

Ahdāf Soueif Makes a Map for Love: A Reality or a Fantasy Through the Meeting of Civilizations and Times? A Dialectic Vision in the Novel *The Map of Love* by the Egyptian Novelist Ahdāf Soueif

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ABSTRACT: *It is impossible to talk about literature except through its genres. Besides, it is impossible to deal with any genre without starting with one of its types. When the writer decides to create a literary work, he produces it in the frame of a story, a novel or a poem within a general perception of literature, where all literary genres meet. The Arab novel has developed since the middle of the last century and it has achieved a presence that imposes itself on other genres and types, especially poetry, which kept occupying the central position in creativity. The historical novel, for example, was established in the Arab world by Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914) at the beginning of the twentieth century, modelled on the Western historical novel and a lot of Arab novelists wrote in its form, stressing in one way or another that they were writing a historical novel. The historical novel is a type of novel in which history blends with imagination, and it intends to describe a certain period or a certain major event in a suitable narrative style that is based on history data, but without being tied or committed to it but often without adherence or commitment to them in most cases. When Ahdāf Sueif wrote *The Map of Love*, she introduced it in a dazzling way because it is based on the reader's manner of reading history and the concept of history through an amazing love story that is full of beauty that makes the reader unite with the text.*

KEYWORDS: external separation, internal assimilation, colonizer, colonized, cultural, violence, natural acculturation.

INTRODUCTION

The historical novel enjoys widespread popularity, and is one of the prominent representatives of this type of novel, besides Walter Scot in English, Tolstoy in Russian, Alexander Dumas in French, and Jurjī Zaydān, who wrote his novels in Arabic. The historical novel is concerned with transferring news, events, and historical stories in different ways such as oral transmission, the transmission of documents, and the transmission of books and other written works. At the beginning of its evolution, it was a kind of transfer that depends on the oral transmission that depends on memorization and memory. After the spread of recording, the oral transmission of documents and written messages were added to oral transmission. This was followed by oral transmission of books and works with the names of their writers.

The historical novel in Arabic literature played a prominent role in achieving the goals that it sought to reach. For example, it instilled life in the past for the sake of reading the present and looking forward to the future, and benefitting from the lessons of history. If history is defined as the events and incidents that took place in the past times, the historical novel as it is defined by Moḥammad al-Madi is an imaginative text that was woven around historical events and characters¹.

Hala Fuad says that the novel that is related to history and is connected to it constitutes the most abundant and intensive texts in the spaces of imagination, the sharpness of surprise, the depth of ambiguity, the wealth of puzzle, and exciting overwhelming surprise².

George Lukasz (1930-1992) says that the historical novel is a novel that stirs the present, and the contemporary people live it by their previous history. It is also a literary artistic work, whose material is 'history', where the novelist employs his vision and experiences to achieve a goal that he pursues, and its real beginning took place in the West by Walter Scot at the beginning of the nineteenth century³.

Said Yaqtin says that it is a narrative work that aims to reconstruct a period in the past in an imaginative way, where historical characters overlap with imagined characters. The historical material is strongly present in the historical novel but it is not rigid, and it is introduced in an artistic creative way. Therefore, those who studied it resorted to making a comparison between historical narration and the historical novel, distinguishing between them from the point of view of 'reality' and 'imagination'. The historical narration introduces 'reality' and narrates the events that are compatible with reality, while the historical novel is closer to imagination and creativity⁴.

The novel is pulled between two obsessions: *Historical authenticity*, which refers to the truth of the novel, and the historical sources regarding the rise and fall of states, wars, events, and minutes. The other obsession is related to the *components of fictional art and its aesthetic necessities*. Each text, according to Roland Barthes, is a collective text inside which there are other texts at changing levels and forms that we might identify, slightly or largely, which are texts of a previous culture, and texts of the present culture.⁵

¹ al-Qadhi, Moḥammad (2008). *al-Riwaya wa al-Tarikh: Dirasat fi Takhyil al-Marji'iy*. 1st ed. Tunis: Dar al-Ma'rafa li al-Nashr wa al-Tiba'ah wa al-Tawzi', p. 145.

² Fouad, Aḥmad, Hala (2009). "al-Mutakhayal al-Riwa'i bayn al-Tarikh wa al-Metaphiziqi" in *Tajareb fi al-Ibda' al-'Arabi*. Wizarat al-'Ilam al-Kuwatiya. *Majallat al-'Arabi*. 1st ed., p. 250-253.

³ Lukasz, George (2008). *al-Riwaya al-Tarikhia*. 1st ed. Tr. Jawad Kazim. Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'rafa li al-Nashr wa al-Tiba'a, p. 145.

⁴ Yaqtin, Said (2009). "al-Riwaya al-Tarikhia wa Qadhaya al-Naw al-Adabi". *Majallat Nazwa*. Issue 44 at: <http://www.nizwa.com/articles.php>.

⁵ al-Qadhi, Moḥammad, *al-Riwaya wa al-Tarikh: Dirasat fi Takhyil al-Marji'iy*, p. 23.

Qassem Abdo Qassem attributes the flourish of the Arab historical novel to factors that are related to the novelist and others that are related to the reader. He says that probably the novelist's political, social, and ideological attitude is the element that motivates him to choose the historical novel to be the field of his creativity. However, the readers' interest in reading the historical novel stems from the need to the knowledge that it provides, and the pleasure that is achieved from reading it. It is also connected to the desire to face that continuous unjust attack on the Arab identity, historically and culturally. It is also connected to the confusing feeling that seizes most of the intellectuals with regard to their essential life and their relationship with the West⁶.

The Study

Said Yaqtin maintains that history is based on conformity with reality, while the novel is inclined to the imagination, which is the essence of a story-telling narration. He wonders: What does the novelist do when he derives the components of his narrative material from a time that he does not live in? He adds: Does the writer write a historical novel or just a novel, regardless of its kind? And what about the aesthetic dimensions of the novelistic text?⁷

Questions of the Study

The study tries to give answers to the following questions:

- What is the connection between the novel and history?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the historical material and its manifestations in the context of the narrative representation?
- Does the novel, as an imaginative material, violate the 'sanctity' of the historical facts?

The novel under study *The Map of Love*⁸ by the Egyptian writer Ahdāf Soueif⁹ covers 702 pages. It was originally written in English and later translated in to Arabic by the

⁶ Qassem ' Abdo, Qassem (2009). "al-Riwaya al-Tarīkhiya al- 'Arabiya: Zaman al-Izdihar" in *Tajareb fi al-Ibda ' al-Adabi*. Kuwait: Wizarat al-Ilam al-Kuwaitiya. *Majallat al- 'Arabi*. 1st ed, p. 236-249.

⁷ Yaqtin, Said (2012). *Qadhaya al-Riwaya al- 'Arabiya al-Jadida wa al-Hudud*. 1st ed. al-Ribat: al-Dar al- 'Arabiya li al- 'Ulum, p. 159.

⁸ Soueif, Ahdāf (2010). *The Map of Love/Kharitat al-Hub*. Tr. by Fatima Mousa. 1st ed. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.

