literary History: The Case of the Arabic Novel.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38 (2007): 247 – 260.
- Anikó, Ádám. *La Poétique du vague dans les œuvres de Chateaubriand : vers une esthétique comparée*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007.
- Apter, Emily. *The Translation Zone: a New Comparative Literature*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006.

- Attar, Samar. *The Vital Roots of European Enlightenment: Ibn Tufayl's Influence on Modern Western Thought*. 2007. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Al-Ba‘albakī, Munīr. *Qiṣat Madinatayn li-Kabīr Kuttāb al-Inkliz Charles Dickens* [A Tale of Two Cities by the Famous English Writer Charles Dickens]. 1955. Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li al-malāyin, 1968.
- Badīr, Ḥilm. *Al-ittijāh al-waqi‘ī fī al-Riwāyah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Ḥadithah fī Miṣr* [The Realistic Direction in the Modern Arabic Novel in Egypt]. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1981.
- Badr, ‘Abd al-Muḥsin Ṭāhā. *Al-Riwā‘ī wa al-Arḍ* [The Novelist and the Earth]. Cairo: Al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmah li al-ta’līf wa al-nashr, 1971.
- _____. *Taṭawwur al-Riwāyah al-‘Arabiyyah al-ḥadithah fī Miṣr (1870-1938)* [The Development of the Modern Arabic Novel in Egypt (1870-1938)]. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1963.
- Al-Baḥrāwī, Sayyid. *Muḥtawā al-shakl fī al-riwāyah al-‘arabiyyah* [The Content of Form in the Arabic Novel]. Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmah li al-Kitāb, 1996.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Baldrige, Cates. “Alternatives to Bourgeois Idealism in *A Tale of Two Cities*.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900: Nineteenth Century* 30.4 (Autumn, 1990): 633 – 654.
- Bannet, Eve Tavor. “The Scene of Translation: After Jakobson, Benjamin, de Man, and Derrida.” *New Literary History* 24 (1993): 577 – 595.
- Bardenstein, Carol. *Translation and Transformation in Modern Arabic Literature:*

The Indigenous Assertions of Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Jalāl. Wiesbaden:

Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi. “Introduction: Of Colonies, Cannibals, and

Vernaculars.” *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. 1999. Ed. Susan

Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London: Routledge, 2002. 1 – 18.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Task of the Translator.” *Illuminations*. Trans. by Harry Zorn,

London: Pimlico, 1999. 70-82.

Bennington, Geoffrey. *Dudding: Des noms de Rousseau*. Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1991.

Berchet, Jean-Claude. Préface. *Les Natchez, Atala, René* by François René de

Chateaubriand. Le Livre de Poche. Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 1989.

Bhabha, Homi (1994), “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial

Discourse.” In *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995. 85 – 92.

Bouvier, Luke. “How Not to Speak on Incest: *Atala* and the Secrets of Speech.”

Nineteenth-Century French Studies 30.3 & 4 (Spring–Summer 2002): 228 –

242.

Al-Buḥayrī, ‘Abd al-Salām. *Athar al-Adab al-Faransī ‘ala al-Qiṣah al-Qaṣirah* [The

Influence of French Literature on the Short Story]. Cairo: Al-Hay’ah al-

Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmah li al-ta’līf wa al-nashr, 1985.

Al-Bustānī, Buṭrus. “*Muqqadimah li al-Mutarjim*” [Translator’s Introduction].

Introduction. ii. In *Al-Tiḥfah al-Bustānīyah fī al-Asfār al-Krusoeiyah* [The

Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels] Parts I and II. 1st ed.

published in 1861. 2nd edition. Trans. by Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-

Ma‘ārif, 1885.

