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The Alterity Business between Commodification and Resistance in World Literature

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DEDICATION

I feel tempted to borrow Mahmoud Darwish's epiphanic words :

At a given stage of a fragility we call maturity,

We are neither optimistic nor pessimistic,

We have given up passion and nostalgia and naming things by their opposites.

Out of confusion between form and essence, we have trained our feelings on quiet reflection before confession,

As we look backwards to know where we stand about truth, we ask how many mistakes we have made and if we have reached wisdom late, not sure about the wind's direction,

What's the use of reaching anything late,

Even if there is someone awaiting us at the bottom of the mountain,

Asking us to pray in gratitude for arriving safe,

Neither optimistic nor pessimistic,

But late. (My translation)

This overdue thesis is dedicated to a rare lady who has never ceased to inspire and illuminate my life path, even when bedridden in a brave and fierce battle against Alzheimer. To my mother, a remarkable woman, whose warrior spirit will ever inhabit my thoughts and my soul, and whose aura will ever accompany me. The bittersweet taste of accomplishment conferred to me by this modest piece of work is inevitably marred by an incommensurably humbling sense of tardiness which positions the self against the sweeping and heartless

passing of time, heedless as it is, of the fragility of our passions and the unsustainable sense of vulnerability in the face of affliction and malady. I equally dedicate this research to my small family, my husband and my sons without whom this phoenixian 'rising out of the ashes' of mine would by no means have been feasible, and whose presence has been a constant source of emotional nourishment. Neither optimistic nor pessimistic but late……

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ABSTRACT

The global literary market is currently witnessing an unprecedented race towards visibility ; an enterprise which unavoidably entails cross-cultural encounters with cosmopolitan taste. While this project of World Literature is not as unproblematic as it may appear, it has enacted an unreserved heeding of to the aesthetic norms of the global market whereby the production, dissemination and consumption of literary works are inevitably informed by a manifest concern with the norms that govern literary taste worldwide. Thus, workers on the literary scene, from different locations, in trying to walk a tight rope between the demands of the international publishing industry- duly responsive as it is to a vogue for exoticism- and significant linguistic, cultural and aesthetic stakes, find themselves grappling with the dilemma of either commodifying their local cultures for the global market- and hence capitalizing on self-othering- or adopting a resistant standpoint. Accordingly, minor authors seem to be the candidates 'par excellence' for this lucrative business of alterity, where their mediated discourse runs the risk of being stage-managed by mass market taste makers, prize institutions and global patterns of commodification at work in the book industry. This dissertation broaches the much controversial debate on World Literature, and surveys a wide range of critical attempts to draw the contours of a highly contested category namely global fiction, it equally explores ways whereby established authors in the caliber of Elif Shafak, Amine Maalouf, Kazuo Ishiguro or Kiran Desai intervene in the debate, while negotiating their status from metropolitan locations, managing literary fame within the international 'economy of prestige', and addressing the vexed issue of self-exoticism.

KEY TERMS : Global Fiction- World Literature- Market Dynamics- Minor Authors- Self-exoticism-Commodification.

ملخص

يشهد السوق الأدبي العالمي تهافتا منقطع النظير نحو البروز والشهرة، مخلفا بذلك تقاطعات ثقافية ذات طابع عالمي بامتياز. إن مشروع "أدب عالمي" من هذ االقبيل يبدو لأول وهلة مجردا من أية تعقيدات، إلا أنه يقتضي التزاما لا مشروطا بالقواعد الفنية المعمول بها في إطار عمليات الانتاج والتسويق والاستهلاك الأدبي. من جهة أخرى، فإن الفاعلين في الساحة الأدبية العالمية، على اختلاف مشاربهم، يجدون أنفسهم في مأزق، من جهة لمتطلبات سوق الكتاب المحكوم بالتوجهات الأدبية التي تروج "لأدب الغرابة "، ومن جهة أخرى بالرهانات اللغوية والثقافية والفنية ذات الأهمية البالغة. إن هذه الوضعية الحرجة تضع "كتاب الهامش" بين مطرقة المقاومة لهيمنة الخطاب السائد وسندان "استغراب الذات"، حيث أنهم مرشحون بامتياز للتعاطي مع تجارة " الآخر"أو "الغيري" والتي تديرها مؤسسات الجوائز، ويتحكم فيها صناع الذوق الأدبي بالإضافة إلى الضوابط المتحكمة في تسويق وتسليع الأدب. إن هذه الأطروحة محاولة للإسهام في النقاش حول "أدب العالم"من خلال التعاطي مع كتاب مرموقين من عيار :إليف شفق، كيران ديساي، أمين معلوف وكازووإيشكورو، كما أنها تحاول إعادة قراءة أعمالهم في ظل خطاب العالمية الجديد ووضعهم الخاص كمشاهيرأدبية تتعاطى مع "اقتصاد الحظوة"، و منطق السوق الأدبي و ديناميته.

الكلمات المفاتيح:

أدب العالم- استغراب الذات- تسليع - سوق الكتاب العالمي- الرواية العالمية.

Résumé

Le marché littéraire international connait une ruée sans précédent vers la visibilité, engendrant ainsi des interferences interculturelles à essence cosmopolite. Tandis que ce projet de 'littérature monde' ne semble présenter aucun heurt, il est à l'origine d'une adhérence sans réserve aux normes esthétiques du marché mondial qui régissent la production, dissémination et consommation des œuvres littéraires, et qui par conséquent, expriment un souci particulier d'accommoder ces mêmes normes. Ainsi, les différents intervenants à la scéne littéraire universelle semblent pris en otage, d'une part, par les exigences de l'industrie mondiale du livre, en amont des tendances littéraires éxotiques au goût du jour, et d'une autre part, par les enjeux linguistiques, culturels et esthétiques considérables. Ce dilemme auquel font face les auteurs et écrivains de la 'périphérie' les positionne dans un état d'inconfort où ils doivent gérer leur statut, moyennant résistance et auto-éxotisme, étant des candidats 'par excellence' à ce commerce juteux et trés sollicité de l'altérité, par ailleurs orchestré par les institutions de patronage littéraire, les créateurs de tendance, et les structures- voire même- modéles de commodification en vogue. Cette dissertation rejoint le débat sur 'la littérature monde', en explorant la contribution d'auteurs aussi bien établis que Elif Shafak, Amine Maâlouf, Kazuo Ishiguro ou bien encore Kiran Desai, au discours de globalization à travers le roman universel, négociant de ce fait leurs statuts de 'célébrités littéraires', au sein d'une industrie internationale de 'l'économie de prestige', en se heurtant au risque d'auto-éxotisme.

Mots Clés : Roman Universel- 'Littérature Monde'- Auto-éxotisme- Commodification- Industrie Mondiale du Livre-Auteurs de la périphérie.

CONTENTS :

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TFROL : The Forty Rules of Love

LTA : Leo The African

AFW : An Artist of The Floating World

IL : The Inheritance of Loss

FIGURES :

INTRODUCTION

It is in the literature emerging from the peripheries and semi-peripheries that the changing parameters of the world system can be most clearly glimpsed. (Sharae, Deckard, Inherit The World, 2015 :15)

The periphery is where the future reveals itself. (J.G.Ballard, qtd in Deckard, 2015 : 3)

There are many World Literatures and each of them is glocally located. (César Dominguez, 2021 :251)

The year 2021 managed the feat to conjugate worldliness with an African flavour. The Nobelizing of Tanzanian author Abdulrazak Gurnah, the recent crowning of the young Senegalese novelist Mohammed Mbougar Sarr with the Prix Goncourt, the Bookerization of South African writer Damon Galgut, and ultimately the obtention of the International Booker by French Senegalese author David Diop and the Neustadt by his fellow citizen Boubacar Boris Diop, are all in turn instances which register a rare constellation of high profile African voices, who in stretching the confines of World Literature, are not only unanimously celebrated by Western prize institutions, but mainly contribute to energize the straddling of the 'littérature-monde' over the local and the global.

If the happy 'fortuity' inspired jubilant comments such as 1986 Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka's :'The Nobel returns home', it nonetheless nods not only towards the fluctuations within the world prizing system , but most importantly to the agendas at work in Western academia and their significance for manipulating literary tastes and expanding the international canon. Similarly, the Bookerization of Hindi author Geetanjali Shree for her novel *Tomb of Sand* (2018) in 2022- translated from Hindi text *Ret Samadhi* by American translator Daisy Rockwell- ushers in a most significant form the growing visibility of peripheral languages and the solvability of minor writers into the international canon. It equally foregrounds, if need be, the decisive role played by translation and translators in the dissemination of World Literature, to the extent of positioning the latter on a comparable status with the author. Pertinently, Geetanjali Shree and Daisy Rockwell shared the 50,000 pounds prize worth in a consequential gesture to rehabilitate the often overlooked and unacknowledged role of translators within the literary machinery. Thus, fascinating as it is, this radiating worlding is not as natural as it might seem, as it thrives on a complex intersectionality networking monopoly capital, marketeering and cultural mediation (agents such as critics, editors, publishers, reviewers and translators). Such a complexity is forcibly

transferred to the debates surrounding World Literature, which by and large, tend to replicate both the theoretical density and looseness rampant in the field. Thus, practitioners stand undivided about the difficulty to come to terms with the far-reaching breadth , along with the inherent interdisciplinarity of the field, generating scholarly anxiety amid academics, who are manifestly summoned to confront the 'megarhetoric' (Appadurai, 1989) of globalization and its hegemonic discourse

The present research is an attempt to account for the dynamics underlying literary globalism as a transnational, translinguistic and transcultural phenomenon, while similarly bearing the vocation to scrutinize the way World Literature writers engage with the international book system, and how the production, circulation and dissemination of diasporic and postcolonial literature do not only rest but thrive on the cosmopolitan demand for cultural alterity. Such a demand forcibly translates into a growing market thirst for exoticism, eventuating in the advent of a 'commodified' literature of sorts, caught, as it stands, between the Scylla of global consumerism and the Charybdis of resistance. Thus, in their race towards visibility, World literature writers are called upon to negotiate their positionality within the international book system, while instrumentalizing discursive and extra-discursive strategies to navigate the literary landscape, through texts which have the double vocation of simultaneously meeting and eschewing the dictates of the book market.

This dissertation argues that this compromise is by no means an aesthetic fatality befalling World Literature authors, but rather more of a knowingly conscious and collaborative literary choice, managing its ways and playing the market logics inherently part and parcel of the game. By sampling a cluster of four well-established and prominently bestselling authors, namely Elif Shafak, Amine Maalouf, Kazuo Ishiguro and Kiran Desai, this research envisages to question the strategies of worlding involved in every single aesthetic and literary enterprise while minding the respective singularities.

Manifestly, the four case studies illustrate not only a diversity of geographical, political, cultural, linguistic and generic affiliations, but mainly a discrepancy of profile and caliber which simultaneously enriches and complicates worldliness in its various versions, while further enhancing the topicality of the present thesis. This topicality positions the overall argument at the center of the current debates on literary worlding, and forcibly invests it with a state-of- the-art quality which is a fortiori energized by the constant tendency to redefine itself within the precinct of World Literature.

While the 'self-othering' inclination within off-center literature has undeniably turned into a ubiquitously lucrative literary 'business', capitalizing on cultural difference to nurture the global demand for exoticism, it has otherwise tended to reduce literary artefacts to marketable goods, and by so doing has unfailingly broached the debate on the conditions intrinsic to literature and the ramifications on production, consumption and dissemination of literary works. Importantly, Bourdieu's contribution to theorizing the sociology of literature and more specifically his notion of 'cultural capital' seems to be a key concept for any appropriate understanding of the current debates on World Literature, and is manifestly an inspiration for the majority of its theoreticians.

The first chapter will accordingly engage with the various theoretical attempts at coming to terms with World Literature as a discipline, posing new challenges to critical theory, with corollary issues such as canonization, prizing, (un)translatability, marketability, digital reading and publishing. If such issues understandably complicate the discussion of a 'littérature-monde' constantly redefining itself, they also further verify the tensions intrinsic to the field, and raise questions about the inequality between minor and major literatures which, in turn, uncover discrepancies in literary or cultural capital. Concomitantly, problematics of definition arise as comparatists, such as David Damrosch, apprehend the inevitable panic critics might face in trying to come to grips with the colossal scope of the

field. Accordingly, defining and gauging worldliness on account of translatability and circulation (Damrosch) do not go unchallenged, as the debate takes different detours with French critic Pascale Casanova, who situates the stakes in the realm of space and the topology of literary capital. In *The World Republic of Letters* (1999), she addresses the world of global literature driven by invisible and 'unsuspected' forces through a close scrutiny of the modes of operation underlying its complex structure, while casting a critical eye on the 'unequal trade' at the heart of the global literary scene. Such a trade uncovers hierarchies within literary production whereby minor literatures are faced not only with the reality of their belated annexation and entry to the global literary space, due to their lack of cultural capital, but also with fierce market competition. Thus, Casanova remaps literary space along an imaginary or 'fictive line' which seems not only to represent the center of the world of letters but also to regiment it. It is against this line that all other literatures are gauged, a 'Greenwich-like' measure which estimates both the aesthetic and temporal distance from the center. The ascendency of nations with cultural capital manifestly materializes in urban spaces, invested as they stand, with a symbolic function whereby they come to operate as centers of credit or banks of sorts. Correspondingly, the role of Paris as a literary epicenter during the sixties confers to the city an establishment-like status which posits the metropole as an authority in literature, criticism, arts, philosophy, fashion, etc.

While Casanova's account has been widely challenged on account of its Eurocentredness, theorists such as Aamir Mufti or Al-Mussawi, question its explicit claim of hegemony of the Western cultural prototype, and incidentally problematize its unfounded claims of intellectual ascendency over the 'World Republic of Letters'. Beyond the French prototype, this cultural hierarchy translates for critics into a linguistic domination which currently posits English as the lingua franca of the world, thus relegating other languages and their respective literatures to minor positions which, in turn, contributes to reconfigure the new literary ecology along

the logics of a 'Mcculture' to borrow from James English(2005). Thus, 'the economy of prestige', which seems to regiment the world of literary production, reckons artistic achievement solely through the prism of 'success and stardom'. In *The Economy of Prestige : prizes, awards and the circulation of cultural value (2005)*, English summons readers to raise questions such as : 'How is such prestige produced and where does it reside ? (in people, in things, in relationships between people and things ?)What rules govern its circulation ?'(English,3). In probing what he calls 'the cultural economics of prestige', fundamentally identified as '….the very system of valuing and devaluing, esteeming and disesteeming…..'(English,24), English steers away not only from the classical narrative or scenario of what he accurately calls 'the fable of the post-modern apocalypse', a scenario which posits art and intellectual labor as victims of the economic apparatus, but also from the 'the reassuring comedy about the democratization of taste'. Instead, he reorients emphasis on the middle space between those two conflicting poles of interest, the space where all the constituents of the 'machinery of cultural production' are involved i.e rules, strategies, players and agents, who are by large the 'neglected instruments of cultural exchange' or what English aptly calls 'the agents of capital intraconversion'. In affording such an interesting paradigm, English shifts the parameters whereby cultural capital is understood in contemporary scholarship, and provokes serious reflection not only on the occult forces working at the heart of cultural practice, but on the accompagnying discursive manifestations surrounding it.