⁹ Ashraf Serif was born in Egypt in 1950 and has been living between Cairo and London since then. She graduated from the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of Cairo in 1971. Then she travelled to London and continued her studies at the University of Lancaster in England, and specialized in Linguistics. She settled there where she married the English author and poet Ian Hamilton. She got her Ph.D. degree in 1978, and was awarded an honorary doctorate from two British universities. Soueif's recent work is *Fi Muwajahat al-Madafi. Rihla Falastiniya/Under the Gun: A Palestinian Journey*, (2000), is a collection of literary articles. Her first collection of short stories in English, *Aisha*, was published in 1983. Her first novel in *The Eye of the Sun* was published in 1992. Her translated into Arabic include: *Zinat al-Haya / The Adornment of Life*, *Zammar al-Raml/ Sandpiper* (two collections of short stories), and *The Map of Love* (a novel) (1999).

writer's mother Fatima Mousa¹⁰. In my opinion, the translator succeeded in the Arabic version of *'Kahritat al-Hub* in transferring the details of that 'map' and overcoming all the barriers between the two languages. The novel sounds as if it had been actually written in Arabic, as it moves elegantly between several cultures, and combines several times and extended decades. In that 'map', various types of cultures from the East and the West live side by side, from Egypt, Palestine, Britain, America, and other spatial stations among whose features and cultures the novel floated.

In my opinion, *The Map of Love* is a novel of a long epic nature that has not been distorted despite the changes in time, space, faces, and dialects, and thus, the novel in its Arabic version represents a special case and a family project. The daughter worked hard to achieve it in its first English version and the mother stabilized the achievement in its translation into Arabic and established it as one of the significant contemporary narrative texts in Egypt and the Arab world.

The Map of Love constitutes the 'voice of love' that replaces the 'voice of conflicts' and introduces several questions regarding the substitution of conflicts with the voice of love, e.g: What if 'love' becomes the motor that moves peoples instead of 'conflicts'? What if 'conflicts' disappear forever and 'love' substitutes them? What if love is adopted in dividing the maps and ignoring the political borders and constant conflicts?

In *The Map of Love*, love in its different dimensions nearly constitutes the fundamental focus from where the events of the novel emerge, and through it, its time threads that extend from the beginning of the twentieth century to its end meet.

In this novel, Ahdāf Soueif writes Egypt's social and political history through a circumstantial follow-up of a British lady called Lady Anna Winterbourne, who comes to Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century out of love to know its places. She meets Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, the national personality, who loves her and marries her, and consequently, she belongs to him and adopts his issues. After the murder of her husband, and in fulfillment of his desire, Anna Winterbourne takes her daughter, leaves Egypt, and returns to England as she promised him. Her news is broken and reappears at the end of the twentieth century, after an absence of a period of about a century through her letters and diary. These papers return to Egypt to settle with Amal al-Ghamrāwi, Laila al-Baroudi's granddaughter, sister of Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, carried by Isabel Parkman, the youngest granddaughter of Sharīf Pasha and Anna Winterbourne. Ahdāf Soueif offered the character of Amal al-Ghamrāwi, a forty-year-old lady, the role of connecting the Present with the Past, and completing the rest of the forgotten tale or ignored story.

¹⁰ Fatima Mousa is Ahdāf Soueif's mother. She translated her daughter's epic novel *Kahritat al-Hub* / *The Map of Love* into Arabic, which Ahdāf had written in English. The novel was awarded the Poker Award and received an international reputation.

Therefore, *The Map of Love* constitutes, **first**, the story that the Egyptian girl, Amal al-Ghamrāwi writes at the end of the twentieth century, when a box arrives her from Isabel Parkman, the American granddaughter of Anna Winterbourne. The box concerns her Grandmother, Anna Winterbourne, the British who discovered that there is a distant relationship between her and Amal al-Ghamrāwi: " The American girl came to Amal's apartment. Her name was Isabel Parkman, and the box was in the bag of the car"¹¹.

Inside the box, Amal al-Ghamrāwi finds letters, some newspapers and other stuff that belong to Anna Winterbourne, who lived in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century. Amal al-Ghamrāwi feels so strongly connected to the diary that she sometimes imagines that the memoirs speak to her. Amal starts arranging the papers according to their dates, sizes, and types of their news items. She checks out the connected ones among them, and among them, she finds papers that are written in her grandmother's handwriting.

Then al-Ghamrāwi starts weaving and telling her story and memoirs and recording them depending on Anna's diary, as if she was urging her to tell history from her point of view. In this way, Amal finds herself involved in the same role as her Grandmother Laila al-Baroudi, found herself a century ago: "This is not my story. This is a story that I found in a box... which came from London to Cairo... it is a story of two women... Isabel, the American, and Anna Winterbourne, her British Grandmother, and originally the box owner. As for me, if I have a role in this story, it is the same role as my Grandmother had, a hundred years ago: the role of the narrator of her brother's love story"¹².

Second, it is a second story that writes itself by itself through the extension of the Past into the Present, the return of the characters of the Present to the characters of the Past, and the rotation of the cycle of the century on these or those scenes and facts, which suggest similarity of today with yesterday.

Third, it is the opposite story that Ahdāf Soueif adopts in her novel here when she rereads the Past in the light of the present and vice versa when she puts the stereotypes of the past in front of the stereotypes of the Present and vice versa.

In this way, Anna Winterbourne turns into a living character who returned after about 90 years to be living with Amal al-Ghamrāwi in her imagination and becomes a real person in front of her eyes. Through those papers, she reveals Egypt since 1900 AD and leads us to clarify the state of the Arab world, the purchase of land in Palestine, the displacement of its people, the occupation of North Africa, the ways of resistance in both places, the scattered news, and the life among the English, among the opposition, and among the ruling class in that period.

¹¹ Soueif, Ahdāf, *Kharitat al-Ḥub/ The Map of Love*, p. 18.

¹² Ibid., p. 23.

Anna Winterbourne introduces Egypt's history in her own style and her own reading in that period, and clarifies an important period in Egypt that followed 1996 till 1999. Therefore, Amal al-Ghamrāwi writes through two periods of time. The reader finds the art of writing history as she projects on the Present through the Past that repeats itself, and reads the Present in the Past and the Past in the Present. She also reads the period chronologically. Ahdāf Soueif clarified that in the novel in its Arabic translation: "I wrote Anna a hundred years ago: I have no choice but be convinced that we are living in a terrible age of brutality – and we have no choice but – Amal inserts the slight change – to wait until history completes its cycle"¹³.

The events of the novel end with the same sentence of the diary, which Amal al-Ghamrāwi started reading, where Amal reads the last thing that Anna wrote in her memoirs and repeats reading them several times: "I tried, I tried sincerely to tell her, but she cannot or does not want to understand and give up the hope...she is waiting for it at any moment"¹⁴. Amal finishes her sentences, and looks for other things madly, messages or history that is related to the children but she does not find anything.

The **Characters** of the novel *The Map of Love* belong to the world of reality and facts. They are the people on whose shoulders the renaissance was raised at the beginning of the century, where the course of events come from two main sources: the **first** is the memoirs and letters of Anna Winterbourne, Grandmother of Isabel Parkman; and the **second** is the memoirs of Laila al-Baroudi, Grandmother of Amal al-Ghamrāwi, which reflect the other face of memoirs of Anna Winterbourne.