- _____. “*Khuṭbah fi Adab al-‘Arab.*” [A Lecture on the Literature of the Arabs]. In *al-Jam‘iyyah al-Sūriyyah li al-qulūm wa al-funūn 1847-1852*. Ed. Yūsuf Qizma Khun. Beirut: Dār al-Hamra, 1990.
- Cachia, Pierre. *An overview of Modern Arabic Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. 1840. In *Thomas Carlyle’s Collected Works*, Vol. XII. London: Chapman and Hall, 1869.
- _____. *On Heroes and Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. 1840. Trans. as *Al-Abṭāl* [Heroes] by Muḥammad al-Sibā’ī. Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, n.d.
- Chateaubriand, François René de. *Les Natchez, Atala, René*. Ed. Jean-Claude Berchet. Le Livre De Poche. Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 1989.
- _____. *Essai historique, politique et moral sur les révolutions anciennes et modernes*. In *Œuvres Complètes de Chateaubriand, Tome XIII*. Elibron Classics. Replica of 1852 edition published in Paris. Boston, M.A.: Adamant Media Corporation, 2006.
- _____. «Préface de 1805 à *Atala – René.*» *Les Natchez, Atala, René*. By François René de Chateaubriand. Ed. Jean-Claude Berchet. Le Livre De Poche. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1989. 51 – 61.
- Colla, Elliott. “How *Zaynab* Became the First Arabic Novel.” *History Compass* 7.1 (2009): 214 – 225.
- Davis, Lennard J. *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

- De Man, Paul. "Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator:'"
 Messenger Lecture at Cornell University, March 4, 1983. Printed in *Yale French Studies* No. 69 (The Lesson of Paul de Man) (1985): 25 – 46.
- _____. "Promises: Social Contract." In *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. 246 – 277.
- _____. "Excuses." In *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. 278 – 302.
- _____. "Autobiography as De-Facement." *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. 67 – 82.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. 1972. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- _____. *Al-Tiḥfah al-Bustānīyah fī al-Asfār al-Krusoeiyah* [The Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels] Parts I and II. 1st ed. published in 1861. 2nd edition. Trans. by Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘ārif, 1885.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Des Tours de Babel." 1985. In *Acts of Religion*, by Jacques Derrida. Ed. Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge, 2002. 102 – 134.
- Devy, Ganesh. "Translation and Literary History: An Indian View." *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. 1999. Ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London: Routledge, 2002. 182 – 188.
- Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. 1960. New York: Signet Classic, 1980.
- Ferguson, Frances. "On Terrorism and Morals: Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*." *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 3.2 (June 2005): 49 – 74.
- Gershoni, Israel and James P. Jankowski. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

- Gasset, Jose Ortega y. "The Misery and the Splendor of Translation." Trans. by Elizabeth Gamble Miller. In *The Translation Studies Reader*. Ed. by Lawrence Venuti. London: Routledge, 2000. 49 – 63.
- Gibb, H. A. R. "The Egyptian Novel." *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 8/1 (1933):1 – 22. Reprinted in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1962.
- Glancy, Ruth ed. *Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities: A Sourcebook*. Routledge Guides to Literature. London: Routledge, 2006.
- _____. *A Tale of Two Cities: Dickens's Revolutionary Novel*. Boston, M.A.: Typeset by Compset, 1991.
- Gran, Peter. *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism: 1760 – 1840*. 1979. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998.
- Gross, John. "A Tale of Two Cities." In *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*. 1963. Eds. John Gross and Gabriel Pearson. London: Routledge, 1966. 187 – 198.
- Gürsel, Burcu. *Invasive translations: Violence and mediation of the false-colonial, France and Ottoman Egypt (1780 –1840)*. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: ProQuest/UMI, 2008. (Publication No. AAI3309438).
- Hafez, Sabry. *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse: A Study in the Sociology of Modern Arabic Literature*. London: Saqi Books 1993.
- _____. "The Transformation of Reality and the Arabic Novel's Artistic Response." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57.1 (1994): 93 – 112.
- Hallaq, Boutros. "La Littérature selon Manfālūṭi." *Arabica* L.2 (2003): 131 – 176.