Similarly grounded in the Bourdieusian legacy, *The Postcolonial Exotic : Marketing The Margins* (2001) by Graham Huggan, carries the debate of World literature beyond the issues of cultural and linguistic domination , and enlarges its scope to encompass problematics of marketability and consumption, by closely examining the dynamics inherent in the Western literary market whereby, a 'booming alterity business' is appropriating marginal literatures and turning them into commodities. While Huggan acknowledges that 'Bourdieu's model has

been attacked for its over-schematised distinctions and, in particular, for its attempt to fix the class positions of different consumer publics' (Huggan,5), he argues that 'the model is useful, nonetheless, in suggesting how postcolonial writers/thinkers operate within an overarching, if historically shifting, field of cultural production.'(Huggan, 2001:5) For him, his study : ' is in part, an examination of the sociological dimensions of postcolonial studies, the material conditions of production and consumption of postcolonial writing and the influence of publishing houses and academic institutions on the selection, distribution and evaluation of these works' (Huggan,vii). In further investigating how this commodification of alterity is promoted by the publishing industry, the award-winning institutions, and academic circles, thus contributing to confer cultural capital to non-Western authors and texts- the ones which understandably respond to the Western market dictates-, Huggan reflects on the levels of 'complicity between local oppositional discourses and the global late capitalist system in which they circulate and are contained'. He further lays focus on what he calls 'the booming alterity industry', and explores how marginal literatures are produced, disseminated and consummed while coming to terms with 'the realpolitik of metropolitan economic supremacy'. Huggan's mapping of the global marketplace along with the codes governing it, and the ultimate uncovering of the implications on the metropolitan literary scene unmistakably translate an anxiety -quite legitimate it seems- about the future of postcolonial scholarship when Postcolonialism itself has turned into a cultural commodity and 'Postcolonial studies, it could be argued, has capitalised on its perceived marginality, while helping turn marginality itself into a valuable intellectual commodity'(Huggan, 2001: xiii).

Adopting an empirical reading of the world literary marketplace and the adjacent manifestations of 'intellectual tourism', Huggan contends that :'….metropolitan book businesses always eager for 'hot' new writers, merchandise the latest literary products from 'exotic' places such as Africa and India, assimilating marginal literatures to an over-voracious

mainstream and plying a moderately lucrative trade- in straightened economic circumstances- by transporting cultural products seen as coming from the peripheries to an audience that sees itself as being located at the center'(Huggan,1997:20). Accordingly, Huggan calls into question the credibility of Western institutions in authenticating othered literatures, or what he calls 'marketing the margins'. Mainly predicated on the concept of the 'exotic', Huggan's project extends the logic of tourism to the literary marketplace, and suggests that : « 'the tourist gaze' in global literature is inspired by processes of '….mystification (or levelling-out) of historical experience, imagined access to the cultural other through the process of consumption ; and reification of people and places into exchangeable aesthetic goods »(Huggan,2001 :19) Thus, a clique of well-established cosmopolitan writers in the caliber of Rushdie, V.S Naipul or Kureishi, superstars of sorts, alledgedly complicit with the market machinery and its mandates, in all likelihood thriving on a 'similar overarching system of authentification', come to epitomize commodity fetishism. These instances of 'staged marginalities' whereby peripherality is subtly exoticised is best attended to by Huggan in his two chapters entitled : 'Consuming India, starting from 1958 up to 2000', and 'African literature and the anthropological exotic'. For him, not only is the onus on award-winning institutions for prizing otherness and creating influential literary patronage, but most importantly for manufacturing global consensus through reviving 'new versions of the Raj'.

If critics concede that Huggan's materialist study is quite 'innovative', they otherwise maintain that his 'description of this field involves frequent reference to a global market reader, a figure with indistinct identity and agency'(Brouillette,2007 :19), a fact which Canadian critic Sarah Brouillette finds incompatible with the spirit of Huggan's project. In *Postcolonial Writers in The Global Literary Market* (2007), Brouillette casts herself as a vociferous critic of Huggan as she does not fail to underscore what she considers critical 'neglect' on his side, while further deconstructing the theoretical armature of his work, a great

deal of which she sees as 'a kind of accusation'. In calling into question his unnuanced use of the category of audience, she charges him of '….identifying readers as guilty of exoticizing, aestheticizing, and/or dehistoricising what might otherwise be subject to more legitimate forms of knowledge production' (Brouillette, 2007 :19).

An equally staple contribution to the World Literature debate is Franco Moretti's notion of 'distant reading' whereby he inventively reconceptualizes World literature while granting the colossal scope of the field, and affirming that any coming to terms with the width and reach of its ubiquitous nature necessitates the reconfiguration of its very categories :'The sheer enormity of the task makes it clear that World Literature cannot be Literature……. the categories have to be different' (Moretti, 2000 : 55). Yet if his prime concern is to revisit the Goethian legacy and to retrieve the true spirit of *Weltliteratur*, Moretti is aware of the predicament of the modern intellectual faced with the quasi-impossibility to read outside and beyond the limits of his own field of expertise, which in turn interrogates the very essence and finality of World Literature : 'It's time we returned to that old ambition of *Weltliteratur* : after all, the literature around us is now unmistakably a planetary system. The question is not really what we should do- the question is how. What does it mean studying World Literature ? How do we do it ?'(Moretti, 2000 : 55).

Alternative theoretical postulates as refreshing as Francesca Orsini's in *Significant Geographies in Lieu of World Literature or The Multilingual Local in World Literature(2015),* whereby she broaches an alternative, and alledgedly more encompassing conceptual framework and in which she cautions against the concept of World Literature as 'A famously slippery, apparently expansive, yet surprisingly narrow category,….' (Orsini, 2015 :345), and further condemns the contemporary '….urge to flatten world literature and make it monologic'(Laachir, Marzagora, Orsini,2018 :293). Orsini's attempt to reconfigure our understanding of space stems from the dilemma she senses is imprisoning minor and non-

Western literatures in misfitting categories. '…..because geography is so crucial to World Literature' (Orsini,2015:345), she calls for a review of the current spatial models provided by World Literature through her 'significant geographies' which enable a more nuanced account of the local/global dialectic. In joining the debate, French critic Didier Coste attempts to demonstrate how World literature as a conceptual framework seems to have '….a rich and dangerous polysemy' and proposes '…..to treat World literature as a myth in the Barthesian sense, which does not imply that it is an empty sign, but on the contrary an overdetermined sign and consequently brimming with both overt hidden effects on the mode of thinking of its users'(Coste,2007 :1/2).

A Momentous twist in the discussion on World Literature is the one accomplished by Emily Apter in both her seminal studies *The Translation Zone* (2006), and subsequently *Against World Literature : On The Politics of Untranslatability* (2014). Her voice stands, together with Spivak's, as one of the most intransigent detractors of the discourse of World Literature, through rethinking translation studies, and provoking serious reflection on the impact of language 'wars' on canonization in literature, Apter claims that : '..….language wars, great and small, shape the politics of translation in the spheres of media, literacy, literary markets, electronic information transfer and codes of literariness' (Apter,2006 :4). Echoing Casanova's contention that 'Translation like criticism is a process of establishing value' (Casanova,1999:23), Apter envisages the world of translation as '…..a military zone, governed by the laws of hostility and hospitality, by semantic transfers and treaties'(Apter,2006:9), while casting her project within a linguistic ecology where we find endangered language species that are subjected to the tyranny of powerful languages, thus killing linguistic diversity. In refusing the possibility and hegemony of a common world culture, Apter unequivocally joins her voice to Spivak's, notoriously inimical to World Literature, being a critic and theorist who has always endorsed the 'singularity and

untranslatability of the literary work', since we find in the literary the 'particularity and irreducibility of idiom, not the universal of translatability', or else 'translation is misprision, so the question is why we want to do it ? to what ends ? and for whom ?', Spivak is resolute that '…. we need to learn languages rather than consume world literature anthologies in English (of the sort Damrosch edits)'(Qtd in McColl,260) . For McColl, Spivak and Apter are preaching a similar resistance to the politics of World Literature, and therefore aligning themselves in opposition to all efforts by other critics such as Damrosch to compromise with its discourse. Spivak is trenchant that :

> Globalization takes place only in capital and data, everything else is damage control.……. I don't believe the humanities can be global. I think our task is to supplement the uniformization necessary for globalization, we must therefore learn to think of ourselves as the custodians of the world's wealth of languages, not as impresarios of a multicultural circus in English. (qtd in McColl, Spivak,36)

Chapter two addresses Turkish author Elif Shafak as the epitome of literary worlding, and by the same token her fiction as the potential quintessence of a newborn genre 'the Dull New Global Novel'(Tim Parks,2010). The chapter similarly investigates how her aesthetic, linguistic, generic and ultimately thematic choices problematize her location as a global writer on the international literary arena, cognizant as she stands of the dilemma of writing for a global and mainly Anglophone audience. If we agree that Shafak's texts are constructed with the embedded anxiety of a cosmopolitan reader, and that this angst contributes to fashion her fiction both on the linguistic and formal levels and hence materializes in translatable and consumable narratives, it is of paramount importance to register her conversion in 2004 from Turkish to English , with the release of her fifth novel *The Saint of Incipient Insanities.* This movement from a local peripheral language to English leaves no ambiguity about the decisive role language choice has operated in Shafak's career, and further evidences the writer's

cognizance of the global stakes of English as a major vehicle of literariness, whereby reaching for an Anglophone global elite becomes synonymous with an engagement with the realpolitik of the international book industry. As legitimate as this race for visibility and prestige may stand, it emphasizes the international lineage of minor authors in the age of globalization by claiming membership to the world cultural and literary landscapes. Shafak's international fame reaches its paroxysm with the rage provoked by the release of *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006)-charged for 'insulting Turkishness and hence violating the Turkish penal code'- wherein she tackles sensitive issues in Turkey namely the Armenian genocide and the incumbent responsibility on the Turks in the decimation of the Armenian minority, and their exilic scattering around the world. Apart from winning her a long-listing for the Orange Prize, the critical acclaim Shafak's sixth text received, not only confirmed her credentials as a distinguished novelist, but also introduced her to the international readership as an anti-establishment voice.

The chapter addresses her bestselling text *The Forty Rules of Love* (2009) as a fetishicized market commodity whereby the author flirts with Western tastes and market dictates, in simultaneously registering and reinforcing a marked infatuation with Sufi philosophy and aesthetics. If it is true that the popularity of Shafak's text coincides with a renewed craze in the West for Oriental spiritualism, it otherwise divulges a tendency in the Anglo-American book market to promote a 'satinized' version of Islam, at a remove from religious rigidity and dogmatism which have in great part contributed to generate islamophobic attitudes in the West. Not only does *The Forty Rules of Love* capitalize on literary trendiness, but it more importantly avails itself of marketing strategies which serve to handle cultural sensibilities across the cosmopolitan book market. While Shafak's explicit intertexuality with Sufi mystic Jalaledine Rumi's legacy and her recuperation of this latter's account of his momentous encounter with his spiritual guru Shams of Tabriz in thirteenth century Konya, make the

substance of her narrative, we are struck as readers by the polyphony upon which she scaffolds her text, as we are equally interpellated by the tensions between the self-essentializing gestures she deploys to appeal to a Western readership thirsty for exoticism, and the will to simultaneously subvert and deconstruct particular myths and cliches about the Orient and Orientals.

Chapter three scrutinizes the fictional world of Amin Maalouf both as a manifestation of World Literature in French and an exceptional diasporic voice, while problematizing Maalouf's positionality as an exophonic writer grappling with issues of language, exile, and identity. It further questions Maalouf's engagement with the essentialist logic characteristic of self-orientalist/exoticist rhetoric, and thus speculates on his involvement- by accident or by design- with the machinery of the global capitalist marketplace and the publishing industry. The argumentation tests the hypothesis that Maalouf's fiction performs a function of memory with a nostalgic/romanticised glorification of the past to facilitate a reading of the present, oscillating between historical fact and fiction, and that such an enterprise of necessity entails the endorsement of essentializing gestures and perhaps even self-Orientalizing/exoticising tropes. It further contends that when writing from a metropolitan center – Paris in this occurrence- a diasporic writer might be inclined – oft against his own intentions- to negotiate the dilemma of vending his own alterity through a subtle 'staging of marginality' (Graham Huggan,2001). This chapter invites the reader to envisage Maalouf's literary opus *Leo The African* (1986) as a market commodity making its way through the international circuits of book trade dissemination, and to further examine the discursive strategies mobilized by both author and publisher to promote the circulation of Maalouf's text on a planetary scale.

Chapter four addresses a most atypical voice in the contemporary literary scene namely Kazuo Ishiguro, and thus investigates his texts as a site of compromise, where linguistic and non-linguistic ingredients are mobilized to engage with the international book market and its

exigencies. It accordingly envisages Ishiguro's novels as commodities, and sets to uncover the complex and intricate processes whereby the author negotiates his status as a 'language migrant'[1], cognizant of the aesthetic dilemmas inherent in World Literature as well as of the stakes involved in writing for a global audience, while simultaneously probing Ishiguro's aesthetic share in the current worlding of the literary. This chapter equally undertakes to interrogate the ambivalent position of Ishiguro as a Japanese-born Briton, and explores the way 'otherness' translates in his works, while coping with the tensions inherent in his bicultural profile ; it further examines the motivations of the Western prize machinery in establishing Ishiguro as a literary megastar through the authentification of his œuvre with a strikingly lavish over-awardedness. The chapter singles out one of the author's earliest texts viz. *An Artist of The Floating World* (1986) to illustrate the entanglement of Ishiguro within market logics and his potential capitalization on his ethnic origin.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Indian novelist Kiran Desai, apprehended less as a post-Rushdian Indian author simultaneously handling and dispensing with Rushdie's all too pervasive and admittedly intimidating ascendency, than as a post-postcolonial writer part of the 'Brown Culture', and representative of the third wave Indian diaspora, stretching her concerns to issues that transcend the anti-colonial to embrace larger scopes, such as the transnational, cross-cultural and global. The 'post-postcolonial' is used herein as a category that expands the postcolonial beyond its temporal and geographical frameworks, with a bifold postness which forcibly entails an engagement with the critical and aesthetic concerns of things postcolonial, while at the same time distancing itself from it through a cogent use of a much more complex and more encompassing literary topography with a multiplicity of foci. Similarly, this section seeks to explore the extent to which Desai is responsive to the precepts

[1] See Mary Besemeres in *Translating One's Self : Language and Selfhood in Cross-Cultural Autobiography,* Oxford : Peter Lang, 2002. ISBN 3906766985.

of the global literary market, and how this awareness aesthetically translates into narratives which not only engage reflection upon diasporic experience within a global context, but articulate a challenging discursivity going well beyond the cultural categories of the postcolonial and ultimately locating itself within a wider transnational topos. The argument will correspondingly test the hypothesis that the recuperation of Desai's fiction by the Western book market needs to be viewed within a gamut of self-exoticizing/Orientalizing strategies deployed both by writer and publisher to titillate the Western readership, and to cater for the market dictates of metropolitan consumption. This contention will concurrently strive to drive home evidence that Desai as a representative of Indian Writing in English (IWE), is of necessity and choice entangled within a market logic which positions her fiction within a site of compromise, whereby she is compelled as a diasporic writer to walk the tight rope between emancipatory tendencies to break loose from reductive niche market literature, and the lure of hypervisibility and prizing. Reading Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss(*2006) as a market commodity and uncovering the dynamics of worlding, which entitle it to the status of best-seller, incidentally questions the textual and paratextual components catalyzed to augment its tradability. Notwithstanding, Desai's re-writing of India in its interconnectedness to the world ironically thwarts the Western reader's expectations, in resisting the eager demand for exoticism, and purposefully circumventing the bulk of self-othering/self-exoticising strategies commonly used to match the exigencies of the cosmopolitan marketplace.