To complete the dimensions of the social-historical image, the narrator resorts to the newspaper archive and other literature in that period in which the characters of the novel move. In parallel with that past, the events of the Present move through Amal's observations, her confrontation with the variables, her defense of the farmers' rights on the land of the family, and then her search for the live sites in which the love story of Anna Winterbourne and Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi took place between Cairo and Minya. We enter with her the two worlds and live with one of the ancient families known for their national struggle in Egypt and their intimate affiliation to their land.

The Family Scene is not complete without mentioning the Palestinian branch of the family and their marriage relationship with al-Baroudi family through the character of martyr Shukri al-A'saly, whose character reflects the other face of the struggle in Palestine, between the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the British dominance. Besides Ahmad al-Ghamrāwi's marriage to Mariam al-Khaledi. From this door, the writer enters via her Narrator into her review of the first stages of the establishment of the State of Israel, and the historical circumstances that surrounded the issue at that time.

Through the wonderful ideal image in which Ahdāf Soueif represents the character of the Egyptian Sharīf al-Baroudi and his honesty, pride, and his just case, and then Anna's

¹³ Ibid., p. 697.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

British aristocratic character and the other official and non-official Egyptian and British characters that the novel deals with, she introduces to us a literary model of a group of scenes, whose style of description varies according to the time that she speaks about. She portrays the lifestyle at the turn of the century with its rich atmosphere, vocabulary, colors, and rites, in a style of a woman of a delicate sensation, and is an accurate observation, and quick in capturing the event and diving into the human interiors. Therefore, her description of the scenes of the city and the village, the inside of the houses, and their outside in a skillful style harmonizes with the rhythm of life in that stage.

When she moves to the Present, we see her resort to a faster style to describe with it the city in its liveliness and noise, but she describes the village in its pure nature and tranquility of atmosphere, despite the tragedies that took place in it as a result of the economic, and political changes in it previously.

In her natural movement between two periods, the author asserts that current events are a natural extension of what had begun at the turn of the century, and continued with Egypt's history and existence for thousands of years.

This idea of communication is revealed in the context of the political events that the novel deals with as they are reflected through the debates that take place between the intellectuals in both times.

The idea of communication in its human image is reflected in the characters of the novel, too. Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, who loves the countryside, and belongs to the earth as much as he loves the city and belongs to the modern life, looks at his extended land when the sun was setting, and stands reflecting: "A similar person stood before him two or three thousand years and saw this scene"¹⁵.

In this way, the events go on through the main narrator of the novel, Amal al-Ghamrāwi, and the reader follows the course of events of the Past, and at the same time, we follow with her the events of the Present as the last years of the twentieth century witnessed them.

The two times, the Past and the Present move in *two parallel lines*. **One** of them describes the struggle of the Egyptian men in their establishment of a modern state that seeks to liberate itself from the dominance of the colonizer, and the establishment of the principles of social justice, spread of education and woman's liberation. The **second line** is a faceless present time in which values and thoughts are in conflict, and the discourse of violence and fanaticism prevails in all its forms, and people's attitudes in it vary between a pessimistic attitude and another attitude that is still fraught with impulse and optimism, and there is a third attitude that sees history as an arbitrator.

The novel in its structure focuses on two narratives: the **first narrative** is related to the romanticism of the English lady, Anna Winterbourne with the honest patriotic Egyptian, Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 256.

second narrative is concerned with the romantics of the American Isabel Parkman with the American music composer of the Palestinian roots, Omar al-Ghamrāwi in 1997. In both narrative lines, falling in love with a patriot who is involved in a political activity (an Egyptian and a Palestinian consecutively) leads the two women to adopt political attitudes that contradict the interests of their country.

The two women travel to Egypt and become friends with the two sisters of their sweethearts (Laila al-Baroudi, sister of Sharīf al-Baroudi, and Amal al-Ghamrāwi, sister of Omar al-Ghamrāwi). This relationship will become later, especially in the Contemporary Narrative, the most important relationship for the two women. However, the motif that connects the two narratives together is a '*family box*' that Isabel inherited and reveals that her first Grandmother is Anna Winterbourne. Therefore, she has a distant relationship with Omar, whose first Grandmother was Laila al-Baroudi, Sharīf's sister, and Anna's closest friend. Omar encourages Isabel to move the 'box' to his sister Amal al-Ghamrāwi in Cairo, where the two contemporary women start building the old story out of the letters and memoirs of Anna Winterbourne and Amal al-Ghamrāwi.

Therefore, I maintain that Ahdāf Soueif's complicated narrative structure of the novel helped to discover the political, sexual, political, national and international connections under imperialistic circumstances, without reducing the local family narration on the patriotic side in an allegorical way or vice versa. Ahdāf Soueif resorts to several technical devices and narrative techniques to introduce the subject of the European "I" and the Egyptian "Other" from her private perspective as her heroine Anna Winterbourne was writing messages to her ex-father-in-law Mr. Charles or her friend Caroline, to tell them about her impressions about her adventures in the land of the 'Other', and the way the British imperialist treats the colonized Egyptian. Ahdāf Soueif's choice to the literature of 'diaries' was not accidental, but because of the influence of letters that was popular in the Victorian age, which was common among the English educated and intellectual ladies.

In my opinion, Ahdāf Soueif is a skilled photographer as she employs the art of photography in an artistic expressionistic way in this novel, where it enters the texture of her work smoothly and naturally as a part of the culture and education of the characters of the novel. Therefore, it is not only a feature of urbanization and modernization but one of the means of education and influence. Lady Anna is a painter by merit of her aristocratic English culture, and her entrance to Egypt's love was a collection of paintings that she repeatedly watched at South Kingston Museum in London by the English painter Frederick Luis (1805-1876), who was known of his accuracy of details and fascinating colors. She often resorted to the paintings of this painter when she needed to relieve herself, and she frequently stood in front of these scenes wondering if such a place existed on the Earth.

A live history is present in *The Map of Love*, and that history depends on documents and certificates that are hidden in it, but it refers them to the worlds of art. The novel of this study, for example, is a meta-historical tourist reading of Egypt in the twentieth century, as it summons important names that occupied a role in it. Among these names is the name of Imam Moḥammad Abdo, who was the best of Sharīf al-Baroudi'd friends,

the poet Ḥafiz Ibrahīm, and Qassem Amīn, defender of women's rights. Besides, the novel reveals different faces which are different from these names, and it is not satisfied with the known and popular things about these personalities. If not, what is the value of the novel, and what is the new things that it adds if it only shows something that people keep silent about, and picks a small hint and builds upon it? This appears clearly in several pages of the novel that need, in my opinion, broader spaces to detail and follow their many aesthetics!

In my opinion, *The Map of Love* is not interested in the facts of history even if it leaned on historical facts, and thus, the new Arabic narrative experiences broke away from the achievements of the pioneer of the historical novel, Jurjī Zaydān, after it went deep in questioning history and examining the complicated relationship between the employment of the historical material on the one hand, and the aesthetic dimension of the narrative fiction, on the other. This is the uniqueness of the novel, in my view, where history is introduced in a different vision and goals that we do not commonly see spread in the historical novels among the Arab authors, not only by the description of one lifestyle against another lifestyle but by facing the East with the West along the whole century.

