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Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity: *Nahda*, *Tanzimat*, and World Literature

A dissertation presented by

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to

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

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in the subject of

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ABSTRACT

The late Ottoman period of the nineteenth and early twentieth century has been almost exclusively associated with national cultural revivals, which prepared the ground for the emergence of nation-states that led to political and cultural splits after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* argues that this period needs to be projected less as the moment of origin that sowed the seeds for nationalism, modernity, and a new literature, and more as a time of cultural experimentation in which new, hybrid visions of Ottoman identity were imagined for shedding light upon new cultural convergences and the formation of interstitial identities that also characterized the late Ottoman Empire.

Through this revisionist analysis of the late Ottoman period, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* undermines the typical scholarly view that *nahḍa*—which refers to Arab cultural revival or "awakening"—and *tanzimat*—which refers to both statewide imperial reforms and the late Ottoman Turkish literature—were two separate movements that took shape solely under the Western influence. To show that these movements were instead constitutive of each other, I re-examine *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* under the larger umbrella term "Ottoman modernity" and re-contextualize modern Arabic and Turkish literary texts of the nineteenth and early twentieth century within a multilingual Ottoman cultural milieu instead of their respective national communities.

The comparative nature of my project also gives me the opportunity to participate in some of the most recent and fundamental debates in world literature, which studies how texts from a particular source culture transform as they are translated, interpreted, and intertextualized in global literary networks. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* proposes that fundamental notions in the world literature scholarship need to be revised for a nuanced understanding of the late Ottoman Empire, hence giving a close reading of Arabic and Turkish literary texts to provide new theoretical perspectives on translation, intertextuality, canon formation, and world literature.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATION, TRANSLITERATION, AND USAGE

I have generally followed the guidelines of *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) for transliteration and *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition) for citation and references. I have used the modern Turkish orthography for Ottoman Turkish names, titles, and terms, while using the Ottoman Turkish transliteration based on the IJMES guidelines for Ottoman Turkish poetic texts. If a word of Arabic origin appeared in an Ottoman Turkish source text, I used the Turkish transliteration. Similarly, if a word of Turkish origin appeared in an Arabic source text, I used the Arabic transliteration. I provided the standard English spelling for Arabic and Turkish words that are also used in English.

If publications were dated based on the Islamic calendar, I have included those publication dates in footnotes and the References section.

Unless otherwise noted, translations from Arabic, French, German, modern Turkish, and Ottoman Turkish into English are my own.

INTRODUCTION

The late Ottoman Empire was studied as a moment of origin that initiated modernity, a set of values such as equality, freedom, nationalism, and civilizational progress, which were widely used and disseminated by Arab and Turkish intellectuals during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This modernity was also associated with the beginning of nationalism as well as the emergence of modern literature. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* projects this period less as the moment of origin that sowed the seeds for nationalism, modernity, and a new literature, and more as a period of cultural experimentation in which new, hybrid visions of Ottoman identity were imagined. The typical scholarly emphasis on political and cultural splits of the late Ottoman Empire overlooked its cultural convergences and interstitial identities.

Two terms have attained significant currency in the study of this modernity—*nahḍa*, which refers to Arab cultural revival or "awakening," and *tanzimat*, which refers to both statewide imperial reforms and the late Ottoman Turkish literature. While texts that were associated with *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* were written in different languages and were produced in diverse urban centers of the empire, such as Beirut, Cairo, and Istanbul, they expressed similar cultural anxieties and aspirations. Their authors built upon shared elements of an Islamic heritage to construct a new, modern identity that lived up to what they considered ideals of advanced civilizations, such as freedom and progress. This shared commitment unleashed new visions of culture that defy the projection of this period as a smooth and often abrupt transition from a cosmopolitan imperial Ottomanism to Arab and Turkish nationalism.

Through this revisionist analysis of the late Ottoman period, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* undermines the typical scholarly view that *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* were two separate movements that took shape solely under the Western influence. To show that these movements

were instead constitutive of each other, I draw upon James Clifford's following insight to reassess our understanding of this period: "Cultural centers, discrete regions and territories do not exist prior to contacts, but are sustained through them."[1] By focusing on moments of contact between Arab and Turkish cultural spheres—translations, intertextualities, encounters during travels, and the study of each other's language, history, and literature—in the late Ottoman Empire, I re-examine *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* under the larger umbrella term "Ottoman modernity" and re-contextualize early modern Arabic and Turkish literary texts within a multilingual Ottoman cultural milieu instead of their respective national communities.[2]

The comparative nature of my project gives me the opportunity to participate in some of the most recent and fundamental debates in world literature, which studies how texts from a particular source culture transform as they are translated, interpreted, and intertextualized in global literary networks. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* proposes that fundamental notions in world literature need to be revised for a nuanced understanding of the late Ottoman Empire. It thus gives a close reading of late Ottoman Arabic and Turkish literatures also to provide new theoretical perspectives on translation, intertextuality, canon formation, and world literature.

Reframing Ottoman Modernity through Literature

Stephen Sheehi notes in regards to the late Ottoman period that "virtually all secondary literature on the period washes over the contradictions, tensions, hiccups within the discourse of reform in assigning them a specific pedigree in preordained ideological, political, and intellectual

[1] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 3.

[2] For this dissertation, I use the term "early modern" to refer to the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which corresponds to the beginning of both modern Arabic and modern Turkish literature.

traditions."[3] The reform discourse was replete with ambivalences because, as I show throughout my work, the empire went through a liminal period during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, transitioning from the dissolution of old political, economic, and social hierarchies that characterized the imperial cosmopolitan Ottoman culture to the solidification of new ones with the emergence of nation-states.

There is ample reason in the context of Ottoman history for these cultural ambivalences as well as significant similarities and intersections between Arabic and Turkish literatures. While the Ottoman Empire had conquered by 1516 the majority of lands that today constitute the Arab League, political and cultural reforms in the empire during the nineteenth century resulted in an unprecedented state centralization that intensified interactions between Arabic and Turkish cultures. The empire's center of gravity also shifted at this time to Arab lands, due to various factors such as pan-Islamism policies by Sultan Abdülhamid (reigned 1876-1909), vast territorial losses in the Balkans, and an expanding network of railways and telegraphs. Various state centralization policies of the Young Turks—a diverse group of politicians, intellectuals, civil servants, and army officers who have started the second constitutional era in 1908—have been often mistakenly viewed as signs of the empire's Turkification, even though many members of the Young Turks came from diverse ethnic backgrounds and wished to preserve the Ottoman Empire as a multi-ethnic entity.[4]

My dissertation shifts the attention away from national cultures to the shared multilingual Ottoman cultural milieu as the real context in which early modern Arab and Turkish literary texts should be reframed and analyzed. This shift in perspective will reveal the hitherto ignored common

[3] Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Florida: University of Florida Press, 2004), p. 72.

[4] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

factors that led to the emergence of these literatures. Such a reframing which I advocate will also disturb some of the more general assumptions that lie at the core of modern Middle East literary history, foremost of which is that linguistic or political splits between Arabs and Turks cut off literary and cross-cultural synergies.

Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity gives a close reading of literary texts for reassessing our understanding of the late Ottoman Empire, because it does not view these texts simply as responses towards or representations of modernity but instead as milieus of cultural experimentation that have, in Walter Andrew's words, generated the language of modernity. Against those who have criticized the Ottoman poetry for its excessive use of metaphors that do not capture the everyday reality, Andrews draws upon Richard Rorty's philosophy of language and argues that metaphors, and literature in general, morph the conditions of knowledge: "[L]iterary and especially poetic usage, in which words are constantly thrust into new relations, are primary generators of the language that makes new conditions of knowledge possible… [N]ew literary languages arise at times of major change and share certain salient characteristics."[5] Following Andrews, my work explores various ambivalences of Ottoman modernity by focusing on its literary language that created "new conditions of knowledge" that characterized the Ottoman modernity.

My project focuses, in particular, on moments of contact, because these moments destabilize our understanding of modernity as an immutable set of ideas, values, and practices borrowed from the West. James Clifford has developed the "contact approach" to criticize the prevalent "fieldwork approach" in anthropology, in which cultures are viewed as objects of

[5] Walter G. Andrews, "Starting Over Again: Suggestions for Rethinking Ottoman Divan Poetry," in *Translation: (Re)shaping of Literature and Culture*, ed. Saliha Paker (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002), p. 27.

observation circumscribed within bounded spaces. Instead, Clifford advocates contact approaches, which "presuppose not sociocultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new relations through historical processes of displacement."[6] He builds upon Mary Louise Pratt's notion of contact zones— social spaces where cultures of unequal power relations interact with each other.[7] At the same time, while Pratt uses the term to shed light upon the context of European imperial expansion, Clifford notes that Pratt's concept can be used to understand a much wider range of human phenomena.

This contact approach should be differentiated from other comparative approaches that merely juxtapose texts from different linguistic traditions, listing their similarities and differences. As Mary Louise Pratt puts it,

> By using the term "contact," I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. *A "contact" perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other.* It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and "travelees," not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.[8]

Although the Ottoman Empire had significant differences from European colonial powers that Pratt's work examined, I find the contact approach a useful methodology to undermine the tendency in the current scholarship to emphasize mainly the relations of domination and resistance between Turks and Arabs. For example, Ulrich W. Haarmann and Şükran Fazlıoğlu focused on

[6] Clifford, *Routes*, p. 7.

[7] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.

[8] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 7, italics mine.

textual representations of despotic Turks in Arabic writings;[9] however, many Arab authors, in fact, considered themselves the main shapers of the empire especially during its final years.

Literary studies has recently used the contact approach to overcome the limitations of its nationalistic frameworks. Karen Laura Thornber used this approach to reassess our understanding of transculturations among East Asian cultures and literatures during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her work demonstrates that the expansion of the Japanese empire corresponded with the formation of "vibrant nebulae of intra-East Asian textual contact."[10] Similarly, Kamran Rastegar argues in his analysis of Arab and Persian literary modernity that "the defining transformations to literary practice… may best be considered to have emerged as a result of *textual transactions*—resulting in the creation of texts engendered through and emergent from translation, appropriation and circulation of textual materials across cultural boundaries and how these transactions brought about transformations in the social function of literature in these societies."[11]

Tarek El-Ariss's recent work on encounters and "trials" of Arab modernity demonstrates that contacts represent opportunities in which all ideas, values, and practices associated with modernity can be contested and re-signified. El-Ariss shifts the focus in modernity studies from

[9] See Şükran Fazlıoğlu, *Arap Romanında Türkler* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2006) and Ulrich W. Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 2 (1988): 175-96.

[10] Karen Laura Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 3. At the same time, the dynamics of the Ottoman cultural field show two significant discrepancies from what Thornber has called the "East Asian contact nebulae." While Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese authors lived under the Japanese imperial rule for a relatively brief period, the Ottoman Empire has ruled over most of the Arab world for centuries. Furthermore, the Ottomans have developed an imperial courtly culture in which Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literary and cultural traditions have become extensively intertwined.

[11] Kamran Rastegar, *Literary Modernity Between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions in Nineteenth-Century Arabic, English, and Persian Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.6.

questions of borrowing to that of contacts and encounters: "[*Trials of Arab Modernity*] reframes Arab modernity (*ḥadātha*) as a somatic condition, which takes shape through accidents and events (*aḥdāth*) emerging in and between Europe and the Arab world, the literary text and political discourse."[12] I situate El-Ariss's insights within a larger Ottoman framework and also view modernity as a condition that is redefined through encounters and contacts not just between Europe and the Arab world, as El-Ariss has shown, but also within the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, El-Ariss notes that his focus on encounters undermines the notion that modernity is generated at "the ivory tower" of a pantheon of intellectuals. Arab modernity has been shaped through encounters "in the street;"[13] in other words, this new approach undermines the "authority of the author," such as Ahmet Midhat (1814–1912) or Rifaʿā al-Taḥtawī (1801–1873), who have been viewed as masterminds of the region's modernity.

The most effective way for undermining the authority of the author in modernity studies is to situate their works within a larger socioeconomic context. While the authors whom I examine wrote in different languages and lived in various cities such as Beirut, Baghdad, and Istanbul, they all engaged with the same political, social, economic, and even ecological transformations of the empire, allowing me to recontextualize their diverse works within an Ottoman modernity. The study of *nahḍa* does not need to get away with close reading of works by canonical figures like al-Taḥtāwī, but it should conduct these readings in the light of socioeconomic changes including the rise of a merchant class, the commercialization of agriculture, and the extensive privatization of state land, all significantly decreasing the power of the old notable groups such as the *ulama*

[12] Tarek El-Ariss, *Trials of Arab Modernity* (New York: University of Fordham Press, 2013), p. 3.

[13] ibid., p. 180.

(religious scholars) and the courtly elite.[14] Through fleshing out the socioeconomic dynamics, I demonstrate that the ambivalences that my work explores do not represent the existential idiosyncrasies of a few intellectuals. Rather, they were reflections of the nebulous and constantly changing social, economic, and political dynamics of the late Ottoman Empire.

My emphasis on socioeconomic dimensions undermines the typical view of literature as an elitist preoccupation of a few individuals who were out of touch with their society. This view stems from the belief that only a few intellectuals cared about modernity, while the rest of the society remained mired in old traditional Islamic customs—leading many thinkers today to claim that both Arab and Turkish modernity "failed." And yet, the entire society, not just the elite, was affected by these socioeconomic changes that prepared the ground for modernity. Many literary works that I examine in this dissertation have reached out to large segments of the society, including its illiterate population. Newspapers that serialized these literary works were read aloud in large communal gathering places, in particular coffeehouses.[15] Furthermore, some of the prominent literary figures, such as Ahmet Midhat, actually came from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. The division between the oral and the written as well as the folk and the courtly traditions was not as stark as is commonly assumed.

The claim that there was a stark separation between the cultures of *avam* ("the commoners") and of *havas* ("the elite") was one of the "discursive strategies" that did not really capture the complexities of the period. In other words, it was an authoritative claim that some Ottoman intellectuals made as a strategy for convincing their audience about the validity of cultural reforms that they hoped would transform their communities into more advanced civilizations. Yet

[14] Stephen Sheehi, "Towards a Critical Theory of al-Nahḍah," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43, no. 2-3 (2012), p. 286.

[15]Renée Worringer, *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 116.

the scholarship on this period has often viewed these claims as indisputable truths of the late Ottoman period, including the notion that *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* were strictly nationalist movements that were generated by the increased Western influence: the empire has been in steady cultural and political decline until the nineteenth century; intellectuals have been divided into two opposite camps of Islamists and secularists; and the Muslim Turkish-speaking elite has turned its face towards the West and cut off its ties with the traditional Islamic past during the nineteenth century. Even if these claims may have some truth in them, they have to be further nuanced, because their assertive tone often served to occlude many ambivalences of the reform discourse.

Reframing World Literature through Ottoman Modernity

Undermining nationalistic frameworks in literary studies as well as Eurocentric assumptions of the comparative literature discipline, world literature can allow scholars who work on non-Western texts—hitherto mostly confined to philological and ethnographic explorations that often remained on the fringes of the humanities—to participate in central academic debates on cultural theory and history. World literature does not mean merely juxtaposing texts from different languages and cultures; it has come to signify different methodologies in the past few years. Franco Moretti, for example, finds the elitist focus on a few canonical texts in literary studies too limiting. He advocates quantitative methodologies, now known as "digital humanities," that are able to charter interactions among all literary texts of the world.[16] David Damrosch, however, emphasizes that "world literature is not an immense body of material that must somehow, impossibly, be mastered; it is a mode of reading that can be experienced intensively with a few

[16] Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000).

works just as effectively as it can be explored extensively with a large number."[17] Most recently, Michael Allan has argued that world literature is not a collection of objects but instead a cultivation of readers who share similar cosmopolitan sensibilities.[18] "World literature," initially signifying only a set of literary masterpieces from different cultures for thinkers like Goethe, has become "world literatures," a set of methodologies all sharing the aim of overcoming nationalistic frameworks and often opening up space for the hitherto underrepresented, mainly non-Western, literary traditions in comparative literature.

Any work that builds upon the promising premise of world literature needs to reflect on its conceptual frameworks and choose the "world literature," or methodology, that suits its purpose. This self-reflection is crucial, because the scholarship of world literature, despite its aim to undermine the Eurocentrism of the comparative literature discipline, can be often prone to what Rey Chow called "Eurocentric models of language and literature." As she puts it, "[The critique of Eurocentrism] must question the very assumption that nation-states with national languages are the only possible cultural formations that produce 'literature' that is worth examining. Otherwise, we will simply see, as we have been seeing, the old Eurocentric models of language and literature study being reproduced ad infinitum in non-European language and literature pedagogy."[19]

Chow warns against a practice of comparative and world literature that often projects literary works as spokespeople of national communities, ignoring that texts can have multiple, even contradicting, cultural identities other than the national. Such a practice perpetuates

[17] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 205.

[18] Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 54.

[19] Rey Chow, "In the Name of Comparative Literature," in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism,* ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 109.

institutional biases in literary studies today that, for example, would not consider classical Arabic poetry Ottoman because it assumes that texts have a single cultural identity circumscribed by the time and place of their production, two factors that are then used to assign to them a national identity.

The reason behind the prevalent vision of "Eurocentric models of language and literature" in comparative literature stems from the institutional framework in which this discipline emerged and took shape. Comparative literature has defined itself as the critique of nationalistic frameworks that have characterized the literary studies. Critiquing the models of language and literature within comparative literature demonstrates that chartering interactions among non-Western cultures and literatures, while urgent and fundamental, is not enough. The major works that have compared Arabic and Turkish literatures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—*Bayna al-adab al-'arabī wa-al-turkī: Dirāsa fī al-adab al-Islāmī al-muqāran* (Between Turkish and Arabic Literature: A Study in Comparative Islamic Literature, 1985) by Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Mıṣrī and *Brückenschläge: Eine Integrierte 'Turkoarabische' Romangeschichte (Mitte 19. Bis Mitte 20. Jahrhundert)* (Building Bridges: An Integrated History of "Turkish-Arabic" Novel" [From mid-19th to mid-20th Century], 2003) by Stephan Guth—have followed a methodology akin to what I call Moretti's "mastery" approach as they have comprehensively chartered intertextualities between the two literatures. However, my approach aims to create a new "mode of reading" for these literatures, questioning the assumptions on culture, language, and translation in the current readings of these literary traditions while fleshing out ambivalences of Ottoman modernity.

The first four chapters analyze the various milieus—literary canon (Chapter 1), Islamic heritage (chapter 2), travel (chapter 3), and translation (chapter 4)—in which moments of contact that have constituted Arab and Turkish modernity took shape and the final chapter revises the

cultural and literary history of the region after the emergence of nation-states based on the findings of previous chapters. **Chapter 1** analyzes the famous Ottoman literary anthology *Harabat* (1874/1875) by Ziya Pasha whose introduction is a comparative history of Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and French literatures. These traditions constituted an integral part of the Ottoman literary community's intellectual formation during the late nineteenth century. I argue that *Harabat* compiles texts from diverse geographical and temporal origins and, instead of defining them as members of distinct national traditions, projects this compilation as what I call a "literary reservoir" that constitutes the multilingual Ottoman canon. My argument draws upon Ziya Pasha's characterization of the Ottoman culture as an "ocean" that encompasses Arabic, Persian, and Turkish "streams." I then call for a reframing of our understanding of canonization through building upon the conceptual repertoire that the world literature scholarship has brought into literary studies—circulations, target culture, and source culture—and redesignate literary canons as "reservoirs." I rephrase John Guillory's work on the process of canon formation in the framework of world literature and argue that each source text can be "deracinated" when its context is ignored in the target culture to facilitate this text's incorporation into a new canon, or "reservoir."

Chapter 2 reassesses the typical scholarly projection of Turk-Arab relations in the late Ottoman Empire as an imperial center hegemonizing the Arab periphery to demonstrate that early modern neoclassical Arab poets drew upon the Arab-Islamic heritage, *turāth*, to provide their interpretation and even critique of the late Ottoman period. As a case study, I give a close reading of "The New al-Andalus" (1912), a poem on the Balkan Wars by Aḥmad Shawqī (1868 –1932). My reading departs from the common assumption that Shawqī's pan-Ottomanist poems express uncritical admiration for the caliphate. Through revealing the nuanced interpretive dynamics in Shawqī's poem, I draw upon translation theory and propose that early modern neoclassical poetry

refracted rather than *reflected* political transformations of its period. This refraction played a crucial role in shaping the vision of *nahḍa*, since Shawqī, like other Arab thinkers, believed that the empire needed to go through "renaissance" after the Balkan defeat. I also demonstrate that movements that are categorized in the current scholarship as *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* were for a brief moment on the cusp of converging and generating the basis of a cultural vision for what Faroz Ahmad called "the Dual Monarchy"—an Ottoman Empire that identifies itself as an Arab-Turkish political entity. Finally, this chapter, building upon Pierre Bourdieu's work, proposes that early modern Arabic and Turkish literatures should be analyzed within the context of what I call an Ottoman cultural field.

Chapter 3 analyzes early modern Arabic and Turkish prose writings of the late Ottoman Empire whose prominent themes were travel and displacement. Modernity has been defined in Middle Eastern studies as a set of values such as awakening (*nahḍa*), reforms (*tanzimat*), renewal (*teceddüd, tajdīd*), civilizational progress (*muasırlaşma*, *ḥadātha*), and nationalist movements that became prevalent in the nineteenth century due to the increasing Western influence in the region. I categorize these values under the umbrella term of what Jale Parla called *değişim* (transformation), a cultural vision that advocates teleological evolution. I then undertake a philological analysis to designate what Parla called *başkalaşım* (metamorphosis) as an umbrella term that corresponds to a repertoire of concepts, such as *tebeddül/ tabaddul*, that stand for unstructured change deconstructing cultural and political boundaries. Through a close reading of two travelogues— *Hac Yolunda* (*On the Way to Hajj*, 1907/1908) by Cenap Şahabettin (1870–1934) and *Mā Hunālika* (*Out Yonder*, 1896) by Ibrāḥīm al-Muwayliḥī (1846–1906)—and two texts that are considered the first examples of modern literature in their respective national communities—*Hasan Mellah yahut Sır İçinde Esrar* (*Hasan Mellah or Secret within Secrets*,

1874/1875) by Ahmet Midhat (1844–1912) and *Fatra min az-Zamān* (*A Period of Time,* 1898–1902) by Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1868–1930)— I demonstrate that the Mediterranean is the shared trope that stands for the metamorphosis vision in these texts, undermining the almost exclusive association of the nineteenth century with the transformation vision in the Ottoman historiography. I also use the concept metamorphosis because it has symbolized in world literature the destabilization of boundaries between human and animal. This destabilization is a key marker of the metamorphosis vision in late Ottoman writings. I thus analyze the representation of animals in these texts in the light of works on environmental and intellectual history that also examine changing notions of the animal in the late Ottoman Empire. Finally, drawing upon Alexander Beecroft's work on ecologies of world literature, I situate literatures of the late Ottoman period within a "liminal literary ecology" that carried characteristics of both national and cosmopolitan literatures.

Chapter 4 gives a close reading of two works by the prominent Iraqi intellectual, Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945), *Daf' al-hujna fī irtiḍākh al-lukna* (*Overcoming Flaws in Speech Defects*, 1912/ 1913) and *al-Ruʾyā fi Baḥth al-hurriya* (Dream of Searching for the Truth, 1909), the translation of *Rüya* (*Dream*, 1908) by the Turkish intellectual Namık Kemal (1840–1888). I examine these two works to capture another ambivalence of this period. Ottoman intellectuals undertook massive translation projects, while writing treatises that emphasized the importance of protecting one's culture and language from foreign influences. Although this situation seems paradoxical at first, I demonstrate that these authors undertook translations also to set up a role model for their national languages that had to remain, in their opinion, "uncontaminated" by the source language. The increasing number of translations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, therefore, allowed a transculturation of ideals and values of modernity

between early modern Arab and Turkish intellectuals, while ironically halting the transculturation of Arabic and Turkish languages. Based on my findings, I propose that we should view translations more as expressions of "dispositions"—beliefs in regards to culture, heritage, and language circumscribed by one's social milieu—rather than as bridges undermining all boundaries. The increase in translations in the late Ottoman Empire corresponded with a decrease in the "diversity," or range, of dispositions towards other cultures and hence of motives behind translations. Through describing translation as disposition, I undermine the tendency in works on the late Ottoman period to consider translations the antidote against cultural insulation, chauvinism, and stagnation.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus to the literary production that was created in the nation-state. By comparing the Turkish novel *The Black Book* (*Kara Kitap;* 1990) by Orhan Pamuk (b. 1950) with the Lebanese novel *Tiller of Waters* (*Ḥārith al-miyāh*; 1998) by Huda Barakāt (b. 1952), I posit that contemporary authors make manifest traces of the imperial past to criticize their current societies despite political and cultural splits that occurred after the emergence of nation-states. Based on the work of the psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1896–1971) on playing and reality, I argue that these texts reconfigure the boundaries of their cultural identity with a playful engagement with the Ottoman past and the Islamic heritage. Pamuk and Barakāt "play" with everyday objects from the Ottoman past, including silk, keys, door, and cups, to generate what Winnicott called an "intermediate zone" that blurs the distinction between the past and the present and undermines the official historiography that represses the cosmopolitan Ottoman past for constructing a modern national identity. Through using Winnicott's object-relations theory, I also reveal resonances between the fields of world literature and material history. Even though the emergence of nations-states decreased various forms of textual transculturations between Arabic and Turkish literatures, such as translations and intertextuality, these literatures still share cross-

cultural synergies and cultural ambivalences that also characterized the late Ottoman cultural landscape.

In short, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* problematizes the way literary historians categorized Arabic and Turkish literary texts of the late Ottoman Empire as the first examples of modern Arabic and modern Turkish literature respectively. Through concepts such as "reservoir," "disposition," or "*tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*," I explore shared ambivalences of these works and suggest that they did not necessarily augur the emergence of modern national cultures after the demise of the empire. My literary readings also undermine the projection of modernity as a time of order, enlightenment, and the formation of national subjectivities. Finally, these readings generate a new framework for reasesssing theories in world literature for studying the late Ottoman Empire in which cosmopolitan and national sensibilities were intertwined. In other words, it lays the basis of a world literature for a world of shifting borders.

CHAPTER 1

Canons as Literary Reservoirs:

Reading Ziya Pasha's *Harabat* in a Comparative Middle Eastern Poetics

The Ottoman Empire went through vast cultural, economic, and demographic transformations in the nineteenth century. The declaration of the Gülhane Decree in 1839 and the Islahat Decree in 1856 culminated in statewide reforms on issues ranging from tax collection to military drafting. The territorial expansion of Russia created an unprecedented influx of Muslim refugees who migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia, significantly changing the empire's demographic landscape. Furthermore, "[t]he Balkan territorial losses raised Muslims' share of the empire's population from 60 percent before 1878 to 72 percent in the 1880s census and 74 percent in 1906-1907."[1] The empire also experienced the largest debasement of its monetary currency in the nineteenth century.[2]

In the face of these territorial losses, economic adversities, and demographic changes, many Ottoman intellectuals believed that the empire was experiencing a political and cultural decline. They thus shared similar aspirations for the inauguration of a cultural and national revival. Literary histories became arguably one of the most fundamental platforms through which these intellectuals expressed their aspirations. More than merely amalgamating and preserving biographies of famous writers and their works, literary histories served to demarcate the heritage that the empire needed to draw upon for its cultural revival.

[1] Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 175.

[2] Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. xx.

Jeffrey Di Leo observes that "anthologies are discussed by progressive thinkers in terms of the canonical formations that they propose and the possible political and cultural directions in which they implicate their subject matter."[3] This chapter gives a close reading of the famous Ottoman anthology, *Harabat* (*Tavern*; 1291 [1874/1875]) by Ziya Pasha (1825–1880) and demonstrates, following Di Leo, that the composition of *Harabat* was less as an attempt to preserve the tradition and more as the future direction that Ziya Pasha wanted to give to the Ottoman culture. In particular, I focus on the anthology's introduction, which provides his perspectives on Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and French literary traditions. This introduction was so influential that the prominent Ottoman intellectual Ebüzziya Tevfik published the anthology's introduction as a separate book, *Mukaddime-i Harabat*. This history is neither like biographical dictionaries (*tezkire*) that document a poet's life and provide excerpts from his works, which was the prevalent way of practicing literary history until the nineteenth century, nor like many literary histories written after *Harabat*, which aim to generate the history of a national culture's heritage.

Harabat compiles texts from diverse geographical and temporal origins and, rather than defining them as members of distinct national traditions, projects this compilation as what I call the Ottoman "reservoir" or canon. My argument draws upon Ziya Pasha's characterization of the Ottoman language as an "ocean" that encompasses Arabic, Persian, and Turkish "streams" in *Harabat*'s introduction. Despite its comprehensive scope of 1227-pages, *Harabat* does not provide an encyclopedic coverage of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetic traditions. It instead selects works from each to affirm a multilingual Ottoman heritage, when other pioneering intellectuals of Ottoman modernity, such as Şinasi (1826–1871), advocated an alternative vision of Ottoman identity that put more distance to Persian and Arabic influences that had hitherto shaped its

[3] Jeffrey R. Di Leo, "Analyzing Anthologies" in *On Anthologies: On Politics and Pedagogy*, ed. Jeffrey R. Di Leo (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), p. 2.

heritage. *Harabat* opposes their vision, viewing Persian and Arabic traditions as an integral component of a grand imperial cultural identity. Through not simply amalgamating but also making categorical claims on Persian, Arabic, and Turkish poetic heritages in its introduction, *Harabat* marks an Ottoman intellectual's authoritative stance in defining, categorizing, and analyzing these literary corpora.

Literary histories written after *Harabat* claimed that Ottoman culture had always lived under the influence of another culture and had to find a new source of influence that would revive an ailing empire in crisis. For example, Şehabeddin Süleyman in *Tarih-i edebiyat-ı Osmaniye* (History of Ottoman Literature, 1910/1911) claims that the "Eastern water spring" (*menba*) had nurtured Ottoman literature until the nineteenth century when the "Western water spring" became its main source.[4] Ibrahim Necmi in *Tarih-i edebiyat dersleri* (Lessons on Literary History, 1919/1920) similarly argues that while Ottoman literature had hitherto lived under Persian and Arabic influence, it had to seek the Western spring to rejuvenate and create a new literature: Şinasi discovered the water spring of the West to revive Ottoman culture.[5] İsmail Hikmet [Ertaylan] in *Türk edebiyatı tarihi: Ondokuzuncu asır* (History of Turkish Literature: 19th Century, 1925) writes that three springs (*menba*), Arab, Persian, and Byzantine influences, shaped the old literature.[6] This view prevailed long after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar in *19uncu asır Türk edebiyatı tarihi* (History of the 19th century Turkish Literature, 1949) writes about the condition of Ottoman poetry, "It is as if all springs dried up and humankind was left

[4] Şehabeddin Süleyman, *Tarih-i edebiyat-ı Osmaniye* (Istanbul: Sancakcıyan Matbaası, 1328 [1910/1911]), p. 278.

[5] İbrahim Necmi, *Tarih-i edebiyat dersleri* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Amire, 1338 [1919/1920]), p. 114.

[6] İsmail Hikmet [Ertaylan,] *Türk edebiyatı tarihi: ondokuzuncu asır* (Azerneşr, 1925), p. viii.

naked,"[7] and later on the art of the same period, "[T]he creative spring of life dried up."[8] Ismail Parlatır uses the same metaphor to describe the emergence of modern Turkish literature in *Tanzimat edebiyatı* (Tanzimat Literature, 2006): The East used to be the "water spring" (*kaynak*) for Ottomans until the late nineteenth century, but the West then became the new "water spring."[9] What unites all these histories is the assumption that a modern, more rejuvenated Ottoman culture emerged once it distanced itself from a heritage that was assumed to be drying up.

Two metaphors—ocean and water spring—stand for different kinds of canon formation circumscribing the texts that a community like the Ottoman literati chooses to preserve and remember. *Harabat* challenges the commonly held notion that literary canon is a list of texts that belong to only a single linguistic tradition, as it asserts that Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetic traditions mix so perfectly in the Ottoman "ocean" that they form the canon that an Ottoman poet should master. However, when each linguistic tradition is portrayed as a spring and hence a source of influence, textual interactions among them either elevate or debase other traditions but never generate a new canon. In histories written after *Harabat*, Ottoman literature could never surpass but merely imitate Arabic and Persian literatures that set the standards for eloquence and poetics. This vision led to what Harold Bloom called "anxiety of influence," which created in the modern Ottoman intelligentsia a need to construct a new literary canon to go beyond the influence of old sources that were perceived to stifle originality.[10]

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[7] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi, 1985 [first edition, 1949]), p. 77.

[8] ibid., p. 134.

[9] Ismail Parlatır, *Tanzimat Edebiyatı* (Ankara: Akçağ, 2006), p. 10.

[10] Harold Bloom gives the following definition of the term: "Poetic history… is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves." *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 5.

These histories suggest that the cultural capital of this reservoir was waning as Ottoman intellectuals experienced more strongly a sense of displacement that emerged due to territorial losses, change of socioeconomic conditions, and the Western imperial expansion into the empire's territories. However, the replacement of cosmopolitan sensibilities of the Ottoman Empire with nationalist aspirations of the twentieth century, as *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* shows, was not an abrupt transition. As I will describe later in this chapter, although classical Arabic and Turkish works were eventually "deracinated" from their cosmopolitan context to be eventually incorporated into nationalist canons, many late Ottoman intellectuals also strived to re-signify these works for novel visions of Ottoman identity.

In the first section, I describe the concepts, "reservoir" and "intertextuality," that I use to crystallize Ziya Pasha's vision for the Ottoman culture in *Harabat* and juxtapose this vision with "the influence paradigm" that then shaped the study of Ottoman culture. Afterwards, I provide contextual background on Ziya Pasha's life and *Harabat* to lay out his motives behind compiling an anthology that captures this vision. The second section performs a close reading of its introduction to demonstrate that this vision took shape as a response to leading intellectuals and politicians who had different aspirations for the Ottoman identity and culture. Finally, I juxtapose *Harabat* with the founding figures of comparative literature discipline both to further elucidate ambivalences of *Harabat* and show that reading *Harabat* provides new theoretical perspectives for world literature.

Intertextual Reservoir and Canon Formation

"Circulation" has become one of the central tenets of the world literature scholarship. David Damrosch defined world literature as "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture

of origin, either in translation or in their original language"[11] and Alexander Beecroft recently described six ecologies of world literature based on the "constraints operating on the circulation of literary texts in a variety of different historical contexts."[12] These works rest on the premise that studying textual circulations would undermine the strict boundaries of national canons as well as the nationalistic frameworks that have characterized literary studies. While I follow this promising premise, I propose that literary critics view circulation as a force that also generates new canons.

For understanding the relation between circulations and literary canons, I draw upon John Guillory's work on the process of canon formation. Guillory pinpoints "deracination of the text tradition" as an important component of this process:

> It is just by suppressing culture in the ethnographic sense—or reserving that sense of culture for non-"Western" artifacts—that the traditional curriculum can appropriate the "great works" of Western civilization for the purpose of constituting an imaginary cultural unity… The deracination of the text tradition thus forces us to define the intertextual relation, say, between Aquinas and Aristotle as evidence of the continuity of Western culture, but it allows us to set aside the fact that Aristotle and Aquinas have almost nothing in common culturally.[13]

I call for a reframing of our understanding of canonization by building upon the conceptual repertoire that the world literature scholarship has brought into literary studies—circulations, target culture, and source culture. To rephrase Guillory's insight in the framework of world literature, each source text can be "deracinated" when its context is ignored in the target culture to facilitate this text's incorporation into a new canon. Since nationalistic frameworks largely determine the academic institutionalization of literature, circulation has been viewed in a positive light, liberating critics from the limitations of analyzing texts only within the context of their

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[11] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 4.

[12] Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Pressent Day* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2015), p. 25.

[13] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 42.

national canons. This celebratory appraisal has often overlooked the circulation's role in generating new canons, which can always entail a process of "deracinating" the source text.

To flesh out the crucial role of circulation in the process of canonization, I designate canons as "literary reservoirs," which amalgamate texts circulating from various source cultures and project them as the property of a national or imperial culture. By doing so, I view canons as nodes in the networks of textual circulations, hence opening up new ways in which the world literature scholarship can theorize the process of canonization. Reservoir creates a literary categorization that forms an alternative both to *national literature* that generates a strictly defined canon of texts written often in one language to imagine a nation-state and *world literature* that analyzes interactions among texts of many languages that drift in transnational circulations to imagine a globe.

The cultural reservoir has a strictly circumscribed boundary that allows intertextualization only among a select number of texts for generating a canon that can incorporate works from diverse languages and cultures, akin to what Ziya Pasha defines as "Ottoman literature."[14] Texts written in languages other than Arabic, Persian, and Turkish also circulated in the Ottoman Empire; however, these literatures, such as Armenian or Kurdish, did not shape the cultural reservoir that the elite Ottoman men of letters identified with.

My emphasis on intertextuality also undermines "the influence paradigm" that has shaped the study of Ottoman literatures. Intertextuality theory does not merely pinpoint shared elements among different texts; in fact, Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) and Roland Barthes (1915–1980) developed

[14] Julia Kristeva, who coined the term, provides the following definition: "The term intertextuality denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another." *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 59-60. For a general overview of intertextuality theory, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

the intertextuality theory to criticize the influence paradigm that has emphasized that any derivation of a source text means an unquestioned acknowledgment of that source text's superiority.[15] According to the intertextuality theory, each translation and adaptation represents a creative rewriting of the source text, as adaptations can surpass and even subvert the source text's supremacy. Drawing upon the influence paradigm, the current scholarship considers Turkish literature the last chain of Islamic literature that started with Arabic, developed into Persian, and finally culminated in its "most derivative" form—the Ottoman literature. E.J.W. Gibb's seminal *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (1900) provides the best example: Gibb argues that Turkish poetry lived under the fetters of Persian influence for centuries until French culture became the dominating influence during the late nineteenth century. This perspective shapes the study of Ottoman literatures to this day.

I also draw upon the intertextuality theory to challenge the common assumption that Ottoman literature was simply an amalgamation of literatures written in three different languages, ignoring the new and manifold ways in which Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts interacted among each other. *Harabat* does not project Arabic or Persian literary works as sources of influence that stifled the Ottoman poet's imagination and originality. Ottoman intellectuals who wrote literary histories after Ziya Pasha voiced much more openly that Arabic and Persian texts were "old classics" that influenced modern Turkish literature. *Harabat* is not an anthology of Islamic literatures either. Ziya Pasha leaves out much of the Islamic corpus such as the Southeast Asian literary tradition. Instead, *Harabat* affirms a cultural reservoir that sustained the multilingual Ottoman literary community whose textual corpus encompassed works from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish traditions.

[15] For a more detailed history on the distinction between intertextuality and influence, see Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

During the late nineteenth century, many intellectuals had extensive debates on whether to call the state's official language "Ottoman" or "Turkish." For instance, Recaızade Ekrem (1847–1914) insisted that people needed to call this language "Turkish," because the adjective "Ottoman" cannot be used to describe a culture, since it merely signifies loyalty to the household of Osman.[16] Similarly, Namık Kemal (1840–1888) uses the term "Turkish" instead of "Ottoman" to describe this language. Namık Kemal identifies the Turkish language as one of the most advanced languages, because it is like museum (*nümune-hane*) that can borrow expressions from Arabic and Persian to create "bouquets of expressions" (*gül-deste beyanı*). At the same time, he still criticizes the language's lack of organic unity. While Persian, Arabic, and Turkish expressions may look similar in form (*lafz*), they are completely unrelated in terms of their essence and meaning (*mana*).[17] This debate suggests that late Ottoman intellectuals felt both anxious about a nebulous future and experimented with new visions of culture.

Ziya Pasha would have disagreed with both Namık Kemal and Recaızade Ekrem. The lines below, which capture most lucidly his vision for the Ottoman culture, do not project Arabic and Persian literatures as a separate "spring" that has nurtured the Ottoman civilization, but instead an integral constituent of its ocean:

Türkī dili evvel idi yektā
İtdi anı Fārsī dū-bālā

Hem öyle yaḳışdı iki gevher
Güyā ki ḳarışdı şīr ü şeker

Yāhūd iki baḥr-ı ʿilm ü ʿirfān
Birleşdi beraber oldu ʿummān

Yoḳ üç deñiz oldılar ferāhem
Andan çıkdı bu baḥr-ı aʿẓam

[16] Quoted in Bedri Gencer, *İslam'da Modernleşme, 1839-1939* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2008), p. 750-51.

[17] M. Kaya Bilgegil, *Harabat Karşısında Namık Kemal* (Istanbul: İrfan Yayınevi, 2004), p. 24.

Zīrā ʿArabī lisānla evvel
Olmuş idi Fārsī mükemmel

ʿOs̲mānlı lisānı bu lisāndır
Fikr iyle ne baḥr-ı bī-kerāndır

ʿOs̲mānlı lisānını bilen z̲āt
Bir bennādır ki ḥāẕır alāt

Bir kaç dürlü edāta nāʾil
Bir kaç nev-i inḳilāba ḳābil (37–38) [18]

Once, the Turkish language was on its own
Then Persian elevated and doubled it

These two jewels befitted each other so well
As milk and sugar mixed together

Two seas of knowledge and wisdom
Came together and became an ocean

No, three seas came together
And from their union emerged this supreme ocean

Since the Persian first
Attained perfection by uniting with the Arabic language

This language is the Ottoman language
So contemplate that this is a peerless ocean

Someone who knows the Ottoman language
Is an architect with devices

Who has mastered several tools
Able to create vast transformations

Unlike all other literary historians who claimed that the Turkish culture lived *under* the influence of Persian civilization, Ziya Pasha argues that the Persian language *elevated* the Turkish language to generate the hybrid Ottoman ocean. Furthermore, Persian itself has already attained perfection

[18] Ziya Pasha, *Mukaddime-i Harabat* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Ebüzziya, 1311 [1893/1894]).

with Arabic. The word "jewels" (*cevher*) also means "essence;" therefore, the Ottoman "ocean"—or what I call reservoir—incorporates languages and their literary traditions in such a way that several cultural essences intertwine with each other to the point of becoming indistinguishable, mixing like sugar and milk. While the Ottoman Turkish poetic corpus may not have a historical tradition as rooted as that of Persian and Arabic, the Ottoman reservoir becomes the repository that preserves, transforms, and even surpasses Persian and Arabic traditions. Ziya Pasha here suggests that literary supremacy is never guaranteed by a deeply rooted tradition. *Harabat*'s introduction displays no anxiety of influence that makes later generations feel compelled to outdo their ancestors who set up the immutable ideals of eloquence and poetics.

To view *Harabat* only as an anthology of three national traditions will overlook the cultural hybridity that Ziya Pasha cherishes. *Harabat*, more than displaying an encyclopedic coverage of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian poetic traditions, provides a panorama that emerges from a distinctly Ottoman mixture of these traditions. For centuries, Ottoman literati have been well versed in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetry; nevertheless, no work before *Harabat* amalgamated these disparate heritages in a single anthology of such scope. As I argue throughout the rest of this chapter, Ziya Pasha composed this anthology not only to conserve the imperial heritage but also to articulate his future vision for the empire.

Harabat is exclusive—Ziya Pasha makes no mention of Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, or Albanian texts that also circulated widely in the empire.[19] Nor does his anthology strive to include all the works of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetry. It also includes no Arabic works written after the fifteenth century. These exclusions all serve to reinforce the boundaries of the Ottoman cultural

[19] For the circulation and reception of these literatures in the Ottoman Empire, see Mehmet Fatih Uslu and Fatih Altuğ, *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı Istanbulu'nda Modern Edebi Kültür* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014).

reservoir. *Harabat* functions almost like a handbook and addresses an aspiring Ottoman *edib*—or "litterateur"—who needs to be well versed in a canonized reservoir to join the intellectual elite rather than a scholar who seeks an accurate understanding of Middle Eastern literatures.

Ziya Pasha draws upon the rooted tradition of a community well versed in what Cornell Fleischer has called the "Ottoman Way," a set of manners and educational background that made a person member of the Ottoman elite.[20] There is a remarkable similarity between Ziya Pasha's description of the Ottoman ocean and the following words from Mustafa Âli (1541–1600), who was deeply familiar with this "Ottoman way":

> The astonishing language current in the state of Rum, composed of four languages [West Turkish, Çağatay, Arabic, and Persian], is a pure gilded tongue which, in the speech of the literati, seems more difficult than any of these. If one were to equate speaking Arabic with a religious obligation [*farz*], and the use of Persian with a sanctioned tradition [*sünnet*], then the speaking of a Turkish made of these sweetnesses becomes a meritorious act [*müstehabb*], and, in the view of those eloquent in Turkish, the use of simple Turkish should be forbidden.[21]

Mustafa Âli makes a clear distinction between the simple Turkish and the eloquent Turkish, "the Ottoman ocean" that unites different languages. Centuries later, *Harabat* aims to conserve this elevated language that Mustafa Âli praised.

This similarity between Mustafa Âli's and Ziya Pasha's descriptions of the Ottoman language reveals the extent to which Ziya Pasha wishes to preserve the courtly literary tradition that he considers vital for sustaining the empire. This tradition reinforced the empire's cosmopolitan aspirations, as Cartey Findley notes: "The very texture of the official language clearly tells how the Ottomans saw themselves in relation to the cultural heritage of the entire

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[20] Cornell H Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 20.

[21] Mustafa Ali, *Muṣṭafā 'Āli's Künhü'l-Aḫbār and its Preface According to the Leiden Manuscript* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1987), p. 11; translation in Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 22.

Islamic Middle East."[22] A heterogeneous combination of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish linguistic elements, the Ottoman Turkish signified that the empire stood at the latest frontier of the complex heritage of the Islamic Middle East, both preserving it and taking it to new heights.

To capture the hybridity of the Ottoman language and its literary tradition, Saliha Paker builds upon Anthony Pym's concept of "interculture"—"beliefs and practices found in intersections or overlaps of cultures, where people combine something of two or more cultures at once"— and argues that Ottoman poets operate within an "Ottoman interculture":

> [Ottoman interculture] would have to be conceptualized in the intersection of three cultures (Persian, Arabic, and Turkish), as the trilingual, tricultural site of operation of Ottoman poet-translators. While "interculture" seems to be a simple construct, the notion of an Ottoman interculture certainly is not. Its very simplicity, or flexibility, lends itself to a much wider range of studies on the work and the practices of the Ottoman poet-translators, allowing researchers to adopt, if they wish, within the frame of "interculture," such postcolonial theoretical constructs such as Mary Louise Pratt "contact zone" (1992:6-7) or Homi Bhabha's "hybridity" (1996: 58).[23]

Paker also notes that those who operate within the Ottoman interculture still perceive Arabic, Persian, and Turkish as three distinct cultures even though the boundaries among them remain highly porous as they become integrated into the Ottoman interculture. I consider reservoir another theoretical construct that will prove useful for understanding the process of canon formation in the Ottoman interculture.

Ziya Pasha's cultural upbringing demonstrates his strong investment in the cosmopolitan Ottoman interculture that *Harabat* celebrates. He was well versed in "three languages" (*lisan-i*

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[22] Cartey V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980), pp. 9-10.

[23] Saliha Paker, "Translation as *Terceme* and *Nazire* Culture-bound Concepts and their Implications for a Conceptual Framework for Research on Ottoman Translational History," in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies II: Historical and Ideological Issues*, ed. Theo Hermans (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2002), p. 137.

elsine), Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, signifying his mastery of the "Ottoman Way." He received his primary education in *Mahalle Mektebi*, and then attended another school that trains bureaucrats, *Mekteb-i Ulum-i Edebiyye* in 1839. He was a self-made man who taught himself Arabic. Through reading classics such as Ferdowsi's *Shahname*, he learned Persian. He also showed the same voracious interest for learning French, which was increasingly becoming an essential component of an Ottoman intellectual's formation during his time. After having studied the language only for six months, he could have translated Louis Viardot's *Histoire arabes et des mores d'Espagne* (History of Arabs and Mores in Spain) into Turkish.[24]

Unlike many members of this elite community, however, Ziya Pasha was never close to the sultan due to his antagonistic relations with Ottoman grand viziers.[25] In 1867, Ziya Pasha became one of the leaders of the *Young Ottomans*, an influential group of Turkish intellectuals who attained prominence in the late *Tanzimat* period and claimed to seek a genuine synthesis between European Enlightenment and Islamic values.[26] Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, the Egyptian khedive Ismail's brother, decided to make contact with prominent members of the Young Ottomans in Istanbul because he wanted to use this group to reinforce his personal interests that often clashed with the Ottoman government's agendas. Therefore, he invited its two most famous intellectuals—

[24] M. Kaya Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1979), p. 27. I do not aim to provide an extensive coverage of Ziya Pasha's life or a summary of his works. Bilgegil's work is an excellent source that provides extensive archival documentation on his life.