- Haykal, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *Zaynab: Manāẓir wa akhlāq rifīyyah* [Zaynab, or Scenes from and Manners of the Egyptian Countryside]. Cairo: Al-Sharikah al-‘Arabīyyah li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1958.
- _____. *Thawrat al-Adab* [The Revolution of Literature]. 1933. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Miṣr, 1948.
- _____. *Jan Jak Rousseau: Ḥayātuhu wa Adabuhu* [Jean Jacques Rousseau: His Life and Literature]. Volume I. Cairo: Al-Wā‘iz Press, 1921.
- _____. *Jan Jak Rousseau: Ḥayātuhu wa Adabuhu* [Jean Jacques Rousseau: His Life and Literature]. Volume II. Cairo: Al-Wā‘iz Press, 1923.
- Heath, Peter. *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
- Heuvel, J. Van Den. Préface. *Paul et Virginie* by Bernadin de Saint-Pierre. Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 1974. 7 – 23.
- Hill, Christopher. “Robinson Crusoe.” *History Workshop* No. 10 (Autumn, 1980): 6 – 24.
- Holt, Elizabeth M. *Silk and Serialization: The Emergence of a Narrative Reading Public of Arabic in Beirut, 1870-1884*. Dissertation, Columbia University. New York: ProQuest/UMI, 2009. (Publication No. 3393566).
- Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939*. 1962. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Ḥusayn, Ṭāhā. *Mustaqbal al-thaqāfah fi Miṣr* [The Future of Education in Egypt]. 1938. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1957.
- Jacquemond, Richard. “Translation and Cultural Hegemony: The Case of French-Arabic Translation.” In *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. London: Routledge, 1992. 139 – 158.

- _____. *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern Egypt*. Trans. by David Tresilian. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008.
- Jad, Ali. *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel 1912 – 1971*. London: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre, 1983.
- Joyce, James. “Daniel Defoe.” Trans. and edited by Joseph Prescott. *Buffalo Studies* 1 (1964): 24 – 25.
- Al-Jundī, Anwar. *Al-Adab al-‘arabī al-ḥadīth fī ma‘rakat al-muqāwamah wa al-ḥuriyyah wa al-tajamu‘ (1830-1959)* [Modern Arabic Literature in the Battle of Resistance, Freedom and Rally (1830-1959)]. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Risālah, 1859.
- Elkhadem, Saad. *History of the Egyptian Novel: its Rise and Early Beginnings*. Fredericton, NB: York Press, 1985.
- _____. “The Popular Arabic Novel of the 19th Century.” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/ Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 9.3 (September 1982): 449 – 460.
- _____. “Early Precursors to the Egyptian Novel.” *International Journal of Fiction Review* 29. 1-2 (2002): 23 – 29.
- Khalidi, Tarif. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Al-Khūrī, Ra‘īf. *Al-fīkr al-‘arabī al-Ḥādīth: athar al-thawrah al-faransiyyah fī tawjīhihi al-siyāsī wa al-‘ijtimā‘ī* [Modern Arab Thought: Political and Social Vestiges of the French Revolution] Beirut: Dār al-Makshūf, 1943.
- Khūrī, Yūsuf Qizmā. Introduction. In *Al-Tiḥfah al-Bustānīyah fī al-Asfār al-Krusoeiyah* (“The Bustānīan Masterpiece concerning Crusoeian Travels”) Parts I and II. 1st ed. published in 1861. 2nd edition. Trans. by Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘āref, 1885. 2 – 5.