The meeting of the Past with the Present was not the only confrontation that the events of the novel have, as Ahdāf Soueif draws 'reality' in the Past and the Present, and draws society and the condition of the individuals, customs, traditions, classes, and conflict between the villages and rural areas and the cities, and between the north and the south of Egypt in order to include the largest possible image of the complete image of society, and clarify it in the midst of events and in the Past and the Present in a super smart way. The idea in the novel of the study depends on highlighting the Past and the Present with regard to the time of writing the novel from several reading entrances and several aspects from where the text and its words spring in order to cleverly surround the historical period in a way that extremely achieves her point of view. Therefore, we notice that the novel is cleverly organized in such a way that the writer connects between the Past and the Present in a highly smooth and skillful way. She moves between the crises of the beginnings and ends of the twentieth century, draws sadness, highlights the beginning point, and draws along *The Map of Love* a path that extends and becomes harsher and more painful because it deprives many people of their right to live and not just from the luxury of love only.

No doubt, the novel is difficult and exhausting. It depends on messages and the Present and Past overlap in the paragraphs without notice many times and sometimes they disconnect (the Present and the Past), and that is the difficult narrative trick, as it takes us back to the beginning, which is reading the Past and Present from different angles and concepts, which are not dry, not as a result of Ahdāf Soueif's dependence on the historical event only, but as a result of Ahdāf Soueif's dependence on the progress of events to clarify reality and society in its folds in a brilliant way.

Therefore, the **Denshawai event** in 1906 is considered as one of the most important scenes in the novel. After years, an explosion takes place in the Present near the Museum and an explosion near Luxor Museum, which puts us between grief and fear,

and the fear of Anna the English and her panic when that happened in the Past, and Amal's and Isabel's fear in the Present; between the murder of the people in the Past and the fire, and silencing of the opposition, and between the people's imprisonment, and the old people and children and hitting them and torturing them and releasing some of them after the interference of a man with influence, after Amal asked him to do so. With regard to Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, he completely isolated Anna from the imperialistic English violence in 1906, when the resistance against the British soldiers caused the death of a number of the villagers, after which there was a widespread storm against the British.

It is possible to say that *The Map of Love* is a polyphonic / multi-voiced novel¹⁶ par excellence, as it is based on four distinctive voices:

- **The first voice is Anna Winterbourne's Voice**, the English widow, who is motivated by the paintings to visit Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it deals with her impressions about the Egyptians and her life in the shade of the English occupation, and Lord Cromer's control. Then, she tells her love-story to Sharīf al-Baroudi, the Egyptian, and her friendship with his sister Laila al-Baroudi (Grandmother of Amal al-Ghamrāwi). All that happened under a political domination that involved power struggles by the Ottoman Empire, and the imposition of the English occupation and a narration of some events such as: Denshawai and the causes that led to the 1919 revolution: "My name is Anna Winterbourne... and do not agree exactly with those who claim the stars control or destinies"¹⁷.

- **The Second Voice is the voice of Amal al-Ghamrāwi**, which deals with some of the events such as naturalization of relations with Israel, the event of al-Bar al-Gharbi, in which a large number of tourists were killed in 1998. These two voices alternate roles in expressing the same attitude, especially if it is related to one's view of Oneself and of the Other, which gives room for *the opinion and the other opinion* as if Ahdāf Soueif wanted to say that the narrative statement gains artistry by the openness of the narrator's position onto the voices of the characters, including the *implicit hearer*, and thus, he leaves for them their own freedom of expression, and introduces to them

¹⁶ The polyphonic novel or multi-voice novel is one of the forms of modern novel, in which 'narration' differs from narrations in other novels. The most prominent feature of the polyphonic novel is that it interprets reality according to several superimposed points of view. The polyphonic novel is not exclusive to introducing one point of view and because of the numerous characters and dialogues that take place among them, various points of view are introduced, which vary in their ideological visions, too. Therefore, the polyphonic novel is a pluralistic novel that is based on multiple dialogues that adopt a democratic approach in introducing thoughts, and is free of the authority that the narrator used to impose on it previously. It also keeps away from the mono-perspective style, its language, its dialect, and the level of consciousness, and thus, reality inside them becomes highly sophisticated. (See: Bo Azzah, Mohammad (2016). *Hiwariyat al-Khitab al-Riwa'i: "al-Ta'adud al-Lughwai wa al-Polifoniyya"*. Cairo: Dar Ru'ya li al-Nashr wa al-tawzi'.

¹⁷ Soueif, Ahdāf, *The Map of Love*, p. 186.

their different and varied utterances, and by that, the artistic voice reveals a deep political nature that is based on freedom of speech and expression¹⁸.

- **The Third Voice is the voice of a part of the papers of Laila al-Baroudi**, (Grandmother of Amal al-Ghamrāwi), in which she dealt with her brother's love-story Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, and some important political events and meetings that were held in the family house.

- **The Fourth Voice is the voice of the writer Ahdāf Soueif herself**, who used to interfere directly to discuss the dialectic of the "I" and the "Other": "The subject is simply that the East attracts Europe for two reasons: the first is economic... and the second may be called a Romantic reason. They are attracted religiously and historically to the Land of the Holy Book¹⁹. By that, she connects between Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century and the end of the twentieth century, and monitors one hundred years of Egypt's life in a smooth and sweet language, and with successive leaps from the past to the present, and re-reading the past in the light of the present, and iteration of the novel and the history of Egypt itself, and "therefore, her novel is impossible to classify, as it is a historical, political, romantic, and realistic play at the same time. The writer attributed this multiplicity to the multiplicity of her intentions in writing her novel, and multiplicity of its cultural and novelistic references; and among the technicalities that the novelist employed is the technique of *literature of memoirs*, *polyphony*, and the *game of language*"²⁰.

Ahdāf Soueif thinks in a way that is meaningful in the relationship between gender and political activity through deconstruction of the 'gender'. **First**, she struggles to escape from the bourgeoisie class origin of the love stories in the narratives of the aristocratic hero and heroine. Besides, she examines the types of the two forward-looking representative positions. **Second**, Ahdāf Soueif opens the ambiguous colonial rhetoric of the fake image of the oriental man and the white woman, who is either very racial, or is not racial enough, and puts it under a narrative exploration that has strict rules about 'race' and 'gender' and 'patriotism', and that is during and after the period of colonialism.

In this way, Ahdāf Soueif introduces possibilities for a symbiotic and counter-discourse. Soueif chose this gender because she realizes its cultural role being an instrument of representation that supports imperialism. She employed it in order to be able to check the Past in an accurate way, on the one hand, and on the other, to be able to give a voice for those who have no place in the historical transformation, and also to

¹⁸ al- 'Eid, Yumna (1986). *al-Rawi: al-Mawqi' wa al-Shakl: Bahth fi al-Sard al- Riwa'i*. Baerut: Mu'asasat al-Abḥath al- 'Arabiya, p. 11.

¹⁹ Soueif, Ahdāf , *The Map of Love*, p. 426.

²⁰ 'Atiq, Madiha (2018). *al-Kitaba bi Lughat al- Ākher*. Amman: Dar al-Yazuri al-I 'Imiya wa al-Tawzi ', p. 210.

call for a questioning of the forms of discriminatory forms of representation, which still exist at our present time.²¹

The novel depends on something that is extremely important, which is 'romanticism' at its highest strength and manifestations. The writer did not write in cliché's but introduced true relationships from the depth of reality. She did not underestimate the reader but treated him in proportion to her high status of work and creativity. Romanticism in my opinion is always an important entry to politics and history, especially if we are speaking about both of them together, where history stands out in its dry physical side, its tragic reality, its emotional brilliance, and the pains that are produced in those relationships that are connected to reality so that we find the mind that thinks and searches, and the heart that drifts in the middle of events. Therefore, Ahdāf Soueif's does not introduce a strong sweeping romantic story or history only. Therefore, the relationship between Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi with Anna Winterbourne does not work like the story of a national unity and national spirit because Anna's position, as an imperial White woman, helps to turn her into an icon for all the powers that hinder the national movement. In addition to that, the powers that threaten her romanticism include a general idea of the emergence of possible neocolonialism after the achievement of unity.

