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Arabs Imagining Communities: how privileged writers restore Arab public and private space to anglophone places

by

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Abstract

This thesis argues that recent Arab-anglophone literature can swell or shrink the private and public space which real-life Arabs inhabit in anglophone societies. Gendered and economic privileges change how Arab-anglophones tell stories, which changes, in turn, Arabs' status in anglophone readers' imaginations. And, Arabs' status in readers' imaginations affects the spaces they have available for political action and thought. But, lack of privilege limits some Arab-anglophone women - like Leila Aboulela and Fadia Faqir - to narrating cultural clash, which affirms in the anglophone imagination that the West opposes Arabs. Still, through work on Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place* and Hisham Matar's novels *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*, this thesis also aims to show that privilege can be extended to Arabs without. Arab-anglophone storytellers can recover the privacy and public respect that Arabs require to be politically active in anglophone societies.

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Introduction

Can Arab-anglophone literature circulate representations of Arabs that open real-life Arabs' access to privilege? And, can authors writing through fictional Arabs expand the private and public spaces that real-life Arabs inhabit in anglophone societies - despite the West fashioning Arab bodies and spaces into savage frontiers to colonize then tame? Asking these questions lets me track a change in representations of Arabs, important because new literary representations coincide with (and, in part, *cause*) Arabs-anglophones' evolving social and economic power in the West. But, analyzing the narratives circulating to explain Arabs also lets me probe the vocabulary that anglophone society uses to represent Arabs. Anglophone readers circulate the rhetorical strategies and narrative frames that Arabs use to write about themselves. Arab writers have, in short, the privilege to choose some of the terms that anglophones use to talk about Arabs.

However, some writers' stories benefit real life Arabs more than others. The cultural clash left a legacy that still inflects the stories that Arab-anglophone writers tell just before and after 9/11. I noticed a shift in tone from literature originally written in Arabic in the 60s, 70s, and 80s to recent literature written by Arabs and Arab Muslims in English. The cultural clash between East and West, the 'clash of civilizations' advanced by Orientalists, governed Arabic novels' plots. In Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Ghassan Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun*, for instance, border crossings - whether to Britain in the north or to rich Kuwait - bring cultural disputes and death. Published in 1966 and 1963 respectively, *Season of Migration to the North* and *Men in the Sun* reflect the mood of decolonizing North Africa and Middle East. Salih and Kanafani seem cynical about Arab culture and Islam's ability to reconcile with the West or meet modernity's challenge.

Arab-anglophone literature written just before and after 9/11 draws from similar Arab cultural and epistemological bases, though the context changes its focus. Arab-anglophone authors, writing in English and heirs to Arabic literature's cultural clash, instead use their work to educate anglophone audiences and correct readers' ideas about Arabs and Islam (with mixed success). This change from futility in the Middle East to renewed attention on Arabs' reconciliation with America and Europe merits study. As Al Maleh argues in the preface to her book *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*, "a significant anglophone Arab literary revival has taken place in the last few decades" that we've done little to explain (ix). Fadia Faqir in her blog post "Lost in Translation: The Arab Book in the Language of the Other" calls that gap in literary criticism "puzzling." This gap matters because language dictates not just texts' contexts, but their contents too. Al Maleh explains that "'anglophone' does not simply provide a linguistic 'shelter for the Arab writer in English… [it] is a much wider umbrella under which certain themes and concerns can be shared" (x). And examining that tonal shift in literature - in thinking of Arabs' turn to English as signalling if not hope for then renewed anxiety about reconciliation - allows me to better expose the anxieties of being Arab in countries like Canada, America, and Britain.

To clarify, when I use the words 'Arab' and 'Arab-anglophone,' I refer to texts, ideas, and people that are framed by reading publics or writers as Arab. I don't seek to define the word precisely because, to compare my primary texts, I only need to point to how these texts signal their association with Arab culture, concerns, and language.

In light of that distinction, I compared five primary texts, including Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*, Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place*

(1999), and Hisham Matar's novels *In the Country of Men* (2006) and *Anatomy of a Disappearance* (2011). Some authors, I found, are more privileged than others. And the success these authors had in changing anglophones' storytelling strategies for representing Arabs depended on their privilege, and their protagonists' privilege. Female authors like Aboulela and Faqir, though as educated as Said and Matar, write through disadvantaged female protagonists. And in so doing, both texts endorse the cultural clash to frame talk about Arabs, even as they make efforts to move beyond it.[1] That's a problem because the cultural clash characterizes Arabs as Western anglophones' antithesis, and pressures the already limited space that Arabs occupy in the anglophone world with open hostility. Under the logic of the cultural clash, Arabs can only occupy positions, in the anglophone imagination at least, that define them *against* the privileges of white anglophone society - making Arabs feared and poor.

Conversely, privileged male intellectuals like Edward Said and Hisham Matar - writing through the perspective of equally privileged male protagonists - enrich anglophone storytelling about Arabs. Their texts give anglophone audiences new narrative vocabularies that, as I demonstrate through empirical work on reading, promotes the economic and social well-being of real-life Arabs. Their texts widen the imaginative role of Arabs in anglophone society as a cultural group that occupies complicated social and economic positions, and ones that aren't defined in negative terms: that is, simply being what one cultural group is *not*. I don't think of privilege, then, as restrictive - limiting what the privileged say, or for whom they speak. Rather, I ask: what

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[1] I don't argue that tackling feminist themes causes works to represent Arabs poorly. Writing a feminist text and representing Arabs in humanizing ways aren't mutually exclusive. In fact, when I turn to Najwa in Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* in chapter three, I imply that a text *must* be feminist to represent Arabs with complexity.

But, Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* embraces the stereotypes that white, anglophone feminists tend to imagine about Arabs and their relationship to Islam. Aboulela's *The Translator* also recirculates problematic anglophone images of Arabs and Islam - except her text sells those stereotypes as authentic and beneficial features of Islam. I go in more in chapter one.

does privilege allow these authors to say that others, for the moment, can't? And how do authors like Said and Matar use their own to open privilege - especially private and public space - to disadvantaged Arabs? Said and Matar's texts alter the anglophone unconscious - that publicly-decided repository of images, words, and stories for representing Arabs - that Aboulela and Faqir only reinforce.

However, I don't want to ignore the plight of the underprivileged. Similarly, I don't want to suggest that texts written by and through the perspective of the privileged should monopolize Arab storytelling. Instead, I aim - in part - to interrogate Said and Matar's advantages in relation to Aboulela and Faqir's. What structures in the publishing industry, details in the paratext, or vagaries in audiences' expectations let male intellectuals with social and economic capital dominate talk about Arabs? In posing this question, I hope to weaken the assumptions that maintain gendered privilege. I hope, then, that my critical work identifies why some Arabs access privilege while others can't. Identifying problems with accessing privilege won't fix them. But it's a useful first step that suggests action Arab-anglophone authors might take to overcome the gendered, economic, and intellectual privilege making certain stories more potent.

More generally, though, I begin to explain how even relatively niche Arab-anglophone texts might change storytelling. I discover the mechanics of how Arabs might - in changing their self-representation from clashing to reconciling - adjust their representation, and thus their social positions. Literature might allow Arabs to rehabilitate their access to private space and political power in anglophone societies like the United States, Britain, and Canada. I demonstrate, then, that storytelling regulates Arabs' social standing rather than simply *reflects* it. Arab-anglophone texts would be worth studying if they were simply artifacts revealing Arab-anglophones' status.

But these texts are even more crucial when they can undermine or sustain Arab life in anglophone societies, too.

I broke my project into three chapters. In chapter one, I ask: what happens when Arab-anglophone writers represent the cultural clash from Arabic literature and Orientalist discourse in their stories? Can authors subvert the cultural clash while working in its parameters? I ask those questions of Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999) and Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* (2007).

Next, I investigate how Edward Said's social, economic, and intellectual privilege allows *Out of Place* (1999) to work past the exoticism that Arabs are supposed to perform to stay marketable. In chapter two, I ask: how does Said the narrator use his privilege to weaken the cultural clash's explanatory power? How does Said use his rich (in actual and cultural capital) childhood to subvert his readers' expectations late in his memoir? And why should subverting his readers' expectations, telling a more complicated story, matter for other Arabs?

Finally, I ask in chapter three: considering privilege's advantages, how does a privileged Arab man like Hisham Matar (who writes stories through and about the ennui of rich men) tell stories that heal damage to Arabs' real life privacy and political agency? Matar replaces the cultural clash with the clash between private and public spheres as his novels' main problem. Why does directing readers to think about Arabs' private and public space matter? I look to Hisham Matar's novels *In the Country of Men* (2006) and *Anatomy of a Disappearance* (2011) for answers.

I chose these texts for several reasons. My authors published their texts close to 9/11 (just before or after). Though 9/11 marks changes in Arabs' treatment (few Arabs now write without

referencing New York), Arabs experienced marginalization before the attacks, too.[2] So, I chose two texts - Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* and Edward Said's *Out of Place*, both published in 1999 - partly because they explore misconceptions about Arabs before 9/11. Readers could consult either text to anachronistically understand a supposed Arab or Muslim mind. But both texts better remind us that Arab problems with representation, privileged storytelling, and the way those change real-life Arabs' privacy and agency existed in the West *before* the wave of Islamophobia after 9/11, even as 9/11 shades all my discussion.

I do know that using 9/11 and the start of the War on Terror to periodize Arab-anglophone literature can be problematic. I don't want to talk about Arabs only through 9/11 and the War on Terror: these events don't mark the first time that Arabs become the West's opposite (see Edward Said's *Orientalism*), and thinking through these events implies that Arab-anglophone writing did not exist or matter until 9/11. But, texts written by Leila Aboulela, Fadia Faqir, Edward Said, and Hisham Matar do share concerns with the representation of Arabs, Islam, and immigration. And they do reckon and reconcile with the West in ways that, if not directly influenced by the advent of 9/11, are better understood as texts circulating, in part, because they explain a mysteriously threatening (to anglophones) Arab culture.

Moreover 9/11 was, and remains, the most recent event to make Arabs and Islam (which Arabs find themselves closely associated with, regardless of their real beliefs) an issue with which the West must wrestle. As Deepa Kumar argues in *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, 9/11 is one of many historical moments that marks a resurgence of an "anti-Muslim [and anti-Arab] prejudice [that] was consciously constructed and deployed by the ruling elite at par-

[2] I reference Edward Said's *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* in chapter two to clarify this point.

ticular moments" (3). Islam and Arabs, Kumar argues, become "that mythical creation conjured out of the needs of empire that has led even progressives to claim that Muslims are more violent than any other religious group… to generate fear and hatred" (2). So, I think covering the literature of the brief period just before and after 9/11, marked by Arabs' resurgence as a looming enemy in the anglophone mind, reasonably limits the type of literature I cover in this thesis - if not as a coherent literature, then as texts responding to a revival of the Arab in popular anglophone consciousness.

Among the works I read, Arab women write two texts with female protagonists: Aboulela's *The Translator* and Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*. Because the project of Arab-anglophone texts changes depending on the gendered, intellectual, and economic privileges of writers and their protagonists, I weigh these texts against Said and Matar's. Aboulela and Faqir also help me explore feminist themes in Arab literature (the veil, women's freedom in Islam). Anglophone audiences expect to see repressed Arab-Muslim women - especially as foils to liberated Western women. Aboulela and Faqir meet that expectation.

Finally, Matar wrote my last pair of texts, *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*, most recently: in 2006 and 2011. Their recency shows me that the structures Arab-anglophone writers use to tell stories about Arabs might be changing, and with it readers' vocabulary for imagining hybrid Arabs. Though the power of Matar's stories does depend on his privilege, his narratives - as some of the genre's recent examples - show hopeful signs of movement away from using the cultural clash to build stories.

My turn to empirical (psychological, scientific) studies on reading and literature makes my methodology unique. Critics normally turn to reader response theory when they talk about audi-

ence reception. But, reader response theory tends to reference hypothetical and not real readers. That left me unsatisfied. I do, of course, rely on conventional literary criticism. I feel, however, that my turn to studies about real readers and theories about reading based on scientific evidence is the only way to assert (with credibility) that literature changes its readers - and that Arab-anglophone literature changes the collective archive from which anglophones draw images of and vocabulary about Arabs.

And, considering that a major assumption of my thesis is that literature changes readers in ways that non-fiction, government discourse, and print and TV journalism can't, it makes sense to turn to empirical theory. The media and the state are ubiquitous and powerful competitors. Their words reach many more people than the niche Arab-anglophone literature that I study. Literature in its "collective efforts against denigration [of Arabs], particularly in the media" (Al Maleh 24) still finds itself outgunned. Fortunately, empirical theory (like Keith Oatley in *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*) affirms that though journalism reaches more people superficially, only storytelling modifies readers' deeper beliefs. Though critics like Al Maleh in *Arab Voices in Diaspora* say that "literary words accessible in a familiar language can offer… humanization of Arabs much better than journalism, historical reports or political memoirs" (x), empirical evidence can give that claim more force.[3]

Together, I hope that my three chapters won't just trace the effect of privilege on the conversation about Arabs' loss of privacy and political rights before and after 9/11. I also hope that my three chapters will point to solutions. As Gregory Orfalea argues in "The Arab American Novel:"

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[3] I have not, however, done any specific empirical studies on Arab-anglophone literature, so I do assume general claims about literature might also be true of specific Arab-anglophone texts. That might be a mistake. I'd like to test some of my hypotheses on real readers in future work, but that's beyond my current study's scope.

> "Because humanness has been so lacking in American novels that treat Arabs in English… the Arab American novelist has indeed a mission beyond the normal one of making moving art. The Arab American novelist is giving birth to images of humanness… The closer he gets to what is real, the closer he gets to justice and redemption" (117).

I plan to discover how privilege alters storytelling. I plan to work out how anglophone (and not only American) authors, publishers, and readers interact to humanize Arabs and their spaces. I plan, in short, to explain why Arab-anglophones have produced and need to continue producing literature about themselves.

Chapter One: The Binaries that Keep Us Apart: Cultural Clash in the Immigrant Narratives of Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* and Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*

Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* and Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* make for a good comparison: both have female authors with Arab-Muslim backgrounds writing novels about Arab-Muslim women finding love in and adjusting to Britain. More importantly, though, both novels endorse similar projects in their titles. Aboulela and Faqir position their novels as negotiations. The translator makes the knowledge in one language available in another. And the crying dove - with its dual connotation of being away from home in Arabic and a peace symbol in English - implies that the novel breaks the silences of the immigrant experience and begins a dialogue of peace. But, both texts spend little time negotiating. Instead, their narratives devolve into tellings of the 'cultural clash,' which interferes with any real progress they make towards reconciling secular British society with Arab culture and Islam.

Critics sometimes think hybridity confirms the absurdity of the cultural clash's binaries. For instance, John Stotesbury in "Genre and Islam in Recent Anglophone Romantic Fiction" talks about the ways that novels like *The Translator* mix "Western popular romantic fiction" with an Islam that demands love go through "a complex three-way accommodation that involves woman, man, and God" (80). Stotesbury's essay assumes that "cultural hybridisation most transparently challenges traditional preconceptions of personal identity" based on a division "where the 'rest' daily encounters the West in forms that are often unwelcome and abhorrent to local creeds and customs" (70). Stotesbury, in short, seems convinced that texts like *The Translator* "contribute to a long-overdue decentering of conventional Anglophone perspectives" and binaries (81).

I don't agree with Stotesbury for two reasons. First, I argue that *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* fail as hybrid texts. Like Wail Hassan argues of *The Translator* in his book *Immi-*

grant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab American and Arab British Literature, *The Translator* finds itself caught in a "reverse-Eurocentrism held hostage by… its rejection of existential freedom… [and] embrace of an idealized past" (197). And *The Cry of the Dove*, though certainly less invested in defending Islam, tells a structurally simple story that disservices Arab-anglophones.

Second, I don't agree with Stotesbury because I don't see hybridity as liberatory in itself. Though my argument analyzes the failed hybridity of both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*, I don't assume that hybridity would otherwise fix these texts. That would be a mistake because, as Madelaine Hron argues in *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture*, "for many immigrants, notions such as 'hybridity,' 'mobility,' and 'difference' are not connotative of any form of redemptive transcendence" (23). The alternative to binaries doesn't always have to be in-between. Being between binaries, though certainly proof that binaries aren't stable categories, might only acknowledge the alternatives that exist between binaries. That doesn't hold true for every hybrid text or identity. But I'll show that *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* affirm the Arab stereotypes that circulate in the anglophone world. And because Aboulela and Faqir are native informants (women with Arab-Muslim backgrounds who write Arab problems in English) affirming cliches, they strengthen stereotypes already circulating about Arabs' essential incompatibility with anglophone society. Even when *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* give their characters complex identities, those positions still affirm the binaries between Arab-Muslim and secular anglophone identities.

So, I read the cultural clash in both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*'s narrative structures. The way writers tell stories can reinforce or decenter readers' ideas about Arabs, and I

claim with empirical evidence that reading subtle literary texts can change readers' beliefs about Arabs. But, both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* simply reverse and work in the cultural clash's confines (pitting old world views against new world views). They miss surprising their readers. Aboulela and Faqir tell stories firmly planted in the immigrant narrative genre, complete with underprivileged protagonists. So, they participate in storytelling that keeps Arab-anglophones alienated from economic and social power in anglophone societies like Canada, Britain, and the United States.[4]

I will analyze *The Translator* first because both its form and ambitions are simpler than *The Cry of the Dove*'s. Aboulela's *The Translator* disputes new world views' ascendancy. She presents Islam (an 'old world' view) as the inevitable champion of the cultural clash. Though Aboulela places protagonist Sammar in a complex position between Sudan and Britain at the novel's start, Islam's primacy in the text undermines Sammar's potential as a mediator. Islam exerts so much pressure on the novel that it stretches the story.

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[4] Before my argument, I need to acknowledge how gender decides the way readers and critics like me frame texts. Otherwise, I risk ignoring how we might read problems we wouldn't otherwise see *into* female Arab writers' work - especially in Arab contexts where the veil and women's rights inevitably shape discussion. Fadia Faqir in her brief article "Cultural Illiteracy" says that while "female Arab Muslim authors are instantly minoritised and associated with the veil," "male Arab authors like… Hisham Matar and Rawi Hage are treated better by the publishing industry" (18). Publishers in turn saddle female Arab writers like Faqir or Leila Aboulela with embarrassing covers and misleading marketing. Faqir says her novel *The Cry of the Dove* "in the USA was promoted as confessional literature" rather than a novel (18). Publishers frame Faqir as a native informant even before the audience can read the text. And only her Italian publisher maintained *The Cry of the Dove*'s original title - *Sage Tea for Salma* (18). Faqir also relates how Leila Aboulela's recent novel *Lyrics Alley* (2011) - despite *The Translator*'s (1999) more respectful marketing campaign - is "packaged and promoted [in a way that] trivializes" its success as a portrait of decolonizing Sudan (18). Faqir reminds us that publishers lampoon the work of female Arab authors by prescribing titles, covers, and other types of paratext to their works. Publishers, in short, frame the way we read female Arab writers, underprivileging writers because of gender. Publishers buy into then help circulate stereotypes about veiled Muslim women who need rescuing.

I can't ignore how the physical packaging of both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* influence my readings, and I want to be frank about this. That's why in light of Faqir's argument in "Cultural Illiteracy," I work to show in this chapter how both Aboulela and Faqir invite stereotypical paratexts with their texts' content. I don't claim that Faqir is wrong in "Cultural Illiteracy." I also don't claim that authors write content independent from publishers' paratexts or readers' expectations, and thus we only need blame the author for misrepresentations in their texts. As Madelaine Hron argues in *Translating Pain*, immigrant writers often change their stories "to standard models of the immigrant narrative" in order to meet the demands of readers and publishers (xiv). But we can claim that *The Translator* and *The Cry* harden cliches without ignoring that the publishing industry caricatures Arab women.

I will discuss *The Cry of the Dove* next. Its project is more complex because Faqir critiques both new and old world views in the cultural clash. She explores the misogyny of both liberal British and Arab-Muslim culture - both exert contradictory pressure on protagonist Salma. But, *The Cry* ends awkwardly and reinforces the cultural clash. I'll clarify my points with Hanan al-Shaykh's Arabic novel *The Story of Zahra. The Story of Zahra* structurally resembles *The Cry*, ending especially, but al-Shaykh's story doesn't carry the same baggage.[5]

At the novel's start, Sammar of Aboulela's *The Translator* seems well-adjusted. Sammar lives in Scotland, clutches "her blue folder with the translation of *Al-Nidda*'s manifesto" (3) - suggesting skill with both Arabic and English - and was even born in Britain, not returning home to Sudan "until [she] was seven" (4). She isn't in the middle of making the painful adjustments that Britain asks of most of its immigrants. On one level, then, Sammar has gotten "used to the explicitness, all the signs and polite rules" of Britain (4). She is already familiar with British social codes, meaning that Aboulela seems to avoid a stock story about an immigrant's adjustment to a new country.

But Aboulela only allows Sammar to appear well-adjusted for a short time. Sammar still compares Britain to Sudan, implying that Sudan remains her ultimate reference point. She talks

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[5] It might seem unfair to compare an Arabic novel with an Arab-anglophone novel. Language, context, and location separate al-Shaykh from Faqir. But, Gregory Nash in "Re-siting Religion and Creating Feminised Space in the Fiction of Ahdaf Soueif and Leila Aboulela" notes that though Hanan al-Shaykh writes in Arabic, she - much like Tayeb Salih with *Season of Migration to the North* - works "closely with her English translators" (28). Nash even notices "variations between... [al-Shaykh's] original and translated texts" that suggest an awareness of the differences between her "respective English and Arab audiences" (28). So, though I can't claim al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra* as an Arab-anglophone text, al-Shaykh writes aware of the same anglophone audience as Faqir. al-Shaykh writes under many of the same pressures as female Arab-anglophone writers, and potentially faces similar discrimination in the anglophone literary scene. That gives me a basis to compare her translated writing with texts like Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*.

Moreover, much like Arab-anglophone novels, Arabic novel *The Story of Zahra* would likely get read by an anglophone audience as an ideal way to 'understand' Arab-Muslim culture, as part of a "literature [that] explains to non-Muslims aspects of Muslim lives... while exposing prejudice, racism, and Islamophobia" (Hassan 317). Anglophone audiences would read al-Shaykh and Faqir's texts in similar modes regardless of the texts' original language.

about "*this* country" (4) or "at *home* in *Sudan*" (5, emphasis mine), suggesting the comparative mindset characteristic of many immigrants (this country contrasted with home). And, a library trip calls Sammar's grasp of English into question. Despite spending years immersed in the language, Sammar feels "like a helpless immigrant who didn't know any English" where she imagines "English words lifting away from her brain, evaporating" (13). Aboulela signals the instability of Sammar's position in Britain.

Yet there's no respite for Sammar in Sudan, either, with her disapproving mother-in-law Mahasen lurking in Khartoum. Mahasen believes that the newly-widowed Sammar shouldn't remarry after her son Tarig's death because "life is different now" - widows don't need men's protection, and Sammar can support herself with work in Britain (13). Her mother-in-law introduces distastefully progressive (to Sammar) ideas in a bastion that Western readers might think reserved for practicing conservative Islam. Aboulela uses the mother-in-law to shut Sammar out of that possibility. Sammar can't lavish nostalgia on Khartoum, in part because her mother-in-law Mahasen blocks Sammar's ability to practice her beliefs to their fullest extent - even in her Southern home where that possibility should stay open.