The sixth chapter is an attempt to cluster Elif Shafak and Amine Maalouf, and to read both authors as a manifestation of remapping World Literature. While it is practically quasi impossible to unburden one's perception of the de facto discrepancies in profile and caliber between the two writers, the mainstay argument rests in large part on probing worlding dynamics and marketing strategies as promoted by Maalouf and Shafak, simultaneously

entangled, as they stand, with the market drive to commodify their texts and the call to resist the sway of the Western publishing industry. Significantly, Maalouf's fictional project which actually started in 1986 with *Leo The African* and materialized in more substantial forms with all his subsequent texts, does not only constitute a historical rewriting which unearths Oriental Arab Muslim historical, cultural and spiritual legacies, but it more importantly invites the Western reader to reconsider his Eurocentred perspective, through the fictional manipulation of official historiography, furnishing thus a revisited history of the world through an Islamic lens. Similarly, while the temporal gap between *LTA* and *TFROL* arguably positions the latter in a belated and potentially 'anxious' stance, Elif Shafak's literary venture is no less history-oriented as her œuvre registers more than one attempt at revamping historical legacy. The chapter will particularly focus on intertexting *TFROL* and *LTA* and will eventually pick up the thread of space and consider how the Orient is represented in both narratives, while being attentive to the reconfiguration of the world map.

Chapter seven juxtaposes Kazuo Ishiguro's and Kiran Desai's fictional worlds as paradigmatic of diasporic literature and examines the way *An Artist of The Floating World* and *The Inheritance of Loss* respectively formulate and manage their worldliness on the international scene, while further anchoring their historicity within wider geopolitical scopes. The chapter equally investigates how both texts position themselves within a complex network of universal interconnectedness, while maintaining a dissonance between the global and the local, and thereby testing the limits of worldliness. At another level, it foregrounds how this discursive resistance to the politics of globalization unsettles the hegemonic rhetoric of this latter, and emphasizes the discontents of cosmopolitanism by maintaining postcolonial ambiguity, and incidentally suggesting a genuine possibility of unmaking/remaking world structures along new paradigms. The chapter will eventually probe how both artefacts attempt to reformulate visible structures of the world, while knowingly capitalizing on their cultural

otherness in their race to ensure market valence and visibility, and strategically subverting Western assumptions about alterity.

The last chapter of the present research entitled : Kiran Desai, Kazuo Ishiguro, Amin Maalouf, Elif Shafak : World Literature in the Age of Digital Culture , seeks to probe how the four worlded and worldly narratives, which make the substance of this dissertation, manage their ways through the publishing industry and the ebook market both as print and digital goods. It similarly ponders the circuits of circulation and dissemination whereby *TFOL*, *LTA*, *IL* and *AFW* navigate their ways respectively within the international marketplace. The chapter will ultimately tackle how the four authors promote their media persona through digital platforms, and how they actively interact with the reader, in the light of the reconfiguration of the concepts of authorship and readerhip in the age of digitization.

Chapter One : 'Write local, sell global' : Anthologizing the World Literature Debate

> Nowadays, national literature doesn't mean much : the age of world literature is beginning, and everybody should contribute to hasten its advent. (Goethe to Eckermann, 1827)

> Importing a literary work from one national field to another means that the work will be received out of the context of its creation, opening up a large space for interpretation and strategies of appropriation through labeling, prefaces, critics, etc, which can be understood only in light of the specific issues at stake in the reception field (Bourdieu 'Social Conditions' ; Damrosch).(Gisele Sapiro, 2016 :90)

> Writers of postcolonial nations on the periphery of international literary space have to struggle not only against the predominance of national politics, as writers in the richest spaces do, but also against international literary forces. The external forces exerted upon the least endowed literary spaces today assume the forms of linguistic domination and economic domination (notably in the form of foreign control over publishing), which is why proclamations of national independencies do not suffice to eliminate outside pressures. To one degree or another, literary relations of power are forms of political relations of power. (Pascale Casanova,1999 : 81)

1.1. The World Literature Debate and Its Global Stakes :

In the 'World Republic of Letters' to invoke Pascale Casanova's notorious phrase , a conspicuously 'entrepreneurial and bulimic' world (Emily Apter ,2013 :347), minor literatures are gaining substantial visibility in their race to join a 'littérature-monde' which is purposefully stretching the international canon to make room for lesser known authors and literary traditions. While much scholarship of World Literature addresses cultural otherness as a key aspect in apprehending the discourse of globalization, 'a triumphalist discourse' according to Sharae Deckard[2] , this impulse basically translates a demand for otherness to nurture a global market thirsty for exoticism. This literary cosmopolitanism and the contingent fetishisation of 'cultural alterity' it generates, is a rather recent concern in Western academic circles, as we witness in recent debates on World Literature, a redirection of emphasis to nascent and rather understudied issues, namely the political economy of literature, market logics and the commodification of alterity in non-Western fiction, along with the decisive part played by translation in disseminating and circulating off-center literature on a global scale. The irresistible yet highly questionable call to match cosmopolitan market tastes uncovers significant imbalances between major and minor literatures, picking thus on the vexed issue of literary capital formation, for according to Pascale Casanova's contention : 'Small literatures are challenged by a problematic relation to world literary space because they lack literary capital'(Casanova,1999). Thus, if 'World literature is a spectre haunting the discipline of postcolonial studies' to quote Sharae Deckard's rather dismissive vignette, or else the 'literature of the capitalist world system' (Franco Moretti,2013), the global literary landscape is manifestly governed by market dynamics that reveal growing

[2] See Postcolonial Studies and World Literature by Sharae Deckard and James Graham., Roultledge, Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Vol.48 No5, December 2012 , 465-471

literary and cultural consummerism, ultimately reducing fictional works to marketable goods while aiming at the enactment of a hegemonic worldliness within the local/global dialectic.

Substantially,'The sociology of literature' as a new concept first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in his foundational work *Cultural Capital (1986)* - seems to have inspired a whole generation of critics beyond the hexagonal borders. Scholars as prestigious as Pascale Casanova, Gisele Sapiro, Graham Huggan, James English, Sarah Brouillette, David Damrosch, Arjun Appadurai, Aamir Mufti, Emily Apter, Djelal Kadir, Theo D'haen, Francesca Orsini, Sandra Pozanesi, Timothy Brenan, Debjani Ganjuly, Franco Moretti, Anna Christina Mendes, Didier Coste or Alexander Beecroft, to name but a few - obviously labouring under a sense of belatedness as much as they are all indebted to Bourdieusian theoretical findings- have all recycled Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital'[3], not only in investigating the material conditions of literary creation and its implications on the production, circulation and consumption of postcolonial and diasporic texts, but foremost in enriching the discussion on World Literature and the concomitant nagging controversies over canonization, prize institutions, (un)translatability…..

1.2. Damrosch and Circulation :

It is veritably a genuine theoretical tour de force for any contemporary critic to eschew the 'scholarly panic' David Damrosch (2003) rightly cautions against since :' The dramatic acceleration of globalization since their era, however, has greatly complicated the idea of world literature. Most immediately, the sheer scope the term today can breed a kind of scholarly panic'(Damrosch, 2003 :4). In emphasizing the incommensurability of scope and the multiplication of 'perplexities' or the 'epistemological and methodological anxieties'- to

[3] Bourdieu's concept is useful in reconfiguring the traditional notion of culture into competing fields.

borrow from Arjun Appadurai (1996)- that critics, comparatists and World Literature theorists have to grapple with in the age of the 'Disneyfication of the globe'(Damrosch,2003 :18), Damrosch along with many other practitioners in the discipline obviously point not so much to the complexities and tensions inherent in the province of World Literature, as to the collaborative quality of the field as a fait accompli after the primary, yet, essential efforts made by Goethe, Marx and Engels to envision World Literature as a concept. Not only does such an inflection in the debate stress the interdisciplinary vocation of the prescinct of World Literature , but it also foregrounds its translocal, transcultural, transtemporal and translinguistic concerns. Indeed, 'what World literature needs today is to address the megarhetoric of globalization' (Appadurai,1989) in the new millenium, an age of rampant literary globalism with emerging literary traditions ; in this respect, Indian critic Debjani Ganguly furnishes us with a two-fold reading :

> Literary globalism for our age is envisioned in two ways : as a *field* of transnational production, circulation and reception of literary texts in a world radically transformed by a high-velocity interconnectivity, itself a qualitative innovation that gives this new century its identity : and as a discipline that demands new theoretical and methodological approaches that go beyond the Eurocentric underpinnings of the comparative literature discipline and the Nation/Empire models of the last century.(Debjani Ganguly, 2008 :119).

What such an understanding underscores is the conception of World Literature, first as production that materializes in mobile texts crossing borders, and inexorably managed by market dynamics and global trade, and second as an intellectual enterprise, supposed to address the ramifications and anxieties inherent in the field as such. In this context, circulation becomes a sine qua none condition for inclusion in the international canon, an issue widely addressed by David Damrosch who is adamant when he declares : 'I take World Literature to

encompass works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language…..…. In its most expansive sense, World Literature could include any work that has ever reached beyond its home base '(Damrosch,4). Conversely, Francesca Orsini would not rest content with circulation and translatability as aesthetic parameters to gauge the worldliness of texts, she rightly argues that crossing borders is by no means a valid criterion to acquire recognition :

> What to me is problematic in this formulation is the implication that what does *not* circulate, or is not translated, is not part of World Literature.……. If the work does *not* circulate even after it gets translated, the implication is that it does not stand on its own in the eyes of 'world readers'…….. By implication, then, if the world system is indeed one, then what is not translated must be somewhat deficient, speak only to the local or provincial tastes, be distant in space-time from the here-now. (Orsini, 2018 :349)

In further distilling the wide-ranging array of arguments incessantly animating the polemic on World Literature, Damrosch attends to the much contested question of canonization in an age that is 'postcanonical in much the same way that it is post-industrial'(Damrosch,44). In *World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age* (2006), he actually distinguishes three types of canons :

> Our new system has three levels : a hypercanon, a countercanon, and a shadow canon. The hyper canon is populated by the older 'major' authors who have held their own or even gained ground over the past twenty years. The countercanon is composed of the subaltern 'contestatory' voices of writers in languages less commonly taught in minor literatures within great-power languages. Many, even most, of the old major authors coexist comfortably with these new arrivals to the

> new neighborhood, very few of whom have yet accumulated anything like their fund of cultural capital. Far from being threatened by these unfamiliar neighbors, the old major authors gain new vitality from association with them, and only rarely do they need to admit one of them directly into their club.(Damrosch,2006 :45)

There is no doubt that Damrosch's categorization alerts us to the hegemony of the Western hypercanon where 'as in today's economy, the richest of the rich get richer still' (Damrosch,2006 :40), yet it unequivocally laments the way postcolonial studies and World Literature are replicating the same hypercanonical bias when dealing with minor authors and texts by truncating whole literary traditions for a single author, who comes to be the 'representative' of a whole nation :

> However, the disparities of attention are more dramatic still when it comes to World Literature, given the severe pressures of time and numbers involved. If we define 'World Literature' for this purpose as works that are read and discussed beyond home-country and area-specialist audiences, we see the hypercanon extending far beyond older fields formerly closely held by the New Criticism and its offshoots. In World Literature, as in some literary Miss Universe competition, an entire nation may be represented by a single author : Indonesia, the world's fifth largest country and the home of ancient and ongoing cultural traditions, is usually seen, if at all, in the person of Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar divide the honors for Mr Argentina. (Damrosch, 2006:48)

This deliberately reductionist attitude in dealing with minor literatures compromises Western scholarship, and further problematizes the exclusion and inclusion processes at work in Western academia through which it continues still today to shape the international canon,

to foster and manipulate tastes globally. So Damrosch asks : « what does it really mean to speak of a 'World Literature ? which literature, whose world ? » (Damrosch, 2003 :1). In trying to draw the contours of a much problematic field, he dispells any misunderstandings from the start :

> …….world Literature is not at all fated to disintegrate into the conflicting multiplicity of separate national traditions, nor on the other hand, need it be swallowed up in the white noise that Janet Abu Lughod has called ' global babble'. My claim is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading that is applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike.….It is important from the outset to realize that just as there never has been a single set canon of world literature, so too no single way of reading can be appropriate to all texts…….The variability of a work of world literature is one of its constitutive features, one of its greatest strengths when the work is well presented and read well, and its greatest vulnerability when it is mishandled or misappropriated by its newfound foreign friends. (Damrosch, 2003 :5)

Such a definition sounds much like an echo of Djelal Kadir's exhortation to 'World' World Literature, which for him is 'nothing more than a product of our engagement in notional or narrative acts of worlding'(Djelal Kadir,2004 :6). The act of 'Worlding'- antithetical to 'globalizing'- actually bestows 'historical density' on literature. By the same token, Damrosch's rendition problematizes the centrality of canon as a prerequisite in gaining the label of World Literature, and thereby calls into question this latter by shifting the focus on reading or reception and incidentally on production, as mechanisms liable to confer 'density' to minor texts ; Damrosch is perfectly aware that :'The problem of reception is

compounded today by questions of production as well. In recent decades, a growing proportion of works has been produced for foreign consumption'(Damrosch,2003 :18). In another instance, he takes stock of the real incentives behind the production and dissemination of particular texts, and rightly argues that : 'Even today, foreign works will rarely be translated at all in the United States, much less widely distributed, unless they reflect American concerns and fit comfortably with American images of the foreign culture in question'(Damrosch,2003 :18). While drawing attention to the intricate role of translation and its complicity in disseminating and domesticating peripheral texts, Damrosch timidly engages with market logics or global consummerism, without really exploring the complexities inherent to it. One can safely conjecture with Debjani that three major features seem to scaffold Damrosch's venture ; first the contention that 'World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures', second, a text is wordly if it 'gains in translation' and finally 'World Literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading ; a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time'(Debjani Ganguly, 2008:123). For Debjani again, 'Damrosch's formulation also situates the practice of World literature firmly at a distance from canon-making imperatives that either promote a vapid universalism or privilege a particular genre, region or period, both efforts ultimately proving reductive in their outcomes. Again he resists the dichotomies of centring/ decentring, Western/ non-Western and old world/ new worlds by recommending elliptical modes of circulation and reading that are generated from two foci at once.'(Debjani,2008 :123). Still, apart from circulation, the question remains what makes a text global ? How does a novel acquire the cachet of World Literature ? what aesthetic criteria is a text supposed to meet to become globe-trotting ?. In his pioneering study *What is World Literature* (2003), Damrosch contends that any text is eligible to be a candidate to World Literature and earn its global status if it meets specific parameters : interpretive flexibility, liability to alternate readings, and ability to be radically

recontextualized. Canadian critic Sarah Brouillette reads Damrosch's championning of the uniqueness of both literary works and reading experiences as totally compatible with the capitalist spirit :'Indeed Damrosch's own project of insisting that every literary work is unique, and that every act of consumption of a literary work is irreducible to any other, is highly compatible with contemporary capitalism's fetish for particularity and diversity.'(Brouillette,1/2).