[25] Ziya Pasha is known for his acerbic criticism against some of the grand viziers, especially Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha. He even wrote a book, *Zafername*, a satire that criticizes Ali Pasha. For more on *Zafername*, see Mustafa Apaydın, *Türk Hiciv Edebiyatında Ziya Paşa* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001).

[26] Often referring to institutional and cultural transformations of the nineteenth century, *tanzimat* corresponds in the Turkish literary studies to the period after Mahmud II's death in 1839 until the establishment of the republic in 1923. Unlike literary critics, historians such as Cartey Findley refrain from designating the entire period as *Tanzimat* due to major shifts in the center of power—from the palace to the Sublime Porte in 1839, to the palace in 1876, and to CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) in 1909. For this dissertation, I follow the literary studies and consider Turkish cultural works in late 19th century *tanzimat* literature.

Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal—to Paris.[27] Several details indicate that Ziya Pasha was the group's most eminent member. He received the largest stipend from Mustafa Fazıl Pasha who gave 3,000 liras per month to Ziya Pasha and 2,000 liras, the second largest stipend, to Namık Kemal.[28] Ziya Pasha initially received financial support from Mustafa Fazıl Pasha and played the leading role for newspapers that voiced an open criticism against the Ottoman government, including the famous *Hürriyet* (*Freedom*).

Mustafa Fazıl Pasha eventually decided to defund the Young Ottomans once the Egyptian pasha had restored amicable relations with the Ottoman government. This defunding created immense difficulties for the Young Ottomans. Ziya Pasha encountered many similar hardships during his lifetime, which contributed to the cynical tone of his works. His famous poems, *Terci-i bend* and *Terkib-i bend*, express an existential crisis of a perplexed and even rebellious poet, who complains about the fickleness of fate, ruthless political affairs, and incomprehensible mysteries of creation. Due to his harsh criticism against grand viziers such as Ali Pasha, Ziya Pasha suffered from numerous forced exiles. Additionally, he was afflicted with severe health issues and witnessed increased censorship for his writings. He died, having made innumerable contributions to the Ottoman world, in dire poverty in his final years as a governor in Adana. He left behind nothing but two pieces of gold in his pocket when he passed away.[29] *Harabat* was produced amidst these disappointments.

While Ziya Pasha was a pioneering figure of Turkish modernity, like the other two intellectuals who also belonged to the Young Ottomans, Şinasi and Namık Kemal, he also wistfully

[27] Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa Üzerine*, p. 100.

[28] ibid., p. 104.

[29] ibid., p. 321.

looked back and kept an eye on a fading past in works like *Harabat* to alleviate the disappointments during his quest for a new cultural identity. As Tanpınar puts it, paradoxes define the essence of Ziya Pasha.[30] Since his corpus is strewn with contradiction, hesitancy, ambiguity, and vacillation, Ziya Pasha has not received as much attention as Şinasi and Namık Kemal, who had taken more radical stances towards modernism, insisting that Ottoman literature should leave behind the old masters, such as Persian literature in particular, and embrace a new literature that will engineer a more healthy society.[31]

In his famous newspaper article, "*Şiir ve İnşa*" ("Poetry and Prose," 1868), which became a manifesto of Ottoman literary and cultural modernity that wished to put distance to the cosmopolitan past for thinkers such as Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha argues that Ottomans could never create original poetry because they imitated Iranians, who hitherto had imitated Arabs. This had detrimental consequences: Not only did imitation stifle the creativity of Ottoman poets but also prevented the emergence of an authentic Ottoman self.[32] Ziya Pasha also complains throughout the article about the gap between intellectuals and "common people" (*avam-ı nas*). This gap had detrimental consequences. No one except a few people who receive a comprehensive scribal training can understand the imperial decrees that are supposed to address all members of the empire.[33] When Tunisians demand an Arabic translation of the new constitution, the original constitution in Ottoman Turkish turns out to be so incomprehensible that no one can translate it

[30] Tanpınar, *19uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, p. 311.

[31] Many Europeans compared the Ottoman Empire to a sick man. Pioneering figures of cultural modernity in the empire appropriated this image. For example, Namık Kemal castigated the classical poetry as a source of sickness. Namık Kemal, *Tahrib-i Harabat*, p. 23.

[32] Ziya Paşa, "Şiir ve inşa," *Hürriyet* 11 (1868), p. 4.

[33] ibid., p. 5.

into Arabic.[34] People remain clueless about cultural and political reforms because the language of intellectuals who demand these changes sounds too foreign to the public. Therefore, Ziya Pasha calls for the formation of a new intellectual who does not remain steeped in useless courtly formalities but crafts a new language that will reach out to the larger society. After asking the reader what the Ottoman poetry is, Ziya Pasha himself gives the answer. He insists that no poet praised in *Harabat*, including Baki and Nedim, composed the authentic Ottoman poetry. Ziya Pasha instead praises the Turkish folk poetry as the authentic Ottoman poetry; therefore, Ziya Pasha calls for a return to the simple language of this poetry that will break down the barrier between the elite and common people.[35]

Harabat's introduction, written nine years after this article, celebrates aspects of the Ottoman culture that are heavily criticized in "Poetry and Prose." Ziya Pasha could have realized that works like "Poetry and Prose" opened up "the Pandora's box," leading to new visions of identity, culture, and heritage that created consequences which Ziya Pasha himself could not have anticipated. In the beginning of its introduction, Ziya Pasha praises God (5–10) and the Prophet Mohammad (11–17). Then he provides his reasons behind composing *Harabat*. This section includes mostly biographical information about Ziya Pasha, who, through composing *Harabat*, writes down the works of Arab, Turkish, and Iranian poets who have shaped his cultural and intellectual formation (18–31). He discusses Chagatai and early Ottoman Turkish poets (32–41). Afterwards, he describes the requirements of being a poet, as he argues that poems need to have both natural talent and comprehensive training of linguistic sciences (41–55) and then provides the biographies of "Rum" (Roman; an epithet used for Anatolia as well as Ottoman Turkish poets)

[34] ibid., p. 5-6.

[35] ibid., p. 7.

poets who have attained prominence after the empire expanded its territories in the fifteenth century (55–80). After this lengthy introduction, he expresses his opinion on Iranian (80–97) and then on Arab poetry (98–103). In his final section, Ziya Pasha describes the anthology as *bezm-i aram* (space of repose) for Arab, Persian, and Turkish poets. Ziya Pasha laments his declining health, apologizing for any mistake he might have made when he compiled the anthology (103–106).

Harabat as Taverns: Ziya Pasha's Exclusivist Vision

The discussions that revolved around culture, literature, and identity during the late nineteenth century significantly drew upon the diverse traditions that constituted the imperial courtly culture, such as the mystical Islam (Sufism), cosmopolitan literary heritage (*adab*), and religious law. Ziya Pasha decided to give the name *Harabat*, which means "tavern," to his anthology. Ottoman poets have used the imagery of tavern to refer to a space of intense passion and spiritual intoxication.[36] Ziya Pasha views his anthology as a space of gathering for poets from different historical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Understanding the metaphor "ocean," especially its resonances with Islamic mysticism that the Ottoman courtly elite was deeply familiar with, provides crucial insights into the cosmopolitanism that Ziya Pasha's "tavern" stood for. Ocean refers to fathomless, spiritual knowledge, also described as the "Ocean of Truth" in Sufi (Islamic mysticism) poetry. Mystics see themselves as drops that yearn for union with the divine Ocean, God. When Ziya Pasha writes that all created beings constantly repeat the word "God," he suggests that linguistic discrepancies prevent us from seeing, both on the metaphysical and cultural level, an overarching unity. Ziya

[36] For a detailed description of the tavern trope, see İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: Akçağ Basım, 1990), p. 410.

Pasha's mystical view of creation resonates with *Harabat*'s vision of culture and identity. God as a metaphysical Ocean provides unity to diverse manifestations of creation; Ottoman reservoir as a cultural ocean provides vigor, stability, and permanence to diverse poetic heritages. In other words, ocean stands for stability and even transcendence. *Harabat* affirms a non-volatile vision of the Ottoman culture that does not suffer from a civilizational crisis or anxiety, as Ziya Pasha compares his anthology with *bezm-i aram*—space of repose where poets congregate together—in the final section.

Nevertheless, we also come across in this final section Ziya Pasha's ambivalence and irresoluteness. *Harabat* admits, albeit only in a few lines, that the Ottoman poetic heritage, in fact, is not as permanent and transcendent as Ziya Pasha himself claimed it to be. Comparing himself with Jesus Christ, Ziya Pasha wants to revive poetry through compiling this anthology (104), hence implicitly admitting that the literary movement that he once had stood for in "Poetry and Prose" was too successful to create in him the need to resurrect the Ottoman reservoir that seems to be desiccating. At one point claiming this heritage to be stable, grand, and immutable and at another emphasizing its need for a reform, *Harabat* crystallizes the existential ambivalence of the late Ottoman period.

While "Poetry and Prose" emphasizes that the role of language is to assure clear communication among members of the society, *Harabat* does not seek a negotiation between the language of the poets and of the general public (*avam*). Ziya Pasha praises the Ottoman language in the introduction not because everyone can easily understand it but because it can convey metaphysical truths (38). Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha's close friend and another intellectual pioneer of Ottoman modernity, did not display such a radical transformation in his ideas. Namık Kemal, as Mehmet Kaplan noted, had a vision of "communal mysticism" (*cemiyet mistizmi*) throughout

his works since Namık Kemal projects social values such as homeland and freedom as objects of mystical love.[37] The clearest example is *Hürriyet kasidesi* (Freedom Kaside), in which Namık Kemal does not praise a ruler—the typical object of praise in *kaside* poetry—but instead freedom itself that is compared with a beloved.

For Namık Kemal, *Harabat* is "a tavern (*meyhane*) that destroys the Young Ottoman ambition to construct a *Darülfünun* of literature;"[38] therefore, taverns, which have been contrasted with mosques for centuries in the court poetry, now stand in opposition to *darülfünun* (European-style universities). Taverns have often had a positive connotation in Islamic poetry. Believers attain true, mystical, and divine love in taverns, as they contemplate the inner essence of religion there rather than blindly following rituals in mosques. While ascetics (*zühad*) take pride in their meticulous attention to daily worship, *rindans*—carefree dervishes— might be lax in following their religious rituals. Yet they attain a true understanding of God through their genuine devotion. A building many scholars have considered the quintessential symbol of Ottoman modernity that advocated rationality and scientific progress, *darülfünun*, is thus associated with mosques and hence meticulous performances of religious rituals.[39] Taverns become re-signified as places of lassitude rather than spiritual transcendence. The new vision of cultural and literary modernity aligns with mosques—sober responsibility rather than intoxicated transcendence. The rivalry between tavern and mosque—which referred to disparate ways of living Islam, the former emphasizing its mystical and the latter its legalistic dimensions—becomes an allegory for the

[37] Mehmet Kaplan, *Şiir Tahlilleri* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1978), p. 29.

[38] Süleyman Nazif, *İki Dost* (Istanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1334 [1924/ 1925]), p. 36.

[39] On the importance of *darülfünun* for Ottoman modernity see Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *Darülfünun: Osmanlı'da Kültürel Modernleşmenin Odağı* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2010).

"rivalry between the realism of modern literature and the neoplatonism of classical Ottoman poetry."[40]

This rivalry crystallizes burgeoning debates on who has the authority to read, analyze, and give future direction to the Ottoman poetic tradition. Tavern, due to its connotation of exclusivity in particular, becomes a metonym for the perspective that this authority should reside in a select few who preserve "the Ottoman Way." *Harabat*'s attitude towards folk poetry already reveals this exclusivist stance, as Ziya Pasha compares it to a donkey's bray (18). To describe the reason behind why he named his anthology as *Harabat*, Ziya Pasha writes:

> *Rindān ider anda çūn mülāḳāt*
> *Ḳoydum adını anıñ Harābāt*
>
> *Mescid disem iʿtimād olunmaz*
> *Şāʿirler o yerde çoḳ bulunmaz*
>
> *Şāʿirlere mey virir müşāfāt*
> *Rindānıñ olur yeri Harābāt* (31)
>
> Because the wandering dervishes come to taverns
> I gave it [the anthology] the title *Harabat*
>
> No one would believe in me if I gave it the title, *Mosque*,
> Poets do not assemble in mosques
>
> Wine provides companionship to poets
> Tavern [*harabat*] is the abode of wandering dervishes

Ziya Pasha wants to carve out space for the tavern when constructions like *Darülfünun* strive to erase these spaces, so he builds *Harabat* to conserve literary gatherings of taverns until eternity. *Harabat* situates centuries of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic poetry into a circle of a mystical brotherhood that sustains the Ottoman cultural reservoir. Furthermore, Ziya Pasha composes his introduction in the *mathnawi* form, verse narratives with independent rhyming couplets. Due to its

[40] Ahmet Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1983), p. 49.

relatively lax formal requirements, poets used this form to write long, didactic works, including some of the most prominent mystical texts like Rumi's *Mathnawi*, Attar's *Mantıq al Tayr*, and Sheikh Galib's *Hüsn-ü Aşk*, which provide a guide to the initiate on the path to spiritual elevation. Ziya Pasha's literary history too guides the "initiate," an aspiring Ottoman writer who can enter the poetic cosmos of the tavern via a thorough familiarity with its multilingual cultural reservoir.

Ottoman courtly literary gatherings have remained private affairs whose members "share the same understanding of and sympathy for the emotional interpretation of reality."[41] Ziya Pasha constantly mentions that texts such as the Persian *Gülistan* or the pre-Islamic Arabic "hanging odes" (*muallaqāt*) transfer him to a mystical world, although he never describes this world and leaves it mysterious to the uninitiated. For Ziya Pasha, these texts never reveal ethnographic information about Iranian or Arab communities, as they all lead to the mystical world that those well versed in the Ottoman literary reservoir should have already visited.

Ziya Pasha's act of selection, preservation, and eventual publication of poetic heritages, however, comes with a cost. Although newspapers act as the ideal medium for his article that advocates a more accessible language and literature in "Poetry and Prose," it is deeply ironic that Ziya Pasha calls for a more exclusionist vision in a *printed* anthology and during efflorescence of the printing press in the region. This irony suggests that *Harabat*'s vision would not find much success. Johann Strauss notes, "The Egyptians were thus the first to print, on a large scale, the collected poetical works, known as *divan*. Many *divans* of major Ottoman poets appeared for the first time in Egypt in print."[42] Indeed, the Bulaq Press in Cairo published many works of Ottoman

[41] Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), p. 108.

[42] Johann Strauss, *The Egyptian Connection in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Literary and Intellectual History* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2000), p. 13.

divan poetry, including *Divan-i Fuzuli*, *Divan-i Nedim*, *Divan-i Nabi*, and *Divan-i Şeyh Galib*, during the late nineteenth century.[43] These texts became less grounded in a demarcated and exclusive community as they circulated to distant parts of the empire and hence remained open to alternative ways of being re-signified and re-interpreted for forging alternative visions of modern self and community.

Taverns represented nebulous spaces that revealed spiritual truths to a few initiates; however, the publication of *Harabat* marks an essential transformation. The tavern of the Ottoman intertextual reservoir ceases to become an exclusive, closed, and mysterious space; it turns into a tangible literary anthology that any reader can pick up, read, and even, as Namık Kemal did, redefine as a dilapidated, shameful space. Texts that constituted the Ottoman intertextual reservoir became disassociated from specific spaces like taverns or literary gatherings (*meclis*) and no longer shaped the cultural repertoire of only a small, circumscribed community of the courtly elite. These texts rather circulated to distant parts of the empire—ironically through the publication of works like *Harabat*.

The Genealogy of the "Classical" and New Cultural Aspirations

When Sultan Selim I conquered Syria in 1516, which incorporated lands with an Arab majority into the empire, one of his first acts in Damascus, much to the surprise of its denizens, was to restore the mausoleum of the Sufi saint Ibn Arabi.[44] This restoration turned Ibn Arabi into

[43] Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *The Turks in Egypt and their Cultural Legacy: An Analytical Study of the Turkish Printed Patrimony in Egypt from the Time of Muhammad Ali with Annotated Bibliographies* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), pp. 397-404.

[44] Marianne Boqvist, "Visualising the Ottoman Presence in Damascus: Interpreting 16th Century Building Complexes" in *Istanbul as Seen from a Distance: Centre and Provinces in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2011), p. 121.

the Ottoman patron saint of the city and linked the foundation to the state-controlled pilgrimage (*Hajj*). Three centuries later, Ziya Pasha performed the same act during his tenure as a governor in Syria, as he also restored the Ibn Arabi mausoleum. However, while Sultan Selim's act incorporated Ibn Arabi into an exclusive cosmopolitan Ottoman culture, many considered Ziya Pasha's act frivolous, especially when sectarian conflicts had started to plague Syria. Thomas Jagos, a British official, notes, "Zia Pasha has expressed to me his astonishment at the state of decay and stagnation which Damascus at present presents."[45] Even if British official reports on the discord between Ziya Pasha and the Syrians might not be reliable, Ziya Pasha's tenure was extremely short—only for six months—which suggests that he did have difficulty in adjusting to the province.[46] Sultan Selim's restoration of the tomb contributed to creating an elite, multilingual, and imperial cultural reservoir when members of the Ottoman elite no longer saw the empire as a frontier, tribal state but instead considered themselves builders of a new and strong imperial culture. Ziya Pasha was to my mind confronting the unsustainability of this imperial vision during a time of vast transformations. He considered this a clear sign of decline.

Harabat—like many other literary works produced in different languages throughout the empire—displays a manifest consciousness about a decline after a golden age, which, in Ziya Pasha's view, corresponded to the reign of Selim I (reigned 1512–1520) and Süleyman I (reigned 1520–1566). Sultans who receive the loftiest praises in *Harabat* are Sultan Selim I and Süleyman the Magnificent, because, in his words, they cared as much about the "order of language" (*tanzim-i lisan*) as state construction (34). In time, he thought, any harmony between stately order and

[45] quoted in Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa Üzerine*, pp. 411-12.

[46] For Ziya Pasha's life as a governor in Syria, see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa Üzerine*, pp. 268-82. Ziya Pasha also inscribed a Turkish poem on the entrance to this mausoleum. The poem praises Ibn Arabi and indicates that Ziya Pasha became the governor of Syria thanks to Ibn Arabi. Süleyman Nazif, *İki Dost*, p. 78.

literary-linguistic order began to vanish when the new emerging bureaucrat elite, including the grand viziers such as Ali and Fuad Pasha, alienated the sultan from the Ottoman intelligentsia. *Harabat* suggests that a *Tanzimat* project that aims to re-build the state through imperial reforms is bound to fail if it excludes the literary elite with whom Ziya Pasha identifies. Ziya Pasha's ideas are neither unprecedented nor unusual; other Ottoman intellectuals too perpetuated a decline consciousness that viewed the reign of Suleiman as a golden age and any deviation from the practices of his time as a sign of corruption.[47]

Ziya Pasha warns against a modernity project that overlooks the Ottoman reservoir and even considers it an obstacle in realizing its goals. He takes upon himself to include in the second volume of *Harabat* numerous poems by former Ottoman sultans who paid homage to literary traditions that Ziya Pasha seeks to preserve. The following lines of Sultan Murad III (reigned 1574–1595) is a case in point:

> *Dil derd-i yāre düşdi bir çare var mı yā Rab*
> *Bir ben gibi cihānda avāre var mı yā Rab* (*Harabat* II: 64)
>
> The heart is afflicted with the misery of beloved; is there any remedy, O God?
> Is there any vagrant like me in this world, O God?

Reading these lines without mentioning the author would make the reader never imagine that an emperor composed them. What Ziya Pasha wants to show us is that a powerful figure such as emperor can express in such lyrical terms the sentiments of a vagabond as a way to exemplify how former sultans understood the force of classical poetry. Ziya Pasha arguably fears that Ottoman sultans like Sultan Murad III who wrote poetry to lament the world's transience and their broken hearts were becoming relegated to a distant past.

[47]For more on the decline consciousness, see Cemal Kafdar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, no. 1-2 (1997–1998), pp. 30-75.

Furthermore, *Harabat* serves as a platform to call attention to the poet's invincibility as well as the ruler's fragility. Ziya Pasha died having long insisted that poets craft words until their last breath, while kings perish and are forgotten quickly. This is, he argues, the ultimate "revenge of the virtuous literati" (*fuzelanın intikamı*). After all, Ziya Pasha writes regarding "thousands of kings who have come to this world":

> *Ol göz ki baḳar bugün nehāre*
> *Yarın yuva ola mūr u māre* (25)
>
> That eye which today looks at the daylight
> Decays tomorrow into nests for ants and snakes

Thus, we get a stronger sense of Ziya Pasha's agenda in composing such an anthology. He wants to guide the Ottoman reader through the tradition of *Harabat* to show that sultans share the same fate with poets, with the ultimate suggestion that if poets are neglected, the social order will fall apart and sultans too will be forgotten. Therefore, he, unlike other major intellectuals of his time, does not consider the cosmopolitan literary heritage a source of decline but even an antidote to it. *Harabat* pleads for a harmonious negotiation between an idealized past and the present project of modernization, i.e. between the poet (literature) and the sultan (politics).

As opposed to *Harabat*, later nationalist histories of Ottoman literature projected Persian and Arabic texts as outdated classics that once influenced the Turkish literature. While *Harabat* considered texts of Ottoman reservoir eternal treasures that provide mystical inspiration, literary histories after *Harabat* viewed them as distant objects of historical curiosity. This burgeoning historical perspective played a key role in constructing the concept of the 'classical' that shapes our current study of literatures. Ottoman literature was starting to be viewed merely as an initial stage in the development of what would later become the modern nationalist Turkish literature. These histories drew upon European Orientalist works on Ottoman literature. The French writer whose works on Turkish history had the most influence on nationalist Turkish historians was Leon

Cahun who made the following remark on Young Ottomans: "The Young Ottomans… started a Turkish revolution initiated by Arabs."[48] Here, Cahun states that Young Ottomans did not only look to Western ideals but also looked back at the classical Arabic heritage to find the inspiration and energy for their new aspirations.

Cahun, like many other literary historians to be mentioned later in the chapter, spread the idea that Arabic culture represented a *classical civilization* for Ottomans, akin to what Greeks and Romans were for Western civilization. In order to create a new literature, many Ottoman intellectuals emphasized the need to overcome the influence of these classical works. In her famous history of Ottoman poetry, Dora d'Istria remarks that the Semitic Arabs and the Aryan Iranians stifled the national voice of the Ottoman Empire, as they turned out to be what Greek and Latin civilizations have been for the French.[49] Her perspective marked the beginning of a changing literary relation that redrew boundaries between Arabic and Turkish cultural spheres. It signified the dissolution of a literary community whose identity relied on its ability to draw upon the reservoir of tropes and images from canonized Turkish, Persian, and Arabic texts. Ottomans created the notion of the 'classical' as the multilingual Ottoman literary reservoir was partitioned into distinctive and independent literary trajectories. This transformation also corresponded to the emergence of literary histories that generate a progressive narrative, which selects folk or rustic foundational texts and projects the multilingual cosmopolitan heritage as abandoned ruins that the modern nation-state needs to overcome.

[48] Leon Cahun, "Le Monde Islamique de 1840 à 1870." *Histoire générale IVe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin & Cie., 1899), 11: p. 546.

[49] Dora d'Istria. *La poésie des Ottomans* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1877), pp. 42-43.

Bedri Gencer has argued that the nineteenth-century Western Orientalist scholarship has generated two conceptualizations of Islam—"Arab Islam as the civilization" (*medeniyet olarak Arap İslamı*) that was associated with arts, culture, and science and "Turkish Islam as the religion" (*din olarak Türk İslamı*) that was associated with a harsh, legalistic interpretation of Islam.[50] A particular consequence of this conceptualization was the burgeoning identification of the Arab Islam—in particular Andalusia and Muslim Sicily—with Mediterranean civilizations as well as the refusal to make a similar association between Ottomans and the Mediterranean legacy.[51] Yet, building upon the Greek, Arab, and Roman heritages, many Ottoman sultans and authors viewed the empire as "the third Rome." After Sultan Mehmed II (reigned 1444–1446 and 1451–1481) conquered Istanbul in 1453, Ottoman rulers saw the empire as the "New Rome" and wished to renew the ancient Roman Empire through reuniting Rome with Constantinople. According to Paolo Giovio who wrote his observations on the Ottoman Empire in *Commentaria* (1532), Sultan Süleyman often claimed that the empire of Rome and indeed the entire West belonged to him since he was the legitimate successor of Constantine the Great.[52]

Nineteenth century Ottoman men of letters turned their attention to Roman civilization to learn from and find solace in predecessors who suffered from the trauma of decline instead. As the Ottoman reservoir was dissolving, its intelligentsia started to have extensive debates also on the history of Rome, which had been an object of preoccupation for the empire long before the nineteenth century. Echoing Gibbon's influential work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89), some of the first writings by Şinasi and Namık Kemal also discussed

[50] Bedri Gencer, *İslam'da Modernleşme, 1839-1939* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2008), p. 10.

[51] ibid., pp. 288-90.

[52] Quoted in Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012), p. 50.

the reasons behind the decline of Rome.[53] As it became a signifier of decline rather than imperial grandeur, Rome eventually ceased to be a source of identification for Ottomans. Ziya Pasha uses in *Harabat* the designation, "Rum," which means "Roman" and refers to Anatolia that had remained under the Byzantine rule, as an epithet for Ottoman poets. Literary histories after *Harabat*, however, do not use this designation, as Selim Kuru notes, "[a]lthough Rum poets who composed their poetry in Turkish are today generally called 'Osmanlı' ['Ottoman'] or '*divan*' poets, this had not been the case until the nineteenth century. Before that time, they were distinguished among other local and foreign cultures by the title '*şuara-yı Rum*' (poets of Rum)."[54] Sharing a similar fate with Persian and Arabic heritages that were projected as old classics, Rome too was becoming "de-Ottomanized."

Literary histories published shortly after *Harabat* devote only a few lines to Arabic and Persian literatures and categorize them as "classics." Ottoman literature has a clear starting point: Just as Western literature began by imitating Greek and Roman works, Ottoman literature started by imitating Arabic and Persian works. Just as French literature produced its geniuses by imitating the classical Greek and Roman, Ottoman poetry created its geniuses as it imitated the classical Persian and Arabic traditions.[55] Tanpınar writes on the influence of Arabic on Cevdet Pasha's style: "In some ways, the influence of Arabic on Cevdet Pasha is like the influence of Latin on Western authors."[56] In all these works, Ottoman literature is the final destination in a teleological

[53] As an example, see Namık Kemal, "Romalılar'ın esbâb-ı ikbal ve zevâli hakkında mülâhazat," *Mir'ât* 3 (1862).

[54] Selim Kuru, "The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600)," *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, eds. Kate Fleet, Suraiya Faroqhi, and Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 549.

[55] İsmail Hakkı [Alişan,] *Muallim Naci Efendi* (Istanbul: Nişan Berberyan Matbaası, 1311 [1893/1894]), p. 88; Faik Reşat, *Tarih-i edebiyat-ı Osmaniye* (Istanbul: Dersaadet Kütüphanesi, 1330 [1911/1912]), p. 17; Mehmet Fuat [Köprülü], *Malûmat-ı edebiyye* (Istanbul: Kanaat Matbaası, 1330 [1911/1912]), p. 18.

[56] Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk edebiyatı tarihi*, p. 177.

Islamic history, which becomes the mirror image of a European history that has a similarly teleological trajectory whose origins lie in ancient Greece and Rome.

As these intellectuals saw themselves less as members of a cosmopolitan Mediterranean civilization, they identified themselves more readily with what they called an "Eastern civilization." For example, they expressed in their writings an unfettered admiration for Japan especially after the Russian defeat at the 1905 Russo-Japanese War because Japan, according to them, showed that it was possible to achieve progress without sacrificing traditional values. This admiration resulted from the concretization of an East/ West divide, making Japan a possible source of identification for Ottomans. Extensively documenting this growing fascination both in literary works of Arab and Turkish intellectuals or among the more general public, Renée Worringer describes this transformation: "To suddenly exit that history [a shared Mediterranean history characterized by both co-existence and conflict with the Christian Europe] in favor of a mythological brotherhood with a foreign, non-Muslim (in fact pagan) nation tucked away in East Asia and about which little was known or had been considered in centuries or decades past required some creative explanation."[57] At the same time, this identification with Japan reflected a desire for a "second chance with the West, a reentry into the European fold in which they would come equipped with Japanese-style modernization and progress as the cultural arbiter to gain inclusion."[58] This fascination among Ottoman intellectuals, ironically, overlooked the fact that the Meiji Japan intellectuals have not always considered themselves the bastions of the Eastern culture. These intellectuals openly rejected what they had considered backward Japanese values

[57] Renée Worringer, *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 7.

[58] ibid., p. 60.

and had celebrated Western cultural borrowings before they started to display a more patriotic and even aggressive defense of the Japanese traditional heritage. In other words, Japan was "Orientalized" among Ottomans who reduced Japan to a static image that stood for the glory of the East that could finally "bring the West to its knees."

In conjunction with this increasing affiliation with "Oriental civilizations" like Japan, Ottoman intellectuals identified themselves more strongly as members of an Islamic civilization.[59] Muallim Naci (1850–1893), who belonged to the "second generation" movement of Ottoman modernity—the "trio" of the first generation being Ziya Pasha, Şinasi, and Namık Kemal—composed *Esami* (*Names*, 1890), which briefly provides the biographies of around 800 poets and, like *Harabat*, includes works from Arabic, Turkish, and Persian poetic traditions. Muallim Naci chose for himself the pen name, "*Mes'ud-ı Harabat*," ("The Blessed of *Harabat*") clearly showing that he drew inspiration from and constantly engaged with Ziya Pasha's masterpiece. Even though both *Esami* and *Harabat* are on the same poetic heritages, *Esami* does not share *Harabat*'s vision for Ottoman culture and identity. Muallim Naci writes on the cover of *Esami* that the work includes biographies of literati who attained fame in the lands of Islam and dedicates the anthology to the "children of Islam." For Muallim Naci, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish heritages can come together under an Islamic framework but never constitute a cultural reservoir in which they "mix like milk and sugar."[60]

This more conspicuous emphasis on the Islamic framework characterizing *Esami* can also be traced in Namık Kemal's writings. He advocated a return to the purity of 'classical' Arabic, as

[59] ibid., p. 157.

[60] This pan-Islamist approach also characterizes the most recent comparative works on Persian, Arabic, and Turkish literatures, like "Comparative Islamic Literatures" (*al-adab al-islāmī al-muqāran*) by Husayn Mujīb al-Misrī. See Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Miṣrī. *Bayna al-adab al-'arabī wa-al-Turkī: Dirāsah fī al-adab al-Islāmī al-muqāran*. (Cairo: al-Dār al-Thaqāfīyah lil-Nashr, 2003).

Cahun also argued, that would save the Ottoman from the shackles of Persian literature to create a new literature (*edebiyat-i cedide*) in the light of modern European culture. After all, Namık Kemal argued, Europe is not really a foreign civilization, because it advanced through its contact with Arabs in Andalusia. Even though the Persian language produced a few good works like *Gulistan* or *Mathnawi*, its literature lacks the simplicity and clarity of classical Arabic. While the Turkish language could not erase even the Albanian language that did not have a proper alphabet, he argues, Arabic succeeded in overtaking the Greek language that was once rooted in the rich cultural heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean.[61] Even when they ceased to have their states, Arabs could preserve their identity thanks to their strong linguistic heritage.

Namık Kemal's views demonstrate that even the staunchest criticizers of the Ottoman courtly literary culture did not want to severe their ties from the heterogeneous Islamic literary heritages. In fact, the late nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire corresponds to an unprecedented circulation of classical Arabic texts, including Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima* or Mutanabbī's poems.[62] Vehbi composes his prominent Arabic-Turkish dictionary during this period. Hilmi Ziya Ülken notes that the majority of translations from "Eastern civilizations" took place when the Western world became a predominant influence on the Ottoman civilization.[63]

Many late Ottoman intellectuals who advocated Western reforms did not necessarily discard the classical Arabic heritage, but instead re-signified this heritage as the property of a national canon. In his work on Ottoman history, Namık Kemal complains that Ottomans did not have their own literary language and concludes with these words from Leibniz: "Give me a perfect

[61] Namık Kemal. "Lisan-i Osmaninin edebiyatı hakkında bazı mülahazat-ı şamildir," *Tasvir-i Efkar* 434 (1283 [1866/1877]).

[62] Saliha Paker, "Turkish Tradition," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker, (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 577.

[63] Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Uyanış Devirlerinde Tercümenin Rolü* (Istanbul: Vakit, 1997), p. 30.

language, and I will construct for you a grand nation."[64] Namık Kemal here advocates a German vision of nationalism in which language becomes the key factor that unites a national community as opposed to its British alternative in which allegiance to the state is the uniting factor.[65] In *Tahrib-i Harabat* (1303 [1885/ 1886]), a book-length diatribe that lists factual mistakes in *Harabat*, Namık Kemal argues that all nations rest upon the shoulders of literary figures who imagined their national communities—poets of *Muallaqāt* for the Arabs, Homer for the Greeks, Virgil for the Romans, Cervantes for the Spanish, Shakespeare for the British, Moliere for the French, and Schiller and Goethe for the Germans. [66] Namık Kemal could have viewed *Harabat* as an obstacle against the desire to revive Turkish national character and literature that had to be saved from the foreign Arab and Iranian influences. Only then, the Ottoman literature would attain a national authenticity and even originality and gain recognition in the world republic of letters that was constituted of national literatures.

Harabat: A Non-Western Manifesto of World Literature?

If the comparative literature discipline emerged in Europe when nationalism was on rise, *Harabat*, as a work of comparative literature, is a product of the transitional period of the late Ottoman Empire. Through analyzing Ziya Pasha's anthology in conjunction with earlier works of the comparative literature discipline, I discuss the categorizations that Ziya Pasha uses to organize literary histories of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish traditions in his work. These categorizations

64. Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı tarihi* (Istanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1326–1327 [1908/1909–1909/1910]), 4 vols., 4: p. 86.

65. For these two visions of nationalism, see Frank Lorenz Müller, *Britain and the German Question: Perceptions of Nationalism and Political Reform, 1830-63* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

66. Namık Kemal, *Tahrib-i Harabat* (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Ebüzziya, 1303 [1885/1886]), p. 27.

reflect a form of cultural hybridization, which is not captured in current studies of Arab and Turkish modernity that projects this period as a smooth transition from the cosmopolitan past to the nationalist present or in major works of comparative literature that often tends to project literatures as properties of national civilizations.

Harabat, unlike earlier Ottoman literary histories, divides works of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetry into three stages of "beginning, middle, and end" (*mukaddime, vasita, nihaye*). In this respect, *Harabat* is like the first works of comparative literature that analyzed literary works, as Natalie Melas shows, within a temporal and teleological scheme. According to Melas, the discipline of comparative literature in its initial years adopted a positivist approach and projected the Western literature as the most advanced stage of human culture and non-Western literatures as primitive. In other words, literature represented a milieu that reflected the level of a civilization's advancement.[67] As noted before, Ziya Pasha believed that the Ottoman poetry was at its most glorious stage when the empire reached the peak of its power during the reign of Sultan Süleyman and Sultan Selim. In this respect, *Harabat* resonates with first works of comparative literature that also considered cultural production a signifier of a civilization's advancement.

Indeed, like Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Ziya Pasha could be seen as a non-Western pioneer of world literature.[68] While *Harabat* includes literary traditions from multiple languages, Ziya Pasha does not make an extensive comparison among these traditions, mainly because he considers Arabic, Persian, and Turkish traditions members of the Ottoman reservoir. Due to its aspirations for undermining national canons that shape the current academic institutionalization,

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[67] Natalie Melas, *All the Difference in the World: Postcoloniality and the Ends of Comparison* (California: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. xii.

[68] For more on Tagore's vision of world literature, see Bhavya Tiwari, "Rabindranath Tagore's Comparative World Literature" in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, eds. Theo D'haean, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir (New York: Routledge, 2012).

comparative literature juxtaposes texts from different linguistic traditions, often assuming that each of these texts belongs to a different national canon. Multilingual reservoirs are rarely studied and theorized in the departments of national literature that are modeled upon national canons and of comparative literature that strives to overcome the limitations of nationalistic frameworks.

Like other works of comparative literature, *Harabat* expresses a genuine curiosity about the "foreign" European literatures. Ziya Pasha insists that the aspiring poet should have determination and an unbridled curiosity for reading European works:

> *İster iseñ añlamak cihānı*
> *Öğrenmeli Avrupa lisānı*
>
> *İtmiş orada fünūn teraḳḳī*
> *Taḥṣīlden eyleme tevaḳḳī*
>
> *Bilmek gerek andaki fünūnu*
> *Terk eyle taʿaṣṣub u cünūnı* (47)
>
> If you wish to comprehend the world
> You ought to learn the European language
>
> Arts and sciences have advanced there
> Do not refrain from acquiring knowledge
>
> It is crucial to learn arts and sciences there
> Leave aside zealotry and irrationality

When sharing with the reader the advanced status of arts and sciences in Europe, Ziya Pasha uses the Turkish suffix "*miş*," which refers to events that one learns or hears from someone else—a detail that demonstrates that Europe is a nebulous space in *Harabat*'s introduction. Ziya Pasha encourages the reader to pursue education because he *heard* that sciences and arts are highly developed in Europe. The word "there" (*orada*) substantiates the narrator's distance from Europe. Ziya Pasha indicates that one cannot become a "complete poet" without learning what he simply calls "the European language;" nevertheless, he never gives a clear idea about what this "European

language" corresponds to. While *Harabat* clearly lays out the conditions for becoming a poet and passes authoritative judgments on Persian, Arabic, and Turkish poetic traditions, it acknowledges the necessity of an engagement with the European tradition but does not provide clear guidance on how to do so.

Like major works of comparative literature, *Harabat* shares genuine curiosity about the relatively unknown cultural traditions; however, unlike these works, Ziya Pasha's anthology uses none of the categorizations of "Turkish literature," "Arabic literature," "French literature," "European literature" or "Middle Eastern literatures." Instead, the categorizations of this literary history are "works of Arab poets," "works of Iranian poets," and "works of Turkish poets." The subtle distinction between, for instance, "Arabic literature" and "works of Arab poets" demonstrates that *Harabat* does not subsume these works into national canons. In fact, the objects of comparison in *Harabat* are not "European literatures" and "Middle Eastern literatures" but instead works by "people of versification and expression" (*ehl-i nazım ve tabir*) of these cultures (50). As the following lines also suggest, Ziya Pasha does not take the leap to make generalizations about a particular national literature but confines his observations to individuals or literary communities, "*ehl-i nazım ve tabir*," at most:

> *Ḳābil mi ide Rāsīn Lāmārtīn*
> *Nefʿī gibi bir ḳaṣīde tezyīn*
>
> *Mümkin mi Senāʾī vü Farazdaḳ*
> *Molyer gibi bir tiyātro yazmaḳ* (49)
>
> Can Racine and Lamartine
> Compose a kaside like Nefi?
>
> Is it possible for Sanai and Farazdaq
> To write a theater play like Moliere?

Harabat retains its focus on elite men of letters rather than on texts ascribed to distinct national traditions and its objects of comparison are literary communities rather than national canons.

Fighting against nationalistic chauvinism, the comparative literature discipline shares high aspirations for a globe in which cultural tolerance and co-existence thrives. Hugó Meltzl de Lomnitz (1846–1908) makes the following remark: "True world literature, therefore, in our opinion, can only remain an unattainable ideal in the direction of which, nevertheless, *all independent literatures, i.e., all nations*, should strive."[69] At the same time, the insatiable desire to achieve the unattainable ideal of world literature emerges when the nation-state becomes the primary site of identification for literary texts. The world here is an eventual point of destination for national literatures.

Harabat does not share this enthusiasm for generating a new discipline. While the founding figures of comparative literature such as Meltzl de Lomnitz advocate collaboration—after all, Meltzl's journal accepted submissions in ten different languages and members of its editorial board hailed from many diverse places such as India and Iceland—*Harabat* crystallizes an intense alienation of an Ottoman intellectual who feels betrayed both by the ruling class and his peers such as Namık Kemal who consider the vision behind *Harabat* frivolous and even menacing to their future goals.[70] Only in Ottoman literary histories written after *Harabat*, texts become objects that circulate as "national ambassadors" rather than as streams that melted in an imperial reservoir.

In the last lines of his literary history, Ziya Pasha complains about his frail body and declining health:

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[69] Hugó Meltzl de Lomnitz, "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," *Comparative Literature: The Early Years* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 47, my emphasis.

[70] David Damrosch, "Hugo Meltzl and 'The Principle of Polyglottism,'" in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, p. 12.

Yazdım ne ise şikeste-beste
Maʿlūm değil mi ḥāl-i haste (106)

Frail and ruined, I wrote all I could
Is not the state of the sick apparent?

In a letter that he sent to the Ottoman grand vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha (1818–1883), Ziya Pasha describes difficulties he faced while composing *Harabat*. He was both bedridden due to health issues and heartbroken due to disappointments and afflictions of life. He wrote *Harabat* as a matter of consoling himself and forgetting all these problems.[71] Ziya Pasha's words pose a stark contrast to the robust determination in the foundational works of comparative literature. Meltzl de Lomnitz makes the following remark in "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature": "After all, it is necessary to assemble stone by stone the edifice of the future which may be of profit only to future generations."[72] The following remarks by Charles Mills Gayley (1858–1932)—the founder of the Society of Comparative Literature—reflects a similar desire: "The members of this Society of Comparative Literature must be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Even though they cannot hope to see the completion of a temple of criticism, they may have the joy of construction."[73]

Ziya Pasha indicates that he composed *Harabat* as a consolation for alleviating his pains and disappointments, while pioneers of European comparative literature such as Charles Mills Gayley insist that the practitioners of comparative literature should revel in the joy of creating a new discipline. *Harabat* expresses a strong sense of nostalgia for a period when Ziya Pasha's vision of the cultural reservoir was largely unchallenged by the Ottoman literati, while his contemporaries, such as Şinasi and Namık Kemal, started viewing Arabic and Persian poetry as

[71.] Quoted in Bilgegil, *Harabat kaşısında Namık Kemal*, p. 111.

[72.] Meltzl de Lomnitz, "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," p. 47.

[73.] Charles Mills Gayley, "A Society of Comparative Literature," *Comparative Literature: The Early Years*, p. 85, my emphasis.

members of distinct national canons. The "Ottoman way" that Ziya Pasha has adamantly defended may have faded away; however, *Harabat*'s reservoir can help today's scholars to imagine alternative ways in which literatures from different linguistic traditions come together.

The uncertainties, vacillations, and liminalities of *Harabat* were symptoms of sudden and unpredictable transformations of the late Ottoman period. As I show throughout my dissertation, liminality was the defining feature of other prominent writers, including Namık Kemal, Aḥmad Shawqī (1868–1932), Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945), Ahmet Midhat (1844–1912), and Muḥammad al-Muwaylihī (1868–1930). Even works of contemporary authors such as Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952) and Hudá Barakāt (b. 1952) display a similar sense of ambivalence. My project maps out manifestations of this ambivalence, while also revealing intra-Ottoman trajectories and projecting the Ottoman Empire as a dynamic milieu of circulation of texts and persons. By doing so, it demonstrates that the period of transition from cosmopolitan Ottomanism to Arab and Turkish nationalisms witnessed many cultural experimentations that become conspicuous especially in literary texts whose "literariness"—aspects of their language that set these texts apart from the ordinary speech and deconstruct rigid ideologies[74] —undermines the discursive strategies of nationalist intellectuals who instead wished to project the late Ottoman Empire as a time of cultural splits as well as clear-cut political transformations.

A stable ocean that asserts an immutable identity turned out to be not a fitting vision for the majority of architects of modernity who sought a linguistic, cultural, and social revival in the empire. For them, culture was more like a river in constant motion, suffering from a crisis and actively seeking new "water springs." Anxiety was the sentiment that sustained this motion—in particular, the anxiety of influence that pushed the culture to move away from what it considered

[74] Roman Jakobson, one of the premier figures of the Russian formalist school, coined the term "literariness." See Roman Jakobson, *Dialogues* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).

the past sources of influence towards the order of modern civilization. This anxiety would open up *Harabat*'s reservoir, its contents ready to be used for the emergence of modern Turkish and Arabic literatures. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* fleshes out liminal understandings of Ottoman identity that featured in the first works of these literatures before works that constituted the cosmopolitan Ottoman reservoir were deracinated for forming the pedestal for new national canons.

CHAPTER 2

Turāth as the Lens of Refraction:

Aḥmad Shawqī's "The New al-Andalus" and Aspirations for the "Dual Monarchy"

The 1912–1913 Balkan Wars resulted in one of the earliest refugee crises of the twentieth century. When it was defeated by the Balkan Alliance of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia, the Ottoman Empire lost 83 percent of its territory in Europe and 250,000 Muslims from the Balkans had to migrate to Istanbul.[1] This demographic displacement was one of the many symptoms of the sudden and unanticipated shifts in cultural and political frontiers in the Ottoman Empire. This displacement, however, should not be solely viewed as the harbinger of eventual political and cultural divergences that would shape the region after the emergence of nation-states in the twentieth century. I argue that many late Ottoman writings, in fact, perceived in this time of traumatic displacements new possibilities for political and cultural convergences, even the basis of what Faroz Ahmad called "the Dual Monarchy"—an Ottoman Empire that identifies itself as an Arab-Turkish political entity.

With the loss of its European territories, which had held for centuries a vital role in the empire's economy, administration, and intellectual life, Anatolia turned into the "Turkish core" and the rest of Arab lands the empire's "periphery" according to historians of the late Ottoman Empire.[2] The following words from Enver Pasha reveal the centrality of the Balkans for Turkish intellectuals: "After 400 years, to be cast out of Rumelia (Ottoman Balkans) and to move to Anatolia: this is something that cannot be borne."[3] Many Ottoman statesmen had to put more effort

[1] Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 202.

[2] ibid.

[3] Quoted in Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Zed Books, 2004), p. 95.

into reforming the Arab lands so that these reforms could make up for the economic losses that resulted from the Balkan defeat.[4] All these demographical and political shifts further led its intellectuals to turn inward—engaging much more frequently with existential explorations of their own cultural identity—and outward—expressing a burgeoning curiosity about distant parts of the world in their attempt to find role models that they could adapt into their particular contexts. Both orientations stemmed from their wish to forge new visions of culture that would alleviate the displacement of peoples, cultural values, and old economic systems.

These changing sociopolitical dynamics also generated new power hierarchies within what I call the "Ottoman cultural field." Pierre Bourdieu, who coined the term "field," defines it as a "network of object relations (of domination or subordination, of complementarity or antagonism etc.) between positions."[5] I build upon the concept "field" because it situates images, themes, works, and producers of early modern Arabic literature within a larger Ottoman context—in particular, a network of power relations shaped by this context. I recontextualize early modern Arabic and Turkish literatures in a cultural field, especially because the Ottoman courtly culture, as I described through my analysis of Ziya Pasha's *Harabat* in the previous chapter, has perceived itself as the frontier of the Islamic Middle East's diverse literary heritages, both preserving them and intertwining these heritages in innovative ways in its tradition. Since the Arab-Islamic heritage (*turāth*) was an integral part of the Ottoman courtly culture's formation, many Arab intellectuals could draw upon the *turāth* in their works to address not only their linguistic and national communities but also the multilingual and multicultural empire of which they were a part. Early

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[4] Emine Ö. Evered, *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p.160.