Consequently, we can say that Ahdāf Soueif deliberately describes a stereotypical group of intimate relationships in *The Map of Love*, and introduces through the trans-national romantics a fantasy about an active net of antagonistic policy to colonialism instead of drawing a map of a historically real active net of the colonial policy.

In my opinion, the novel *The Map of Love* does not employ the *Eros* to empower the national spirit, and she follows a complicated net of national concerns and trans-national borders through a central love-story. Here, the need for a national unity appears to be urgent like the national romance, but the relationship of Omar al-Ghamrāwi (brother of Amal al-Ghamrāwi) with the American Isabel does not unify the national factions, and it is more like the marriage of Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi with Anna Winterbourne.

I maintain that the partition that was caused by colonialism and globalization – the Neocolonialism- cannot be repaired in Ahdāf Soueif's novel by romances, and despite that, the romantic relationships in the novel always tries to escape into the private space from the constant problems that play a part in the public space. In the romances of the beginning of the twentieth century, Anna Winterbourne's refusal to the colonialist ideology and Sharīf al-Baroudi's tolerance with her British background had made it easy for both of them to build a private cave, separate from the attractions of the social authorities.

However, these arrangements are fragile in their nature, and both of them know that. Sharīf's message in life is the national politics, and Anna has become involved in his

²¹ Sabrina, d'Alesandro. (). "The Re-positioning of Anglo-Egyptian Cultural Crossing in Ahdaf Soueuf's Contemporary". In *Visual and Literary Culture Representations*. London, UK. I.B. Tauris, p. 80

case, and encouraged it. She translated his article to be published in the English press, and worked with a staff of an Egyptian woman's magazine, and served at the newly established art institute in Cairo. The artistic knitting she performed just before her husband's death was intended "to contribute to Egypt's Renaissance"²². In this sense, they were politically and emotionally committed to each other, and both of them paid a high price for that commitment.

Actually, Anna's entrance into a love story appears to be possible is because she is completely alone; her parents died and she had no family. She travelled to Egypt from the beginning just to reconcile her husband's death who participated in the campaign of the British army in Sudan.

Anna became an orphan, and the prophecy of Sharīf's mother to him came true. She warned him that he would be everything for her: "If tire her, to whom will she resort? She had no mother, no sister nor a friend. She had no one with her, which means that if she makes you angry, you have to forgive her, and if she makes the sign of the cross, you have to follow suit. No matter what deeds the English committed, you should not put the blame of her country's guilt on her. She will not be your wife and the mother of your children only if God wills – but she will be your guest and a stranger under your protection, and if you are not just with her, her God will not forgive you"²³.

I would like to add that the romance of race difference in *The Map of Love* does not appear to have broad relationship with the national romance. The hero of Ahdāf Soueif, Sharīf Pasha al-Baroudi, is like the typical romantic hero. He is a real nobleman by birth and spontaneity, and besides, Anna and Sharīf show clear lack in their personal relationships and exposed their differences in culture and language. This shortage of personal contrast or intimate debate between the two lovers might be the key to the national romance. Based on that, and since the moment of Anna's arrival in Egypt, she has refused the colonial rumors about the Egyptians, in which other people of her English society believed. She did not show fear when Sharīf's nephew kidnapped her or when she meets Sharīf for the first time. The truth is that her failure to enter a forward-looking fantasy bothers her: "Are you afraid of me, the bad Pasha who is likely to imprison you with his harem and commit horrible acts with you? Anna simply replies: Which horrible acts do you mean?"²⁴

To sum up, we can say that the novel was written through a woman's sense, and in true feelings, and out of the writer's education and experience in that period, where she expresses literally what happens to her in a true, enthusiastic literary charge. Therefore,

²² Soueif, Ahdāf, *The Map of Love*, p. 403.

²³ Ibid., p. 281.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 153.

we can say that *The Map of Love* constitutes an example of how history is read, how we should look at it, what it means is, and how we should write romanticism, and how to write a very hard novel. Ahdāf Soueif created a detailed historical plot with an imaginative narration.

The Language of the Novel

Ahdāf Soueif wrote the novel *The Map of Love* in a language that combines between the language of the "I", Arabic, and the language of the "Other", English. For example, she uses the following words in colloquial Egyptian Arabic:

- /أبيه/ yakti /أبيه، Abeih /عم، Am /عمدة/ 'Umda (single words)
- /فرخ البط عوام/ the Son of a duck is (born) a swimmer (a Proverb)

This language expanded to include phrases and sentences:

This cultural bilingualism created what Hishmi Trabelsi Tarabulsi calls "Transcultural Writing". Thus, Ahdāf Soueif's language is neither perfect Arabic nor standard English, and despite Soueif's mastery of English, her style ranges between the high sophisticated idiomatic level, and the elegant version level. She pumped Arabic blood in her texts so that her Arab readers would 'hear' Arabic behind her English words. Besides, her non-Arabic readers would feel the other tongue behind the English vocabulary"²⁵.

The novel in its English version is a masterpiece, and the translator, Fatima Mousa, the writer's mother, translated it skillfully and accurately. Another distinctive feature is the sequence of events, which makes the novel occupy 702 pages in Arabic versus 529 pages in English.

With regard to Soueif's writing in English instead of Arabic we can say that though the language that Soueif used in writing the novel is English, it is noticed that the language of the novel is just a means, and the spirit of the text is the spirit of an Egyptian woman who modified the language in order to reach through it to characters, speeches, and sayings that the English language is not familiar with, especially when the dialogue is introduced by characters like Mabruka, Tahiyya, Uncle Abu Aly, and others.

In addition to that, Soueif deals with some words and expressions and tries to find out their roots and implications, and when she enters the details of daily life, traditions and beliefs, she does not hesitate to adopt a language that reflects the nature of society through the human relationships at their different levels.

Besides, her easy handling of the language made her capable of building natural bridges between two parallel banks in order to build a map for the human culture and its communication, which includes all the periods of history. Therefore, *The Map of Love* cannot be but an Arabic Egyptian novel, as if the writer, in Edward Said's words in his

²⁵ Hechmi, Trabelsi (2003). *Transcultural Writing: Ahdāf Soueif's Aisha as a Case Study*. Tunisia: Université de Tunis, p. 56

description of Joseph Conrad's literature, was living in a language and writing in another one²⁶. Therefore, and in this sense, the novel *The Map of Love* is, in my opinion, an original experience in English literature due to the human cultural dimension and the clear Arab vision that it lends.

No doubt that English literature has provided high literary examples of writers who experienced the Eastern life and played a role in its events such as T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell, and Lewis Darrell, but these remain works that belong spirit and letter to the culture of the Other, the culture of the condescending winner.