And Sammar's name neatly symbolizes her uncomfortable in-betweenness. Her name's reception in Sudan and its reception in Britain reveal the collapse of Sammar's ability to be in-between, and signal the coming cultural clash. Sammar likes to "reinvent the beginnings of her life" and "make believe that she was born at home in Sudan" (5). She imagines that, having been born in Khartoum, her parents would have picked a name less conspicuous than Sammar. Instead, Sammar stands out among her peers as "the only Sammar at school and at college" in Sudan (5). Interestingly, having a name as exceptional as Sammar actually *prevents* her from using

other markers of familial identity and affiliation, because "when people talked about her they never needed to use her last name" (5). Sammar's name cheats her out of complete belonging in Sudan. To parallel, though Sammar's name also stands out in Britain, its pronunciation makes it more familiar than most Arab names in the West. Rae asks if "you pronounce it like the season, summer," which Sammar affirms, while qualifying that its meaning is different. It "means conversations with friends, late at night" (5). As Hassan observes in *Immigrant Narratives*, "the meaning of her name clashes with her isolated and alienated condition in Scotland" (188). Sammar's name, rare in Sudan, a homonym in Britain that *seems* English, and a semantic mismatch for her personality, positions her *outside* both her Sudanese and British locales. Her name serves as the first sign that Sammar might not be the ideal go-between (translator) for Sudan and Britain.

Though I've demonstrated that *The Translator* traps Sammar between a binary Britain and Sudan, many critics insist that *The Translator* complicates Sammar's initial identity as an immigrant. I must credit these critics for nuancing my argument. Sammar is not helpless, and "it quickly becomes apparent that the novel does not conform to the stereotype privileged by the Western publishing industry of 'the Arab/Muslim woman who escapes from the oppressive patriarchy of her native culture to freedom and independence in the West'" (Hassan citing self 309). Moreover, Brendan Smyth argues in his article "To Love the Orientalist: Masculinity in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*" that the novel troubles gender stereotypes. Smyth observes that Rae, an Orientalist academic who "participates in constructing the West and the Orient in gendered terms" (172), sees his masculinity undermined by his dependency on Sammar's translations and his physical illness, which "reveals these Orientalist notions [of disengaged, objective rationality]

as illusory" (173). Smyth sees *The Translator* as a writing-back because it undercuts "Western imperial discourses which depict Islam as a backward, barbaric religion of extremists and terrorists" (180). And, Shirin Edwin in "(Un)Holy Alliances: Marriage, Faith, and Politics in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*" commends *The Translator* for "recognizing that not all Muslims are scholars or experts of their religion but are fallible in the way they live their faith on a daily basis" (77). Edwin concludes that Aboulela fosters "a greater appreciation of religion beyond the purported doctrinal and legal expertise" (77), an Islam "shorn of the doctrinal loftiness or complications that scholars tend to read in it" (70).[6] *The Translator*, then, sidesteps obvious stereotypes, reverses gender roles, and represents Arab-Muslim culture in its realistic imperfection. And though it's difficult to discover authors' intentions, least of all regard writers' interpretations of their own texts as authoritative, they can guide our reading. In a personal email to John Stotesbury, Leila Aboulela claims to simply "want Western/Christian readers to respect and empathize with Sammar's very Muslim dilemma" in needing Rae to convert before marrying (Stotesbury citing Aboulela 81).

All these critics and the author herself have fair ideas about *The The Translator*. But, *The Translator* has good qualities that don't cancel out its ultimate conflict - a battle for both Sammar and Rae's (Sammar's would-be fiancé) minds. Even early in the novel, clear signs telegraph the novel's devolution into reversals of the cultural clash's hierarchies, in this case affirming Islam's universality. Rae, for instance, recounts how his uncle David went to Egypt in World War II and

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[6] What Edwin and I mean here is that, often, Christian practitioners are given the benefit of imperfection where most Muslims aren't. Some in anglophone societies look only at Islam's doctrines rather than its practitioners to decide whether its ideologies actually limit freedom. And, like any old religious doctrine read literally, contradictions exist, especially for outsiders living in a different context from where the doctrine was created. At the same time, many anglophones generously separate Christianity's (especially Catholicism's) doctrines from the actual practice of the religion. Aboulela shows an imperfect daily practice of Islam that can go some way to remedying this double standard.

converted to Islam after interest in Sufism. Uncle David wrote a letter about Islam "like it was a step on in the way that Christianity followed Judaism,... [because] the Prophet Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets that stretched from Adam, to Abraham through Moses and Jesus" (18). Rae's uncle argues in his letter "that they were all Muslims, Jesus was a Muslim, in a sense that he had surrendered to God," which Rae then plagiarizes as a child to argue "that Islam was 'better' than Christianity" (18). Uncle David's letter characterizes a foundational Muslim belief: he sees Islam as the final evolution in a long chain of monotheism, where Muhammad acts as the final seal on divine revelation. Islam overwrites Judaism and Christianity. And Aboulela, though pitting Islam against liberal secularism instead, makes that hierarchy visible in her novel's plot. *The Translator* translates, but only to make available in English Islam's universality, which Sammar uses to augment the Islamic side of the cultural clash and convert Rae. Translation becomes a tool to convert characters from one side of the cultural clash to another.[7]

But, what is the cultural clash, and what makes it the leading structural feature of classic immigrant narratives? I use William Boelhower's essays "The Immigrant Novel as Genre" (1981) and "The Ethnic Trilogy: A Poetics of Cultural Passage" (1985) to explain the centrality of the cultural clash in typical immigrant narratives. Boelhower in "The Immigrant

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[7] I borrow the equation of translation with conversion from Hassan's *Immigrant Narratives*. Hassan separates two types of translation: there are "human forms (linguistic transfer, putting knowledge into practice, cultural media, and so on)" and there is "divine translation (conversion, the transfer of saints to heaven without death)" (190). Divine translation "negates human agency, interrupts history, and supersedes all worldly affiliations - the very definition of miracle" (190).

Though Aboulela's novel *seems* to be about human translation, the last translation in *The Translator* (Rae's miraculous conversion at the end) doesn't seem logical and disappoints some readers. Aboulela's *The Translator* focuses more on divine translation. We can't, in light of this distinction, think of the title *The Translator* as a reference to the heroine Sammar. Rather, *the* translator in this novel is God. Thus, we need to redefine translation in Aboulela's novel. To translate is to convert. It is not, in this context, a postcolonial action to reconcile worldly cultures. I see many critics misled in failing to make that distinction. They assume that the novel, with its emphasis on translation, performs intellectuals' common understanding of translation: bridging cultures. Critics who read the human type of translation into the novel, thinking that *The Translator* affirms hybrid identities, writes back, and helps readers understand Muslims, seem to ignore that *The Translator* performs a less common understanding of translation: divine conversion.

Novel as Genre" argues that most immigrant stories are introspective narratives where, through the clash between expectation and reality, immigrants have their idealism about their new country corrected. This 'decentering' - a term that I define in my discussion of Miall and Kuiken's theories about the educative power of literature - comes from the discrepancies between what Boelhower calls old world views and new world views. Immigrants "cannot but act out their peculiar culture or contrast OW [old world views] and NW [new world views]," which is "the inevitable result of the *clash* between their expectations and their OW cultural background" (6, emphasis mine). There are, in other words, two 'clashes' in most immigrant narratives. First, on the level of expectation, the immigrant watches (quite uncomfortably) their hopes about the new country disintegrate when exposed to reality. Second, on the level of their old world views, immigrants struggle to replace their old beliefs with 'progressive' new world views.

To expand on Boelhower, this doubled cultural clash, where both idealism/old world views combat with reality/new world views is the highlight of most immigrant novels. This arrangement is problematic. Implicitly, old world views are aligned with the past's idealism and illusion, and the liberal, Western new world views are aligned with present reality. In being arbitrarily given the most powerful ally (reality is a powerful antidote to illusion), it's only natural that new world views, armed with the new country's 'realities,' supplant old world views. As Boelhower argues in "The Ethnic Trilogy: A Poetics of Cultural Passage," the classic immigrant narrative is "patterned on the spatial shift from old world to new world and… naturally concerned with the attempt to establish… continuity" from the catastrophe of moving (7). Both Aboulela and Faqir's novels contend the arbitrary deference to and inevitable movement towards liberal Western values. As Hron argues in *Translating Pain* (who also cites Boelhower's "The

Immigrant Novel as Genre"), at the beginning of most immigrant narratives "the immigrant hero seemingly often lacks basic social skills, which he or she must acquire in the immigration process" (17). Both Aboulela and Faqir question the assumption that navigating Western space should injure Muslim beliefs: that narrative movement shouldn't be taken for granted. However, Aboulela questions that assumption by working within the cultural clash's confines. For Aboulela, the best antidote to this process rests in converting to Islam a symbol of the leftist secular West - Rae, a white, British, and left-leaning academic.

So, Aboulela builds the movement of *The Translator*'s cultural clash in the opposite direction through Sammar and Rae's romance. She calls Sammar's old world view (Islam) into question via a romance with white, intellectual Rae. Because Sammar's Islam and Rae's leftist, liberal politics are incompatible, their romance becomes a cultural clash. But, unlike most immigrant stories, and though it seems that Sammar's Muslim "rules broke and burst her head in little bright pieces" (45), Sammar won't compromise her faith just to be with Rae. So, instead of asking, when will Sammar give in, Aboulela asks: how will Sammar preserve faith? In the conservation of Sammar's old world views, Aboulela critiques the assumption that the comparatively progressive -isms of anglophone society - liberalism, secularism, and materialism - naturally supplant Islam (assumed to be backwards). But, Aboulela's approach has problems. In reversing the direction of Boelhower's cultural clash and moving from new world to old world views, Aboulela embraces stereotype and elevates Islam above reproach.

Sammar, on Christmas break from her job at the university in Aberdeen, imagines Rae sitting with his family after Christmas lunch listening to the Queen's speech. She thinks of how "it would mean something to *him*, what *his* Queen said or did not say" (34, emphasis mine). In

this scene, Aboulela sets up difference between Sammar and Rae to the point of caricature. Sammar feels "separate from him, exiled while he was in his homeland, *fasting* while he was eating turkey and drinking *wine*" (34, emphasis mine). Sammar is careful to point out that Rae is "not so different from her" (34) - suggesting that he might be an ideal candidate for conversion. But by contrasting Sammar's Christmastime fasting (she is making up for lost days in Ramadan) with Rae's drinking (forbidden in Islam, of course), the contrast between the denial of Islam and the 'freedom' of the West gets amplified. Aboulela turns Christmastime into a cultural void for Muslims, where the differences between Muslims and Westerners are embellished: a Muslim woman, fasting in her ascetic, decoration-free apartment at Christmastime thinks about a Western man eating, drinking and listening to the Queen. Though it seems like Sammar and Rae "live in worlds divided by [several] simple facts - religion, country of origin, race -" (34) religion is the only inviolable difference keeping them apart.

And Aboulela continues to make Islam inviolable by overlooking opportunities to critique its utility in Britain. When noticing the tassels on her prayer mat, Sammar remarks that the mat symbolizes "the *only* stability in life, unreliable life, taking turns the mind could not imagine" (37, emphasis mine). Then, in a reversal of expectation (because Sammar says that Islam keeps her focused where her mind fails), she hears her neighbour "Lesley's footsteps on the stairs, thirty-three, and *what was left of her concentration* scattered with [Lesley's] knock on the door" (37, emphasis mine). Though Samar finishes her thirty-three post-prayer appeals for God's forgiveness, Sammar's ritual gets interrupted by her white British neighbour. Aboulela could use this moment to outline Islam's limits - to reveal where the demands of Islamic prayer don't mesh with the rhythms of British life. Instead, Aboulela tests Sammar's devotion to Islam by distract-

ing her with the promise of Rae's romance. Her neighbour Lesley presumably knocks to tell Sammar that on the shared "telephone in the landing ring" Rae waits to speak with her (37). Islam and its ideology is safe from critique - its only reproachable element remains the fallible humans (like Sammar) practicing it.

Islam's impregnability is, in fact, built into the *The Translator*'s very structure as what one reviewer from *Muslim News* in *The Translator*'s paratext calls "the first halal novel written in English." *The Independent* is enchanted to see "through the eyes of her [Aboulela's] devoutly Muslim narrator," and *The Sunday Herald* raves how "Aboulela shows the rich possibilities for living in the West with different, non-Western, ways of knowing and thinking." These newspapers' short reviews, incorporated into the book's paratext, signal Aboulela's attempt to make a *halal* (permissible in Islam) Arab-anglophone novel.

But, as Sadia Abbas argues in her article "Leila Aboulela, Religion, and the Challenge of the Novel," contradictions exist in creating halal novels. Abbas says that "imaginings of creation or revelation, divine representation, and theological argument must be absent in order to earn [a novel] the imprimateur of the *halal*" (455). To be *halal*, Muslims should avoid representing metaphysical reality - especially God. Abbas clarifies by saying that "the attributes that allow the novels [Aboulela's] to be designated as Muslim and *halal* are thoroughly secular," meaning that novels like *The Translator* "have little to say about divinity and bracket theological questions and the more troubling effects of religion on the world" (455). In other words, Aboulela's novel must stay grounded by physical reality to be *halal*, and can't reckon with representations of God in writing except for those in conventional, widely-circulated Muslim theology. J. M. Coetzee, South African writer of *Disgrace* and highlight of the paratext (his words are on the novel's cov-

er), praises *The Translator* precisely for "the restraint with which it is written." Coetzee applauds Aboulela for restraining her religious zeal. Restraint becomes Aboulela's most effective tool in creating a paradoxically earthly but religious novel. It excuses her from creating challenging representations of God or Islam (because they'd be *haram*, or forbidden in Islam).

Restraint is also demanded by the generic conventions of the novel. As Abbas argues, "God is difficult to incorporate into the generic frame of the *realist* novel" (456, emphasis mine). For this reason, Aboulela is not only able to excuse herself from representing God for the sake of her Muslim readers, but also for the sake of her non-Muslim audience (like Coetzee) who expect novels to be realist. The novel's realism "allows Aboulela to sidestep a larger reckoning with the presence, or absence, of God in the world" (Abbas 456). In listening to the demand for restrained realism from both major subsets of her audience, Aboulela can avoid representing Islamic theology and, because representation is necessary before critique, can avoid reevaluating Islam. Aboulela has this bizarrely restrained, abstract, and impregnable Islam structure the rest of *The Translator*'s plot.

As Rae and Sammar's romance progresses, *The Translator*'s inflexible Islam steers the story more rigidly. About midway through the book, Aboulela spells out the novel's central problem: in conversation with Rae, Sammar "wanted to say, because unless you become a Muslim, we will not be able to get married, we will not be together and I will be miserable and alone" (89). After Rae rejects Sammar's conversion attempt, Sammar struggles through the emotional fallout by moving back to Khartoum. She resigns from her translation job in Aberdeen after a brief term in Egypt interrogating suspected terrorists. She wants Rae to think about "how much [he] hurt [her] saying objective and detached, like [Rae] above all of this, above [Sammar],

looking down" (126). Sammar gets hurt not just by Rae's reservations about their relationship, but what his reservations imply about Islam: that Islam can't be universal when Rae, as an academic on Islam, knows "very well that it's for *everyone*… not just for Arabs" (126, emphasis mine). Aboulela makes it clear that *The Translator* can't end until Rae surrenders to Islam.

So, *The Translator* resolves 'will-they-won't-they' tension between Sammar and Rae with his miraculous appearance in Sudan, preceded by a letter confirming Rae's conversion to Islam. I should qualify what I argue here because *The Translator*'s ending is divisive. Christina Phillips in her article "Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*: Reading Islam in the West" disappoints me by claiming that "if Rae's conversion is difficult for some readers to accept, it is more to do with *their own belief system*, for within the story the way has been amply prepared for" (71, emphasis mine). This is a stray comment in an otherwise astute article where Phillips explains "how... a novel with a religious agenda and, moreover, one which projects ideals that contradict those of its target audience, has been welcomed by the literary establishment" (66). But it still captures responses to the novel's ending well.

Katayoun Zarei Toossi's dissertation "Dislodging (New) Orientalist Frames of Reference: Muslim Women in Diasporic and Immigrant Muslim Anglophone Narratives," which explores how "an emergent body of 'Muslim narratives' in English written by women complicates... reductive and binary portrayals" (2), argues more rigorously than Phillips about reactions to *The Translator*'s ending. Toossi observes that "the issue of conversion in *The Translator* appears as discomfortingly teasing to many Muslim as well as non-Muslim and especially Western readers," and remembers "classmates' frustrated responses in a graduate course on postcolonial literatures and masculinity for finding Rae's conversion unconvincing" (95). And Toossi rightly notices that

responses to *The Translator*'s ending speak to readers' biases "about the irrationality of the act of conversion into Islam in light of a secular worldview" (109). But Toossi seems convinced that "the narrative's simultaneous placing of European and Islamic/African worlds thematizes an attempt to move beyond Manichean binaries such as colonizer/colonized, self/other, and the Western/Oriental" (134), even while *The Translator* reverses how power flows between binaries. Creating a "reversal of the rescue mission (Muslim woman saving the non-Muslim man)" (Toossi 117) still reinscribes the essential incompatibility of Muslims with regular secular anglophone society. The miraculous conversion, which the novel cannot explain except as purely transcendental and faith-based, doesn't expose any of the real rationale for which one might adopt Islam.

And though Toossi reminds us that "the Muslim woman [is] in constant conflict as she cannot be practising her faith and still be regarded as enlightened, outspoken, and agential" (1), Hassan in *Immigrant Narratives* argues that "Aboulela's Islamism and the fiction that embodies it" rejects "existential freedom and political responsibility" (197). Sammar never seeks to explain, for instance, why she has work translating terrorists' tracts, despite the fact that "Islamic theology does not bar the investigation of such reasons" (195). Hassan asserts that "Sammar's brand of religiosity rejects human agency in the world... thereby encouraging complacency with regard to political responsibility" (195). Sammar's success and "fate is etched out by Allah Almighty" (73), despite historical events that "gave her a British passport, a point in time when the demand for people to translate Arabic in English was bigger than the supply" (Aboulela 73). Toossi's premises are strong, but they don't apply to *The Translator*'s consciously ahistorical, anti-agential religiosity. In sum, critiquing *The Translator*'s ending has potential for fallacy. I hope that my analysis avoids the mistakes that Phillips and Toossi see in the bile directed at *The*

Translator's ending, while also advancing their ideas about Islam's effects on *The Translator*'s ending.

So to turn from conversations about *The Translator*'s ending back to my analysis of the ending, Rae realizes that (with stress on the possessive pronoun) that "ours isn't a religion of suffering… *nor is it tied to a particular place*" (198, emphasis mine). Rae *must* accept that Islam applies at all times and for all people because the text's plot depends on his conversion. Even Sammar's reintegration in Britain is at stake, because "her ability to translate and speak English is [only] re-acquired when Rae converts to Islam and asks her to marry him" (Rizzo 410). Rae's conversion for Sammar "was a miracle" (198) and even Rae seems surprised: "I didn't think of myself as someone who would turn spiritual…" (199). Their surprise is the only hint of concrete representation of divinity in *The Translator*, since their surprise at Rae's conversion suggests that God likely willed it - especially because Rae used to get irate that "Muslims expect him to convert just because he knows so much about Islam" (22).

And, during Rae's reappearance, Aboulela even comments on the way that Islam structures *The Translator* through her characters. In what seems like an excuse for *The Translator* not ending when Sammar first begs Rae to convert, Rae claims that he "wasn't clean enough" for Sammar back in Aberdeen for their happy ending at that point (196-197). *The Translator* can't end in Aberdeen because Rae hadn't come far enough in his acceptance of Islam's truth, and Sammar had to reorient her prayers towards Rae's salvation for his own sake, not her desire to marry him. Rae and Sammar have to fix their faith before they marry. The plot is, in short, stretched by the stress that Islam places on its structure.

In telling simultaneous stories of maintained faith in and conversion to Islam (respectively Sammar and Rae's stories), Aboulela gives the old world view (Islam) the tools it needs to win the cultural clash, to overturn the idea "that West is best" (22). Though new world views are normally thought of as the logical, progressive replacements of old world views (where liberal values replace antiquated Islam), Sammar and the newly Muslim Rae plan to "go back together to Aberdeen" (196). They don't even worry about the adverse effect that Rae's conversion could have on his academic career - a career he built on impartial, objective distance from Islam, on which anything less than would be "professional suicide" (21) - because everything "would come from Allah" (199-200). Aboulela inverts the logic of the classic immigrant narrative, tempting Sammar with and turning Rae away from British liberalism and secularism. In this sense, the inversion of the cultural clash's logic is a useful way to deconstruct the stories Aboulela's readers would take for granted. Reversing the flow of the cultural clash can seem a viable corrective to non-Muslim misunderstandings of Islam, because "in *The Translator* the successful conversion of the Scottish Rae to Islam testifies to the way in which Sammar transports her Islam to the West… it is an African woman who saves a white man" (Rizzo 418). Toossi, as I mentioned earlier, thinks similarly in "Dislodging (New) Orientalist Frames of Reference." This reversal might, in short, function as reminder that British (or Western) liberalism isn't Islam's inevitable replacement. *The Translator*'s inversion also reminds readers that Islam had and has utility as an anti-colonial ideology - that "the link between Islam and anti-colonialism" (109) means that Arabs don't need to replace their beliefs with Rae's leftist politics to earn their nations' sovereignty.

But there's nothing surprising about Aboulela's flat reversal. And, in inverting the flow of the cultural clash, Aboulela makes Sammar a problematic protagonist for Arab-anglophones. As Wail Hassan argues in "Leila Aboulela and the Ideology of Muslim Immigrant Fiction," "in her [Sammar's] desperate attempt to find a new anchor for life (and such an anchor for her can only be another husband), a British born and educated woman… clings to a notion of tradition that is made up of immigrant nostalgia,… [an] *uncritically reactive embrace of Orientalist stereotypes of her culture*, and [a] rejection of British norms" (316, emphasis mine). Much like problematic Orientalist narratives about Arabs that "distort… the image of the Arabs and Islam" (Aboulela 21), Sammar shrinks her entire cultural identity to religion (Islam) instead of being more measured - that is, treating Islam as an important *part* of her difference from Rae rather than its totality. Instead, *The Translator* leaves readers with a reactive story-telling template (reactive because it flips rather than resets the terms of debate) that limits Arab-Muslims to performing the opposite of British liberalism.

The Cry of the Dove sets up a more intricate cultural clash than *The Translator*. At first, *The Cry* seems to support readers' impression that protagonist Salma belongs in Britain, if only for the novel's first two pages. Salma acts like liberated woman - "I stuck a liner to my pants, pulled them up my shaved and oiled legs and realized *I was free at last*" (1-2, emphasis mine). And, because unveiled Arab women need to be specified as unveiled in anglophone literature, Faqir describes Salma's "*no longer* braided and veiled hair" (2, emphasis mine) - an unveiled Arab woman to anglophone society signals freedom. Faqir draws a close association between Salma's shallow beauty routine and her supposed freedom (by placing both in the same sentence) in order to demonstrate that link's faulty logic. The performance of British femininity doesn't

actually liberate Salma. As Salma dabs on "some perfume" and pulls her "tummy in" before she leaves Swan Cottage, the house where she rents a room (2), the reader's aware of the artifice and contingency of Salma's belonging. This scene's deliberately fallacious association between British beauty routines and freedom allows Faqir to expose the crude logic that British society uses to decide who's free and who isn't.