Taken as a whole and despite all the charges levelled against it, Damrosch's contribution is beyond doubt an enlightening and perceptive addition to the World Literature debate as it furnishes new paradigms in understanding the complexities of the field, and opens up new vistas in the enquiry about the effects of globalization on literature and reading as a praxis. Theorist Theo D'haen does not miss to laud its dynamic nature when he declares : « David Damrosch has championed an alternative and dynamic approach to World Literature that focuses on circulation » (Theo D'haen,2012 :1),

1.3. Pascale Casanova and Literary Space :

Four years earlier, in her 1999 monumental work, *The World Republic of Letters*, French critic Pascale Casanova gives the debate a different dimension and situates the stakes in the realm of space and the cartography of literary capital. Thus, she addresses the world of global literature driven by invisible and 'unsuspected' forces through a close scrutiny of the modes of operation underlying its complex structure, while casting a critical eye on the 'unequal trade' at the heart of the global literary scene, a trade which uncovers hierarchies within literary production whereby minor literatures are faced not only with the reality of their belated annexation and entry to the global literary space due to their lack of cultural capital, but also with fierce market competition :

> In the world republic of letters, the richest spaces are also the oldest, which is to say the ones that were the first to enter into literary competition and whose national classics came also to be regarded as universal classics(……) It is a consequence of the unequal structure (to recall Fernand Braudel's phrase once again) of literary space, the uneven distribution of resources among national literary spaces. In measuring themselves against one another, these spaces slowly establish hierarchies and relations of dependency that over time create a complex and durable design. (Casanova,1999:82/83)

This uneveness translates political, economic and linguistic domination, manoeuvered by nations with global cultural might over culturally poor countries with no right to claim literary space, for 'The temporal law of the world of letters may be stated thus : ' *it is necessary to be old to have any chance of being modern or of decreeing what is modern*. In other words, having a long national past is the condition of being able to claim a literary existence that is fully recognized in the present'(Casanova,89/90). A'presentness' or modernity otherwise denied to 'poor' literary traditions which, in contrast, are lacking in cultural capital and are subjected to symbolic violence whereby they are constantly annexed to older and richer traditions. It is hardly surprising that this violence is manifest in the way minor texts are approached within the global literary and economic contexts. Indeed, Casanova remaps literary space along an imaginary or 'fictive line' which seems not only to represent the center of the world of letters but also to regiment it. It is against this line that all other literatures are gauged, a 'Greenwich-like' measure which estimates both the aesthetic and temporal distance from the center :

> Literary space creates a present on the basis of which all positions can be measured, a point in relation to which all other points can be located, just as the

> *fictive* line known as the prime meridian, arbitrarily chosen for the determination of longitude, contributes to the *real* organisation of the world and makes possible the measures of distances and the location of positions on the surface of the earth, so what might be called the Greenwich meridian of literature makes it possible to estimate the relative aesthetic distance from the center of the world of letters of all those who belong to it. This aesthetic distance is also measured in temporal terms since the prime meridian determines the present of literary creation, which is to say modernity… (Casanova,88)

While this ascendency is claimed by nations with a rich literary background or 'thick soil' in Casanova's borrowing from Henry James, cities themselves stand as centers of credit, banks of sorts she reminds us, which simultaneously claim their cultural capital and capitalize on it. Accordingly, and :

> As against the national boundaries that give rise to political belief and nationalist feeling, the world of letters creates its own geography and its own divisions. The territories of literature are defined and delimited according to their aesthetic distance from the place where literary consecration is ordained. The cities where literary resources are concentrated, where they accumulate, become places where belief is incarnated, centers of credit as it were. Indeed, they may be thought of as central banks of a specific sort. (Casanova, 23)

Faithful to the Bourdieusian and Braudelian spirit, Casanova underscores the symbolic function of different urban spaces, and true to her cultural and national affiliation , she stresses the 'unique configuration' of Paris and its far-reaching impact as a literary center, as a matter of fact, the city of light seems to make the consensus of critics and writers alike that it is 'where the twentieth century was' (Gertrude Stein)' (Casanova, 88) or a city invested with

an establishment-like status if we believe Victor Hugo ‘s notorious portrayal : ‘ Paris, it needs to be emphasized, is a government. This government has neither judges, nor police, nor soldiers, nor ambassadors, it operates through infiltration, which is to say omnipotence….’ (Casanova,89)

An omnipotence which posited Paris at the center of the intellectual map of the sixties, a Greenwich line of arts, literature, criticism, philosophy, fashion,etc….., a trend-setter in all different fields where modernity was constantly reinvented, good taste manufactured, prestige equally attributed or withdrawn, and being modern constantly redefined. The authority of Paris as the world intellectual epicenter, Casanova concedes, was both real and imaginary since : ‘Paris was thus doubly universal, by virtue both of the belief in its universality and of the real effects that this belief produced.’ (Casanova, 30)

Casanova’s narrative of the World Republic of Letters is beyond doubt illuminating in many ways, though many critics have discerned the Eurocentric inclination of her analysis and overtly charged it with essentialism. A case in point is Muhsin J. al Musawi who, in *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters : Arabic Knowledge Contruction*(2010), interrogates the amnesia of Western theorists in general, and Casanova’s in particular, in dealing with the universal literary capital and their deliberate-or not-dismissal of any preceeding literary traditions, and though he borrows Casanova’s conceptual framework, he argues that :

> My (his) use of this term , given its current association with Casanova’s World Republic of Letters, merits further attention, not only to decenter the latter conceptualization of a Europeanized world system, but also, and primarily, to direct attention to traditions that antedate the European

> model and perhaps problematize a global application of the term. Casanova's world republic cannot accommodate non-European cultures of the recent past. (al-Musawi,2010)

A creative borrowing, as it stands, one that al-Musawi aptly extends to the Islamic world of letters to rehabilitate an unjustly undermined legacy, concurrently by Western and Arab critics. Furthermore, Casanova's eurocentric arguments such as : 'the exceptional concentration of literary sources that occurred in Paris over the course of several centuries gradually led to its recognition as the center of the literary world'(Casanova, qtd in al-Musawi footnote 15), obliquely confirm the Western hegemonic discourse, and further lay bare the colonial condescending rhetoric besides seriously compromising Casanova's critical stance :'Pascale Casanova's argument with respect to Paris and its centripetal and centrifugal roles could have been expanded and problematized, beyond what is a celebratory narrative, in order to account for the imperial use of native traditions to seduce and lead native elites.'(al-Musawi,2010). Accordingly, Paris as a capital holds, by no means, according to al-Musawi, ascendency in 'the World Republic of Letters'. For him, Cairo furnishes a counter-example of a citadel of culture and knowledge, certainly at disparate cultural and political locations, but most importantly at a temporal framework that is prior to the Parisian model. The main thrust of al-Musawi's argument is to question the claim of hegemony of the Western cultural prototype and incidentally problematize its unfounded claims of intellectual ascendency over 'the World Republic of Letters', besides, by challenging Casanova's European template, al-Musawi invokes the Arab-Islamic literary tradition, and while re-examining 'the Medieval Islamic republic of letters' with its rich tapestry across an edifice stretching over six centuries, as a site of

unprecedented literary genius and creativity, he remaps the universal intellectual geography, and calls for the reconstruction of Western knowledge along new paradigms. Thus, al-Musawi's impressive study is recuperating the Arabic and Islamic republic of letters across seven centuries to bely Casanova's claim and worse perhaps, to draw attention to her circumscribed ambit, which reveals -if anything- her critical chauvinism and her essentialist outlook.

A continuity of perspective is formulated by another critical voice, Aamir Mufti's, who partly dismisses Casanova's configuration of 'the World Republic of Letters', and if it is true, as Aamir Mufti's reading shows, that casanova identifies three significant stations in the development of the literary space :

> The first, its moment of origin, so to speak, is the extended and uneven process of vernacularization in the emerging European states from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The next turning point and period of massive expansion comes, she argues, again following Anderson 's periodization, is the philological-lexigraphic revolution starting in the late eighteenth century and the widely dispersed invention of national tradition that ensued. (……..) The third and for Casanova, ongoing period in the expansion of this literary space is linked to the historical 'event' of decolonization in the post World War II era. (Aamir R. Mufti,2010 :459)

She nonetheless commits a 'most consequential misconception' as she fails to acknowledge the Orientalist contribution to the universal literary heritage for she seems to believe that : '(…..), non-Western literary cultures make their first effective appearance in world literary space in the era of decolonization in the middle of the

twentieth century.'(Aamir R. Mufti,2010 :459). Mufti is highly critical of her enterprise, for missing to take into consideration the Orientalist role in shaping the world literary space. Such an outspokenly short-sighted Eurocentric attitude, he carries on, is mainly due to the fact that :

> Casanova misses this initial charting of non-Western traditions of writing on the emerging map of the literary world (……), such figures as Kateb Yacine, V.S.Naipul, and Salman Rushdie and the psychology of assimilation into metropolitan languages and cultures typify the non-Western writer (as they all do for Casanova). Such models of cultural change as creolization and metissage consequently become the privileged mode of understanding literatures originating outside the metropolis, and the far more complex and elusive tensions and contradictions involved in the emergence of the modern non-Western literatures disappear from view altogether. (Mufti,2010 : 460)

This oblivion of sorts, openly condemned by Mufti, is illustrated by Casanova's reductionist and selective perspective whereby non-Western writers and their texts are considered with very little, if no nuance at all, while cultural capital is granted by means of authentification upon 'elected few' authors, the ones who master the assimilation game, the 'prize-friendly', the 'translation-happy' ones to borrow Emily Apter's terminology.

In his essay *Orientalism and the Institution of World Literatures* (2010), Mufti revisits Orientalism not only as a body of knowledge and sholarship epitomizing the spirit which reigned in Europe across the eighteenth and ninteenth centuries, but mostly as a key moment for comprehending the complex cultural, literary and

linguistic interactions which shaped European tradition. A moment of crosscultural exchange, yet a historical station which records the appropriation, subjugation and hierarchisation of linguistic and literary world traditions. In further exploring the way Orientalism relates to World literature, Mufti maintains that : 'In its historically received forms, therefore, world literature is fundamentally a concept of exchange (….) that recodes an opaque and unequal process of appropriation as a transparent one of supposedly free and equal interchange and communication' (Mufti,2010 :488), he then laboriously documents how this actual inequality is far from being accidental,and asserts that it basically stems from the linguistic hierarchies imposed by Western hegemonic scholarship, a hegemony which strenghtened the superiority of cosmopolitan 'major' languages over 'minor' ones, institutionalizing English as the lingua franca of the world which explains why '(……..)English now assumes the mantle of exclusive medium of cosmopolitan exchange'(Mufti,2010 :489). The global hegemony of English has in fact contributed to reconfigure the linguistic, literary and cultural geographies of the world to the extent that any textual tradition seeking recognition needs necessarily to engage with the translation process, thus we find : 'Today, readers in India, Pakistan, Iran, or Turkey will typically encounter each other's literatures only in translation in English (or in further translation from English), thus only if the works have received that metropolitan recognition.'(Mufti,2010 :489). This in turn has generated a race towards greater currency on the part of writers with minor linguistic profiles to integrate the international canon, which is typically true for Indo-English writers who have acquired huge valence in the global literary market :

> The Indo-English novel has become in recent decades a global form, a tradition with a vast accumulation of cultural capital, with British and

> American editors descending routinely on the major Indian cities in a frenzied search for the next big novel, the next *God of Small Things*, a process that is now a routine part of the lives of aspiring young Anglophone writers, affecting in all kinds of concrete ways the writing that gets produced.(Mufti ,2010 :491)

Thus, a nursery for young talented writers has mushroomed and flourished, thirsty for the seal of metropolitan authentification, and forcibly entangled within the logics of the global marketplace. This reality is further complicated by the concomittant existence of academic brokers and translators across a literary 'ecology' to borrow from Alexander Beecroft, where prevail opportunism, marketability, prizes and consecration. An ecology where English becomes the 'global language' or a 'hypercentral language' to invoke Beecroft anew, and where we notice : 'the increasing dominance of a handful of languages, especially English, the increasing concentration of the publishing industry and the increasing need for sales in translation to sustain a literary career(…..)'(Beecroft qtd in Duncan McColl Chesney, 253)

1.4. The Economy of Prestige :

According to Duncan McColl, the world tendency to posit English as the lingua franca or Esperanto of the age will likely yield the following scenario : ' a global literary ecology will result either in the hegemonic domination of literature in English at the expense of all other literatures(and perhaps many languages), or in the emergence of a sort of standardized 'world novel', designed for easy translation and consumption abroad'(Beecroft qtd in Duncan McColl,253). If we believe McColl - quoting Beecroft-, this in turn, is leading us '….towards an increasingly homogeneous literary world, one in which universality is

achieved through the creation of a monoculture.'(McColl/Beecroft,253). This monoculture or 'Mcculture' to use James English's neologism, reckons artistic achievement solely through the prism of 'success and stardom', a world James English apprehends as 'shallow and homogeneous McCulture based on the model of network TV. Prizes,……', as opposed to the rich and varied former reality of artistic space. In *The Economy of Prestige : Prizes, Awards and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (2005), James F. English summons readers to raise questions such as :' How is such prestige produced and where does it reside ? (in people, in things ? In relationships between people and things ?) what rules govern its circulation ?' (English,3). In probing what he calls 'the cultural economics of prestige', fundamentally identified as '(…..), the very system of valuing and devaluing, esteeming and disesteeming,'(English,24), English steers away not only from the classical narrative or scenario of what he accurately calls 'the fable of the post-modern apocalypse', a scenario which posits art and intellectual labor as victims of the economic apparatus, but also from the 'the reassuring comedy about the democratization of taste'. Instead, he reorients emphasis on the middle space between those two conflicting poles of interest, the space where all the constituents of the 'machinery of cultural production' are involved i.e rules, strategies, players and agents, who are by large the 'neglected instruments of cultural exchange' or what English aptly calls 'the agents of capital intraconversion'. In affording such an interesting paradigm, English shifts the parameters whereby cultural capital is understood in contemporary scholarship, and provokes serious reflection not only on the occult forces working at the heart of cultural practice, but on the accompagnying discursive manifestations surrounding it. Thus he defines the very raison d'être of his whole study :

> My aim is not to decide whether cultural prizes are a treasure or an embarassment, whether they are conferred upon deserving or undeserving artists and works, whether they serve to elevate or to degrade the people's taste and the

> artist's calling. It is rather, to begin an analysis of the whole system of symbolic give and take, of coercion and negotiation, competition and alliance, mutual disdain and mutual esteem, into which prizes are extended, and which encompasses not just the selection processes and honorific ceremonies, but many less central practices, and in particular the surrounding journalistic discourse- all the hype and antihype itself.(English,26)