Because the experience of colonialism is not limited to the physical violence but also extends to the cultural, linguistic and psychological violence, the experience of liberation from colonialism on the level of writing is a phenomenon that is not void of violence in its essence. If this is the case of the man-writer, the experience of the woman-writer is wrapped with a sharper double feature. She shares him his submission to the tools of colonialism in oppression, suppression, abolition, and taming, but exceeds him in her submission to another oppression that is connected to the nature of her position in the local society before, during and after the coming of imperialism and her liberation from it.

The local person in the eyes of the colonialist is the "Other", whether he is a man or a woman, but the woman is the "Other of the Other" in the eyes of the local person and the norms of the patriarchal domination. Besides, she is the object of the mere bestial desire in the eyes of the Western colonialist, who froze her image at the borders of forward-looking writings and the climate of 'harem', where she cannot represent herself outside her body that is deprived of its humanity, as Edward Said showed²⁷.

In this specific context, it is possible to raise the thesis that says that irony of writing in the language of the colonialist (which is forced from the outside under the considerations of cultural absorption or mandatory intercultural communication) is also a threshold of the second suppression to which the woman submits being "the Other of the Other", and a frame of writing and rewriting of the aesthetic discourse of liberation on the level of the female self.

In his study "Rewriting Writing: Identity, Exile and Renewal in Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*", H. Adlai Murdoch talks about a fundamental aspect in the colonial experience, which involves a conflicting duality between the need of the colonized for recognition and the inability of the colonizer to meet this need because it involves negation of the pillar of his cultural penetration to the colonized self"²⁸.

Julia Kristeva resorts to psychology to monitor the raw semantic relationship between the mother's discourse and the child's discourse. She sees that the development of new forms of discourse must fit the attainment of a free feminist text. She also calls for the

²⁶ Said, Edward (1978). *Orientalism*. Routledge, London.

²⁷ Said Edward. (1992). "The Anglo – Arab Encounter," *TLS*. June 1992, p.19.

²⁸ Murdoch, H. Adlai (1993): "Rewriting Writing: Identity, Exile and Renewal" in Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*. Yale French Studies, V 38, p. 89

integration of women's poetics into the analytical systems that seek to uncover the priorities of women's oppression, and probably the whole society.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty²⁹ doubts that! She says that compromise or dislocation of meaning will not necessarily guarantee a future a necessarily a woman's discourse, and will not ease the historical inevitability of the variations of Miranda Complex, and the nervous insistence on refusing of dual forms of the patriarchal discourses will threaten with turning a blind eye to political, social and ideological forces of other racial and imperialistic dualities such as white/ black; colonizer, colonized; western/ other³⁰.

Asia al-'Ulma, the heroine of Ahdāf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, says in her argument about her relationship with the English language: "Can the whole issue be funny? Funny and naïve? Is it a kind of malignant implicit colonialism that is planted in the depths of her soul? A kind of imperialism that no rebellion can ease? And no agreement will be able to put an end to it?"³¹

In my opinion, Ahdāf Soueif lives a state of oppression that causes her alienation twice: the **first**: alienation from her national identity in the context of colonialism. The **second**: alienation from her national identity in the context of the patriarchal system. In both states of alienation, she lives a state of extreme exile from her private voice in her history, language, identity, and language, and her novel reflects strong tension in her life within the version of the "Other and under the roof of the other" where the

²⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an American critic of Indian origin, a university lecturer at Columbia University and a founding member of Institute of Comparative Literature. She was born in 24 February, 1942. Gayatri is considered one of the most influential thinkers in the Postcolonial period, and she has become famous for her article "Can the Subaltern Speak" ? in which she tried in her study to observe three women critical texts and criticism to colonialism, which can be called "Miranda's Complex", in attribution to Shakespeare's focal woman character in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, where she says: "If the tension between the due Prospero/ Caliban, (or the Lord / the Slave; the Colonizer/ colonized) raises the questions of the Self/ the Other/ the West and the rest of the World, then the relationship between Prospero and Caliban and Miranda opens the feminine question in the postcolonial discourse: Miranda was colonized because her existence was limited to perform the job of the "Other/the Man" and its denied hidden side, and embodies her Cultural weightlessness. Spivak goes beyond this standard datum in order to reach the analysis of the Patriarchal literary forms themselves, which multiply in a "secret" way and unaware of the ideology of the text and the systems of masculine linguistic multiplication within the collective aesthetic awareness of the feminist production. Spivak's affinity with India provided her with the ability to enrich the deconstruction of the Marxist-feminism with pillars that strike post-colonialism. She was awarded Kyuto's award in Arts and Philosophy for 2012 because of her being a "critical ideological and a teacher who speaks about the human sciences against intellectual colonialism with regard to the globalized world. In 2013, she was awarded Badma Boshlan award, which is the third highest prize that India grants to its scholars. See: Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988): "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg eds., Chicago, Illinois U.P. p. 76

³⁰ Fanon, Frantz (1970): *Toward the African Revolution* Tr., Haakon Chevalier, Harmondsworth, Penguin, London, p. 39.

³¹ Memmi, Alber (1967). *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Tr. Howard Greenfield, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 512.

existence and meaning are doubled, and more than one language disappears under the cover of writing.

Therefore, history in *The Map of Love* highlights the crisis of identity, Therefore, Anna the English lady lives in Egypt between nostalgia and longing for her parents, homeland, her desire to gather all her beloved ones under one roof, and her love for her husband and her place in which she settled and lived. Therefore, there is hardly any message to her father without inviting him to come.

So, there is a lot of different situations in the novel of different psychological conditions, political events and reality. We see that they are repeated in different ways, which makes us say that 'history repeats itself. We also see that romance repeats its hidden impact. We also find Anna's world, Amal's world, and the world of political oppression and intervention in two periods and between them. We also find violence, the crisis of freedom of expression, the crisis of identity, the crisis of the intellectual, the crisis of the ordinary citizen, the crisis of ignorance, poverty, religious, customs, traditions, and stagnation of the East and its attachment to certain habits, traditions and thoughts that do not suit modernity and development. We also find people's fixation, their attachment to the past, their inferior view of the woman, and everything that is different. We find conflict between development and backwardness; we find consolation in change, which will not come or will not come. We find the public's attachment to no change, and find that the enemy of the people is themselves, before the occupation and the authority. We also find the conflict of ideas. With all these circles, Ahdāf Soueif skillfully draws the history of Egypt in two periods and what happened between them and in them.

In fact, we do not need complicated strategies of analysis in order to realize this side of the novel, as Ahdāf Soueif in *The Map of Love* does not connect the search of identity or the complications of identity formation in a post-colonial context, but she starts where the heroine of Assia Djebar ends, namely, affinity to the foreign tongue (English in this context), which she loved in the literary text and the cultural text in general, before she clashes with it in real actual life and on a level that does not differ in essence from that text which the heroine of love and fantasy faces, namely, on the level of the torn body between two loyalties, two cultures, two geographies, and two cultures: "Since my childhood, my foreign language served me as a window through which I look onto the world and its treasures, but it soon turned into a knife that was pointed at my neck"³².