Faqir critiques another weak sign of liberation by giving Salma two names - Salma and the anglicized Sally (3). Usually a sign of 'hybridity,' being "happy in theory" as Hron calls it (20), Salma's two names actually evidence the cultural clash wearing her down. Salma observes that "Salma, the dark black iris of Hima must try to *turn into a Sally*, an English rose, white, confident, with an elegant English accent and a pony" (4, emphasis mine). Her Arabic name "Salma Ibrahim El-Musa" (25) and adopted English name "Sally Asher" (15) compete against one another. When Salma, for example, sits in front of a kebab van run by British Arabs, the old man asks her if she's spying. Salma says that if she was "in the old country of the Levant" she would have "stood up,… called him *jiddu* [grandfather] and introduced" herself as "Salma Ibrahim El-Musa" (25). Salma can't introduce herself with her real name here, partly because she's in "the new country now" and partly because she's "a fugitive with a record" (25). Salma's circumstances keep her from flowing between identities. Salma's name trouble hints at her split personalities because while "Salma resisted… Sally must adapt" (3) - both names have their own temperaments. For Salma, then, her dual identity, related to "notions such as 'hybridity,' 'mobility,' and 'difference,'" is "not connotative of any form of redemptive transcendence" (Hron 23). It's a sign of her struggle.

And ‘Sally’ can’t adapt to Britain. Salma thinks that "in England the police stop you in the street and check your papers and *sense of belonging* regularly" (3, emphasis mine) - a misunderstanding suggesting that her unveiled liberation is only a ruse for fear of being outed as the backwards Arab. And when Salma invites the postman over for coffee, he takes it as a sexual invitation. He comes in with "his dark hair swept back with gel, his shirt… bright and clean" - he holds Salma’s "hand a bit longer than he should" (16). When the postman realizes that Salma’s offer for coffee isn’t a sexual proposition while she hugs herself and apologizes for the misunderstanding, he storms out "shouting something that sounded like ‘Coke tea man’" (16). Faqir has readers revise their initial impression of liberated ‘Sally.’ Much more than Sammar in *The Translator*, Salma’s naiveté makes her a classic immigrant protagonist: as Boelhower argues, immigrant protagonists "are *naive*, *ignorant* of American [or British] life in all its facets, have a *language* barrier, are *unassimilated*, and, crucially, *hopeful*" initiates of the new world (6, author’s emphasis). Salma, in short, reveals that her "actions (thus the plot) are still motivated by an OW [old world] view" (Boelhower 6).

British law and social codes bewilder Salma, laws and codes that Faqir then criticizes for their misogyny. Salma has a fanciful vision of what the perfect (and privileged) British woman should look like, and makes her quest to change into a British woman explicit: "Salma the dark black iris of Hima must try to turn into a Sally, an English rose, white, confident, with an elegant English accent, and a pony" (4). Salma wants to own the markers of the desirable English woman, including social grace, an *upper-class* accent, ponies. These are outdated markers of British desirability - good manners, proper accents, and ponies would fit better in a Jane Austen

or Charlotte Bronte novel. But Faqir reveals that these qualities are still valued by modern British society then, more importantly, read by women immigrants as *the* exemplar to imitate.

More pertinent still, Salma here wants to be white - "dark black iris" Salma gets contrasted with "white" Sally (4). It's a wish made even less realistic because Salma associates whiteness with her past's deletion. Salma imagines waking up "one morning a nippleless blond bombshell" and "puff, [her] *sinful past would disappear*, a surgeon would slice away part of [her] mind and [her] ugly nipples" (90, emphasis mine).[8] Once again, Salma connects her looks with her happiness. She links her dark, damaged body with her inability to assimilate in British society, assuming that lightening her skin and slicing off her nipples would let her "turn white just like Tracy, who worked and talked non-stop" (90). Faqir critiques racial gatekeeping, but also calls attention to British beauty standards' schizophrenia. When Salma goes to see a plastic surgeon for "nipple reduction," begging for them to be "reduced, cut out, doctor, please" - "eyes brimming with tears" - the doctor coldly commands the nurse to refer Salma "immediately for treatment" (134). The curators of British beauty - plastic surgeons - want to institutionalize Salma for having ridiculous standards even while British doctors and society continue to circulate them.

Faqir also turns to the Muslim half of the cultural clash, where she pulls Salma into Islam's contradictions. Much like though less completely than Sammar in *The Translator*, Islam controls Salma's behaviour. By extension, Islam structures much of *The Cry*. When Salma goes to a bar, for example, she chooses "a stool at the far side of the bar to avoid unwanted

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[8] This moment happens earlier in *The Cry* too, when Salma imagines marrying "a sensitive, generous, rich white Englishman" (41). She fantasizes rubbing her "olive skin against him:" "- puff - like magic, I would turn *white*... Just like that I would disappear" (41, emphasis mine). Salma might be imagining here not only her self-annihilation (she disappears), but also the annihilation of her past. This also occurs midway through the novel, when Salma decides to stop "locating myself" (161). She becomes "neither Salma, nor Sal or Sally, neither Arab nor English;" instead, "puff - like magic [she] would turn into a *white* cloud" (161, emphasis mine). The recurring association between whiteness and erasure (of the self, of memory) reinforces the mistaken ideas that Salma lifts from British culture.

attention" (53). The bartender asks Salma what she wants, and she asks for apple juice because "the colour of apple juice looked like beer" (53). Whoever speaks to her will think she's open-minded enough to drink rather than "an inflexible Muslim immigrant" (53). Salma appears to blend in while refusing to drink, asserting her Muslim morality even in spaces (bars) where it seems impossible.

Salma makes more tiny interventions that maintain her Muslim identity throughout the rest of the novel. Salma's Islam - much like Sammar's in the Christmastime fasting scene - functions as an ethics of denial in the West. It stops her from doing the drinking, the Christian praying, and the undressing that British society believes are signs of participation. When Salma's boss Max brags about getting drunk at weddings, she secretly thinks to herself that "what he [Max] did not know was that alcohol had never passed my lips ever" because Salma's "a god-damn Muslim" (219-220). She prays to Allah in an English cathedral (148) - to passerby she'd seem a devout Christian - and quietly feels "as dirty as a whore… a sinner who would never see paradise" when she pulls off her veil for the first time in Britain (108). Salma's Muslim morals trap her into a half-hearted participation with British culture. She wants to be British, but only permits herself the appearance of assimilation. Much like *The Translator*, Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* tells a story of maintained Muslim faith, but it's Salma's half-hearted involvement in Britain and inability to rid herself of Muslim guilt that grinds on her sanity.

The contradictions between what constitutes a good British woman and a good Muslim create cognitive dissonance in Salma. That cognitive dissonance manifests as interruptions in *The Cry*'s narrative flow. Salma begins to mix up the real and imagined, the past and the present - evidenced by the imagined appearance of her brother and atemporal non-sequiturs. When Salma

returns to work from her lunch break, she hears her former lover Hamdan breathing on her, then thinks she sees "the lone assassin" (her violent brother Mahmoud) following her back to work with "his rifle slung on his right shoulder" (120).[9] Mahmoud haunts the text when he's not there - an aspatial punishment that stalks Salma for her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. The pressure that Mahmoud's spectre exerts on Salma keeps her from embracing British culture - he is a psychological manifestation of her Muslim guilt. He polices her behaviour with reminders of honour, Islam, and the old world.

Short memories of her past also disturb Salma, which not only serve to reveal more about her character, but also undo any of the progress toward agency she makes in *The Cry*. When, for instance, Salma's other boss Allan asks if she'd "like to have dinner… next Wednesday," Salma hesitates (248). The power differential here is huge because Allan hired Salma under the table and pays her in "cash, three pounds an hour" (137). Allan keeps her out of the record books and has no contractual obligation to keep her as an employee should she refuse the date. Moreover, Salma is desperate for the extra cash her bar work provides. Yet, in what seems like a victory for both immigrants and feminists, Salma "swallow[s] hard" and refuses his invitation, claiming that Allan is "like a *brother*" to her (204, emphasis mine). Salma asserts her will in an unprecedented way. When Salma leaves the bar (job and integrity intact), however, the story switches to an

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[9] There are many other moments when Salma feels Mahmoud's presence, even if she's safe in Britain. When her best friend Parvin interrogates Salma, asking if she's "seen men with rifles lately," Salma lies with a firm "No!" (151). Moreover, John, an academic at the Open University where Salma studies, offers to marry her and gives her "sweet things from the Middle East: a packet of dates, baklava with pistachio nuts, halva and Turkish delight" (247). She tells Parvin that, recalling a temporally and spatially distant memory, "My brother brought me a bag full of biscuits and Turkish delight" (248). Is she sharing a story here of the time when Mahmoud watched her "eat the biscuits with a mixture of love and disgust" (205)? Or is Salma confounding John with her brother, allowing herself to "cross the sea" (139) as she calls it to connect temporally distant people?

Finally, in a scene near *The Cry*'s end, Salma looks of the window of her son's bedroom and sees Mahmoud "dagger tied to his side... his feet covered with desert dust" (272). Salma imagines him killing her lost daughter Layla right outside her window in Britain, and begs Mahmoud to "kill [her] instead" (272). As I argue, all these moments exert pressure on the novel that steers it away from happy resolution/assimilation in Britain and back to Hima.

anecdote about her brother Mahmoud (a different presence than his spectre). Presumably related to her excuse for refusing Allan (he's like her brother), she remembers how her real brother Mahmoud "would look at [her]… then curse," how he would "wave his cudgel in the air threateningly whenever [Salma] moved" (205). Shahla, a woman from her village Hima, warns Salma to "watch [her] step" around her irascible brother (205). The threat of Mahmoud's violence reinstalls the novel's atmosphere of fear. Salma's anecdote - because it reminds us that violent men still threaten her life - stops us from celebrating any change in Salma and immediately quashes the power in her refusal. The text's cultural clash (Islam against British liberalism) links Salma's past with present to show just how much Salma is "damaged goods… a wounded animal" (248). With old world anecdotes intervening in then imposing themselves on the text, Salma stands little chance of making 'progress' in the new world. But, just because Faqir interrupts the movement of the cultural clash doesn't mean that her novel isn't entangled in its confines.

Boelhower speaks of 'three major moments' in immigrant novels. *The Cry* keeps its story telling firmly rooted in "EXPECTATION (project, dream, possible world), CONTACT (experience, trials, contrasts), and RESOLUTION (assimilation, hyphenation, alienation)" (Boelhower 5). Boelhower's structure for the immigrant narrative is, admittedly, general: it can apply to many stories. But his template does let me argue that Faqir doesn't stray as far from the immigrant narrative as her story might lead Faqir and her readers to believe. Each vignette about Salma's past allows Faqir to extend the immigrant narrative's 'contact' phase. They put Britain in relief with Salma's old world life, deferring the ending *past* her marriage to John, the white man she dreamed of marrying. John, a white academic, gives Salma everything she spends the novel fantasizing about: she goes on an "aeroplane carrying [her] to Greece" for a honeymoon (251),

gets promoted at work (257), and finally has a house and son of her own. John even converts to Islam after Salma warns him that "Muslim is difficult," on the condition that his faith "will be 'nominal'" only (247). A normal novel would end with this marriage - a fulfillment of the heroine's fantasies. But Faqir tries to be unexpected.

In what was likely a conscious move by Faqir to avoid turning *The Cry of the Dove* into a story where the Arab women gets saved by the liberal West, Salma shuts down the possibility of British liberalism winning the cultural clash. She abandons both John and her infant son Imran - though not without tearful regret as she asks Sadiq to tell John and Imran that she "love[s] them so much" (275) - to find her lost daughter Layla. Layla is the consequence of Salma's premarital pregnancy and the reason for Salma's flight from the Middle East. Salma sets high emotional stakes for finding her daughter: "I had to find her… I had to go find me" (275). So, Faqir defers the ending to adjust our expectations, using the memory of Salma's daughter to undo the progress she's made. Then Salma runs straight into the barrel of her brother's gun.

The novel ends with Salma's death at her brother Mahmoud's hands. Salma feels "a cold pain pierce through [her] forehead" and then "like blood in water it spread out" (279). One might think that Faqir has managed to infinitely defer answering the cultural clash with Salma's death - that she chooses ambiguity over *The Translator*'s simple flip of Islam and British liberalism's positions. But, Faqir can only do just that: *defer*, not prevent, transcend, or avert the cultural clash. She only stretches the text past its natural ending (the wedding, the birth of Salma's son Imran), allowing Salma to discover that her daughter Layla was pushed down a well two months before her trip (277). Faqir also has Salma die in the name of "dishonour" (278). There's resolution, then, but one that Faqir leaves to the men of Salma's tribe. The reader discovers what hap-

pens to Salma's daughter Layla while the tribe's men get their 'honour killing' (as Susan Avery calls it in the "Reading Guide" in *The Cry of the Dove*). The narrative suggests that Salma's death was an inevitability, which ends up less a powerful critique of Islamic misogyny and more convincing support of Western cliches about Islam (honour killing). Britain doesn't win the cultural clash, either, but Salma's cliched death distracts - drawing attention away from Faqir's careful feminist critique of British beauty to focus on Islam and Bedouins' 'savagery.'

The Cry's ending also interacts with the novel's most interesting paratext: Susan Avery's "A Black Cat Reading Guide" with 'Questions for Discussion,' which the publishers insert after the ending, and likely without Fadia Faqir's consent. Avery's reading guide shows us how Faqir's anglophone audience might read *The Cry*. Most questions instruct readers to contrast cultures, think about Salma's relationship with her "tribal family" (Avery's words) or subtly admonish Salma for leaving her new half-Arab son Imran behind to find her Arab daughter. Those questions enhance the contrast between Bedouins and British by asking readers to spot more differences. Avery's paratext can prime *The Cry*'s audience to read Faqir's text as a typical immigrant narrative and miss the real complexity that Faqir builds into her novel. The guide also shows us how publishers position *The Cry* - it is yet another post-9/11 manual for understanding Muslims. In 'Suggestions for Further Reading,' Avery recommends that readers look at Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* among others. The only real similarity *Brick Lane* and *The Kite Runner* share with Faqir's text might be their intersections with Islam and immigration, so Avery categorizes Faqir as an immigrant writer. But, Avery's paratext only amplifies the binaries that Faqir herself invites with *The Cry*'s simple cultural clash.

I also ask the paratext a question that I introduced with Fadia Faqir's short article "Cultural illiteracy" (see footnote four): is Faqir only an Arab woman writer abused by her publishers, or can we also read Avery's "Questions for Discussion" as a symptom of Faqir's shallow cultural project? Discussion questions ten, eleven, and twelve help me decide. Question ten asks readers, after reminding them that Salma gave up her new husband and baby, to "explain how she *could* have made these choices" differently (emphasis mine). Question eleven asks readers if they felt "the ending was inevitable." Both questions imply that Salma's death was needless. Avery asks readers not so much to sympathize with Salma for returning to the Middle East, but to condemn her choice because she gives up "the beginning of better prospects." As Hron in *Translating Pain* argues, "the fiction of immigrant success is closely linked to the capitalist 'myth of success'" (19), so Avery reminds readers of the nuclear family and middle-class existence (signs of capitalist success) that Salma gives up to go home. We might read Avery and readers' confusion about Salma's choices as a sign that *The Cry* breaks down the connection between the rags-to-riches and immigrant stories - that Faqir shows that immigrant suffering doesn't end with money or arrival among the middle-class.

But we might also read Avery's surprise as a sign that Faqir's critique wasn't deep enough to be effective - or at least had an ending predicated on stereotype. Question twelve asks readers to name "other cultures [that] condone 'honour' killings." Pay special attention to Avery's scare quotes. She doesn't question the entire enterprise of 'honour killings,' or honour killings' connection to Islam. She takes that for granted. Avery only questions the validity of its justification - 'honour.' And so it seems, does Faqir. Salma's 'honour' killing is an essential device in *The Cry* because it lets the novel end. Honour killing doesn't get questioned so much as considered a

fact of Arab culture - a Western cliche made manifest as one of the primary pillars of Faqir's critique of Islam. Faqir's text, then, generates the initial cliché, which Avery's paratext picks up then amplifies. Faqir isn't only a victim of marketers and publishers - she participates. She uncritically feeds her audience cliched honour killings and examples of male Arab misogyny in *The Cry*, which anglophone audiences take as proof of Arab-Muslims' backwards, unapologetic religiosity. Though Faqir in the ending doesn't completely undo the subtleties she introduces in her reading of both sides of the cultural clash, juxtaposing Britain and the Middle East's treatment of women along a binary fortifies stereotypes.

I use Hanan al-Shaykh's 1986 Arabic novel *The Story of Zahra* to insist that *The Cry*'s shallow ending, among other moments in Faqir's novel that dramatize Islam and British liberalism's clash, invites Avery's "Questions for Discussion." It isn't a paratext only imposed on *The Cry* because of Faqir's status as an Arab woman writer. Though originally released for Arab audiences in 1980, al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra* tells a strikingly similar tale to Faqir's *The Cry*, especially as it approaches its end. The out-of-wedlock protagonist Zahra - after enduring years of her father's physical abuse and her uncle's sexual advances - begins sleeping with a man while civil war wrecks Beirut. Her lover might be a sniper and after Zahra gets pregnant, he promises to meet her family and marry Zahra. However, after leaving their hideout, Zahra's killed by one "stray bullet" (213) after another.

As she closes her "eyes that perhaps were never truly opened" (215), the novel suggests that Zahra's lover killed her to cover her pregnancy's disgrace. Like Salma in *The Cry*, Arab-Shia Muslim Zahra dies to save a man's reputation, which isn't the only example of feminist commentary in *The Story*. The men in Zahra's life misinterpret her desperation for sexual consent - "it

was my letters asking him [Zahra's incestuous Uncle] to invite me to Africa that had prompted him to behave as he did" (25) - and ignore her degrading mental health with "passing references to death and despair" (68), even after Zahra's Uncle Hashem writes to her brother stressing that she "needed to be cared for" (68). The degradation of Zahra's mental health, a clandestine pregnancy, death at the hands of gun violence - al-Shaykh uses all those devices like Faqir to expose misogyny in Arab-Muslim culture.

Though *The Story* has a similar narrative structure, an Arab woman author in al-Shaykh, and an anglophone audience like Faqir's *The Cry* after its translation by Peter Ford, *The Story*'s anglophone publishers still create the book's paratext with more respect than Faqir's. There's no veiled woman or mosque gracing *The Story*'s cover, no discussion questions, and even the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s quote on the cover of the First Anchor Books Edition isn't as simple as it seems. The *Chronicle* claims that *The Story* can "change any simple preconceptions about the Muslim women of today." Though the quote positions al-Shaykh's writing as the type that explains Arab-Muslim women to white people, it also hedges its language - the *Chronicle* claims that *The Story* cuts through preconceptions rather than reaffirming them. The more respectful paratext reflects *The Story of Zahra*'s more complex ending and aversion to getting regulated as a tell-all narrative about Arab culture. Rather than suggesting that Zahra died for honour - al-Shaykh doesn't cite "dishonour" in her ending as readily as Faqir does (Faqir 279) - Zahra weighs all reasons for her murder as she dies: "Does he kill me because I'm pregnant… Or is it because I asked him whether he was a sniper" (214)? *The Story of Zahra*, then, complicates Arab identity in a way that *The Translator* but especially *The Cry of the Dove* can't. I might attribute *The Story of Zahra*'s complexity to al-Shaykh's more firm location in Arab culture - the cultural

clash doesn't corrupt her feminist message because al-Shaykh doesn't need to write in the cliches about cultural difference that trying to explain Arab experience in the West might demand. That, ironically, gives *The Story of Zahra* the power to surprise anglophone readers into questioning tired stories about Arabs. Arabic novel *The Story of Zahra* is a model text for Arab-anglophone novels - critiquing the chauvinism of an Arab-Muslim culture without leaning on stereotype.

We might, then, think about the damaging consequences that *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*'s ends may have on templates for storytelling about Arab-anglophones. I turn to the empirical concept of 'decentering' to learn what educative power these novels might give up in staying conventional stories of immigrant hardship. David Miall in his book *Literary Reading: Empirical & Theoretical Studies* defines 'decentering,' which is "a shift in feelings and concepts" in reading stories, that Miall argues "can be evoked by the encounter with defamiliarizing devices in literary language [style], by the shift in understanding that characterizes an episode [structure], or by the self-modifying effects of empathy with a character [narration and emotion]" (144). Literary fiction, whether on a stylistic, structural, or emotional level, modifies readers' assumptions.

Referring to his 1994 study with Don Kuiken "Foregrounding, defamiliarization, and affect: Response to literary stories," Miall finds that "readers who experience such moments of defamiliarization [decentering] tend to experience a subsequent shift in understanding; this appears to involve a search for meaning guided by the feeling that foregrounding [unusual stylistics] has evoked" (Miall 145). Unusual narratives, then, are capable of making readers' deep-seeded assumptions available for alteration. Making the corrective power of decentering clearer yet, David Miall and Don Kuiken in their 2002 study "A feeling for fiction: becoming what we behold" re-

mark that when unusual style evokes existing emotions and memories, readers "implicitly blend… the fictional world with what readers [already] know, believe, or feel about their own lives" (238). If what Miall and Kuiken argue is true, if reading can prime "the reader [in]to [modifying] other 'texts' (e.g., personal memories, *world knowledge*)" (395, emphasis mine), what *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* give up in being conventional, then, is the chance to decenter their audience's ideas about and templates for telling stories about Arabs. At least on a structural level (I make no argument about the effects of their style) Aboulela and Faqir wield limited power to create new storytelling models out of what readers assume about Arabs-anglophones - though, as I've shown, it is not for lack of *trying* to be subversive.[10]

Moreover, in reinforcing classic immigrant narratives, Aboulela and Faqir also risk banalizing real-life immigrant pain - lowering the chance for praxis to fix Arab-anglophone's second-class status in Britain and the anglophone world. As Madelaine Hron argues in *Translating Pain*, "because of its generic structure, the immigrant narrative risks being conflated with other prototypical narratives of suffering, whether it be the classic American 'rags-to-riches' story or the Christian narrative of redemption" (17). Classic immigrant narratives match the narrative flows of Western society's most central stories, which have puritan lessons about suffering to prosper that get extended to explaining away Arab-anglophone pain. Hron goes on to argue that "the

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[10] Though it might seem like I'm taking too extreme of a logical leap by using the decentering power of literary *stylistics* to talk about the overall narrative structure of *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*, Miall's *Literary Reading* helps me make this connection. In chapter eight of *Literary Reading*, "Episode Structures in Literary Narratives," Miall talks about short story structure and takes a "mid-level focus" on what he calls an "episode"--a chunk of text half a page to a page long (120). Though Miall focuses on a more specific narrative device than I do (episodes are much smaller than the overall stories of *The Translator* and *The Cry*), Miall notes that "the most signal feature of the episode... is that it offers a thematically distinctive topic requiring a shift in the reader's understanding" (120). Episodes thus rely on decentering much like stylistics, since a typical episode begins by "establishing a certain setting or concern, then offering a special twist, or insight in the final sentence or two," motivating readers to continue to the next (120). Miall, in short, affirms that literary structure can decenter readers' beliefs. It isn't a stretch then to apply this idea to structures larger than episodes, and to argue that unusual structure might surprise readers into imagining new templates for talking about Arabs.

hardships, difficulties, and sufferings of immigration," rather than being brought into awareness by the immigrant narrative, "risk being essentialized, banalized, or relativized" (17) - as well as internalized by immigrants as truths about themselves (18). As a result, in Aboulela's case, real life immigrant suffering begins to be read as a "necessary series of trials" (Hron 17) before an inevitable happy ending caused by no one in particular. Or, in Faqir's case, integrating Arabs seems like an impossibility because of their backwards relationship to Islam - why try to effect change when we can attribute Arabs' hardships to a fixed "cultural difference… rather than... problems caused by external [and *changeable*] socioeconomic or political conditions" (Hron 17)?