- Kirecci, Mehmet Akif. *Decline Discourse and Self-Orientalization in the Writings of Al-Taḥṭāwī, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Ziya Gökalp: A Comparative Study of Modernization in Egypt and Turkey*. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: ProQuest/UMI, 2007. (Publication No. 3260932)
- Kraft, Quentin G. "Robinson Crusoe and the Story of the Novel." *College English* 41.5 (Jan. 1980): 535 – 548.
- Lane, Edward. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the Years 1833-1835* (originally published in London by Charles Knight in 1836). New York: Cosimo, 2005.
- Laroui, Abdallah [‘Abd Allāh ‘Arawī]. *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism*. 1974. Trans. from the French by Diarmid Cammell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Levine, George. *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Lowry, Joseph E. and Devin J. Stewart. Introduction. *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350-1850*. Ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart. *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography* Vol. II. General editor Roger Allen. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009. 1 – 12.
- Lukács, Georg. *The Historical Novel*. 1962. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
- Al-Manfalūṭī, Muṣṭafa Luṭfī. *Al-Nazarāt* [Contemplations]. Vol I. Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-‘ilmīyyah al-ḥadithah, n.d.
- _____. *Al-Faḍīlah, aw Paul wa Virginie* [Virtue, or Paul and Virginie]. Damascus: Dār ‘Usāmah, 1986.

_____. *Al-‘Abarāt* [Tearful or Moral Lessons]. Cairo: Dār al-Maktabah al-Ahlīyyah, n.d.

Al-Māzinī, ‘Abd al-Qādir. “Al-’ustadh al-Sibā’ī wa Adabuhu” [Professor al-Sibā’ī and his Literature]. In *Al-Ṣuwar* by Muḥammad al-Sibā’ī. Cairo: Al-Sharikah al-‘Arabiyyah li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, n.d.

Marzec, Robert P. “Enclosures, Colonization, and the *Robinson Crusoe* Syndrome: A Genealogy of Land in a Global Context.” *boundary 2* 29:2 (2002): 133 –191.

McKeon, Michael. *The Origins of the English Novel: 1600 - 1740*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Molan, Peter D. “The Arabian Nights: the Oral Connection.” *Edebiyat* n.s. 2. 1-2 (1988): 191 – 204.

Monod, Sylvère. “Dickens’s Attitudes in *A Tale of Two Cities*.” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction: The Charles Dickens Centennial* 24.4 (1970): 488 – 505.

Monroe, James. *The Art of Badi‘ az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī as Picaresque Narrative*. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983.

Moosa, Matti. *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*. 1983. Washington: Three Continents Press, 1997.

Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. New York: Verso, 2000.

_____. “Conjectures on World Literature.” *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 54-68.

_____. “History of the Novel, Theory of the Novel.” *Novel* 43.1 (Spring 2010): 1 – 11.

_____. *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*. London: Verso, 1998.

_____. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*. London: Verso, 2007.

Muhaidat, Fatima Muhammad. “*A Tale of Two Cities in Arabic Translation*.”

Dissertation, Binghamton University. Binghamton, NY: Dissertation.com, 2009.

Al-Muḥāfazah, Alī. *Al-itijihāt al-fikrīyyah ‘ind al-‘Arab fi ‘aṣr al-nahḍah (1798-1914)* [The Intellectual Currents of the Arabs in the Age of the *Nahḍah* (1798-1914)]. Beirut: al-Ahlīyyah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1961.

Najm, Muḥammad Yūsuf. *Al-Qiṣah fī al-adab al-‘arabī al-ḥadīth (1870-1914)* [The Story in Modern Arabic Literature (1870-1914)]. Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-Ahlīyyah, 1961.

Nasīr, ‘Aydah Ibrahīm. *Ḥarakat Nashr al-Kutub fī Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Tāsi ‘ ‘Ashar* [The Movement of Publication in Cairo in the 19th Century]. Cairo: Al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmah li al-Kitāb, 1994.

Al-Nṣūli, Anīs. *Asbāb al-Nahḍah al-‘Arabiyyah fī al-Qarn al-Tasi ‘ ‘Ashar* [The Reasons Behind the Arab Renaissance in the 19th Century]. Beirut: Dār Ibn Zaydūn, 1985.

Omri, Mohamed Salah. “Local Narrative Form and Constructions of the Arabic Novel.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 41.2/3 (Spring/Summer 2008): 244 –263.