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 231.

modern neoclassical Arab poets, therefore, claimed a more authoritative stance in regards to the empire's domestic and international political affairs.

Pascale Casanova recently drew upon the concept field to create a new framework for world literature studies. She coined the term "world literary space" in order to analyze globe as a field in which national literatures compete with each other for cultural prestige. Casanova argues that whenever authors engage with their linguistic and nationalistic heritage, they situate themselves in a cultural field larger than the national:

> [U]nderstanding the way in which writers invent their own freedom—which is to say perpetuate, or alter, or reject, or add to, or deny, or forget, or betray their national literary (and linguistic) heritage—makes it possible to chart the course of their work and discover its very purpose. National literary and linguistic patrimony supplies a sort of a priori definition of the writer, one that he will transform (if need be, by rejecting it or, as in the case of Beckett, by conceiving himself in opposition to it) throughout his career. In other words, the writer stands in a particular relation to world literary space by virtue of the place occupied in it by the national space into which he has been born. But his position also depends on the way in which he deals with this unavoidable inheritance; on the aesthetic, linguistic, and formal choices he is led to make, which determine his position in this larger space.[6]

Casanova's framework needs to be revised if we want to understand the emergence of modern Arabic literature in the context of the recent "global turn" in humanities since early modern Arab and late Ottoman Turkish authors were not "born into" two distinct national spaces. Both communities reflected on and responded to historical events that shaped the entire empire in their works. Furthermore, these communities did not engage with two totally different patrimonies. Medieval Arabic masterpieces that belonged to *turāth* have also constituted the cultural reservoir of the Ottoman court in Istanbul. Since literary figures who are today claimed by different nation-states that emerged after the demise of the empire drew upon a shared Ottoman cultural reservoir, early modern Arabic authors engaged with their national and linguistic patrimony within an

[6] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 41

Ottoman cultural field. Therefore, how early modern Arab authors "invented their own freedom" should be analyzed not just within the context of national awakening but also within their engagement with the power dynamics that defined this field.

Through this recontextualization, I flesh out the previously overlooked cultural liminalities and convergences of the late Ottoman period through giving a close reading of "The New al-Andalus" (*Al-Andalus al-jadīda*) by Aḥmad Shawqī (1868–1932), who is known as the "prince of poets" (*amīr al-shuʿarāʾ*) in the Arab world and the most eminent figure of early modern Arabic neoclassical poetry. Critics, who have analyzed extensively his other poems on al-Andalus (Muslim Spain), have focused in particular on "The Journey to al-Andalus" (*Al-Riḥla ilā al-Andalus*), more widely known as his *Sīniyya*, which Shawqī wrote during his exile in Spain. They argued that the *Sīniyya* symbolized a transitional moment for modern Arabic literature because it was Egypt's poetic manifesto on the birth of its national consciousness.[7] However, even if Shawqī could have changed his cultural and political affiliations during his exile, al-Andalus retained the same symbolic associations such as interfaith dialogue, civilizational grandeur, and the loss of this grandeur after a humiliating defeat against the Christian world throughout his poetry. Al-Andalus, which Shawqī used as a central image for the first time in "The New al-Andalus" (1912) to guide the Ottoman Empire, again attained such a key role in the *Sīniyya* (1919) now to guide Egypt instead. Critics consider his exile a turning point that ended his affiliations with the empire; however, the *Sīniyya* uses the repertoire of themes, metaphors, and images of "The New al-Andalus."

[7] Shawqī was the court poet of the khedive of Egypt from 1892 to 1914. In 1914, the British exiled him to Spain due to his support for the Egyptian khedive. On Shawqī's exile, see Antoine Boudot-Lamotte, *Ahmad Šawqī: L'Homme Et l'Oeuvre* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1977), pp. 53-64. His son, Husayn Shawqī, also writes about his memories when he was with his father in Spain in an autobiographical work. Ḥusayn Shawqī, *Abī Shawqī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-nahḍa al-miṣrīya, 1947), pp. 32-88.

The first section of this chapter describes how the Balkan defeat created for Arab and Turkish intellectuals both a strong sense of traumatic humiliation and aspirations for a new political order. I then read closely "The New al-Andalus" in the second section to demonstrate that al-Andalus becomes the fictional lens through which Shawqī provides his own interpretation of the Balkan defeat. Al-Andalus not only captures the trauma of the defeat but also gives Shawqī the authority to guide the empire towards a better future. I reveal similarities between his pro-Ottomanist "The New al-Andalus" and nationalist *Sīniyya* for also undermining core assumptions on the emergence of modern Arabic literature, foremost of which is that the emergence of nation-states in the Middle East was a clear turning point for its literary history.

The Balkan Defeat: Trauma of Loss and Aspirations for a New Political Order

According to Bruce Masters, while "Egypt attained nominal independence in the mid-nineteenth century, Ottoman cultural influences had never been stronger in the country."[8] One could make a similar statement about Arab cultural influences among Ottoman Turkish intellectuals. Islamist Turkish intellectuals of the Second Constitutional period (1908–1914) such as Mehmet Akif [Ersoy] (1873–1936) were deeply influenced by thinkers such as Rashīd Riḍā (1865–1935), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1845–1905), and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838/39–1897).[9] Furthermore, Şükrü Hanioğlu demonstrated that translations of Büchner's works into Arabic by

[8] Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, *1516–1918: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 188. While many Arab and Turkish Ottoman intellectuals viewed the Balkan defeat as a catastrophe, it meant liberation and freedom for many others in the Balkans. For this other perspective, see Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqi, *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Boston: Brill, 2002).

[9] İnci Enginün, *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e (1839-1923)* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p. 98.

Shiblī Shumayyīl (?–1917) played a major role in shaping the cultural formation of what is now known as "materialist" Ottoman Turkish intellectuals such as Beşir Fuad (1852–1887).[10]

Probably aware of these cultural exchanges and willing to capitalize on them, Sultan Abdülhamid II even considered making Arabic an official language of the empire.[11] He has also put more emphasis than any other previous sultan on his title, the caliph, to project himself as the leader of all Muslims. This renewed emphasis on the empire's Muslim identity had many advantages. Muslims have become the predominant majority of the empire after vast territorial losses in Europe. Furthermore, many Muslims throughout the world were living under the imperial rule of Western European countries, and many looked up to the Ottoman Empire as the single independent Muslim political entity that could fight against imperialist powers.

The sultan would also capitalize on the growing consciousness among Muslims of their belonging to a global community by showing his support for Muslims in Java or various parts of the Indian subcontinent. The rise in telecommunications technology led Muslims around the world to identify themselves more strongly as members of a global community that remains united regardless of linguistic and cultural differences. Many Islamist journals also complained that Muslims communities remained unaware of sufferings of their religious brethren in other parts of the world.[12]

It was not just the sultan who wished to reinforce bonds among Muslims of the empire. As Feroz Ahmad puts it,

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[10] Mustafa Gündüz, *Osmanlı Mirası, Cumhuriyet'in İnşası: Modernleşme, Eğitim, Kültür, ve Aydınlar* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2010), p. 110.

[11] Bedri Gencer, *İslam'da Modernleşme 1839-1939* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2008), p. 532.

[12] Gündüz, *Osmanlı Mirası, Cumhuriyet'in İnşası*, p. 334.

> Finding itself ruling over an empire that had just lost most of its European territories, [the Ottoman Empire] began to focus on its attention on Anatolia and the Arab provinces. The Unionists even imagined using the Dual Monarchy model for the Ottoman Empire…. The model was appealing because such an empire would rest on the shoulders of Turks and Arabs, just as the Dual Monarchy rested on the shoulders of the Germans and Hungarians.[13]

Despite the overall lack of emphasis in the current scholarship on this vision of the "Dual Monarchy," many intellectuals, such as ʿAzīz ʿAlī al-Mıṣrī, upheld this vision. In fact, Arabs who received their educations in Istanbul universities believed that it became easier for them to rise up in the empire's administrative ranks. Therefore, instead of independent nation-states, they aspired for an empire in which its Arab population exerted a significantly stronger influence. Even in 1914, when the empire formally entered World War I that would lead to its demise, Talat Pasha believed that all the potential conflicts with the empire's Arab constituencies would eventually get resolved.[14] Many other members of the empire could not have foreseen the sudden and, to many, shocking political transformations that would afflict the empire during World War I.

Due to these abovementioned reasons, Arab intellectuals displayed a heightened awareness towards political events that shaped the empire during its final years. The Balkan defeat, in particular, triggered extensive debates about its future. Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia formed the Balkan League in 1912 in order to expel the Ottomans from European territories. The Balkan countries saw the defeat of the empire in the Italian-Turkish War of 1911–1912 as an opportunity to attack the Ottoman Empire and expand their territories further. This led to the First Balkan War, after which the empire lost almost all of its European territories. Shawqī wrote "The New al-Andalus" after this defeat that also resulted in the loss of Edirne, one of the most important

[13] Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities: Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs, 1908-1918* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2014), p.118.

[14] ibid., p. 123.

cities in Ottoman history. Although the empire eventually regained Edirne in the Second Balkan War in 1913, the defeat at the end of the First Balkan War etched a sense of rootlessness and hopelessness in the psyche of the Ottoman world.

The loss of the Balkans created an intense trauma for Turkish intellectuals, as the empire developed its formative years in the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire "was first and foremost a Balkan Empire."[15] Edirne, which Bulgarians captured at the end of the First Balkan War, served as the empire's third capital city from 1363 to 1453, before Istanbul became the empire's fourth and final capital. Hayriye Süleymanoğlu Yenisoy argues that Turkish authors advocated a pan-Islamist Ottoman ideology in the beginning of the Balkan Wars, but their works eventually glorified ethnic Turkish nationalism once the defeat became imminent.[16] Indeed, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey, declared that the Balkan defeat was the death knell of the empire.[17] With the defeat, the hitherto Near East was to be partitioned into the two conceptually disparate regions of the Balkans and the Middle East. Pan-Islamist aspirations among Turkish intellectuals came to an end also because the Muslim Albania declared independence.[18] The Balkan Wars ended "all the illusions of… the brotherhood between the elements of the empire and the quest for Ottoman modernity."[19]

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[15] Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 25.

[16] For other works that document the representations of the Balkan Wars in Turkish literatures and newspapers, see Halûk Harun Duman, *Balkanlara Veda: Basın ve Edebiyatta Balkan Savaşı (1912-1913)* (Istanbul: Duyap, 2005) and Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks, and the Balkans* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

[17] F. Rezzan Ünalp, "Balkan Savaşları'na İlişkin Örneklerle Askeri ve Psikolojik İncelemeler," *The Centenary of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913): Contested Stances*, ed. Mustafa Türkeş (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 2 vols., II: p. 828.

[18] Oğuzhan Türkoğlu, "Balkan Savaşları Sonrası Anadolu'ya Yönelen Göçün 'Hayali Cemaatler' Teorisi Perspektifinden İncelenmesi," in *The Centenary of the Balkan Wars*, I: p. 327.

[19] Erol Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), p. 47.

Ottoman defeat in the Balkans led to extensive debates in the Arab world as well. The strong censorship that characterized the Abdülhamid era greatly diminished after the coup of 1908. The press welcomed a plethora of different views, so intellectuals could voice their opinions more freely. Therefore, the Balkan War received widespread coverage in the Arabic press. The Balkan Peninsula was an alien, strange land for many Arabs. In the November issue of *al-Hilāl*, published a few days after the Balkan Wars broke out, Jurjī Zaydān (1861–1914) provides encyclopedic information on the region's mountains, rivers, population, and economic resources, suggesting that the reader has no familiarity with the region. At the same time, the Balkan Peninsula, although foreign to the Arab world, was never peripheral for the imperial center. In a map of the Balkans, Zaydān divides the Ottoman Empire into two parts: "Turkey," which corresponds to the empire's European territories and "Turkey in Asia" (*Turkiyyā fī Asyā*) which corresponds to Asia Minor.[20] Zaydān considers Istanbul a Balkan city and the conquest of Istanbul an integral part of the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans that made it a global empire. Zaydān, like many other Arabs, claimed that the Balkans could never successfully integrate into the Ottoman Empire whose roots rested on the Arab-Islamic civilization. Therefore, the Balkans rebelled unsurprisingly against the empire.[21] Many other prominent Arab intellectuals shared the same view. Maḥmūd Shihāb wrote that the Balkans had a heterogeneous ethnic and religious composition and could never fully integrate into the Ottoman Empire.[22] Although many of these writings projected the Balkans as a foreign, and often Christian, enemy, the Balkan defeat was far from a catastrophe that was

[20] Jirjī Zaydān, "Al-mamālik al-Bulqān wa al-dawla al-ʿuthmāniyya," *Al-Hilāl* 21, no. 2 (1912), p. 66.

[21] ibid, p. 80.

[22] Maḥmūd Shihāb, *Tārīkh al-ḥarb al-Balqānīya* (Beirut: M. Shihab, 1913), p. 122.

happening at a distance, because for the first time, Arab conscripts were fighting and dying for the Ottoman army in the Balkans.

The Balkan Wars and the ensuing military defeat extinguished hope for a unified Ottoman polity for many Arabs. Some had already lost pro-Ottomanist aspirations when Italy invaded the Ottoman provinces in North Africa (later known as Libya) in 1911 and considered the empire's inability to protect these provinces a sign of its negligence of Arabs.[23] At the same time, some Arab intellectuals believed that this defeat would lead to a new, rejuvenated Ottoman Empire, even creating a future in which Arabs and Turks had an equal share. They thought that the Ottoman Empire was, in essence, an Asiatic empire, so it had to leave aside aspirations for keeping its European territories. As the empire lost the majority of its Christian population with the Balkan defeat, the state could maintain a stronger and more "organic" bond with its Muslim population. Fu'ād and Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf argued that if the empire cared more about the Muslim world than about the Balkans, it would have avoided this catastrophic decline.[24] In the end, they noted that the Empire should leave aside its aspirations to become European and come to terms with the fact that it is an "Asian state" (*dawla asyawīya*) after the Balkan defeat.[25]

Like many of these intellectuals, Shawqī also wrote extensively on manifold political events in the Ottoman Empire, including the Balkan Wars.[26] However, the Anglophone scholarship

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[23] Erol Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), p. 47.

[24] Līndā Ṣadaqah, Fu'ād Ṣarrūf and Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf, "Mustaqbal al-bilād al-ʿUthmānīya," *al-Muqtaṭaf* 42, no. 6 (1913), p. 560.

[25] ibid, p. 567.

[26] On Shawqi's works on Ottoman poetry, see Muḥammad Zāhid 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah, *Al-Tārīkh al-'Uthmānī fī shi'r Aḥmad Shawqī*. (Canada: Dār al-Rāʾid, 1996) and Ahmet Kazım Ürün, *1868-1932 Mısır'da Türk Bir Şair: Ahmet Şevki* (Istanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2002). For some of his poems on the Ottoman Empire, see Aḥmad Shawqī, *Al-Mawsū'a al-Shawqīyya: Al-a'māl al-kāmila li-amīr al-shu'arāʾ Aḥmad Shawqī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1994), II: pp. 413-20; III: pp. 315-23; V: pp. 92-95; V: pp. 463-66; V: pp. 470-74; V: pp. 487-88.

has extensively focused on Shawqī's poetry on Egypt. Hussein Kadhim analyzed his "postcolonial qasida" written against Lord Cromer, while Akiko Sumi and Yaseen Noorani focused on his *Sīniyya*. To situate Shawqī's works within a larger Ottoman context, I give a close reading of "The New al-Andalus," which is a poetic manifesto for a new order that Shawqī hoped would emerge after the Balkan defeat. Al-Andalus disproves any consideration that Europe is an unfamiliar enemy; even before the Ottoman Empire came into existence, Arabs of al-Andalus were a part of and even contributed to the Western civilization. Furthermore, Shawqī's poem emphasizes that the Balkans, unlike what many other Arab intellectuals have suggested, was an integral part of the empire, not a foreign territory.

Building upon Saint Augustine's famous insight, "the present time of things past is memory; the present time of things present is sight; and the present time of future is expectation," William Granara argues that "[t]he process of writing al-Andalus in modern Arabic literature involves a dynamic of memory, sight, and expectation that determines the form and conveys the seminal messages of the text."[27] Al-Andalus has been the key metaphorical site through which modern Arab writers not only look at their past but also contemplate about their present situation and shape future aspirations of their community.

Al-Andalus played a similar role also for late Ottoman Turkish writers. Just as Jurjī Zaydān wrote several historical novels on al-Andalus, Abdülhak Hamid (1852–1937), the Turkish grand poet (*şair-i azam*), dedicated five plays to it.[28] Ziya Pasha (1825–1880) translated *Histoire arabes et des mores d'Espagne* (1851; *History of Arabs and Moors in Spain*) by Vierdot (1800–1883) into

[27] William Granara, "Nostalgia, Arab Nationalism, and the Andalusian Chronotope in the Evolution of the Modern Arabic Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 1 (2005), p. 60.

[28] These works are *Nazife*, *Tarık yahut Endülüs'ün fethi*, *Tezer yahut Melik Abdurrahmannü's-Sâlis*, *İbn Musa yahut zâtü'l-cemal*, and *Abdullahü's-Sagîr*. For a complete list of Tarhan's works, see İnci Enginün, *Abdülhak Hamid Tarhan* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1986), pp. 93-94.

Turkish. With the increasing Western presence in the empire during the nineteenth century, these authors used the trope of al-Andalus to articulate their opinions on East-West relations. For some, al-Andalus represented the ideal of co-existence between Islamic and Western values. They could in fact project Westernization as a return to Islamic roots hitherto ignored due to the wrongdoings of their ancestors. In contrast, al-Andalus could also symbolize incompatibility and even enmity between Islamic and Christian worlds, in particular in works that focus on Islamic conquest of the Iberian peninsula, such as *Fatḥ al-Andalus, aw, Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād* (1903; The Conquest of Andalusia or Tariq ibn Ziyad) by Jurjī Zaydān (1861–1914) or *Tarık yahut Endülüs fethi* (1878/9; Tarıq or the Conquest of Andalusia) by Abdülhak Hamid.[29]

This revived interest in al-Andalus reflected a growing preoccupation with the classical Arabic poetic heritage throughout the empire during the late nineteenth century. With the unprecedented circulation of classical Arabic masterpieces, such as Abū Tammām's and Mutanabbī's poetry, this heritage became more accessible to a wider segment of the society, including the pioneering figures of early modern neoclassical Arabic poetry.[30] In terms of meter, rhyme, place-names, personages, thematic types (*aghrad*), lexical inventory, and figurative language, this neoclassical poetry drew heavily upon medieval Arabic poetry, especially that of the Abbasid era (750–1258). Furthermore, while the form of early modern neoclassical Arabic poetry was like that of its medieval predecessors, its content was "modern," narrating political and historical events that affected the entire empire or even more distant parts of the world such as

[29] For Jurjī Zaydān's works on al-Andalus, see William Granara, "The Historical Poetics of Jurji Zaidan's Andalusian Fictional Cosmos," in *Jurji Zaidan: Contributions to Modern Arab Thought and Literature*, eds. George C. Zaidan and Thomas Philipp (Bethesda, MD: The Zaidan Foundation, 2013), pp. 231-42.

[30] Saliha Paker, "Turkish Tradition," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 577. Even if few people read these classics that had a difficult and even incomprehensible language for many, these works had a wide reception, because they were summarized in the popular newspapers and taught in schools. Masters, *Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 204.

Japan.[31] Indeed, "[t]he old Arabic dictum to the effect that 'poetry is the annals of the Arabs' (*al-shi'ru dīwānu'l-ʿarab*) has never been so true in the history of Arabic literature as it was in the heyday of neoclassical Arabic poetry."[32] At the same time, I propose that neoclassical poetry *refracted* rather than reflected the region's political transformations. Translation studies, following Lawrence Venuti, has defined translation as a refraction to put emphasis on its hermeneutic ("refractive") rather than instrumental ("reflective") value. While earlier scholars, in particular linguists, viewed translation as an instrument that merely transmits a source text's content in the target language, more scholars now consider translation interpretation and even creative rewriting of the source text.[33]

By writing about events that shaped the Ottoman Empire in the style of classical Arabic, neoclassical poets situated them within a repertoire of signifiers from the *turāth*. This intertextual process generated a deeply nuanced interpretation, or *refraction*, of the Ottoman political sphere. Early modern neoclassical Arabic poetry, therefore, did not merely transcribe the political history of the late nineteenth century but provided a particular interpretation of it. As a result, the revival of Arabic culture that this poetry sought did not arise only as a reaction and resistance to Turkish

[31] For Shawqī's poem on the earthquake in Tokyo, see Shawqī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Shawqīyya*, V: p. 135. For another work that argues that the pioneers of Arab cultural nationalism did not necessarily aspire for seceding from the Ottoman Empire, see Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nahdah: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 127-58.

[32] S. Somekh, "The Neo-classical Arabic Poets," *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 51.

[33] Lawrence Venuti has defined translation as an intertextual process, since "[t]ranslation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying them another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there. The foreign text, then, is not so much communicated as inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and interests." *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p.100.

cultural nationalism, as Yasir Suleiman argued, but also through an active "translation" and hence interpretation of the modern Ottoman world. [34]

Al-Andalus, thus, is the fictional lens through which the reader interprets the Ottoman history in Shawqī's poem. It is not an object of gaze that perpetuates nostalgia about an idyllic Islamic past or a metaphorical site that merely conveys the author's views on East-West relations; al-Andalus rather *bridges* the reader to the Balkans and the Ottoman political world. Even when many other Arab intellectuals, like Shawqī, affirmed their allegiance to the Ottoman dynasty, they used the classical Arabic heritage as the medium through which they provided their perspective and even critique of the empire. In conjunction with their burgeoning engagement with the empire's affairs, some of them also participated more actively in its administration. For instance, the pioneer of modern Arabic neoclassical poetry, Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī (1839–1904), "recognized and recreated as the founder of Arab nationalism coinciding with the revitalization of the utopian vision of this movement,"[35] served as a civilian officer in Istanbul. During his time there, he became acquainted with classical Arabic, Turkish, and Persian poetic traditions that constituted the formation of an Ottoman intellectual like Ziya Pasha.

What these neoclassical poets chose to emphasize from the *turāth* revealed key insights into their opinions about events that shaped the empire. The cultural capital of al-Andalus in Shawqī's poem elevates the Balkans to a respectable addressee whose loss afflicts the entire Islamic community. Authors who disagreed with Shawqī's view drew upon other aspects of *turāth* when they wrote on the Balkan Wars. The beginning of an article on the Balkan Wars in al-

[34] Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), p. 70.

[35] Terri DeYoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi: Reconfiguring Society and the Self* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), p. 2.

Muqtaṭaf (1912) quotes verses from two pre-Islamic poets, Zuhayr ibn Abī Sūlmā (520–609) and Ibn Qays al-Kinānī (?), who both wrote against tribal feuds. When the article introduces al-Kinānī's verses with the words, "as our people say in the words of Ibn Qays al-Kinānī's wisdom" (*rijālunā yaqūlūn bi lisān ḥikmat Ibn Qays al-Kinānī*), it elevates him to a leader whose words crystallize the empire's political situation.[36] These references project the Balkan Wars as a tribal conflict, and the Balkans a foreign other that does not belong to the Arab tribe, unlike Shawqī, who actually called Macedonia part of the Muslim tribe, *ʿashīra*, in "The New al-Andalus" (v. 10).

"Despair lies behind and hope ahead": Reading "The New al-Andalus"

A close reading of the poem provides deeper insights on how Shawqī "refracts" the Balkan Wars. The first lines of al-Andalus describe the cataclysmic tumult caused by the traumatic Balkan defeat, while also reminiscing about the Islamic civilization's past glories (vv. 1–10). Shawqī then addresses Macedonia and writes about the gory and catastrophic consequences of the Balkan defeat (vv. 11–57). Addressing the imperial center, Istanbul, he declares that what led to this traumatic moment in history was caused by centuries of decline and slumber and lays out the ways in which the empire can put an end to its problems, such as scientific reform and more harmonious unity among the empire's diverse communities (vv. 58–83). He finally assures Edirne that it should be proud of its heroic stance against the enemy despite the catastrophic and irretrievable defeat (vv. 84–105).[37] My close reading focuses on several roles of al-Andalus in the poem. Al-Andalus stands for both the trauma of defeat and the future that the empire should aspire for. Drawing upon

[36] Ṣadaqa and Ṣarrūf, *al-Muqtataf*, p. 485.

[37] For the poem, see Shawqī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Shawqīyya,* V: pp. 118-27. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sasson Chahanovich for his help on my translation. Please see the appendix for my own English translation and the Arabic source text.

the cultural capital of al-Andalus, Shawqī projects himself as the sage poet who would guide the empire to a better future.

Al-Andalus as Trauma of the Past

"The New al-Andalus" is less a diatribe against a particular enemy than mourning for a significantly transformed political order. The poem does not provide an accurate transcription of historical events. Although Shawqī extensively lists the horrendous consequences of the Balkan defeat (vv. 91–98), we read little about perpetrators of the violence. "The New al-Andalus" lacks any overt reference to a Balkan territory except Macedonia. Shawqī does not provide a plethora of historical facts that would overshadow the intensity of trauma. Al-Andalus provides the repertoire of associations and metaphors that help the reader to associate the chaotic and unrepresentable present, the Balkan defeat, with a more recognizable trauma of al-Andalus that has been inscribed into the Islamic memory repeatedly for centuries.

The fall of the crescent moon (v. 1) signifies the end of the Islamic civilization's glorious past, which the poet looks with suspicion "as if it were all a dream" (v. 8). The ambiguity of the word "as if" (*ka-anna*) captures Shawqī's dilemma: All remnants of the classical heritage confirm that this past existed, while imagining this past becomes almost implausible due to the traumatic present. Shawqī would feel less shattered if the entire world order crumbled and darkness engulfed the entire sky (v. 2) rather than witness this defeat. The plethora of two-word nominal sentences suggests that the reality is too clear-cut to accept any wordplay that cherishes ambiguity—the sword is unscathed; the plague overbearing; the flood frightening; and the snow-heap mountainous (v. 97). The peninsula's soundscape will never be the same, as one no longer hears the prayers (v. 92). The war annihilates all the graveyards—perhaps the most significant sign of the Muslim community's deracination from the peninsula (v. 94). The fall of the Balkans triggers a worldwide

cataclysm that does not just affect the Balkans. Shawqī considers the Balkan defeat the cause of even past traumas such as the European colonial expansion into North Africa:

> *Yesterday, Africa turned its back and a kingdom fell*
> *Into the midst of a fathomless ocean.* [38]
>
> *The Caliph's crescent flag once contained four kingdoms.*
> *These jewels no longer adorn the imperial neck.*
>
> *Since the conquest of the Hashimites or Umayyads*
> *Neither Tatars nor Persians could shake its foundations.*
>
> *God's decree manifests itself in Macedonia today*
> *There is no way for us to confirm this decree or reject it.* (vv. 27–30)

The Balkan defeat destroys the order in the four North African kingdoms—Egypt, Trablus (modern-day Libya), Tunisia, and Algiers—and becomes also a trope for the fragmentation of the entire Arab world.

Confronting with vast transformations, Shawqī also uses the trope of al-Andalus to re-write the Ottoman heritage. The first verse interpolates the Balkans as "sister of al-Andalus," creating an essential bond between the two communities. The Balkans, like al-Andalus, becomes a central land whose loss represents a catastrophe for the Arab world and al-Andalus, like the Balkans, an integral part of the Ottoman heritage. Once Shawqī interpolates the Balkans as the "sister of al-Andalus," he constructs a kinship bond that gives the Balkans a prominent role in the Arab-Islamic civilization. This interpolation also transforms al-Andalus, which becomes a past homeland, not just for the modern Arab selfhood but also the entire Ottoman community that now suffers from a perpetual sense of rootlessness after the Balkan defeat.

Shawqī uses the present tense (*tamḍī*) when writing about the wound of al-Andalus, a detail that suggests that it is still afflicting his community:

> *The one* (hādhā; the wound of the Balkans) *flows;*

[38] The line refers to the recent territories that the empire lost in North Africa.

That (dhāka; the wound of al-Andalus) *one heals not.* (v. 4)

Al-Andalus is neither a layer of unconsciousness that hides underneath the modern Arab self nor is it an archaeological site that waits to be unearthed. Al-Andalus is visible on the body of the Ottoman community, still bleeding, and the Balkan defeat creates another irremediable wound on this body. While painful, the diasporic dispersion from al-Andalus also marked the beginning of affective bonds that sustained a multicultural coexistence in the Empire:

Days have passed between the death of al-Andalus and your own demise
Such days in which we [once] *loved and despised.* (v. 7)

Only here does Shawqī use the word "we" in the poem to lament a bygone time of unity, with its good and bad times. Yet the dispersion from the Balkans promises no future unity, glory, or home—a fact that haunts the entire poem.

In this new political order, poetic tropes do not serve the function they had for centuries: "The cupbearer is replaced and the goblet has changed hands" (v. 13). While the ruler protects the poet from the vicissitudes of time in the classical panegyric poem, fate (*dahr*) now destroys not just crumbling ruins but also formidable empires (v. 8) and even the full moon (v. 3). The world in which the poet praises a sultan that promises eternal stability is over. Shawqī uses tropes of the praise poetry, but for a different addressee. The word "lion" does not praise the ruler but all Muslim men in the Balkans and "antelopes" not to eulogize the beauty of a single beloved but of all Muslim women (v. 92). The Balkan defeat does not only transform the region's geography but also creates a trauma intense enough to redefine the poetic tropes that have existed for centuries.

While Ottomans called those who migrated from the Caspian Sea region *göçmen*, they called people who migrated from the Balkans *muhacir*.[39] Both words mean migrant, but the word

[39] H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, "Balkanlar'dan Türkiye'ye Göçlerin Genel Değerlendirmesi," *The Centennary of Balkan Wars*, I: p. 285.

muhacir has religious connotations, as it also refers to the first Muslims who migrated from Mecca to Medina. Likewise, Shawqī uses the word *muhājirīn* for migrants from the Balkans (v. 52). Prophet Muhammad's companions found refuge in Medina and the Islamic civilization erased in Iberia flourished in the Ottoman lands. Yet this last wave of migration from the Balkans will find no stable hostland. Migrants will face death wherever they go. Regardless of the direction they take, all share the same fate: the sword if they leave and the execution table if they stay (v. 54). Shawqī underlines this situation through the repetition of the same words (*in*) or words that rhyme (*al-firār* and *al-qarār*; v. 54).

The harshest aspect of this new reality for the Balkan Muslims is that their homeland is beyond recognition (v. 53). Traces of al-Andalus still remained, whether as ruins in the Iberian Peninsula or common tropes that recurred in the classical Arabic poetry tradition, but the Balkans will remain unrecognizable forever. Classical poets such as al-Saraqustī (d. 1143) lamented the fallen cities of al-Andalus in *rithā' al-mudun* (elegies for fallen cities). These poets described the lost cities so extensively that they could be restored again at least in the reader's imagination.[40] However, Shawqī's poem lacks any concrete reference to the architecture or geography of the Balkans. The Balkans cannot survive even in Shawqī's poetic monument—the sign of its eternal loss.

Al-Andalus and the Cultural Capital of Turāth

Even more disconcerting than the Balkan defeat is its messenger:

> *The messanger of death announces that the empire does not stand*
> *On its ground, nor does it move on its feet.* (v. 24)

[40] For these elegies by al-Saraqustī, see Alexander E. Elinson, *Looking Back at al-Andalus: The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature* (Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 51-81.

Shawqī here describes the telegraph that brings news of the defeat and crystallizes a deterritorialization created by the communications revolution, which Nergis Ertürk describes in depth:

> Despite the oppressive political climate of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the literary works of this period register the communications revolution as a powerful linguistic liberation. "Liberation" here might be best understood not in terms of the historical dissemination of French Enlightenment political concepts of freedom and equality, but rather as an uprooting of the linguistic sign into omnidirectional exchangeability. . . My contention here is that the emergence of the novel in the Ottoman literary context cannot be understood apart from an early enchantment with (as well as fear of) this "freed" power of language. For a brief period, at a time of intensified communicability, authorship in the empire meant not the original invention of a story but the transcription of the news (*haber*; *rivayet*) of a freed language.[41]

I find Ertürk's insights equally applicable to early modern Arabic literature. However, transcribing events of modernity that create a sense of deterritorialization in a style constantly evoking *turāth* provides a means of resistance. To write in classical Arabic is not just a matter of embellishment; if the message—the Balkan defeat—augurs deracination, its medium—the neoclassical style, with its manifold associations with the traditional heritage—endows the reader with a rootedness that gives the resilience to resist this traumatic displacement.

The cultural capital of classical Arabic provides this resilience and even authority during the chaotic times of modernity. Sometimes describing it simply as prestige, Bourdieu defines cultural capital as an essential component of cultural fields, since positions in a cultural field are characterized "by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the distribution of this

[41] Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 47.

specific capital."[42] Arabs in the empire considered themselves inheritors of a "highly developed literary, political, and religious culture that did not always conform to the culture present at the Ottoman court."[43] While Arab intellectuals indeed did not necessarily affiliate with the Ottoman courtly culture, classical Arabic poetic heritage constituted an integral element of what I called in the previous chapter the cultural "reservoir" that shaped the intellectual formation of the Ottoman court. Because classical Arabic heritage also had a high cultural capital for the Ottoman literati, *turāth* was a language that the Ottoman "center," Istanbul, could recognize—a fact that poets like Shawqī could use to their advantage in the empire's cultural field as they considered themselves shapers of the empire rather than its periphery subjects. Therefore, even the staunchest supporters of the Ottoman dynasty among Arab intellectuals were not, as is commonly assumed, peripheral figures that expressed an uncritical admiration for the empire because they used the prestige, or cultural capital, of *turāth* to emphasize that the empire needed their guidance.

Furthermore, while the increasing state centralization marginalized Arabs who might have constituted a "peripheral" position in the political realm, these authors who addressed the Ottoman Empire did not consider themselves peripheral because they drew upon the cultural capital of classical Arabic heritage as they engaged with the Ottoman world. In other words, the Ottoman cultural field functioned relatively autonomously in respect to its economic and political fields, as the power dynamics within the Ottoman political sphere did not neatly map onto that of its cultural sphere.[44]

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[42] Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, p. 30.

[43] Masters, *Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 6.

[44] To describe this relative autonomy, Bourdieu notes, "[C]ultural fields generate a social universe which has its own nomos, independence with respect to economic and political power" (*The Rules of Art* 61).

Al-Andalus has such a high cultural capital that it even overshadows the Balkans in Shawqī's poem. The word "the Balkans" never shows up in it, since he introduces the region as the "sister of al-Andalus." Al-Andalus is the poem's main character because everything else—including the imperial center, Istanbul—revolves around it. In contrast to the pluralistic and cosmopolitan Abbasid Empire, the Umayyad caliphate in al-Andalus more openly expressed pride in its Arab identity. Paying attention to this implication of al-Andalus demonstrates that Shawqī was far from a mere sycophant that uncritically praised the Ottoman Empire and its sultan.

The neo-classical style rendered the history of the Ottoman Empire legible and familiar to Arab readers, and this legibility reversed the center/ periphery dynamics that characterized the empire's political landscape. While the central Istanbul administration infringed on the domestic affairs in many regions of the empire more than ever in its final years, a situation that Ussama Makdisi calls "Ottoman Orientalism," the Ottoman cultural field rarely replicated the steeper hierarchies of the political relations that Makdisi examines more in depth. The cultural capital of the classical Arabic heritage countered this Orientalism.

The theory of Ottoman Orientalism rests upon a key paradigm in Ottoman studies developed by Şerif Mardin who argued that the empire always suffered from a unidimensional clash between center and periphery.[45] Thus, the paradigm of a clash between the center Istanbul and the Arab periphery still colors the current perceptions on the relation between Arab and Turkish cultural milieus. When prominent critics such as Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Miṣrī classify "The New al-Andalus" as a pan-Islamic poem,[46] for example, they imply that this poem, unlike other

[45] Şerif Mardin. "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus* 102 (1), p. 170.

[46] Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Miṣrī, *Al-Andalus bayna Shawqī wa-Iqbāl: Dirāsa fī al-Adab al-Islāmī al-Muqāran* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Thaqāfīyah, 1999), p. 53.

texts that took pride in an Arab cultural nationalism and developed as a reaction against an imperial hegemonic center, expresses an uncritical admiration for and even subordination to the Ottoman Empire.

Another way through which Shawqī refracts the Ottoman world is *muʿāraḍa*, a poem that imitates a classical model in terms of metre, rhyme and, often, thematic substance. Shawqī's poems that praise Ottoman sultans are *muʿāraḍas* of panegyric poems by Abū Nuwās (756–814), Abū Tammām (804–845), and Mutanabbī (915–965).[47] For instance, one of his praise poems for Sultan Abdülhamid, "*bi sayfika yaʿlū l-haqqu wa l-haqqu aghlabu*" (Justice rises by your sword and reigns supreme),[48] is a *muʿāraḍa* of Mutanabbī's panegyric poem for Abū al-Misk Kāfūr (reigned 946–966), "*ughālibu fīka sh-shawqa wa sh-shawqu aghlabu*" (I contend with my longing for you but longing remains triumphant).[49] Similarly, Shawqī's praise poem for Sultan Reşit V (reigned 1909–1918), "*al-mulk bayna yadayka fī iqbālihi*" (Kingship is between your hands even as it advances towards you),[50] is a *muʿāraḍa* of Mutanabbī's praise poem for Sayf al-Dawla (reigned 945–967), "*lā l-ḥulmu jāda bihi wā lā bi-mithālihi*" (Dreams are not generous enough to bestow him nor the likes of him).[51] Akiko Sumi argued that Shawqī competed and even tried to surpass his classical masters through *muʿāraḍa*.[52] When analyzed within the context of an Ottoman field,

[47] For a list of Shawqī's *muʿāraḍas*, see Ibrāhīm ʿAwaḍayn, *Al-Muʿāraḍa fi shiʿr Shawqī* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, 1982).

[48] Shawqī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Shawqiyya*, II: pp. 211-39.

[49] Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Mutanabbī, *Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī* (Beirut: Dār al-Arqam Ibn al-Arqam, 1994), pp. 370-72.

[50] Shawqī, *Al-Mawsūʿa al-Shawqiyya*, IV: pp. 298-304.

[51] Mutanabbī, *Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, pp. 235-8.

[52] Akiko M. Sumi, "Poetry and Architecture: A Double Imitation in the Sīniyyah of Ahmad Shawqī," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 39, no. 1 (2008), pp. 73-74.

muʿāraḍa also served as the medium through which Shawqī integrated Ottoman sultans into the *turāth*. Building upon Marcel Mauss's gift exchange theory, Suzanne Stetkevych proposed that when the Arabic *qaṣīda* form took the primary theme of panegyrics, the poet provided some semblance of immortality through his verse in return for protection and generosity that the poet received from the patron.[53] Likewise, Shawqī's panegyric poems granted Ottoman sultans the gift of immortality through his works on the condition that these sultans preserved and lived up to this *turāth*.

"The New al-Andalus" itself is a *muʿāraḍa* of Abū Nuwās's poem, "*yā dār mā faʿalat bika l-ayyām*." (O Abode, what have the times done to you?). Abū Nuwās, like Shawqī in "The New al-Andalus," laments a world falling apart in the beginning, but eventually praises al-Amīn (reigned 809–813) in the end.[54] His work follows the structure of a traditional tri-partite classical panegyric. The poet praises the court of al-Amīn, who provides order and stability. In contrast, "The New al-Andalus" praises no sultan. After the Balkan defeat, returning to the relatively stable times of Abū Nuwās is out of reach. This time, there is not a political court that would provide refuge from a world falling apart.

Many people denied the Ottoman sultan's claim to the caliphate because Ottoman sultans could not trace back their lineage to Prophet Muhammad.[55] In "The New al-Andalus," Shawqī associates the sultan with Khālid ibn al-Walīd (v. 89), Prophet Muhammad's companion and military commander who united Arabs under a single political entity. Ibn al-Walīd came from the

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[53] See Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).

[54] Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās: tārīkhuhu, raʿy al-shuʿarāʾ fihi, nawādiruhu, shiʿruhu.* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1932), pp. 326-7.

[55] Masters, *Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 54.

Quraysh tribe that the Prophet was born into, so this association substantiates the legitimacy of the Ottoman claim for the caliphate. Shawqī suggests in the same verse an implicit association between the empire's founder, Osman, and the Caliph Uthman, the third caliph in Islamic history:

> *Uthman in his war mantle protected his army*
> *And Ibn al-Waleed guarded his people.* (v. 89)

The reader here cannot exactly tell whether the poet refers to Sultan Osman or Caliph Uthman. Shawqī's predecessors created a lineage between Sultan Osman (*Uthman* in Arabic), the founder of the Ottoman Empire, and Caliph Uthman, although their claim had no basis other than the fact that these two figures shared the same name. Concerned with the Ottoman house's lack of a suitable pedigree, Mar'ī al-Karmi (d. 1624) created an Arab lineage for Sultan Osman.[56] Similarly, Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Surūr (d. 1676) cited the claim made by the chronicler Ibn Iyās who also asserted that Sultan Osman was of the lineage of Caliph Uthman.[57] In my opinion, al-Karmi and al-Surūr did not seek historical accuracy but instead granted legitimacy to the Ottoman rule through their works that created a fictive kinship between Ottoman sultans and the Prophet. Following this tradition, Shawqī demonstrates that the sultan's claim to be the leader of the Islamic *umma* (religious community) becomes null unless he uses his cultural authority in linking the Ottoman leader to the classical Arabic heritage.

This cultural capital of *turāth* also determines the power relations among various geographical sites in the empire. As Shawqī praises Ottoman lands, he does not mention Istanbul, but instead centers of Arabic cultural efflorescence—Baghdad and Levant—and the rivers—

[56] As quoted in Michael Winter, "A Seventeenth-Century Arabic Panegyric," *Asian and African Studies: Journal of the Israel Oriental Society* 2 (1979), p. 136.

[57] Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Surūr, *Al-Minaḥ al-raḥmānīya fī al-Dawla al-'Uthmānīya* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir, 1995), pp. 9-10.

Euphrates and Tigris—closely linked to these centers (v. 82). In fact, Shawqī never uses the word "Istanbul," but instead calls it "umma of dispersion" (*umma furūq*; v. 56). This draws upon the famous line from Abū Tammām (d. 845), who also used the same phrase to refer to an earthquake that destroyed almost every building in Constantinople in his praise poem for Abū Saʿīd, "*mā ʿahidnā kadhā bakāʾ al-mushawwaqa*" (We have not known such weeping of a lover).[58] This reference reveals the extent to which Shawqī is acquainted with the city's history—including its Byzantine period. Shawqī is not a peripheral figure that addresses an imperial center, as the classical Arabic heritage gives him a rich corpus of knowledge about the city that even its inhabitants are unaware of.

Even in his other poems that praise Istanbul, the imperial center remains a key buttress for the sacred centers of the Islamic world. The following verses are a case in point:

> *I witness that God the Most Merciful fortifies the two masjids*
> [Kaaba and al-Aqsa Mosque]
> *With your* [Istanbul's] *majestic walls.*
>
> *You have been a foundation for Bayt al-Haram*
> *The longest tent pole for al-Aqsa Mosque.*[59]

When he praises the Göksu River in Istanbul, he writes that the river's sacredness derives from its connection to other holy waters in the region:

> *The pure zamzam water*
> *And the holy waters of Jordan flow to you.*[60]

[58] Ḥabīb ibn Aws al-Tāʾī Abū Tammām, *Al-diwān al-kāmil* (Cairo: al-Markaz al-ʿArabī li l-Baḥth wa al-Nashr, 1983), p. 140.

[59] Shawqī, *Al-Mawsūʿa Al-Shawqiyya*, IV: p. 63, verses 11-12.

[60] ibid., IV: p. 38, verse 3.

The reader can comprehend Göksu's and Istanbul's magnificence only when the poet compares them to signifiers familiar to the Arab reader. In other words, the glory and beauty of the imperial "center" will remain illegible to the audience unless Shawqī ties it to *turāth*.

Al-Andalus as Hope for the Future

The forced migration of the Balkan Muslims was a warning sign for Ottoman-era intellectuals who wanted to create a modern identity and culture that would ward off the burgeoning threats that the Balkan defeat stood for. This defeat significantly extinguished hopes for a revival. At such a moment of intense transformation, Shawqī constructs a poetic order that provides a new political vision. The cultural capital of *turāth* gives Shawqī the legitimacy for leading the empire to a better future. Like Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād's Andalusian army that burned its ships to eradicate any possibility of escape when it first embarked on the Iberian Peninsula, the empire has to fearlessly move forward—even if it involves the risk of total annihilation:

> *Your conditions are like that of Tariq* [ibn Ziyad]
> *Despair lies behind and hope ahead.* (v. 76)

Al-Andalus here does not only stand for the sense of displacement that plagues the empire, but also the determined march that commands it to look ahead at the future. The Ottomans are not the new al-Andalus just because they lost their European territories; if they follow Shawqī, they can become the new al-Andalus through attaining the artistic and scientific efflorescence that the Muslim Spain once had.

With the authority derived from the cultural capital of *turāth*, Shawqī uses the command form (*amr*) when addressing Istanbul in the second half of the poem. This signifies a particular transformation for the poet's role. Shawqī no longer simply describes and laments a world falling apart, but instead gives instructions for what the empire's future should be like. Shawqī recognizes

the main reason behind the Balkan defeat—the negligence of the empire's founders. In his critique, he emphasizes that the Ottoman Empire needs to value reason and knowledge more than brutal force in order to sustain its existence:

> *Your ancestors achieved glorious conquests*
> *They then came upon lions in a jungle and slept.*
>
> *Your forefathers bring this affliction upon you*
> *Have patience and clemency, as the culprits are in fact generous.*
>
> *They raised their edifice upon a sword, yet it lasted not*
> *A building founded on swords is never stable.*
>
> *The most lasting kingdoms are those built on knowledge*
> *And whose walls and pillars are justice.*
>
> *If your cause is good guidance and grace*
> *Then walk in the light of knowledge, the true reigns of ruling.*
>
> *Leave behind vain pride in heritage even if it is precious*
> *As glory is attained* [by merit] *and time is but a yoke*. (vv. 65-70)

Although Shawqī extensively draws upon the classical Arabic poetic heritage in his work, he also advises the empire not to remain paralyzed by a vain pride in heritage. *Turāth* needs to remain a force that moves communities forward rather than imprison them in a perpetual nostalgia.

When the crumbling global order offers no firm ground and the poet can address no political ruler that provides stability, he turns to the community and shoulders the task of articulating the vision of modernity:

> *O you umma ensconced in Istanbul, fate has separated them*
> *And when fate strikes, reason is debased.*
>
> *Why does such languor prevail over you*
> *Ummas are lost, their rights humiliated.*
>
> *God witnesses that I am not a partisan*
> *In times of calamity, there is no place for partisanship and sectarianism.*
>
> *I call to unity as I am a poet*
> *Whose uttermost aim is unity and harmony.* (v. 56-59)

The dispersed nature of the city perplexes anyone who visits it except Shawqī, now an enlightened poet who lists key solutions for the empire's future (v. 59). Shawqī composes this poetic order when the empire no longer has a sustainable political architecture after the Balkan defeat, since it was built upon weak foundations of the sword (v. 21). Shawqī argues that the lands that lived under the Ottoman rule suffered from stagnation. His poetic monument that values reason more than brutal force stands on firmer foundations than the crumbling Ottoman order.