I argued that both *The Cry of the Dove* and *The Translator* reinforce the cliched ways that we tell stories about Arabs. Both novels - despite good intentions - reinforce the ready-made templates for explaining Arabs that policymakers and media circulate in anglophone societies (like Canada, the United States, or Britain). Normally, Arab-anglophone literature can counter ideologues. As Hassan argues, "this new kind of [anglophone] literature explains to non-Muslims aspects of Muslim [or non-Muslim Arab] lives… while at the same time exposing prejudice, racism, and Islamophobia" (317). Readers rely on Arab-anglophone literature to humanize Arabs and Islam, to overwrite the misinformation circulated by foreign policymakers and the media. Aboulela and Faqir's writing does react to ideologues who tout an inevitable 'cultural clash' between the Arab-Muslim and secular anglophone worlds. But, Aboulela and Faqir fail to, unlike what Toossi argues about *The Translator*, craft "a language to talk about a different culture and religion" (87). They couch their writing in the language of anglophone formulas about Arabs' relationship to Islam, and thus do little to humanize the Arab-anglophone woman in a way that acknowledges both her Muslim faith and her agency.

Moreover, both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* exploit the typical immigrant narrative's structure. Neither novel, then, can truly surprise its readers - they invert but don't disrupt the logic of the cultural clash. And, as I argued with the help of David Miall and Don Kuiken's studies on the transformative power of literature, surprise is a powerful tool that Arab-anglophone authors can't afford to relinquish. Surprise in literature can overturn the templates that Canadians, Americans, and the British use to tell stories about Arab-anglophones, stories which otherwise limit real world Arabs to second-class citizenship in the West. Surprise remains one of literature's best tools for effecting real-world change. Both *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* strain to critique the cultural clash on terms that their anglophone audience understands. But in using Arab-anglophone novels to critique the cultural clash, in attuning the movement of their novels' plots to the cultural clash, Aboulela and Faqir fortify the already circulating, simplistic templates anglophone societies use to talk about Arabs.

I still need to ask: how can an acknowledgement of the way that Arab-anglophone novels impact storytelling affect who we hold accountable for stories like *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*? Do we hold publishers, writers or their readers responsible for novels with limited power to challenge audiences? As Layla Al Maleh argues in the "Preface" to her book *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*, "anglophone Arab literature has recently captured the attention of readers world wide as a medium through which they can gain a better knowledge of the intellectual and spiritual make-up of Arabs" (x). This is especially true not only in light of the misinformation circulating about Arabs after 9/11, but also the rekindled hunger by Western readers to know Arabs after constant strife in Palestine and the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Readers turn to literature because it offers "plausible interpretation

and humanization of Arabs *much better than journalism, historical reports or political memoirs*" (Al Maleh x, emphasis mine). Al Maleh further argues that "anglophone Arab writers have the capacity to play a crucial role in disseminating through the wider world their images of hyphenated Arabs and of the Arab people as a whole, thereby fostering acceptance through understanding" (x). This is problematic, of course, because it can lead to what Shakir Mustafa in his article "Defending the Faith: Islam in Post 9/11 Anglophone Fiction" calls the stressing of "the positive aspects of the Muslim [or Arab] communities they present," or the conscious production of counter-narratives without concern about their truth (283).

Readers might demand more stories that help them interpret the Arab-Muslim perspective in cultural clash. That demand puts pressure on Arab writers to be cultural ambassadors, to guide readers through their differences or invent differences when they can't find any. That process might produce typical immigrant stories like *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*, since anglophone audiences who buy Aboulela and Faqir's books might expect Arab writers' books to give them exotic perspective. But even if Arab-anglophones write fully aware that readers think of their texts as informants, Arab writers and publishers can make books salable by creating then marketing surprising, corrective, or remedial texts. Like the Arabic novel *The Story of Zahra*, Arab-anglophone novels can combine text and paratext to create complex images of Arabs. Arab-anglophone (especially female) writers aren't unaffected by reader expectations or publishers, but neither are they slaves to their texts' reception and production, or their gendered lack of privilege.

My answer is, then, complicated. I don't want to decide here, once and for all, the extent to which writers and audience expectations interact to produce Arab-anglophone literature -

that's a question I return to in later chapters. But by taking the right people to task for these stories in exploring answers to this question, we can recognize the processes and the people that allow cliched templates about Arabs to circulate. We can also, if my idealism can be tolerated, distinguish the structural properties of literature that promotes Arabs' social and economic well-being in the West from literature that doesn't - then explain *why* those properties change how we regard real-world Arab immigrants. We can, in short, see how something as seemingly innocent as reading *The Translator* or *The Cry of the Dove* shapes how we comprehend a culture, its clash with another culture, and the hyphenated Arab-anglophones caught in that crossfire.

Chapter Two: "Being Not Quite Right and Out of Place:" Edward Said's *Out of Place,* the Immigrant Narrative, and the Privilege of Intellectual Exile

Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place* models an alternative to Arab-anglophone texts. Said doesn't let any cultural clash, cliche, or audience expectation shape his story. Instead, Said partially defines his childhood by his ever-evolving struggles with Arabic, English and French. Which one was his native language: stigmatized but welcoming Arabic, or the colonizers' English? Even considering his European resemblance as a Christian Arab, could Said own French the way the French do? Said's identity, then, slowly mutates in *Out of Place* as he comes to new realizations about his relation to languages, and especially to anglophone societies. Yet, as Yasir Suleiman argues in *Arabic, Self, and Identity: A Study in Conflict and Displacement*, people who link their selfhood with language are never "fluid in a way that denies it [their identity] any core or stability," even while "the Self is never fixed" (233). Said's struggles with language and anglophones doesn't shut down the possibility of finding home, but neither does it allow Said to see his hybridity as his final state. Instead, Said profits from his tenuousness to escape the conventions of Arab-anglophone writing.

But scholars like Madelaine Hron in *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* don't agree with the kind of reading I try to make here. Hron criticizes Said for making "exile… represent an elevated position associated with intellectual value, which often replaces the figure of the immigrant," especially in his book *Reflections on Exile* (12). Hron argues that "in doing so [being a social critic], 'non-native academics [like Said] - be they 'diasporic exiles,' 'post-colonial exiles,' or exiles from former communist countries - [unjustly] hold greater authority in academic scholarship, by virtue of their experience of exile" (187-188).

Hron believes that Said forgets about the immigrant who moves out of her own volition, often for economic reasons.

Yet Hron isn't entirely correct. In his essay "Reflections on Exile" Said, who was writing of refugees from places like Palestine rather than overwriting the experiences of regular immigrants, says that "so many other exile poets and writers lend dignity to a condition [exile] legislated to deny dignity… to deny an identity to people" (175). Writers and exiled intellectuals' pain doesn't take precedence over regular refugees or immigrants. Instead, they play a special role in shaping how others think of immigrants' identities; they give refugees and immigrants their identities back. Writers and intellectuals produce new stories about exile that replace the usual structures for thinking about identity - rigid, one-size-fits-all stories like nationalism. Exiled writers like Edward Said don't flatten the identities of immigrants that aren't privileged enough to speak in writing, then - they give society the words to talk about them. As Edward Said argues in *Culture and Imperialism*, we might "regard the intellectual as first distilling then articulating the predicaments that disfigure modernity - mass deportation, imprisonment, population transfer, collective dispossession, and forced immigration" (332-333).

Hron and Said both do, however, touch on the importance of the intellectual's privilege, which is the crux of *Out of Place*.[11] As I will argue, Said lived a privileged life and especially

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[11] When I say intellectual's privilege, I'm referring to two things. First, to be an intellectual is to be privileged - privy to texts, knowledge, and perspectives inaccessible to laymen. Intellectuals (especially literary critics) can put ideas in writing clearer than most, and have both wider conventional and disciplinary vocabularies with which to express their ideas. That makes intellectuals more articulate and convincing.

Second, intellectual usually means part of at least the middle-class, with matching economic and social privilege. But Said is a unique case. Said's family fortune, elite education, and eventual professorship in an Ivy League university (Columbia in New York) steeps him in a more intense privilege than most intellectuals. Though Said thinks of his experience as 'exile' - from Palestine and Egypt - it's really an exile to America's Ivy League brought on by his father's fortune.

So, though being an intellectual comes with its own privilege, I can't ignore the effect of Said's larger than normal social and economic capital which, initially, had nothing to do with his status as an intellectual. Rather, his economic and social privilege led him towards his exiled intellectual privilege, and sustained Said's towering intellectual presence later in his life.

childhood. But instead of asking how Said's privileged life limits what he can say - as intellectuals like Hron might do - I ask: what kind of story does Said's privilege let him tell, and how does he tell it? Like all privilege, Said's affords him opportunity. Said uses the structure of his privileged life to defy the cultural clash - moving the clash to different spaces in his memoir in order to show that it's neither a necessary nor inevitable part of Arab-anglophone stories. Which matters, of course, because by defying the cultural clash's explanatory power in literature, Said defies the "commonplace understanding of Arab American culture" (Aboul-Ela 18).

I outline two caveats before making my main argument. First, I compare a memoir's narrative structure and thematic concerns (*Out of Place*) to novels' (like Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*, Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*, and Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*). I admit that comparing memoir to novels can be tricky, since memoirs fit to the contours of a real, messy life. However, memoirs are also narratives. They demand nearly as much artifice as novels, since lives need deft editorial touches (reordering events, inventing details where memory fails) to make real people interesting. So, I evaluate these narratives on similar grounds. And, as I'll demonstrate, it might even be a boon to talk about Arabs through memoir. Covering the life of a real Arab shows just how weak the cultural clash and typical immigrant narrative are for explaining Arab-anglophones.

Second, I don't claim that *Out of Place* changes the place of syncretic Arabs in anglophone society all by itself. Madelaine Hron in *Translating Pain* notes that "even when immigrant writers do write within the genre of the 'immigrant narrative,' they are... regulated to this category, whether by the publishing industry or by the receiving readership" (43). Texts like *Out of Place* are probably placed by the average reader on the fringes of the exotic literary scene,

meaning that the memoir has little chance of impacting the average readers' ideas alone. Instead, I argue that whatever impact texts like *Out of Place* have work with a larger literary field that defies packaging as immigrant stories (which includes books like Hisham Matar's). I'll talk about literature's impact on public ideas more in chapter three when I consider Hisham Matar's novels.

So, the most striking aspect of *Out of Place* (and thus our best chance of finding where Said veers away from the typical immigrant narratives I described in chapter one) might be Said's early submersion in privilege, especially as a child in mid-twentieth century Egypt.[12] I can summarize his privilege in one word: familiarity. Said isn't only familiar with English and French (languages of pre- and postcolonial power), he's also a member of an international bourgeoisie with access to the same luxury objects (high-brow literature and music or otherwise) as rich Europeans and Americans, as well as an excellent education. After moving from Palestine to Cairo "in Zamalek, an island in the Nile between the old city in the east and Giza in the West, inhabited by foreigners and wealthy locals" in 1937 when Said is two, Said notes that the tone of his community "was set by Europeans with whom we [him and his family] had little or no contact" (22). Said's family seems "determined to make itself into a mock little European group despite the Egyptian and Arab surroundings" (75). His Christian family imitates and appropriates European privilege from their isolated island.

But rather than granting Said privilege, Said's hybridity as an Arab Christian works strangely in *Out of Place*. Normally, hybridity can displace the dangerous "binary logic through

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[12] I should note that I speak here and in the rest of my analysis of Said the *narrator*, not Said the historical subject. In light of the fact that memoir brims with artifice, I only make claims about the narrator in *Out of Place*. However, my project argues not only about the gendered or economic privilege of the protagonist's perspective, but also that the *author*'s privilege impacts texts' power to change conversations about Arabs. I think it's difficult to completely separate narrator Said and historical Said's privilege. So, though I make no claims about the feelings or privilege of the historical Said, I think it's fair to assume that similar kinds of privilege had by narrator Said also allowed the historical Said to produce *Out of Place*.

which identities of difference are… constructed," where "a cultural hybridity… entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 5). Hybridity, then, could mean that Said might feel comfortable anywhere.

But Hisham Sharabi in *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875-1914* clarifies the position of Arab Christians in the Middle East. Sharabi explains that "for the awakened [Arab Christian intellectual], uprootedness was a natural condition of life" (54), whether from "the villages to the larger cities… and later to Europe and America" (15). Though Christian intellectuals are "in a deep and real sense… *outsiders* in Muslim society" like Cairo (14, emphasis mine), Said and other Christians aren't cut-off from Cairo's poor Muslim Arabs, nor estranged from their own Arabness. Arab Christians feel sufficiently Arab to feel uprooted in America and Europe, too. Hybridity in *Out of Place* can't hide the transience in Said's identity. Instead, it sensitizes child Said to the strangeness in *everything*, Arab or European. Ironically, though, Said's "fantastically isolated and almost experimental childhood" (38) in an Arab Christian family - filled with anglophone literature and education - will arm him against reacting to America as a wide-eyed immigrant.

Said's surprising access to European culture in Cairo, his *familiarity* with operas, recordings of symphonies like Beethoven's Ninth (101), American magazines like *National Geographic* (224), and literary texts like *Hamlet* (51) or others by Dostoyevsky and Balzac (165), expose Said to European storytelling. In fact, by turning to what Said uses Dostoyevsky, Balzac, and other authors to do, Said reinforces my thesis: that books can change the way we read culture around us. Said talks about "two main sources of stories whose boundaries [he] could expand: books and films" (33). And Said recalls that Dostoyevsky and Balzac made him

think about "the role of the great city… drawing analogies between various characters (money lenders, criminals, students) that [Said] encountered in books that [he] liked and comparing them with individuals [he] had met or known about in Dhour or Cairo" (165). Said gives the characters and narratives "an imaginary life beyond the pages of the book" (165) - extending their meanings to explain other people and places. Because Said reads European literature, he imagines for instance that "a couple standing on a balcony overhead spoke French and had just had a leisurely breakfast with champagne," and that a "red-headed woman" was both "a poisoner and… a divorcee" (37). Said, in short, models the kind of reader that I assume read Arab-anglophone texts - one who uses narratives or character types to understand real men and women.

Stories, in short, envelop Said. Yet, Said's European immersion breaks with his Arab surroundings and identity - his European stories can't explain all of Cairo's cultural surpluses, absences, and discontinuities. A decentering of Said's thinking while he's young, in Cairo, and early in his memoir marks his time at Gezira Preparatory School (a British-controlled elementary school and relic of British colonialism). As I argue in chapter one, typical immigrant novels usually revolve around the cultural clash - where decentering replaces an immigrant's old world with new world views. Said gets over that early. While at Gezira Prep, he notices he "had no Egyptian teachers at all, nor was [he] conscious of any Arab Muslim presence in the school: the students were Armenians, Greeks, Egyptian Jews, and Copts, as well as a substantial number of English children" (36). Said's also removed from Cairo's Muslim-Arab quotidian. The moment where Said imagines "a couple standing on a balcony overhead [speaking] French" (37) not only confirms Said's literary imagination, but also his real reference point. Said projects cosmopolitan European lives onto other Egyptians.

So while Said puts European stories to work explaining Cairo, he notices inconsistencies. Said's education doesn't fit with his Egyptian backdrop and Arab roots. At Gezira Preparatory Said's teachers spend "a disproportionate amount of time… on the Battle of Hastings, along with lengthy explanations of Angles, Saxons, and Normans," one among many history lessons Said finds "mystifyingly English" (39). Said reads "about meadows, castles, and Kings John, Alfred, and Canute with the reverence that our teachers kept reminding us they deserved, a world that made "made little sense" to Said as a "little Arab boy" (39). Gezira Prep's alienating curriculum bores and reminds Said that, despite his European privilege, he's an Arabic speaker with an Arab last name. Even when history turns to Edward the Confessor - who shares Said's first name - Said pictures him "as an elderly bearded gentleman in a white gown lying flat on his back… [and] there was never to be any perceived connection between him" and Said (39). Said can't own European history like he owns European literature.

And neither can Said learn the "privileged remoteness and *hauteur*" (39) of authentically English children. All around him "were Greenvilles, and Coopers, and Pilleys: starchy little English boys and girls with enviably authentic names, blue eyes, and bright, definitive accents" (39, emphasis mine). When I turn to Said's high school education in America (at Mount Hermon School), I show that this early decentering by English names, eyes, and accents makes Said aware that he "was not English," though Gezira Prep treats its children as if they "should (or *really* wanted to) be English" (39). Said recognizes his difference, reinforced by a moment later in the same chapter where Said "directly grasp[s] the significance of the designation [Arab] as truly disabling" (44). Said's position as a Christian Arab lets him interact with European culture with some belonging and ownership (at least in experiencing its stories), but he also can't deny

his growing awareness of being Arab. At this point in *Out of Place,* it seems like child Said only wins unhappiness from his double consciousness. But Said's double consciousness reveals itself as an 'epistemological privilege' - a knowledge of two cultures that will pay dividends later in the text.

I borrow the term ‘epistemological privilege’ from Enzo Traverso’s article "To Brush Against the Grain: The Holocaust and German-Jewish culture in Exile." "To Brush Against the Grain" deals with a subject far from my own: Traverso asks why refugee intellectuals in exile were able to react to and theorize the Holocaust much quicker than other ‘blind’ intellectuals. "All the critical spirits that were able to see Auschwitz in the midst of a blind world shared a common feature: they were exiles, marginal people and outsiders" (254). In other words, exile gives intellectuals privileged distance from sensitive subjects, allowing them to theorize what would otherwise go ignored. These intellectuals, then, "illustrated the *epistemological privilege* of exile" (255). But "it was not a normative privilege, because the majority of exiles did not write about Auschwitz; it was rather a possibility and a chance that could be grasped" (255). My point in borrowing the idea of ‘epistemological privilege’ isn’t to veer into Holocaust studies, but rather to assert that Said’s granted the same freedom from the "constraints of national contexts" (abstract, Traverso 243). His in-betweenness - a familiarity with European culture but an identification with Arabness - gives Said the critical acumen to respond to and move outside discourse boundaries. He has the toolset to deconstruct the immigrant narrative and take both the tempos and thematic concerns of *Out Of Place* in unexpected directions.

And, Said’s *Out of Place* does defy readers’ expectations for his stay in America. Mount Hermon (a high school in Connecticut where Said studies) marks the start of Said’s time in

America, which extends past "high school then undergraduate and graduate degrees, a total of 11 years, after which [he] remained" (218). Said's first taste of America resembles a typical immigrant's - his position in America seems uncertain. Said claims that he begins "again in the United States, unlearning to some extent what [he] had learned before, relearning things from scratch, improvising… and restarting in surprising and frequently painful ways" (222). But, Said can't avoid his knowledge of the West when his experience in Gezira Prep seeps into the text. As Said gets over his parents' hurried departure from Mount Hermon - which leaves Said "with a lump in [his] throat at the entrance to [the] imposing dormitory building" (225) - Said sees that:

> "A blond and blue-eyed youth of my own age was there to greet me. "Hi, I'm your roommate, Bob Salisbury," he said pleasantly, leaving me no opportunity to recuperate some of my mother's disappearing aura as I realized that I had now definitely arrived" (225).

Immediately after describing his roommate, Said describes Mount Hermon's history with no further focus on Salisbury, even though he represents what made Said uncomfortable as an elementary student at Gezira Prep. Bob Salisbury's authentic American name recalls the "enviably authentic names" of the English boys and girls at Gezira Preparatory (39). Salisbury's blond hair and blue eyes reflect the alienating "blue eyes" and light complexions of English students (39). And teenage Said, who's now habituated to American accents from the Cairo School for American Children, makes no mention of Salisbury's "bright, definitive accent" (39) - only remarking that Salisbury spoke "pleasantly" (225). This scene reproduces the exact circumstances for instilling the jealousy that inauthentically American Said feels as a child, but teenage Said doesn't feel it. Instead, the scene is banal. The angst over his difference doesn't spill

over into his experience of America because Said worked through his decentering in Cairo. America's social landscape feels normal to Said.

I don't claim that Said feels totally right in America. But, he doesn't feel tense because of his Arab background: "it wasn't nostalgia for Cairo that kept me [him] going, since [he] remembered all too acutely the dissonance [he] had always felt there as the non-Arab, the non-American American, the English-speaking and -reading warrior against the English, or the buffeted and cosseted son" (236). Instead Said notes that he "battled [his] way through, trying more and more successfully to hold on to and develop the sensibility that resisted the American leveling and ideological herding that seemed to work so effectively on so many of [Said's] classmates" (236). Said feels an intellectual exile that alienates him as much from his daily American life as it did from his controlling community in Cairo. Said never sounds wholly loyal to his American or Arab half, important because that adds to his ever provisional sense of "being not quite right and out of place" (295).

So while Said's readers might expect an ethnic tale of adjustment, Said effortlessly blends into Mount Hermon's cultural (especially musical) milieus, besides obligatory shock about winter weather (240) and the curtness of Americans' "cut-and-dry, mean-what-you-say exchanges" (228). In fact, after spending his life "in two rich, teeming, historically dense metropolises, Jerusalem and Cairo," Said finds himself so cultured that Connecticut seems "totally bereft of anything except the pristine woods, apple orchards, and the Connecticut River valley and hills *stripped of their history*" - where the closest town represents "the enforced *desolation* of middle America" (235, emphasis mine). Said practices reverse orientalism, stripping Connecticut of its culture and vibrancy, designating America as barren, and bestowing

on the Arab cities a rich, cosmopolitan urbanity. He draws from his Arab cosmopolitan urbanity an archive of European literature and musical talent which he sets to work in Mount Hermon.

Teenage Said reads "some of the many sets of American and literary classics (Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Twain's travels and novels, Hawthorne and Poe stories) with considerable excitement" (232) - new books made accessible by aforementioned literary grounding provided by Shakespeare, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and other European greats. American literature reveals "a complete and *parallel world to the Anglo-Egyptian one* in which [Said] had been immersed in Cairo" (231, emphasis mine). Said contextualizes his reading in American canon by linking it with his Anglo-Egyptian education and reading at home.

Said's surroundings also reawaken his desire to play music, which was sapped from Said by his "wasteful years" at Victoria College - an English school that Said enters when he's nearly fourteen (232). But, "listening to records and L'Hommy's playing [the school's organist] inspired [Said] to begin again" and ask L'Hommy for piano lessons (232). Said's integration in American cultural consumption and production seems nearly effortless. There is, in short, no culture shock in *Out of Place*'s America, nor a discovery of Americanness through people or cultural texts. Because of Said's familiarity with everything that his education in America has to offer, Said's time at Mount Hermon is, if anything, a recollection of Said's cosmopolitan childhood in Cairo.

We can explain these recollections of Said's childhood in America - and name them responsible for *Out of Place*'s unusual narrative rhythm and focuses - by applying Roland Barthes' idea of function and correlate from his essay "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives." Functions are moments that seed actions later in a story. For example, the functional "purchase of a revolver has for correlate the moment when it will be used (and if not used, the

[purchase] is reversed into a sign of indecision, etc.)" (92). Barthes explains that functions decide a story's structure since "a narrative is never made up of anything other than functions" (89) - that is, moments that predict other narrative events. Because functions and correlates can have space between them - the connection between a function and its correlate moment might be "diffuse, delayed" (90) - an author controls a story's rhythm by adjusting the distance between functions and correlates. So, when Said recalls his Cairene childhood in America, he doesn't dwell on America's strangeness. He was already decentered at Gezira Prep. Said need only re-invoke images, music, and literary texts from his childhood (his functional privilege) to omit the wide-eyed descriptions of America typical of immigrant stories when he arrives in Mount Hermon (his privilege's correlate).