³² Assia Djebar employs the language of the colonizer, the French language, which is a dual signal because it is part of the duality of the patriarchal authority in order to register his brutality and some of his bloody memory, which he left behind. Djebar's writing in that language takes the form of open problematics. The writer puts herself in the position of the local citizen, who should reconcile with the history of her country, Algeria, and herself as a female Arab Self, who writes in French about the Arab women who do not speak French, and about Arab men who deprived the women from their right to speak for themselves. Djebar says: "the language that my father made an effort to teach me serves now a medium to narrate history, and it is from now on a dual contradictory sign that dominates my dependence in life". See: Djebar, Assia (1985). *L'Amour, la fantasia* J.C. Lattes, Paris; (1986), Nawal al-Saadawi: *une voie a Lenfer*, Lrad; Assia Djebar, *des femmes*, Paris, p. 89.

Therefore, we say that the language of the colonizer proves to be the utmost obstacle, where the climates of alienation increase, and the narrative vibrates between the *first* person singular and the *third* person singular, and language becomes an excellent embodiment of the duality of belonging and exile. Besides, this duality in the use of language or this contrast between 'affinity' and 'extermination', between the 'self' and the 'other' reduces the speaker into a creature whose identity is based on two separate linguistic and cultural fields that complete each other in establishing the duality and depriving the identity from its historical, social, cultural, and psychological context because employment of the Arabic language is closely connected to the identity configuration and plays the role of the absolute *moment of purification* in Assia Djebar's words, which sharply clashes with the forced employment of the French language, which simultaneously emancipates and captivates its user.

Ahdāf Soueif writes in the English of the margin rather than the English of the center, and this is the nature of postcolonial writing, which absorbs the language of the center and rebuilds it, namely, possessing it, and reshaping it in such a way that gives room to include new employments that represent a sign of separation from the position of privilege after the postcolonial period³³.

Therefore, this study is based on postcolonial discourse theories, and in my opinion, it is possible to consider *The Map of Love* a representative of the postcolonial counter-discourse, which is 'Writing against Writing'. Between these two levels of mutual writing, the postcolonial critical discourse evolved in the novel, putting tools and strategies that allow the reader to read the text according to tools and strategies of postcolonial discourse, with all the contents that it bears and the ideologies that it reflects, in addition to the textual formations that are based on language. That happened because the postcolonial discourse aims to convey the voice of the oppressed in a discourse that was dominated by the colonizer³⁴.

The postcolonial product is in a state of contradiction with the Self and in a state of alienation, extermination, and search of one's identity. The postcolonial writer looks for strategies that allow him to achieve a reconciliatory version between the limitations of colonial inheritance and the necessity of self-writing, and this search is likely to take violent forms when the Self is obliged to write itself by the language of the colonizer, which ranges between the example of the Haitian poet Edmond Laforest (1876-1915), who reaches the border of suicide by using a dictionary, and the example of the Indian English scholar Homi Bhabha (b. 1949), who classifies the text far away from the ethics of the text-bearer³⁵.

³³ Ashcroft, Bill et. al. (2006). *Al-Rad bi al-Kitaba: al-Nazariyya wa al-Tatbiq fi Adab al-Musta'marat al-Qadima*. 1st ed. Tr. Shahrat al-Alim. Beirut. Al-Munazama al-Alamiya li al-Tarjama, p.74.

³⁴ Craig J, Calhoun (2002). *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³⁵ In 1915, the author Edmond Laforest committed suicide in a unique symbolic way. He tied a heavy copy of the French dictionary, Larousse, to his neck and dropped himself from a bridge down into the

Frantz Fanon wrote about the colonialist condition being a condition of an incurable hostility between the Native citizen and the invader. He mentioned in his book: *Toward the African Revolution* (1970), the psychology of the oppressed who judged and convicted and gave up his cultural forms and traditions in eating and drinking, in his sexual behavior, in his way of sitting, resting, laughing, and enjoying. He had no outlet but to drop himself on the forced culture³⁶.

In my opinion, what Ahdāf Soueif did in *The Map of Love* is what is called in postcolonial studies "Working Back" writing, which borrowed a colonial literary form that is loaded with colonial visions, which emptied out its contents and reloaded them with the writer's postcolonial propositions³⁷.

It is important here to distinguish between two concepts and terms: The Colonial Discourse and the Postcolonial Discourse. The *first* is based on the efforts of Edward Said,³⁸ which is concerned with the Western Discourse as a tool of domination and

muddy waters of the river. By that, he declared that the European language that he uses in writing and expression constitutes limiting heavy weights in life and limiting heavy weights in death. His choice of the dictionary, rather than any other French book, constitutes an indication of the official content of the language as a global colonialist and oppressive tool. The Indian researcher Bhabha Homi tells the following story that is derived from the records of the Church Missionary Society: In May, 1817, in the suburbs of the city of Delhi, a Christian preacher approached a group of Indians, who sat in a circle to study the Holy Book. These Indians agreed that the book is a divine miracle and the words of God, but they wondered how this book reached them, and who is the "Sahib who printed it and distributed it. They discovered that that Sahib was the representative of the colonizing British Crown and he is (unlike the book) far from the divine wonder: He is a stranger, a carnivorous, a wine drinker, cruel and arrogant, but in order to restore his spiritual authority, the Preacher had to deny his relationship with that Sahib. These two stories refer two of the most prominent flies of the colonial experience in the cultural arena. The File of the Invading Language, which practices a parallel domination and complementary to the forms of military, political, and economic domination; and the File of the External Separation and Internal Fusion between the colonial authority and its varied cultural discourses and the resulting dedication of the files: The colonizer/ the colonized; the lord/ the slave; the center/ the circumference; the West/ the Other, and the alienation within the identity and violations in affiliation, and tension, conflict, and resistance that might reach a high degree of violence, by necessity. See: Bhabha Homi (1985): "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1. 145.

³⁶ Fanon, Frantz (1970). *Toward the African Revolution*, p. 39.

³⁷ Atiq, Madiha (2018). *Al-Kitaba bi Lughat al-Ākher*, p. 15.

³⁸ *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* (2001), confirms that the discourse was established on the methodology of Edward Said' book *Orientalism* (1978), while the year 1980 was the year of inauguration of this new cognitive field, but the year 1990 represented the actual and methodological breakthrough, because it adopted clear academic principles. After that, this research trend flowed through several studies that dealt with all research fields such as: Lomba Ania (1998). *Colonialism and Post-colonialism*; Ghandi Laila (1998). *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*; Moore-Gilbert, Bart (1997). *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (1997) and other books. It is worthwhile mentioning here that Edward Said's works represented the systematic inauguration of the postcolonial discourse, especially the book, *al-Thaqafa wa al-Imperyalīya / Culture and Imperialism* (2014). See: John C. Hawley (2001). *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. World Literature Today. London: Greenwood press, pp. 359–360; Lomba, Ania (2007). *Fi Nazariyat al-Isti'mar wa ma Ba'd al-Isti'mar al-Adabiya*. Tr. by Mohammad Abd al-Ghani Gannoum. Latakia. Dar al-Hiwar; Said, Edward (2006). *al-Istishraq*

control, which describes the system and means that made the discourse become a tool of power and domination, forming by that the Colonial Discourse. The **second**, deliberately focuses on the associations of colonialism on culture and society after independence. It is worth mentioning that the two concepts are related to Edward Said and refer to him, Therefore, the difference results from two factors:

The **first** is the time factor, which refers to the period of the colonial discourse and after it, namely, the associations, the effects, the opposition, and the resistance, besides the fact that colonialism is still in effect through several means and forms. This means that the colonial discourse is still taking place as long as colonialism exists. In addition to that, the consequences of colonialism are still incomplete and or achieved. The **second factor** is the rhetoric factor that results from the rhetoric strategy. In the colonial discourse, the focus is on the order of the discourse and its practice in order to ease domination through representations of the Other (the colonized) in the language of the colonizer, while the postcolonial discourse studies the results of colonialism and its effects on society, culture, and language. Besides the manifestations of resistance, there is a discourse act and counter-act. In spite of that, the term of 'postcolonial discourse' has spread in most critical studies because it expresses the two concepts, and carries the indication of the pre-colonialism and post-colonialism³⁹.