Shawqī shared the opinions of many other Arab intellectuals who also believed that the Ottoman Empire had to go through *nahḍa* (awakening) after the Balkan defeat. Like many other terms that crystallized future aspirations of Arab modernity, *nahḍa* had multiple significations that could not be just reduced to "Arab national awakening" in the Ottoman cultural field. The Balkan defeat was a warning sign not only to the Turkish nation but also the entire Empire. As a result of the defeat, many Arab intellectuals reflected on the empire's sluggish state. For instance, the final chapter of *Tārīkh ḥarb al-Bulqān al-ūlá bayna al-Dawlah al-ʻAlīyah wa- al-ittiḥād al-Bulqānī* (History of the First Balkan Wars Between the Sublime State and the Balkan Alliance) by Yūsuf al-Bustānī is on "the most effective ways of waking up the empire [*inhāḍ al-salṭana*]."[61] Upon completing the work, the author decided to ask the opinions of prominent figures, including Jurjī Zaydān and Rashīd Riḍā, on how to awaken the empire (*tanhaḍ*) from its slumber (*ghafwa*). Words derived from the root n-h-d consistently come up in this chapter—including *nahaḍat, nuhūḍ,* and *inhāḍ*. Fathī Zaghlūl Pasha indicates that if the empire wishes to wake up (*inhād*) it needs to stop favoritism, provide justice, ensure equal rights, and spread education so that the state wakes up

[61] Yūsuf Bustānī, *Tārīkh ḥarb al-Bulqān al-Ūlá bayna al-Dawlah al-Alīya wa-al-Ittiḥād al-Bulqānī* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Hilāl, 1913), p. 314.

from its fall (*suqūtuha*).[62] Jurjī Zaydān also provides similar recommendations so that the empire can wake up (*nahaḍa*) in forty years and regain its past glory.[63] We cannot fully disassociate *nahḍa* from Arab cultural identity. For these intellectuals, the Ottoman Empire can wake up only when the Arabic language becomes more prominent and Turks and Arabs receive equal respect.[64]

At the same time, all these examples demonstrate that Arab intellectuals themselves did not use the term *nahḍa* to refer to Arab awakening only. Jurjī Zaydān associates *nahḍa* neither with modernity nor Arabness: "*Nahḍa* in poetry, adab, or science happens after a political revolution upon conquest, war, victory or social change due to a disaster or catastrophe or anything that stirs up sentiments." He also states that *nahḍa* can happen "anywhere and anytime" (*fī kull zamān wa makān*).[65] It occurs after political upheaval (*inqilāb*) or disaster (*nāzila*)—like the Balkan Wars. Zaydān also notes that the Ottoman Empire is going through "a modern *nahḍa*" (*nahḍa ḥadītha*) as it constructs high schools throughout the Arab world such as the law faculty in Beirut.[66] In an article of *al-Hilāl*, Zaydān calls the constitutional changes of 1909 in Istanbul *nahḍa*—a key statement from a quintessential *nahḍa* figure in Arabic studies that nevertheless dismisses Istanbul in its assessment of Arab modernity.[67]

These intellectuals claimed that the Ottoman Empire had to go through or was actually going through *nahḍa* at a time when they "refracted" the empire through a formalized and often

[62] ibid., p. 315.

[63] ibid., p. 320.

[64] ibid., p. 318.

[65] Jurjī Zaydān, *Kitāb tārīkh ādāb al-Lugha al-'Arabīya* (Fajallah: Maṭba'at al-Hilāl, 1911), I: p. 63.

[66] ibid., IV: p. 398.

[67] Jurjī Zaydān, "Al-Inqilāb as-siyāsī al-'uthmānī," *Al-Hilāl* 17, no. 1 (1908-1909), p. 3.

classical Arabic in their texts, which became political manifestos that aimed to guide and awaken the empire. Şükran Fazlıoğlu, who looks at representations of Turks in early modern Arabic novels, argues that the increasing Western intervention in the empire led to a cultural split between Turks and Arabs during the nineteenth century, as imperialist powers convinced Arabs that Turks were the despotic enemy.[68] However, "The New al-Andalus," like many other reactions to the Balkan Wars throughout the Arab world, never advocated such a complete split. Before it started to connote almost exclusively Arab national awakening, *nahḍa*, like al-Andalus, also stood for ambitious aspirations of Arab intellectuals who saw themselves not simply as eulogizers of the empire but also builders of its future. Few could have predicted that the empire that controlled their lands since 1516 would in a few years come to an end, partitioned into numerous nation-states, which would re-signify terms like *nahḍa* and al-Andalus and incorporate them into their political and cultural discourse.

Sīniyya: Birth of a New Literature?

Nationalistic frameworks that have characterized the study of modern Middle Eastern literatures undermine our appreciation and understanding of the complexity of Shawqī's life and works. The national identity of Shawqī has been widely contested. For example, while Shawqī Ḍayf views Aḥmad Shawqī as a quintessentially Egyptian poet, Ahmet Kazım Ürün considers him a Turkish poet, a view made clear in the title of his work, *1868–1932: Mısır'da bir Türk şair* (*1868–1932: A Turkish Poet in Egypt*). Shawqī wrote both before and after the demise of the Ottoman Empire; scholars considered some of his works pan-Ottomanist/ pan-Islamist and others Arab/ Egyptian nationalist. Furthermore, Shawqī was a "world poet" whose works of neoclassical

[68] Şükran Fazlıoğlu, *Arap Romanında Türkler* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2006), pp. 90-91.

poetry addresses prominent figures including Gandhi (1869–1948),[69] Tolstoy (1828–1910),[70] and Victor Hugo (1802–1885),[71] as well as global events such as the earthquake in Tokyo (1926)[72] or Boxer Rebellions in China (1901).[73]

Like many other biographers, Ṣāliḥ Ashtar and Antoine Boudot-Lamotte view Shawqī's exile as a turning point in his life. According to this view, Shawqī was once a poet who had an unfettered admiration for the Egyptian khedive and Ottoman sultan; he eventually became a poet of the Egyptian people during his exile in Spain.[74] Shawqī was rooted in the "wrong homeland," the Ottoman Empire and the khedive's palace, yet he eventually became rooted in the "right homeland"—the Egyptian nation.[75] Because they point out such a sharp divide in Shawqī's life, critics do not look at the intersections between his "pan-Ottomanist/ pan-Islamic" and his "nationalist" poetry.

The *Sīniyya*, another poem in which al-Andalus is a central trope, marks this turning point during his exile according to Yaseen Noorani: "The year 1919, in which the '*Sīniyya*' was composed, was a watershed in the development of national consciousness in Egypt and agitation for independence. It is out of this political context that the '*Sīniyya*' and the Egyptian self it produces arise."[76] Most of the scholarship on Shawqī's representation of al-Andalus pays attention

[69] Shawqī, *Al-Mawsū'a al-Shawqiyya*, III: pp. 122–6.

[70] ibid., III: pp. 392-7.

[71] ibid., III: pp. 377-9.

[72] ibid., V: pp. 135 -7.

[73] ibid., V: pp. 407-8.

[74] Shawqī Ḍayf, *Shawqī, shā'ir al-'aṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1971), p. 64.

[75] Boudot-Lamotte, *Ahmad Šawqī*, p. 237 and Ṣāliḥ Ashtar, *Andalusīyāt Shawqī: Baḥth taṭbīqī fī adab Shawqī fī al-manfā wa-athar Al-Andalus fī shakhṣīyatihi wa-fannihi* (Damascus: Maṭba'at Jāmi'at Dimashq, 1959), p. 184.

[76] Yaseen Noorani, "The Lost Garden of al-Andalus: Islamic Spain and the Poetic Inversion of Colonialism," *IJMES* 31, no. 2 (1999), p. 241.

to his works written during his exile in Spain between 1914–1919, when "the history of modern Egypt becomes poetically linked to that of al-Andalus."[77] At the same time, the tropes of the *Sīniyya* and hence the modern nationalist discourse emerged first in the context of an Ottoman cultural field.

In the beginning of the *Sīniyya*, Shawqī laments the loss of a bygone youth and yearns for his homeland Egypt (vv. 1–44). He then ruminates on al-Andalus and its grand monuments. For a moment, he falls in reverie and imagines the splendid past of al-Andalus, describing in detail the crowded Friday prayers in the Great Mosque of Cordova and vibrant courtly life of the Alhambra Palace (vv. 45–63). However, this reverie comes to an end quickly, as he now confronts the deadly silence of ruins, ruthlessly reminding the poet that this glorious civilization is now a distant memory (vv. 64–99). The poet finds in the tumultuous history of al-Andalus much to ponder for Egypt's future (vv. 99–110).[78]

Living up to its reputation as the poem that laid out the core values of Egyptian nationalism, the *Sīniyya* endows Egypt with a sacred aura:

> *My homeland! If I were distracted from it by Paradise,*
> *My soul in Paradise would drag me back to it* (v. 13)

The poem's center of gravity is Egypt and the *Sīniyya* does not make any reference to the Ottoman past. Unlike in "The New al-Andalus," al-Andalus is not merely "fictional;" Shawqī composes the *Sīniyya* during his exile in Spain and after he visited the ruins of al-Andalus. This is arguably why he provides a much more detailed description of al-Andalus in the *Sīniyya*, suggesting that he had a heightened awareness of the past of a glorious Arab civilization. All these details substantiate

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[77] William Granara, "*Extensia Animae*: The Artful Ways of Remembering 'Al-Andalus.'" *Journal of Social Affairs* 19, no. 75 (2002), p. 63.

[78] My translation is from Akiko Sumi, "Poetry and Architecture," pp. 78-87.

the assumption that Shawqī's exile was indeed a turning point both for his life and, in fact, for modern Arabic literature that now served the nation-state and hence left behind the past imperial context in which it emerged.

However, partitioning Shawqī's works into two distinct stages of "pan-Ottomanist" and "nationalist" overlooks shared features between the two. Al-Andalus in the *Sīniyya*— just like in "The New al-Andalus"— is compared with a wound:

> *Who would imagine a Hamrā' covered with the dust of time*
> *Like a wound between recovery and relapse?!* (v. 78)

The wound becomes the shared metaphor that bridges the classical and the modern, this time standing for both al-Andalus and Egypt:

> *Ask Egypt if my heart has been consoled from her*
> *Or if healing time has treated its wound.* (v. 4)

Just as Shawqī uses the same imagery, wound, to describe both Egypt and the Balkans, he ends "The New al-Andalus" and the *Sīniyya* with lessons to be drawn from a traumatic past. Therefore, his poems do not merely describe a tragedy of displacement, whether it be the Balkan defeat or his own exile in Spain since this tragedy needs to fuel the poetic construction of a future homeland that is more stable, more just, and more promising than what any empire or nation-state could create.

The *Sīniyya* shows an acute awareness that all political entities—including the Egyptian nation itself—are transitory, a harsh reality that Shawqī would have learned during the Balkan defeat which brought an empire to its knees:

> *Affairs have their appointed times*
> *And when they reach them they are reversed.* (v. 40)

Al-Andalus is a site for lessons to be learned for any political entity with future aspirations. The poet holds a special position because he has direct and even corporeal connection to the *turāth*:

My heart thrilled to [the touch of] *Cordovan soil*
In which my fingers felt the lesson of fate. (v. 53)

After Shawqī confronts with the ruins of the Mosque of Cordova and the Alhambra Palace, witnessing the remnants of a distant glorious past, he shoulders the responsibility of sharing his wisdom with the reader. He states even more explicitly that this heritage is a repository of lessons that will shape the trajectory of Egypt's future:

Let these ruins suffice as warnings to them [sons of Egypt]*, once again*
Against the vicissitudes of fate and effacement.

If you fail to consider the past,
The face of consolation will be concealed from you. (vv. 109-10)

While the nationalist discourse strived to reject the Ottoman past, it drew upon and eventually resignified terms and concepts initially articulated and used in an Ottoman cultural field. Shawqī's exile, often considered a transformational moment also for modern Egyptian and Arabic literature, was a turning point in terms of whom he addressed; however, it was not a turning point in terms of the *turāth* he drew upon, the cultural values that political rulers should adopt for progress, and literary images and themes that he used to convey his message. Despite the political and even linguistic splits that occurred between the composition of "The New al-Andalus" and the *Sīniyya*, Shawqī's "nationalist" phase shares literary and cross-cultural synergies with his "pan-Ottomanist" period.

The liminality that shapes Shawqī's poetics was not the idiosyncratic characteristic of an individual writer but a common trait among many who found themselves baffled at instances of unanticipated and instantaneous changes in cultural and political frontiers of the late Ottoman Empire. The Balkan defeat indeed could have augured the eventual demise of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of nation-states in the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet, these sudden transformations in the region's political landscape did not erase the cultural convergences that

emerged during the empire's final years as many authors experimented with the possibility that the empire could soon have turned into a "Dual Monarchy." Even when it is used as an image for consolidating an Egyptian instead of an Ottoman unity, al-Andalus retains the role it signified in the Ottoman cultural field, evoking nostalgia for a Mediterranean cosmopolitanism.

The way in which Shawqī's poem refracts the Ottoman political landscape also demonstrates that *turāth* is not necessarily an old, ruinous terrain where the modern Arab self scavenges to find cultural roots, but also a lens through which she looks at the globe. Studies of Arab modernity should not charter transcultural textual circulations only, but also analyze how the producers of early modern Arabic literature perceived the *turāth* as a medium for refracting the globe. This refraction that shaped their interpretation of political events played a crucial role in forming their vision of *nahḍa*.

What lies at the core of both the *Sinīyya* and "The New al-Andalus" is the poet who interweaves diverse temporal and geographical milieus to generate the vision for a new self and community. If modernity costs a sense of displacement for the Arab world, then writers imagine a new cultural order to transform this displacement from a source of trauma into a transitory phase that will eventually lead them to a better future. The promise of a journey alleviates the trauma of displacement.

CHAPTER 3

Modernity as Metamorphosis: Imagining the Mediterranean in the Late Ottoman Empire

The scholarship of Ottoman modernity characterizes late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a period of increased order, surveillance, and centralization as well as secessionist nationalist movements that would eventually partition the empire into nation-states.[1] Nevertheless, not all Arabic and Turkish writings associate this period with stronger disciplinary measures and concretization of national and cultural identities. In fact, many of these writings, which witnessed a transitional period of vast economic, political, and social transformations, flesh out the nebulousness of newly emerging cultural thresholds and the ambivalent, interstitial identities that came to the surface as a result.

The recently burgeoning scholarship on cartography and photography during the late Ottoman period has further substantiated the typical scholarly view that the Middle East witnessed an abrupt transition from a heterogeneous empire to homogenous nation-states at this time.[2] Stephen Sheehi considers photography and cartography two fundamental means through which the "larger Ottoman and Ottoman Egyptian projects instituted new disciplinary regimes of organizing and controlling populations, land and commerce throughout their rural as well as urban domains." As Sheehi puts it, the "cartographic and photographic perspective" characterized the late Ottoman period, a view which "arose from a vision produced by an archipelago of new schools and national institutions in Ottoman Egypt."[3] Many infrastructural developments—ranging from

[1] For an overview of this period, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) and Carter V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

[2] In 2016, two monographs were written on photography in the late Ottoman Empire. See Stephen Sheehi, *The Arab Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016) and Ali Behdad, *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography in the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
[3] Sheehi, *The Arab Imago*, p. xix.

'Ali Mubarak's topographical textual map of Cairo,[4] the increased circulation of geography textbooks throughout the Ottoman Empire,[5] and the burgeoning popularity of portraiture photography[6]—all testified to the constitution of this new perspective that aspired for control, order, and stability.

The "cartographic and photographic perspective," however, does not fully capture the dynamics of the cultural production that also reflected a sense of ambivalence. For this chapter, I perform a close reading of four canonical prose writings— *On the Way to Hajj* (1907/1908) by Cenap Şahabettin (1870–1934), *Hasan Mellah* (1874/1875) by Ahmet Midhat (1844–1912), *Out Yonder* (1896) by Ibrāḥīm al-Muwayliḥī (1846–1906), and *A Period of Time* (1898–1902) by Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1868–1930)—to argue that literary texts of the late Ottoman Empire did not only serve to consolidate national subjectivities but also stood as spaces of experimentation for new cultural possibilities during the transitional period of the late Ottoman Empire.

Displacement becomes a defining feature of this experimentation as writing is also driven by "the prime poetic desires," which are "to be elsewhere, to be different, and to represent that otherness."[7] In particular, travel writing becomes a primary means for articulating this displacement. I use the word "travel writing" in a broad sense, following Jan Borm, who argued that travel writing is "not a genre, but a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel."[8] Some of the most canonized prose

[4] Eve M. Troutt Powell, *Tell Me in This Memory: Stories of Enslavement from Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 9.

[5] Behlül Özkan, *From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 102-45.

[6] See Sheehi, *The Arab Imago*.

[7] Harold Bloom, ed., *The American Renaissance* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2004), pp. 15-16.
[8] Jan Borm, "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing, and Terminology," in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, eds. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 13.

writings of this period crystallize a strong sense of displacement that constitutes an essential component of Ottoman modernity. Like James Clifford who considered displacement as "*constitutive* of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension,"[9] I demonstrate that moments of displacement played a formative role in the creation of a cultural vision that laid the ground for the construction of modern Arab and Turkish identities as well as "crucial sites for an unfinished modernity."[10] In other words, the eventual dissolution of old economic, social, and cultural hierarchies of the Ottoman Empire resulted in both the reinforcement of new cultural boundaries and visions of in-betweenness that stemmed from a sense of displacement that was strongly felt even by staunchest supporters of nationalist movements.

To flesh out this dynamic, I build upon two concepts coined by Jale Parla, *değişim* (transformation) and *başkalaşım* (metamorphosis)—the former referring to teleological evolution towards a desired cultural change and the latter to unstructured change deconstructing political and cultural boundaries—to reassesses the literary history of the modern Middle East that has claimed that early modern literature was the milieu for the birth of new national subjectivities. Azade Seyhan notes that "although poetry had been the dominant literary genre of both Ottoman literature and the golden age of Arabic literature, prose became the leading idiom of modern literary revolutions in Turkey and the Arab countries."[11] She also argues that the rise of prose writing accompanied the rise of nation-state for both cultural milieus. Nevertheless, I demonstrate that prose writing sometimes reflected a "metamorphosis" vision and hence has not necessarily

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[9] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 3, italics in the original.

[10] ibid., p. 2

[11] Azade Seyhan, *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008), p. 7.

collaborated with the nation-building project but sometimes even undermined it. My close readings also suggest the necessity of an alternative historiography of the late Ottoman Empire, a historiography that no longer views the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a teleological, orderly transformation of two distinct national communities.

Transformation and Metamorphosis: Towards a New Conceptual Repertoire of Modernity

Jale Parla used the terms, *değişim* (transformation) and *başkalaşım* (metamorphosis), to describe cultural responses among modern Turkish writers towards the vast changes of their period.[12] Some writers believed that these changes eventually culminate in a teleological trajectory that would bring their communities towards a successful endpoint, which, for many, meant a nation-state that attained the scientific, cultural, and military might of Western civilizations. Parla describes this vision as "transformation" (*değişim*). However, many other authors believed that these changes would not bring their communities to a tangible and even desirable endpoint. They did not plan out a trajectory of cultural transformation for their communities and instead reveled in the possibility of a plethora of new and yet nebulous possibilities that would not necessarily create a more "advanced," civilized culture. Parla defines this vision as "metamorphosis." For Parla, authors whose works reflect this "metamorphosis vision" accept and even cherish the liminality, ambivalence, and ambiguity that transitional moments embody. While Parla writes mainly about Turkish authors of the Republican period, I designate "transformation" and "metamorphosis" also as two kinds of cultural responses within both Arabic and Turkish prose writings of the late Ottoman Empire to social, political, and economic changes of their period. I propose that the study of both Arabic and Turkish modernity have focused mostly on works that

[12] Jale Parla, *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Başkalaşım* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2011), p. 11-14.

reflected the "transformation" vision, and hence associated the late Ottoman period with "reforms" (*tanzimat*), "awakening" (*nahḍa*), increased centralization, and construction of new national subjectivities. Nevertheless, the period between the demise of the old cultural, economic, and political hierarchies of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of new hiearchies that were solidified after the empire was partitioned into several nation-states is characterized by uncertainties, vacillations, and ambigiuities, all becoming more visible in texts that reflect the "metamorphosis vision."

While Parla uses these terms to describe how Turkish authors responded towards historical changes, I designate "transformation" and "metamorphosis" as two umbrella terms for a crucial reassessment for the Ottoman historiography. Modernity has been defined in Middle Eastern studies as a shared set of values, such as freedom, equality, and civilizational advancement that became prevalent especially in the nineteenth century due to the increasing Western influence in the region. Furthermore, much of the scholarship on Arab modernity or Turkish modernity has used the concepts *tamaddun/ medeniyet* (civilization), *teceddüd* (revival), *nahḍa* (enlightenment), *tanzimat* (reforms), *ḥadātha* (modernity) as quintessential features of the late Ottoman Empire. In fact, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been sometimes described simply as *nahḍa* in studies of Arab modernity and *tanzimat* in studies of Turkish modernity. Despite their different meanings, all these concepts can be categorized under the larger umbrella term, "transformation," since they signify teleological evolution towards a desirable endpoint. I designate metamorphosis as an alternative umbrella term that includes concepts and tropes which problematize this almost exclusive association of the nineteenth century with the transformation vision in the Ottoman historiography.

While many Arab and Turkish intellectuals indeed frequently use the terms that I classified under the transformation vision, such as *nahḍa* and *muasırlaşmak*, other terms that refer to change deconstructing political and cultural boundaries also feature prominently in their works. One such term is *tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*, which literally means change and transmutation. Many late Ottoman works use the term *tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*. For example, the famous 1839 Imperial Decree, a document that is viewed as a milestone for inaugurating political and cultural reforms, describes the reason behind its composition in the following words: "The empire's power and order has turned into [*mübeddel olmuş*] frailty and neediness."[13] The word, *tabaddul*, has been used in classical Arabic texts to refer to chaotic change. The Qur'an uses *tabaddul* in the following verse for referring to the Day of Judgment when everything will be toppled down: "It will be on the Day the earth will be replaced [*tubaddala*] by another earth" (14:48). *Lisān al-ʿarab*, one of the most comprehensive Arabic dictionaries which was compiled by Ibn Manẓūr (1233–1311/1312) and completed in 1290, quotes the hemistich by Abū al-Najm al-ʿIjlī (d. 747/748) who laments the unstructured change of times: "And she was changed; for time has the property of changing [*ad-dahr dhū al-tabaddul*]."[14] This dictionary also defines *tabdīl* as "changing from one form into another" (*taghīr as-ṣūra ilā ṣūra ukhrā*).[15] The Ottoman Turkish dictionary, *Kamus-i Türki* (1899/1900–1900/1901) by Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904), defines *tebeddül* as "taking another form and state."[16] These definitions demonstrate that *tebeddül*/ *tabaddul* can be classified under

[13] Mehmet Yıldız, *Modernleşme Dönemi Osmanlı Siyasi Metinleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2015), p. 25.

[14] Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955–1956), 15 vols., 11: p. 49.

[15] ibid., 11: p. 48.

[16] Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-i Türki* (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1317–1318 [1899/1900–1900/1901]), p. 386.

metamorphosis. Late Ottoman writings do not only project their time as a moment of *nahḍa* and *tanzimat* but also of *tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*.

I also build upon the concept "metamorphosis" because it has symbolized in prominent works of world literature such as Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis* the destabilization of boundaries between human and animal. I consider this destabilization an important characteristic of late Ottoman writings. Many characters often turn into plants and animals in these works.

The animal is an object of derision in works that advocate the transformation vision. Alan Mikhail, who extensively documented the changing notions of the animal in the late Ottoman Egypt, notes that many peasants relied less on domestic animals for agriculture, corresponding with the denigration of animals as useless beings and, at best, sources of meat in various Arabic and Turkish writings of the period. As he puts it, "In nineteenth-century Egypt, nature (animal) was replaced by a mechanical thing (rail)... Unable to turn animals into usable inanimate things, the Egyptian state shunned them aside for machines."[17]

Intellectual history provides another crucial perspective for understanding the changing notions of the animal in the late Ottoman Empire. Marwa El-Shakry and Şükrü Hanioğlu wrote extensively about how Ottoman intellectuals built upon Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in their writings on society and civilization. Many thinkers, such as Qāsim Amīn, Beşir Fuad, Shiblī al-Shumayyīl, and Jurjī Zaydān, compared the rivalries among empires with "natural selection."[18] These intellectuals also extensively read and reflected on Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima* (1377) and

[17] Alan Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 62.

[18] See Marwa El-Shakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013) and M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, "Blueprints for a Future Society: Late Ottoman Materialists on Science, Religion, and Art," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), pp. 28-116.

Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1787–1789), shaping their belief that the Ottoman Empire, which once enjoyed a golden age, was experiencing a severe decline. At the same time, they considered their empire more "evolved" than what they called "wild tribes" such as indigenous people of America. Therefore, they situated their civilization within a teleological spectrum in which the wild animal remains at the lowest end and the advanced civilization at the highest level.

As their perspectives on animals suggest, the authors whose works I examine in this chapter were strong advocates of the "transformation" vision as they all demonstrate that their societies should cast aside their animal nature to transform into advanced civilizations. In one of the journals that was edited by Ahmet Midhat, *Dağarcık* (*Bag* or *Repertoire*), he wrote articles on various animals, including beavers, ants, and spiders. He notes that even some animals like ants have a notion of community (*efkar-ı cemiyet*); therefore, humans should never be left to the "natural state" (*tabii hal*) and always strive to civilize themselves not to become wild beasts.[19] Similarly, Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī notes that a person should cultivate compassion not to fall into the level of animals (*manzilat al-ḥaywān*).[20] Cenap Şahabettin too compares the Arabian tribes with wild beasts in his travel writings both on Iraq and Egypt. While all these authors would have advocated a teleological transformation from wild beasts into advanced civilization, their literary writings represent sites in which the Ottoman identity is constantly renegotiated, as their characters vacillate between seemingly contradictory identites of Arab/ Turk, Muslim/ Christian, and human/ animal.

[19] Ahmet Midhat, "Karıncalar," *Dağarcık* 1 (1871), p. 16.

[20] Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī, *al-Muʿallafāt al-kāmila* (al-Qāhira: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā lil-Thaqāfa, 2002), p. 113.

Travel Writings: Deconstructing the *ʿĪyān*

Most authors whose works I examine in this chapter traveled extensively and had to live in exile. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī accompanied the Khedive Ismail, who was deposed in 1874 after Egypt's financial bankruptcy, and went to Italy. Muḥammad al-Muwaylihī later joined them, as he learned both Latin and Italian in Naples. Afterwards, Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī lived in Paris, Istanbul, and Cairo. Similarly, Ahmet Midhat was exiled to Rhodes Island, where he wrote *Hasan Mellah*, due to one of his politically controversial articles in *Dağarcık*. Cenap Şahabettin, while never forced to exile, practiced medicine in different parts of the empire, including Baghdad and Damascus. While physical displacement is the shared feature of these authors' lives, exile and travel are the shared features of their writings.

In the Islamic tradition, *ʿiyān*, direct witnessing, has been considered one of the most reliable means of knowledge acquisition. However, since the narrators of *On the Way to Hajj* and *Out Yonder* witness the breakdown of old hierarchies of the Ottoman Empire, they experience a strong sense of displacement that further perplexes them and even questions this authority of *ʿiyān*. While a sense of displacement is their shared feature, these works have vastly different agendas, a discrepancy that reveals unequal power dynamics that characterize the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the travel writings that I analyze in this section all explore the Mediterranean world, "a malleable space of contact, encounter, entanglement, and interaction among its diverse and heterogeneous populations,"[21] as a site for new ways of imagining the future. I designate the Mediterranean, with its evocation of nature, wilderness, and blurred boundaries, as the shared trope of early modern Arabic and Turkish texts that stands for the metamorphosis vision.

[21] Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou, *Mediterrenean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 2

On the Way to Hajj

Cenap Şahabettin (1870–1933) was the son of the famous military commander Binbaşı Osman Şahabettin Bey. After having graduated from medical school as a valedictorian, he went to Paris to specialize in dermatology. He became acquainted with Western literature there and started to publish his first works. He was the most famous and eminent member of the "second generation" of the Turkish literary modernity—the trio of the first generation being Ziya Pasha, Namık Kemal, and Şinasi—which put less emphasis on social issues and instead emphasized aesthetic concerns over the political. After having published his literary works, he worked as a doctor in Jiddah as well as in the modern-day Syria.

On the Way to Hajj (*Hac Yolunda*), Cenap Şahabettin's most famous travelogue that narrates his journey in Egypt, describes his departure from Istanbul. He then writes about the ship that takes him from Istanbul to Alexandria. The work is particularly famous for its elaborately descriptive passages of his journey in the train to Cairo. In the end of the travelogue, he embarks on the ship that would take him to Jiddah.

While he was never exiled, Cenap Şahabettin worked as a physician in Baghdad and Damascus. Therefore, mobility always signifies privilege for him. To elaborate on the privileging of mobility, James Buzzard makes the following remark in regards to Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*:

> [T]he novel structures itself around the sets of oppositions travel discourse employed, most notably that of stasis and mobility, or dwelling and traveling. The fictional narrative strives for authority over against a set of characters differently figured as fixed in place or in entrenched mentalities, and Flaubert's masterful use of free indirect style becomes the narrator's means of establishing that authority through the demonstration of unparalleled mobility that the technique affords.[22]

[22] James Buzzard, "Travel's Others: Realism, Location, Dislocation," *Journeys* 16, no. 2 (2015), p. 1.

In *Madame Bovary*, mobility is a marker of privilege and even authority, signifying open-mindedness and high socioeconomic class. Likewise, Cenap Şahabettin enjoys a strong sense of mobility in *On the Way to Hajj*, providing him authority over his objects of observation. He signifies this authority through repeatedly using the term "*cevelan*," which literally means aimless wandering.[23] He never feels circumscribed by another subject of surveillance like the extensive spying networks of Istanbul that Ibrahīm al-Muwayliḥī's *Out Yonder* describes in depth. As readers, we never get the impression that Cenap Şahabettin is intruding into someone else's private space, as no space seems to be closed off to him. He acts more like a tourist who just wants to share entertaining anecdotes with the reader.

Susan Sontag observes that "[p]hotography's main effect is to convert the world into a department store or a museum-without-walls in which every subject is depreciated into an article of consumption, promoted into an item for aesthetic appreciation"[24] Cenap Şahabettin's perspective, like photography, too commodifies and fixates the Egyptian landscape for the reader's enjoyment. In particular, he emphasizes the exclusivity and selectivity of his gaze through constantly using the phrase, *ihate-i nezaretime*, which means "circumscription of my gaze": "I would take everything into the circumscription of my gaze" (*ihate-i nezaretime*; 117). Another word that Cenap Şahabettin constantly uses is *şayan*, "worthy." Whenever he writes about various facets of Alexandria or Cairo, he notes that these aspects are "worthy of recording" (*şayan-ı kayd*, 175), "worthy of observation" (*şayan-ı temaşa*, 213), or "worthy of attention" (*şayan-ı dikkat*, 213). Cenap Şahabettin does not aim to provide a comprehensive panorama of Egypt but only records things that he deems "worthy" in his travelogue, underlining the selectivity of his gaze.

[23] For moments in which Şahabettin takes "*cevelan*," see Cenap Şahabettin, *Hac Yolund*a (Istanbul: Matbaa-ı Ahmet İhsan, 1325 [1907/1908]), pp. 6, 84, 87, and 113.

[24] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador 2001), p. 110.

Cenap Şahabettin also fleshes out his authority through building upon the privileging of *ʿiyān*, direct observation, in the Islamic tradition. He in fact quotes the famous Arabic proverb, *Laisa al-khabar k'al-ʿiyān* (30; there is no informant like the eye). At the same time, like "Europeans in general [who] arrived in the Orient after seeing plans and copies—in pictures, exhibitions, museums, and books—for which they were seeking the original,"[25] Cenap Şahabettin notes that he has already acquired pre-conceived notions on Egypt: "I was not like Christopher Columbus going to America. I have already read travelogues on Egypt." (64). He has acquainted himself with the city on several levels: "What I read and heard from others already gave me some idea about the city." (64). In regards to the relationship between *ʿiyān* (direct observation) and *ḥadīth* (textual transmission), Abdelfattah Kilito notes that "observations of travelogues have always been shaped by *ḥadīth* and a geographer is, before everything else, someone who reads a lot."[26] Kilito reminds us that the distinction between *ʿiyān* and *ḥadīth* is not clear-cut because travelers, like Cenap Şahabettin, have preconceived notions formed and shaped through *ḥadīth* about their objects of observation.

Classical Arabic poetry is part of this *ḥadīth* that shapes his perspectives on the city. Cenap Şahabettin has written numerous articles on Arabic poetry in the prominent Turkish newspaper, *Servet-i Fünun*, showing his deep familiarity with it.[27] In this respect, he is like many other Ottoman intellectual elites such as Ziya Pasha. *On the Way to Hajj* too makes numerous references to classical Arabic poetry. However, rather than quoting specific verses, Cenap Şahabettin makes generalizing statements such as "in the words of classical poets" or "as Arab poets say." *On the*

[25] Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989), p. 234.

[26] Abdelfattah Kilito, *Les Séances: Récits et codes culturels chez Hamadhani et Hariri* (Paris: Sindbad, 1983), p. 22.

[27] İnci Enginün, *Cenap Şahabettin* (Ankara: Kültür Yayınları, 1989), p. 35.

Way to Hajj projects Arabic poetry as an object of gaze: "I looked at Cairo's shining minarets early in the morning. All this view is like an Arabic poem" (144). This poetry becomes dehistoricized and decontextualized in his works: "Arab poets who have looked at this view for centuries have lived in a perpetual dream, become an excellent man of imagination, and developed a pure heart" (110). He considers the poetic heritage a panorama and a photograph to be captured for providing ethnographic perspectives of an Arab "civilization." Despite these categorical statements, Cenap Şahabettin also reminds us that he neither knows Egypt nor its language well enough to communicate with its denizens (83). Nowhere throughout the work does he speak to an Egyptian. His main focus is on beauties of Egypt, offering no insights into its administration or social life.

Cenap Şahabettin's gaze often intertwines diverse aspects of the city into a unified mystical vision as he often makes observations like the following one: "In the morning fog, the panorama became mystical. All minarets started to look like a torch. It became like a celestial sea" (185). This mystical vision also suggests his distance from historical and political transformations in Egypt as well as from Egyptian people's everyday struggles. His beautiful and mystical descriptions eclipse Egypt's harsh political and economic realities. Therefore, Cenap Şahabettin employs the strategy of anti-conquest, which Mary Louise Pratt defines in regards to European travelers as "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony."[28] *On the Way to Hajj* stands in stark contrast to Ibrahīm al-Muwayliḥī's *Out Yonder* to be analyzed in this chapter. Al-Muwaylihī constantly thinks about the empire's political situation during his stay in Istanbul, and yet Cenap Şahabettin makes almost no observations on the general state of the empire during his journey in Egypt, as if Egypt had always remained a foreign, exotic territory for the Ottomans.

[28] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 7.

Cenap Şahabettin projects the Ottoman Empire as a civilization which carries the legacies of older civilizations—Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. Through looking at Alexandria, he relegates Greeks and Arabs to a distant past, projecting them as two glorious civilizations that lost their former might and grandeur: "This beautiful city went from the hands of Greeks to Romans, from Romans to Arabs, and finally from Arabs to Ottomans" (51). Cenap Şahabettin speaks of Arabs as a civilization that preceded the Ottoman civilization but never as people that have been living under the Ottoman imperial rule.[29]

I demonstrated in Chapter 1 that literary histories have started relegating Arabic and Persian poetic heritages to a distant past and compared them with "Western classics," ancient Greek and Roman works. In a similar vein, Cenap Şahabettin perceives Greeks and Arabs as old civilizations, both of which now suffer from deep stagnation. He complains that "a modern Greek literature does not exist" (34) and that "there is nothing in Greece that deserves to be called a sculpture" (34). Cenap Şahabettin projects modern Greeks, just like modern Arabs, as backward. In fact, he pities and looks down upon Greece's current state because it has lost its initial glamor. Furthermore, he thinks that Greece's cultural grandeur deteriorated because it hybridized with other cultures. Reading *On the Way to Hajj*, the reader never gets the impression that the Ottoman Empire is in decline. Cenap Şahabettin does not use the term "we" while speaking about Ottomans (*Osmanlılar*). He refers to Ottomans in the third person, giving his subjective views on civilization an objective aura.

Although its author considers hybridity a signifier of decline for the ancient Greece, *On the Way to Hajj*'s linguistic style reflects a hybridity that also characterized the Ottoman courtly

[29] In his lesser-known travelogue *Afak-ı Irak* (The Skies of Iraq), which narrates his memories from the modern-day Iraq, Şahabettin makes similar remarks. For example, he again compares himself with Christopher Columbus (56), speaks about his aimless wanderings within the places he visits (43), and makes similar observations about the Arabic poetry, comparing Iraq's landscape with an Arabic poem (91).

culture. In fact, Cenap Şahabettin is renown for original verbal constructions, since he combined Arabic and Persian phrases in unprecedented ways. His poetry created expressions such as "*saat-i semen fam*" (watches that have the smell of jasmine).[30] Cenap Şahabettin, like many members of the Ottoman literati, was well versed in several literary traditions, including German, English, Persian, and Arabic. This hybrid cultural upbringing already undermines Şahabettin's cartographic-photographic perspective that divides the world into distinct civilizations. Furthermore, like taverns of *Harabat*, ships and trains in *On the Way to Hajj* are liminal spaces where cultural boundaries become obsolete. It is no coincidence that Tarek El-Ariss analyzes Rifā'a al-Ṭahṭāwī's experiences in the French battleship, *La Truite*, which transports students like him from Alexandria to Marseille, in *An Imam in Paris* (*Takhlīṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz aw al-dīwān al-nafīs bi-Īwān Bārīs*) for reassessing the current scholarly understanding of Arab modernity, because ships capture the sense of displacement of this period: "This complex site of the modern [*La Truite*], full of ambivalence, is simultaneously a war zone, a place of youth, a city with professions and crafts, and a cause and object of desire."[31] Like *La Truite*, trains and ships in *On the Way to Hajj* also represent in-between sites of *tebeddül*—ambivalence and perplexity. These transportation devices become the mediums that undermine boundaries. Cenap Şahabettin constantly notes that he cannot differentiate what is inside from what is outside while he is in the train (108). In the ship, he is dizzied by the crowd and notes that all people seem to fuse into one amorhpous mass (59).

Cenap Şahabettin's "cartographic-photographic perspective" is undermined as he embarks on Alexandria: "[Alexandrians] have intruded into our ship, pulled people's pants, pushed them

[30] Enginün, *Cenap Şahabettin*, pp. 9-10.

[31] Tarek El-Ariss, *Trials of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), p. 31.

away, and clanged to their umbrellas, walking sticks, and hats" (123). Cenap Şahabettin can no longer have an authoritative stance once he confronts the uncircumscribable mobility of Alexandria's crowd. Alexandria, which has become a commercial hub for European merchants, now includes people from all national and cultural backgrounds. The city has many eclectic elements that resist the fixation of a particular gaze that strives to convert Alexandria into a digestible image. "This city is like the tower of Babel. There are people from all nations; all languages are spoken by everyone, women, men, children, and old people" (25). As Cenap Şahabettin himself notes, recent economic transformations sharpened the discrepancy between the rich and the poor. All these vast changes catch him off guard, since he learned of Egypt mainly through works of classical Arabic heritage and developed a static and even Orientalized image of this place.

Alexandria, in particular, undermines Cenap Şahabettin's authority, because the city defies clear-cut categorizations: "This place is neither Western nor Eastern, neither fully European nor fully African. This is a hybrid place in the middle of everything" (73). At certain moments, it seems as if the city were assaulting his senses: "These people boil under the light of sun and there are all kinds of colors. Sometimes you see all kinds of colors on a single person" (90). This description, in particular, brings to mind Homi Bhabha's concept of "hybridity." At the same time, Parla argues that "metamorphosis" rather than "hybridity" crystallizes the dynamics of identity formation and cultural transformations of Turkey.[32] As the multicultural Ottoman Empire headed towards a more nebulous future, the period pointed to new thresholds. Parla notes that Bhabha's hybridity paradigm captures the dynamics of a colonial setting in which boundaries among cultures remain stark and cultural transformations occur at a slower pace. In colonized lands, even if the encounter

[32] Parla, *Yazar ve Başkalaşım*, p. 16-17.

between colonizers and colonized people create ambivalent cultural identities, colonized communities still feel a strong need to protect a notion of cultural essence to defend themselves against the rigid cultural engineering of the colonizing order. Nevertheless, this paradigm cannot be applied to the Ottoman Empire, which did not live under colonial rule and where cultural transformations often occurred at a much faster pace. What Cenap Şahabettin observes is much more radical than "hybridity"—like the moment when he notes that bodies became fused into each other, becoming an amorphous mass.

These moments of metamorphosis, more subversive than hybridity, play a crucial role in undermining Cenap Şahabettin's authority. In fact, they undermine the "the association between the acquisition of wisdom and the experience of travel"[33] of the travel literature, *riḥla*. This relation between travel writing and knowledge acquisition stems from the authority of direct observation, *ʿiyān*. Like Cenap Şahabettin, many sources from the Islamic heritage have underlined that knowledge acquired through travels and hence *ʿiyān* always holds more authority than knowledge acquired through textual transmission. For example, a "hadith attributed to the Prophet Muhammad claims that information established by others is not the same as seeing with one's own eyes."[34] In his famous Ottoman Turkish dictionary, Şemsettin Sami defines *ʿiyān* as "what is apparent, seen with the naked eye" and uses the word in two sentences as an example for the reader: "There is no way of attaining knowledge like *ʿiyān*" and "This is *ʿiyān* like the sun."[35] Nevertheless, in a period of metamorphosis, *ʿiyān* no longer has the authority and privilege that it has enjoyed for centuries in the Islamic tradition.

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[33] Roxanne L. Euben, *Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 15.

[34] Quoted in Euben, *Muslim and Western Travelers*, p. 189.

[35] Şemsettin Sami, *Kamus-i Türki*, p. 957.

Out Yonder

While displacement is the shared feature of both Arabic and Turkish prose writings of the late Ottoman Empire, these writings also differ in their responses to political changes. While *On the Way to Hajj* projects Cenap Şahabettin's experiences in Egypt as an exotic escape into a fixated image of the Orient, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī aims to pinpoint in Istanbul the root causes behind the empire's political decline. His travel account, therefore, is not as "playful" asCenap Şahabettin's, because al-Muwayliḥī is less interested in providing a panorama of Turkish customs and people but more in exposing the complex machinations of Istanbul's bureaucracy that has remained an enigma to Arab denizens and yet has been profoundly shaping their lives.

Egyptian political journalist and writer Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī (1844–1906) was born into a wealthy Egyptian family of silk merchants that traced their ancestry back to the town of Muwayliḥī on the coast of the Red Sea. He initially criticized the Ottoman government in the newspaper *Al-Ittiḥād* whose commentaries against the empire provoked the anger of Sultan Abdülhamid, who thus exiled al-Muwayliḥī to France. While in France, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī continued to publish articles that criticized the government in the same newspaper so that the sultan asked French authorities to exile him and his son to London. Afterwards, al-Muwayliḥī started to write articles that were more in favor of the Ottoman regime, leading the sultan to invite Ibrāhīm to Istanbul. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī first sent his son, Muḥammad, to make sure it would be safe for him to go to Istanbul. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī eventually joined his son in the Ottoman capital.

This stay in Istanbul had a crucial impact on their literary output. First, they founded the newspaper, *Misbāh al-Sharq*, which revived interest in classical Arabic heritage. The newspaper included excerpts from Arabic masterpieces that were transcribed from manuscripts of Istanbul's

Fatih Library.[36] Furthermore, the newspaper informed the larger Arab public about events in Istanbul. This stay resulted in one of the most popular travelogues in Arabic, *Out Yonder* (*Mā Hunālika*). Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī published his observations on the city, in particular its administration, in a serialized form from July 1895 to February 1896 in the newspaper *al-Muqattam*. The book version of *Out Yonder* appeared within months of the conclusion of the series of newspaper articles.

Although Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī considered the empire a fundamental bastion that defends the Islamic world against Western imperialist powers, he also expresses his shock against the high level of corruption in Istanbul's administration, considering it the primary reason behind the empire's decline.[37] The first chapters describe the structure of the Ottoman government in vivid detail. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī analyzes aspects of the Ottoman government, division by division. He writes about the Sultan's palace itself, the Bab al-Ali ("Sublime Porte"), and behavior of the bureaucrats who run the government. Al-Muwayliḥī provides comprehensive explanation of the function of each office and then provides a whole series of anecdotes that reveal why these offices have recently become corrupt. The travelogue also includes detailed explanations about the Chief Eunuch (*bash-agha*) and generals in the army. Afterwards, al-Muwayliḥī explains in detail the elaborate rituals of the Caliphate in Istanbul including the procession to Friday prayers. The author writes about senior religious leaders (*shaykhs*) of Istanbul, focusing in particular on the famous

[36] Roger Allen, "Introduction," in Muḥammad al- Muwayliḥī, *What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us, or, A Period of Time*, trans. by Roger Allen (New York University Press, 2015), 2 vols, 1: xiii.

[37] For *A Period of Time* and *Out Yonder*, I quote from Roger Allen's translations. See Muḥammad al-Muwaylihī, *Spies, Scandals, and Sultans: Istanbul in the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Roger Allan. (Lanham, MD: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers, 2008) and Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, *What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us, or, A Period of Time*, trans. Roger Allen (New York: Library of Arabic Literature, 2015). When necessary, I quote from the original source texts in Arabic. See Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, *Mā hunālika* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Muqaṭṭam, 1896).

Syrian Shaykh Abū al-Huda. Arguably to defend himself against upcoming criticisms from the Ottoman government, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī writes in the end why he decided to publish this work. He argues that his main intention was to prevent the imminent collapse of the Islamic caliphate by exposing the current corrupt practices taking place in the capital. Although Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī strived to justify the reason behind why he wrote this account, his book was banned within days of publication in Cairo in 1896.

As *Out Yonder* expresses a strong pride in the Arab cultural heritage and identity, it also exposes the prevalent discrimination against Arabs in the empire: "Abu Huda is not assigned to this post because he is not a Turk. No one should be allowed to do such things in the seat of the Caliph of the Arab Prophet" (219). Many people in Istanbul use the term Arab for denigrating others in expressions such as the following: "'If I don't do such and such to you,' he said in a fury, 'then I'm an Arab'" (200). This discriminatory attitude is accompanied by indifference towards Arabic culture and its heritage. Unlike al-Muwayliḥī who knows both Turkish and Arabic, the sultan cannot speak Arabic and understands only a few expressions in the Hijazi dialect that he picked up from those who worked in the palace (240). While the sultan needs a mediator to listen to his subjects from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, al-Muwayliḥī has access to Turkish and Arabic cultural realms without the need of a mediator. The plethora of expressions such as "it is said among them" (33) demonstrates al-Muwayliḥī's deep sense of familiarity with codes of the Ottoman Turkish cultural milieu, while also suggesting that he does not feel a belonging to this milieu. At the same time, he never encounters someone else who has the same mastery of Arabic language in Istanbul. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī was like many other Arab intellectual elites who could have an easier time for rising up in administrative ranks of the Ottoman government due to recent reform movements, giving them an added incentive to improve their Turkish.

Al-Muwayliḥī makes no references to Turkish poets or places that deserve sightseeing. In contrast, al-Muwayliḥī frequently quotes verses of Arabic poetry. This signifies a strong investment in an Arab cultural nationalism, an investment that he also marked through his dedication to Arabic language. Early modern Arabic newspapers employed a lofty language to educate their readers. Newspapers do not merely transmit information but, in Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī's words, also preserve "the fruits of the word and harvest of speech."[38] Indeed, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī was seen as a pioneer of his time, as Muṣṭafa al-Manfalūṭī notes that Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī is the leader (*sheikh*) of Arabic writing who taught later generations how to write, ending Arabic's centuries-old stagnation (*al-jumūd al-qadīm*) in literary production.[39]

This burgeoning sense of cultural nationalism corresponded with a key transitional period of deterritorization and displacement during al-Muwayliḥī's stay in Istanbul. *Out Yonder* exposes the most horrendous facets of the city: spies that deprive every Ottoman citizen of a sense of security and privacy, sultans completely indifferent to sufferings throughout the empire, constant territorial losses, and dysfunctional families. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī describes Istanbul as a soulless bureaucratic machine "cowering between the claws and jagged teeth of injustice" (24). The agenda behind Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī's travels is to find a cure against the decline of the empire.