We might connect Barthes with David Miall's theory of decentering (which I describe in chapter one) to appreciate how *Out of Place* uses its function-correlate structure. To remind my readers of Miall's key claim, Miall argues in chapter eight of *Literary Reading: Empirical & Theoretical Studies* that story structure can encourage "a shift in the reader's understanding" (120). And as David Miall and Don Kuiken argue in their 1994 study "Foregrounding, defamiliarization, and affect: Response to literary stories" (though here they study the power of rhetoric), each time the reader shifts their understanding, this process primes "the reader [in]to [modifying] other 'texts' (e.g., personal memories, *world knowledge*)" (395, emphasis mine). The reader happens on surprising knowledge in books, changes what they think of the world, then recenters themselves, comfortable with their new knowledge. I combine Barthes and Miall's theories because together they let me articulate how *Out of Place* changes its readers. Decentering himself early in the story (during functional moments) wins Said the ability to

decenter readers later in the text (during correlate moments) because Said's early decentering allows him to act in surprising ways later in *Out of Place*.[13]

Let me give just one example of how Barthes and Miall's perspectives have explanatory power for *Out of Place*, starting with Said's confrontation with Miss Clark. When Said transfers to CSAC (Cairo School for American Children) in 1946, he has to endure "the chilly put-downs and severe scoldings… from Miss Clark" (85), one of Said's nastiest teachers. Miss Clark chastises Said after a field trip to a sugar refinery, a functional moment whose full implications get deferred until Mount Hermon. At CSAC, Miss Clark's speech makes Said imagine his classmates' racism, feeling Arab for the first time among American children. He's "a little Arab boy, and what is he doing in a school for American children" (86), thinks Said. Even Said's mother sees merit in Miss Clark's analysis of Said's flaws: "a more well-sculpted and delivered account of her son's weakness than had ever been given before" (87). Though Said was "supposed to be among [his] own kind at CSAC" - since he's an American citizen - Said found it his "lot to be even more the stranger than [he] had been at GPS" (87).

I link Said's inferiority complex at CSAC in Egypt with his calm acceptance of losing salutatorian/valedictorian honours at Mount Hermon in America. Despite top distinction in swimming and tennis, academics, and practiced piano playing by his graduation, Said seems "incapable of achieving the moral stature… that the school's general approval could bestow on one" - Said lacks a Miss Clark-like "right attitude" (247). When Said finds out that Fred Fisher

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[13] I want to clarify the connection between the function-correlate structure and privilege. Said's privilege allows *Out of Place*'s unique narrative structure to exist, and thus allows *Out of Place* to erode the structures of the cultural clash. Said's privilege as a child seeds the narrative in a functional moment. That functional moment then correlates later in the memoir, where Said's privileged encounters with European cultural objects, money, and elite education translate to even bigger gains as an adolescent or adult. So, Said's privileged decentering in the functional moments of his childhood translates into a surprising story that, in the correlate moment, decenters Said's readers out of beliefs about the turns that Arab narratives should take.

and Ray Byrne win salutatorian and valedictorian, Said spots the prejudice behind the decision. Said had thought himself "to be colorless," but the incident makes Said see himself "as marginal, non-American, alienated, marked" (248). Yet, "in some strange but peculiarly fitting way [he] knew [he] should *not* have been given" salutatorian honours (248); Said believes that he "was not a leader, nor a good citizen, not pious, nor just all-round acceptable" (248). Said's thoughts correlate eerily with Miss Clark's about his moral fibre: by linking his race and perceived moral inferiority, Said recalls Miss Clark's idea that child Said has "nothing… that could possibly redeem" himself (86). And, significantly, Said carries over feeling like an imposter in schools that demand Americanness - first in the Cairo School for *American* children, then at Mount Hermon in *America*.

At the same time, Said uncovers an insidious, subtle racism that still holds Arabs back today. Normally, we could dismiss Mount Hermon's racism as a relic of its period: an unsurprising symptom of living in 1950s, rural, and "primarily white" America (248), especially from the perspective of our era's post-race racism. But instead of the obvious racism that readers recognize, condemn, and separate themselves from, Said uses the function-correlate structure to make this moment more complex. By the time of his graduation from Mount Hermon, Said has spent *Out of Place* internalizing his moral and linguistic inferiority. He's embarrassed "at how lavish and eccentric both his [father's] gift and accompanying words" (grateful gratitude) were to Mount Hermon's administration (249). In light of his father's awkward Arabness, Said considers how especially "unfit [he] must have seemed to Rubendall and his colleagues for the position of either class valedictorian or salutatorian" (249). As Hron claims in *Translating Pain*, "immigrants may internalize the conventional image of the successful immigrant, and so feel compelled to

play down their suffering of immigration" (xiv), or be reluctant to blame prejudice for their problems. So, author Said shows us how anglophone societies keep Arabs and other immigrants from inhabiting positions of power. The internalization of Arab inferiority throughout *Out of Place* - starting with the Cairo School for American Children - tames Said and others' reaction to injustice in its correlate moment. That stories can get internalized then shape our reaction to racism is as worth remembering in today's anglophone society as it was 1950s rural America.

In another example, the function-correlate structure speeds *Out of Place*'s pacing and changes its focus. After graduating from Mount Hermon, Said glosses over his undergraduate and graduate education at Princeton and Harvard in chapter ten. Said says that his "American life was acquiring a more durable, more independent reality, unrelated to Cairo, [his] family, and the familiar old habits and creature comforts" that his old life includes (246), but the chapter doesn't reflect that feeling. Said spends more time in chapter ten describing his summers in Dhour, his first love Eva Emad (250), and the end of his family's days in Dhour, punctuated by his "father's long decline over the last ten years of his life" (262).

Said does use chapter eleven to describe his eleven-year undergrad and grad education. But he gives his American education disproportionately little space in *Out of Place*, especially for an experience that revamps his "Cairo habits - of thought, behavior, speech, and relationships" - and made him "much more independent and resourceful" (273). Most importantly though, Said doesn't sound like an adjusting immigrant, and we might give more credence to what he leaves unsaid, here. Imagine, like Said, that you've already experienced English and American education and go to America. Imagine going to a metropolis like New York, a university like Princeton, or a high school like Mount Hermon in Connecticut, then

imagine again all the opportunities that open to you because you know the language, the social codes, and have the cultural capital to speak with and convince others of your competence. Said's privilege, then, permits him to defy "commonplace understanding of Arab American culture" (Aboul-Ela 18) in his correlate moment in America. He doesn't, besides a quick moment in Mount Hermon where he mentions "practically sanctioned adultery" with girls (235), marvel at American women's freedom to date. Nor does Said get frustrated with anglophone education (he has spent his life immersed in it) or seem unprepared for life in the American city (Said has already lived in cosmopolitan Cairo and Jerusalem). Functional moments ensure that Said has already experienced everything strange about American culture, meaning that correlate moments near the book's end speed up and leave much unsaid. And in speeding through these moments, Said avoids adoption of the "standard models, or popular notions about immigration" - Said can surprise his readers rather than "meet [their] expectations" or think about "the demands of the publishing market" (Hron xiv).

In sum, the reader and protagonist Said get decentered at opposing moments in *Out of Place*. While Said's childhood in Gezira Prep alienates *him* in the functional moment, for example, readers might think it's expected. And while Said habituates to America fast in the correlate, his readers might be surprised by the speed of his assimilation - there's no cultural clash. Given that texts like Aboulela's *The Translator* and Faqir's *Cry of the Dove* train readers to expect drawn-out disputes with the adopted culture that have clear resolutions, Said frustrates his readers' preconceptions and unseats the cultural clash as immigrant literature's central device.

So, *Out of Place* ends arbitrarily, with Said affirming on the last page that he "occasionally experience[s himself] as a cluster of flowing currents" (295). Said prefers that "to

the idea of the solid self" (295) - and to the solid *story*. Said says that the "flowing currents" of his identity are "in the form of all kinds of strange combinations moving about... yet without one central theme" - "many dissonances" inform Said's life (295). And that cognitive dissonance in both America and Cairo displaces *Out of Place*'s "resolution," which, according to William Boelhower's "The Immigrant Novel as Genre" (an essay I discuss in chapter one), can mean "assimilation, hyphenation, [or] alienation" (5). For Said, Cairo takes on "a new uncertainty" with Gamal Abdel Nasser's ascent to power (272). America isn't a stable option for settlement either because Said struggles "with a sense of provisionality despite thirty-seven years of residence here" (222). We can't describe *Out of Place*'s ending with any one of Boelhower's possible immigrant novel resolutions (not even 'hyphenation') since Said experiences all three at once. Because his story is really about "the mental and experiential making of an intellectual, and the foundations necessary to become one" (Confino 187-188), as an intellectual with an elevated, privileged, and rare perspective, Said feels assimilated, hyphenated, and alienated no matter where he is. And his position as an intellectual strains his readers' preconceptions about Arab-anglophones - his intellectual status demands that readers think of Said as an intellectual first and Arab second.

Before I close this chapter, I'd like to ask: how far can stories like *Out of Place* take us in rethinking Arab-anglophone's position in anglophone society? Hron in *Translating Pain* reminds us that "for many immigrants, notions such as 'hybridity,' 'mobility,' and 'difference' are not connotative of any form of redemptive transcendence" because they "often originate from painful events - such as discrimination, interracial conflict, or destitution" (23). Hybridity and difference in themselves, then, shouldn't be the ultimate goal of writers like Said. We also shouldn't think

that writers defer the discovery of a stable 'home' forever, either. Though "'home' can no longer be regarded as a stationary, homogeneous point of view," we can rethink home for Arabs as "a safe and secure living space...the centre of one's social life, a safe and familiar environment that confers order in people's lives and *control over their identities*" (Hron 23, emphasis mine). We can instead argue that Said's hybridity, mobility, and difference are *tools* to break free from the structures that limit Arabs. Arab writers like Said pass those tools to their Arab and non-Arab readers, who can work to create homes and establish safe space for Arabs in Western society. If writers can give readers the tools to break down North American and European limits on where Arabs can establish 'home,' a safe centre from which to build the rest of their identities, then the new narrative structures advanced by Said's *Out of Place* have done useful work. But who, exactly, sets the limits that Arab-anglophone authors push against?

To answer that question, I might return to the debate I introduced in chapter one: who shapes the way that we talk about Arabs - publishers, writers, or readers? It might be none of the above. *Out of Place* regularly revisits Said's feelings of "being not quite right and out of place" (295), and Said continually experiences anglophones' racism. Said points to something bigger as the controller of our conversations about Arabs, which Hosam Aboul-Ela identifies in his article "Edward Said's *Out of Place*: Criticism, Polemic, and Arab-American Identity." If anything brings together Arab Americans "and separates them from the larger communities in which they live, it is a common acute feeling toward *US foreign policy* in the Middle East, an engagement with and an attention toward America's role in the region... not shared by the citizenry as a whole" (21, emphasis mine). Aboul-Ela uses *Out of Place* "as the proving ground for [his] claim that a dissident relationship to United States foreign policy in the Middle East is foundation to

the experience of many Arab-Americans and to a potential sense of Arab-American community" (15).[14] In other words, Said and Aboul-Ela show that literature competes against a media working with government policy, from which comes problematic discourse about Arabs.

I regard foreign policy as *the* competing discourse structure for explaining Arabs because political policy can tell stories about Arabs that set the public's attitude towards them. Even the typical immigrant narratives (*The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove*) that I analyze in chapter one have their origins in the stereotypes peddled by the media. As Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky argue in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, the media turns political policy into digestible stories for the public and mobilizes "support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity" (lxi). That doesn't mean that anglophone government and their media's collaboration is total, as Herman and Chomsky do "not imply that any propaganda emanating from the media is always effective" (xii, emphasis mine). As I contend, literature can be a powerful antidote when read. We might, then, modify my initial question: what combination of interaction between publishers, writers, and readers helps literature resist the complicity of foreign policy and the media in creating stories about Arabs? What story structures (created by writers, influenced by publishers and audience expectations) make anglophone readers question conventional ways for talking about Arabs? In readjusting my questions, and clearly defining literature's competition, I'm better equipped to understand the

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[14] We might think of Aboul-Ela's claims as limited to the Arab-American situation post-9/11, since "Edward Said's *Out of Place*: Criticism, Polemic, and Arab-American Identity" was published in 2006. But, Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (initially published in 1981 and revised in 1997) shows us that this 'dissident relationship' to American foreign policy existed before 9/11 - though, of course, Said doesn't speak only of Arabs in *Covering Islam*. The combination of media and public policy - made up of "vociferously polemical Orientalists" who make "unacceptable generalization[s] of the most irresponsible sort" (xvi) - creates a mistaken discourse about Islam that enables simplistic foreign policy creation. And that simplistic foreign policy reduces Muslims "to a handful of rules, stereotypes, and generalizations" by America (xvi), enabled by the media's discourse about 'them.'

conditions that create typical immigrant novels or original Arab-anglophone texts. And distinguishing between those texts is important because, once I've identified the conditions that create their unique narrative structures, I discover how authors and readers interact to decide the economic and social position of real Arabs. *Out of Place* doesn't only help me define literature's competition, but it also begins to answer my new questions. Said's memoir models an alternative narrative structure that challenges readers' preconceptions about Arabs in a way that *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove* can't match.

In this chapter, I analyzed the narrative rhythm of Edward Said's *Out of Place* and its effects on readers. I argued that *Out of Place* supplies us with an alternative structure for talking about the position of syncretic Arabs in North American and European society, mostly by leveraging Said's privileged access to European culture as a child. Author Said then uses functions (seeded privilege) and their correlates to change how protagonist Said and his readers react to textual moments that would otherwise descend into the cultural clash - to shake them out of typical thinking. When we don’t recognize authors who write without marketable immigrant tropes, we let foreign policy and the media control what anglophone societies say about Arab-anglophones. These tropes lampoon Arab identity, which interferes with real Arabs’ search for advancement in North America and Europe. Luckily, as empirical theory demonstrates, literature can influence how readers see the world. Writers like Edward Said can correct readers' misconceptions of real Arab-anglophones - by keeping his memoir "always in motion, in time, in place" (295), Said lets us speak of syncretic Arabs' *becoming* rather than being.

Chapter Three: "A Father Who Has Disappeared:" the Disappearance of Arab Public and Private Space in Hisham Matar's Fiction

In a 2010 interview, Hisham Matar said that "there's something very bizarre about having a father who has disappeared… it's very hard to articulate" (Derbyshire 57). Matar was born in New York, raised in Tripoli and Cairo, and has a father - Jaballa Matar - who was "abducted in 1990 and taken into detention in Libya" (Derbyshire 57). These autobiographical details, a cosmopolitan childhood and a politically-involved father who disappears, resurface in Matar's fiction. So, Matar writes - in part - to explain disappearance's strangeness.

How does Matar's focus on disappearance change the his novels' structure, especially compared the other Arab-anglophone books that I've read? Matar abandons the cultural clash. He doesn't even, likely mindfully so, critique it. Though living through the disappearance of his father is hardly a boon, it does, in addition to Matar and his protagonist's gendered, educational, and economic privilege, give Matar an experience that allows him to say things that change Arabs' positionality.[15] So, since Matar leaves the cultural clash behind, so will I. Instead, I see conflict between private and public space in privileged (rich, educated) Arab lives as essential to Matar's novels, especially *In the Country of Men*. I also analyze Matar's *Anatomy of a Disappearance* to show that conflict between private and public space informs the rest of Matar's

[15] I have scant details about Matar's life, but he does mention in a 2011 interview with Hari Kunzru called "Libya's Reluctant Spokesman" that he went to an English-language school in Cairo and learned English through Jane Austen, much like Said. Matar seems to have acquired the same privileged cultural capital. More important than the autobiographical details of Matar's life, however, are the privileges of Matar's protagonists. They - especially the obscenely rich and cosmopolitan Nuri in *Anatomy of a Disappearance* - access similar anglophone educational and cultural capital, which lifts his novels above narrating an immigrant's cultural clash.

work.[16] Still, I don't have space to investigate *Anatomy* as thoroughly as *Country*. *Anatomy* is more complex.

Privilege informs Matar's ability to leave behind the cultural clash and focus instead on the private and the public. Despite their hardships, the narrators in Matar's *Country* and *Anatomy* come from money, have connections to Europe, and get excellent educations. Suleiman of *Country* becomes a pharmacist in Egypt, and Nuri in *Anatomy* earns a PhD in art history. Suleiman and Nuri co-opt the advantages of rich Westerners, and act more like landed elite than expats needing refuge. They don't, in short, act as the West's functional opposite. And that privileged elevation above the cultural clash is key to the success of Matar's critique. His protagonists aren't burdened by problems other than invasions by representatives of the nation-state in their private lives. This muddles the arrangements of space in their households - the problem that faces all Arabs, regardless of their privilege. Matar elevates his protagonists above struggles with an oppositional culture, struggles which all too often associate Arabs with a backwards culture or exaggerated relationship to Islam. So Matar, like Said, can get closer to the fundamental spatial issues that actually affect Arabs' status in anglophone states.

Matar's privileged approach, then, has its advantages: it draws attention back to the private and public spheres, and allows Matar to recover Arabs' right to private space in anglophone readers' imaginations. This recovery of Arab private space in literature affects real-life Arabs, earning them both private and public space in anglophone countries - despite anglophone medias'

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[16] In my research, I've consulted most of Matar's writing. But note that Matar wrote a short story that I don't reference. "Naima," published in *The New Yorker* January 24, 2011, is nearly identical to early chapters of his novel *Anatomy of a Disappearance*, which Matar published just two months later in March 2011. I'd find comparing "Naima" and *Anatomy*'s paratexts interesting. And, seeing how *Anatomy*'s emphasis changes with renewed focus on narrator Nuri's possible mothers rather than his father in "Naima" might be a useful extension of my analyses. But this goes beyond this chapter's scope, especially because I focus more closely on *In the Country of Men* than *Anatomy*.

efforts to undo that. Hannah Arendt says in *The Human Condition* that "public life… [is] possible only after the much more urgent needs of life itself [have] been taken care of in the private sphere" (65). Arendt inspires my work. She, like Dana Villa notes in "Postmodernism and the Public Sphere," describes "the closure of space for action in the modern age" (718) - and shows how this space can be "forcibly collapsed or eliminated (as Arendt argues it is under totalitarianism)" (714). Since totalitarianism haunts both *Country* and *Anatomy*, Arendt's theory describes Arab homes' dwindling privacy in Matar's work well.

But Matar doesn't reject home or stability. Rather than coming "to prefer being not quite right and out of place" - Said resigns himself to rather than fixes his confused spatial plight in *Out of Place* (295) - Matar recovers Arab private space and space for action. He wants to find home. So, I argue that Matar's fiction, in recording his father's disappearance, revises the stories we tell about Arabs more intensely than Edward Said's *Out of Place*.

My argument has two consequences. First, in studying Matar, I find one of the best examples of literature contradicting Western (especially the American media's) rhetoric about Arabs, both pre- and post-9/11. Matar shows us what happens when a totalitarian regime (Qaddafi's in Libya) meddles in Arabs' private lives. By extension, Matar shows us the danger when Western media and democracies snoop in Arabs' private lives, making Arab lives penetrable to flush out terrorists.

I don't argue that most the media is limited because journalists choose ignorance. The pressures faced by the media are structural and systematic. We don't need to fix the media, and no easy solution exists anyway. Instead, I show why the novel, as a structure for representation, works better to represent individual rather than cliched images of Arabs. That's important be-

cause it lets me explain why we can trust novels' (and especially Matar's) representations of Arabs more than the media's, and why we should refer to novels' representations when we think of the word *Arab*.[17]

Second, I find in Matar's novels a reflection on storytelling itself. Matar's ideas mature in moving from *In the Country of Men* to *Anatomy of a Disappearance*, but overall he suggests that stories can change the real world. Stories can humanize Arabs. Strangely, by making *public* fictional Arab private lives - letting non-Arabs access fictional Arabs' inner lives - Matar restores real-life Arabs' right to privacy. Margaret Scanlan in "Migrating from terror: the postcolonial novel after September 11" says that "Libya [and the Arab world in general] lacks, for non Arabic speakers,… a *domestic space*" (267). So, Matar reminds readers of Arab writing that real-life Arabs have privacy worth protecting, too. Empirical theory, and specifically Keith Oatley's book *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*, lets me explain how accessing Arab inner lives humanizes real life Arabs - which I'll do later in this chapter. Literature then, both Matar and Oatley affirm, can change the world. And, with the help of that affirmation, I'll ask: considering the media's ubiquity, how can literature hope to change how we talk about Arabs? And, recalling my question from chapter one and two, who has the most power to shape how we speak of Arabs - publishers, readers, or writers?

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[17] To explain further, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky say in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* that journalists often cover news with good intentions. Journalists don't realize that what they report is not "objective" or free from corporate influence (2), despite the fact that "ads give media outlets such a decisive competitive advantage" (14). Advertisers dictate the design principles that media outlets use to create their programs (16), and directors and journalists need to tread carefully to avoid the advertisers' ire. Herman and Chomsky talk of how "advertisers will want, more generally, to *avoid programs with serious complexities* and disturbing controversies that interfere with the 'buying mood'" (17, emphasis mine). That's why mass media makes a particularly bad platform for talking about Arabs. Even if journalists wanted to correct the public's misconceptions about Arabs (which the state uses to justify its anti-terror crusades) through polemical programming, they'd face funding cuts. For a thorough takedown of American media, see Herman and Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, especially the first chapter "A Propaganda Model."

Suleiman, the narrator in *In the Country of Men*, has a father named Faraj who seems ever away on European business. But one day, Suleiman's sense of space gets changed; Matar introduces the clash between public and private spheres as *Country*'s main conflict. When on errands with his mother Najwa in Tripoli, Suleiman spots his father Faraj among a crowd when "only a couple days ago, he had kissed us goodbye" (5). Suleiman remembers the formality of the goodbye, where he "kissed his hand like he [Faraj] taught me to" and where Faraj whispered "you are the man of the house now" (5). Having gone through this ritual, a transfer of dominion over the household from father to son in anticipation of a real absence, Suleiman feels awkward. Though Faraj's words are, of course, meaningless (no one really expects nine-year-old Suleiman to replace his father), Suleiman shows that he took his father's command to be "the man of the house" seriously later in *Country* (62). Suleiman feels he must pick up his father's responsibilities, despite Faraj's presence in Tripoli, which undermines the dynamics of their household. It confuses Suleiman and hints at the coming interference of Faraj's political convictions in his private life. Now that he's seen his father in Tripoli, Suleiman can't be sure what his father's presence in their home city means.

So, his father walks "where I could touch him, *here* [in Tripoli] *where we should be together*" (5, emphasis mine), which Suleiman repeats: "Baba wasn't on a business trip, but here, in Tripoli, where we should be together" (6). Suleiman is uncomfortable with what his father's presence in Tripoli means for household power dynamics, yes, but seeing his father in a public place where he can't approach him also unsettles Suleiman. Faraj can, after all, hang "a small red towel on a clothesline and disappear" inside a mysterious building on Martyr's Square (7). Seeing Faraj in the wrong sphere bothers Suleiman. Faraj is in public and not away on business to

sustain their household - important since, according to Arendt, economic activity like business belongs to the private sphere (45). In a city where Suleiman should be able to access his father, Suleiman signals the start of his father's political life, which will soon interrupt his family's private space. This scene introduces one of the central questions that Matar's texts seem privileged enough ask: what happens when politics bend the boundaries between Arabs' public and private lives? And what happens when Arabs tell stories about these dynamics?