To sum up, *The Map of Love* repeats the discourse of the follower, who is captivated in the culture of the postcolonial language. The literary text in the postcolonial discourse plays a main role. It allows to find the order and rhetorical practice. As Foucault showed, the study of discourse is not based on what was said but on what was not said, and why?

Thus, we find two sets of writing: writing of the colonizer that aims to describe and represent the Other within limited rhetorical strategies versus another set that is based on an opposite act that reveals and resists the previous set. If the Westerners reduce other peoples to specific definitions, categories and provisions that are based on ethnic, racial and cultural interpretation, that pushes the dominated side to establish a counter-discourse that works on two levels: the **first** is rejection of what the other said, and the **second** is reacting by resistance, and within these two levels, the postcolonial literary discourse moves⁴⁰.

wa al-Mafahim al-Gharbiya li al-Sharq. 1st ed. Tr. Moḥammad Anani. Cairo: Ru'ya li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'. Said, Edward (2014). *Al-Thaqafa wa al-Imperyaliya*. Tr. Kamal Abu Deeb. Beirut: Dar al-Adab. al-Ruwaily, Mijan; al-Bazi'i, Sa'd (2002). *Dalil al-Naqed al-Adabi*. 3rd ed. al-Dar al-Baydha': al-Markaz al-Thaqfi al-'Arabi.

³⁹ Ashcroft, Bill. Griffith, Garth, Tefin, Helen (2010). *Dirasat Ma Ba'd al-Klonialiya: al-Mafahim al-Ra'isiya*. Tr. by Aḥmad al-Rubi et. al. 1st ed. Cairo: al-Markaz al-Qawmi li al-Tarjama.

⁴⁰ Foucault, Michel (1990). *al-Kalimat wa al-Ashya'*. Tr. Mutawi' Safadi and Others. Beirut: Markaz al-Inma', p. 216-220.

In my opinion, what Ahdāf Soueif does in *The Map of Love* is an upheaval that she intends to introduce in more than one image, which makes us consider her faithful to the traditions of the English Victorian novel⁴¹ in general, and to the strategies of the female characterization within stormy social and political contexts as we see in George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*⁴² specifically.

It may not be an exaggeration if we say that *The Map of Love* is an Egyptian English novel par excellence, because the meeting of the East with the West is the focal regulator behind a narrative that does not rewrite a previous writing (as the case is in Assia Djébar's novel "*There Is No Room for Me in My Father's Home* ")⁴³ even though she is trying to restore the strategies of Najib Mahfouz in his *Trilogy* in describing the Cairene middle-class through three generations amidst an extremely private social and political crisis.

In short, Ahdāf Soueif seeks in *The Map of Love* to create two parallel levels of conflict in order to achieve identity, entity, and independence: Egypt's level, and the level of the Egyptian woman. Besides, the element of autobiography is quite clear in the novel and it is integrated into a strong, skillful, and realistic research ingenuity in the daily texture of the Egyptian and Arab political life.

Finally, we can say that *The Map of Love* constitutes a new artistic sharp turning point in the special experience of Ahdāf Soueif's novel writing on both levels, form, and content. First and foremost, we are in front of a long novel that was written in the same narrative and chronological spirit that expands on the space of 702 pages. The first thing that draws the reader's attention is the nature of excitement that guides the writer and constitutes a starting point for this experience, and a fountain from which all her turnings, dimensions, and structure emanate.

⁴¹The Victorian Era was a motoring historical movement not only in England but in Europe, which started after the Renaissance. During this era, the Industrial Revolution reached its peak and then expanded to Europe and the United States. The Victorian Era witnessed resistance to the age of Reason that characterized the Georgian period and increased transfer towards Romanticism and later, towards Sufism with regard to religion and social values and arts. For more information, the features of the Victorian Literature. See: Adams, James Eli, ed. (2004). *Encyclopedia of the Victorian Era*. V. 4. short essays on a wide range of topics by experts; Burton, Antoinette. (2012). "Victorian History: Some Experiments with Syllabi." *Victorian Studies*. 54.2, p. 305–311; Dixon, Nicholas (2010). "From Georgian to Victorian". *History Review*. v. 68. P.34-38

⁴² The novel *Middlemarch* by the British novelist and poet Mary Ann Evans, who is famous by the name George Eliot, is one of the most important novels in the English literature. It was chosen by the Britannica to be one of the greatest Western works since the Greek periods till today. The significance of the novel lies in its description of the English society at the beginning of the nineteenth century in all its classes and sections, and on the aspects of life of the social, economic and political life of the individuals without ignoring the natural influence on the scientific development and modern discoveries in that society.

⁴³ Bishara, Hanan (2021). "Literature and Anger or Wild Courts? Revelations of Anger and Taboo Breaking in the Scheherazadian Literature: A Dialectic Reading in the Novel of La Makan Li fi Bayt Abi, Nowhere in My Father's House, by the Algerian Writer Assia Djébar ". *International Journal of Linguistics and Literature (IJLL)*. Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 39–62

Summary

The Map of Love is a rich novel that tells a tangled and moving love story that reflects an image of Egypt at the dawn of the twentieth century and its sunset. In my opinion, it was easy to trace the springs of love in the novel because the writer clearly confirms to its reader their branches and leads his insight to realize them and follow its threads in the general texture of her experience.

Ahdāf Soueif restores her relationship with history through her narrative work *The Map of Love* and finds out that she did not write about her Self as she believed but about the Egyptian history, which was infiltrating into the space of the characters against her will. The heroine of *The Map of Love* says: "But this novel is not my novel", and concludes that the novelist's concern is 'history', no matter how far he/she tries to keep far away from it.

The novel is considered an imaginative creative narrative with a human vision of Egypt's recent history, which is reflected through a love story in which the past which is documented by the daily present overlaps in a natural communication, which is an extension of Egypt's existence that extends decades and thousands of years, in which different voices from various directions of this world live side by side: the message of the English Anna, the Egyptian Laila and Amal, and other women of the novel's characters, who occupy the best part of the novel.

Ahdāf Soueif resorts to the technique of the technique of *literature of memoirs and letters* to monitor the features of the colonial stage from the point of view of the European (I), and the (Other) Egyptian.

Though the novel depends in its treatment of the events on facts and real characters, the writer grants them an existence that is full of life. The reader of *The Map of Love* moves between varied levels and cultures from here and there and East and West, and therefore, the novel, from the first pages, dominates the reader's consciousness and makes him interested in its details.

There is no doubt that Ahdāf Soueif was highly creative in *The Map of Love*, and she enriched her product with a highly intellectual treasure, and with deep tight intention, and she is the first one who wrote about the social aspect of the existence of the British colonialism in Egypt.

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