Accordingly, we need to conceive of intellectual labor not in terms of the manichean binarism art /economy, but rather situate it within the larger optic of the struggling forces and negotiation taking place in cultural production. This transaction of sorts implicates a plethora of intermediaries including 'administrators, judges, sponsors and others' (English,11). Because prizes are essentially ambivalent, and on account of the prize frenzy particular to our cultural landscape, English cannot help speculating : 'Who can possibly keep up or keep track ? The sense that the cultural universe has become supersaturated with prizes, that there are more cultural awards than our collective cultural achievements can possibly justify, is the great and recurring theme of prize punditry' (English, 17). In this light, English points fingers at prize institutions complicit not only in fabricating literary prestige but in fashioning and manipulating literary tastes, with one particular institution in the crosshairs viz. the Booker Prize. English is hardly unique in criticizing literary patronage institutions ; indeed a number of recent studies have drawn attention to the growing authority of award-winning institutions in refashioning cultural capital. Thus, his views can be readily supplemented with a similarly market-centered vantage point held by Alexander Beecroft in qualifying nowaday's literary landscape and epitomized in the expression the 'Booker Prize literature'. Having said that, English grants that : '(….), prizes are not a threat or contamination with respect to a field of properly cultural practice on which they have no legitimate place.'(English,26). If the essence of his project is to 'capture the fundamentally equivocal nature' of prizes, which according to

him, run the risk of being demonized, we need to be vigilant and perhaps less biased when considering the very notion of 'prize', while what we really need is to posit prizes as a cultural phenomenon within a larger and more complex network of interconnected fields :

> Of all the rituals and practices of culture, none is more frequently attacked for its compromising covergence with the dynamic of the marketplace than is the prize, which seems constantly to oscillate between a genuinely cultural event (whose participants have only the interests of art at stake) and a sordid display of competitiveness and greed whose participants are brazenly pursuing their professional financial self-interests. (James English,7)

1.5.The Postcolonial Exotic :

Similarly grounded in the Bourdieusian legacy, *The Postcolonial Exotic : Marketing The Margins* (2001) by Graham Huggan, carries the debate of World literature beyond the issues of cultural and linguistic domination , and enlarges its scope to encompass problematics of marketability and consumption, by closely scrutinizing the dynamics inherent in the Western literary market whereby a 'booming alterity business' is appropriating marginal literatures and turning them into commodities. While Huggan acknowledges that 'Bourdieu's model has been attacked for its over-schematised distinctions and, in particular, for its attempt to fix the class positions of different consumer publics'(Huggan,5), he argues that ' the model is useful, nonetheless, in suggesting how postcolonial writers/thinkers operate within an overarching, if historically shifting, field of cultural production'(Huggan,5). For him, his study : '…. is in part, an examination of the sociological dimensions of postcolonial studies, the material conditions of production and consumption of postcolonial writing and the influence of publishing houses and academic institutions on the selection, distribution and evaluation of these works'. (Huggan, vii)

In further investigating how this global commodification of alterity is promoted by the publishing industry, the award-winning institutions, and academic circles, thus, contributing to confer cultural capital to non-Western authors and texts- the ones which understandably respond to the Western market dictates-, Huggan reflects on the levels of 'complicity between local oppositional discourses' and the global late capitalist system in which they circulate and are contained'. He further lays focus on what he calls 'the booming alterity industry' and explores how marginal literatures are produced, disseminated and consummed while coming to terms with 'the realpolitik of metropolitan economic supremacy'. Huggan's mapping of the global marketplace along with the codes governing it, and the ultimate uncovering of the implications on the metropolitan literary scene unmistakably translate an anxiety-quite legitimate it seems- about the future of postcolonial scholarship when Postcolonialism itself has turned into a cultural commodity and 'Postcolonial studies, it could be argued, has capitalised on its perceived marginality, while helping turn marginality itself into a valuable intellectual commodity'(Huggan,2001 : xiii). This complicity or 'staged marginality' whereby workers on the postcolonial and diasporic scenes capitalize on their cultural difference ' is in reality a self-conscious process by which marginalised individuals or minority groups dramatise their subordinate status for the imagined benefit of a majority audience' (Huggan, 9). Adopting an empirical reading of the world marketplace and the concomittant manifestations of 'intellectual tourism', Huggan contends that : '(…..)metropolitan book businesses always eager for 'hot' new writers, merchandise the latest literary products from 'exotic' places such as Africa and India, assimilating marginal literatures to an overvoracious mainstream and plying a moderately lucrative trade' (Huggan, 1997 :20). Accordingly, Huggan calls into question the credibility of Western institutions in authenticating othered literatures, or what he calls 'marketing the margins', recycled by Italian critic Sandra

Ponzanesi as ‘advertising the margins’ or a ‘third world memorabilia ornamentalism’ of sorts bearing, thus, a troubling homology to Pappelinas’ concept ‘boutique xenophobia’ :

> The recent commodification and popularization of third world culture implies treating culture as disposable and replaceable.(……..). The fashionability of a Third world culture/postcolonial culture is a two-way boutique window, contingent upon the successive approval of and metamorphosing by Western consumers.(Sandra Ponzanesi, 2014: 2).

Fundamental to Huggan’s study is the discrimination he establishes between ‘postcolonialism and ‘postcoloniality’, and while he apprehends the former as an anticolonial discourse with an emancipatory agenda and a rhetoric of resistance, he reads the latter as compatible with the worldwide market machinery promising a value-regulating assimilative potential :

> Postcoloniality, put another way, is a value-regulating mechanism within the global late-capitalist system of commodity exchange. Value is constructed through global market operations involving the exchange of cultural commodities and, particularly culturally ‘othered goods’. Postcoloniality ‘s regime of value is implicitly assimilative and market-driven : it regulates the value equivalence of putatively marginal products in the global marketplace. Postcolonialism, by contrast, implies a politics of value that stands in obvious opposition to global processes of commodification. (Huggan, 6)

Having said that, Huggan does not miss to stress the inexorable entanglement of both aspects ‘bound up with’ each other as they happen to be, and unquestionably governed by market logics : ‘It is not just that postcolonialism and postcoloniality are at odds with one another, or that the former’s emancipatory agenda clashes with the latter’s ; the point that

needs to be stressed here is that postcolonialism is *bound up with* postcoloniality- that in the overwhelming commercial context of late twentieth-century commodity culture, postcolonialism and its rhetoric of resistance have themselves become consumer products'. (Huggan, 6)

Deterministic as this formulation might seem, it nonetheless reveals an unfortunate reality about the quasi impossibility of escaping the machinery of the global market and much less of standing outside the discourse of what Huggan calls 'neocolonialism' with all 'its continuing modes of imperialist thought and action'. Spivak lends strength to this view when she calls for '(….) a constant need for vigilance to neocolonial structures of power' (qtd in Huggan,7) because 'when marginality(…) comes with the seal of academic approval, this may only help to commodify it, at the university and elsewhere in society'(Spivak 1991:154 qtd in Huggan,23). Spivak's partial rejection begs on the question of marginality which transcends the superficial commonplace dimension, and actually requires to be viewed with Spivakian lenses as 'a legitimising category for palatable versions of cultural otherness in society at large'. Thus the margins as a discursive and aesthetic site lose all their subversive potential since they are '(…..)being rerouted into safe assertions of a fetishised cultural difference' (Huggan,24). What is clear, then, as Huggan contends, is that terms as '–'resistance', 'authenticity' and 'marginality' and so on circulate as reified objects in a late-capitalist currency of symbolic exchange' (Huggan,29). All these caveats, in reality, concur to revisit the dictionary of postcolonial concepts in the light of the mainstream culture and its logics, and while it is true that such a rereading presupposes the existence of a naive '…….somebody, somewhere, engaged in consuming postcolonial texts in ways that are meant to concern an academic reading audience.'(Brouillette, 2015 :26), as critic Sarah Brouillette points out , and though she concedes that Huggan's materialist study is quite 'innovative', she faults it for its '(….) frequent reference to a global market reader, a figure with indistinct

identity and agency'(Brouillette, 2007:15) , a fact she finds incompatible with the materialist vocation of Huggan's project which she charges of not adhering to the same logic. In *Postcolonial Writers in The Global Literary Marketplace*(2007), Brouillette casts herself as a vociferous critic of Huggan, and on account of this purpose, she does not fail to underscore what she considers critical 'neglect' on his side, and further deconstructs the theoretical armature of his work, a great deal of which she sees as 'a kind of accusation'. In calling into question his unnuanced use of the category of audience, she charges him of '….., identifying readers as guilty of aesthetizising, and/or dehistoricizing what might otherwise be subject to more legitimate forms of knowledge production' (Brouillette, 23).

Mainly predicated on the notion of the 'exotic', Huggan extends the logic of tourism to the literary marketplace, and suggests that 'the tourist gaze' in global literature is inspired by mechanisms of 'mystification (or levelling-out) of historical experience, imagined access to the cultural other through the process of consumption ; and reification of people and places into exchangeable aesthetic goods'. Thus, a clique of well-established cosmopolitan writers in the caliber of Rushdie, V.S Naipul or Kureishi, superstars of sorts alledgedly complicit with the market machinery and its mandates, in all likelihood thriving on a 'similar overarching system of authentification', come to epitomize commodity fetishism. These instances of 'staged marginalities' whereby peripherality is subtly exoticised is best attended to by Huggan in his two chapters entitled :'Consuming India, starting from 1958 up to 2000', and 'African literature and the anthropological exotic'. For him, not only is the onus on award-winning institutions for prizing otherness and creating influential literary patronage, but most importantly for manufacturing global consensus through reviving 'new versions of the Raj'. Brouillette takes her critique a step further to maintain that '…..Huggan's study is a version of what he analyzes, subscribing to a logic that separates the authentic from the inauthentic, the insider from the outsider, in an endless cycle of hierarchical distinction and counter-

distinction' (Brouillette,19), only to come to the conclusion that she sees '….Huggan's work as a *symptom* of postcoloniality even while it is an assessment of it' (Brouillette,28)

It would not be fair to totally endorse Brouillette's vantage point without resituating Huggan's argument within its pertinent context, and doing justice to the subtlety of his reasoning, besides the skepticism he adopts all the way through in addressing the vexed issues of agency and readership, this explicit alertness becomes particularly evident when he maintains that: 'To accuse postcolonial writers/thinkers of being lackeys to this system, is as I have repeatedly suggested, to underestimate their power to exercise agency over their work. It may also be to devalue the agency, both individual and collective of their readers, who by no means form a homogeneous or readily identifiable consumer- group' (Huggan,30)

In *Postcolonial Print Cultures*, Brouillette reiterates her perception of audience when she avers that 'The manner in which these texts reach audiences involves complex negotiations of political, commercial and cultural boundaries and sensibilities' (Brouillette and Finkelstein,2013 :3). She identifies five disparate constituents in her mapping of postcolonial scholarship namely 'postcolonial literary fields, postcolonial systems, postcolonial contexts, postcolonial archives and postcolonial critiques'(3). Instead of a monolithic homogenizing vision of audiences which she castigates Huggan for, Brouillette conceives of audiences as communities while she does not miss to acknowledge the material forces that shape intellectual production and writers' efforts to respond to their aesthetic and political interests, while conforming both to the demands of commerce and to the pressures imposed by systems of evaluation.

In *Literay Markets and Literary Property* (2015), she reaffirms that ' literay markets might be studied as sites of conflict and controversy over the ownership of intellectual property.'(Brouillette,2015 :140). Thus, she engages with the act of reading as a highly

measurable and monetized experience., nodding towards E-books on Amazon and its kindle version, which have radically metamorphosed the geography of reading and even the nature of readers.

In *Postcolonial Literature in the Global Marketplace : A Few Thoughts on Political and Aesthetic Value in the Field* (2009), which reads like a borrowing from Brouillette, Eric Falk excoriates both Huggan and Brouillette for their heavy focus on the political dimension of literature to the detriment of the aesthetic aspect. If it is true that their approaches are respectively premised on empirical grounds, he recognizes the pressure from globalization theory in the general arc of postcolonial studies and how the ubiquitous tendency within postcolonial literature '….., is the self-reflective stages of its entrapment in a commodified culture which amounts to a loss of any real political function' (Eric Falk,404), this in turn begs the question of marginality as a powerful space with political edge in a world 'increasingly deterritorialized and representativity increasingly complicated' (Falk, 406)

While Anna Christina Mendes in *The Marketing of Postcolonial Literature* (2016) is much more conciliant, as she retrieves and synthetises both Huggan's and Brouillette's readings of the postcolonial market, she puts particular emphasis on high profile writers originating from South Asia, and highlights their active role in reconfiguring literary topographies by examining how their texts are 'contestations of locality /nationality and global citizenship'(Mendes,5). By recognizing the new 'tiger economics', invoking India and China, she draws attention to novel and dynamic flows that undeniably invigorate and refashion the global economic and literary landscapes, while keeping in mind the imbalances of cultural trade. Mendes establishes a direct link between the growingly noticeable marketability of subaltern fiction and a persistent- if age-long- 'post-imperial melancholy fascination with the Orient'(Mendes, 9).

On the other hand, In *The Postcolonial Culture Industry :From Consumption to Distinction* (2014), which unequivocally reads like an echo of Huggan's work, Ponzanesi recuperates Huggan's central argument and rather than dismissing it in the fashion of Sarah Brouillette, she rests her entire study both in shape and content on a strikingly identical framework if not template. Ponzanesi invokes Theodor Adorno, famous for considering « …..'culture industry' as a persuasive structure that produces cultural commodities for mass audiences,……'(Ponzanesi,2), and while stressing the need for a 'participatory culture' whereby readers, users and audiences are involved in processes of interaction and co-shaping, Ponzanesi takes stock of the literary prize circuit and the way it cannibalizes cultural otherness in its different strands. She considers a multiplicity of genres within postcolonial literature such as postcolonial chick or feminist literature, and further explores how feminist bestsellers can be complicit in rehearsing colonial dynamics in matching the cosmopolitan call for both local taste and global reach.

An equally important critic of World literature and market dynamics is French theorist Gisele Sapiro who investigates throughout her article *How Do Literary Works Cross Borders (Or Not)* ? (2016) '(….) the factors that trigger or hinder the circulation of symbolic goods in a particular context,(…..)' (Sapiro,82). In this respect, she recognizes four categories ranging from the political, economic, cultural and social aspects whilst undescoring the role of the state in controlling the circulation of print and publishing, and the way the logics of the market together with the law of profitability govern the distribution and circulation of cultural products :'Consequently, while the capitalist development of the book industry helped to free it from state control, the market can exert a commercial censorship that is only weakly counterbalanced by sales in independent bookstores and on the internet in the US and UK.'(Sapiro, 87). Sapiro lays great emphasis on the crucial role played by translation in promoting '…..the formation of literary and publishing fields' (Sapiro,88), a role corroborated by many a

theorist in the caliber of Casanova who rightly contends that 'the most translated works formed the new canon of literature'(Casanova,1999).