To explain the workings of this scene in *Country* better, we might turn briefly to a scene in *Anatomy of a Disappearance* where Nuri, the narrator, returns home with his stepmother Mona from Switzerland to Egypt. His father Kamal has just been kidnapped, likely by Qaddafi's men, from a bed in Geneva where he was having an affair. When they finally land in Cairo, narrator Nuri describes Cairo in detail, speaking of the "damp tarmac… [how] the air was heavy with the human smell of the old and overpopulated city" (139). Before this moment in *Anatomy*, Nuri never bothered to describe Cairo - it was just there. But now, he notes how he "had never felt so deeply disoriented", and describes his need for his dead mother as "sudden, bottomless, unendurable," with a "physical need to be beside" his father (139). On one hand, Nuri's need for his mother and father speaks to the therapeutic power of domestic space. Having lost both mother and father, the symbols of stable domesticity, Nuri loses the comfort of home.

On the other hand, without his father Kamal around, Nuri of *Anatomy* loses mastery over Cairo - Kamal's disappearance reconfigures his sense of space like Suleiman in *Country*. Nuri, then, also demonstrates the centrality of the public/private clash in Matar's corpus. He spends the rest of the novel trying to recover that space, because "a great emptiness" fills his father's apartment (146). Nuri, for instance, places his "hand over [stepmom Mona's], hoping she would hold

it tightly" (142) - Mona doesn't reciprocate. And when the family lawyer Hass implies that Kamal's lover Béatrice Benameur (from whose bed he was kidnapped) had with Nuri's father "a life like any other married couple," Nuri feels "ants… all over [his] body" (214-215). The thought of his father's doubled private sphere, a double life "not too dissimilar from the life [Nuri] and [his] mother shared with him in Cairo" (214), irks Nuri and changes his feelings about his father.

The specifics of these scenes in *Country* and *Anatomy* differ - one father appears where he shouldn't in *Country*, and one father disappears where he shouldn't in *Anatomy*. But, the consequences are the same. Both narrators feel disoriented by the cities where they grew up. Both narrators see the demarcations between public and comfortable private space redrawn. Both narrators, in short, introduce the centrality of the public/private conflict which structures Matar's novels. And, ultimately, Matar demonstrates what happens when domestic space disintegrates.

Matar advances *Country*'s plot, and his focus sharpens: he moves from more general disturbance in city space to the specific disturbance in the private and the public of an Arab home. And this disturbance replaces the cultural clash as the force structuring the novel. Matar reflects this new clash in the paranoid set-up of Suleiman's Libyan home, where his family configures their house to keep the unfamiliar out. First, "there was a front and a back half to [their] house, divided by the hallway swing doors" (52). The front entertains strangers in "the formal rooms: the reception room where we received guests we didn't know very well and where I practiced my piano," complete with a formal dining room they never use (52). The house gets more intimate as guests move to the back, where they keep "the television, then the kitchen, and beyond them the bathroom and bedrooms" (52). Matar shows a family obsessed about protecting their domestic space. They split their house into levels of gradually increasing intimacy designed to keep un-

wanted visitors out of their most private rooms. And through their paranoia, Matar demonstrates how prone Libyan private space is to breaches by Qaddafi's regime. Suleiman's house can't, of course, keep the public and private spheres apart forever. But, I'll argue that its layout helps.

First, however, I should define public and private space, and explain why mixing these spaces can have dangerous consequences for Arabs specifically. Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* explains that "everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest publicity," which includes political action (50). For Arendt, the public realm is important - it's like a table "located between those who sit around it," relating and separating men at the same time (52). But, a life lived entirely in public becomes "shallow" (71), since the public realm leaves little space to think or deepen relationships. Conversely, Arendt defines the private realm as that which stays hidden from the public, like birth, death, and love (63). Though the modern era has enriched the private sphere, a life purely in own's own thoughts is uncertain, obscure, and 'shadowy' (50). We need some public validation to make our individual experience real, since "the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm" (51).

Arendt says that the separation between the public and private has declined in the modern age, to the detriment of everyone hoping to profit from this dynamic. But more dangerously for Arabs, and especially for underprivileged Arab women, private and public space have an inverse relationship. Maggie Awadalla in her article "The Labyrinth of Enclosures and Concealment in the Novels of Two Arab Women Writers: 'Your Gazes Behind Which to Hide Myself'" discusses Hanan al-Shaykh's Arabic novel *Women of Sand and Myrrh*. Awadalla observes how one of the protagonists in al-Shaykh's novel, Nur, "lives in a large extended house with surrounding

grounds" where "she can drive a motor bike (which is otherwise prohibited by law for a woman to drive in public)" (52). At the same time, Nur's "public life beyond the walls of the family house is severely curtailed," since she has no passport and needs to be escorted by a male driver when she leaves the home (52). Though Awadalla makes this observation of an Arabic novel I don't analyze, I've seen this special spatial problem in Arab-anglophone novels, too: private space limits Arabs' ability to navigate and effect change in public space, and public space limits Arabs' domestic lives. And, out of the authors I've analyzed, Matar seems the best positioned (or best *privileged*) to represent this spatial problem.[18]

Without representation in media, literature, and politics - public presence - Arabs condemn themselves to marginality. But, with too much representation in the wrong places, like American media, Arabs risk losing their private lives. They become both penetrable and powerless. Margaret Canovan in her "Introduction" to *The Human Condition*'s second edition notes that governments from the 17th century and on began administrating "economic activities that had traditionally been private matters for the house" (xvi). Government intervention made individuals think "of themselves as helpless flotsam on the currents of socioeconomic forces" they can't control (xvi). In other words, government penetration of the private - imposing rules on how families subsist at home, or entering the home to enforce those rules - can interfere with an individual's feeling that they can effect political change in the public sphere. Though Arendt argues historically - claiming this process is already complete - I argue that this process remains

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[18] I mean here that Matar (and Said with *Out of Place*) having enough narrative space to represent the problems in Arabs' spatial arrangements is, in itself, an advantage. As a male Arab author, Matar has little pressure from audiences to represent Arab women, or respond to Western feminism's challenge to Arab women's relative lack of freedom. Matar has more literal space in his novels to speak about space. That, of course, doesn't mean that Matar can't explain the issues that Arab women have in accessing private and public space. As I argue in this chapter, Suleiman's mother Najwa incisively critiques how Arab women lose control over their domestic and public space.

most dire for Arabs in anglophone societies. Arabs seem a special case: losing private space when represented, or becoming invisible when too private. They can't assume the balance that Arendt champions.

When Arabs get overexposed and misrepresented in the media, invasion of Arabs' private space - their suitcases, their homes, their religious beliefs - becomes easier, and justified in the name of safety. Their religious beliefs are misrepresented as irreconcilably foreign, and their privacy as concealing bombs, terrorism, and strangeness. Government and media, in pretending their critique of Arabs is nothing more than a critique of Arab *Islam* (which they think is an disposable belief system rather than integral to many Arabs' identity), get away with simple racism. So, putting Arab private lives on display allows American or anglophone foreign policy makers to misrepresent Arabs, to decide what parts of their lives to report, and to, as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky say in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, "ready the public for war" (xxiv). So, when the private becomes public - when the media and government decide to enter Arab homes - Arabs lose control over their representation. And when they lose control of their representation, Arabs also lose control of their place in society.

The paranoid arrangement of Suleiman's home in Matar's *In the Country of Men* seems designed to separate their private and public lives, and make penetration in the house's deeper regions scandalous and inappropriate. And, this arrangement works. When the revolutionary committee - Qaddafi's vanguard - look for Suleiman's father Faraj at his house, Suleiman and family isolate the men in the reception room.[19] Remember, they receive strangers there.

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[19] I should note Matar uses the term 'revolutionary committee' to ironically reference the men allied with Qaddafi. These men are *not* allied with Faraj or actual revolutionaries in *Country*. Rather, they are vanguards of Qaddafi's 1969 coup d'état, which he later styled as a revolution. His revolution, of course, remained anything but. It conserved Qaddafi's power rather than redistributing it.

Suleiman's mother Najwa first tries to keep the men out, confirming that "this is his [Faraj's] home" but that they're "not coming in" (61). Moosa, Faraj's young friend, political confidant, and frequent visitor to their home, tries to calm the men. Still one man sneaks "deeper into our house" and returns with Najwa's "medicine," a bottle of alcohol which is "not only forbidden by God and tradition… [but] also illegal" (64). The revolutionary committee's deeper penetration in the house and reappearance with one of Najwa's secrets affirms my observation: that their house holds more secrets - becomes more private - the deeper you go.

Still, Moosa calms the men before they discover more. He tells them to "have tea first, then you can search the house… leading them into the reception room" (64). Moosa brings them into liminal space, the reception room intended to receive "guests [they] didn't know very well" (52), and puts the men in quarantine. He holds them there and passes around cigarettes, serves tea, brings food. Interestingly, Moosa's show of hospitality and intimacy seems to convince the men that the reception room holds all the private space they need to see - that they don't need to search the house. First, the reception room creates the illusion of privacy, baiting the men into thinking that the rest of the house holds no more secrets than the semi-public reception room. Moosa's warmth, however, has the biggest impact. He humanizes the family and makes it socially inappropriate for the men to go deeper in the house (since they now *know* and presumably sympathize with someone in the house).

While Moosa distracts the men, Suleiman thinks about Scheherazade, the woman in *One Thousand and One Nights* who told King Shahryar stories to defer her execution. Scheherazade's appearance in this scene has Matar reflecting on the storytelling's practical benefits. Suleiman wonders how the "secretly trembling… Scheherazade [kept] her nerve" before King Shahryar

(66), then affirms that "she… was one of the bravest people that had ever lived" because "it's one thing not to fear death, another to sing under its sword" (67). Scheherazade explains the dynamics of this scene: storyteller Moosa, a literary man who infects Suleiman "with his love of language" (58), holds off those with political power, the revolutionary committee, by entertaining them. Moosa sings under death's sword, ingratiating himself and Suleiman's family to the otherwise unfeeling committee. Though Moosa doesn't directly tell stories to keep the men in the reception room, he does re-sacralize the family's private space.

So when the "pockmarked man" (who becomes important later in *Country* when identified as Sharief) insists that they search the house, Moosa's scheme convinces the other men that they "came to find Faraj, not search the house" (68). Moosa's hospitality in the public-private reception room convinces most the revolutionary committee that they've seen all they need. But we can't give all credit to Moosa: the reception room's deceptive quality - feeling intimate without harbouring real secrets - fools the men into believing that they've entered private space. So, Moosa and the reception room keep the committee away from Faraj's incriminating book collection.

That Suleiman's family *needs* this bizarre arrangement of storytelling and faux-private rooms proves that their privacy is precious. After the committee leaves, Moosa recites "verses from the Holy Quran [while] adding in his own bits:" imploring the "Concealer" to "conceal our faults" (68). In this moment, Matar recalls Moosa's literary impulse and reinforces his connection to Scheherazade: he can't resist adding words to even the holy Quran. But more importantly, Moosa calls God by one of his 99 Islamic names, which reflect facets of God's personality. Having Moosa focus on God as 'Concealer' speaks to his and other characters' anxiety - they invoke

God's protective, secretive traits. Matar intensifies, in short, the precariousness of private Libyan space. He underscores just how carefully it needs to be guarded for Faraj to continue plotting against Qaddafi, because, to recall Arendt, "public life… [is] possible only after the much more urgent needs of life itself [have] been taken care of" in the private sphere (65). Faraj's political convictions threaten the stability of his home - bringing strange men to his house to take him away. But even as they threaten his home, Faraj can't have political aspirations without his home.

So, *Country* makes private space rarefied and desirable. Suleiman's friendship with the neighbourhood boys lets me explain more. Adnan is a sickly boy with hemophilia and a weak immune system. He lives in Suleiman's neighbourhood. After much convincing, Adnan agrees to show the boys the "two injections a day" he takes in secret (126). But he imposes a condition on their visit: they can't "laugh or [he]'ll slap each one of" the boys (126). Adnan's home has a sacred quality, because "none of [the boys] had ever been inside the house before," and as they watch Adnan drive a "a long needle in his buttock," they decide that they "never wanted to see him do that again" (127). Adnan has something the neighbourhood boys (and the adults, too) don't - privacy that no one violates. No one even *wants* to violate Adnan's privacy, which gives him "a higher moral authority" (128) in public that the boys respect despite his physical weakness.

And, Suleiman is honest about his desire. He "envied Adnan" because "his illness had… gained him something none of us had: a *private world* that involved books and syringes" (127, emphasis mine). That Suleiman admits to praying "for a disease that would give me what Adnan had" (127) proves just how much the neighbourhood boys (and the characters of *Country* in gen-

eral) crave solitude. The independence that having "his own life and literature of illness" brings - since Adnan seems "to need no one" (128) - seduces Suleiman. That nine-year-old Suleiman would sacrifice his health, a basic need, to win private space shows us how prized it becomes.

Adnan also shows us that Matar considers literature (a 'literature of illness,' here) essential to creating privacy. Like I noted with Arendt, Adnan's room allows him to participate in the children's political life. And, "the fact that he was closer to death aged him and gained him a higher moral authority" (128). Adnan uses literature to ward off death in the private sphere because, like Scheherazade and Moosa, Adnan, "too, was living under the sword" (128). Adnan makes a good foil to Suleiman and family's paranoia about their home and books. Of course, because he has an illness, Adnan isn't worry-free. But, he has means to fight back - his books. Adnan show us what Libyan private space could be, had they the means - literature and the ideas it stores - to oppose dictators like Qaddafi.

I've been mentioning Scheherazade a lot because Matar invokes her a lot in *Country*. I want to discuss what Scheherazade's presence in *Country* means - especially in light of Scheherazade as a representation of the Arab storyteller. Scheherazade allows me to return to the question of privilege: what privileges does storytelling lend not just to privileged men like Matar's protagonists, but also Arab women? And what does Matar think about storytelling as a tool to teach his readers about real-life Arabs? Though Matar and I seem to have similar answers, Matar isn't convinced of literature's reliability, especially for giving Arab women agency. First, using empirical theory, I'll explain how literature effects real world good and generates privilege, speculating how it helps Arabs specifically. Then, I'll outline Matar's ambivalence towards using literature to advocate - apparent after seeing his characters' ambivalence to Scheherazade. In do-

ing so, I hope to show how Matar's stories, in light of his privilege as a male Arab author telling stories about economically, socially, and educationally advantaged Arab protagonists, might let him rework his readers' assumptions about Arabs.

I draw ideas about literature's function from Keith Oatley's book *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*. Oatley uses empirical evidence to explain how books convince us to see others differently. Oatley argues that "reading fiction might enlarge people's knowledge of selves in the social world" (158). Most importantly, "readers of fiction tend to become more expert at making models of others and themselves, and at navigating the social world"(160). Story, in short, changes the mental models we use to represent others. And those mental models control how we tell stories about others - our vocabularies of representation.

"The art of the story," Oatley says, can act "as something… beyond" readers, which can "loosen up the *habitual structures of selfhood*" (162, emphasis mine). Literature also challenges the limits of selfhood, defamiliarizing - like I argued with David Miall and Don Kuiken in chapters one and two - readers out of their assumptions. Not only does Oatley reinforce what I've argued earlier in my thesis, but I like his spatial metaphors ('enlarge', 'navigate', 'world', 'beyond'). While literature redraws the borders between people - erasing emotional distance between Westerners and Arabs - can it at the same time reinforce the boundaries between the private and public spheres? Literature, by eliminating the emotional boundaries between Westerners

and Arabs, might make anglophone readers value Arab private space like their own - strengthening the line that should exist between Arabs' public and private lives.[20]

In other words, fiction helps readers "overcome the actor-observer discrepancy" (166). Oatley means that fiction helps readers "think oneself into the circumstances of people who have been harmed in society" (165). By letting readers "understand character both in terms of personality and by being *inside the character*," good authors lead readers to "practice the same kind of understanding in ordinary life" (166, emphasis mine). In combination, new mental models and empathy encourage readers to make protection of the Arab private sphere (rather than control of the Arab private sphere) a public concern. Seeing inside a character, discovering emotion in Arabs' fictional privacy - that helps readers value real-life Arabs' privacy. And that brings me to the paradox at the centre of Matar's books. In circulating the private suffering of fictional Arabs in public books - that is, letting readers access a fictional privacy - Matar renders real Arabs' lives less penetrable. I'll explain further: representing fictional inner lives, and having non-Arab readers empathize with the problems of Arabs' interior lives, makes Arab private space less exotic, more relatable. And when readers relate to Arab lives, the media and state have to work harder to justify invasions in their private affairs. It's hard to make audiences fear Arabs (which the me-

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[20] I want to make clear here the limitations of the empirical theory I cite, and justify why this theory helps me, all the same, understand the effects of Arab-anglophone literature on audiences. Speculating about the effects of a particular work from general empirical theory about 'literature' might be problematic. I can't assume that a particular story will share every characteristic with literature as a general category. Still, no empirical studies about the effects of Arab-anglophone literature or the texts I deal with, to my knowledge, exist (see, however, Mazzocco et al.'s study, which I cite in my conclusion). And, I didn't want to talk about a purely hypothetical reader. Imagining how average readers *might* react to texts, especially as a critic who reads texts closer than the average reader, seems a fruitless exercise without empirical evidence. I'm more comfortable theorizing about how readers might receive texts with the backing of empirical theory.

In turning to empirical theory, I'm not saying that the effects of a particular literature are knowable through a turn to the general. But I am saying that we can at least make educated guesses about more likely types of reader responses, and argue why through the application of general theory to specific texts. My argument rests on more solid ground than it would making baseless claims about Arab texts, unless we argue that specific instances of Arab-anglophone texts in this thesis are unrelated to the literary texts that empirical theorists use to test their theories.

dia and state need to convince the public to do, should they wish to penetrate their spaces) when Arabs seem more familiar than exotic. So, readers are less likely to support state intervention in Arab lives when they access Arabs' interiority, even and especially when that inner drama remains literary and fictional.

Matar shows some agreement in *Country* about this process through Scheherazade from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Scheherazade shows us how story humanizes victims. Suleiman first describes Scheherazade as "a brave woman who had gained her freedom through inventing tales and [Suleiman] often, in moments of great fear, recalled her example" (15). Suleiman mimics Scheherazade to survive. Scheherazade earns her private life back which, as I learn from Arendt, she needs in order to participate in politics.

But, Suleiman's mother questions story's real-life power: Najwa hates Scheherazade. Yes, Scheherazade earned domestic space to raise her children, but does she use it to change the public sphere? Najwa reproaches Scheherazade for asking for a "favour of your highness" King Shahryar - to simply be allowed "to live" (16). Scheherazade should have asked to "rule one of the corners of even a dirty little cave in his kingdom," or "be given a writing desk in a quiet room in the palace… a room the *woman could call her own*" (16, emphasis mine) - echoing the feminist imagery of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. Najwa reframes Scheherazade's bravery as "acts of tale-telling, even tattling, contesting the iconic reading of Scheherazade as heroine and the master *par excellence* of the proverbial power of stories" (Harlow 442-443). And, she reframes Scheherazade's choice as a choice of the *wrong kind* of private space.

Scheherazade's wish to live to "raise them [her children] as they should be raised" leads Najwa to guess that she had "five, maybe ten years at the most before she got the sword" (17).

Scheherazade's storytelling won't produce the lasting privacy she needs to change her personal living situation, let alone effect political good. Matar, in short, rechecks optimism about stories by presenting good storytelling as a cycle: tell stories, earn sympathy and private space, effect public change with that privacy, then repeat. Scheherazade stops at earning sympathy and private space. Matar, through Najwa, argues that stories (and books by extension) aren't perfect communication tools.[21] That argument both aligns with and modifies my own. I do much of spend my thesis in agreement with Matar: I show why some Arab-anglophones' stories (like Said and Matar's) make stronger impacts on readers than others (like Aboulela and Faqir's). But, Matar also makes me ask: is there an ethics to Arab storytelling, especially the kind done by the privileged? Do privileged Arab-anglo storytellers - knowing that their writing guides public perception of Arab-anglophones - need to write more carefully?

Do Arabs, then, need to tell stories that might make readers think better about Arabs? I don't think that Matar wants Arab-anglophones to censor themselves, but he does remind me that authors need to acknowledge their power. Their writing can decide the social position of other Arabs. Najwa in *Country*, forced to marry Faraj at fourteen, is the perfect example of an Arab whose social position gets decided by story - an Arab victimized by what stories promise to do. Najwa "had always seemed captive, *captive in her own home*" (167, emphasis mine). Najwa says that her father and brothers sentenced her to "life imprisonment" (169) after her brother Khaled catches her in the company of a female friend and two boys. Khaled is a "gifted poet," and it's

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[21] *Anatomy of a Disappearance* makes a similar point about the limitations of literature. After Nuri starts boarding school in England, Daleswick, he complains that England seems "gloomy" (95). His stepmother Mona tells him "it was exactly that gloominess that made in romantic and asked [him] to read *Wuthering Heights*" (95). Grown-up narrator Nuri says that "now that [he] had read that book, [he] still could not understand what she meant" (95). Literature can't bridge Nuri and Mona's communication gap - *Wuthering Heights* can't clarify her feelings to Nuri. Matar, then, thinks about the limits of literature across his work.

fitting that he of Najwa's seven brothers betrays her by telling their father. Khaled's literary bent, "his sensitivity, his complex ideas" (169), certainly doesn't make him sympathetic to Najwa's desire to be in mixed company.

Literature also fails as Najwa's defence mechanism. So, after literature betrays her (figuratively through Khaled), Najwa's father locks her in the bedroom and asks her to contemplate her "actions a thousand times" - which, after hearing 'thousand,' makes Najwa think of "that wretched woman" Scheherazade (170). Curiously, Najwa thinks reading can help her endure her father's punishment, but "part of the punishment was to leave [her] with no books" because her father fears giving her "more ammunition" (170). Najwa's family strips her private space clean, and her "arsenal of literary characters shrank rapidly" (171). Even Scheherazade, who she admired as a child, "would betray" her (171). Notice the weaponized vocabulary: ammunition and arsenal. Najwa thought of literature as defence, but it proves more treacherous than she hoped.

But even while Najwa's mental stock of stories fades, Najwa's total mistrust of books keeps her from finding redemption in them. Adult Najwa can't "read anything longer than poem or a newspaper article" because "books demand too much trust" (171). She avoids books completely. And, as Adnan taught me, books are essential for forming private space - the kind that wins respect in public. Books are liminal objects, in fact. Though they preserve public knowledge and get publicly distributed, they're usually stored and consumed in private. Arendt argues that the public sphere "can absorb and make shine through the centuries whatever [thing from the private sphere] men may want to save from the natural ruin of time" (55). Books are the ideal go-between, then: they preserve knowledge for the public, but their enduring form structures further

thought in private. And without private-public objects, books, Najwa loses her independence. Her well-being and private sphere in *Country* rests entirely on husband Faraj's fate.[22]

Matar uses Najwa less to rebuke story's power and more to remind readers that Arab-anglophone books don't raise Arab women's social position as they might for Arab men. And it isn't because women are underrepresented in Arab-anglophone literature - they're not. Instead, the solutions to Arab women's problems are misrepresented. Authors like Aboulela with *The Translator* and Faqir with *The Cry of the Dove* don't write about characters like Najwa. Could it be because Najwa is too privileged to write about, not a pitiable enough subject for an anglophone audience? She isn't a struggling translator negotiating with Islam (like Samar in *The Translator*). Nor is she a poor immigrant haunted by Muslim guilt (like Samar in *The Cry of the Dove*). Najwa marries a rich businessman, too, so she isn't burdened by minimum-wage work. Instead, gender encumbers Najwa. She's immersed in economic privilege that actually makes her "captive in her own home… failing to prepare herself for anything else" (167). Najwa's problem, then, is larger than economics or an oppressive religion. Najwa's economic power and freedom from the cultural clash prove that neither economics nor culture alone cause Arab women's tortured relation to literature.