Orwell, George. “Charles Dickens.” *George Orwell (1903 – 1950)*. 2011. Maintained by O. Dag. Accessed on 19 December 2010 at http://orwell.ru/library/reviews/dickens/english/e_chd.

Peled, Mattityahu. “Creative Translation: Towards the Study of Arabic Translations of Western Literature since the 19th Century.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 10 (1979): 128 – 150.

Pérès, Henri. *Le Roman, Le Conte et La Nouvelle dans la littérature arabe moderne, extrait des Annales de l’institut d’Etudes Orientales* (Tome III, 1937). Paris: Librairie Larose, 1937.

- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession 91*. New York: MLA, 1991. 33 – 40.
- Rastegar, Kamran. *Literary Modernity between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions in Nineteenth-Century Arabic, English, and Persian Literatures*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Reynolds, Dwight and Kristen Brustad eds. *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Richetti, John J. *Defoe's Narratives: Situations and Structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Rizq, Yūnān Labīb. "Duel of the masters." *Al-Ahram Weekly*. No. 442: 12 – 18 August 1999. 25 Nov. 2006 < weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/442/chrncls.htm >.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *The Social Contract and Discourses*. 1913. Trans. by G.D.H. Cole. London: Everyman's Library, 1963.
- _____. *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. 1997. Trans. and ed. by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006.
- _____. *The Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau*. 1950. Trans. by J.M. Cohen, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1960.
- _____. *Emile, Or Treatise on Education*. Trans. by William H. Payne. New York: Prometheus Books, 2003.
- _____. *Julie, or the New Heloise, Letters of Two Lovers who Love in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps*. From *The Collected Writings of Rousseau, Vol. VI*. Trans. by Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché. New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1997.
- Said, Edward. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. 1975. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

- Saint-Pierre, Bernadin de. *Paul et Virginie*. Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 1974.
- _____. « Préambule. » 1806. In *Paul et Virginie*. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1974. 103 – 194.
- Seidel, Michael. *Robinson Crusoe: Island Myths and the Novel*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
- Selim, Samah. *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt, 1880–1985*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- _____. “Nation and Translation in the Middle East.” *The Translator* 15.1 (2009):1 –13.
- _____. “The Narrative Craft: Realism and Fiction in the Arabic Canon.” *Edebiyat* 14.1 (2003): 109 – 128.
- Semah, David. *Four Egyptian Literary Critics*. Leiden: Brill, 1974.
- Şentürk, Recep. *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Hadith Transmission Network, 610-1505*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005.
- Al-Shayyāl, Jamāl al-Dīn. *Tārīkh al-tarjamah fi Mişr fi ‘ahd al-Ḥamlah al-Faransīyyah* [The History of Translation in Egypt in the Time of the French Expedition]. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1950.
- _____. *Tārīkh al-tarjamah wa Ḥarakat al-thaqāfah fi Mişr fi ‘Aşr Muḥammad ‘Alī* [The History of Translation and the Movement of Education in Egypt in the Time of Muḥammad ‘Alī]. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, 1951.
- Sherif, Nur. *Dickens in Arabic (1912 – 1970)*. Beirut: Beirut Arab University, 1974.
- Shaden, Tageldin. *Disarming Words: Reading (Post)Colonial Egypt’s Double Bond to Europe*. Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley. Berkeley: ProQuest/UMI, 2004. (Publication No. 3147025).