1.6. Franco Moretti and 'Distant Reading' :

> FRANCO MORETTI is hard control, Didier Coste and Wai Chee Dimock are soft control, and so is David Damrosch.(Spivak,2012 :455)
>
> (…..)World literature is not an object, it's a problem and a problem that asks for a new critical method….(Franco Moretti, 2013 :46)

The author of this well-known quote is a voice that cannot by any means be circumscribed in the World literature debate. In his seminal book *Distant Reading* (2013), Franco Moretti inventively remaps the geography of World literature while acknowledging the colossal scope of the field, and affirming that any coming to terms with the width and reach of its ubiquitous nature necessitates the reconfiguration of its very categories :'…..the sheer enormity of the task makes it clear that World Literature cannot be Literature(…….). The *categories* have to be different' (Moretti, 46). Yet if his prime concern is to revisit the Goethian legacy and to retrieve the true spirit of *Weltliteratur*, Moretti is aware of the predicament of the modern intellectual faced with the quasi-impossibility to read outside and beyond the limits of his own field of expertise, which in turn raises questions as to the very essence and finality of World Literature : '(….), I think it's time we returned to that old ambition of *Weltliteratur* : after all, the literature around us is now unmistakably a planetary system. The question is not really *what* we should do- the question is *how*. What does it mean studying World Literature ? How do we do it ?.....' (Moretti, 45). In problematizing reading as a practice, and emphasizing the compulsion to fashion new modes and approaches to address literature, Moretti understates the accumulation of knowledge, and relocates the

stakes in a know-how whereby :‘ Reading ‘more’ seems hardly to be the solution. Especially because we’ve just started rediscovering what Margaret Cohen calls ‘the great unread’’ (Moretti,45).

Distant Reading, which ironically stands for Moretti’s ‘pact with the devil’, is a new paradigm whereby instead of reading texts, we ‘learn how not to read them’ :‘Distant reading : where distance, let me repeat it, is *a condition of knowledge* : ‘it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text : devices, themes, tropes- or genres and systems. And if, between the very small and the very large, the text itself disappears, well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, less is more’ (Moretti, 48/49). Seen this way, ‘distant reading’ comes to function as the antinome of close reading, which Moretti is aware is a salient feature of American and Western academia by and large, and which he charges for its remarkably restricted canon, while what we need is to enlarge and stretch this latter to match the scope of World Literature :

> The United States is the country of close reading, so I don’t expect this idea to be particularly popular. But the trouble with close reading (in all of its incarnations from New Criticism to Deconstruction) is that it necessarily depends on an extremely small canon. This may have become an unconscious and invisible premise by now, but it is an iron one nonetheless : you invest so much in individual texts *only* if you think that very few of them really matter. Otherwise, it doesn’t make sense. And if you want to look beyond the canon (and of course, World Literature will do so : it would be absurd if it didn’t), close reading will not do it. It’s not designed to do it, it’s designed to do the opposite. At bottom, it’s a theological exercise- very solemn treatment of very few texts taken very seriously.(Moretti,48)

As a true 'enfant terrible' of Western Criticism, Moretti dares to challenge the Eurocentred eclectic canon to be much more inclusive for a' revamped World Literature', to recall Emily Apter's phrase, where '(….) the ambition is now directly proportional *to the distance from the text* : the more ambitious the project, the greater must the distance be.' (Moretti, 48). Yet, if she aknowledges the radical nature of Moretti's argument, Apter cannot restrain from wondering if his thesis is really a consistent alternative framework : 'Does he propose a method ? Well, yes and no. He introduces the promising idea of 'distant reading' as the foundation of a new epistemology (echoeing Benedict Anderson's notion of distant e-nationalism), but it is an idea that potentially risks foundering in a city of bits where micro and macro literary units are awash in a global system with no obvious sorting device'(Apter in *Debating World Literature*,78). For Francesca Orsini, Moretti's theory is essentially predicated on mapping cultural space, a reconfiguration clearly inspired by Wallerstein's tripartite 'world system' formula :

> Moretti draws on Immanuel Wallerstein's' world system' theory to argue that the onset of capitalism and European empires reduced the many independent local/regional spaces of literature to just three positions- core, periphery and semi-periphery- which exist in hierchical relationships to each other. While initially, Moretti's ideas regarding World Literature were shaped by his theory of the diffusion of the European novel in the world ('More Conjectures'), more recently he has suggested that the object of World Literature is best theorized through a combination of (a) evolutionary theory to explain proliferation and diffusion of forms before the integrated World-system and (b) World-system theory. (Orsini, 2015 : 347)

Orsini finds significant convergences between Moretti and Casanova in the Eurocentric narrative underlying their respective enterprises. For both theorists, 'the global overrides the

local', advertising the validity of a Russian puppet-like template as Moretti maintains in his conception of the literary space :'The many spaces of literary history- province, nation, continent, planet…The hierarchy that binds them altogether'(Moretti, 113). Amir Mufti joins his voice not only to dismiss Moretti's concept of 'close reading' but also to suggest an alternative way for rethinking the concept of World Literature which :'…..cannot take the form exclusively of 'distant reading' Moretti proposes……, but neither can it take the form of close reading for its own sake. What is needed is *better* close reading, attentive to the worldliness of language and text at various levels of social reality and from the highly localized to the planetary as such' (Mufti. 493)

1.7. Theoretical Alternatives to World Literature :

Refreshing indeed in Francesca Orsini's *Significant Geographies in Lieu of World Literature (2018) or The Multilingual Local in World Literature(2015),* whereby she broaches an alternative, and alledgedly more encompassing conceptual framework , in which she cautions against the concept of World Literature as 'a famously slippery, apparently expansive, yet surprisingly narrow category,' (Orsini, 2015 : 345), and further condemns the contemporary '…..urge to flatten world literature and make it monologic'(Orsini,2018 :293). One of the issues she identifies 'with current theories of World Literature is that the term 'world' is insufficiently probed and theorized. As a category, 'world' is too generic and suggests a continuity and seamlessness that are both deceptive and self-fulfilling.'(Orsini,290). These sentiments are shared by a number of theorists, particularly David Damrosch who stresses the floating character of the category of world literature and recognizes its ambiguous position between territory and ideology.[4]

[4] See David Damrosch's discussion of the category of ' world literature' and the ambiguity inherent in it in *What Is World Literature ?, Princeton University Press, 2018.*

Orsini's attempt to reconfigure our understanding of space stems from the dilemma she senses, is imprisoning minor and non-Western literatures in misfitting categories. 'Precisely because geography is so crucial to World Literature' (Orsini,2015 :345), she calls for a review of the current spatial models provided by World Literature through her 'significant geographies' which enable a more nuanced account of the local/global dialectic :

> While approaches based only on single-language archives often tend to reproduce the literary and social biases of each archive, a multilingual approach is inherently comparative and relativizing ; it highlights authors' and archives'strategies of distinction, affiliation and/or exclusion, and makes us look for what other studies and actors existed, it also shows with particular geographies- real and imaginary- were siginificant for each set of authors and genres in each language (I suggest the term 'significant geographies') instead of positing a generic 'World' or 'global' elsewhere to which only very few had access. While multilingual literary cultures are rarely(if ever) so fully interconnected as to be literary systems, their codes and trajectories help us think about local and 'global' in more complex and accurate ways.(Orsini,346)

This new framework furnishes a substitute model against the homogenizing global paradigm that currently seems to prevail in World Literature, and that operates through market mechanisms to further marginalize minor cultures under the sway of a mono-cultural system in a total denial of diversity or difference :

> By 'significant geographies', we mean the *conceptual, imaginative*, and *real* geographies that texts, authors, and language communities inhabit, produce and reach, which typically extend outwards without (ever ?) having a truly global reach. (Orsini,294)

In joining the debate, French critic Didier Coste attempts to demonstrate how World literature as a conceptual framework seems to have 'a rich and dangerous polysemy' and proposes 'to treat 'world literature' as a 'myth' in the Barthesian sense, which does not imply that it is an empty sign, but on the contrary an overdetermined sign and consequently brimming with both overt hidden effects on the mode of thinking of its users' (Coste,2007 :1/2). Such a Barthesian reading of the 'inflated, outwardly fleshy' term, replete as it stands with potentially playful semiotic content indeed, complicates the already overloaded category of World Literature and perhaps justifies why Coste raises a host of further questions as to the reason why 'World Literature has never been institutionalized as a discipline with its own object, methods and prerequisites' (Coste,2007 :3), while maintaining that World Literature ' is competing not only with global, universal and planetary literature but with (unqualified) literature itself'. According to Coste, if literature is intrinsically global, the world dimension holds the power of a panacea since 'World literature once in circulation becomes a currency and merchandise with a strong impact on cultural economy, it is thus highly political'(Coste,4). If the power to circulate is one of the criteria which entitles any text to integrate World Literature, recalling Damrosch's three-fold test set, it would be more accurate to raise questions as to the influential role of capitalist forces in marketing particular texts and the margin of intellectual integrity left for the authors to join or not the race.

A Momentous twist in the debate on World Literature is the one accomplished by Emily Apter in both her seminal studies *The Translation Zone* (2006), and subsequently *Against World Literature : On The Politics of Untranslatability* (2014). Her voice stands, together with Spivak's, as one of the most intransigeant detractors of the discourse of World Literature, through rethinking translation studies, and provoking serious reflection on the influence of language 'wars' on canonization in literature, Apter claims that : ' (…..) language wars, great and small, shape the politics of translation in the spheres of media, literacy,

literary markets, electronic information transfer and codes of literariness' (Apter, 4). Echoing Casanova's contention that ' Translation like criticism is a process of establishing value' (Casanova,23), Apter envisages the world of translation as '……a military zone governed by laws of hostility and hospitality, by semantic transfers and treaties', while casting her project within a linguistic ecology where we find endangered language species that are subjected to the tyranny of powerful languages, thus killing linguistic diversity. For Sarah Brouillette, both books :

> (…..) are at heart motivated by polarizing debates in the field of translation studies. Is everything translatable, or nothing ? Do we insist on universals or on particulars, on the planetary or the local, on a global World Literature or a disparate array of national traditions ? Do we with Alain Badiou engage in the elevation of 'univocity over equivocation', of idea over language, of transparency over opacity, of transmission over hermeneutics ?'(p.23) or does such a manoeuvr justify a potentially annihilating blindness to the specificities of local cultural traditions ?.(Brouillette,2013 : 3)

Yet, Brouillette senses an unmistakable difference in Apter's tone ; if in *The Translation Zone*, Apter is rather neutral and exhibits a bona fide attitude towards World Literature and its ensuing stakes, her tone in *Against World Literature* becomes ' less hopeful' (Brouillette,2013 :4) as 'she insists more that it is the untranslatable that should command our allegiance'(Brouillette,4). In her attempt to trace Apter's incentive, Brouillette finds in *Against World Literature* reverberations of French critic Barbara Cassin while acknowledging the way Apter has further elaborated on the former's *Vocabulaire Européen Des Philosophies :*

> Part of her inspiration is Barbara Cassin's 2004 *Vocabulaire Européen Des Philosophies : Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles* ; a dictionary of nearly 400 terms that have proven difficult to translate-(…). Yet Apter wearily extends Cassin's practical and philosophical interest in the untranslatable in the direction of speculative realism, such that failure to translate becomes just another measure of our hubristic human drives. She adopts from the speculative realists an image of a planet in the grip of revolutionary ressentiment : sullen, wounded, and ready to retaliate against the hubris of humans who 'forget' that their own psychic fates are tethered to the Earth's distressed crust, depleted mineral veins, and liquid molten nihilism. (Brouillette, 2013 :4)

For Brouillette, two antagonistic forces seem to animate Apter's project namely World Literature and untranslatability, which is not to be interpreted - she cautions- as Apter's hostility to 'a globalized canon for comparative literary studies'(Brouillette,4) , but rather as her binary mapping of the field of comparative studies along two avenues : World Literature as the wrong path because of its association with what Apter calls 'one worldedness', and 'the homogeneity of culture produced under capitalism'(Brouillette,5). In refusing the possibility and hegemony of a common world culture, Apter unequivocally joins her voice to Spivak's, notoriously inimical to World Literature and who has always endorsed the 'singularity and untranslatability of the literary work', since 'the literary is the particularity and irreducibility of idiom, not the universal of translatability. Translation is misprision, so the question is why we want to do it ? to what ends ? and for whom ?'(qtd in McColl,260). If for McColl, '(….) Spivak insists that we need to learn languages rather than consume World Literature anthologies in English (of the sort Damrosch edits)'(McColl,260), this by no means imply that Damrosch is supportive of 'monolingualism and monoculture'(McColl,261). For McColl, Spivak and Apter are preaching a similar resistance to the politics of World Literature, and

therefore aligning themselves in opposition to all efforts by other critics such as Damrosch to compromise with World Literature. Instead, Spivak suggests the 'planetary' as a new paradigm to replace 'the global', and she is trenchant in her declaration that : 'Globalization takes place only in capital and data, everything else is damage control……. I don't believe the humanities can be global. I think our task is to supplement the uniformization necessary for globalization, we must therefore learn to think of ourselves as the custodians of the world's wealth of languages, not as impresarios of a multicultural circus in English'(qtd in Mc Coll,269).

In his review of Emily Apter's *Against World Literature*, Damrosch maintains that : 'In *Against World Literature*, she offers a bracing critique of the politics of translation in American literary studies. All too often, she argues, scholars and teachers of World Literature assume a ready transferability across open linguistic and political borders and she aims to complicate these matters, both linguistically and politically'(Damrosch,2014 :504). Arguably, if Apter establishes a rather depressing framework, a legitimate question at this stage would be : to what extent is the untranslatable solid in the face of global flows and a mighty capitalist machinery ?. In this respect, Brouillette is very skeptical as to Apter's categorical contention that 'nothing is translatable', and readily questions the putative defiance of the untranslatable when 'its celebration of the untranslatable does not stem from any engagement with the details of how what is treated as World Literature is actually constituted at a material level'(Brouillette 2015 :10).What Apter is really championing against the bulimic drives of the whorling vortex of the World capitalist system is the investment of translation with its capacity 'to present barriers to easy comprehension.….In her view we must constantly acknowledge that there are things we cannot assimilate'(Brouillette,2015:6). Debjani Ganguly, on the other hand is confident that Apter's project is almost '….. the most 'worldly' in Edward Said's sense of being attuned to the geopolitics of its time' (Ganguly, 2008 :122)

Pertinently, in her enlightening article *Polysystems Redux : The Unfinished Business of World Literature(2015),* Indian scholar Debjani Ganguly embarks on a reappraisal of the findings of World literature theorists as she evaluates the work accomplished by a number of prestigious scholars while nodding towards the potential clusterings to be effected between different critical postures. Foucauldian in essence, Ganguly rehearses the history of world literature in terms of 'epistemic ruptures', while finding resonance in numerous contemporary theories. By bracketting off Casanova's theory of a 'World republic of letters', aligning herself , thus, with Al-Musawi and Mufti, she calls for '(…) the opening up of comparative literary studies beyond the French-English-German-Spanish quartet to the philologically rich world of area studies especially from the Middle East, Africa, South and South East Asia, not to mention the Russo- Slavic region.'(Debjani,275). Instead, she recommends '…..a serious rethinking about the world literary system itself in terms of a polyworlds model'(Debjani,275). Such a paradigm based on plurality or multiscalar systems of thought is strongly reminiscent of Orsini's Significant Geographies, or more accurately perhaps of Arjun Appadurai's five dimensions of 'global cultural flows' better known as the five scapes first introduced in *Modernity at large : Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996) wherein he revisits the confusing notions of culture, cultural and culturalism :

> I propose that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed : (a) ethnoscapes, (b) mediascapes, (c) technoscapes, (d) financescapes,and (e) ideoscapes.(Appadurai,1996 :33)

By adopting the theory of rupture, Appadurai explores the transformation in everyday discourses of media and migration in the electronic field, and acknowledges their constant deterrioralization across the globe. Three categories of diaspora are to be reckoned with ;

namely diasporas of hope, diasporas of terror and diasporas of despair. These categories are catalysts of memory and desire in propelling the force of the imagination.