Many travel writings before *Out Yonder* expressed similar concerns about the corruption of the Istanbul administration. For example, both Shaykh Abdullah al-Suwaidi and Shaykh Abū Thana al-ʻĀlūsī wrote their grievances against the Ottoman administration. However, we should not read their grievances as signs of a desire for political secession, since "protest literature

[38] Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmila* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā lil-Thaqāfa, 2007), p. 5.

[39] Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, *Al-sharq wa-al-gharb* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʿir al-Islāmīya, 2013), p. 8.

emanat[ed] from within the Ottoman bureaucracy itself."[40] Both authors, just like Ibrahīm al-Muwayliḥī, pose bitter critiques against the religious establishments in Syria, the Holy Cities, and Istanbul as well as of the "corruption" that lay at the heart of the Islamic institutions of higher learning and professional specialization.

What differentiates al-Muwayliḥī's work from these previous accounts is its description of a strong sense of chaos and even barbarism that now haunts Istanbul, destabilizing the boundary between human and animal as well as undermining the projection of the city as a center of civilization: "Thereafter people come to regard them [Istanbullites] as rapacious tigers, ripping at the flesh of people's limbs; as lions that pull people's corpses apart; constricting snakes; and lethal scorpions. As far as they are concerned, people are simply lambs for the slaughter, with absolutely no means of protecting themselves" (120). Al-Muwayliḥī constantly complains about the prevalent surveillance mechanism in the city: "As it is, they have assigned spies and watchmen to keep an eye on everyone who makes use of their tongue or pen" (55). Spying has reached to such a level that no one feels safe and secure. Because of this increased state surveillance, people in Istanbul have become dehumanized. In describing one of the spies, al-Muwayliḥī writes: "It seems as though he is ringed with eyes" (188). At another moment, Al-Muwayliḥī notes that spies have "placed their eyes onto" (170) the city's residents, underlining the uncanny and even monstrous nature of the widespread spying networks. This increased surveillance, creating a strong sense of paranoia, becomes a source of sickness for the empire: "When any government is so dominated by cowardice and fear, when its affairs are run by despicable fools, when its entire body is infected by the spy disease, it is time to give its rulers the glad tidings that the whole edifice is on the point of collapse and ruin" (80-81). Rather than a space of refinement and civilization, Istanbul is a

[40] Hala Fallah, "Representation of Self and the Other in Two Iraqi Travelogues of the Ottoman Period," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 1 (1998): p. 52.

savage jungle of *tabaddul*, and only the rational observer al-Muwayliḥī can guide the sick man Ottoman Empire to a better future.

The most horrendous effect of this prevalent surveillance is on families, as al-Muwayliḥī asks: "Can there be any moral depravity lower than this? How can there possibly be any hope of sound rule and prosperity for a state, which has fallen into the hands of such people? Their entire thought process is so permeated by the idea of spying that sons think nothing of spying on their fathers, brothers on brothers, and wives on husbands—things unheard of in previous eras" (25). Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī declares that families have become dysfunctional, signifying the empire's imminent decline.

This increased paranoia of surveillance reflects a loss of control and authority. The Ottoman administration has a tight grasp on newspapers published in Istanbul, but the scope of their control is limited: "Whenever people in Istanbul notice mistakes in Egyptian newspapers, they have a good laugh. Not a single letter is out of place when it comes to official matters in Istanbul newspapers" (33). When a person who shares the sultan's name (Abdülhamid) wants to stay at a hotel called Yıldız, he gets arrested. When asked why, the hotel manager tells him: "Have you forgotten that your name is 'Abd al-Hamid' the Pasha told him, 'and that the hotel is called 'Yıldız' [also the name of the sultan's palace]? What kind of disaster are you trying to bring down on your head and mine too?" (97). Even the simple fact that someone else shares the sultan's name creates an intense fear and paranoia.

In accordance with this paranoia, the Ottoman government sometimes ignores and even remains fearful of Arabic texts. Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī observes in Istanbul that Mutanabbī's verses are chanted (30), Imrūʿ al-Qays's poems are memorized (40), and imams in mosques repeat the Prophet's sayings (106). However, al-Muwayliḥī points out a disturbing fact: The Ottoman

government issues the burning of many Arabic works, including *al-Tarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, *Al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyya*, and *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya*. Even if some of these works were written centuries ago and had nothing to do with Ottomans, they, according to Ottoman bureaucrats, evoke in readers the desire to rebel against the government. This suggests that these works are now being resignified and re-interpreted in subversive ways, perhaps being read in a new way for undermining the Ottoman authority.

Notwithstanding his sharp criticisms, al-Muwayliḥī also defends the empire against European ambassadors who heavily criticized it. His article "Arabs and Turks" in *Misbāh al-Sharq* quotes a famous line from al-Jāḥiẓ, who argued that Turks have always protected the Abbasid caliphate.[41] Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī makes a "diagnosis" of the empire's problems and insists that it deserves the reader's compassion. His frequent use of the expression, "should" (*la budda*), suggests that his aim is not just to transcribe events but also to guide the empire to a better future: "So if one of limbs is affected, the rest feels it as well. An Egyptian Muslim is hurt when an Istanbul Muslim is, and the same with Muslims East and West" (232-33). Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī considers himself the rational observer and the imperial "center" a savage jungle, as the increased surveillance and spying mechanisms have made Istanbul a barbaric space of metamorphosis.

Prose Writings and *Turāth* as the Milieu of Metamorphosis

Percy Adams pinpoints many shared characteristics between European travel writings and its "amorphous early novel," and concludes: "By no means, then, have the novel and the *récits de voyage* ceased to evolve, or to evolve together; for the journey motif itself—real or fictional—is

[41] Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmila* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿla lil-Thaqāfa, 2007), p. 187.

still the most significant, whether geographical, spiritual, psychological, or intellectual."[42] Arabic and Turkish literatures in their early development also had a strong bond with travel writing. Travel is a major theme in both *Hasan Mellah* and *A Period of Time*, which are both considered quintessential examples of a transition from classical to modern sensibilities in fiction writing, because while they draw on traditional genres, the former on *maqāma* and the latter on *meddah* (oral story), they also share characteristics of the modern novel, i.e. polyphony, linear narration, and character development.[43] Unlike *On the Way to Hajj* and *Out Yonder*, however, these works also feature "movement across time." While one of the main characters of *A Period of Time* is an Ottoman Turkish pasha who resurrects from death, *Hasan Mellah* is set in the eighteenth century. The past in these works provides a fertile ground for alternative visions of "metamorphosis" at a period when the empire wished to transform itself through modern reforms.

Hasan Mellah

Hasan Mellah yahut Sır İçinde Esrar (*Hasan Mellah or Secret within Secrets*; 1874) is one of Ahmet Midhat's first novels. The novel narrates adventures of the pirate Hasan Mellah. Hasan is a son of a Moroccan prince who was killed by his enemies. He then receives a naval education in Madrid and goes to Morocco to take revenge of his father's death. After being kidnapped by Moroccan pirates, Hasan Mellah is forced to intrude into the rich merchant Senior Alfons's house and steals his possessions. Alfons wanted his daughter, Cuzella, to marry a merchant named Pavlos, who, it eventually turns out, had also killed Hasan Mellah's father. When Hasan Mellah

[42] Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), pp. 283-84.

[43] Roger Allen, for instance, notes that *A Period of Time* is the quintessential work that marks the transition from classical to modern in Arabic literature. "Hadith Isa ibn Hisham by Muhammad al-Muwailihī: A Reconsideration" *Journal of Arabic Literature* 1, no.1 (1970), p. 89.

intrudes into Alfons's house, Cuzella and Hasan Mellah come across each other and immediately fall in love. Nevertheless, Hasan Mellah has to leave the house when Alfons's guards are about to capture him. Eventually Pavlos kidnaps Cuzella. Afterwards, the novel narrates Hasan Mellah's various adventures during his quest for Cuzella throughout the Mediterranean. In the end, Hasan Mellah manages to find Cuzella, marries her, and kills Pavlos, thus taking revenge of his father's death.

Ahmed Midhat (1844–1912) was a prominent Ottoman journalist, writer, and translator. Unlike other pioneers of Ottoman modernity, he came from a more modest socioeconomic background. He worked as a civilian officer and wrote for the *Tuna* newspaper in Baghdad. Due to his pro-government writings, he was invited by the sultan to continue publishing his newspaper in Istanbul. He opened up a printing press and published many famous novels there. He continued to produce works in multiple genres, including novels, short stories, newspaper articles, and philosophical manifestos.

Jale Parla argues that Ahmet Midhat was like many other prominent *Tanzimat* authors who projected themselves as father figures to a reading public they viewed as children in need of an enlightened author-father's guidance.[44] In the novel's preface, Ahmet Midhat shows his awareness of his role as a pioneer. He notes that unlike Western writers who come from "a civilization that has been producing novels and philosophical treatises for the past 300 years," he is from a "community that started writing its first serious prose works only three years ago" (1).[45] He considers himself one of the few brave pioneers who dared to write prose works, however

[44] Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), p. 3.

[45] Ahmet Midhat, *Hasan Mellah, yahut Sır içinde Esrar* (Istanbul: Şark Matbaası, 1291 [1874/1875]), p. 1

elementary, that would transform the empire to an advanced civilization (6). For Ahmet Midhat, the empire could show progress only when readers become informed of the empire's history and geography. He considers reading not a pastime activity but a platform of learning. In fact, he uses the term *erbab-ı mütalaa*, "community of *mütalaa*" when describing his audience (75). The word "*mütalaa*" not only refers to reading but also meticulous analysis and careful observation; therefore, Ahmet Midhat constantly reminds us that he has high expectations from the reader through sentences such as, "Dear readers, if you have been attentive, you should now guess what is soon to come" (242). He similarly asks the following question: "In the previous book, did you keep in mind the situation of the poor child? Do you know who this Murad Bey is? If you want to know more, you can consult the history of Cevdet Pasha or French histories on this subject" (153). Ahmet Midhat here acts as a father figure who provides a reading list for educating the reader.

In the preface, Ahmet Midhat writes that *Hasan Mellah* is his contribution to the civilization. The word that most frequently comes up in *Hasan Mellah*'s introduction is "movement" (*hareket*): "Instead of feeling stagnant at one place, we should always strive to move forward" (6). For Ahmet Midhat, prose writing is an essential catalyzer of "movement" that does not stand for aimless wandering but instead transformation into a civilized society.

Unlike Ziya Pasha's *Harabat* that was exclusive and addressed a small elite cultural community, Ahmet Midhat wanted to reach a large audience in order to inculcate within his "child," the Ottoman Turkish reading audience, essential values of civilization and progress. While *Harabat* covered a rich corpus of the classical Arabic poetic tradition that the Ottoman literati were well versed in, Ahmet Midhat's novels never quote extensively from this tradition. They instead describe the vast territories with a large Arab population that the empire controlled or referred to

historical Arab characters that everyone in the empire would recognize. As late Ottoman Turkish writers made fewer references to classical Arabic poetry, they wrote much more extensively about the geography, history, people, and customs of the Arab world. Like Cenap Şahabettin, they made references to Arab poets mainly to justify their ethnographic observations on the Arab civilization.

As opposed to the claustrophobic *Out Yonder*, confining most of its descriptions to the interiors of the palace or roles of bureaucratic administrators, the setting of *Hasan Mellah* is the vast Mediterranean region. Hasan Mellah praises throughout the novel the sense of unrestrained freedom that the sea evokes in him. Almost all of the chapters start with a generic description of the landscape: "As you embark on a ship from Malta and head to Sebte, you come across the western beaches of the Tunisian shore and the cape that the Spanish pirates call Bona. Afterwards, you see beautiful cities, small towns, and small villages of Algiers" (6). These descriptions serve to raise in the reader a consciousness about the geography, history, and cultural milieus of various communities that the empire once controlled. At other moments, Ahmet Midhat writes about the empire's history. What Stephen Sheehi has argued for Jurjī Zaydān's historical novels also holds true for *Hasan Mellah*: "This sense of historicity is key because . . . positivist knowledge, including historical knowledge that pertains to both the region and the world, is an essential cornerstone of societal progress and cultural renewal."[46]

The romantic encounter between Cuzella and Hasan Mellah is an allegory for civilizational progress. Just as Ahmet Midhat advocates "movement" as the essential condition for Ottoman modernity, Hasan Mellah travels across various geographical sites to eventually attain his object of love, Cuzella. Hasan Mellah fulfills his dreams at the end of his journey, just as Ahmet Midhat wants his readers to believe that the Ottoman Empire would fulfill its own by eventually becoming

[46] Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 169.

civilizationally advanced. While lovers could never attain a final union in classical stories of the Islamic tradition, Ahmet Midhat creates a love story in which lovers, in fact, finally come together. Cuzella is European; therefore, *Hasan Mellah* is like many other Turkish and Arabic novels in which Western female characters are objects of romantic affection and union with them symbols of civilizational advancement.[47] Gaze plays a similar role in Ahmet Midhat's novel. Hasan Mellah and Cuzella fall in love when they look at each other, in Ahmet Midhat's words, "deep into their pupils" (85). Cuzella actually admits that she had already fallen in love with Hassan Mellah before she met him in person as she had bought during her childhood a painting, which turned out to be portraiture of Hasan Mellah (48). Similarly while reading *Hasan Mellah*, the reader "gazes" at the past when the Ottoman Empire was robust, controlling vast territories, a setting that now becomes a source of aspiration for civilizational progress.

This revived interest in diverse geographical and cultural milieus that the empire controlled corresponded to a period when the empire suffered from vast territorial losses and its intellectuals believed that the empire was undergoing decline. Ahmet Midhat wrote *Hasan Mellah* after France conquered Algeria in 1830 and hence the Mediterranean Sea was no longer an "Ottoman lake." Through writing this novel, Ahmet Midhat wanted to revive a past in which Ottoman intellectuals could feel at ease at several continents and comfortably move across diverse cultural milieus. Hasan Mellah constantly compares himself to the famous 16th-century Turkish pirate Hayreddin Pasha who conquered the modern-day Algeria and made the Mediterranean Sea an "Ottoman lake" (31). Furthermore, rather than focusing on recent catastrophes such as the French invasion of Egypt, Ahmet Midhat writes more extensively about the positive aspects of modern reforms,

[47] For examples from the Arabic tradition, see Derek Hopwood, *Sexual Encounters in the Middle East: The British, the French, and the Arabs* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1999).

including the abolition of janissaries: "Janissaries [Ottoman soldiers] always carried weapons and never used them for self-defense. They instead attack people for their own entertainment" (333).

Mediterrenean is the setting for many of the first prose writings of the late Ottoman Empire. In *Temaşa-ı Dünya* (1870) by Euangelinos Misaēlidēs (1820–1889), which is written in *Karamanlı* (Turkish written in Greek script), the narrator is first exiled to Greece, and then kidnapped by pirates in Tunisia before settling in Istanbul. Another canonical Ottoman novel, *Turfanda mı Turfa mı* (1892) by Mizancı Murat (1853–1914?), narrates the traumatic displacement of Mansur Bey's family after France conquered Algeria. Ahmet Midhat wrote a novel similar to Hasan Mellah, *Hüseyin Fellah* (1875), which is a historical fiction that narrates the adventures of a pirate, Hüseyin Fellah, who travels to various places such as Istanbul and Algeria. All these works express a desire and yearning for a multicultural Mediterranean cosmopolitanism that signified imperial grandeur. The Roman Empire referred to the Mediterranean as "our sea" (*mare nostrum*);[48] hence, the Mediterranean setting in late Ottoman writings evokes the past imperial grandeur of the Ottomans that claimed the legacy of Romans.

Ahmet Midhat asserts himself as a part of the larger Mediterranean community of thought rather than projecting himself as a peripheral figure imitating the works of France. In the preface, Ahmet Midhat insists that *Hasan Mellah* is not an imitation or translation. Instead, he writes that this work is a *nazire* of Alexander Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (5), a famous French novel, which also features pirates as main characters and has similar themes such as exile and travel. *Nazire* is a poem that adopts the rhyme, rhythm, and often the vocabulary of the source poem, while also trying to surpass the original poem in terms of quality. Walter Andrews notes that while

[48] Richard W. Clement, "The Mediterranean: What, Why, and How," *Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012), p. 115.

translation (*terceme*) implies difference, *nazire* suggests similarity.[49] In other words, poets write *nazires* of works that are produced in a culture that they consider similar to their own. Andrews also emphasizes that as classical Ottoman poets wrote *nazires* of Persian poems, they considered Persian and Ottoman Turkish poems as part of the same literary "episteme" or universe. Therefore, as Ahmet Midhat insists that *Hasan Mellah* is not a translation (*terceme*) but instead a *nazire* of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, he implies that he and Alexander Dumas belong to the same literary episteme.

Ahmet Midhat wrote *Hasan Mellah* to advocate his "transformation" vision for the Ottoman Empire and used Hasan Mellah's search for Cuzella as an allegory for this transformation. Nevertheless, the entire novel is suffused with moments that reflect a "metamorphosis vision" instead. The Mediterranean, with its vast and multicultural setting, offers many possibilities for a future liminal Ottoman identity that blurs the distinctions between Christian/ Muslim, Arab/ Spanish and even man/ woman—possibilities often foreclosed by his "transformation" vision whose clear-cut vision of progress did not cherish ambivalences and liminalities. Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, who have been the main characters in most of Ahmet Midhat's novels, represent the quintessentially ambivalent figures of the empire because the ruling Muslim elite considered their Christian subjects neither foreign nor completely "native." Furthermore, Hasan Mellah can adopt various identities simply by changing clothes (*tebdil-i kıyafet*). He takes on various names, including Cadiz, Safatino, and Turgo. He is described as Christian, Muslim, and Jew as well as Spanish, French, and Arab. He is said to have some fluency in Italian, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Greek. Gender ambiguity too reflects the sense of ambivalence. Hasan

[49] Walter Andrews, "Starting Over Again: Some Suggestions for Rethinking Ottoman Divan Poetry in the Context of Translation/ Transmission," in *Translations: (Re)shaping of Literature and Culture*, ed. Saliha Paker (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002), p. 33.

Mellah's neighbor Fatma Hanım falls in love with a young man, who actually turns out to be a woman in the end of the story (54). The boundaries between reader and writer are also blurred when even the author does not always act as an authoritative father figure but rather admits of his shortcomings: "In fact, readers should inform me of mistakes in my writing so that I can overcome my deficiencies" (6).

We come across the word *tebdil* and *tebeddül* numerous times in *Hasan Mellah* as characters constantly adopt new identities. At one point, Hasan Mellah notes, "This is Istanbul… It may corrupt (*tebeddül verebilür*) one's morality" (354). At another instance, Ahmet Mithat observes regarding Madame Ilya, "One started to observe changes (*tebeddül*) in the lady's behaviors" (202) after she speaks with Trillo who convinces her that protecting honor is not important for women. Afterwards, Madame Ilya is described as a beast-like creature. For instance, we read that "she was fighting against her desire with her claws" (204). Other characters, including Hasan Mellah, too acquire similar characteristics as they fight against their enemies (250). In this voyage throughout the Mediterranean, many characters are not like typical Muslim travelers who seek out new knowledge. Instead of transforming into more civilized people, they metamorphose, blurring the boundary between human and animal.

As the empire was experiencing the trauma of losing one territory after another, visions of a stable and glorious past when the empire controlled a vast domain of territories became a source of comfort, refugee, and contemplation for both Arab and Turkish intellectuals. This glorified past also became the pedestal for visions of transformation that advocated civilizational progress and formation of new national subjectivities. Nevertheless, writing of the past also meant dabbling in its perplexing liminalities that could sabotage hankerings for a teleological evolution to an advanced civilization. Visions of transformation propelled by a desire for regaining a past glory

existed side by side with moments of metamorphosis when characters could adopt multiple identities with ease—reflecting confusions in understandings of self-identity and cultural identity at a moment of dizzying changes that were expected to provide, at least by pioneers of modernity like Ahmet Midhat, transformation into a new, stable culture instead.

What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us or A Period of Time

Hasan Mellah associates the past with a sense of unfettered movement when the empire attained the apex of its power and controlled vast territories. In contrast, Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī's *A Period of Time* (*Fatra min az-Zamān*; 1898–1902) associates the past with dead bodies buried underground, signifying the end of the era of Ottoman Pashas who exerted unrestrained control over Egyptian subjects. Both works evoke the past to lay out their vision of transformation. Ahmet Midhat wants readers to "move" to a future in which Ottomans regained their past imperial glory while *A Period of Time* initially seems to signify a transformation from an old despotic era to a new modern world governed by law. Nevertheless, just as Ahmet Midhat's transformation vision gets disrupted as *Hasan Mellah*'s characters adopt multiple identities, *A Period of Time* exposes the futility and even danger of a transformation vision that wishes to completely bury and leave behind the past.

The son of Ibrahīm al-Muwayliḥī, Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī worked with his father in publishing the famous *Miṣbāh al-Sharq*. The reputation of the newspaper reached its height during the publication of Muhammad's series of episodes, *Fatra min az-Zamān*, published eventually in a book form under the name *Ḥadīth ʿĪsā ibn Hishām aw Fatra min az-Zamān* (*What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us or A Period of Time*). The work revolves around two main characters, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām and Ahmad al-Manikalī, the Ottoman Pasha. One day as ʿĪsā ibn Hishām strolls around a

graveyard, he meets the Pasha, who has just resurrected from the graveyard. Several events unfold after the Pasha's resurrection. After getting into a feud with a farmer, the Pasha has the opportunity to observe the Egyptian legal system. The Pasha and ʿĪsā ibn Hishām list both positive and negative aspects of the legal feud. Then the Pasha hears about the plague that afflicted Egypt and seeks ways of avoiding it. In the end, we see a series of assemblies during which the Pasha encounters people from diverse professions and backgrounds. In the final section, which is the shortest part of the book, the Pasha and ʿĪsā ibn Hishām visit a cultural fair in Paris.

In many ways, *A Period of Time* augurs the eventual political and cultural splits that would characterize the twentieth century. ʿĪsā ibn Hishām underlines the antagonistic relation between Egyptian people and their Turkish rulers when he says: "But the worst misfortune of all is that all this wealth has fallen into the hands of foreigners and aliens. It seems as if fate put the Mamluks in authority over the Egyptians in order to rob them of their wealth and deprive them of their properties, then God put other people in command in order to rob the Mamluks of what they had collected" (148-49). The plethora of references to Sudan, in particular, augurs the emergence of new political hierarchies, often sustained through an imperial vision. As Eve Powell has demonstrated in *Tell This in My Memory*, the imperial ambitions of Egyptian rulers for Sudan played a crucial role for the formation of a civilized Egyptian subjectivity that is contrasted with a primitive Sudanese—in accordance with the prevalent discourse that compared relations among civilizations with natural selection: "The Sudanese people are still primitive; they don't have ingrained in them the customs of Oriental civilization" (I: 125).

This new imperial vision also incites a desire to return back to *turāth*. In the beginning of *A Period of Time*, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām tells that he had a dream in which three leaders were conversing over a meal. One of the leaders, Butrus, laments the bygone times of eloquence:

> Where, O where, I ask, are those orators of olden times, men of eloquence, poets who could sing paeans of praise, litterateurs who would record people's names for all time? Where are Ibn al-Walid and Abu Tammam, Firdawsi and al-Khayyam, Euripides and Homer, Horace and Virgil? Who will record the part we have played in this great victory and our share of the glory? Who will note down the marvelous record in the archives of time and make the white pages of our history glow with stories of the conquest of Sudan, the lands of the blacks? (I:3)

Butrus evokes works of Arabic tradition in order to find a means of affiliation with the Western culture. Just as the Western civilization had Homer and Virgil, the Arabic world shared its own geniuses, such as Ibn al-Walid and Abu Tammam. A return to the heritage culminates in the realization that Arabs, like Europeans, belong to the order of civilization that considers conquest of "the lands of blacks" legitimate.

In spite of the consolidation of cultural boundaries such as black/white, *A Period of Time* displays diverse kinds of displacement during a time of new and often nebulous cultural thresholds. Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī decided to draw upon a genre that attained prominence during the medieval period, *maqāma*. In simplest terms, *maqāma* refers to narratives of episodic adventures of a rogue trickster endowed with elaborate language. Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī's work is a direct reference to Hamadhānī's *Ḥadīth ʿĪsā ibn Hishām* (*What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us*), the first example of the *maqāma* genre written in the 10th century. The *maqāma* has always had a strong association with the theme of travel: "The forever on-going travel is one of the most conspicuous themes of the *maqāmas*, and most of them have titles derived from place names (*Baghdadian maqāma; Isfahanian maqāma* etc.)… Most of the *maqāma*s start with a mention of an arrival somewhere where the scene is set, and they end with a more or less implicit mention of departure."[50] The most common form of *maqāma* is the so-called picaresque *maqāma*, a comic story featuring a ragged hero whose eloquence is phenomenal. One of the essential features of the

[50] Jaakko Hameen-Antilla, *Maqama: A History of Genre* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), pp. 53-54.

maqāma genre is the fluidity of identities. In many stories, the hero appears in different guises and no one can recognize his true identity until the very end. Due to its association with travel and emphasis on the fluidity of identities, *maqāma* captures the transitional period of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, what constitutes Egyptian identity is open to constant negotiation throughout *A Period of Time*, a reality that shocks the Pasha who asks ʿĪsā ibn Hishām: "Tell me, for heaven's sake, which country are you from? You can't be an Egyptian. There's no one in the whole country who doesn't know where my house is. I'm Ahmad Pasha al-Manikali, the Egyptian Minister of War!" (I: 39). For al-Manikalī, the marker of one's being Egyptian is familiarity with Egypt's ruling class rather than one's ethnicity or heritage. ʿĪsā ibn Hishām, instead, insists that having a solid grasp of the Arabic language is the essential characteristic of an Egyptian when the Pasha misuses a word: "It's clear to me that you're the one who's not Egyptian. The only use we have for such words is for food. We've never heard of their being used to convey permission to travel at night" (I: 43).

The Pasha's resurrection is one of the most potent symbols of this in-flux state of Egypt:

> Deep in thought about the extraordinary things which fate brings about, I was trying to probe the secrets of the resurrection. Suddenly, there was a violent tremor behind me, which almost brought my life to an end. In terror I looked behind me. I discovered that one of the graves had opened, and a man had appeared. He was tall and imposing, carried himself with dignity and a majestic aura, and displayed all the signs of nobility and high birth. I felt as stunned and terrified as Moses on the day when the mountain was destroyed (I: 39).

This resurrection undermines a complete split between the past and the present. After this shocking moment, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām notes that the Pasha uttered some words in Turkish and some in Arabic. The vision for transformation to a national culture is disrupted by the resurrection of the Pasha who carries traces of both past customs of the empire and future aspirations of the nation.

Aḥmad al-Hiwārī argues that two kinds of journey exist in *A Period of Time*. The first one is the spatial journey as ʿĪsā ibn Hishām and the Pasha together wander around Cairo. The second one is temporal, as the Pasha who passed away a century ago comes back to life again.[51] In this case, the soil becomes a crucial metaphor for the desire to leave the past behind and "underground," and the Pasha's resurrection for the impossibility of fulfilling this desire. The fragile boundary between past and present, life and death, and predecessors and future generations can, at any moment, be rent apart, as al-Maʿarrī too reminds us:

> *Tread lightly, for methinks the surface of the earth*
> *is made only from these bodies*
>
> *It would be wrong of us to treat our forefathers*
> *and ancestors lightly even if they lived long ago*
>
> *Walk slowly abroad, if you are able*
> *and do not strut over the remains of God's people* (I: 35).

After reciting these verses, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām notes, "So I repented and trod lightly," suggesting the insurmountable power of al-Maʿarrī's words.

A Period of Time emphasizes the loss of strict hierarchies that characterized the Pasha's period, leading to the strong sense of displacement, as ʿĪsā ibn Hishām notes: "Just observe how circumstances have made us equals" (I: 102). Certain markers of authority, such as the hunchback that would have signified one's high level of knowledge and learning during the Pasha's time, no longer represent mastery of knowledge, as the Pasha asks in shock: "How can they possibly claim that knowledge is the sole province of the young to the exclusion of older people? I've only encountered genuine learning in people whose backs have been bent by old age and whose hairline has been whitened by experience" (I: 115). The Pasha constantly complains about the destruction

[51] Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Hiwārī, *Naqd al-mujtama fī 'Ḥadīth Isa ibn Hishām* (Cairo: Ein, 1993), p. 139.

of old political and cultural hierarchies, as he rebels: "Is the mighty man on a par with the lowly, the powerful dignitary the equal of the small, the great man the equal of the despised, the servant the equal of the master? Has the Qurayshi no longer any superiority over the Abyssinian, and is a Turkish amir not of higher status than a mere Egyptian?" (I: 61), and then states, "What was considered a virtue in the past is regarded as depravity on the morrow; behavior which was regarded as a failing in the past ages is now considered a virtue. In the past, nobility may indeed have derived its splendor from forceful authority and used brute strength to support itself, but today nobility in every sense demands submission to the regulations of the law" (I: 99). Imperial reforms generated significant desacralization of past values according to the Pasha, who now confronts the vision of new social groups (technocrats, state intellectuals, and merchants) and "organic intellectuals, who, in turn, naturalized material and ideological conditions of nation-state and bourgeois selfhood,"[52] undermining economic, cultural, and political privileges of elite communities of the past.

Newspapers also capture the breakdown of past hierarchies. During his observations on Cairo, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām makes the following remark: "Just then, we heard a newspaper vendor shouting in a voice so hideous that it was even worse than a donkey braying: *ʻAl-Mu'ayyad* and *Al-Muqattam*, *Al-Ahram*, and *Misr* all four for a piaster." The Pasha continues to express his utter shock in the following words, "What incredible things I keep hearing! Have mosques, mountains, monuments, and countries become things one can purchase by auction in the market?" to which ʿĪsā ibn Hishām responds, "Those names aren't monuments or countries! They're used as titles for daily newspapers" (I: 98). Even the most important markers of Egyptian identity become open to

[52] Stephen Sheehi, "Towards a Critical Theory of *al-Nahdah*: Epistemology, Ideology and Capital," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43, no. 2-3 (2012), p. 287.

commodification and all the disparate elements that constitute the Egyptian identity are reduced to names of newspapers.

This desacralization is particularly conspicuous in one of the key settings, the Ezbekiyya garden. Elizabeth Holt demonstrates that both garden and fruits have been important tropes for literary production in the Islamic tradition, and late nineteenth-century Arabic printing press capitalized on the garden image. Many writers thus projected their works as both "Eden" (*janna*) and "gardens of knowledge" (*majlis*). Nevertheless, through a close reading of Jurjī Zaydān's novels, Holt shows that Ezbekiyya garden represents a "counter-allegory" that undermines the association between gardens and refinement as well as knowledge acquisition. In Zaydān's novels, the Ezbekiyya is a "Un-edenic" space, a site of burglary, drinking, and illicit encounters.[53] The Ezbekiyya in *A Period of Time*, too, is a place of debauchery and extravagance. During their stroll in the garden, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām and the Pasha observe corrupt behaviors of the Playboy, Merchant, and ʻUmdah. Therefore, *A Period of Time* does not, in fact, celebrate what Egypt has achieved but poses a harsh criticism against a vision of modernity that transformed the country with new technologies like telegraph and newspapers and yet caused Egyptian people to fall into moral decrepitude. In other words, Egypt failed to achieve a "transformation" that was supposed to create a refined civilization.

A Period of Time describes Paris as a space of wilderness and barbarism, deconstructing its projection as the center of civilization. ʿĪsā ibn Hishām and the Pasha observe that all people in Paris "seemed as frightened as sparrows, looking anxiously around like scared sand grouse in the desert. One false glance, and they would be dead; one slip of the foot, and blood would flow; a

[53] Elizabeth M. Holt, "From Gardens of Knowledge to Ezbekiya after Midnight: The Novel and the Arabic Press from Beirut to Cairo, 1870-1892," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 16, no. 3 (2013), p. 238.

single disdainful stare, and perdition would soon ensue" (II: 195). Paris defies the laws of nature: "There was no night, and the lights were so bright that one would have to be worried about night blindness. Indeed the cock might have been deceived and started crowing to announce the arrival of morning" (II: 193). Paris of *A Period of Time* is like Alexandria of *On the Way to Hajj*, Istanbul of *Out Yonder*, and the Mediterranean of *Hasan Mellah*—in all these places, the distinction between human and animal is constantly destabilized.

Instead, Egypt finds itself in a movement that has no particular direction. Like in Cenap Şahabettin's work, transportation devices such as trams crystallize the strong sense of displacement, ambivalence, and metamorphosis of this period: "On the way I came across a tram moving along like fate itself descending from heaven. I got on and found myself among a whole variety of people. Some were standing, others sitting, and people kept getting on and off" (I:27). ʿĪsā ibn Hishām himself would consider transportation devices the quintessential symbols of his age, as he explains to the Pasha why fewer people are reading despite "the progress of sciences, the number of students, the ease of access to books, the abundance of printing presses, and the freedom to publish" (I: 377):

> Today everyone is caught up in a movement (*ḥaraka*) which is neither Eastern nor Western; they are all involved in each other's business. By way of destiny, they are content with everyday occurrences, so their learned circles and gatherings have become defunct, source of knowledge have diminished, and literary springs have run dry. Instead they devote all their attention in their gatherings to reading newspapers and their ephemeral daily reports. How can they establish for themselves a place in a learned circle when they never stay in one place and are always moving around? You see them coming and going, traveling here, there, and everywhere. The one place where they spend the most time sitting down is in vehicles: steamboats, tramcars, horse carriages, and bicycles. (I: 377)

The first sentence, "Today everyone is caught up in a movement which is neither Eastern nor Western," undermines the typical scholarly understanding of modernity in various ways. The word "today," like many texts that are associated with modernity, underlines a stark separation between

the past and present. However, the next word, "everyone," demonstrates that ʿĪsā ibn Hishām's perspective of cultural change differs from the grand narrative of modernity. While the current scholarship still puts emphasis on pioneers such as Namık Kemal and Rifaʿa al-Taḥtawī as the masterminds of cultural change, the word "everyone" suggests that the cultural change in Egypt is not necessarily led by an elite group. In fact, the phrase "caught up" implies a loss of agency, substantiating the view of change more as a flow that spares no one. The word "movement" (*ḥaraka*), unlike *nahḍa* (awakening) or *teceddüd* (renewal), is a generic term having neither positive nor negative connotations. The sentence still would make sense and, in fact, have a very similar meaning, if it did not include the final phrase, "which is neither Eastern nor Western." However, in addition to putting emphasis on the movement's generic character, these words destabilize any claim that traces the root of these cultural changes in Egypt to the Western influence as the ultimate origin.

Ahmet Midhat might have imagined that the Ottoman Empire is currently going through a "movement" (*hareket*) that would "transform" the empire to a mighty and advanced civilization. Nevertheless, al-Muwayliḥī's words capture a sense of movement that can be more accurately described as *tabaddul*. People are not moving towards a particular destination that would make them more refined, knowledgeable, and civilized; instead, they are "traveling here, there, and everywhere." Texts too, like people, are in constant travel. Because of the mechanical reproduction of texts, the intellectual elite feels disempowered and, as Ziya Pasha also complained in *Harabat*, no longer enjoys a privileged sense of exclusivity. This increase in textual circulations creates a strong desacralization of past literary practices. What we might have considered a period of efflorescence of prose writing is, in fact, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām warns us, a period of desiccation

("literary springs have run dry")—a particularly interesting description given the fact that the Arabic word for prose fiction, *riwāya*, originally meant "to convey water."

Conclusion

Texts that were produced after the eventual dissolution of what I called "Ottoman reservoir" were seen as belonging to a moment of origin. This moment marked for many scholars the beginning of both modern Arabic and modern Turkish literature. However, my revisionist reading suggests an alternative historiography. It reframes these texts not as the beginnings of nationalist literatures but instead projects them as sites of experimentation in which the Ottoman identity is constantly renegotiated—embodied by the Pasha who resurrected from death in *A Period of Time* and uttered some words in Turkish and some words in Arabic upon his resurrection. My close reading of Shawqī's poem, "The New al-Andalus," revealed one way in which this renegotiation took place, as *turāth*—the heritage—served as a "refracting lens," laying the ground for what Faroz Ahmad called a "Dual Monarchy." Travel writings of the late Ottoman Empire became another site of renegotiation, as the boundaries between cultures, religions, and even species become blurred. Many literary critics associate nineteenth century with the transformation vision so they describe Turkish literature of the late Ottoman Empire simply as *Tanzimat* literature and Arabic literature of this period as *nahḍa* literature. However, I propose that we categorize this literature instead as "*tebeddül/ tabaddul* literature" to put emphasis on the ambiguities and cultural anxieties that they express.

The period between the dissolution of old hierarchies in the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of new ones that were consolidated in nation-states was, in Mikhail Bakhtin's words, one of the "most heteroglot eras" of the Middle East. It thus had the following characteristics:

> It is precisely in the most heteroglot eras, when the collision and interaction of languages is especially intense and powerful, when heteroglossia washes over literary language from all sides … aspects of heteroglossia are canonized with great ease and rapidly pass from one language system to another… In this intense struggle, boundaries are drawn with new sharpness and simultaneously erased with new ease; it is sometimes impossible to establish precisely where they had been erased or where certain of the warring parties have already crossed into an alien territory.[54]

The scholarship on Arab and Turkish modernity has focused on the ease with which "boundaries are drawn with new sharpness"—what Parla called "transformation"—but ignored also the ways in which these boundaries were "simultaneously erased with new ease"—what Parla called "metamorphosis." I reassess our understanding of modernity as an intertwinement of metamorphosis and transformation to capture the cultural dynamics of a period that was brimming with novel and yet nebulous thresholds.

The circulation of works to much wider masses, as ʿĪsā ibn Hishām noted, led to changes in what Alexander Beecroft called "literary biomes" of the empire. Beecroft defines literary biomes as "particular patterns of ecological constraints operating on the circulation of literary texts in a variety of different historical contexts."[55] While Beecroft provides definitions of six ecologies, I focus for this chapter on his characterization of national and cosmopolitan literary biomes. In national literary biomes, literatures that support nationalist aspirations thrive, while in cosmopolitan biomes, literature is produced in an imperial language of high prestige which is, according to Beecroft, difficult and somewhat artificial, such as the Ottoman Turkish that was seen as the heterogeneous mixture of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages. Describing the tension between national and cosmopolitan biomes, he defines the entry into modernity as follows:

[54] Mikhail M. Baktin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 418.

[55] Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015), p. 25.

> [T]he entry into modernity and thus into "national literatures" is marked by a *decisive transformation* in the relation with cosmopolitan literature, frequently taking the form of a "Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns," in which cosmopolitan literary languages are associated with the Ancients, usually to their detriment.[56]

This chapter problematizes this characterization of the entry into modernity, at least in the Ottoman context, as a decisive transformation. Indeed, the pioneers of Arab and Turkish modernity wrote works for laying out future aspirations of their respective national communities, and most of them castigated a multilingual, cosmopolitan Ottoman past and viewed this past as a period of decline that should be overcome. Yet the entry into modernity and hence national literatures in the Middle East was at times more like a metamorphosis instead of a decisive transformation. Since Beecroft made this statement to describe the crucial role of Hu Shi (1891–1962) in the history of modern Chinese nationalist literature, my reframing of Ottoman modernity can provide new perspectives on literatures that were produced outside the Middle East.

Displacement crystallized a period of existential anxieties spurred by vast territorial losses, loss of the power of old landowner groups and rise of a merchant and technocrat class, a burgeoning discourse that divides the world into distinct national cultures and civilizations, and circulation of texts that were once under the exclusive monopoly of a small intellectual elite to wider masses. Promises of transformation could momentarily alleviate these anxieties. However, "the longest century of the empire," as İlber Ortaylı put it,[57] that was seen to promise "order" (*tanzimat*) and "awakening" (*nahḍa*) after a harrowing period of decline also brought to surface a panorama of *tebeddül/ tabaddul*—instances of disarray triggering cultural vacillations and ambivalences.

[56] ibid., p. 202; italics mine.

[57] İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (Istanbul: Hil Yayın, 1995).

CHAPTER 4

Translation as Disposition:

Marʿūf al-Ruṣāfī and Linguistic Anxieties of Modernity

Emily Apter has recently defined translation as "the fulcrum for a new comparative literature,"[1] since translation theory provides new directions for literary studies that strives to overcome the limitations of its nationalistic frameworks. Many scholars, including Apter, also demonstrated that while translations should be rightly celebrated for their role in bridging cultures and overcoming chauvinism, they should not be romanticized as the antidote against cultural insulation, since translations are shaped by unequal power relations among different cultures. Their perspective is crucial for undermining key assumptions about the late Ottoman Empire that has often been described as "an age of translation."

Translations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire have largely leveled out, in Michael Allan's words, the "phenomenological differences" among languages. Allan argued that debates around the discovery of the Rosetta Stone (1799) contributed to the creation of a new perception of translation in Egypt, generating a vision of "interchangeability in a linguistic system that itself echoes the organizational logic of world literature."[2] When archaeologists viewed languages on the stone as codes to be deciphered for understanding ancient civilizations, they overlooked the fact that they had different "phenomenological" functions for their respective societies. While the Egyptian hieroglyphs were

[1] Emily Apter, *Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 243.

[2] Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 41.

from a sacred text, the Greek words were from a political treatise. His following words elaborate this insight:

> What is discovered with the Rosetta Stone is less a prized object than a scholarly frame in which the object is understood as a key to translation, as a set of codes and an invitation to decipher. As this object becomes text, it is fractured into signs, copied and read, disseminated across a scholarly world as the puzzle of its age. And to be understood as a puzzle, each of the three languages on the stone's surface must be read as the equivalent of the other. This notion of linguistic equivalence, integral as it is to theories of translation, levels out the phenomenological distinctions of languages, bracketing the critical differences between them.[3]

To take Allan's argument a step further, the discovery of the Rosetta Stone corresponded with the emergence of new motives for translations, which stemmed from new dispositions towards other cultures. This chapter will show that translations can generate borders by projecting translations not as bridges undermining all boundaries but instead as expressions of a circumscribed set of dispositions.

I argue that the burgeoning number of translations during the late Ottoman Empire corresponded with a decrease in forms of "alternative" transculturations that do not seek to decipher other cultures. During this period, intellectuals were more inclined to consider other cultures, as Allan showed, codes that should be deciphered to masterfully understand national civilizations. One of the most conspicuous examples is the translations between Arabic and Turkish languages during the late Ottoman Empire. These translations have generated a common repertoire of themes, imagery, and style in Arabic and Turkish writings, while largely impeding hybridizations between the two languages.

This theoretical engagement with translation is fundamental, because an increased receptivity towards other cultures, largely signified by the increasing number of translations from them, is viewed as the most salient signifier of modernity that has been often defined in Ottoman

[3]ibid.

studies as a period of cultural enlightenment and civilizational advancement that emerged because of Ottoman intellectuals' engagement with Western ideas and thinkers. Hilmi Ziya Ülken, one of the most prominent sociologists of the early Turkish Republic, argued that translation brought the Ottoman Empire into modernity in *Uyanış Devirlerinde Tercüme* (Translation in the Ages of Awakening, 1935).[4] Similarly, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl wrote *Tarīkh al-tarjama wa'l-ḥaraka al-thaqāfiyya fī ʿaṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī* (The History of Translation and Cultural Reform in the Age of Muhammad Ali, 1951), also emphasizing the crucial role of translation in Egypt's modernity.[5] Both monographs compared the cultural enlightenment of the Islamic world during the nineteenth century with the Abbasid period (750–1258). While translations from Greek and Latin works works brought the Abbasids to the golden age, translations from Western European writings played the same role for the late Ottoman Empire. Both works rested on the assumption that cultural insulation is the ailment that causes civilizational stagnation and translation is the ultimate cure against this ailment.

As a case study that explores the dynamics of this tension, I give a close reading of two works by the prominent Iraqi intellectual, Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945), *Daf' al-hujna fī irtiḍākh al-luknah* (Overcoming Flaws of Speech Defects, 1912/ 1913) and *al-Ruʾyā fī baḥth al-ḥurriya* (A Dream of the Search for Freedom, 1909), the translation of *Rüya* (*Dream*, 1908) by Namık Kemal (1840–1888), who is considered a pioneering figure for Turkish modernity. *Dafʿ al-hujna* provides an extensive list of Arabic loanwords in Turkish that have been misused incorrectly by both Arabs and Turks. *Ruʾyā fī baḥth al-ḥurriya* is an allegorical story that advocates values of civilizational advancement, scientific progress, and equality between genders. I examine these two works to

[4] Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Uyanış Devirlerinde Tercüme* (Istanbul: Vakit, 1935).

[5] Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl, *Tarīkh al-tarjama wal-ḥaraka al-thaqāfiyya fī ʿaṣr Muḥammad ʿAlī* (Cairo: Dar al-fikr al-ʿarabī, 1951)

demonstrate a key ambivalence of Ottoman modernity. The empire's intellectuals undertook massive translation projects, while writing treatises that emphasized the importance of protecting one's culture and language from foreign influences. Their translations did not just aim to inform readers about other cultures but also to set up a role model for their national languages from which they wanted to excise "foreign" loanwords. The increasing number of translations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, therefore, allowed a transculturation of ideas and values of modernity between early modern Arab and Turkish intellectuals, while ironically decreasing the exchange of loanwords between Arabic and Turkish languages.

My focus on dispositions reveals another way in which the dissolution of the cultural reservoir that Ziya Pasha's *Harabat* stood for did not immediately result in a stark separation of different communities and literatures that constituted this reservoir. Instead this dissolution led to new ways of imagining the cosmopolitan Ottoman identity. Through a close reading of Shawqī's "The New al-Andalus," I demonstrated how Arab thinkers projected themselves as the cultural leaders of the Ottoman Empire as they drew upon *turāth*, the Arab-Islamic heritage. My chapter on travel writings also proposed that the association of the late Ottoman period with teleological terms such as *nahḍa* (awakening), *tanzimat* (reforms), and *tajdīd* (reforms) largely overlooked the condition of metamorphosis (*tebeddül/ tabaddul*) that characterized this period. This condition is especially visible in literary texts that undermine the stark separations between different cultures, religions, and even species. Yet some texts of this period indeed consolidated the nationalist movements of Arabism and Turkism and hence what I called the transformation vision. This chapter shows that even these texts, however, shared a common set of features—dispositions—since they were part of the same Ottoman cultural field, providing another ground of comparison between early modern Arabic and Turkish literary modernity.

The first section of this chapter lays out the changing notions of translation in the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world more broadly. Laying out the historical trajectory of translation allows me to demonstrate that translations have not always served to decipher the wisdoms of other national civilizations or acted as bridges that provide a free flow of languages and ideas. The second section examines Iraq's relationship vis-à-vis the empire. One of the most marginalized provinces, Iraq strongly felt the consequences of state centralization that strived to "civilize" this province. I also provide a brief biography of Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī, who has not been as canonized as other Arab authors that I examined such as Aḥmad Shawqī in the Anglophone scholarship on modern Arabic literature, which has primarily focused on Egypt and Lebanon. Al-Ruṣāfī in some ways benefited from the empire's centralization, as he was able to attend imperial schools, learn Turkish, and eventually rise up in administrative ranks. At the same time, he displayed a deep erudition in the Arab-Islamic heritage, *turāth*, especially in the *adab* tradition, and voiced his opinion against the contamination of Arabic culture and language by foreign influences. Al-Ruṣāfī notes in the conclusion of *Daf' al-hujna* that bad translations from Arabic to Turkish led to an increase in solecisms in the Arabic language. Taking this observation as a point of departure, I demonstrate that al-Ruṣāfī's translation of *Rüya* allows the transmission of Namık Kemal's ideas, while setting up a stark boundary between Namık Kemal's and his language. Al-Ruṣāfī does not significantly alter the source text's content in its translation; however, he makes an active effort in not including in his translation solecisms that emerged due to transculturations between Arabic and Turkish languages during the late Ottoman Empire.