- Sheehi, Steven. "Inscribing the Arab Self: Butrus al-Bustani and Paradigms of Subjective Reform." *British Journal of the Middle Eastern Studies* 27.1 (Spring 2000): 7 – 24.
- Al-Sibā'ī, Muḥammad. *Abṭāl Miṣr*. Cairo: Unknown publisher, 1922.
- _____. *Qiṣat Madinatayn, ta'līf Charles Dickens*, Part I [A Tale of Two Cities, Written by Charles Dickens]. Cairo: Al-Bayān Press, 1912.
- _____. *Qiṣat Madinatayn, ta'līf Charles Dickens*, Part II. Cairo: Al-Bayān Press, 1912.
- _____. *Qiṣat Madinatayn, ta'līf Charles Dickens*, Part III. Cairo: Al-Bayān Press, 1912.
- Smith, Charles D. *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt: A Biography of Muhammad Husayn Haykal*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1983.
- _____. "Love, Passion and Class in the Fiction of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99. 2 (Apr. - Jun. 1979): 249 – 261.
- Somekh, Sasson. "The Emergence of Two Stylistic Norms: In the Early Literary Translation into Modern Arabic Prose." *Poetics Today: Translation Theory and Intercultural Relations* 2.4 (Summer – Autumn 1981): 193 – 200.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Politics of Translation." *The Translation Studies Reader*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. London: Routledge, 2000. 297 – 316.
- Starobinski, Jean. *Jean Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Stetkevych, Jaroslav. *The Modern Arabic Literary Language: Lexical and Stylistic Developments*. 1970. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Stewart, Devin. "Maqama." In *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical period*. Ed. Roger Allen and D.S. Richards. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 145 – 158.

- Stewart, Garrett. *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Stout, Daniel. "Nothing Personal: The Decapitation of Character in *A Tale of Two Cities*." *Novel* 41.1 (2007): 29 – 52.
- Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Rifā‘a Rāfi‘. *An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831)*. Trans. by Daniel L. Newman. London: SAQI, 2004.
- _____. *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz* [The Extraction of Gold in the Summary of Paris]. Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīyyah, 2005.
- _____. *Mawāqī‘ al-aflāk fī Waqā’i‘ Talīmāk* [The Positions of the Planets in the Events Concerning Télémaque]. Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmīyyah, 2002.
- Tājir, Jak. *Ḥarakat al-Tarjamah bi Miṣr khilāl al-qarn al-tāsi‘ ‘ashar* [The Movement of Translation in Egypt in the 19th Century]. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1945.
- Taymūr, Maḥmūd. *Al-Qiṣah fī al-Adab al-‘Arabi* [The Story in Arabic Literature]. Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1971.
- _____. *Rajab Efendī* [Mr. Rajab]. Cairo: Al-Maṭba‘ah al-Silfiyyah, 1928.
- Tymoczko, Maria. "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation." *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. 1999. Ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London: Routledge, 2002. 19 – 40.
- ‘Ubayd, ‘Īsā. *Iḥsān Hānim* [Mrs. Iḥsān]. 1921. Cairo: Al-Dār al-qawmīyyah li al-ṭibā‘ah wa al-nashr, 1964.
- _____. "Introduction." *Iḥsān Hānim*. Cairo: Al-Dār al-qawmīyyah li al-ṭibā‘ah wa al-nashr, 1964. 1 – 25.
- ‘Uwayḍah, Kamel Muḥammad. *Muṣṭafa Lutfī al-Manfalūṭī: Ḥayātuhu wa Adabuhu*

- [Muṣṭafa Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī: His Life and Literature]. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmīyyah, 1993.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- _____. “Simpatico.” *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995. 273 – 306.
- _____. “Local Contingencies: Translation and National Identities.” In *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Ed. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005. 177 – 202.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.
- _____. “*Robinson Crusoe* as Myth.” In *Essays in Criticism* (April 1951). Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition (second edition, 1994) of *Robinson Crusoe*. New York: Norton, 1994. 288 – 305.
- Welsh, Alexander. *The City in Dickens*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Woolf, Virginia. “Defoe.” 1919. In *The Common Reader: First Series*. *eBooks@Adelaide*. 2010. Rendered into HTML by Steve Thomas. Accessed on 20 Oct. 2009 at <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91c/chapter9.html>.
- Yāghī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Al-Juhūd al-Riwā’iyyah: min Salīm al-Bustānī ila Najīb Maḥfūz* [Novelistic Efforts from Salīm al-Bustānī to Najīb Maḥfūz]. Beirut: Dār al-‘Awdah, 1972.