I want to compare Najwa to the women of *The Translator* and *The Cry of the Dove.* Sammar in *The Translator* and Salma in *The Cry of the Dove* marry white men for security. But marriage keeps them from the private space and independence that would link them to public

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[22] In another moment, Najwa watches Egyptian romance films. Suleiman imagines that "she [his mother] must have sat on the edge of her seat... impatient for the moment that would come to strengthen her doubts about love and confirm her instinct to go without it" (86). Here, Najwa uses story to accept "a life forced upon her" (86).

This isn't an example of literature specifically. But it's still story. And story operates ominously, here. Najwa uses it to accept her life rather than steel her resolve to change it.

power. Sammar wants marriage, and she's locked out of Scottish space until marrying white academic Rae. She can't live and work again in Britain until her white husband (albeit as a Muslim, now) brings her back. Britain similarly alienates Salma in Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* until her marriage to white academic John. Still, Salma can't overcome the loss of her daughter or Muslim guilt for premarital pregnancy, so she loses her home in Britain. These women's problems are spatial first and cultural second, but Aboulela and Faqir present their protagonists' problems as irreconcilable cultural differences. Really though, Samar and Salma can't win the private space they need to access the public sphere, where they'd have the option of changing their social and economic ranks independent of marriage. So, Najwa would critique Aboulela and Faqir's protagonists like she does Scheherazade: they want security (marriage, motherhood). They, in short, forget to ask for private space that links them to social and political power - 'a room of one's own' that would let them read, write, and think their way into political power.

Matar in *Country* shows me, in short, that the best kind of private sector reconnects Arabs to books, because with books comes choice. Suleiman imagines saving his mother by taking her fourteen-year-old self to Europe, where he "would spend the money [he] made on *books* for her" (174, emphasis mine). And after "all the books in the world were read," she'd meet the boy she knew at the café in Tripoli and fall in love with him, then "it would be time for [Suleiman] to be born" (174-175). Suleiman's daydream seems senseless, but he actually makes a lot of sense. He restores his mother's access to books. He thus restores Najwa's authority to choose her husband, when Suleiman should be born, and what her private space looks like. Matar, then, might not question story's power to effect social change. But he does ask: which Arabs can access books? And, Matar has readers think harder about storytelling's ethics. Who, in imagining litera-

ture's power to let us "tune in to what others are thinking and feeling" (Oatley 167), do we forget to feel for? In Suleiman's pretend reconfiguration of private space (which restores Najwa's books), Matar has readers think about how gender decides both access to literature and its effect size.[23] Matar, even while he tells stories from the angle of real and fictional privilege, calls attention to how privilege inflects storytelling and Arab women's social positions.

Still, the men in *Country* don't do well. This speaks to the extent of Najwa's repression. She's twice-removed from an ideal arrangement of private and public space: first, by her forced marriage, and second, by the pressure that Qaddafi's regime exerts on their household. So far, I've shown that books connect Arabs to the public sphere. And, I've argued that storytelling interacts with privacy on two levels. First, on the level of *Country*'s protagonists, his characters lose privacy and power when they lose books. Second, on the level of *Country*'s readers, *Country* as a book protects the privacy of real-life Arabs when fictional private space breaks down. Sharief - the man with the pockmarked face and old woman's voice - reveals even more about storytelling through the pressure he exerts on the book collection owned by Suleiman's family.

A day after Suleiman's family repels the revolutionary committee, Moosa helps Najwa burn her husband's books. But first, they redecorate their reception room - which, remember, is both public and private. The reception room features a photograph of Faraj "the size of a magazine cover and hung alone, too high up" (71), where "the photographer painted over it to make

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[23] To explain further, though I and empirical theorists believe that literature does functional good, Matar adds ethics to the issue. Authors can deliberately create literature with the goal of effecting real world change, but should they? Matar doesn't mean that authors writing for justice risk diluting the purity of their artistic message (if such purity can even exist). Instead, Matar's text warns that authors risk asking their readers for the wrong kinds of understanding. In asking, much like Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights*, for the *right* to live through literature, do Arabs forget to ask for the *space* to live? In justifying their right to exist, Arabs might forget to claim the private and public space that they deserve. Matar, in short, asks me not to value Arab authors' commitment to any change - to value change and reversals of cliche in themselves. Instead, he asks me to value a commitment to the kind of change (in private/public arrangements) that solves Arab-anglophone problems, especially women's.

Baba look more handsome, less dark" and put him in front of a fake background "standing among the trees in the sunlight" (72). Though Suleiman remarks that the painting was "hung too high where it could easily be forgotten" (72), the painting represents Faraj as the literal household head.

The removal of Faraj's painting signals the beginning of his retreat from the public sphere. Moosa - at Najwa's behest and under pressure from a revolutionary committee eager to test their family's loyalty - takes Faraj's picture down. When he does, the smile on Faraj's picture seems to change, and he looks "embarrassed now, and the trees behind him look… even less lifelike" (90-1). In his place, Moosa hangs a picture of 'the Colonel' (Qaddafi), with "two mysterious lines carved into his cheeks like brackets on either side of his mouth" (91). The brass plaque underneath the picture reads "*Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi, the Guide of the Libyan Popular Revolution*" (91). Presumably, Moosa wants Qaddafi's picture in the reception room to serve as evidence of the family's loyalty, should the revolutionary committee return. Replacing Faraj's picture with Qaddafi's displaces him as household head. More importantly though, Qaddafi's picture introduces state intervention into their home and eliminates all hope of Faraj leading a democratic revolution.

Arendt explains that "the decline of the family indicates clearly that what actually took place was the absorption of the family unit into corresponding social groups" and government entities (40). Though Arendt argues that this process has already happened, Matar demonstrates how this state absorption of the family happens in an Arab (and specifically Libyan) context. Hanging up Qaddafi's picture has two effects. First, Qaddafi - a public figure - replaces Faraj as head of Suleiman's home. Second, Qaddafi forecloses the possibility that Faraj's picture could

similarly hang in other homes, too, as national hero whose portrait could replace Qaddafi's. Hanging Qaddafi's portrait ruins Faraj's shot at fame in the political arena. Faraj had promised to "guide" others like he guided Moosa (95), but only until *the* guide retakes his place in Suleiman's home.

And, Faraj's books definitively cut him out the public sphere. To add to Qaddafi's threatening portrait, the revolutionary committee men and especially Sharief's omnipresence in their neighbourhood force Moosa and Najwa to burn Faraj's books. Faraj, of course, endorses the book-burning (101). Moosa and Najwa pull from the master bedroom - the home's most intimate space - "mountains of books and papers" (92). Suleiman watches Faraj's "writing curl, turn red, grey, and vanish into black ash" as they burn in the backyard (93). Suleiman hides one book from the fire called *Democracy Now*, but that can't stop Moosa and Najwa from cutting Faraj off from all the intellectual resources that he needs to remain revolutionary. As Jurgen Habermas' book *The Structural Transformation of the Private Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* helps me argue, Faraj is one of "those few individuals who still seek to form their opinions through literature" (247) rather than the media. That's important because literature forms "a kind of opinion capable of becoming public, but actually nonpublic" (Habermas 247) - meaning an opinion formed by private reading but capable of inspiring public, political action. So, separating Faraj from his books destroys his revolutionary potential.

Meanwhile, Sharief drains Suleiman's home and neighbourhood of their remaining intimacy, and alters the neighbourhood's dynamics: the halfway public-private interactions between neighbours get subsumed to the goals of Qaddafi's state. Neighbours become informants for the state, and extend both hospitality and information to the revolutionary committee. Suleiman de-

scribes "Sharief, sitting in his white car, not minding the heat,… his gun probably still occupying the passenger seat beside him" (156). Pockmarked Sharief's camping in his car suggests that he's a transitory presence in their neighbourhood - a car isn't a permanent home and suggests mobility. But Um Masoud, the wife of a high-ranking government official named Jafer, brings Sharief cake because he "work[s] so hard, sitting in the sun all day" (163). Her small gesture adds comfort to Sharief's space and allows him to endure a little longer in their neighbourhood. Sharief, in short, becomes localized - a sinister fixture of their neighbourhood who won't leave until he captures Faraj. When Suleiman sees "Sharief waving at [him]," Najwa shuts the door and turns "the bolt twice" (156). Najwa might be able to shut him out their house physically, but she can't stop him from transforming the neighbourhood's social dynamics.

After being domesticated by Um Masoud, Sharief involves himself in the children's lives, becoming the neighbourhood's father figure where fathers are otherwise absent. He, for example, learns Suleiman's pet name used only by family and close family friends, calling him "Slooma" (131). Sharief says that Faraj is "a good friend" and that he's "trying to defend him [Faraj], but... need[s] evidence" (131). We can guess Sharief's real motives, but Suleiman trusts Sharief for two reasons. First, Sharief knows about Najwa's alcoholism, which he chooses "to keep quiet" (131). Sharief can supposedly be trusted with their family secrets. Second, Sharief uses the details he knows about their lives - like the "English fiery mints" (131) Faraj used to give Suleiman, Najwa's secret alcoholism - to manipulate Suleiman. Suleiman ends up feeling "so grateful [he] could have kissed his hand" (132). Sharief performs an intimate knowledge of Suleiman and his family, which gives him better access to the private evidence that condemns Faraj.

And when a fight breaks out between the neighbourhood boys, Sharief becomes Suleiman's surrogate father, disciplining Suleiman and completing his insertion in the neighbourhood. Suleiman tosses a rock at hemophilic Adnan, which threatens Adnan's life. Kareem (another neighbourhood boy) attacks Suleiman, but Sharief pulls them apart, telling 'Slooma' that the boys "can't just hit each other over nothing" (164). Taking Suleiman's side - Suleiman endangering Adnan certainly was *not* nothing - ingratiates Sharief to the boy. Suleiman describes how, "pulling [Suleiman] off the pavement by hand," Sharief "had sighed 'Slooma'" and whispers "it almost, claiming me [Suleiman]" - coddling him with the concern that he "craved" (165-166). Sharief picks sides and splits the boys from each other, which "split[s] the sea, creat[ing] an undertow that would pull [Suleiman] even further away from [best friend] Kareem" (165). Sharief obliges the narrator to see him as a father by supporting Suleiman. That leads Suleiman to "handing [Sharief what was supposed to be] Baba's book, *Democracy Now*" (178). Sharief imposes himself as a father in a neighbourhood missing adult men (which gives *In the Country of Men*'s title a satirical twist). But Sharief uses that power to destroy neighbours' relationships, isolate families, and win evidence of disloyalty like *Democracy Now*. Sharief represents governments' ability to destroy domestic space through surveillance.

Yet after father Faraj returns to their house, abused and bleeding (194), the balance of the family's domestic space seems restored. The damage Sharief did seems to change little. Still, Suleiman's house becomes more segregated and literally less reflective than before, with "the mirror in the bathroom covered" (195). While Faraj recovers from captivity, Najwa bars Suleiman from parts of the house and won't let him see his father. With the mirror covered so Faraj can't see his beaten form, Suleiman can't "even peek in on Baba" (195), which disturbs

Suleiman. When Faraj returns, Suleiman doesn't see their routine turn normal, either: "Mama didn't want me to wake him up when on Friday mornings I always ran to his bed and pounced on him" (196). The derangement of privacy in their home, with Suleiman left out of a deepening mystery in his own home (he wonders what happened to Faraj), troubles Suleiman. And, it troubles Faraj's position as father.

Faraj's battered body speaks to more than Qaddafi's power to dole out physical pain: Qadaffi can also render fathers unrecognizable to their own families. Suleiman starts to doubt "that the man in Baba's [Faraj's] bed was Baba" (202). He peeks through the bedroom window and sees "a naked man sitting on the bed, his back criss-crossed in dark glistening lines, some oozing in blood" (202). The man's face frightens Suleiman, with "eyes full of air or water or blood… like split rotten tomatoes… and his lower lip… as fat and purple as a baby aubergine" (202). With Najwa's restrictions on Suleiman seeing his father before he recovers, and with Suleiman's doubts about the 'monster,' the family can't restore intimacy. So, when Suleiman runs in the house shouting "who's in there?" (202), Faraj turns away and instructs Najwa to "take him away, he'll get nightmares" (203). Faraj becomes literally unrecognizable, and the old separations between private and public space become forever blurred by the state's interventions.

After Suleiman sees his injured father, we might expect to find a family happily reunited, but intimacy grows from which Suleiman finds himself excluded. So, the balance between the public and the private shifts almost entirely to the private sphere, which underscores Faraj's inability to participate in the public, political sphere. Suleiman tires of his parents' "new life together, where Baba *never went away* and Mama *was never ill*" (221, emphasis mine), and feels

stifled. Suleiman loses the "presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear [which] assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves" (Arendt 50); his life takes on the 'shadowy' quality of lives lived purely in the domestic sphere. So, Suleiman longs "for the summer to end and for school to begin" (221), which would at least force him to live again in the public eye. Suleiman missed his family's private life, but without the books that fuelled Faraj's ideas for political action *outside* the house, staying home can't satisfy for long. Private space needs to segue into the public sphere, too.

But Suleiman doesn't suffer most from forced domesticity - Faraj does. As *Country* closes, he stays trapped in his book-less house until death. And, Faraj can only watch as the Libyan government dismantles everything that makes his quiet life bearable, and his existence in his private home comfortable. Suleiman says that "in 1979, a few days after I was sent to Cairo [for school], the entire Libyan population was given three days to deposit liquid assets into the National Bank" (234). The government then puts withdrawal limits on all accounts, and Suleiman's parents can't sustain their posh lifestyle. Faraj has to take a job at a nationalized pasta factory (234). This state-enforced banking is an example of bringing "household and housekeeping activities" - which includes economics - "to the public realm" because "the private realm of the household was the sphere where the necessities of life, of individual survival as well as the continuity of the species, were taken care of" (Arendt 45). By regulating their wealth and property, Qaddafi's regime takes away the "chief condition for admission to the public realm and full-fledged citizenship" (Arendt 61). Beyond that, Qaddafi takes away Faraj's independence from the state. Faraj was once an international businessman, whose work and ideas extended *beyond*

Libya's borders. Now, he's reduced to working for his government in a local, nationalized pasta factory. Faraj's world retracts.

It's interesting how Faraj's new job, though putting a strain on their finances, both does and doesn't constrain his time. His pasta factory work has an "early start and noon end," which allows him to translate Niccolo Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio* (*Discourses on Livy*) from Italian to Arabic (235). Faraj sees *Discourses* as a more truthful extension of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, because Machiavelli "was sixty-two, so much wiser, and didn't have the Medici [the ruling family in Florence in Machiavelli's time] breathing down his neck" (235). *Discourses* represents the ideal writing and reading environment for Faraj - free from intervention by the Medici-like Libyan regime. But, as *Country* ends, Matar makes it clear that Faraj long lost any potential to live with Machiavelli's freedom as his life ends.

Kamal from *Anatomy of a Disappearance* helps me better understand the effect of Faraj's new budget and schedule on his participation in politics. Kamal shows me how the privilege of private space (without getting imprisoned in it) generates political power. Narrator Nuri knows that his "Father [Kamal] did not have a job; that he did not need to work for money; that he had inherited a good amount from his father... the last in a long line of silk merchants" (98). Financial stability frees Kamal to obsess about "the military dictatorship that ruled [Libya] our country," against which he "committed himself to fighting a war" (99). Kamal is, much like Edward Said and other affluent Arabs, better able to think on politics and effect change *because* of his privilege.

However, Kamal doesn't spend more time than Faraj in private space: Kamal spends "little time... at home" (98) while Faraj's schedule remains open. Rather, Kamal only uses home to

return to the public sphere as quickly as he can, "resting, reading in [his] studies, before returning to the secret obsession to which... [he was] devoted" (98). Rather than spending spare time in privacy, Kamal works politics. Kamal's privilege allows him spend little effort maintaining his powerful private sphere, where he can spend a minimum amount of time resting and reading before working to his political ends.

Faraj begins *Country* like that, too. Recall *Country*'s start, where we find that Faraj isn't really away on business, but organizing political dissenters (4-7). He's rich enough, and presumably has enough business contacts, to afford to not work even when he says he plans to. He doesn't have to work steadily to maintain his household, giving him ample time to spend away from both business and his family on political protest. But by *Country*'s end, Faraj only public presence is work at local pasta factory, and on the Libyan government's terms. He returns home and translates Machiavelli partially to "help keep the Italian alive" (235), and partially in a bid to earn the economic and intellectual capital that once enabled his political life (restoring his library by translating an Italian book). But his efforts are fruitless. Faraj, unlike Kamal, loses the capital he needs to maintain and rebuild his personal library.

So, Matar shows readers what happens to the now humiliated Faraj when he tries to recapture his old power. Recall that Suleiman saved a single book from the book-burning, *Democracy Now*. In 1994, Faraj gets arrested for reading to his factory coworkers "*Democracy Now*, the book that [Suleiman] had rescued from the fire" (235). Faraj's gesture baffles Suleiman: his father had lost the ideas that made him a threat to the Libyan government, so "there was indeed an element of intrigue and madness in the way Father [Faraj] had behaved" (236). Why resist now?

Democracy Now, in the absence of other tools of legitimation like prosperity, property, and privacy, becomes a liability rather than a source for revolt.

Suleiman then asks a key question: "Had he [Faraj] come to prefer death over slavery, *unlike my Scheherazade*, refusing to live under the sword" (236, emphasis mine)? This question touches on a (if not *the*) central issue at stake in *Country*. In invoking Scheherazade for the last time in *Country*, Matar asks: are there alternatives to telling stories in order to earn Arab freedom? *Should* Arabs be expected to sing under the sword, to live under the threat of penetration in their private lives, when they tell stories? Even while Matar's stories demonstrate how storytelling improves Arabs' lives, Matar questions this process' existence. Despite the tragedy in his life, Faraj's defiance of Scheherazade completes his wife Najwa's critique. If it seems like storytelling only serves Arab men and forgets women, Faraj shows us that 'singing under the sword' is neither an acceptable option for Arab men living in the ruins of their domestic space.

Yet I don't think that Matar resigns himself to storytelling's futility. After all, his novels allow anglophones to know the tragedy in Arabs' loss of private space. Moreover, in speaking back to Western media by telling complicated stories, Matar's texts seem hopeful about the potential of literary texts as correctives to the Arab place in anglophone societies. But, I've yet to address how Matar's novels specifically speak back to Western policy makers and media, which matters because this chapter tests the effectiveness of Matar's resistance to Western policy-makers and media. Rather, I've focused on how Matar writes back to an Arab regime. I'll connect Matar's critique of Arab governments' administration of Arabs' private lives with Western and specifically the American government's meddling in the Arab world.

Hisham Matar's *New Yorker* article "The Light" - which appeared on September 12, 2011, a day after 9/11's 10th anniversary - helps me connect Qaddafi's government with the West. Matar writes "The Light" in the context of the Arab Spring, and hopes for a day "where we might… live free from totalitarian rule, and independent of the *intrusive foreign powers that colluded with our dictators*" (38, emphasis mine). Western influence consolidates Qaddafi in Libya or Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. Matar remembers how "the countries we admired, Europe and America, paid us the insult of befriending our dictators and, when it came to our suffering, looking the other way" (38), how Europe and America participate in "remote-control colonialism" (38). Matar, in short, sees Western power as integral to everything the Libyan state does. So, though we don't see signs of American or French politicians in *Country* or *Anatomy*, the shades of their influence colour both texts.

And, the shadow of Western influence limits Libyan and Arab imaginations. Matar in "The Light" says that the dictators "also corrupted our imagination" (38) - describing their power to structure how Arabs think. This reflects the point I made in my first two chapters - that structures available for talking about Arabs shape how we conceive of Arabs. Matar takes this idea further, though, to argue that words and not just larger storytelling structures change what we see. These kitschy dictatorships "influenced even the words we [Matar, other Libyans, and Egyptians] chose to express love, *or how we felt about the moon and sunset*… it spoke in one note, monotonous and intolerant" (38, emphasis mine). Dictators, then, don't just limit the larger stories that readers use to understand the world - though they did decide "what we read, watched, and heard" (38). They also micromanage the words that citizens use in everyday conversation, exercising fuller control over Arab speech and domestic lives. Since these dictators derive their

legitimacy from Western rhetoric, it follows that Western and specifically anglophone influence places limits on the Libyan (and Arab) imagination. And when Arab citizens express themselves beyond the limiting rhetoric and power structures set up by their dictators, as Matar in "The Light" says happens with the Arab spring, Western commentators and media don't help. In fact, they become "hysterical whenever the subject of Islam [comes] up" (38).

The news, then, isn't the right medium to change attitudes about Arabs. But neither, it seems, is literature. Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* claims that literature could *once* (in the eighteenth century) form public opinion. The "bourgeois domain of interiority… required a public and could express itself through literature… [and] the public use of reason remained tied to literature as a medium" (246). Habermas affirms my idea that literature makes the private public - granting readers access to others' interiority and emotions without destroying their privacy. But Habermas was already claiming that reliance on literature was history in 1962, 50 years before I started my research: he emphasizes "those *few* individuals who still seek to form their opinions through literature" (247, emphasis mine). Plus, Matar's corpus asks why Arabs should justify their right to private and public space through storytelling in the first place. Given Habermas and Matar's reservations, that literature (especially Arab-anglophone literature) has a small audience and could get used for the wrong ends, how can texts like *In the Country of Men* change public opinion - especially if most the public will never read Matar's book?

I'd like to point to an idea in Oatley's *Such Stuff as Dreams* that helps me address Habermas and Matar's concerns. Oatley believes that "the important discussion of fiction is between friends, colleagues, and relatives" (178). Referencing French critic Pierre Bayard's *How to*

talk about books you haven't read, Oatley says that it doesn't matter if both parties have actually read the book in question when they discuss it. Because "we assimilate what we read to a schema of what we know, while retaining only salient details," when we do:

> "…discuss books of fiction, not only do we exchange our impressions of fragments we have read with the impressions of fragments in the inner libraries of other people, but we re-introduce this material - fiction - about what people are up to in the social world, back into the social world of conversation and relationship" (178).

Oatley argues that talking about books injects their ideas back in the social world - even if only *fragments* of a text (defamiliarizing moments, new empathy for Arabs) survive in readers' memories. Oatley, in short, suggests that literature's limited audience might not matter. Fragments of literature circulate in the social world, which can counter the justification for invading Arabs' space in the Middle East and West. And because "fiction grew out of conversation" (Oatley 196), conversation about fiction continues a cycle. Talking more about books (creating more conversation) generates more books, which creates more conversation. Ideally, Arabs - talked about in better ways - see their place in private and public spheres shift. So, more books and conversation translates to safer spaces and homes for Arabs.[24] And Matar specifically circulates complex ideas about Arabs that rehabilitate their place in the private and public spheres - ideas that circulate, if

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[24] I'd also point out that Oatley *Such Stuff as Dreams* directly addresses the difference between fiction and non-fiction "to counter the misgivings of certain scientists and policy makers that fiction might be perfectly pleasant, but that it is no more than a pastime" (162). Literature has powers that non-fiction, and especially the media, can't have. Oatley argues that "in fiction, as well as in genres like biography, emotions are critical... The emotions we experience are not primarily those of the characters, they are our own" (115). Conversely, "in non-fiction, the issues with which we engage may include people, intentions, and outcomes but they can be more various, and need not have our own emotions at the center" (115). Fiction, then, engages us personally. That personal touch helps explain how authors impact public conversation without having as large of an audience as journalists.

not among an audience of readers, then in a public anglophone repository of words, images, and storytelling strategies used to represent Arabs.