Not only are such understandings of the global literary scene sensitive to material, cultural, socio-historical, geographical and linguistic particularities, but they also offer a highly nuanced and complex account with overlappings, intersections and cross-cuttings across a vast spectrum of discursive sites and modes of thought. If they mark a different curve in debates on globalization, they surely usher in innovative spaces of enunciation opening up challenging rhetorics in discourse and critical theory in the much contested terrain of World literature.

This dissertation contemplates to position itself within the debate on World literature, while being predicated on a number of theoretical postulates namely Bourdieu's insights on cultural capital. It will additionally draw on the notion of 'gatekeepers', the'economy of prestige', and the politics of prizing which seem to regiment the international book industry. The paper's modus operandi will accordingly adopt a culturalist approach with a macroscopic thrust to simultaneously gauge the extrinsic as well as the intrinsic dynamics involved in the fabrication and manufacturing of literary capital. If it is true that Bourdieu's conceptual framework has often been taxed as deterministic by a number of scholars, it is however undeniable that his theoretical findings have generated a paradigm shift in rethinking the concept of culture and underpinning the inbuilt complexity of the mechanisms involved in the cultural act. Thus, the notion of 'cultural capital' remains central to any coming to terms with the Bourdieusian sociological approach. An equally fundamental premise to this dissertation

is Gerard Genette's typology in identifying the tresholds of interpretation and the way paratextuality bears a powerful illocutionary thrust on narratives.[5]

[5] See Gérart Genette's *Paratexts : Tresholds of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E.Lewin,Cambridge University Press :1997.

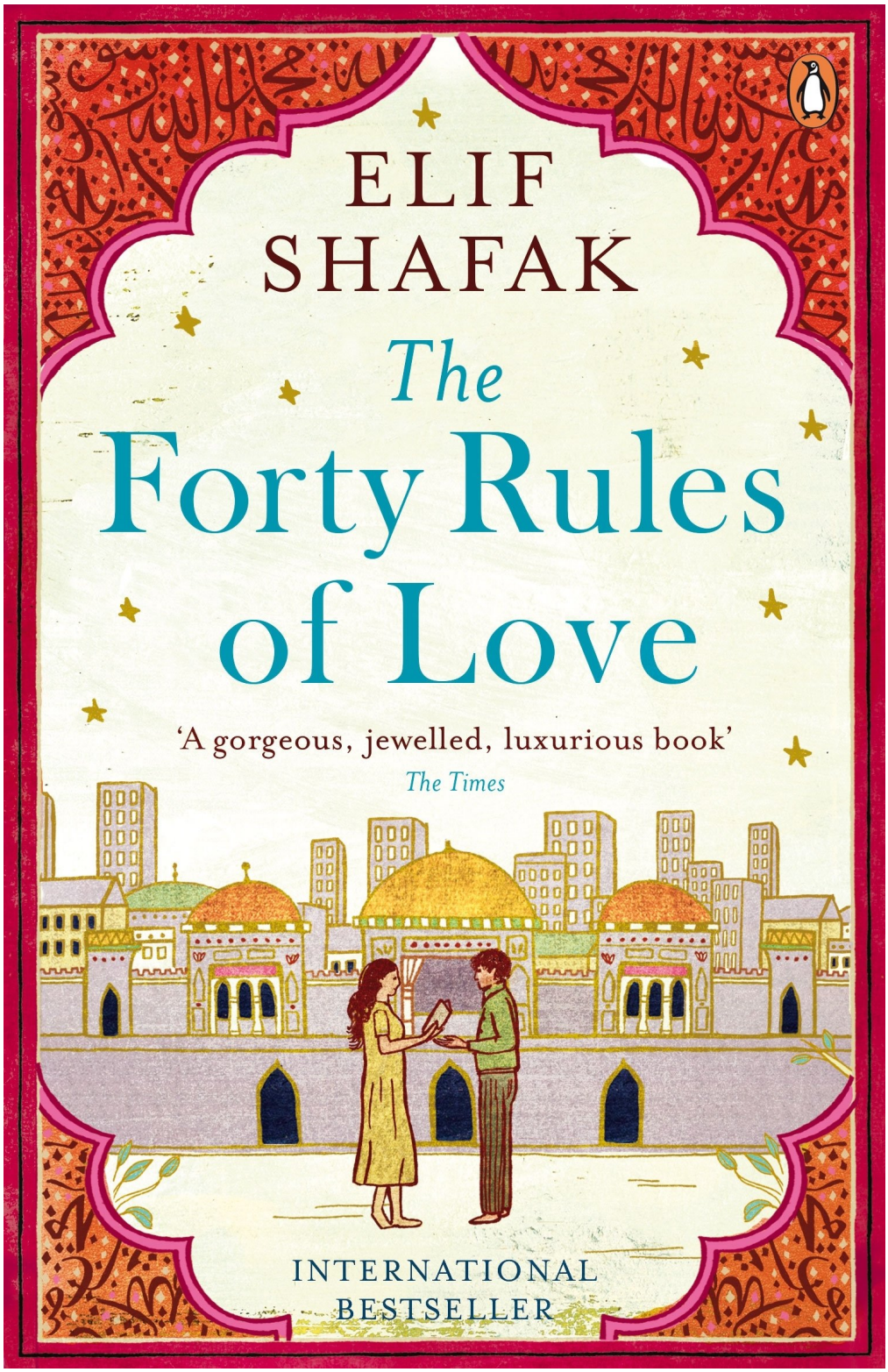

Figure 1: The Penguin version featuring the encounter between Ella and Aziz

https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/91Q4lLuogQL.jpg

Chapter Two : The Elif Shafak Mania in The Global literary Market : *The Forty Rules of Love*

'Elif Shafak is one of the best writers of the present time' (Hanif Kureishi)

I respect novelists who see their mother tongue as their primary source of identity but I sincerely believe my own homeland is none other than Storyland : a vast expanse where static identity is replaced by multiple belongings and the boundary between dream and reality is fluid. This is what keeps me going despite my broken accent and enduring foreigness. I believe that if we can dream in more than one language then, yes, we can also write in more than one language. (Elif Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love*)

2.1 . Elif Shafak and The 'Dull New Global Novel' :

Once upon a time, there was a novelist who wrote stories in her native tongue 'Turkish', acquired fame in her native land, but wouldn't rest content with being a local celebrity. Elif dreamt of international recognition, prizes and a place under the sun. Once upon a time, there was Elif Shafak , an inhabitant of Storyland/ Disneyland, the land of the fetish par excellence, where 'static identity' dissolved into the fluid vortex of 'multiple belongings', where dreamers crossed all borders including linguistic ones, and writers detoured the local to embrace the global. Once upon a time, there was a 'nomad', a 'commuter' between cultures and languages who dreamt in more than one language, and wrote likewise, in her indefatigable pursuit to be a 'global soul'.

The above-paragraph might understandably be faulted for the inappropriateness of its register and diction, as it manifestly sounds like a violation of critical and academic decorums, yet my design in starting this chapter with a parable-like is to set the tone for the line of reasoning buttressing this part of the thesis, and which will progressively unfold along the argumentation. Indeed, Elif Shafak's career as a fiction writer and her choices- be them aesthetic, linguistic, generic or thematic–bespeak central concerns to contemporary World Literature, while highly problematizing her location as a global writer on the international literary arena. Not only does her itinerary disclose her early engagement with the exigencies of the book industry, and the dilemma of negotiating her position as a 'minor' writer authoring her fiction in a 'minor' language (Turkish), but it also demonstrates her alertness to the worldwide hegemony of English as a linguistic medium, and the duress for any writer eager to retain the attention of the international readership to indulge in the process of translation into English. Actually, this linguistic frustration of sorts seems to be the kismet of most World Literature authors whose works are compelled to travel out of their respective

contexts into new literary systems, and to survive the complex and cruel trafficking of literary goods across the planetary circuits of dissemination. If we agree with Rebecca L. Walkowitz that '…….the novel today solicits as well as incorporates translation, in substantial ways'(Walkowitz,2015 :4), and if we further concede that :

> In born-translated novels, translation functions as a thematic, structural, conceptual, and sometimes even typographical device. These works *are written for translation* in the hope of being translated, but they are also often *written as translations*, pretending to take place in a language other than the one in which they have, in fact, been composed. (Walkowitz, 2015 :5)

Then, the queries begging an answer at this stage are : How does Shafak's awareness of the deep impact of translation on the circulation of her fiction shape her artistic production, or else how far does targetting an international readership translate in designing border-crossing, translation-friendly texts ? Does the sequel bear the imprint of anxiety about global marketability, and ultimately how does Shafak's fiction, being presumably the epitome of a newborn genre- the 'Dull New Global Novel' (Tim Parks, 2010)- negotiate its status within the world market since : ' From the moment an author perceives his ultimate audience as international rather than national, the nature of his writing is bound to change. In particular, one notes a tendency to remove obstacles to international comprehension' (Tim Parks, NYR Daily The NewYork Review of Books)[6]. In fact, the adjustments a World Literature writer is called to enact stretch from ideological and discursive compromises to linguistic and thematic ones, with the concomitant risk of not only marketing a palatable cultural alterity but of yielding literary works with low aesthetic caliber. Tongue partly in cheek, Tim Parks again deplores the mediocrity of global literary production in the international marketplace where

[6] https://www.nybooks.com/online/2010/02/09/the-dull-new-global-novel/

‘high brow’ writers ‘ in the stature of Shakespeare would have eased off the puns’(Tim Parks, 2010) , or ‘A new Jane Austen can forget the Nobel’(Tim Parks,2010). Such a romantically past-oriented dismissive critique is situated by Karolina Watroba within the wider scope of the debate about World Literature and literary value ; and in attempting to address the vexed question : is ‘Global’ the new ‘lowbrow’ ?, she maintains that the debate is definitely :

> Fashioned as a materialist narrative about cultural hegemony in the globalized world, these critiques turn out to be motivated by a much older concern to preserve a literary elite : ‘the global’ and its opposite, ‘the local’ start to sound like code words for ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’, and seen in this light, the whole critical debate about the new global novel appears as an attempt to sidestep a direct engagement with the ever-elusive question of literary value. (Karolina Watroba, 2017:53)

By calling into question the high/low brow divide, global writers, in reality, carve out new discursive spaces for their narratives, while simultaneously playing the fault line between minor and major literary topographies, via transcultural and translinguistic movements that deeply interrogate fixed categories of nation, identity, belonging, canonicity and so forth, besides further demarcating themselves from postcolonial aesthetics because of its inadequacy to engage with ‘global crises that exceed the national and anti-colonial’ (Tim Parks, 2010). Such an endeavour mobilizes aesthetic concerns, the most salient of which are the crisis of form, generic affiliation and translatability. So what is the profile of ‘the Dull New Global Novel’ ? What are its lineaments ? Is it an identifiable ‘category’ ? As a matter of point, Karolina Watroba establishes a set of distinctive features based on Parks’ diagnosis :

> The texts that belong to this new genre have two characteristic features. They are written by non-Western authors, but become very successful on the Western

> literary market- that is because, the story goes, these books are 'eminently translatable' : they eschew the idiosyncrasy of the local for the interchangeability of the global'. In other words, the authors of the' dull new global novel' choose to write in a neutral style that is easier to render in translation rather than engaging creatively with the resources of their native languages. Moreover, they avoid references to the intricacies of their own cultures and local literary traditions, and instead use motifs and narrative strategies familiar to the Western reader. (Watroba,2017: 53)

To recapitulate, global fiction is , first of all, mostly written by non-Western authors with market valence in the West, second it is designed for foreign consumption or export, third it encompasses works that readily lend themselves to translational transfer, fourth these works flirt with global tastes as well as with Western techniques and forms, while shunning the peculiarities of their own respective cultures. Such a gestalt could perfom as a procedural benchmark to gauge the solvability of the works which form the substance of this study, and more particularly the present chapter's focus, into the portrait sketched out concurrently by Parks and Watroba. Accordingly, one can reiteratively ask : does Shafak's fiction respond to Parks' profiling ? Are her texts constructed with the imbedded anxiety of a cosmopolitan reader? And if the case, how far does this angst contribute to fashioning her texts both on the linguistic and formal levels, while materializing in collaboratively translatable and consummable narratives ?

In 1997, Shafak published her debut novel *Pinhan* (The Hidden)- originally written in Turkish and actually never translated into English- yet winning her the 1998 Rumi Prize, followed by *Sehrin Aynalari* (1999) (Mirrors of the City), then by *Mahrem* (2000) (The Gaze) consecrated as the 'Best Novel' by the Turkish Writers' Union in 2000, followed two years later by *Bit Palas* (The Flea Palace) shortlisted for Independent Best Foreign Fiction in 2005. In 2004, Shafak releases her fifth opus *The Saint of Incipient Insanities,* for the first time

composed originally in English. This cursory survey across a time-lapse of seven years documents how Shafak has managed her way into the global book market first as a 'local' author penning her texts in a peripheral language- or in one of the 'remote languages of the third world' to borrow from Nobelized Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk- winning her acknowledgement in the Turkish market, besides a gradual infiltration into the wider international scene, then as an English-language writer with global market valence which astonishingly surpasses by far her Nobelized fellow citizen. Clearly enough, there is no ambiguity about the decisive role that language choice has operated in Shafak's career , for the compromise to shift from Turkish to English evidences the writer's deep cognizance of the global stakes of English, as a major vehicle of literariness, whereby reaching out for an anglophone global elite becomes synonymous with an engagement with the realpolitik of the global book industry.

This compromise actually stamps the consciousness of the majority of, if not all , World Literature authors , yet, Shafak's case retains its own particularities ; in this respect Rebecca Walkowitz draws an interesting analogy between Shafak and Nabokov in instantiating what she inventively chooses to label 'preemptive translation', a strategy whereby writers try : ' to mitigate the need for translation by choosing to write in a dominant language, if they can. We could call this strategy preemptive translation'(Walkowitz,2015 :10).Walkowitz convincingly argues that : 'Shafak follows a path- and a rationale- traveled by mid-twentieth century writer Vladimir Nabokov, who composed his early novels in Russian but began producing novels in English, starting with *Lolita*, so he could publish in New York'(Walkowitz,2015 :11). What this 'translingual writing' or 'self-translation'(Walkowitz,2015)- wherein the writer functions both as author and translator- indicate, is not only linguistic renouncement, but an authorial choice which strategically positions itself in linguistic exilic spaces in 'an embrace of the global, in lieu of the local' (Walkowitz,2015 :13). The legitimate wish to move from small to

large-scale audiences emphasizes the international lineage of 'minor' authors in the age of globalization, by claiming membership to the world cultural and literary landscape. One important detail that should by no means be overlooked is what I would term the passport text or 'gateway text' to borrow from Walkowitz ; the one narrative that ensures a peripheral author access to the global market, and If *Lolita* happens to be Nabokov's gateway text, then Shafak's *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* unmistakably inaugurates her entry into the anglophone arena. If it is true that the critical accolade the novel was met with attests to the genius of the author and her immense talents as an exceptional storyteller, it mainly gestures towards the hegemony of English and its power to recuperate authors from the periphery by luring them into more visibility and prestige.