The History of Translation and Dispositions of the Ottoman Cultural Field

Saliha Paker notes that Ottomans have developed a wide range of concepts in regards to translation, none of which corresponded with the modern notions of translation that advocated strict adherence to the source text. She describes these concepts in her analysis of *Mecnun u Leyla* (1565/1566) by Salih Çelebi:

> Çelebi's explicit distinctions in his "Reasons for Verse Composition" involves only two strategies: (a) between *nakl*, a process which points to imaginative transfer claimed to be originating from the poet's own inborn poetic skill to interfere with his Persian predecessor's version and to transform and appropriate it and (b) *terceme*, as a repetitive process in its strict adherence to the source texts he considered as models. Therefore, it seems more accurate in the Ottoman traditional terms to consider *telif* not a distinct third strategy of "originality," here but a general strategy of creative mediation that combines in the text the creative *nakl* and the repetitive *terceme*; such mediation (*telif*) would then be appropriately described as a composition harmonizing traditional repetition with inventions and expansions contributed by the poet-translator.[6]

Drawing upon Maria Tymoczko, Paker argues that a translator did not operate *between* languages in the Ottoman Empire, but instead in a system in which source and target languages—Arabic, Turkish, and Persian—have become intertwined. Translators also did not feel the need to strictly adhere to the source text and "decipher" it, making it more accessible to a large audience. In fact, they enjoyed the liberty of significantly altering the source text's content, while even keeping some of the words untranslated.

Rebecca Gould notes that the Arabo-Persian poetics that Ottoman poets were well versed in also shared this particular understanding of translation:

> While modern linguistics commonly understands language as a form of communication, neither al-Jurjānī's *naẓm* nor Rādūyānī's *naql* deploy language for the purpose of communication. In Islamic literary culture, translation was available

[6] Saliha Paker, "On the poetic practices of 'a singularly uninventive people' and the anxiety of Imitation: A Critical Re-appraisal in Terms of Translation, Creative Mediation and "Originality," *Tradition, Tension, and Translation in Turkey* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), p. 40.

> to make foreignness legible. Translation was an adornment, a subdivision of poetry, a means of intensifying the beauty of a text and multiplying its polysemy.[7]

The late Ottoman Empire witnessed a decrease in translations that acted as an adornment and aimed to make foreignness legible, because such translations were seen to distract from the increasing curiosity for understanding, "deciphering" other cultures.

Understanding the changing perceptions of translation is important especially because translation has been considered the cornerstone of both *nahḍa* and *tanzimat*—two keywords that are used to describe Arab and Turkish modernity respectively especially in literary studies. Just as Muḥammad Badawī, the prominent critic of Arabic literature, defines the Egyptian *nahḍa* as the "the Age of Translations and Adaptations,"[8] Nurullah Ataç, one of the most influential Turkish critics of the early Republic period, described *tanzimat* as the "age of translation (*çeviri çağı*)."[9] Indeed, the Egyptian khedive, the Ottoman sultan, and many other intellectuals supported the burgeoning translation activities during the late Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman government set up the Translation Chamber, which has translated many of the canonical French, Persian, and Arabic works into Turkish in 1832, and the Egyptian khedive Mehmed Ali set up the Bulāq Press in 1820, which translated works from multiple languages, including Italian, French, English Turkish, and Arabic into Arabic and Turkish.[10] This period also witnesssed an unprecedented publication of dictionaries, textbooks on language, and treatises on grammar and rheoteric, including *Kavaid-i*

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[7] Rebecca Gould, "Inimitability versus Translatability: The Structure of Meaning in Arabo-Persian Poetics," *The Translator* 19, no. 1 (2013), pp. 99-100.

[8] Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Badawī, *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 11.

[9] Nurullah Ataç, "Çeviri Çağı," in Hikmet Dizdaroğlu, Nurullah Ataç, and Sami N. Özerdim, *Ataç* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1962), p. 251.

[10] For a comprehensive list of these translations, see al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjama*, pp. 250-73.

Osmaniyye (Grammar of Ottoman Language; 1889/1890) by Ahmet Cevdet Paşa (1822–1895), *Lisan* (Language; 1885/1886) by Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904), *Muḥīt al-muḥīt: ay qāmūs muṭawwal lil-lughah al-ʿArabīyya* (Ocean of the Ocean; Or Comprehensive Dictionary of the Arabic Language; 1867–1870) by Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819–1883). Shayyāl notes that the Turkish language had never been as prevalent as it was during the age of Muhammad Ali in Egypt.[11] In fact, the number of translations between Arabic and Turkish reached a peak during this period.[12]

While all these examples testify that the late Ottoman period has been an age of translations, these translations should not be viewed as the signs of an empire finally shedding off its cultural insulation. Because translations have been mainly viewed as bridges especially in the study of Ottoman modernity, this period was wrongly categorized as "the age of Westernization," as if the empire had no engagement with the West before the nineteenth century. The increase in translations from Western sources into Turkish or Arabic, however, pointed to more a change in the disposition towards the West than an increased receptivity towards it. As Michael Allan noted, translations were now undertaken to "decipher" the Western culture and mainly understand the "secret" behind its rise in power. Nergis Ertürk observes a crucial change in the conceptualization of writing during the late Ottoman Empire: "No longer a half-symbolic instrument (*âlet*) for the mediation of the truth of a universal higher ontological reality, writing was now an arbitrary representational and translational medium for the transmission of a variety of different, and sometimes conflicting, messages from unfamiliar sources."[13] As its role transformed from the "mediation of the truth" to the "transmission of messages," writing turned into a milieu that

[11] ibid., p. 222.

[12] Saliha Paker, "Turkish Tradition," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Turkish Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 577.

[13] Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 9.

decodes messages. Translation, too, adopted this role during the late Ottoman Empire and served to decode and eventually unlock the wisdoms of other civilizations for the benefit of the empire and the Islamic civilization more broadly.

The increasing number of translations during the nineteenth century has familiarized the Ottoman thinkers with new political, philosophical, and scientific concepts from different parts of the world. At the same time, these translations also naturalized the view that each civilization is a repository that captures the essence of national civilizations and translation serves to unearth the essence of other cultures. Consequently, the phenomenological distinctions between languages were leveled out. For instance, Ottoman Turkish was seen less as the language of the bureaucracy and Arabic less as the language of sciences and religion within the empire. Instead, they were increasingly viewed as properties of distinct national civilizations. The desire to translate and learn about other cultures, Western European cultures in particular, became significantly stronger once languages were seen to share the same role of preserving the essences of civilizations. At the same time, this new vision would decrease transculturations among Persian, Arabic, and Turkish languages, which were being regarded as essences of three distinct Islamic civilizations rather than as integral "streams" of the Ottoman "reservoir."

Ertürk draws on İhsan Fazlıoğlu's work on the role of the Arabic language in the writings of the Ottoman scholar, Taşköprülüzade (1495–1561). According to Taşköprülüzade, the Arabic language was like a system of mathematical signs that described metaphysical truths. Thus, the study of Arabic was inevitably the study of these truths. In Fazlıoğlu's words, Arabic was "more than a language."[14] Translations from Arabic into Turkish played a key role in the emergence of

[14] İhsan Fazlıoğlu, "Osmanlı Döneminde 'Bilim' Alanında Türkçe Telif ve Tercüme Eserlerinin Türkçe Oluş Nedenleri ve Bu Eserlerin Dil Bilincinin Oluşmasındaki Yeri ve Önemi," *Kutadgu Bilig* 3 (Mart 2003), p. 153

the heterogenous Ottoman language, because translators left many Arabic expressions untranslated. They believed that Arabic loanwords did not corrupt the language but instead elevated it. While early modern Ottoman intellectuals were disposed to view the Arabic language as a mediation of metaphysical truths, Arab and Turkish intellectuals of the "age of translation" became more disposed to view the Arabic language as the code to be deciphered for understanding the essence of Arab civilization.

I build upon the concept "disposition" to further our understanding of what I called the "Ottoman cultural field" as the milieu in which early modern Arabic and Turkish literatures should be contextualized. If the field is a network of power relations, then dispositions stand for a set of behaviors by this network's agents towards each other. Sometimes simply describing it as propensity, inclination, and a way of being, Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept as a way to mediate between two schools of social sciences—the former emphasizing the individual agency and the latter social structures (economic, political, and social circumstances) as the main cause that transforms societies.[15] Dispositions are beliefs and behaviors that "feel natural and instinctual," often evading our consciousness, even though they are generated and shaped by the social structures and institutions in which people are enmeshed. People use their agency in choosing the disposition that they express; however, the kinds of dispositions that they can express are circumscribed by their social milieu.

I use the term disposition specifically to refer to beliefs regarding culture, language, and heritage that shaped the Ottoman cultural field. I demonstrate that intellectuals of the late Ottoman Empire shared similar dispositions due to their Ottoman cultural milieu, even if these dispositions

[15] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 214. For an extensive description the concept, also see Olivier Servais, *L'épistemologie pratique de Pierre Bourdieu* (Paris: Harmattan, 2012).

eventually culminated in political and cultural ideologies that were viewed as incompatible with each other on the surface—such as secularism and Islamism or Arab nationalism and Turkish nationalism. One such disposition, as Allan showed, was the notion that each language is a code to be deciphered.

Using the concept disposition allows me to shed light upon three facets of the Ottoman cultural field. First, I intertwine the two angles through which Arab and Turkish modernity have been studied. The first one—mainly represented by intellectual historians such as Şerif Mardin and Albert Hourani[16]—emphasized the agency of "genius pioneers," such as Ziya Pasha or Muḥammad al-Muwaylīḥī, who laid out the visions of modernity through their writings. The second one—mainly represented by economic historians such as Şevket Pamuk and more recently by environmental historians such as Alan Mikhail[17]— emphasized the structural factors that were beyond the control of these pioneers as the real driving factor behind modernity. I instead propose that intellectuals such as Ziya Pasha and Marʿūf al-Ruṣāfī mediated between social structures that determine the range of dispositions available to them and their agency in choosing the disposition they express.

Second, it further undermines the romanticization of translation as the free flow of ideas and languages. Instead, it situates translations within a larger field—in this particular case, the Ottoman cultural field—as expressions of a circumscribed range of dispositions rather than as "bridges" that undermine boundaries. In other words, I emphasize a shift of emphasis from what

[16] See Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000) and Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[17] See Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

translations transmit—a question that has preoccupied much of the scholarship that examines the degree of a translation's "faithfulness" to the source text—to why they are undertaken. To answer the latter question, I draw upon writings by translators that describe why they translate as well as scholars who have theorized on the changing notions of translation in the late Ottoman Empire. By describing translations as "expressions of dispositions," I refer to underlying values and beliefs in regards to culture and language that shape translators' perception of which texts are worthy of translation and how they can be translated. Since the kinds of translations that are undertaken in a cultural field also play a key role in shaping cultural values and beliefs, translation not only express but also shape or structure dispositions.

Finally, I use the concept disposition to point out similarities between the staunchest advocates of Arab and Turkish nationalism or secularism and Islamism. Hasan Kayalı notes that "Arabism and Turkism were proto-nationalist currents that grew during the long reign of Sultan Abdülhamid on a literary and cultural level."[18] While these movements augured the eventual political divergences after the demise of the Ottoman Empire, they were also ramifications of the same dispositions of Arab and Turkish intellectuals who found themselves in increasingly similar social circumstances as a result of the state centralization during the late Ottoman Empire.

The History of Translation and Dispositions of the Ottoman Cultural Field

The burgeoning emphasis on protecting languages from foreign influences corresponded with the growing cultural hybridization that characterized the late Ottoman period. This tension was conspicuous especially in Iraq, one of the provinces that was heavily affected by state

[18] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 21.

centralization reforms. Iraq, like the rest of the Ottoman Empire, had a heterogeneous religious, ethnic, and cultural composition, and yet it also differed from the rest of the empire due to its demographical composition that included a substantial number of Kurds and Shiites. Therefore, this composition was a challenge from the perspective of nationalist movements that aimed to unite this heterogeneous community through a shared national language and heritage as well as the empire's cosmopolitan vision, which still remained exclusive, dismissing many traditions including the Kurdish and Shiite cultural production. Due to this significant discrepancy from other provinces, Iraq was seen as "backward" compared to the rest of the "civilized" Ottoman world. In his travelogue on Iraq, *Afak-ı Irak* (1914), Cenap Şahabettin notes that Iraq has been deprived of its Abbasid glory for the past eight centuries.[19] While Baghdad was once the center of the cosmopolitan Abbasid Empire, Iraq was assumed to be enmeshed in tribal and sectarian conflicts since the Mongolian invasion in 1258.

Therefore, Ottoman officials agreed that Iraq was in need of comprehensive reforms that should be imposed on the local administration—not much different from France's "civilizing mission" towards its colonies like Algeria and Tunisia. Tahsin Pasha describes the relation between the Ottoman "center" and Iraqi "periphery" in his observations on Iraq in 1860 in the following words: "Sultan Hamid employed a special policy towards distant regions like Iraq and Yemen, which might be called a colonial policy. Sultan Hamid, having appreciated that the people of these regions could not be administered like those settled in other parts of the country, or with a uniform law and methods, accepted a system of administration in accordance with the capacities

[19] Cenap Şahabettin, *Afak-ı Irak* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2011), p. 91.

of the population of these regions."[20] Officials reached a broad consensus on many issues ranging from railroads, telegraphs, settlement of tribes, and distribution of state lands, which would create a firmer control over the Iraqi population.

The large shifts in cultural and political frontiers also resulted in an increased investment among Ottoman statesmen in Iraq, since they "saw Iraq and Syria as potential areas to be developed to make up for the empire's economic losses from lost territories in the Balkans. Later reforms thus were aimed at developing the Iraqi provinces in ways that would increase productivity."[21] Political conditions of the period generated a platform that led to this cultural hybridization. Although the principal language of Iraqi newspapers and magazines was Arabic during the Ottoman era, most Iraqi journalists went to government schools whose language of instruction was Turkish. "The Arabist al-Karmili described the Arabic language of the Baghdad press as being 'mixed with all languages spoken in Baghdad. It contains words and constructions from Turkish, Kurdish, French, English, Indian, and Persian.'"[22] The state centralization deprived the old elites of their primary source of income, *waqf* (endowment) revenues, which have also sustained Sunni *madrasa*s (higher learning centers) and *ulama* (religious scholars). As the Ottoman Empire integrated more into capitalist networks of a global market economy through the construction of railroads and telegraphs—the key markers of state centralization—the merchant class became

[20] Tahsin Pasha, "Suphi Paşa Hazretleri'nin Layihası'ndan," quoted in *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi I: 1839-1865*, eds. Mehmet Kaplan, İnci Enginün, and Birol Emil (Istanbul: İÜEF, 1974), 4 vols., 1: p. 21; translation in Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London: Routledge, 2011), p 3.

[21] Emine Ö. Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reforms, and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), p. 160.

[22] Thabit Abdullah, *A Short History of Iraq* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2010), p. 129

more influential than the traditional religious class.[23] One of the consequences of this socioeconomic shift was the rise in middle-class intelligentsia that al-Ruṣāfī belonged to.

While other parts of the empire went through similar political and cultural reforms, Iraq did not receive much attention in the studies of Ottoman modernity. Unlike other authors whose works were examined in *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity*, such as Ziya Pasha, Aḥmad Shawqī, and Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī, al-Ruṣāfī is not a canonized figure in the Anglophone scholarship of Middle Eastern literatures. Iraq was overlooked in the studies of the late Ottoman period that has emphasized the Western influence as the main factor behind the emergence of modernity. Therefore, urban centers in which this influence was most visible, such as Cairo, Beirut, and Istanbul, received the main attention in this field. However, Iraqi intellectuals also played a crucial role for this modernity. For example, Taha Hussein notes in regards to another prominent Iraqi writer, Jamīl Sidqī al-Zahāwī (1863–1936): "Al-Zahāwī did not just belong to Iraq. In fact, he was also the poet of Egypt and the Arab world."[24] While Iraqi intellectuals played a key role both for Ottoman modernity and early modern Arabic literature, they gave much less emphasis on the West in their writings than their counterparts from Cairo, Beirut, and Istanbul.

This chapter focuses on the Iraqi poet al-Ruṣāfī to demonstrate that an examination of the cultural changes in Iraq in the late Ottoman Empire serves to reassess our understanding of Ottoman modernity. Al-Ruṣāfī did not read European languages. He instead had access to European works through their Arabic or Turkish translations. He also never traveled to Europe. At the same time, he espoused many values that are associated with modernity such as freedom and women's rights that were shared among other Ottoman intellectuals who went to Europe and could

[23] Çetinsaya, *The Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908*, p. 140.

[24] Quoted in Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Adab al-ʿArabī al-muʿāṣir fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1957), p. 29.

read in Western languages. This chapter on al-Ruṣāfī further reinforces one of the central tenets of my work, which proposes that modernity is not "a great river running from Europe to the rest of the world," but instead "a much broader delta of interconnecting channels and tributaries."[25]

Marʿūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945) was among the most influential poets in Iraq during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Al-Ruṣāfī grew up in the multilingual Ottoman milieu as his father knew three languages, Arabic, Turkish, and Kurdish. After having attended the military junior school of Baghdad,[26] he joined the Government School. He had a difficult time there because he had to adjust to the strict military discipline and did not then have a high proficiency in Turkish. He notes that even his Arabic language classes were conducted in Turkish.[27] He then attended the *madrasa*, religious scholar, of Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi, a famous Iraqi theologian and writer, because no other institution in Baghdad offered a comprehensive training in Arabic language and literature at that time. After his education, al-Ruṣāfī worked as a teacher in a primary school and later as a teacher of Arabic language and literature in a civilian senior high school in Baghdad.

Early in 1909, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, editor of the famous Istanbul journal *İkdam*, invited al-Ruṣāfī to join him in Istanbul to participate in the publication of an Arabic edition of that paper. Al-Ruṣāfī started to attain acquiescence with other Turkish intellectuals and significantly improved his Turkish. He described his travel to Istanbul as a rite-of-passage, since he familiarized himself

[25]Ian Coller, "Ottomans on the Move: Hassuma D'Ghies and the 'New Ottomanism' of the 1830s," in Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou eds., *Mediteranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 100.

[26] Abdul Abbas Al-Qaysi, "The Impact of Modernization on Iraqi Society During the Ottoman Era: A Study of Intellectual Development in Iraq, 1869–1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1958), p. 186.

[27] Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *al-Ruṣāfī yarwī sīrat ḥayātihi: sijill lil-ḥayāh al-ijtimā'īya wa-al-siyāsīya wa-al-fikrīya bi-kull jarā'a wa-ṣarāḥa* (Damascus: al-Madá, 2004), pp. 147-48.

with works of Western tradition through their Turkish translations during his stay there.[28] In Istanbul, al-Ruṣāfī discarded traditional Muslim clothing, turban (*ʿimāma*), for tarboush (*fez*).[29] He also became the co-editor of *Sabīl al-Rashad*, Arabic daily, a post that he held with the Turkish intellectual Abdullah Idin.[30] While he deeply engaged with the Turkish cultural milieu, al-Ruṣāfī also wanted to protect the Arabic language from "foreign" influences including Turkish. He held two teaching positions in Istanbul as an instructor of Arabic in the imperial civil service school (*mülkiye*) and of Arabic literature in the preachers' school (*vaiz*). He was also well versed in Arabic belles-lettres. He wrote numerous essays and literary histories on the Arabic language[31] as well as Arab poets al-Mutanabbī (915–965)[32] and al-Ma'arrī (953–1057),[33] showing his comprehensive erudition in the Arab literary tradition, *adab*.

Al-Ruṣāfī genuinely believed that literature could transform the world, as he wrote in one of his poems: "[W]e live in the most advanced age where the sword submits to the pen."[34] Al-Ruṣāfī, like other intellectuals of his time, thought that the empire was going through a political and cultural decline and viewed reforming language and literature as one of the most crucial ways of halting this decline. While al-Ruṣāfī's work held many similarities with the formal qualities of the traditional Arabic poetry, its content, unlike this poetry, was deeply political. He did not consider poetry a pastime of aesthetic activity but also a cure against the society's decline. In fact,

[28] al-Qaysi, "The Impact of Modernization on Iraqi Society," p. 34.

[29] ibid., p. 189.

[30] ibid.

[31] Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī, *Āthāruhu fī al-naqd wa-al-adab* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jamal, 2014), 1: pp. 45- 100.

[32] ibid., 1: pp. 185-217.

[33] ibid., 1: pp. 258-400.

[34] Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī, *Dīwān al-Ruṣāfī* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Istiqāma, 1963), 2 vols., 1: p. 67.

al-Ruṣāfī compares himself with a doctor, noting that while the doctor examines human body, the litterateur—*adīb*—examines the universe by using the medium of words.[35] He was like many other intellectuals who believed that the Ottoman Empire fell into a state of decrepitude and even sickness.

While al-Ruṣāfī's ideas challenged Iraq's traditional customs, he constantly emphasized that his ideas did not contradict with the main tenets of Islam. His writings did not just criticize the society's traditional customs that led to its corruption but also intellectuals who considered Islam the main cause of this corruption. He wrote a biography of Prophet Muhammad, *Kitāb al-Shakhsiyya al-Muḥammadiyya* (Book of the Personality of Muhammad, 1933) to argue that Islam stands for values of modernity, including liberty and women's rights. Al-Ruṣāfī considered himself a pious Muslim, yet he did not practice rituals such as daily prayers that many today view as the main "pillars" of Islam. He argued that these rituals did not constitute the core of Islam, which primarily aimed to cultivate one's heart and soul.[36] Many religious scholars castigated some of these views and even considered them heretic.

After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, al-Ruṣāfī became a member in the National Assembly of Iraq in 1921. For five successive sessions, al-Ruṣāfī served as a deputy in the Iraqi parliament. Despite this crucial role, he eventually lost prominence. His disapproval of the British mandate was met with harsh criticism. Al-Ruṣāfī also did not enjoy the position and prestige that he had during the Ottoman era.[37] He spent his final years in isolation, as the world around him was

[35] al-Ruṣāfī, *Āthāruhu fī al-naqd wa-al-adab*, 1: pp. 126-27.

[36] al-Qaysi, "The Impact of Modernization on Iraqi Society," p. 191.

[37] ibid., p. 205.

becoming less receptive to his ideas and less accustomed to people who vacillated among different languages and cultures that constituted the Ottoman Empire.

Al-Ruṣāfī and the Arabic Language

While al-Ruṣāfī displays both a deep familiarity and engagement with the Turkish culture, he constantly emphasized the need to maintain a stark boundary between Arabic and Turkish languages. In the beginning of *Daf' al-hujna*, al-Ruṣāfī complains that many Arabs have been using solecisms due to the increasing transculturation between Arabic and Turkish languages. To better understand his perspective, this section provides a historical background on solecism in the Arabic tradition.

The Arabic word for solecism, *laḥn*, has had various connotations, such as idiom, speech style, and tone. It also designates the peculiar manner of speaking of a particular individual or ethnic community. In addition, it has other meanings, such as "perceptiveness," "veiled or obscure allusion," "solecism (barbarism and malapropism)" and "musical melody, song, or tune."[38] In the Qur'an, it is used to designate a particular manner of expression, as in the verse, "Had we wished, we would have shown them to you; you would have known them by their marks, but surely you will know them by the manner of their speech [*laḥni l-qawli*]" (47:30).

As Islam spread into non-Arab territories, more people started speaking with incorrect idioms in routine speech and made frequent mistakes in the recitation of the Qur'an, giving arise to the *laḥn al-'āmma* (literally "solecisms of common people") literature. *Laḥn* from the third/

[38] Amidu Sanni, "The Discourse on Laḥn in Arabic Philological and Literary Traditions," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 13, no. 1 (2010), p. 3.

ninth century onward became identified with solecism and malapropism.[39] This period also witnessed the proliferation of debates about foreign accents as people started discussing whether a foreign accent could be considered a solecism. While some Islamic legal schools such as the Malikis considered accent a natural way of speaking and hence claimed that those with foreign accents could perfectly fulfill their religious obligations, others claimed that people with foreign accents should not be allowed to hold high political and religious positions.

Yasir Suleiman notes that "[t]he Umayyad period brought about a change in the attitude towards solecism. Whereas the association between language and religion was paramount in the early Islamic period, greater weight started to be given to the association of language and people in the Umayyad period."[40] While solecism was hitherto considered a linguistic mistake that everyone could make when reciting the Qur'an, it eventually became a marker of ethnic identity and designated non-Arabs in the Muslim community. Not only have Arabs considered language a repository of wisdom but also interpreted it as a medium for setting up boundaries among various social and ethnic groups that made up the Muslim society of the day. People looked down upon language mistakes and marginalized people who failed to speak Arabic properly. Also during this period, non-Arabs were called *ajam*, which literally means "speech of animals,"[41] as Persians attained prominent positions in the government that hitherto had been occupied by Arabs during the Umayyad Empire (661–750). This challenged the political supremacy of Arabs, hence giving rise to *Shu'ūbiyya*, a collective backlash among the non-Arab peoples against the Arabs and their

[39] For more on *lahn*, see Johann Fück, *Arabiya, Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1950), pp. 13–34 and Shady Hekmat Nasser, "The Grammatical Blunders of Qur'an Reciters," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 2, no. 1 (2015).

[40] Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), p. 53.

[41] Abdelfattah Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), p. xix.

privileged position. In response, many Arab intellectuals defended the superiority of their language and ethnic identity.[42]

Al-Ruṣāfī builds upon this understanding of solecism that has eventually become a marker of identity differentiation. He extensively wrote on the history of Arabic language and solecisms in particular. He notes that solecisms have become widespread especially during the Abbasid age, witnessing a rise in those "who have adopted the Arab customs and speech" (*al-mustaʿribūn*) and people of non-Arab heritages (*al-muwalladūn*). After the Abbasid Empire became weaker, non-Arab empires took control of the region, leading to a decline in the Arabic language that continues to his day. Al-Ruṣafī notes that the art of oration had become inert (*bārid*) and imitative (*muntaḥal*), while the poetry had become more barren (*aṣlad*).[43] Only those who specialize in Arabic in Western universities such as Oxford and Sorbonne have a solid knowledge of the language (1: 62).

For al-Ruṣāfī, this decline of the language is the clearest signifier of the Arab civilization's decline. While al-Ruṣafī, like his predecessors, viewed language as a marker of differentiation, he, unlike his predecessors, has developed a new disposition towards language. He notes that language is the fundamental marker of the progress of a nation (*umma*) and literature has a crucial role for protecting the language from foreign influences (2: 438). For him, literature captures a nation's spirit (*rūḥ*), intellect (*ʿaql*), sagacity (*faṭin*), morals (*akhlāq*), and sentiment (*ʿāṭifa*; 2: 450). Al-Ruṣāfī also castigates any imitation of other literary works (2: 247). When he is asked whether Egypt is the cultural leader in the Arab world, he laments that Egypt, like the rest of "Eastern Arab nations," only imitates sciences and literatures of the West (2: 436).

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[42] ibid., p. 17

[43] Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī, *Āthāruhu fī al-naqd wa-al-adab* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jamal, 2014), 2 vols., 1: p. 61.

*Daf*ʿ *al-hujna* and Aspirations for a New Language

In his introduction to *Daf' al-hujna*, al-Ruṣāfī considers Ottoman language the mixture of four languages, Turkish, Arabic, French, and Persian, and, like many Turkish intellectuals of his time, considered this heterogeneity an obstacle against civilizational advancement. He compares both Ottoman Turkish and the Ottoman community with a mixture of wine and water, suggesting that they can never attain a sense of organic unity.[44] In this sense, al-Ruṣāfī does not view the Ottoman culture as a reservoir, in which Arabic, Persian, and Turkish streams mix perfectly. In the work's introduction, al-Ruṣāfī constantly uses the expression "the Ottoman language" (*lugha ʿuthmāniyya*) instead of "Ottoman Turkish," suggesting that he considers Turkish and "Ottoman" two separate languages. Al-Ruṣāfī indicates that *Daf*ʿ *al-hujna* would prove useful for his nation and people. He criticizes hybrid expressions that have recently proliferated in the Arabic languages—what he calls expressions that are "Arabic in terms of structure and Turkish in terms of meaning" (*'arabīyya al-tarkīb wa turkiyya al-maʿnā*). The "split" character of these expressions that al-Ruṣāfī wanted to purge from the Arabic language very much resembled the "split" characteristic of al-Manfalutī, whose "style seems derivative, steeped in tradition" while "every one of his pages whispers the same question: how do I become European?"[45]

Among the goals of al-Ruṣāfī of writing the treatise of *Daf' al-hujna* was to point out Arabic expressions that are now misused in Ottoman Turkish. He describes his reading audience as "Arab people" (*abnāʾ al-ʿarab*) and considers this book a shield against the influence of what

[44] Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna fī irtiḍākh al-lukna* (Istanbul: Maṭba'a Ṣadā-ı Millet, 1331 [1912/ 1913]), p. 4.

[45] Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language*, pp. 3-4.

he calls "people of the Ottoman language."[46] The phrase, "sons of Arabs," already suggests that Arabic speakers, unlike speakers of the "Ottoman language," have a familial and even affective bond among each other. While many Arabs have criticized Ottoman intellectuals who want to purge Arabic expressions from Ottoman Turkish, al-Ruṣāfī is convinced that Arabs would benefit from this simplification. He observes that many Arabs picked up solecisms from Turkish journals and newspapers, corrupting the Arabic language. In the end, he notes that one finds "Turkish style" (*uslūb turkī*) in the works of unskilled translators (*kalām ghayr al-maharra min al-mutarjīmīn*) who translate works from Arabic to Turkish.[47]

Al-Ruṣāfī then lists expressions that have not changed in terms of meaning (*maʿnā*) or form (*lafẓ*), those that have changed either in terms of only form or only meaning, those that have changed only in both form and meaning, and finally those that do not actually exist in Arabic language. For the last category, he notes that Ottoman Turks created words on their own based on Arabic grammar rules.[48] While many classical authors have also emphasized the importance of protecting language from foreign influences, al-Ruṣāfī, unlike these classical authors, argues that the purity of language is an essential component of the purity of national culture.

Al-Ruṣāfī writes in length about the properties of Ottoman language in his introduction—observations shared by many Ottoman Turkish intellectuals during his time. He also lays out the extensive debates among Ottoman intellectuals about the role of language. Al-Ruṣāfī notes that Arabic terms have such a crucial role for Ottomans that they cannot explain even the most basic concepts in science if they excise Arabic expressions from their language. They regress to

[46] al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna*, p. 147.

[47] ibid., p. 111.

[48] al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna*, p. 19.

"uncivilized days" as they speak uncouth Turkish, so al-Ruṣāfī suggests that the Arabic language plays a key role in making Ottomans a "civilized" culture. This language, remaining incomprehensible to large audiences, testifies to the intellectual rigor of a person who strives to master it.

Many late nineteenth-century Turkish thinkers throughout the empire, such as Namık Kemal and Şinasi, complained about a linguistic gap separating the speech and writing of the "learned class" (*havas*) from that of the "commoners" (*avam*). While vernacular Turkish of the commoners was not "uncontaminated" and borrowed numerous Persian and Arabic expressions, the differences between the language of the *avam* and that of the *havas* were significant enough for prominent thinkers who complained about a "diglossia" that has been afflicting the empire and even causing its decline and stagnation. Diglossia, however, did not necessarily capture the relation between these two languages and often occluded "the question of how the popular dialects of Turkish translate, imitate, and adapt (or rewrite) the Perso-Ottoman poetic language and thereby diffused epistemic assumptions [of the poetic language] throughout the society."[49] Instead, like the notion that the empire was in a state of complete slumber before modernization reforms, the emphasis on the stark separation between the two languages was what I called a "discursive strategy." These intellectuals disseminated the notion that the spoken language of the commoners was the natural "core" of the Turkish language, while the written Ottoman Turkish was an artificial creation and a hodgepodge of three distinct languages—Arabic, Turkish, and Persian.

Yet, "commoners" were perhaps much less concerned than intellectual elites about retaining the purity of their language. *Daf' al-hujna* reflected a tension between an intellectual elite

[49] Walter G. Andrews, "Starting Over Again: Some Suggestions for Rethinking the Ottoman Divan Poetry in the Context of Translation and Transmission," *Translations: (Re)shaping of Literature and Culture*, ed. Saliha Paker (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002), p. 34.

like al-Ruṣāfī who insisted on protecting the Arabic language from Turkish influences and the "commoners" who were more willing to borrow "foreign" Turkish expressions, even if they did not have a good command of Turkish due to their relative lack of education. For al-Ruṣāfī, the "commoners" (*al-ʿawām*) exert little effort in protecting the Arabic language from foreign influences. Al-Ruṣāfī complained about uneducated Arabs who kept borrowing misused Arabic (*aḥaḍuhā al-ʿawām*) words from Ottoman books or newspapers. He dismisses any agency of commoners in using these expressions to articulate their own identities.[50]

Al-Ruṣāfī regularly makes succinct and assertive statements to substantiate his authority in Arabic language. At some moments, al-Ruṣāfī claims that a word that Ottoman Turks would consider Arabic does not have an equivalent in Arabic (*lā yanṭabiq ʿalā-lʿarabiyya*) nor does its origin lie in Arabic. At other moments, he would say that a particular word does not exist in Arabic language or its origin does not lie in Arabic (25). Sometimes, he would merely dismiss a misused expression by saying, "this is not correct" (*dhalik ghayir ṣaḥīḥ*) or "this is distant from its meaning in Arabic" (*huwa baʿīd ʿan maʿnāhi al-ʿarabī*). At other instances, he would suggest that certain words have not transformed in meaning but in their letter composition i.e., their form (*hiya muḥarraf lafẓan*; 44). He also notes that because Turks pronounce the letter *gh* as *q*, they transform the letter *gh* to letter *qaf* in their writings. Similarly, since Turks mispronounce the letter *hamza* as the letter *yā*, the letter *hamza* is replaced by the letter *yā* in many Turkish words that were taken from Arabic. In both cases, mispronunciations created morphological transformations (80).

Al-Ruṣāfī wants his audience to consult the classical Arabic heritage, *turāth*, rather than Turkish translations or newspapers for coining new expressions that would capture the technological advancements of his age. For example, he suggests that Arabs should not use the

[50] al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna*, p. 18.

word *mustaḥrāj* to describe fossils and archaeological excavation because Arabs borrowed this expression from Turks. He suggests that Arabs should use the word *mustahāth* instead, because classical Arabic sources also used this expression (76). Similarly, he notes that people should use the expression *ṣaʿada* instead of *tabkhīr* to describe the process of steam formation, because while *tabkhīr* is a loanword from Ottoman Turkish, *saʿada* is extensively used in classical Arabic sources (43). While, as İhsan Fazlıoğlu noted, the Ottoman Turkish used Arabic and Persian loan words to better describe metaphysical truths, the Arabic language was accepting Turkish words to describe technological, political, and scientific developments of modernity. Linguistic hybridization thrived in the Ottoman poetic cosmos that Ziya Pasha's *Harabat* cherished; however, the march towards civilizational progress only allowed a "pure" Arabic language that drew upon tradition for al-Ruṣāfī—signifying a new disposition towards language, shared by many Arab and Turkish intellectuals of the empire.

Daf' al-hujna contests Şemsettin Sami who notes in his Turkish-Arabic dictionary that the Ottoman word *mola* is borrowed from Italian. Al-Ruṣāfī insists that this word is, in fact, a deviation of the Arabic word *muhla* (104). He here looks down upon alternative authorities over the Arabic language, in particular Ottoman Turkish authors who produce works on Arabic language. Both al-Ruṣāfī and Şemseddin Sami, however, aimed to "master" each other's language so that they could purify their own language, making it conform to its "national essence"—perhaps the most significant proof of their intense engagement with each other's culture.

Al-Ruʿyā and the Borders of Translation

Although al-Ruṣāfī was highly critical of the hybridization of Arabic language with Turkish expressions, Erol Ayyıldız points out many forms of transculturations between Iraqi and

Ottoman Turkish literatures. Al-Ruṣāfī's poetry makes many intertextual references to works of prominent Turkish poets such as Recaızade Mahmud Ekrem (1847–1914) and Tevfik Fikret (1867–1915). Furthermore, al-Ruṣāfī's poetry shares many similar themes with the late Ottoman Turkish poetry such as education of women, freedom of love and criticism against tyranny (*istibdāt*), and the beauties of Istanbul. [51]

In the beginning of his translation of *Rüya*, al-Ruṣāfī introduces the source text's author, Namık Kemal, to his audience. He describes Namık Kemal as the most important intellectual of his generation—"author of Turkish authors" and "the poet of poets."[52] Al-Ruṣāfī emphasizes that Namık Kemal's success does not stem from his upbringing and privileged position only—two traits that were essential for belonging to the upper echelons of society in earlier generations—but also through hard work (*ijtihād*). He projects Namık Kemal as a paragon of virtue embodying the idealized vision of modernity. He was also the editor of the newspaper, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, which, al-Ruṣāfī claims, contributed to the Turkish "enlightenment" or, in al-Ruṣāfī's words, *nahḍa* (2: 616). Al-Ruṣāfī continues to describe the Turkish modernity movement as a "modern Turkish *nahḍa*" (*al-nahḍa al-turkīyya al-ḥadītha*; 2: 612). In viewing himself as the leader of the Iraqi *nahḍa*, al-Ruṣāfi could have seen in Namık Kemal an image—or "translation"— of himself (2: 615).

Namık Kemal's *Rüya* reflects a utopian vision of civilization that all nations can attain. In the beginning of the story, the narrator sits in a mansion facing the Bosporus. Looking at the sea, he records what comes to his mind. Suddenly, he observes many frightening transformations in nature, like a suddenly darkening sky. He falls asleep under immense pain. He suddenly wakes up

[51] For an extensive documentation of how al-Ruṣāfī intertextualizes the modern Turkish literature, see Erol Ayyıldız, *Irak Şiirinde Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Tesiri* (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi İlhiyat Fakültesi, n.d.), pp. 36-54.

[52] al-Ruṣāfī, "*Al-Ruʾyā*," in *Āthāruhu fī al-naqd wa-al-adab*, 2: p. 615.

when a young and beautiful woman, who introduces herself as "Freedom," appears in the midst of a fire cloud. She laments horrendous conditions of the narrator's society, emphasizing the need to reform it and put an end to its deep slumber. Freedom possesses supernatural qualities; in fact, the narrator compares her with a "goddess of beauty." Freedom complains extensively about the decline and stagnation of the narrator's society and provides a road map on how to make the society more advanced. The society should develop science, express interest in other cultures and civilizations, and promote values such as equality and freedom of speech. After this lengthy discussion, the narrator suddenly realizes that his surroundings have completely changed. At an instant, he finds himself in a society that has already achieved these qualities.

The story deeply resonates with a prevalent notion of the rise and fall of civilizations that became prevalent both in Europe and in the Middle East during the nineteenth century. Many authors that I have examined in *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity*, such as Ziya Pasha and Aḥmad Shawqī, shared the assumption that after a golden age, the Islamic civilization was going through decline. They also believed that they could pioneer a political and cultural reform that could halt this decline. Like many other Ottoman intellectuals, Namık Kemal and al-Ruṣāfī emphasized the need to "wake up" their society and transform it into a more advanced civilization.

Due to the lack of specific geographical and temporal references in the story, it is easy to imagine that *Rüya* could take place anywhere. Therefore, the anxiety of being culturally backward and desire for civilizational progress become disassociated from the context of the Western imperialism that played a key role in the emergence and evolution of these sentiments in Muslim societies. Instead, cultural backwardness becomes a supernatural nightmare, which would come to an end with the supernatural descent of the "Freedom" from the sky. The "decline period" seems to have happened beyond the narrator's, or anyone else's, control because the narrator describes

the decline period more as a catastrophe than as a consequence of historical and political developments. By translating Namık Kemal's *Rüya*, al-Ruṣāfī suggests that the desire for civilizational progress is universally shared, yet the language of this desire has to conform to national essences.

Al-Ruṣāfī's translation remains mostly "accurate," as he often adheres to the source text. At the same time, discrepancies exist between the two especially because al-Ruṣāfī does not choose for his translation words that are shared by both Arabic and Turkish languages. This particular decision is fundamental because al-Ruṣāfī ended his treatise, *Daf' al-hujna*, with the observation that numerous translations from Turkish into Arabic have recently introduced solecisms into the Arabic language.[53] Al-Ruṣāfī translated Namık Kemal's works not only to transmit the content of his writings, but also to set himself apart from other translators who continue introducing solecisms into the Arabic language.

Through his translation, al-Ruṣāfī wants to substantiate the boundaries between the Arabic and Turkish languages. For example, when Namık Kemal uses the word *millet*,[54] al-Ruṣāfī translates the word as *qawm*.[55] While Namık Kemal uses the word, *milla*, to refer to people who belong to a particular national community, al-Ruṣāfī insists that *al-milla* in the Arabic language refers instead to people who belong to the same religious community.[56] Likewise, he criticizes that people have been misusing the word *waram* in Arabic. This word specifically refers to tuberculosis in Turkish; however, al-Ruṣāfī notes that the word *waram* simply means any form of swelling.[57]

[53] al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna*, p. 111.

[54] Namık Kemal, *Rüya ve Magosa Mektubu* (Mısır: Matbaa-ı İçtihad, 1908), p. 20.

[55] al-Ruṣāfī, "*al-Rū'ya*," 2: p. 632.

[56] al-Ruṣāfī, *Daf' al-hujna*, p. 80.

[57] ibid., p. 84.

Therefore, to differentiate this more generic meaning from the tuberculosis disease, he uses the expression *dā' al-waram*[58] (sickness of swelling) for translating *verem* in the source text.[59] While Turks use the expression *vücud* to refer to body, al-Ruṣāfī notes that this expression solely means "existence" in Arabic, [60] thus translating the word *vücud* in the source text[61] as *abdān* (bodies).[62]

After Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī translated the famous Turkish author Namık Kemal's *Rüya* into Arabic, many other Iraqi authors produced similar works in what some scholars call a "dream genre," in which the narrator sees a dream of a utopian vision.[63] The proliferation of this genre in Iraq played a key role for the emergence of the nationalist movement. As Lawrence Venuti puts it, "translation can support the formation of national identities through both the selection of source texts and the development of discursive strategies to translate them."[64] Compared with Namık Kemal's other works, *Rüya* could be much more easily "domesticated" for al-Ruṣāfī. The Turkish source text includes several lines of classical Arabic poetry and does not make any geographic references that would sound foreign to the Arab reader. Although Namık Kemal quotes a few verses from the classical Persian poetry, al-Ruṣāfī chooses not to translate these lines while managing to retain the core message of the text, i.e., the need to reform societies. Furthermore,

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[58] Namık Kemal, *Rüya*, p. 19.

[59] al-Ruṣāfī, "*al-Rūʾya*," 2: p. 633.

[60] al-Ruṣāfī, *Dafʾ al-hujna* p. 84.

[61] Namık Kemal, *Rüya*, p. 21.

[62] al-Ruṣāfī, "*al-Rūʾya*," 2: p. 628.

[63] On the proliferation of this "dream genre" in Iraq, see Erol Ayyıldız, *Arapça bir Rüya Fantazesi, Tercemesi, ve Namık Kemal'in 'Rüya'sı ile Mukayesesi* (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, n.d.).

[64] Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 119.

unlike in his other works, Namık Kemal does not complain about the detrimental influences of foreign cultures on the Turkish civilization.

When the "Freedom" advocates virtues such as equality, scientific progress, and civilizational advancement, her statements on civilizational progress sound like divine, irrefutable commandments, and the narrator never attempts to argue against her. These virtues no longer seem borrowings from the Western society, but are instead articulated by a woman, who, in terms of her physical appearance, significantly resembles the archetype of the female beloved in both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish court poetry, such as her pearl-like teeth and the mole that seduces any viewer.[65] While "Freedom" shares many physical features with the idealized female beloved of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish poetry, she differs in terms of character from this beloved figure, because she is not merely a passive object of observation in which the poet merely takes pleasure. "Freedom" speaks back, practicing her agency and instructing the readers about what to do to make their society advanced.

As Turkish and Arab intellectuals "purified" their languages, they accelerated the political and cultural splits that took place especially after the demise of the empire. Their shared attitude towards language could also allow themselves to see each other as a "translational equivalent," sharing the same disposition of marching towards modernity without sacrificing their Islamic tradition. This sense of translational equivalence does not erase the unequal power dynamics that shapes the Ottoman cultural field. Only once throughout the entire story does the narrator use the word "Ottoman." This, however, represents one significant moment when al-Ruṣāfī asserts his difference from Namık Kemal. Namık Kemal glorifies the Ottoman Empire in the following words:

[65] al-Ruṣāfī, "*al-Rū'ya*," 2: p. 626.

The future of the empire lies in the hands of freedom
With God's help, the Ottoman state will enter an age of glory[66]

Al-Ruṣāfī translates these lines as follows:

O the flag is in the hand of Freedom
Attained through glory and victory, raised by every Ottoman [67]

What will bring the empire to glory is the "Ottoman state" (*Osmanlı devleti*) for Namık Kemal and "every Ottoman" (*kull ʿuthmānī*) for al-Ruṣāfī. While Namık Kemal argues that the Ottoman state would lead the empire to a better future, al-Ruṣāfī wants to bring all the subjects of the Ottoman Empire—including its relatively ignored Iraqi population—to a central stage in shaping the empire's future.

Al-Rūʾya includes many details that capture the ambivalences of Ottoman modernity that I have been exploring. While "Freedom" advocates rationality and scientific progress, she is a supernatural figure who descends from the sky. While she shares features of the female beloved in the courtly poetry from the traditional Islamic heritage, she is also unlike the female beloved, advocating values of freedom, equality, and progress. The story is one of the plethora of cultural experimentations of the period, fitting into neither the Islamic-Muslim tradition nor secular Arab/ Turkish nationalism. This ambivalence also reframes the period as a liminal time of both cultural convergences and divergences. Arabic and Turkish writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have become increasingly similar in terms of their content, themes, metaphors, and imagery, while these increased interactions also reinforce a sense of differentiation on the linguistic level.

[66] Namık Kemal, *Rüya*, p. 237.

[67] al-Ruṣāfī, "*al-Rūʾya*," 2: p. 637.

Many Ottoman Turkish intellectuals who had an extensive knowledge of the Arabic language shared the same disposition with al-Ruṣāfī, protecting what they considered a pure national language from foreign loanwords. Şemseddin Sami, the composer of the Arabic-Turkish dictionary, notes, "If we speak Arabic, we should only speak Arabic; if we write Persian, we should write only in Persian; if we speak French, we should speak only French; as we speak and write Turkish, we should not use Arabic, Persian, and French words. We should learn languages of the world, but we should preserve our Turkish as Turkish."[68] Şemseddin Sami encourages readers to attain mastery of several languages, while making sure that these languages do not hybridize each other. Languages exist as codes to be mastered and the modern Ottoman intellectual is expected to master them without letting other languages sully his cultural essence. He claims that even though the Ottoman language is a mixture of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, the Ottoman is in essence a Turkish language and Arabic and Persian expressions in this language are merely foreign loanwords. Hence, Şemseddin Sami explains, the Ottoman could have preserved its "Turkish grammar and syntax" even though it heavily borrowed expressions from Arabic and Persian.[69] Muallim Naci (1850–1893), who wrote the comprehensive compilation of Arabic proverbs *Sanihatül Arap* (1886/1887), also emphasized that the Ottoman language should remain uncontaminated by Arabic and Persian loanwords. He holds many views on the Turkish language like the following one, which resonates with al-Ruṣāfī's views on protecting a language from foreign influences: "Even though to say the word *bedāyī* with the letter *yā* sounds pleasent in our language when speaking and writing Turkish, why does a Turk need to go through the

[68] Şemsettin Sami, *Lisan* (Istanbul: Mihran Matbaası: 1303 [1885/ 1886]), p. 103.