From my speculation on how literature's limited audience doesn't matter, I'd like to return to the question that I asked in chapter one and two. Literature can compete with the media and control how readers react to Arab private and public space. So, who do we cite as most responsible for that power? Or better yet, what interaction between writers, publishers, and readers lets literature undermine the media's excuses for seizing Arab space? Throughout my thesis, I've shown that the author has the most power to decide their stories' effects. Publishers might try to change novels' meaning with paratexts, and might entice authors to write publishable texts. But they can't control a text's narrative structure as carefully as an author. Readers might seem like the wildcard. Authors depend on readers' interpretation of their text, and who can guess what an individual thinks? But, empirical theory about reading shows that we can predict reader response. Most reader response isn't individual or original: it's a structured emotional response that follows steps, from defamiliarization to newfound empathy. So, considering that readers can be made to feel empathy through a mostly unconscious process, they aren't the centre of literary power. They’re symptoms of it.

Matar also lets me answer this question with some finality. Consider that Matar shows us that authors can reflect self-consciously on their own writing - he evaluates if his and other Arab-anglophones' writing answers the political problems they set out to solve. Matar's meta-reflection on how his types of storytelling might change arrangements of Arab space shows us that writers aren't passive victims of publishers' marketing. Nor do they remain at their readers' mercy.

Matar's mastery over the novel's form and function proves that authors can exercise control over the types of stories they tell, and should be held accountable for their writing's real world effect.

I don't hold writers accountable to punish them. I also don't want to tell Arab-anglophones what to write. But, finding out that writers are accountable for and aware of - at best - their literature's influences on what the public believes matters. It matters because writers have considerable power. And just like I'd ask of anyone in power, I'd ask if Arab-anglophone writers are using their privilege wisely. All Arab-anglophone authors I've covered, Leila Aboulela and Fadia Faqir included, undermine the erasure of Arabs' private and public space - that has value. But, as Edward Said argues in *Representations of the Intellectual: The Reith Lectures*, "although there is an inestimable value to what an intellectual [or author] does to ensure the community's survival during periods of extreme national emergency" (41) we shouldn't suspend better judgment and support flawed storytelling simply because authors like Aboulela and Faqir show allegiance to the Arab cause. There's value in identifying who does that work best and why.

It's crucial to decide who's carefully reflecting on their power as an author because, in doing so, we learn whose diagnosis of Arabs' spatial problems might be trusted. And Matar uses his power and privilege as a male Arab author most responsibly. He demonstrates a careful understanding of the Arab problem in *In the Country of Men*: that the Western state and media, colluding with the Middle East's dicatorships, disturb the balance between the Arab's private and public spheres. Matar's novels, in other words, can correctly identify the Arab problem post-9/11. They also, simply in correctly identifying then circulating the problem, have the power to change it.

In this chapter, I argued that Matar correctly identifies the Arab issue with space in his novel *In the Country of Men*. Matar doesn't explore any supposed cultural clash between exiled Arabs and the West since, as Merritt argues in "Tidy and Untidy Novels: The Booker Prizes 2006 - 2007," "after Suleiman is sent away to Egypt *In the Country of Men* seems to run out of steam, so it is hardly a study of exile" (291). Instead, Matar in *Country* (and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*) guides his readers through the emotional breakdown of a fictional family's private life when the Libyan state interferes. I argued that his novels make readers feel for real Arabs (even with his reservations about storytelling's uses) constructing "this [Libyan domestic] space so artfully that readers scarcely notice its strangeness, for it is the only world its nine-year-old narrator knows" (Scanlan 267). So, Matar's work renders Western media's attempt to justify American (and, more generally, anglophone) intrusions in Arab homes to its publics less persuasive. He uses his and his protagonists' privilege to makes Arab space immediate and familiar to his readers.

So, through his novels' work, does Matar find Arabs a definitive home? Or, at least, a home for his protagonists? Not exactly. But does it matter? *In the Country of Men* ends with narrator Suleiman reuniting with his mother at twenty-four years old in Alexandria, where his domesticity and his ability to use the word "Mama!" return after his long absence (245). *Anatomy of a Disappearance* ends with narrator Nuri reclaiming his father's apartment and possessions, finding that he fits his missing father's clothes, "albeit stiffly" (245). Matar, at the very least, gives imperfect hope by the end of his novels. And that is, perhaps above all the complicated effects of his novels on readers, his novels' point. He grants Arabs the ability to endure, to hold out

hope that they might - after fighting for domestic space and political power in the wake of their disappearance - finally find a space safe enough to call home.

Conclusion

I've explored how privilege inflects storytelling about Arab-anglophones. I've demonstrated that certain Arab-anglophone authors, in their and their protagonists' gendered, economic, and intellectual privilege, can control Arab-anglophone literature's effect on their audience, and change the repository of words, images, and storytelling strategies that anglophones use to represent Arabs. This matters because, in the frame of empirical work about the effects of literature on readers, privileged authors like Edward Said and Hisham Matar can change the economic and social status of real life Arabs. Storytelling can change lives - regain for Arabs private and public space (important for accessing political power, as I argued in chapter three with Hannah Arendt) and complicate the cultural clash. But, so far, only elite Arab-anglophone storytellers writing about specific protagonists have that power.

Leila Aboulela and Fadia Faqir reinforce the cultural clash even as they invert it. In chapter one, I argued that Aboulela and Faqir hew close to the typical immigrant narrative. They work on terms set by anglophone policymakers and media. So, Aboulela and Faqir reinforce the structures that the media already uses to talk about Arabs, and give up their power to decenter their readers. Aboulela and Faqir's storytelling stems only partially from a systemic lack of privilege: Hanan al-Shaykh writes a remarkably similar story about an underprivileged female protagonist without leaning on stereotypes of honour killings. al-Shaykh proves that women writing about Muslim misogyny have better options - that gendered privilege need not *always* limit what can be said. Still, Faqir and Aboulela turn to storytelling that can harm Arabs - first, by representing Arabs in caricatures, and second, by bracing stereotypes with their authority as Arab-Muslim native informants. The discovery that the two female authors of my study can't change real-life Arabs'

social conditions (in desirable ways, at least), coupled with finding that certain types of stories *can*, disappoints. We learn that books like *The Translator* or *The Cry of the Dove* can endorse harmful fictions about Arabs. And in the context of my larger project, we learn that the missing privilege of *The Translator* and *The Cry*, where both texts turn to civilizational clash to explain what's right with Islam (*The Translator*) or wrong with Muslim misogyny (*The Cry*), limits Arab-anglophone women's powers to change the stories circulating in anglophone societies.

Next, I read Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place* in chapter two. In fitting the narrative to the real (and chaotic) form of historical Said's life, narrator Said tells an alternative story - one that Said doesn't change to fit the cultural clash of an expected immigrant narrative. It's also in chapter two that I introduced the idea that the media (and the foreign policymakers that use the media as a tool to generate consent) competes with literature as *the* discourse shaping how we speak about Arabs. Said has intellectual privilege since he, throughout his body of criticism in books like *Covering Islam*, exhibits awareness of how the media works to caricature Arabs. Said has economic privilege - he has the means to tell an unmarketable story that doesn't exoticize his Palestinian identity. And Said has gendered privilege because he need not rely on an underdeveloped vocabulary for speaking about Arab women's problems (since he isn't one, nor does he write of one).[25] Privilege, then, allows Said to create competing narratives that change how we tell stories about Arabs. Using Barthes' function-correlate structure, I showed how Said seeds

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[25] I mean here that, unlike Aboulela and Faqir, Said doesn't have to turn to the cultural clash or specifically anglophone feminisms unsuitable for speaking about Arab women's problems. Nor does he have to take enormous pains, as would Aboulela and Faqir's likely need do, to make Arab or Muslim feminisms comprehensible for anglophone readers. That's a big privilege, and makes the complicated storytelling of Said's *Out of Place* easier.

Of course, speaking about Arab and Muslim feminism goes beyond the scope of this project. I only mean to say that it's little wonder that Aboulela and Faqir turn to popular Western understandings of the 'free' woman contrasted with the veiled Arab-Muslim woman. When they have limited vocabulary and precious few story structures in English to capture the complexity of the Arab-anglophone woman's experience, it's tough to tell stories as complicated as Said or Matar's.

moments of privilege (even if they're moments of hardship or racism in his privileged education and contact with Europe) that correlate later in the memoir with wild deviations from normal vocabulary and structures in Arab storytelling. Said's intellectual, economic, and gendered privilege links with his ability to undercut the cultural clash's structure. Author Said can change his readers' ideas about Arabs because narrator Said's early access to privilege allows him to surprise readers later in his text.

When I discussed Hisham Matar's novels *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*, I moved to narratives that aren't content - unlike Said in *Out of Place* - to rest in the provisional space afforded to Arabs in anglophone society. After comparing how privilege limits and expands the stories that Aboulela, Faqir, and Said tell, I talked about how Matar uses his privilege to restore Arabs' access to private space. Without private space, which allows an intellectual and emotional life that shelters from and prepares for participation in the public sphere, Arabs have little political power. In *In the Country of Men*, Matar makes that point explicit. The invasions of the Libyan state into the private home of Faraj destroy his potential as a revolutionary. And, with the recent penetration of anglophone states (especially the United States) into Arabs' private spaces (their homes, religion, airport luggage, bodies, countries of origin, among others) to regulate their foreignness and demand complicity, it's easy to use Matar's books to extrapolate. Similar privacy-destroying practices in Canada, the United States, and Britain hold Arabs in the public eye as objects to be debated on, examined, and judged.

Matar displays Arabs' private lives. He helps his audience access a fictional Arab interiority. So, Matar not only reveals Arabs' fundamental problem with space. In his exhibition of fictional Arab lives - in sacrificing his protagonists' privacy - Matar protects the privacy of real-life Arabs.

Matar's texts stir readers' empathy, and remind readers that Arabs deserve private space. And Matar's texts thus restore sanctity to the space which Arabs lost after 9/11 - or, more likely, never had to begin with.

If I have any final point, it's that Matar's privilege proves generative. That is, Matar's personal privileges (his gender, his education, his successful literary career in the anglophone world) begets privilege for other Arabs when he writes. The stories he tells open space and create new vocabulary for underprivileged Arabs to, if not write more complex and surprising stories than Aboulela and Faqir, at least enter the public sphere in anglophone societies. Matar doesn't directly reach more than a limited literary audience, nor does he revolutionize Arab storytelling. But, he's symptomatic of a new kind of Arab-anglophone storytelling, and an agent who writes about and teaches anglophone audiences new ways to position Arabs.

However, I also want my work to spark new studies. That's why I want to propose three directions that my work opens for study. First, further research on privilege in Arab-anglophone literature might prove productive. Edward Said's *Out of Place* and Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance* take privileged perspectives. Said and Matar write stories from the vantage of riches, elite educations, and social capital. Said and Matar are also men writing about men. Edward Said and Hisham Matar's male characters - compared to Leila Aboulela and Fadia Faqir's oppressed female protagonists - seem privileged enough to speak against and beyond the supposed cultural clash.

I should be careful here. I'm not arguing that men should speak for women. Nor do I argue we should allow male and other privileged perspectives to dominate. They shouldn't. These per-

spectives deserve critical scrutiny. We need to dismantle their often unquestioned right to speak for and above others, or risk losing perspectives vital for understanding the Arab experience.

But I have argued in this thesis that, while we dismantle and question the privilege of being rich, educated, male, or all at once, we should also ask: what unique critiques do privileged perspectives allow writers to make? What does their privilege let them say that, for the time being, the less privileged can't? These questions are important. First, because dismissing the special critique that privileged Arab-anglophones like Said and Matar provide just because they're privileged (and limited to representing the experiences of a smaller subset of Arab-anglophones) doesn't make sense. But also because asking these questions allow us to locate the exact mechanism of privilege (gender, money, social connections, etc.) that lets certain Arab-anglophones write beyond the cultural clash, then take steps to fix the excluded's access to privileged perspectives.

Geoffrey Nash's *The Arab Writer in English: Arab Themes in a Metropolitan Language, 1908-1958* helps me isolate the privilege that separates Said and Matar from Aboulela and Faqir. Nash speaks of a specific type of Arab-anglophone writer: Lebanese and Christian in the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, he captures the essence of privilege that today's Arab-anglophone writers share when he says that writers' "exposure... to Western, metropolitan codes, and their use of them to enunciate a common concern with Arab cultural and political meanings... enables us... to address such a category as Anglo-Arab discourse" (3-4). All the writers I examined access the Western city. They all use 'western metropolitan codes' (the English language, colonial or western educations, the novel) to talk about Arab problems. Faqir and Said hold doctorates. Leila Aboulela and Hisham Matar hold Master's degrees. In sum, the Arab-anglophone

writers I analyze seem to share the same codes and privileges - a simultaneous access to Arab and western culture. But, if they share similar privileges, how can I explain the contrast between Said or Matar's work and Aboulela or Faqir's?

The largest difference likely comes from gender, as I've suggested throughout my project. Do Arab-anglophone men have privileges that women don't when writing literature, especially when gender intersects with education and economics? And it's here that future studies should push the envelope. Why does Faqir (educated in both Jordan and England) write of poor immigrant Salma in *The Cry of the Dove* while Matar writes of affluent Arab men who stay in the Arab world in his novels? Why does Leila Aboulela defend Islam by writing a *halal* (permissible in Islam) novel about a chaste, lower middle-class Muslim woman while Said searches for home in his elite background?

Gender, of course, doesn't condemn Aboulela and Faqir to write one way. But Faqir and Aboulela find gendered problems (Arab patriarchy, Western stereotypes about women in Islam) in which neither Said nor Matar need invest themselves wholly while they formulate more complex representations of Arab-anglophones. We need to examine gendered privilege in order to explain why Aboulela and Faqir's plots don't move beyond the cultural clash. We need to ask: what makes Faqir and Aboulela believe that the cultural clash - in its parody of Arab and Muslim culture - helps them represent Arab women's problems? It might be worth testing this perspective on other recent Arab-anglophone texts to see if it holds true, too, like Ahdaf Soueif's 1999 *The Map of Love* and Rabih Alameddine's 2008 *The Hakawati* ('the storyteller').

Second, Philip Mazzocco et al. in their study "This Story Is Not For Everyone: Transportability and Narrative Persuasion" test the ability of narratives to create empathy for both minorities

and the LGBTQ community (Mazzocco et al. use the outdated term ‘homosexuals’ in their study). Their data "suggests that when recipients [readers] become immersed [or transported] in narrative worlds their attitudes and beliefs are often changed in the process" (366). Stories have a unique "ability to create attitudinal traction even when rhetorical arguments often fall on deaf ears" (367). In short, well-written stories are more likely to absorb readers then reshape their attitudes - a finding that I've presented using other studies. Mazzocco et al.'s finding seems worth testing on actual Arab-anglophone fiction, especially to see if their work on minorities apply to my texts.

My argument rests on the premise that narratives can change readers, but I haven't looked to the formal properties of stories that can transport readers into changing their beliefs: characters, dialogue, and description. I avoid analyzing these properties because they're hard to assess - in conventional literary criticism, at least - without making tough judgments.

However, Mazzocco's work and mine suggest where further studies can go. After deciding how to distinguish good stories from bad, further studies might ask: do 'bad' stories (with low transportability) about Arab-anglophones have the same impact on readers' beliefs as the 'good' (with relatable characters and style)? As far as I'm aware, no one has collected empirical data specifically about Arab-anglophone literature changing its audience's beliefs about Arabs. This data could test the arguments I make on real readers. For example, do stories with complex representations of Arab-anglophones (Said, Matar) also tell more engaging stories in readers' opinions? And if so, is the complexity of representations of Arab-anglophones a byproduct of stories' ability to engage readers - of a text's dialogue, characters, or style? If we find that writing

well about Arabs is the same as simply writing well, then crafting good fiction (with attention to creating rounded, lifelike characters) could be an act of social justice.

Finally, the Arab-anglophone private and public spheres - which I introduce in chapter three - seem a productive place to take further criticism. It correctly locates the issue with Arab rights. And, it provides a good metric for how far Arabs have come in gaining fair social positions: when Western media and foreign policy makers give ordinary Arabs little privacy and political say, and when Arabs represent themselves and their private space as threatened, Arabs likely don't occupy fair space.

But there is a problem with this metric. Evelyn Alsultany argues in her book *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* that much of US media after 9/11 - especially TV dramas - "narrated stories about innocent Arab and Muslim Americans facing unjust post-September 11 hatred" (3): 'fair and balanced' representations, in other words. But the circulation of representations that portray "Arab Muslim Americans as hardworking, often patriotic victims" (3) doesn't guarantee that Arabs get fair treatment. In fact, Alsultany warns against 'simplified complex' representations, where "sympathetic representations - whether Bush's speeches, TV dramas, news reports, or public service announcements - [get] cited as examples of a new era of multicultural sensitivity" (5). Western citizens cite rare exceptions in the representation of Arabs and Muslims - despite America and others' dominant "passage of racist policies" (7) - to claim that society has somehow transcended racism. That creates "a postrace racism" (7). Though I affirm that literature has a stronger impact than the media on readers' beliefs, Alsultany has a point: "a diversity of representations, even an abundance of sympathetic characters, does

not in itself demonstrate the end of racism, nor does it solve the problem of racial stereotyping" (13).

What if, rather than correcting readers, readers take the existence of fair representations of Arab-anglophones by Arab-anglophones in niche literature to mean that American, British, or Canadian society is postrace? What if Arab-anglophone literature mistakenly convinces its audience that Arabs make their voices heard more often and more fiercely than they actually do? Further studies on the Arab private and public spheres need to take these questions into account. If Arab-anglophone literature's audiences read Arab-anglophone stories as proof that the Arab problem of privacy, among others, are somehow taken care of, reading this literature might not have the protective effect that I claim.

In sum, we need to keep studying Arab-anglophone literature - to question its many functions. When we understand Arab-anglophone literature, we rehumanize one of the Western world's most maligned groups. We protect Arab-anglophones' privacy and dismantle the flimsy stereotypes on which the media and foreign policy makers rely. And we acknowledge that literature has more influence on social positions than we might believe: we justify the study of literature itself. And by the study of literature, I don't mean it as a stale noun - a piling of studies for the sake of it - but as an ongoing critical practice applied to Arab-anglophone texts.

Edward Said in his essay "Secular Criticism" (from his 1983 collection of essays *The World, the Text, and the Critic*) decries how "specialization and professionalization… as well as a surprisingly insistent quasi-religious quietism, have transported the professional and academic critic of literature - the most focused and intensely trained interpreter of texts produced by culture - into another world altogether" (25). Said's "Secular Criticism" is a symptom of critics' anxieties

in his time, but it's also a salve for our time.[26] Said thinks of criticism as an ongoing practice that defines itself by its *opposition* to other types of thinking - "its difference from other cultural activities and from systems of thought of method" (29), especially of filiative (birth, the nation, our jobs) and affiliative (political beliefs, our context, our education) systems that support the status quo (25). Criticism then, should circulate as an oppositional discourse - one that refuses to legitimize the state in anglophone societies' universities. And criticism, like literature, has value even if it's not read widely. When literary critics pay attention to the ways that texts inflect the real world rather than just signal it, when literary critics refuse to legitimize their culture's simplifying, exclusionary systems, and when literary critics *write* about that, their refusal of silence and complicity has real power even when it's unread. When the critic refuses complicity and writes real criticism, they - as a symbol of higher institutions, of the university, and of "the most focused and intensely trained interpreter of texts produced by the culture" (25) - withhold a powerful seal that could enable regressive, racist, or received ideas. Critics' real power might not rest in what they do or who they reach but, rather, in the prestige that their criticism withholds or revokes.

It's in this active practice of criticizing Arab-anglophone texts, especially in my constant imagining of how these texts might reflect and affect real-life Arabs' status (which includes me), that I see as the thread that gives my project real-world application. I can't claim that my project creates any popular awareness of Arab literature, privilege, or the way that literature's reception changes the living situation of Arabs. I can neither guess who might one day read my work, be-

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[26] Said's comments reflect when he wrote. 1983 marked the aftermath of the theory wars of the 70s and 80s, where critics like Said directed ire towards the 60s cult of textuality (think the death of the author, Barthes, and Derrida). There seemed for intellectuals like Said "no contact [of 60s criticism] with the world of events and societies" (25), removing texts from the circumstances that create them.

sides a tiny, highly specialized, professional audience (the kind of whom Said would be suspicious). But I can say that I noticed how I represented myself as an Arab, and the way that images of Arabs in texts - circulating in the popular imagination - changed the choices I made. I learned, in short, to cultivate a critical mindset. The critical work I produced changes the way that I represent myself, speak about my identity, and justify the importance of literature to my community as an Arab-anglophone. In adopting the mindset of the secular critic, I've found better strategies for practicing my identity. I've cultivated an intellectual privilege that will, in small ways, change the way I circulate stories about Arabs.

Beyond the personal change that my project sparked, and though I said that I can't claim with certainty that my criticism does anything beyond cultivate my own critical consciousness, I also have hopes for what my project may do for other critics. My criticism is a call for anglophone critics to pay attention not just to Arab storytelling, but to its details: its plotting, its personalities, its privileges. We need to watch the ways that storytelling changes real-life Arabs' opportunities in anglophone societies, and distinguish stories that affirm the media's harmful representations of Arabs from those creating more complex representations. I want to generate dissent with Arabs' anglophone representations, rather than contentment that anglophone culture represents Arabs at all (think about the danger in Alsultany's 'fair and balanced' representations).[27] Because in generating dissent in the field of Arab-anglophone literature - in refusing to condone the status quo - critics encourage the development of complicated storytelling techniques.

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[27] Even in those texts where I found reasons to be satisfied with Arabs' likenesses (Said's memoir, Matar's novels), I argued that privilege produces these valuable representations. I don't see myself, then, as satisfied in any sense with what Said and Matar do. Rather, in outlining how Said and Matar's texts contribute to Arabs' well-being while two female Arab-anglophone writers struggle to do anything but affirm the cultural clash, I generate dissent. Why, in the Arab-anglophone field, should rich, intellectual *male* writers be the only ones to produce space and privilege for Arabs?

The intellectual privilege that we cultivate in this type of criticism, then, may not only be the discovery that certain texts can change anglophones' repository of Arab images. In refusing quietism and spurning the critics' seal of approval, in discussing the limitations of Arabs' self-representation in literature, and in thinking about way those limitations inflect real Arab lives, critics dispute how anglophones talk about Arabs. And, critics can, alongside the literary texts they look at, help Arabs win safe space in an otherwise unfriendly anglophone public sphere.

How can we make room for feminist Arab texts that don't need to rely on the cultural clash or culturally-insensitive feminisms to tell stories? Do my ideas still hold when tested on real readers, or when we look at Arab-anglophone writing's mechanics? And, while we ask these questions, how can we make sure that Arabs' improved visibility in the West's private and public spheres won't get construed as an already solved problem? These three directions for further study - which include gender, empirical studies, and the public/private spheres - as well as the countless questions that I've had to exclude, marks the start of an intellectual quest to win Arabs safe space. And that journey's best tool is the mindset of the secular critic.

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