[69] Quoted in Şemsettin Sami, "Elsine ve Ulum ve Fünun," *Şemsettin Sami: Süreli Yayınlarda Çıkmış Dil ve Edebiyat Yazıları*, ed. Yüksel Topaloğlu (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2012), p. 354. The original article is in *Sabah* 3301, pp. 1-2.

burden of writing the phrase as *badā'ī'* with the letter *hamza* and pronouncing the letter *'ayn* while enunciating the *hamza* in order to adhere to the rules of Arabic?"[70]

Nadia Bou Ali makes an observation about the idea of nationalism by Butrus al-Bustānī (1813–1889), one of the leading figures of Arab modernity, "The idea of the nation is both a universal and particular notion for Bustānī. In other words, the Arab nation is one form of the many nations around the world: it is a comparable subject, a translation."[71] Bou Ali's description of the Arab nation as both a "translation" and "a comparable subject" captures the dynamics of the ambivalence that I have been describing in this chapter. Translations were increasingly seen as the means to "unlock" and capture the wisdoms of other nations for attaining cultural and scientific progress. Arab and Turkish intellectuals affiliated themselves more strongly as members of national civilizations, "equivalent to" other civilizations like the French or Japanese in terms of a sense of desire for cultural, scientific, and military might, while fundamentally different from them in terms of national essence. Cultural interactions flourished during the late Ottoman period; however, these interactions came with the cost of decreasing other forms of transculturation and translation practices that undermined the sense of a stable national and cultural essence.

Conclusion

Arabic and Turkish literary texts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century differed in regards to terms and expressions they used. At the same time, they were similar to each other in terms of shared themes and metaphors. While al-Ruṣāfī's translation aims to affirm a pure,

[70] Muallim Naci, *İntikad: Muallim Naci Efendi ile Beşir Fuat Bey arasında 'Viktor Hugo' hakkında cereyan eden mükabeledir* (Istanbul: Kitapçı Arakel, 1304 [1886/ 1887]), p. 48.

[71] Nadia Bou Ali, "Buṭrus al-Bustānī and the Shipwreck of the Nation," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 16, no. 3 (2013), pp. 267-68.

"uncontaminated" Arabic language and identity, it also upholds many values of late Ottoman Turkish intellectuals through translating famous Turkish works. While the number of translations could have reached a peak during the late Ottoman period, translators increasingly shared the same disposition to view other cultures as codes to be deciphered for civilizational progress, leading to a decrease in the "diversity" of dispositions.

If "Egypt was most European when, paradoxically, it was most Egyptian,"[72] Iraq was most Iraqi when it was, paradoxically, most Ottoman, just as Egypt was also most Ottoman when it was most Egyptian. In other words, the emphasis on maintaining a pure Egyptian, Iraqi, Turkish, or Arab identity throughout the empire coincided with the increasing cultural hybridization that occurred due to transculturations both within the empire as well as with other parts of the world, including Europe and East Asia.

My study of al-Ruṣāfī's work also undermines the typical scholarly view that Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and al-Tahṭāwī's stay in Paris initiated modernity in the Middle East. By studying al-Ruṣāfī, I reveal the dynamics of an alternative modernity that does not view the French cultural influence as its central component. Iraq has received much less attention than Egypt and Lebanon in the studies of early modern Arab modernity especially because Iraq did not have as much contact with the Western world as Egypt and Lebanon did—perpetuating the assumption that Iraq was less modern than the latter two. Values such as freedom and equality flourished as much in Iraq as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Al-Ruṣāfī has become acquainted with these values during his stay in Istanbul where he engaged in dialogue with Ottoman Turkish intellectuals and their writings. Examining al-Ruṣāfī's works demonstrates that, contrary to the typical

[72] Shaden Tageldin, *Disarming Words: Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 201.

scholarly view, modernity was not the exclusive consequence of increasing Western presence in the Ottoman cultural life.

Furthermore, this chapter emphasizes translation's role in expressing dispositions rather than merely bridging cultures. Prominent works from translation studies already demonstrated that translation is not just a mere flow of ideas and a bridge among different cultures. They instead situate translations within unequal power dynamics that characterize cultural relations. For example, since her publication of *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Emily Apter observes that translation studies has overly romanticized border crossings. This field also has ignored that it is at the sites of crossings such as the airport transit, or checkpoints, where nation-states can practice their authority of surveillance most forcefully.[73] She thus proposes that the site of translation should be viewed more as a checkpoint that not only allows the flow of ideas, languages, and cultures but also sometimes heavily polices and halts their flow:

> [I]n an era in which translation studies has burgeoned and received enormous validation in the institutional frameworks of the humanities, I am suggesting that the term "translation" has been compromised by its association with the metaphor of fluid borders, and more generally with a language of border crossing that obfuscates the politics of state function at the border. I would argue for looking more closely at moments of maximal translatability—violence, arrest, deportation, linguistic profiling—that occur at borders and that we treat translation as a set of performative and politically volatile interactions that happen at checkpoints.[74]

If translations occur at checkpoints that control cultural flows, then cultural dispositions—values and beliefs on language and culture that circumscribe the motives behind translations and hence the kinds of translation that are produced—act as another element that structures these flows. Translations do not just erase or create borders among cultures; they also express and structure dispositions towards them.

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[73] Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (New York: Verso, 2013), p. 75.

[74] Emily Apter, "Translation at the Checkpoint," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50, no. 1 (2014), p. 72.

Many scholars of world literature have already emphasized that values and beliefs in regards to other cultures shape why translations are undertaken. Through describing these values and beliefs as "dispositions," my work emphasizes that they represent a crucial component of cultural networks that have received more attention in recent years with the increasing prominence of world literature and digital humanities. It thus bridges works in translation studies that call attention to the power dynamics that circumscribe the kinds of translations that are undertaken and works in world literature and digital humanities that charter translations for mapping out global cultural networks. This mapping should view dispositions that translations express as essential components of these networks and pay more attention to them. This increased attention to dispositions will also undermine the tendency to project networks of translations simply as the marker of increased transculturations. The strength of engagement with other cultures should not be merely measured by the quantity of translations—an assumption that has significantly shaped also the study of Ottoman modernity. Even if the number of translations between the two cultures may have increased, their transculturations may be significantly reduced if translations only "decipher" cultures. A significant marker of the richness of transculturations is the range of dispositions that translations express, such as those that strive to make, in Rebecca Gould's words the "foreignness legible" or to generate linguistic adornment.

Finally, my emphasis on dispositions also reveals the limitations of describing "the age of translation" as Westernization, which misleadingly implies that the empire had minimal engagement with the West before. We do not need to view the "pioneers of modernity" as vacillating between "Islam" and "the West"—the former affiliated with tradition and the latter with modernity. These pioneers have instead developed similar dispositions towards both. Even if they may have affiliated themselves more strongly with one of them, these intellectuals have

attempted to find both in Islamic and Western civilizations lessons to be learned and implemented for halting what they consider a political and cultural decline. It is through a shift from a preoccupation with these intellectuals' cultural vacillations towards mapping out their shared set of dispositions that we can rewrite the narrative of modernity.

CHAPTER 5

Ottoman Empire as The Transitional Object:

Playing with the Past in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*

and Huda Barakāt's *Tiller of Waters*

Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity has re-contextualized Arabic and Turkish literary texts that were written during the late Ottoman Empire—works that were classified as the first examples of modern Arabic and Turkish literature respectively—as sites of cultural experimentation in which the Ottoman identity was subject to constant renegotiation. Most authors of these texts could not foresee that the Ottoman Empire was soon to be partitioned into several nation-states after the empire experienced a massive defeat at World War I (1914–1918). Literary texts that were written after the emergence of nation-states generated aspirations for a new national identity that tried to put distance to the Ottoman past. At the same time, Arabic and Turkish literatures today display many cross-cultural synergies. In this chapter, I build upon theories of the psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1896–1971) on playing and reality to demonstrate that both literatures reconfigure the boundaries of their cultural identity with a playful engagement with the Ottoman past and the Islamic heritage.

Political and cultural reforms in the beginning of the twentieth century both in Turkey and the Arab world reinforced political and cultural splits. Many Arab and Turkish nationalists considered the Ottoman period a time of tyranny that did not allow their national cultures to flourish. According to them, generating a modern national identity necessitated repressing the Ottoman past. However, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* thus far demonstrates that the transition from cosmopolitan Ottomanism to Arab and Turkish nationalism—which both cultures experienced within the shared context of the Ottoman cultural field—was not abrupt or smooth;

therefore the Ottoman cosmopolitan past was never fully "repressed." This chapter proposes that both *The Black Book* (*Kara Kitap*; 1990) by Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952) and *Tiller of Waters* (*Ḥārith al-miyāh*; 2001) by Huda Barakāt (b. 1952) "play" with objects from the Ottoman past, including silk, keys, door, and cups, to generate what Winnicott called an "intermediate zone" that blurs the distinction between the past and the present, allowing these authors to undermine the projection of the past as a layer that has to be buried underground or an altar that should be fetishized.

The Islamic tradition has described literary texts as works of craftsmanship, like garments or metalwork. In this chapter, I also draw upon this association between texts and other material objects to pinpoint strong resonances between the fields of world literature and of material history. World literature studies how textual objects are received, translated, and interpreted once they leave their source cultures mainly by examining intersections among different literary traditions. Material history, with its recent emphasis on global networks, asks similar questions on the reception of material objects. Concepts that have recently attained prominence in the world literature scholarship, such as "refraction" or "translation zone," can be used for creating new insights for material history. Similarly, material history can expand its scope by examining how material objects, once they circulate outside their source culture, are received and represented in literatures of target cultures. I examine in this chapter how everyday objects from the past are represented in contemporary Arabic and Turkish literatures. Studying these representations will show that despite the decrease in translations and intertextualities between contemporary Arabic and Turkish literatures with the emergence of nation-states in the Middle East, they still maintain traces of an Ottoman cultural field in which earlier works of these literatures were produced. I also provide new perspectives for studying one of the most extensively analyzed texts in world literature—*The Thousand and One Nights* (*Alf Layla wa Layla*). World literature has focused on

how this text has been translated and intertextualized as it circulated throughout the world. This chapter aims to understand how this text has been endowed with new meanings and interpretations in the "intermediate zone" that Orhan Pamuk and Huda Barakāt created in their novels.

Playing With Things: The Materiality of World Literature

The demise of the Ottoman Empire resulted in vast cultural and political transformations, leading to traumatic displacements. Observations by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) about the formation of the individual subject resonates with writings that described the process of formation of modern national subjecthood and that were written after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. While Freud considers repression an essential component of the formation of individual subject, many nationalist authors believed that the "decrepit" past should be "repressed" for the formation of a new, civilized social order. Numerous Arab and Turkish writers such as ʿAbd al-Karīm Ghallāb (1919–2006), who wrote his epic novel *Dafanna al-māḍī* (*We Buried the Past*; 1966) narrating Morocco's journey from tradition to modernity, used the trope of burying the past to signify national aspirations for a new social, civilized order for the twentieth century.

Like Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī's *A Period of Time* that undermines a stark separation between the Egyptian present and the Ottoman past through the trope of the Pasha's resurrection, *The Black Book* and *Tiller of Waters* expose repressed layers of the past that earlier generations wanted to bury underground. I refrain from describing this exposure of the past as a condition that is akin to the "return of the repressed," however. Freud emphasized in his later writings that "it is not repression itself that is pathological, but rather *the return of the repressed*."[1] At the same time,

[1] Edward Erwin, ed., *The Freud Encyclopedia: Theory, Therapy, and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 483; italics Erwin's.

these works do not project exposing this hitherto repressed past as something pathological. To substantiate my point, I draw upon Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory on object relations to undermine the Freudian reading of the Ottoman past as a relic that was buried underground and its exposure as a pathology in works of Arabic and Turkish literary criticism.

Winnicott developed his theories to further revise the Freudian psychoanalysis that "dwell *either* on a person's life as it relates to objects *or else* on the inner life of the individual."[2] He emphasized that the formation of self, especially during early stages of a child's development, is constituted by its relation with external objects such as toys. Furthermore, unlike Freud who considered play an escape from reality, Winnicott conceived play as an intermediate zone between the inner psyche and the external world. The boundaries of the self and the other are reconfigured in this "intermediate zone." Due to its liminal nature, Winnicott describes this zone as transitional and describes objects associated with it, such as toys, as "transitional objects." The child partakes in and shapes the external reality through playing with external objects such as dolls or teddy bears: "In playing, the child manipulates external phenomena in the service of the dream and invests chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling."[3] As the subject plays with the object, the object attains a mythical aura, belonging neither fully to the individual's inner world nor to the external world but instead to an intermediate zone between the two.

Although Winnicott developed psychoanalytic theory mainly to describe child development, he was aware that his theories are applicable to cultural phenomena, as he compared listening to a Beethoven symphony or going to a picture gallery with what a child does "when

[2] D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 105; italics Winnicott's.

[3] ibid., p. 51.

sitting on the floor playing with toys under the aegis of the mother."[4] He also argued that as artists draw upon their tradition, they "play" with it, situating this tradition in an "intermediate zone" that allows artists to reconfigure their cultural boundaries: "[I]n any cultural field *it is not possible to be original except on a basis of tradition*… The interplay between originality and the acceptance of tradition as the basis for inventiveness seems to me to be just one more example, and a very exciting one, of the interplay between separateness and union."[5] Just as children bring a part of themselves into toys, artists who engage with their tradition inevitably bring some of their contemporary sensibilities into this tradition.

Amal Treacher Kabesh points out a key difference between Freudian and Winnicottian notions of culture: "While Freud believed that the individual's relationship with society and culture is fundamentally compromised, indeed is based on disavowal and repression, Winnicott understood culture as potentially benign and facilitative, as human beings discover their capacities to live a satisfying life."[6] As Freud puts it, "The theory of repression is the corner-stone on which the whole structure [of psychoanalysis] rests."[7] I reframe our understanding of contemporary Turkish and Arabic literatures through the lens of Winnicott's psychoanalytic theories to demonstrate that their authors do not necessarily think that the formation of modern cultural identity has to entail compromise, including the repression of the Ottoman past. Literary critics have used the term, "return of the repressed," to describe this exploration of the Ottoman past in

[4] ibid., p. 105.

[5] ibid., p. 99; italics Winnicott's.

[6] Amal Treacher Kabesh, "Soundspace," *Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena, and Cultural Experience*, ed. Annette Kuhn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), p. 65.

[7] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), 24 vols., 14: p. 16.

post-Ottoman Arabic and Turkish literatures. For example, Erdağ Göknar quotes the passage from Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* in which the narrator Galip descends into the underground mannequin museum, and then argues that this moment "manifests Freud's metaphor" and "describes the return of the repressed."[8]

For Göknar, works such as *The Black Book* demonstrate that the Ottoman past is the repressed layer that lies beneath the contemporary Turkish nation. While "[t]he essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious"[9] in the Freudian psychoanalysis, repressed memories or emotions are never fully annihilated. They are instead restored in the unconsciousness and can, for any reason, return back to the consciousness. Repression is thus a defense mechanism that protects people from painful memories. The Ottoman past is a painful memory that has to be repressed from the perspective of the nationalist historiography. Pamuk and Barakāt engage with the Ottoman past to challenge the notion that this past should remain repressed to achieve ideals of modernity such as progress and cultural advancement.

Their playful engagement with the past also challenges the recent projections of this past as an object of fetish. In anthropology, fetish has often referred to an object that is endowed with supernatural and sacred powers among various societies. Freud redefined fetish as an object that becomes the substitute for the actual object of sexual desire often when the sexual aim is unattainable and its fulfillment is prevented.[10] While Freud used the concept fetish to specifically

[8] Erdağ Göknar, *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism, and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 228.

[9] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition*, 14: p. 147.

[10] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, translated and edited by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 34.

describe the sexual development of individuals, Homi Bhabha used the concept fetish to describe the dynamics of power relations within colonial and postcolonial societies.[11] Fetish can be a useful category of analysis for understanding the current engagement with the Ottoman past in post-Ottoman societies as well. Like fetish objects, the Ottoman past is sacralized, as representations of this past become the substitute for the might and grandeur that Islamic civilizations used to enjoy.

I propose that the Ottoman past has been either as an object of repression or an object of fetish in much of the official Arabic and Turkish historiography as well as popular culture. Therefore, this past is either highly derided or lauded, but almost no one fully engages or "plays" with it. *The Black Book* and *The Tiller of Waters* go beyond these "Freudian" projections of the Ottoman past. They create an "intermediate zone" that allows them to critique their current communities without having to idealize this past.

Winnicott's works on transitional objects also undermines, as Bill Brown notes, the centrality of human subject in the Freudian psychoanalysis. Brown thus emphasizes that we need to generate a "thing theory" which will not simply describe "things themselves" but shed crucial light on "the subject-object relation in particular temporal and spatial contexts."[12] Like psychoanalysts, many historians considered material objects unworthy of study and instead focused on "subjects" such as political rulers as the real makers of history. Using textual sources of archives, "historians would have been skeptical about the value of engaging with 'objects' or 'artefacts.'"[13] While historians mostly engaged with documents of "advanced" civilizations,

[11] Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and the Colonial Discourse," *Screen* 24, no. 6 (1983): pp. 18-36.

[12] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001), p. 7.

[13] Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Introduction: Writing Material Culture History," in *Writing Material Culture History*, eds. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 1.

anthropologists examined everyday materials of "primitive" societies. Yet, history is recently going through "a material turn," realizing that "material objects are not, and have not been, just caught up in an ever-shifting world but are actually creating, constructing, materializing, and mobilizing history, contacts, and entanglements."[14]

Similar to world literature, material history studies circulations of objects to gain better insights on social and cultural power dynamics, since "from a *methodological* point of view, it is the things-in-motion that illuminates the human and social context."[15]As Kaori O'Connor notes: "The most common thing is 'follow the thing'—tracing the circulation through different contexts of a manifestly material object of study such as commodity, gifts, money, works of art, and intellectual property."[16] This emphasis on the "things-in-motion" resonates with the shifting dynamics of literary studies that focuses on textual circulations. World literature is, in a sense, material history, while it also has the potential to reshape material history. Just as material history undermines the centrality of textual sources in history, world literature aims to de-emphasize the centrality of national canons in literary studies. Furthermore, just as material history demonstrates that human subjects, political leaders in particular, do not exclusively determine the course of history, world literature shows that meanings of literary texts are not circumscribed by their authors or national communities only, since these meanings undergo vast transformations once they circulate throughout the globe. Both history and literary studies seek new avenues of research through the "follow-the-thing" methodology.

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[14] ibid, p. 2.

[15] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5, italics Appadurai's.

[16] Kaori O'Connor, "Anthropology, Archaeology, and the Material Culture of Lycra," in *Writing Material Culture History*, p. 79.

Describing resonances between world literature and material history expands the scope of literary studies. When world literature maps out translations and intertextualities, it reveals the reception of textual objects among different literary communities. As I show in my analysis of *The Tiller of Waters,* the Islamic heritage has frequently described texts as a handicraft, undermining the stark distinction between texts and material objects. Although material history emerged as a reaction to the centrality of textual sources in the discipline of history, this description of texts as a form of handicraft opens up the possibility of viewing world literature, which studies the circulation of textual objects, as an essential component of material history. Similar to its endeavor of examining how textual objects are represented in different cultures, world literature can look at how non-textual objects are represented in literatures of different cultural communities. This new angle can flesh out cross-cultural synergies among literary communities whose interactions cannot be documented through an exclusive emphasis on textual relations such as translations. Material history also studies the ways in which material objects are endowed with interpretations and new meanings in their respective societies. Literary texts, in particular, are crucial sources that can inform us about the social meanings and functions of everyday objects. The reception of both textual and non-textual objects in literatures can be considered a Winnicottian play that allows their authors to reconfigure their cultural identities.

Viewing texts as objects also allows me to use the conceptual repertoire of psychoanalysis—repression, fetish, and play—for providing new insights on world literature and the creation of national canons. Alexander Beecroft argued that national literatures emerge as a reaction against cosmopolitan literatures.[17] If national canons are heterogeneous reservoirs that

[17] Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature*: *From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015), p. 202.

encompass source texts from diverse cultures, it arises from the repression of certain works from the cosmopolitan literary heritage and fetishization of others. For example, many works of Ottoman court poetry were deemed too "foreign" and "artificial" by Turkish literary historians of the twentieth century, who believed that a modern Turkish literature needs to "repress" or forget these works and instead build upon works of "indigenous folklore and traditional storytelling" that were elevated to a sacrosanct status. Such a process allows national canons to project themselves as transhistorical and their boundaries as unchanging. When novels adopt a playful engagement with this heritage, they challenge the solidification of nationalist canons and cultures that are maintained through a dynamic of repression and fetishization.

This playfulness also allows Pamuk and Barakāt to become what Felix Lang calls in regards to authors who wrote on the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) "underground historians": "As a person who uncovers counter-hegemonic 'truths,' or perspectives on reality that are obscured by the dominant narratives and discourses, the author is cast as an 'underground historian' who, in keeping with the neorealist paradigm, investigates marginal aspects of reality."[18] Lang's insight holds true also for many contemporary Arab and Turkish writers who believe that their works undermine official narratives of history that wish to put more distance to the Ottoman past.

The Ottoman Empire was abolished in 1922, giving rise to many nation-states in the Middle East, including Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine. The first years in Turkey witnessed vast reforms that aimed to bring the Turkish nation to the level of advanced Western

[18] Felix Lang, *The Lebanese Post-civil War Novel: Memory, Trauma, and Capital* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 40-41.

civilizations.[19] These reforms include the abolishment of the Ottoman sultanate (1922), abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate and religious courts (1924), and changing the alphabet from Arabic to Latin scripts (1928). They substantiated the boundary between Turkey and the Arab world, refashioning Turkey instead as a Western nation. For many historians, these reforms aimed "to cut young Turks off from their Ottoman heritage and to replace the conservative mentality of the past with a modern and liberal one."[20] Pamuk's works represent a critique of modernity that emphasizes cultural transformation that advocates a cultural progress seeking to repress the Ottoman past.

According to the official Turkish state historiography, Arabs rebelled against their Turkish rulers and declared independence at the end of World War I. Many historians considered this rebellion a natural culmination of the burgeoning Arab nationalist movement of the nineteenth century, even if historians such as Hasan Kayalı have recently showed that not all Arabs aspired for rebellion or even planned creating new nation-states.[21] After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, various European states, especially Britain and France, took control of territories with a majority of Arab population and played a key role in setting up the boundaries of many Arab nation-states, including Syria and Iraq. These boundaries were often set up to serve the interests of these European states rather than of these states' inhabitants. For example, "[t]he British officials who determined the boundaries of the post-Ottoman Arab world were at their most arbitrary in the new case of the state of Iraq,"[22] just as "it is difficult to disagree with the statement

[19] Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976-1977), 2 vols., 2: p. 373.

[20] Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 2: p. 376.

[21] See Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[22] William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Westview Press: Colorado, 2004), p. 204.

that Transjordan was an artificial state created to accommodate the interests of a foreign power and an itinerant prince in search of a throne."[23] Although the Arab world was divided into several nation-states, they still maintained a sense of cultural unity for various reasons, including the shared language of the Modern Standard Arabic (*fuṣhā*) and the rise of pan-Arab nationalism that was spearheaded by Egypt. Many novels such as *Return of the Spirit* (*ʿAwdat al-rūḥ*; 1933) by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm (1898–1987) gave voice to these nationalist aspirations. These works suggested that the Ottoman past represented a source of tyranny stifling the Arab imagination that "woke up" once the Ottoman rule came to an end with the emergence of nation-states.

Although these nationalist works strived to repress the Ottoman past, this past evokes a sense of might and grandeur for many Arabs and Turks today. Turkey witnessed especially in the past few years the emergence of *Ottomania*, a recent phenomenon in cultural studies that expresses a richly significant sentiment of nostalgia which projects the Ottoman past as an impeccable utopia especially under the rule of AKP (Turkish acronym of Justice and Development Party). Recent developments, ranging from naming a bridge over the Bosporus after the Ottoman sultan Sultan Selim I (reigned 1512–1520) to the increasing popularity of Turkish soap opera, *Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*), which is about the "golden age" of the empire under the rule of Süleyman the Magnificent (reigned 1520–1566), testify to this rising Ottomania. Tarek El-Ariss notes that Turkish soap operas have become extremely popular in the Arab world, also generating a strong sense of Ottomania: "[Turkish TV series] have triggered a longing for and fascination with the Ottoman Empire and modern-day Turkey."[24] El-Ariss associates this longing and

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[23] ibid., p. 213.

[24] Tarek El-Ariss, "Ottomania: Boy Love, Incest, and the Arab Spring," in *Essays on Heritage, Tourism, and Society in the MENA Region*, Dieter Haller, Achim Lichtenberger, and Meike Meerpohl, eds. (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015), p. 17.

fascination with "the apparent collapse of the project of Arab modernity and of colonial-era boundaries of Arab nation states."[25] Ottomania contrasts with the transformation vision that characterized much of the modernity movements in the Middle East, which advocated values such as progress, nationalism, and enlightenment. Evoking the sexual nature of the fetish object in the Freudian psychoanalysis, El-Ariss notes that these shows, famous for their "beautiful men and women, fair and blue eyed, engaging in various kinds of amorous encounters,"[26] generate "a moment of both political and sexual seduction, which finds profound historical and cultural resonance in the Arab unconsciousness."[27]

Huda Barakāt and Orhan Pamuk do not consider the Ottoman past as something that needs to be repressed and its "return" in the past few years a pathological condition. Nor do they elevate it to the status of fetish. Instead, they "play" with this past and consider traces of it transitional objects that blur the distinction between the cosmopolitan past and the nationalist present. This play is visible especially in how both Pamuk and Barakāt use and represent *The Thousand and One Nights* in their works. These authors engage with the text in such a way that the *Nights* is treated neither as an object of repression nor of fetish. Instead, the *Nights* is an object of play that allows these authors to blur the distinction between tradition and modernity. Contemporary Arab and Turkish authors find in the fluidity of the *Nights* in terms of style, plot, and cultural origins possibilities with a more playful engagement with their heritage than repressive or fetishizing approaches allow.

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[25] ibid., p. 20.

[26] ibid., p. 19.

[27] ibid., p. 20.

The Thousand and One Nights in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*

The Thousand and One Nights becomes a transitional object in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* that "plays" with this work of the Islamic heritage to construct an intermediate zone. Although the *Nights* includes many stories, all of these stories are situated within a larger frame tale. According to this frame, Sultan Shahryar learns that his wife has been cheating on him, and he orders her execution. Then, to take revenge on all women, the sultan marries each day a virgin only to kill her the following morning. Scheherazade, the grand vizier's daughter, wants to put an end to these executions, begins narrating to him a story each night, and ceases narrating the story, just before its climactic ending. Captivated by these stories, the sultan puts off Scheherazade's execution and finally spares her life after many years.

The *Nights*' resurgence in popularity in past years is considered one of the most significant examples that shows how texts attain new meanings as they circulate throughout the world. As Sandra Naddaff notes, "Perhaps no other work of world literature holds up as clear a mirror to the way a text can be simultaneously identified wholly with a literary culture and yet circulate well beyond that culture, than does this foundational text of Arabic narrative."[28] Much of contemporary scholarship on the *Nights* emphasizes how Antoine Galland (1646–1715) popularized *The Thousand and One Nights*. Galland lived in Istanbul for fifteen years and traveled to many Ottoman cities, including Aleppo, Beirut, and Damascus. However, he started translating *The Thousand and One Nights* into French after his stay in the Ottoman Empire. Galland composed the work in eight volumes. Although stories in the first two volumes came from the Arabic source text, other volumes included tales that are not part of what has come to be identified as the "original" *Nights*. Many of these tales came from other Arabic sources and Galland, in fact, came up with new stories,

[28] Sandra Naddaff, "The Thousand and One Nights as World Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, eds. David Damrosch, Theo D'Haen, and Djelal Kadir (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 487.

including the famous "Aladdin." The *Nights* grew in popularity and was translated into different languages.

While translation studies and world literature seek to show how the *Nights* changes in meaning throughout its global circulation, this chapter also emphasizes how authors such as Pamuk and Barakāt endow this textual object with new meanings. Therefore, I focus less on changes in the content of *Nights* in the Turkish or Lebanese novel and more on its status as a "transitional object." I demonstrate how Pamuk and Barakāt "play" with the *Nights* in a Winnicottian sense to evoke a shared cosmopolitan past. Just as Aḥmad Shawqī used the trope of al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) in his work to "refract," or provide his own interpretation, of historical developments of the late Ottoman Empire, Pamuk and Barakāt use the *Nights* as the interpretive lens through which the Ottoman past is "refracted." Following Nazry Bahrawi, I consider the "original" *Nights* tales and themes, which are associated with the Galland version of the *Nights* due to the elusive nature of the work's origin.[29] I demonstrate how Pamuk and Barakāt engage with this "source text" both to problematize the entry into modernity and also to provide new aspirations for their nationalist communities.

These authors draw upon the *Nights* also due to its form that challenges our contemporary sensibilities on reading and textuality. Dwight Reynolds notes, "It would therefore be singularly inappropriate to approach a work drawn from this domain of medieval popular literature with preconceptions derived from the modern Western idea of a bounded, cohesive 'text' produced to be silently consumed by solitary readers."[30] Because the *Nights* does not have a linear plot

[29] Nazry Bahrawi, "A Thousand and One Rewrites: Translating Modernity in the Arabian Nights," *Journal of World Literature* 1 (2016), p. 361.

[30] Dwight Reynolds, "A Thousand and One Nights: A History of the Text and Its Reception," in *Arabic Literature in the Post-classical Period*, eds. Roger Allan and D. S. Richards (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 273.

development, it also becomes a constant source of inspiration for works like *The Black Book* that mocks visions of what I called in Chapter 3 a teleological transformation towards a nation-state that attains cultural and military might of Western civilizations. Furthermore, while many works of classical heritage can be assigned to a single author, *The Thousand and One Nights* is an anonymous work. The original date of the work's composition also remains elusive. While some scholars trace the origin of these stories to the Persian *Hazar afsaneh*, others claim that *The Thousand and One Nights* first originated in India. "Playing" with the *Nights* allows contemporary Arab and Turkish authors to undermine nationalist histories that fetishize a few cultural figures that are projected as "national geniuses."

Orhan Pamuk wrote the preface of the latest Turkish translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* by Alim Şerif Onaran (1921–2000).[31] In this preface, Pamuk recounts his childhood memories when he first read the *Nights*. Pamuk notes that although heroes in these tales had names that sounded familiar, the world of the *Nights* was for him like the world of rural Anatolian villages that he had no familiarity with. Reading the *Nights* also reminds Pamuk of his alienation from the Islamic heritage: "So the first time I read *The Thousand and One Nights*, I read it as [*gibi*] a Western child would, amazed at the marvels of the East."[32] The word *gibi*, which literally means "as if," captures the deep sense of Pamuk's ambivalence, revealing that he is aware that he is, in fact, not a Western child but approaches the *Nights* as if he were Western. Pamuk also writes that he developed new perspectives on the *Nights* when he read the work for the second and third time. Although he expressed anger at the mistreatment of women in tales when he read the work for the second time, he attained a true appreciation of the *Nights* during his third reading, since he

[31] Alim Şerif Onaran, trans., *Binbir Gece Masalları* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009), pp. xi-xv.

[32] Orhan Pamuk, *Other Colors: Essays and a Story*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), p. 119.

discovered that the sense of chaos and mystery that shapes the *Nights* also characterizes his native city, Istanbul.

Like the *Nights*, *The Black Book* includes stories embedded within a larger frame tale. One day, Galip's wife Rüya suddenly disappears and Galip travels around Istanbul to find her. During this journey, he eventually takes on the identity of his cousin and Rüya's stepbrother, Celal (spelled as "Jelal" in the English translation), who is a famous newspaper columnist. During his search for Rüya, Galip continues to read Celal's articles. He realizes that Celal has not been visiting his office lately and has not been writing new articles. This leads Galip to believe that Rüya left Galip to live with Celal. Then Galip goes to Celal's apartment, decides to live there, puts on Celal's clothes, and even writes articles for Celal's section in the newspaper. In the end, Galip learns that both Celal and Rüya were killed although the novel provides no clear explanation on their murder. *The Black Book* is allegorical on many levels. *Rüya* literally means dream; therefore, Galip's search for his wife becomes an allegory for the search for a new dream of the nation. Galip is a direct reference to the famous mystical treatise, Şeyh Galip's *Hüsn ü Aşk* and Celal is a direct reference to the famous Sufi poet, Celaleddin Rumi. *The Black Book* is thus also an allegory for spiritual and mystical quest.

In the preface to the Turkish translation of the *Nights*, Pamuk points out a key paradox in the reception of *The Thousand and One Nights* in the Middle East. Although he classifies the *Nights* as a work of Eastern civilization, the *Nights* attracted a new readership in the nineteenth century in the Middle East as their translations by European Orientalists grew in popularity via a wider circulation and in market demand throughout the world. Pamuk's observation of paradox exposes a deep anxiety that the Islamic heritage is a synthetic creation of European Orientalists. *The Black Book* subtly articulates this anxiety. *The Thousand and One Nights* stands for an

Orientalized representation of Istanbul that reduces the city to a few stereotypical images such as belly dancers, demonstrating that this playful engagement with the past can be reductive and Orientalist: "[Galip]'d picked up the BBC television crew at the Pera Palas Hotel, given them the thousand-and-one-nights tour of Istanbul [*'bir binbir gece Istanbul'u yaptırmak' için onları gezdirmiş*] (dogs on garbage patrol, dope and rug dealers, potbellied belly dancers, nightclub hooligans etc.), then he'd taken them to a club on one of the back streets."[33] In the Turkish source text, Pamuk uses the expression "*bir binbir gece Istanbul'u*," which literally means "a one-thousand-and-one-nights Istanbul." *The Thousand and One Nights* becomes an epithet that describes an Orientalized representation of Istanbul.

At the same time, the *Nights* is also a source of aspiration in Pamuk's work. Modern authors aspire to attain storytelling techniques of Scheherazade in *The Thousand and One Nights*. When Galip meets three Turkish writers or what he calls "three musketeers," one of them tells Galip that he is the disciple of Scheherazade: "Our teacher and master is Scheherazade; remember, you merely tack ten- or fifteen-page stories in between events that constitute 'life'" (77). The *Nights* becomes an object of play that allows writers to generate narratives that would reconfigure their cultural identities, since Galip thinks that the room in which Celal wrote his newspaper articles "was a room out of the *Thousand and One Nights*, full of marvelous stories, lives, and dreams constructed on paper that he couldn't imagine himself" (82).

The Thousand and One Nights also evokes a time of *tebdil* and *tebeddül*, or metamorphosis, that undermines boundaries among different cultural identities. I demonstrated in Chapter 3 that *tebeddül*/ *tebdil*, which refers to "metamorphosis" or unstructured change deconstructing political and cultural characteristics, is a shared feature of many late Ottoman prose writings, such as Ahmet

[33] Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Vintage International Books, 2006), p. 140.

Midhat's *Hasan Mellah* and Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī's *A Period of Time*. In *The Thousand and One Nights*, characters constantly metamorphose too into different animals or people from different social and cultural backgrounds, blurring the boundary between cultures and even species. In its various references to the *Nights*, *The Black Book* notes that sultans, like characters in Ahmet Midhat's *Hasan Mellah*, change their clothes (*tebdil-i kıyafet*) in order to disguise themselves and travel with ease among the public: "Haroun al-Rashid would at times go around Baghdad in disguise [*zaman zaman tebdil ederek Bağdat'ı gezer*], wishing to find out what his subjects thought about him and his rule" (268).

However, the time when characters could easily vacillate back and forth between different identities by simply changing garments is over. When Celal writes about the biography of a late Ottoman pasha, he notes: "He had the *Thousand and One Nights* burned since sultans who went around in disguise with whom he identified on the account of this book, were no longer the sort of sultans it behooved the Prince to become [*bu kitap yüzünden kendini özdeşleştirdiği tebdil gezen padişahlar değildi artık*]" (370). While fictive characters changed their garments to adopt new identities with ease in *The Thousand and One Nights*, as well as Ahmet Midhat's *Hasan Mellah*, realistic people are stuck in what Jale Parla termed in Chapter 3 *değişim* (transformation) vision in the early Republic that does not allow *başkalaşım* (metamorphosis), or *tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*: "Turks nowadays didn't want to be 'Turks' anymore but something else. That's how come they instigated a code of proper attire, shaved their beards, reformed their tongues and their alphabet. A more laconic storeowner pointed out that his customers did not buy an outfit but, in truth, bought a dream. What they really wanted to purchase was the dream of being like the 'others' who wore the same outfit" (54). Rather than a playful exploration of different identities, changing garments is no longer a theatrical stunt but rather a serious enterprise of moving along civilizational progress.

The Black Book expresses a deep anxiety among Turks who consider the demise of the Ottoman Empire a turning point in history. They believed that this demise transformed "old people" into "new people" that completely severed their ties with the past, as Celal notes in one of the newspaper articles: "Initially, a new state would be set up on the Straits of Bosporus and the Dardanelles. This time, they would not bring in new settlers to populate this new country, as was the case a thousand years ago; they would transform the old inhabitants into a 'new people' that could serve their purposes. It wasn't even necessary to read Ibn Khaldun to surmise they'd have to detach our memories and turn us into wretches existing out of time, without a past, without a history" (109). Celal captures the anxiety by comparing this cultural transformation with the conquest by foreign forces, just as Ottomans had put an end to the Byzantine Empire a thousand years ago.

The Black Book also makes various references to the *Nights* to suggest that all texts are derivations of other texts and one can never create an "authentic" cultural work. Celal suggests that even some of the canonical texts, including Rumi's *Mathnawi*, are derivations of the *Nights* (140). *The Black Book* also undermines the stark boundaries between Eastern and Western cultures. After seeing the photo of a freak in the French newspaper (122), Celal writes in one of his articles that the archetype of one-eyed monster features prominently in tales from many different cultures, including Dante's *Inferno*, the Turkish epic tales of Dede Korkut, and *The Thousand and One Nights.* The novel mocks the prevalent notion that cultures, which invent new genres or narrative techniques, are more advanced than others. In another newspaper article, Celal notes that the Andalusian philosopher Ibn al-Ṭufayl (1105–1185) wrote *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, which narrates the story of a young man who is the only survivor of a shipwreck and lives by himself on an island. Ibn al-Ṭufayl's work is highly similar to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, although

Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān was written six hundred years before *Robinson Crusoe*. Celal notes that we cannot consider one work more or less "evolved."

One of the most important settings in *The Black Book* is Aladdin's store, a shop that sells all kinds of goods endowed with magic powers: "[A] light streamed out of Aladdin's store, through the toys, the picture books, balls, yo-yos, the colored bottles" (47). Galip also explains why Aladdin's store has such a crucial importance for shaping characters' memories: "I told him [Aladdin] how the thousand—nay, the ten thousand—kinds of articles he sold there remained alive in our memories color by color, smell by smell" (36). Aladdin's store seems to spring forth from *The One Thousand and One Nights*, reinforcing its magical aura:

> On the subject of the skin magazines which [Aladdin] displayed in his store window and strung all the way around the large chestnut tree across from his doorway, I confided that in the dreams of the lonely men who passed by absentmindedly on his sidewalk, the local and foreign playmates who'd bared all for the camera would make whoopee that night like the insatiable slave girls and the sultans' wives in the *Thousand and One Nights* tales. And, since we were on the subject of the *Thousand and One Nights*, I informed him that the tale which bore his name was never told in any of the *Nights* but that when the book was first published in the West a hundred and fifty years ago, it appeared among the pages due to a sleight of hand perpetrated by one Antoine Galland. And I explained that the story was never actually told to Galland by Scheherazade but by a Christian scholar from Aleppo called Youhenna Diab, and that the story was probably Turkish in origin, and that, more likely than not, it took place in Istanbul as indicated by the details about coffee. But, I went on, if truth be known, it was impossible to know what was what as to the origins of any story any more than the origins of any life. (36–37.

Galip's description already resonates with a sexualized depiction of the Orient that was popularized through the dissemination of *The Thousand and One Nights*. At the same time, Galip challenges the common assumption that Galland fabricated the famous Aladdin story. Like a detective, he insinuates that Aladdin should be a Turkish story based on details on coffee in the tale. He suggests a work that is also known as *The Arabian Nights*—or an Arabic "masterpiece"—

transformed through having contributions from the Turkish culture. Galip's lengthy description defies the tendency to shoehorn cultural works into fixed historical trajectories.

The Black Book often emphasizes that what is left behind after the demise of the Ottoman Empire is a strong sense of deterioriation that afflicts post-Ottoman societies: "The horrifyingly dark results of the art of photography, as it got directed toward people as subjects, were related to this emptiness in our faces, just as was the odd photography seen in the faces of Turkish, Arab, and Indian movie stars that reminded one of the invisible faces of the moon. That the throngs of people in the streets of Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo were as alike as restless ghosts mourning at midnight; that the scowling faces of the men all wore the same mustaches; and that all the women wearing the same emptiness" (267). This deteoriation provides a source of entertainment, especially for marginalized communities in Turkey, in *The Black Book*. While searching for Rüya, Galip visits the house of his friend, Saim, as Saim was watching a TV program on the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans: "The program, 'Things We Left Behind,' was a diatribe lamenting the passing of the old mosques, fountains, and caravanserais built by the Ottomans in the Balkans into the hands of Yugoslavians, Albanians, and Greeks. Saim and his wife seemed oblivious to Galip, who watched the images of forlorn mosques on the tube—like some neighbor boy who'd come in to see the soccer game—from the fake rococo armchair the springs of which had sprung long ago" (62). This show has a large following also among "cabbies and doormen [who] would watch together in a basement coffeehouse" (63). Here, Ottomans have become synonymous with "we" or Turks, a category that excludes Yugoslavians, Albanians, and Greeks who were hitherto considered an integral part of the Ottoman state. The narrator also observes a strong pleasure that comes from watching "the images of forlorn mosques on the tube," as looking at ruins now becomes a form of entertainment that is compared with watching a soccer game. This dilapidated

condition of Ottoman traces resonates with the sense of decrepitude that permeates in their apartment—"the fake rococo armchair the springs of which had sprung long ago." Here, the "things that are left behind" are passive objects of gaze and pleasure.

The Black Book instead advocates a relationship with such traces of the Ottoman past that creates the possibility of play. Everyday objects are endowed with mythical qualities in Orhan Pamuk's and Huda Barakāt's works. Pamuk notes in regards to the role of everyday objects in his novel: "In a novel, objects, furniture, rooms, streets, landscapes, trees, the forest, the weather, the view outside the window—everything appears to us as a function of the protagonists' thoughts and feelings, formed from the general landscape of the novel."[34] These objects become an essential means through which authors "play" with the past especially when they believe that they are cut off from the past due to linguistic and political barriers. In fact, Orhan Pamuk wrote the novel, *The Museum of Innocence* (*Masumiyet Müzesi*, 2008) and supervised the construction of an actual museum that displays everyday objects from the early Republic that featured in this novel. As he explains why he built this museum, Orhan Pamuk observes in "The Massacre of Objects" how the secular Turkish bourgeoisie put a distance from the Ottoman past by ignoring its material culture:

> The relatively secular new generations, products of the Republic, were equally indifferent to Ottoman culture, its objects, and all things written or printed in the Arab alphabet—the old script—or in Ottoman Turkish… And as the city grew wealthier and more modern between 1950 and 1980, the things left behind from its Ottoman past and its non-Muslim inhabitants—printed matter, almost unlimited quantities of photographic equipment, and vast amounts of paper, furniture, books, old money, and other assorted knickknacks that filled the used bookshops, antique shops, and flea markets across the city—were incinerated, pulped, or otherwise destroyed.[35]

[34] Orhan Pamuk, *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*, trans. Nazım Dikbaş (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 85.

[35] Orhan Pamuk, *The Innocence of Objects: The Museum of Innocence*, trans. Ekin Okalp (New York: Abrams, 2012), p. 43.

In his "Modest Manifesto of Museums," Pamuk reveals why museums that display everyday objects generate the basis for an "underground history": "The measure of a museum's success should not be its ability to represent a state, a nation or company, or a particular history. It should be its capacity to reveal the humanity of individuals."[36] He notes that while people "had epics, representation, monuments, histories, nations, groups and teams" they need "novels, expressions, stories, persons, and individuals."[37]

The Black Book also draws extensively upon the language of Islamic mysticism, Sufism, as a means of writing underground history. With its mystical undertones, Pamuk's work criticizes a vision of literary modernity that looked down upon the allegorical nature of the Ottoman court poetry. Everyday materials such as silk as well as texts from the Islamic heritage such as the *Nights* attain a metaphysical aura: "[I]f it was true that the world was a place swarming with secrets, then it was also true that the coffee cup on the table, the ashtray, the letter opener, even his own hand that rested like a hesitant crab next to the letter opener, all pointed to and were a part of the existence of a hidden world" (260).

Another crucial setting in which everyday objects attain a metaphysical aura is Celal's room. This room is also compared with a museum:

> In one of Jelal's columns, which had been penned with an anger of baroque proportions, he'd written that the subconscious [*bilinçaltı*, which can also be translated as "unconsciousness"] didn't originate with us but came out of the pompous novels of the Western novel and their movie heroes whom we never quite learned to imitate… When Galip discovered that Jelal had built his private life into a library and a museum, he came to understand that, under the influence of what he had previously read in abridged translations of psychology books replete with pornographic details, Jelal had written a great deal that explained everything, even

[36] ibid., p. 56

[37] ibid., p. 57.

> our miserable lives, in terms of this frightening and incomprehensible subconscious he called darkness (29).

This scene blurs the distinction between public and private "[w]hen Galip discovered that Jelal had built his private life into a library and a museum." Through material objects—both textual and non-textual—Galip retains intimate connection with Celal. Entering Celal's apartment for Galip is like entering Celal's unconsciousness, which manifests itself in material objects "including the thick Yeni Harman butts in the worn asthrays that seemed placed here and there at random, or the cleanliness of the plates in the kitchen cabinets, or the relative freshness of the toothpaste on the end of the tube of Ipana which had been throttled at the neck with the same anger that had precipitated a column denouncing this same brand years ago." Galip considers all these objects "the unique reproductions in this museum" (211). Even if Celal is no longer present, his objects have a mystical and metaphysical function that give Galip access to Celal's inner psyche as well as the realization that Celal had "explained everything."

Just as objects in the apartment lead to Celal's unconsciousness, the Ottoman cultural field also left behind tangible traces—everyday objects—that remind the reader that the Ottoman past was never fully repressed. It is true that the past seems fully buried underground at certain instances in *The Black Book*. When Galip descends into a mannequin museum that is underground, he associates "the levels below" with "history, and the things that make us 'us'" (163). At the same time, Istanbul's "unconsciousness" does not lie fully repressed beneath its soil, since material objects provide a new opportunity for playing with the past. These objects constantly intrude into everyday life and their presence, more than a pathological condition, provides characters of the novel new opportunities for play.

This becomes especially visible in an oft-quoted chapter in *The Black Book*, which is a newspaper article by Celal on desiccation of the Bosporus waters. The chapter depicts a doomsday

scenario in which waters of the Bosporus dry up. This desiccation exposes all past archaeological objects from different periods of history that were overlooked in visions of national modernity. Celal notes that he learned about this news from a French geographical journal, suggesting that Turkish newspapers remain aloof of the upcoming danger. The chapter starts with a question suggesting that the reader remains unaware of this looming disaster: "Are you aware that the Bosporus is regressing? I doubt you are" (14). Celal generates a dystopian vision by exposing layers beneath "the paradise we call the Bosporus." The following description substantiates the view that the desiccation of the Bosporus can indeed be viewed as a "return of the repressed": "Obviously a short time from now, the paradise we call the Bosporus will turn into a pitch-black swamp in which the mud-caked skeletons of galleons will gleam like the luminous teeth of ghosts" (15). Once the waters desiccate, people confront with traces of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, such as "Ionic columns covered with seaweed" and "mussel-encrusted Byzantine treasures" (15). These exposed objects will unleash a panorama of violence: "Now it will be the screams of those who, fearing death, go at each other with the swords, knives, rusty scimitars, handguns, and shotguns that they've got hold of, weapons dumped into the water to frustrate a thousand years of unwarranted searches and seizures" (16).

However, various descriptions as well as the chapter's ending both suggest that the desiccation of the Bosporus waters, or "return of the repressed," is not necessarily a pathological condition and can lead to new, exciting possibilities. Celal notes that in this new valley that once were filled with Bosporus waters, dervish *tekkes* will stand by nests of Marxists (15). Although the desiccation of waters can lead to chaos and perplexity, it can also lead to the emergence of "a civilization whose energy needs for their antiquated stoves and lights will be derived from a dilapidated Romanian tanker" (15).

Texts as Handicrafts: Material History and Traces of Ottoman Ambivalence

Like *The Black Book*, *The Tiller of Waters* plays with the *Nights* as a transitional object and endows everyday materials with a mythical and mystical aura. The novel's main character, Niqūlā, a textile merchant, generates an underground history through narrating the history of various fabrics such as velvet, cotton, and finally silk to his maid Shamsa. The novel takes place during the chaotic years of the Lebanese Civil War. As everything, including the fabric shop of Niqūlā's father, is destroyed in the war, Niqūlā emphasizes throughout his stories that people can avoid war by learning more about the past. Although Niqūlā and Shamsa develop a romantic affection for each other by the end of the novel, Niqūlā passes away and Shamsa disappears at the end.

The Tiller of Waters makes numerous references to the *Nights*. In her interview with Barakāt, Elisabeth Marie compares Niqūlā with Scheherazade, since he narrates stories so that Shamsa continues to stay with him. While Barakāt indicates that she did not think of this similarity while writing the novel, she agrees with the interviewer that Niqūlā could be compared with Scheherazade.[38] Barbara Winckler also notes a key similarity between *The Tiller of Waters* and the *Nights* since main characters in both works develop a romantic attraction for each other in the process of narrating or listening to stories: "This intertwinement of 'narration and eroticism' reminds the frame story of *The Thousand and One Nights*."[39] Furthermore, the narrator Niqūlā associates the grandeur of the Ottoman past with the *Nights*, as he describes the awe that Süleyman

[38] Elisabeth Marie, "Woven Archives of Beirut: A Conversation with Hoda Barakat," accessed 28 March 2017. http://www.aljadid.com/content/woven-archives-beirut-conversation-hoda-barakat.

[39] Barbara Winckler, *Grenzgänge: Androgynie—Wahnsinn—Utopie, im Romanwerk von Hudā Barakāt* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2014), p. 232.

the Magnificent's garments generated among his subjects: "And he [Sulayman the Magnificent] stayed there, in the blazing imagination, in the pages of the earliest translations of *The Thousand and One Nights*. For the velvet etched richly in deep and dappled hues was embroidered with the smoke curling from the narghileh's tobacco and the cardamom wafting from the breasts of young women, yielding to the vapors of yearning."[40]

Also like *The Black Book*, *The Tiller of Waters* emphasizes the crucial need to contemplate about material objects for new configurations of cultural identity in a world falling into ruins. The Lebanese Civil War began in 1975 and lasted until 1990. Although it is seen as a sectarian conflict among various communities, including Sunni Muslims, Christians, Druzes, Shia Muslims, and Palestinian refugees, miriam cooke notes that the war defied clear-cut explanations and categorizations: "Lebanese civil war was like no other war. There were no clear causes, no stable enemy, no stereotypical attitudes. The chaos penetrated every aspect of daily life so that everyone participated always. However, because it was an anomaly it was rarely referred to as a war but rather as a 'situation,' the kind of situation anyone could experience."[41] Huda Barakāt reveals the extent of horror, destruction, and even absurdity that characterized the war. Rather than a political assessment of various sects, she focuses on traumatic ramifications of this war on individuals.

Barakāt's descriptions, at certain moments, also project the past as a layer that is buried underground: "A city that does not advance in time but rather in accumulating layers, a city that will sink as deeply in the earth as its edifices tower high" (66). When Niqūlā asks why his grandfather decided to leave Beirut, his grandfather replies: "Beirut's soil is composed of layer

[40] Hudá Barakāt, *The Tiller of Waters*, translated by Marilyn Booth (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), p. 96.

[41] miriam cooke, *War's Other Voices: Women Writers on the Lebanese Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 164.

upon layer of lives that have passed on. Beirut's soil is not like the soil of other cities, living by the movement of winds along their surfaces, shifts that shape their edifices but do not pierce deep inside" (31). At the same time, Barakāt does not just dig deep into Beirut's soil to expose the past; instead, the narrator plays with traces of this repressed past—everyday materials—for re-configuring the identity of her national and cultural community.

The Tiller of Waters celebrates "[t]he weaver's appetite for play and imagination" (94). Niqūlā constantly reminds the reader that the Arabic words, *ghazal, hiyāka* and *nasaja*, all emphasize a strong association between the act of narration and of weaving. He thus suggests that texts are just like any other object of handicraft like garments. The word *ghazal* has various meanings in Arabic, including spinning, spun, thread, yarn, and love poetry.[42] *Lisān al-ʿarab* defines *ḥiyāka* both as an act weaving clothes and of generating an overall harmony between different segments of a poem (*yalāʾim bayna ajzāʾihi*).[43] Similarly, the word *nasaja* means not just weaving but also composing poetry.[44] The expression *nasīj* refers to someone who has no equivalent (*naẓīr*) in terms of knowledge.[45] *The Tiller of Waters* describes literary works as *ṣanʿa*, which literally means handicraft (150). All these examples demonstrate that texts were seen as a form of handicraft such as garments in the Islamic heritage.

In the introduction of *Harabat*, Ziya Pasha compared the Ottoman culture with an ocean in which Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages and literary texts attain a metaphysical unity. Neither Pamuk nor Barakāt is well versed with all of these languages that played a key role for the

[42]Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Edited by J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1994), p. 787.

[43] Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955-56), 15 vols., 10: p. 418.

[44] ibid., 2: p. 377.

[45] ibid., 2: p. 376.

formation of an Ottoman intellectual. While Ziya Pasha's "tavern"—the space of spiritual intoxication and mystical unity—consisted of textual objects, Pamuk and Barakāt seek a similar metaphysical transcendence and cultural unity in their engagement with everyday material objects. Both authors share the tendency to describe the entire universe as a text. Although Pamuk and Barakāt may not have the formation of a cosmopolitan Ottoman intellectual, their works share a cosmopolitan vision especially through their engagement with Islamic mysticism that advocates visions of cultural unity instead of difference.

Niqūlā sees in material objects—especially fabrics and garments—an otherworldly aura since they carry traces of a past whose meaning was lost to many people in their communities: "And my father, who taught me all of this and gave me the long training of a long disciple, was not a mere trader in cloth. He was a man of knowledge; he had penetrated the secret [*kāna ʿāliman fāhiman lil-sirr*]" (126-127). Like Celal and Galip in *The Black Book*, Niqūlā believes that all objects hold a "secret": "And after the weaver [*al-ḥāʾik*] listens to his grandfather, the third *nomo*, who breathes from from his pharynx the sacred word and pulls and ties the threads of life together, he transmits these to other men by his weaving and the secret calculations that underlie it… but like the priest [*kāhin*], he gives or bequeaths the secret of weaving [*al-ḥiyāka*] only to those who have gained the necessary knowledge, the gnosis; to those who deserve it in their aptitude and their wisdom, and with the blessing of the ancestors" (128). Niqūlā notes with disdain that people no longer reflect on the history behind everyday materials; therefore, they cannot see the mystical aura behind them.

Like *The Black Book*, *The Tiller of Waters* provides a mystical and metaphysical projection of the universe: "Know that for me, the entire world is nothing but a mirror. And know that in every speck blaze thousands of suns" (80). Niqūlā castigates a vision of modernity that

commercializes material objects and hence destroys spiritual and emotional enchantment with the world: "The great Sufi Jalal al-Din al-Rumi says that in the rhythm of working with cloth lies that which organizes the universe. Were we to understand the great secret it enfolds, the very foundations of the cosmos would crack and all existence would sink into fatal chaos. It is the rhythm of woven silk, he says, the silken thread with its distinct echo, that might pull us nearer—if only illusorily—to this dangerous secret by compelling us to attempt its explanation. Thus, to handle silk and its sounds require extreme caution" (148).

The emergence of nation-states solidified political and cultural splits among different religious and national communities in the Middle East; nevertheless, everyday objects still testify to a shared history. While much of the historiography reinforces the distinction between Islam and Christianity as well as Europe and the Middle East, *The Tiller of Waters*, as a work of material history, reinforces a vision of Mediterranean cosmopolitanism: "The peoples of the Mediterranean believed that clouds are lengths of cloth, unraveling to their first strands when the sky pours rain and there falls onto the earth blessed water" (130). This material history can also evoke nostalgia for a glorious past in which Western cultures developed a fascination for the Ottoman Empire and in which power dynamics between West and East were reversed. Niqūlā describes how Ottoman sultans "seduced" Europeans with their magnificent garments: "[I]t was Mehmet the Conqueror, seventh sultan-caliph of the Ottoman Empire, who opened the eyes of the West and schooled lusty European appetites when he conquered Constantinople in the mid-fifteenth century" (96).

Niqūlā notes that people today remain ignorant of their past customs especially with the increasing commercialization of fabric, which also corresponds with a loss of respect towards guilds: "Who, these days, sees in a length of cloth its origin, its place of birth, the caravans' voyages? Who detects countries and regions, histories and stories, massed like a miracle in this

city of ours? Who, these days, knows the true merchant of textiles? Who knows what we are? People come in, they buy and within minutes they leave. They converse only to haggle over prices. It is no longer necessary to place chairs around the vestibule of the shop. We no longer have any need for little tables on which to rest cups of coffee, glasses of tea, and ashtrays" (140). Everyday materials lose their mystical and magical aura, becoming instead objects of trade only. Guilds are now reduced to merchants.

This contrasts with extensive debates about fabrics in Islamic history that did not consider them simply a commodity but also an important marker of gender as well as social status. Especially in preindustrial societies, there was a significant gap between the price of simple fabrics and of luxurious ones like silk.[46] The attitude towards silk has been ambivalent in the Islamic heritage. While the verse 22:23 in the Qur'an indicates that those who enter the Paradise will be clad in silk, some *ḥadīths* (Prophet's sayings) suggest that wearing silk is decadent and womanish. Yet as the Muslim empire expanded and became stronger, rulers and the courtly elite wished to manifest their power and opulence. They often sought and even found *ḥadīths* that legitimized wearing silk. All schools of religious law prohibit men from wearing garments made only of silk, but many rulers did not adhere to this prohibition.[47] *The Tiller of Waters* suggests that the recent commercialization of silk was a direct consequence of the new political and cultural order that took shape after the demise of the Ottoman Empire: "Before the lamentable downfall of the Ottoman Empire, to possess a velvet garment was to possess the sign of entrée to full adult life. Your grandmother's *yalik*, her vest embroidered with threads of silver and embellished with

[46] Kjeld von Folsasch and Anne-Marie Keblow Bernsted, *Woven Treasures: Textiles from the World of Islam*, trans. Martha Gaber Abrahamsen (Copenhagen: David Collection, 1993), p. 9.

[47] ibid., p. 21.

buttons, was a necessity for any trousseau, as it was a symbol of a man's power and superiority and of a woman's sexual maturity and her readiness to obey" (98).

Everyday objects whose histories are being forgotten become the point of departure for an underground history for marginalized communities like Kurds. Niqūlā develops a desire for both linen and Shamsa as he narrates the history of various fabrics, and this desire undermines the discourse of national modernity that strives to repress Kurdish culture and traces of cosmopolitan past such as fabrics. Niqūlā cannot tell whether he falls in love with the Kurdish maid Shamsa or the linen, as both become deeply intertwined in his moments of self-reflection: "Did I fall in love with Shamsa for her linen?" (53) Unlike many people who reduced it to commercial merchandise, the linen is endowed with supernatural, even fetish-like qualities: "I was thinking ardently about the linen that awaited me at home, in which I would wrap myself—in that linen, exclusively. I would wind myself up in that linen and it would cure me. I would warm myself in that linen and I would recover. And I would remember the linen of Shamsa" (51).

Like Barakāt, fabric merchants too are "underground historians." After Niqūlā passes away, he meets his deceased father and asks: "Have I not spent my entire life tilling the water? Isn't that what we always did, father?" (175). Tilling waters refers to a style of craftsmanship that is not preoccupied with leaving behind tangible traces that signify cultural grandiosity. After all, Niqūlā notes: "Grandfather, from whom I inherited the absurdity of wisdom, did you grow so passionately attached to cloth because it will not be here when the archaeologists excavate the traces of our disappearance? Was it because cloth is neither ceramic nor bone, metal nor stone, but just a bit of carbon and dust, like the traces of dust that the muscles of our hearts will leave behind?" (66).

Conclusion

My reframing in the past four chapters of Arabic and Turkish literatures that were written in the late Ottoman Empire also generates new readings for contemporary Arabic and Turkish literatures whose authors do not consider the Ottoman past a homeland in which they wish to enroot themselves. They are aware that "[t]he dreams of imagined homelands cannot and should not come to life. They can have a more important impact on improving social and political conditions in the present as ideals, not as fairy tales come true."[48] Instead of calling for a return to an impeccable Ottoman past, their works play with this past to generate an alternative future, allowing them to critique their communities and to provide new aspirations. These works also generate new dispositions both towards the West and the Islamic heritage. This disposition is not utilitarian, viewing these cultures as codes to be deciphered for nationalist progress; instead, it treats both cultures as an open text that is conducive to new ways of imagining the future.

This chapter also demonstrates that the strong sense of ambivalence that characterized Arabic and Turkish literary texts of the late Ottoman Empire has not completely faded away with the emergence of nation-states. Even if this ambivalence is subdued after the transitional period of the late Ottoman Empire when political and cultural horizons looked nebulous for its intellectuals, many contemporary authors such as Orhan Pamuk and Huda Barakāt put emphasis on this sense of ambivalence through "playing" with the past and endowing everyday materials with a mythical and mystical aura. These playful moments allow new forms of cultural experimentation, which demonstrate that the Ottoman past does not have to be repressed to generate the ground for new cultural visions. It does not have to become an object of fetish either. Rather, post-Ottoman Arab and Turkish authors endow their tradition with new meanings through their "play" with traces of

[48] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 355.

this past. Even if their works are not produced in a shared Ottoman cultural field, contemporary Arab and Turkish authors still find a common playground in the Ottoman past as they reconfigure aspirations for their communities.

Finally, this chapter situates the circulation of literary texts as one example of "things-in-motion" that have been extensively studied in material history. This reframing of world literature can allow scholars to pinpoint connections among literatures that seem distanced from each other due to lack of textual transculturations, such as translations or intertextualities, among them. All texts "refract"—translate and interpret—objects, whether they be textual and/or non-textual, from other source cultures. In Winnicottian terms, refraction is play and these objects are transitional objects. Therefore, world literature demonstrates how these refractions of objects from target cultures can generate an intermediate zone that blurs the distinction between source and target cultures, giving rise to new ways in which authors can playfully reshape their cultural identities. This kind of playful engagement undermines the dynamic of repression and fetishization that shapes the formation of canons, hence opening up more creative explorations of other cultures and the literary heritage.

CONCLUSION

Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity argued that Arab and Turkish modernity—movements that expressed similar aspirations for progress, freedom, cultural reform, and new national subjectivities—did not emerge separately and exclusively due to the increasing Western influence in the region; instead, my work reframed and re-contextualized these movements within a shared Ottoman multilingual milieu. Through using James Clifford's contact approach, which demonstrated that these movements were constitutive of each other, I reassessed current theories on Middle Eastern literary history, Ottoman modernity, and world literature.

Each chapter explored the various ways in which the contact approach transforms our understanding of modernity. Chapter 1 redefined canons as "literary reservoirs" to call attention to the heterogeneous character of each canon, a crucial step for re-designating Ottoman literature as an imperial, cosmopolitan literature. The next three chapters demonstrated that the eventual dissolution of the Ottoman reservoir did not suddenly lead to the emergence of modern Arabic and Turkish literatures. Chapter 2 demonstrated that the Islamic heritage did not merely act as the traditional root to which early modern Arab poets, such as Aḥmad Shawqī, escaped as they confronted with vast political changes; instead, this heritage became the medium through which they interpreted political transformations throughout the empire. Chapter 3 used the concept "metamorphosis" or "*tebeddül*/ *tabaddul*" to provide an alternative to the typical scholarly view of modernity—a set of values that are associated with order, progress, civilization, and emergence of national subjects. Chapter 4 shifted the focus to translations for revising our understanding of the period that has been viewed as the age of translations. I demonstrated that translations allowed the exchange of ideas and values while halting the exchange of languages. The final chapter demonstrated that these ambivalences were not fully erased; instead, they remained as "traces"

that allow contemporary authors to maintain a playful engagement with the imperial past to reconfigure their contemporary identities. For the conclusion, I explore future possibilities for the study of late Ottoman literatures.

The prevalent assumption that the West has played an exclusive role in bringing the Middle East into modernity has been contested by two approaches in the past few years. The first approach demonstrates that the Middle East has indeed had a significant intellectual and cultural efflorescence before the burgeoning Western presence in the nineteenth century.[1] The second approach documents that there has been significant cultural cross-fertilization among the pioneers of modernity from different linguistic and ethnic communities within the Ottoman Empire as well as these pioneers and intellectuals from other parts of the world, such as East Asia and Southeast Asia.[2] Building upon the second approach, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* emphasizes the importance of the contact approach for studying cultural cross-fertilization among different communities of the Ottoman Empire.

My dissertation, thus, builds upon the recent works that study diverse literatures of the late Ottoman Empire, such as Armenian and Greek, to reassess Ottoman literature as an imperial, multilingual literature rather than as the pre-modern Turkish literature. For example, *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat* (*Tanzimat and Literature*), a scholarly volume that was published in 2014 and edited by

[1] Some examples include Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab* Nahḍah: *The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[2] For instance, see Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 1 (2003), pp. 39-76; Lital Levy, "The *Nahḍa* and the *Haskala*: A Comparative Reading of 'Revival' and 'Reform,'" *Middle Eastern Literatures* 16, no. 3 (2013): 300-316; Renée Worringer, *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Fatih Altuğ and Mehmet Fatih Uslu, includes essays on various subjects including the Persian diaspora literature that was produced in Istanbul, *Karamanlı* (Turkish in Greek script) literature, and Armenian literature. Altuğ notes that especially the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a Ottoman cultural field in which authors from different linguistic, cultural, and national backgrounds engaged with each other in a shared contact space, giving rise to unprecedented similarities and parallels between literatures that were produced in different languages.[3]

While this dissertation has focused on convergences to undermine the earlier scholarship that instead emphasized divergences, the late Ottoman Empire should not be romanticized solely as a period of cultural and religious co-existence. With the eventual dissolution of old social, political, and economic hiearchies during the nineteenth century, more cultural communities could lay claim to and resignify what it means to be Ottoman. At the same time, many emerging visions of the Ottoman identity were also exclusive. For example, works such as Aḥmad Shawqī's "The New al-Andalus" express an aspiration for what Feroz Ahmad called the "Dual Monarchy" among Arab authors who envisioned themselves as builders of the empire. This vision of the "Dual Monarchy," like the Ottoman reservoir that was described in Ziya Pasha's *Harabat*, did not consider Armenian, Greek, or Albanian works integral streams of the Ottoman reservoir.

The empire's heterogeneous political and cultural landscape was far from a "Dual Monarchy" that rested on the shoulders of two national communities only, as its intellectuals from different linguistic and national communities advocated values such as freedom, equality, and scientific progress. As Isa Blumi notes, "The French-speaking intelligentsia in Bucharest, Cairo,

[3] Fatih Altuğ and Mehmet Fatih Uslu eds., *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı Istanbulu'nda Edebi Kültür* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014), p. 114.

Athens, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Beirut, Aleppo, and Istanbul all represent an important cultural and historical force in the late Ottoman Empire."[4] Because of nationalistic frameworks, these intellectuals have been analyzed under the framework of different "renaissance" movements—*rilindja* (Albanian modernity), *nahḍa* (Arab modernity), *haskala* (Jewish modernity), *zartonk* (Armenian modernity), and *tanzimat* (Turkish modernity).[5] All these movements developed partly as a response to socioeconomic dynamics that were shaping the empire, such as state centralization and erosion of local affiliations. Instead of reassessing fundamental assumptions in Arab and Turkish studies only, the concept "Ottoman modernity," therefore, can also be used to problematize ethnolinguistic categorizations of modernity movements including *zartonk* and *rilindja*.

Works such as *Tanzimat and Literature* that flesh out intertextual relations among the hitherto ignored Armenian, Greek, and Persian literatures of the late Ottoman Empire play a crucial role for pointing out convergences among these movements. Johann Strauss rightly notes that the study of late Ottoman literature should not be confined to Islamic literatures only: "The context established for comparative studies in Middle Eastern literatures has conventionally been limited to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. This 'Orientalist' perspective proper to the Islamic scholar may be justified for the 20th century, where the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Middle East has been radically transformed."[6] While Strauss emphasizes the need to go beyond this Orientalist perspective and to study "non-Islamic" literatures of the late Ottoman Empire, such as Armenian and Greek, the Middle Eastern studies also needs new theoretical frameworks for studying its

[4] Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 178.

[5] ibid., 73.

[6] Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire? (19th-20th Centuries)," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 1 (2013), p. 65

literatures that will challenge what Rey Chow called "Eurocentric notions of language and literature" that often give legitimacy to only ethnolinguistic visions of culture. Writing histories of different national literatures of the late Ottoman Empire is fundamental and yet not sufficient, as the late Ottoman literature should not be viewed as merely the amalgamation of disparate literary traditions such as Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, and Greek. The contact approach, rather than solely studying more literatures from different linguistic traditions such as Arabic and Armenian, situates these literatures within a shared Ottoman cultural field, analyzing both convergences and power hiearchies among them.

Instead of mapping out all literary traditions of the empire, I focused only on two traditions—Arabic and Turkish—that allowed a more in-depth theoretical engagement that is crucial for the study of late Ottoman literatures. Unlike the majority of Armenian and Greek intellectuals, the pioneers of Arab and Turkish modernity, as Pascale Casanova noted, had to accept, modify, or fully reject the shared elements of the Islamic heritage during their modernity movement. Furthermore, these writers had to situate themselves vis-à-vis what Saliha Paker called an Ottoman "interculture," a heterogeneous combination of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian cultural elements that constituted the formation of a cosmopolitan Ottoman intellectual. My dissertation generated a conceptual repertoire for understanding the complex dynamics of this engagement with the Ottoman interculture. The eventual dissolution of what I called Ottoman reservoir unleashed new possibilities in which the Ottoman identity is constantly renegotiated. For example, my work on Shawqī's poem demonstrated that the classical Arabic heritage that constituted an integral part of the Ottoman reservoir became a "lens" through which neoclassical Arab poets provided their interpretation of historical and political changes of the late Ottoman period. I then

used the concept "disposition" to further demonstrate that even thinkers with different ideological affiliations shared similar values on identity and civilization.

Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity has also chartered a new direction for the field of Middle Eastern literatures that are often divided into the three distinct categories of Arabic, Pesrian, and Turkish. Even comparative works in this field have largely focused on intersections between Western and Arabic, Western and Persian, or Western and Turkish literatures instead of on interactions among Middle Eastern literatures. *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* has used the method of comparison not merely to list similarities and differences among different literatures. Instead, it has advocated comparison as a methodology that revises the core assumptions shaping the study of modern Middle Eastern literatures. For instance, in terms of themes, metaphors, and style, late Ottoman Arabic and Turkish literary texts share convergences that do not necessarily exist between the Moroccan and other late Ottoman Arabic literatures, such as the Egyptian.[7] These convergences are overlooked due to today's ethnolinguistic academic institutionalization of literature especially in Middle Eastern studies.

Furthermore, my comparative approach undermines the decline paradigm that has shaped the study of both Arabic and Turkish literatures. According to this paradigm, Arabic literature became stale and imitative after the golden age of the Abbasid period and Turkish literature after a similarly golden age whose apex was the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. After a long stagnation, the nineteenth century has been viewed as the moment of origin for both modern Arabic and modern Turkish literature. Paying attention to the shared context of a multilingual Ottoman

[7] Roger Allen notes that "[t]he nineteenth century, a period of such development in other parts of the Arabic speaking world, forms part of the 'pre-history' of the renaissance in the Maghrib. The real developments in Arabic fiction in this area come in the twentieth century, and particularly, following the achievement of independence from France, when writing in Arabic begins to be encouraged." *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), p. 23.

cultural milieu in which both literatures took shape makes cross-cultural synergies between Arabic and Turkish literatures more conspicuous. This contextualization also challenges the tendency to describe the history of these literatures as fixed and clear-cut trajectories.

Finally, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* has demonstrated that representations of the past give voice to cultural aspirations for the future. The Ottoman elite developed a cosmopolitan culture for generating a more "stable" sense of imperial identity to ward off against ambivalences of its earlier frontier nature that was increasingly viewed as "un-Ottoman": "Just as fellow warriors and allied social forces of the frontier era had to be subjugated or eliminated in order to establish the supremacy of Ottoman power, so their legacy had to be tamed or suppressed or marginalized in order to consolidate the power."[8] Cemal Kafadar notes that Mehmed the Conqueror (reigned 1444–1446 and 1451–1481) shuddered at the idea of standing up to the sound of martial music—a ritual that his ancestors performed for showing respect to frontier warriors.[9] After conquering Constantinople, the sultan wanted to refashion the state as a cosmopolitan empire that carried the legacies of Rome, Greece, and the Islamic Middle East.

In an ironic twist of fate, this imperial Ottoman culture would become the "legacy that had to be tamed or suppressed or marginalized" for a new political landscape that emerged during the late nineteenth century. What Turkish loan words in Arabic were for al-Ruṣāfī was what martial music was for Mehmed the Conqueror. At the same time, *Ambivalences of Ottoman Modernity* has shown that an undesirable past can never be fully repressed but instead remains as traces that give artists the opportunity to initiate cultural experimentations and to reshape their current identity.

[8] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 154.

[9] ibid., p. 152.

The imperial past is a rich kaleidoscope offering to the artistic imagination “an object of play,” in a Winnicottian sense, for creative intellectual exploration.

APPENDIX

The New al-Andalus
Aḥmad Shawqī

1. O Sister of al-Andalus, peace be upon you
   The Caliphate has fallen away from you, and Islam too.

2. The crescent moon has descended from the sky;
   If only the sky were folded up and darkness engulfed this world and the next.

3. Fate, scornful of the moon, has effaced its phases
   Bringing it asunder when it was full.

4. Two ummas enduring two wounds:
   The one [the fall of the Balkans] flows and the other [the fall of al-Andalus] heals not.

5. Muslims suffer both blights:
   In both lands, pens [scientific, civilizational glory] were interred and swords [military might] were taken away.

6. Mourning for al-Andalus has yet to end,
   In grief people don black for you, stunned in shock.

7. Days have passed between al-Andalus's death and your own demise
   Days were spent by what we love and what we loathe.

8. Centuries have passed as though in just a night
   And lands once conquered under Islam have vanished like dreams.

9. Fate does not spare kingdoms with a warning;
   If kingdoms pay no heed, how is fate to blame?

10. Macedonia – for Muslims are a tribe –
    How is our kin there?

11. See you not their abject state?
    Once Islam felt proud of their might and glory.

12. When you were a lion's fang
    Every battalion was a prey for you.

13. The days continued thus, but now they are reversed;
    The cupbearer is replaced and the goblet has changed hands.

14. Do you see [O al-Andalus] how dens are taken away from lions?
    Do you witness how their jungles are taken as spoils?

15. They alleged that you were a strenuous burden to the caliphate

But guardianship over territories is not sleep or rest.

16. Some say you are the most inauspicious of water sources
Yet I see you sweet to drink; throngs of people hankering after you.

17. People consider you a venomous affliction to the empire,
Yet they beset the empire with vice and ailment.

18. If they preferred reform, you would be
A pillar to their throne, erected on crowns of stars.

19. They fetter themselves with false suppositions
As fancies are fetters of this world.

20. Manifold are the forms of blindness, the ugliest of all are
The heads that see with eyes other than their own.

21. Swords may once again be made straight
But the traces of virtuous peoples may never rise again.[1]

22. Bringer of the good tidings of peace, I said, perhaps it is for the best
May our wishes come true.

23. The two sides abandoned the war,
This barren peace is more bitter to the taste than war.

24. The messenger announcing the death of empire has not stepped foot
On a land, let alone walk on it.

25. A bolt bears its news, like a tempest of lightning
Strokes of lightning and clouds follow the bolt's trail.

26. If it be evil, its visit would be permanent;
If it be good, its visit would be transient.

27. Not long ago did Africa come to its knees
And the great dominion on the sea passage disappeared.

28. The crescent standard once strung four kingdoms like pearls
Alas, they no longer adorn its neck.[2]

29. Since the conquest of the Hashimites or Umayyads
Neither Tatars nor Persians could shake its foundations.

30. God's decree manifests itself in Macedonia today

[1] The lines here suggest that a community can recover from military defeat, but not form moral decay.

[2] The four kingdoms are Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Tripoli (modern day Libya).

It is beyond our power to ratify this decree or reject it.

31. Macedonia was the last remaining land from the West;
There is nothing else to do, O Sons of Osman.

32. The grand allied armies clutched cities
And small villages at their throats.

33. The sky and the earth are covered with the armies
As too are the highlands shrouded by them.

34. Atrocities, tyranny, and abomination march
With the cadence of their steeds, accompanying the armies wherever they go.

35. The priests encourage them in the name of the book
To do whatever is forbidden in the book.

36. Tyrannizing over the kingdoms
People become subjugated to them like sheep.

37. Every butcher whose ancestor was a shepherd
Covets a position at the king's assembly.

38. His knife, hand, sword belt,
And scepter all become instruments of sin.

39. Jesus, your path is mercy and care,
Protection and peace, in this world and Hereafter.

40. You were not a cruel man who shed blood,
Nor did you consider the weak and the orphans despicable.

41. You, who shoulders the suffering of mankind,
Sufferings multiplied in your name.

42. You are the one who made all believers
Kin, and in your name kinships are broken.

43. The day of judgment once happened during the time of Youssef
Today twice-over turmoil is created in your name.

44. How many times the king's entourage attacked Youssef and Youssef attacked them back
How many times the knights and the flags confronted each other.

45. Transgression in every religion is disgraceful
And peace is an order and war abominable.

46. Today, communities call people to the crucifix
As they tyrannize in the name of God and His spirit.

47. They sullied your cross with dagger and knife

All is a tool of torture and death.

48. Do not you see them massacring their neighbors
Among their homes as if they were livestock.

49. How many a suckling child is hindered from nourishment
Weaned from the breast by the sword.

50. The thicket of a girl's honor ripped apart
Their sheaths dispersed from their flowers.

51. My eighty-year-old brother's honor is declared fair game,
Spared neither by age nor feebleness.

52. They bury alive thirsty and wounded soldiers
Their bleeding wound and thirst inspire no mercy.

53. And the homes of migrants changed beyond recognition
They have been led astray by confusion, wandering aimlessly.

54. They confront with the sword should they seek to escape
And with the strap for execution should they remain.

55. They turn their faces as they leave their land
Their gaze is water, their homeland ablaze.

56. O umma ensconced in Istanbul, fate has dispersed them
And when fate strikes, reason is debased.

57. Why does such languor prevail over you?
Ummas are lost, their rights humiliated.

58. God witnesses that I am not a partisan
In times of calamity, there is no place for partisanship and sectarianism.

59. I call to unity as I am a poet
Whose uttermost aim is unity and harmony.

60. Whoever is afflicted with calamity strives
To find recourse in God's Will and submit to it.

61. Blame not each other for what has happened.
The injustice of bygone rulers is confined to the past.

62. Nights issue judgments in favor of or against men
Praise and blame come from the power of nights.

63. It is history's custom that its judgment be fulfilled
With justice, as its quiver with arrows.

64. Books and pens cannot protect

What unsheathed swords do not.

65. Your ancestors had achieved glorious conquests
They then came upon lions in a jungle and slept.

66. Your forefathers bring this affliction upon you
Have patience and clemency, for the culprits are in fact generous.

67. They raised their edifice upon a sword, yet it lasted not
A building founded on swords is never stable.

68. The most lasting kingdoms are those built on knowledge
And whose walls and pillars are justice.

69. If your cause is good guidance and prosperity
Then walk in the light of knowledge, the true reigns of the ruling.

70. Leave behind vain pride in heritage even if it is precious
As glory is attained [by merit] and time is but a yoke.

71. If pride takes over an umma
Like a flower, it conceals a sudden, violent death.[3]

72. Let not the empire be possessed by your desires
The transitory gains of this world are derelict and frail.

73. People attain positions they do not deserve
As idols replace God.

74. A rule reflects its people's status; if its honor should be lost
Then its subjects become a heedless flock.

75. Among the animals are the spoiled and satiated
Their rein and bridle made of silk.

76. Your conditions are like that of Tariq [ibn Ziyad]
Despair lies behind and hope ahead.

77. Patience and courage were also required in these circumstances;
If both would eventually kill you, know that cowardice is certainly deadlier.

78. The meek calculate their goal while
The fearless pay no heed for the morrow.

79. This land is what is left to you – provided you defend it
Rashid fought for it, and Hisham made it glorious.

80. The destiny of past rulers and caliphs [in terms of land]

[3] Shawqī refers to the fact that flowers pollute the air in a small space, leading to asphyxiation.

Never equaled yours.

81. Prophethood came to light in the bosom of a pure land
Divine revelation and inspiration once roaming therein.

82. Two rivers gushed forth from it
And Baghdad and the Levant flourished in its shadow.

83. Its coasts were bounteous, its soil ripe
Pearls in its water and gold, like the soil, abundant.

84. Glory to you O Edirne, this is the way to defend yourself
And remain steadfast against the oppressors.

85. A land is taken with blood and surrendered with blood
As lions die outside their dens.

86. Power can be lost or gained; it lasts not
Nations gain back what was once taken with the sword only with the sword.

87. Holy fighters, ghazis for God and zealots for the Prophet
Protect the honor of the Caliphate.

88. Lands are protected behind his swords
And banners attain glory around his lance.

89. Uthman in his war mantle protected his army
And Ibn al-Waleed guarded his people.

90. Time affirms Şükrü Pasha's glory
Unto him belong the timeless gratitude and glorification.[4]

91. Be patient Edirne, every kingdom perishes one day
Only the All-Knowing King remains.

92. Prayers are silenced, Muslims no longer
Rule over you, nor are the Friday prayers convened.

93. The lights of your mosques have faded
The light that lions and antelopes follow.

94. Pious women walk in the sanctuary of prayer
Like pigeons, in white skirts.

95. The graveyards of past conquerors are effaced,
The dunes and gravestones of Caliphs demolished.

96. Graveyards are plundered of firm might

[4] Şükrü Paşa was the military commander of the Ottoman army in Edirne.

Just as the pyramids were of their grandeur.

97. Five months were granted to you in the course of history
And every day was like one year.

98. The sword is bare and the plague strikes fierce
The flood is frightening, and the snow piles on.

99. And starvation is fatal; you [Edirne] have companions, like those of the Prophet
If they were not starving in their holy war, they would fast.

100. They were frugal, not letting your honor be bought or sold
The honor of freeborn daughters is beyond measure.

101. The siege narrowed as if its circles became
An orbit and bombs its celestial bodies.

102. The enemy assaults you [with bombs] and you attack back with hell fire
A fire casted by God, not by mankind.

103. You sacrificed one soul for every acre of land that the enemy conquered
This is how a land is sold when it is desired.

104. Still between you and the siege reaches
A mass of bones, piling high like citadels.

105. The enemy took you as a massive grave, while you took them
As corpses. There is no cowardice or disgrace in that.[5]

[5] Although the enemy seems victorious, the soldiers who defended Edirne showed exemplary courage. Shawqī considers their corpses the signifier of this bravery and hence perceives these soldiers as victorious.

الأندلس الجديدة

1	يا أختَ أندلُسٍ عليك سلامُ	هوت الخلافةُ عَنكِ والإِسلامُ
2	نَزَلَ الهلالُ عن السماءِ فليتَها	طَويَتْ وعمَّ العالمين ظلام
3	أزرَى به وأزالَه عن أوْجِه	قدرٌ يحطّ البدرَ وهو تمَام
4	جُرحان تمضى الأمتانِ عليهما	هذا يَسيلُ وذاك لا يلتام
5	بكما أصيبَ المسلمون وفيكما	دُفِنَ اليَراعُ وغُيِّب الصَّمصام
6	لم يُطو مأتمُها، وهذا مأتمٌ	لِبسُوا السوادَ عليكِ فيه وقاموا
7	مابين مَصْرَعِها ومَصْرَعكِ انقضت	فيما نحبُّ ونكرهُ الأيام
8	خلت القرونُ كليلةٍ وتصرَّمَتْ	دُوَلُ الفتوحِ كأنها أحلام
9	والدهرُ لا يألو الممالكَ مُنذِراً	فإذا غَفلنَ فما عليهِ ملاَم
10	مَقْدونيا – والمسلمون عَشيرةٌ –	كيف الخؤولةُ فيكِ والأعمام؟
11	أتريْنهم هانُوا وكان بعزِّهم	وعلوِّهم يتخايلُ الإسلام؟
12	إذ أنتِ نابُ الليثِ، كلُّ كتيبةٍ	طلعَتْ عليكِ فريسةٌ وطعام
13	مازالت الأيامُ حتى بُدِّلتْ	وتغير الساقي، وحالَ الجام
14	أرايتِ كيف أديل من أسْدِ الشرَى	وشَهِدْتِ كيف أبيحَتِ الآجام؟
15	زعموكِ هَمًّا للخلافةِ ناصبا	وهل الممالكُ راحةٌ ومنام؟
16	ويقول قومٌ كنتِ أشأَمَ موردٍ	وأراكِ سائغةً عليكِ زِحام
17	ويراكِ داءَ المُلك ناسُ جحالةٍ	بالمُلكِ منهم علةٌ وسَقام
18	لو آثروا الإصلاحَ كنتِ لعرشِهم	رُكناً على هامِ النجوم يُقام
19	وهْمٌ يُقيِّدُ بَعْضهُمْ بعضاً بِهِ	وقيودُ هذا العالَمِ الأوهام
20	صُوَرُ العمى شَتَّى، وأقبحُها إذا	نظرَتْ بغير عيونِهنَّ الهام
21	ولقد يُقام من السيوفِ وليس من	عثراتِ أخلاقِ الشعوبِ قيام
22	مبشرِ الصلحِ قلتُ: لعله	خيرٌ، عسى أن تصدقَ الأحلام
23	ترك الفريقان القتالَ، وهذه	سِلمٌ أمَرُّ من القتالِ عُقام

24 يَنْعَى إلينا الملكَ ناعٍ لم يَطأ أرضاً ولا انتقلت به أقدام

25 برقٌ جوانبُه صواعقُ كلّها ومن البروقِ صواعقٌ وغَمام

26 إن كان شرٌّ، زارَ غيرَ مفارقٍ أو كانَ خيرٌ، فالمزارُ لمام

27 بالأمس أفريقا تولّتْ وانقضى ملكٌ على جيدِ الخِضم جُسام

28 نظمَ الهلالُ به ممالكَ أربعاً أصبحن ليس لعقدِهن نِظام

29 من فتحِ هاشمٍ أو أميةَ لم يَضَع آساسَها تَتَرٌ ولا أعجام

30 واليومَ حكمٌ اللهِ في مقدُونيا لا نقضَ فيه لنا ولا إبرام

31 كانت من الغَربِ البقيةَ فانقضَتْ فعلى بَنى عثمانَ فيه سَلام

32 أخذ المدائنَ والقُرى بِخِناقها جيشٌ من المتحالفِين لُهام

33 عظّت به الأرضُ الفضاءُ وجوهَها وكست مناكِبهَا به الآكام

34 تمشى المناكرُ بين أيدى خَيله أنّى مَشى، والبغىُ والإجرام

35 ويحثّه باسمِ الكتاب أقسَّةٌ نَشِطوا لما هو في الكتاب حَرام

36 ومسيطرونَ على الممالك سُخِّرت لهم الشعوبُ كأنها أنعام

37 مِن كُلِّ جزّارٍ يَرُوُم الصدر في نَادي المُلُوكِ وجَدُّه غنام

38 سكِّينهُ، ويمنيتُه، وحِزامه والصولجانُ، جمعيها آثام

39 عيسى سبيلُك رحمةٌ ومحبةٌ في العالمين وعصمةٌ وسلام

40 ما كنتَ سفّاكَ الدماءِ ولا أمرأ هانَ الضِّعاف عليه والأيتام

41 ياحاملَ الآلامِ عن هذا الورَى كُثرَت عليه باسمك الآلام

42 أنتَ الذي جعلَ العبادَ جميعَهم رَحِماً، وباسمك تُقْطَعُ الأرحام

43 أنَت القيامةُ في ولايةِ يوسفٍ واليومَ باسمِك مرتين تُقام

44 كم هاجَه صِيدُ الملوكِ وهاجَهم وتكافأ الفُرسانُ والأعلام

45 البَغْيُ في دينِ الجميع دَنِيَّةٌ والسِّلمُ عهدٌ والقتالُ زِمام

46 واليوم يهتفُ بالصليبِ عصائبٌ هم للإلهِ وروحِه ظلّام

47 خلَطوا صليبَكَ والخناجرَ والمُدى كلٌّ أداةٌ للأذى وحِمام

48 أوَما تراهم ذبَّحوا جيرانَهم بينَ البيُوتِ كأنهم أغنام؟

49 كم مُرضَعٍ في حِجْر نعمتِه غَدا وله على حدِّ السيوفِ فِطام

50 وصَبيَّة هُتِكَتْ خَميلةُ طُهرْها وتناثَرتْ عن نورِه الأكمام

51	وأخى ثمانينَ استُبيحَ وَقارُه	لم يُغْنِ عنه الضعفُ والأعوام
52	وجريحِ حربٍ ظامىءٍ وأدُوه لم	يعطفْهمُ جرحٌ دَمٍ وأوَامُ
53	ومهاجرينَ تنكّرَتْ أوطانهم	ضلوا السبيل من الذهول وهاموا
54	السيفُ إن ركبوا الفِرارَ سبيلُهم	والنِّطع إن طلبوا القَرار مُقام
55	يتلفّتون مودِّعين ديارَهم	واللحظُ ماءٌ، والديارُ ضِرام
56	يا أمةً بفروقَ فرَّق بينهم	قَدَرٌ تطيشُ إذا أتى الأحلام
57	فيم التخاذلُ بينكم ووراءَكم	أممٌ تضاعُ حقوقُها وتُضام؟
58	الله يشهدُ لم أكُن متحزّباً	في الرُّزءِ لاشِيعٌ ولا أحزام
59	وإذا دعوتُ إلى الوئامِ فشاعرٌ	أقْصَى مُناهُ محبةٌ ووِئام
60	من تُضْجِر البَلْوَى فغايةُ جهده	رُجْعَى إلى الأقدار واستِسلام
61	لا يأخُذَنَّ على العواقبِ بعضُكم	بعضاً، فقِدْماً جارتِ الأحكام
62	تَقضى على المرء الليالي أولَه	فالحمدُ من سُلطانها والذّام
63	مِنْ عادة التاريخ ملءُ قضائِه	عدلٌ وملءُ كنانَتَيه سِهام
64	ما ليس يدفعه المهنّدُ مُصلَتاً	لا الكُتْبُ تدفعهُ ولا الأقلام
65	إن الألى فتحوا الفتوحَ جلائلاً	دخلوا على الأسْدِ الغياضِ وناموا
66	هذا جماه عليكمُ أباؤكم	صبراً وصحفاً فالجناةُ كرام
67	رفعوا على السيفِ البناءَ فلم يدم	ما للبناءِ على السيوف دوام
68	أبقى الممالكِ ما المعارفُ أسُّهُ	والعَدْلُ فيه حائطَ ودعام
69	فإذا جرى رَشداً ويُمناً أمرُكم	فامشوا بنورِ العلمِ فهو زِمام
70	ودعوا التفاخُر بالتُّراث وإن غلا	فالمجدُ كَسْبٌ والزمانُ عِصام
71	إن الغرورَ إذا تملكَ أمةً	كالزهرِ يُخفى الموتَ وهو زُؤام
72	لا يعدلنَّ الملكَ في شهواتكم	عَرَضٌ من الدنيا بدا وحُطام
73	ومناصِبٌ في غير موضِعها كما	حلّتْ محلَّ القدرة الأصنام
74	الملكُ مرتبةُ الشعوب فإن يَفُتْ	عزَّ السيادة فالشعوبُ سَوام
75	ومن البهائم مُشْبَعٌ ومُذَّللٌ	ومن الحرير شكيمة والجام
76	وقف الزمانُ بكم كمَوْقف طارق	اليأسُ خلفٌ والرجاءُ أمام
77	الصبرُ والإقدام فيه إذا هما	قَتَلا فأقتلُ منهما الإحجام

78	يُحْصِى الذليلُ مدى مطالبه ولا	يُحصِى مَدَى المستقبلِ المِقدام
79	هذى البقيةُ — لو حَرَصْتم — دَوْلةٌ	صال الرشيدُ بها، وطالَ هِشام
80	قِسْمُ الأئمَّة والخلائفِ قبلكم	في الأرضِ لم تُعدَل به الأقسام
81	سَرَت النبوةُ في طَهور فَضائِه	ومَشَى عليه الوحىُ والإلهام
82	وتدفّق النهران فيه وأزهرَتْ	بغدادُ تحت ظلالِه والشام
83	أثْرَتْ سواحِلُهُ وطابت أرضُهُ	فالدرُّلجُّ والنَّضارُ رُغام
84	شرفاً أدرنةُ هكذا يقفُ الحِمى	للغاصِمين، وتَثْبُتُ الأقدام
85	وتُردُّ بالدم بقعةٌ أخِذَتْ به	ويموتُ دون عرينه الضِّرغام
86	والملكُ يؤخذ أو يُردُّ ولم يَزَلْ	يرثُ الحسامَ على البلادِ حُسام
87	عِرْضُ الخلافةِ ذادَ عنه مجاهدٌ	في اللهِ غازٍ، في الرسول هُمام
88	تستعصمُ الأوطانُ خلفَ ظُباتِهِ	وتَعِزّ حول قَناتِه الأعلام
89	عثمانُ في بُرْدَيْهِ يمنعُ جيشَه	وابنُ الوليد على الحِمَى قَوَّام
90	عَلِمَ الزمانُ مكانَ شكري وانتهى	شكرُ الزمانِ إليه والإعظام
91	صبراً أدرنةُ كلُّ ملكٍ زائلٌ	يوماً ويَبقى الممالكُ العلّام
92	خفَت الأذانُ فما عليكِ موحِّدٌ	يَسعى ولا الجُمَعُ الحِسانُ تُقام
93	وخَبَتْ مساجدُ نوراً جامعاً	تمشي إليه الأسدُ والآرام
94	يدرجْن في حَرَم الصلاة قوانتاً	بيضَ الإزار كأنهن حَمام
95	وعَفَتْ قبورُ الفاتحين وفُضَّ عن:	حُضَر الخلائف جَنْدلٌ ورِجام
96	نُبِشَتْ على قَسْعاءِ عزَّتها كل	نُبِشَتْ على استعلائها الأهرام
97	في ذمة التاريخ خمسةُ أشهُرٍ	طالتْ عليكِ فكلُّ يوم عام
98	السيفُ عارِ الوباءُ مُسَلّط	والسيلُ خوفٌ والثلوج رُكام
99	والجوعُ فتّاكٌ وفيك صحابةٌ	لولم يجوعوا في الجهاد لصاموا
100	ضَنُّوا بِعرضكِ أن يُباعَ ويُشْتَرى	عِرْض الحرائر ليس فيه سُوام
101	ضاق الحصارُ كأنما حلقاتُهُ	فَلَكٌ ومقذوفاتُها أجرام
102	ورَمى العِدَى ورَمْيتهم بجهنم	مما يَصُبُّ الله لا الأقوام
103	بِعْتِ العدوَّ بكل شرٍ مهجةً	وكذا يُباعُ الملكُ حين يرام
104	مازال بينك في الحصار وبينه	شُمُّ الحصونِ ومثلهن عظام

105 حتى حواكِ مقابرا وحَوْيتِه جُثَثا فلا غَبْنٌ ولا اسْتِذْمام

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