Before moving any further in this speculation, the reader should be informed that my approach learns much from Bourdieusian critical postulates together with Genette's notion of paratext(1997), and its subnotions of epitext and peritext, for their tremendous theoretical value as tresholds of interpretation in scrutinizing literary artefacts through textual liminal devices. In this very occurrence, Shafak's fiction in general, and *The Forty Rules of Love* (2009) in particular (hereafter referred to as *TFROL*) will benefit extensively from the insights these critical tools are liable to furnish the present study with. Having said that, and at this particular stage of the argumentation, epitexts (reviews, news, interviews) will be exploited to peruse the author's narrative and linguistic choices, her marketing and textual strategies as well as her aesthetic concerns as a World Literature author. Indeed, in many interviews, Elif Shafak- at her twelfth novel so far with the recent publications of *10 minutes and 38 seconds in This Strange World* (2019) and *The Land of Missing Trees* (2021)- confesses that : 'Turkish is my (her) emotional language, whereas English is my (her) rational one ', or 'Oddly, sorrow, melancholy, lament…. These are easier to express in Turkish. Humour, irony, satire, paradox.. much easier to express in English. Each language is equipped differently'(….) In

answering a British interviewer if she felt that she wrote from a global perspective, she affirms :

> I believe it's possible to have multiple, flowing belongings, instead of a singular, solid identity. Iam an Istanbulite, for instance, and Iam also a Londoner. Iam from the Mediterenean, the Middle East, The Balkans, Asia Minor, and from Europe. Inside my soul reside stories from the East and stories from the West, and I don't know exactly where the boundary lies. I feel attached to cultures, cities, peoples, always plural. There is a strong local element in my novels, and at the same time a strong global element. To me, these things are not mutually exclusive. They can co-exist.[7]

In addition to advertising for literay experimentation with a polyglot flavour and brandishing the double banner local/global , Shafak is unequivocally claiming her Sufi affiliation by echoeing Rumi's words and philosophy, besides aligning herself with the Sufi tradition upon which a lot of her project as a writer draws, an affiliation she has incessantly acknowledged in her fiction and non-fiction works, and which will be addressed in due course in this section of the study. Yet, more urgent at this stage, perhaps, is to tend to the local/ global dialectic- so cherished by the community of 'global' authors which, the not-yet Bookered Shafak, is undeniably part and parcel of. Several affinities seem to be shared by the members of this club, yet, the common denominator seems to be the enterprise of transmuting local realities into global ones, of further resisting 'to match language to geography, many contemporary works will seem to occupy more than one place, to be produced in more than one language, or to address multiple audiences at the same time'(Walkowitz,2015). In other

[7] See britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine//elif-shafak-writing-english-brings-me-closeturkey.

words, the broadness of the geographical horizons global authors tend to construct in their narratives, the universality of their themes dramatize a detachment from the national as a category in favour of transborder cultural flows, thus culminating into : 'global literatures metaboliz(ing) economic conditions but also transformations in the world ecology, and emergent developmental and epochal crises of capitalism'(Walkowitz,2015). These linguistic, aesthetic and ethical concerns in global fiction eventuate in a ' bifurcated sentence structure' which openly courts a multiplicity of audiences, and by so doing creates an internal climate of traveling narratives'(Walkowitz,2015). These narratives, according to Walkowitz, equally manage to vehicle the impression of multilingualism on a manifold level ; spatial, visual and narrative, creating polyphonic textualities reflexive of the multi-voicedness of today's World Literature, and rehearsing a heteroglossiac literature in the Bakhtinian fashion.

Two years ensuing the success of *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), Shafak is charged by the Turkish government for 'insulting Turkishness', and hence 'violating the article 301 of the Turkish penal code' in her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), wherein she tackles sensitive issues in Turkey namely the Armenian genocide and the incumbent responsibility on the Turks in the decimation of the Armenian minority, and their exilic scattering around the world. Apart from winning her a long-listing for the Orange Prize, the critical acclaim Shafak's sixth text received, not only confirmed her credentials as a distinguished novelist, but also introduced her to the international readership as an anti-establishment voice. It is no wonder that Turkish scholar Arzu Akbatur argues that *The Bastard of Istanbul* :'is without doubt the novel that has truly made Elif Shafak an internationally recognized writer'(Akbatur,2011 :171), on the other hand, Turkish critic Alev Adil, in trying to comprehend the success of this type of novels in the West, convincingly argues that the Turkish novel 'is caught between the Scylla of the commercial forces of Orientalist banalisation in global publishing and the Charybdis of political persecution in

Turkey, Turkish literature inhabits a very restricted imaginary indeed'(Adil,2006 :5). Tethered as it stands to what she calls 'the cramped space of political signification'(Alev,2006 :5), Turkish novels are thus constrained to 'signify politically', to match the Western agenda incarnated by the global publishing conglomerates who are , more often than not, interested in 'banalised orientalist local colour'(Adil,5) or in Turkish writers as martyrs of ' an eternal and unchanging despotic orient'(Adil,10). Such reductionist views motivated by what Alev ironically calls ' the pitypolitics of European liberals'(Alev,10) cast Turkish literature within a circumscribed space, laying it bare of its 'complexity and contradiction'(Alev,6). The result is that Turkish writers in particular -and third world authors in general- are left with very limited imaginary and aesthetic scopes , wherefore they can either game and titillate the system, or stretch its confines to meet larger concerns.

This dilemma is a familiar scenario to writers like Shafak who , by physically moving to the West, had to start with the preliminary and telling compromise of Westernizing her last name to make it more accessible to occidental ears, she thus documents her anguish in *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004) : 'As names adjust to a foreign country, something is always lost- be it a dot, a letter or an accent… It is the cutback a foreigner learns first. The primary requirement of accommodation in a strange land is the estrangement of the hitherto most familiar : your name' (p.6). If losing a dot is no real debate to a Westerner, it is revealing of a deep paradox which locates third world authors in the territory of compromise as Alev Adil argues :

> Jonathan Heawood, director of English PEN, misreads fertile issues of cultural debate as mere hysterical extremism. 'When brilliant young novelist Elif Shafak' he writes, 'Who has Turkish roots but now lives in Arizona, first wrote in English, there was outrage back home. Worst was the fact that she began spelling her name phonetically, 'Shafak' for Americans, and omitting an accent ' you lost the dot'

> screamed her detractors in Istanbul'(Heawood,2006). The loss of a dot is no big issue to Heawood ; anyone who raises the issue is surely a frenzied fanatic? yet the debate about the diasporic transformation of names is a topic with which afak/ Shafak herself engages in her novel *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*. (Alev Adil, 2006,6)

Apart from renaming, what other compromises do 'minor' authors have to indulge in ? How do they manage the precarious and delicate tightrope walking on which their literary journey embarks them ? Is there any margin of intellectual and artistic integrity left for them, or are they forsaken, under the grips of the capitalist machinery , with no free power of choice ? Do they just rehearse the self-othering, self-exoticising gimmicks designedly dictated by Western literary patronage, or are they '……the accomplices of the capitalist apparatus rather than the victims….' (Huggan,2001) ?

2..2.*The Forty Rules of Love* as a fetishicized Market Commodity:

Released in 2009, *TFROL* is Elif Shafak's eigth novel, and by far her most hailed one. Published in Turkish under the title *Aśk,* or *Soufi Mon Amour* in French (documented evidence is appended hereafter), the novel displays from the outset a real awareness of marketing strategies through a dexterous handling of the politics of titling, besides an acute sensitiveness to cultural nuance. In one of her interviews, Shafak, in trying to account for these subtelties, declares that :

> In Turkey, we have at least two different words for 'love'. I like the sound and depth of aśk very much. It can be very passionate and mundane, yet at the same time it can be spiritual and otherworldly. The Turkish aśk and the English 'love' do not sound exactly the same. That is one reason why I wanted to have a different title. The second reason is that in Western societies the word love has

been used more frequently to name books, movies, etc. Whereas for us Turks to name a novel Aśk is still out of ordinary. In other words, the perceptions are different. Therefore, in English I wanted to name the novel The Forty Rules of Love. In French it is even different, Soufi Mon Amour (Sufi, my love). I think each and every language has its own rhythm and melody, and in general I like to pay attention to these differences when naming my novels. I do not believe in a one-to-one absolute cementlike translation. I believe in flexible transformation. (Journal of Turkish Literature, issue 6 2009).

Figure 2: The Turkish version capitalizing on the Turkish word for love Aśk
https://images-na.ssl-images amazon.com/images/I/71jH4O0GJWL.jpg

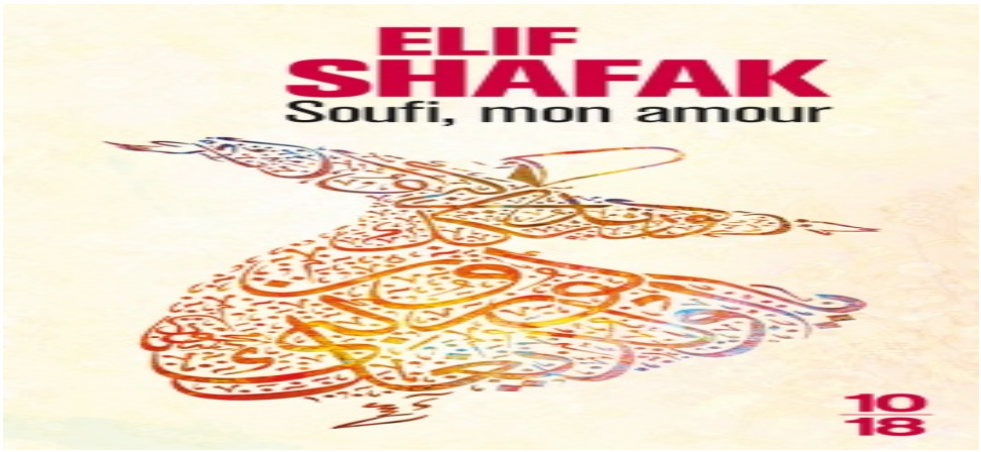

Figure3 : The French version featuring a whirling dervish
https://i.grassets.com/images/S/compressed.photo.goodreads.com/books/1237239242i/6341492._UY200_.jpg

Figure4 :The Arabic version featuring a young lady
https://www.imarabe.org/sites/default/files/styles/boutique_product_big/public/delivery/9789953892573.jpg?itok=pi1oJ5kL

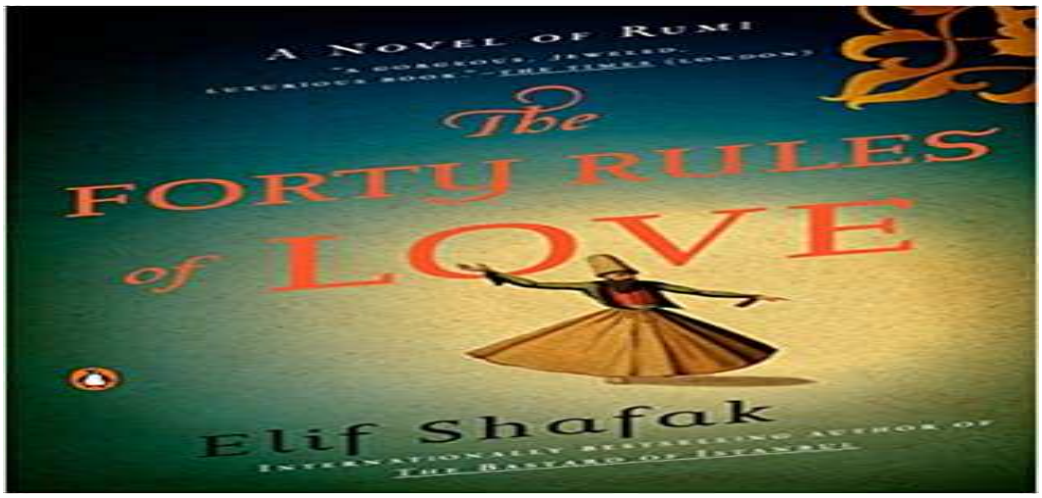

Figure5 : An English version with a whirling dervish
https://encryptedtbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQNhPdzs85y6jZQ7L1bTU2bchCoaZNA5b7ciCWqCyBwJ4zE2P6uotH-vBkOHH9gcpNpqIQ&usqp=CAU

The critical kudos *TFROL* earned hardly matches the international fervour that ensued its publication, winning the author Prix ALEF –Mention Spéciale Littérature Etrangére, a nomination for the 2012 international IMPAC Dublin literary Award, besides featuring on the BBC's list among the One Hundred Books that shaped our world. More explicitly and in crude market terms , the exponential sales the novel recorded worldwide, attest to the huge commercial success and massive large-scale marketability of *TFROL* with unprecedented sales figures- 750.000 copies sold in Turkey and France alone- as well as translations in more than fifty languages ; all this concurred not only to consecrate shafak as a World Literature writer, but also to entitle her to the status of intellectual celebrity in the 'World Republic of Letters'. This place on the pantheon, along with a parade on the walk of fame whereby Shafak became the pet of the media, and incidentally the keynote speaker in a number of conferences and prestigious venues (a TED Global speaker thrice), paradoxically cast shadows on her potential complicity with the Western demand for a consumable alterity, packaged in reader-friendly versions. This, in turn, compromises her ideological and aesthetic choices as a high profile author entangled within the Western book market machinery, and incidentally raises questions about her margin of agency and intellectual integrity. It is worth noting, though, that despite all her commercial success, Shafak has not been listed for the Booker Prize until very recently with the release of *10 minutes and 38 seconds in this strange world*- shortlisted in 2019, a reality which in fact raises questions about the resistance of the Western gatekeeping institutions to her potential canonization, thereby positing her works within the 'middle brow'category.

The narrative, quite familiar to most readers now, recuperates the story of Sufi mystic Jalaleddine Rumi and the momentous encounter with his spiritual guru, Shams of Tabriz, in thirteenth century Konya. Through an artful 'mise en âbime', Shafak juxtaposes Rumi's tale to Ella's story, a twenty first century unfulfiled Jewish American housewife, who out of sheer

bourgeois ennui, gets a job as a literary reviewer, whereby she comes to discover the world of Sufism through Aziz and his novel *Sweet Blasphemy*. In examining the paratextual elements of the novel, we are first struck as readers by the titular apparatus and more specifically by the numerological component ; if *Forty* or *The Forty*-with more marketing assertive exclusiveness conveyed through the definite article- unequivocally refers the reader to Rumi's *Mathnawi* by capitalizing on explicit intertexuality with this latter's legacy, it nonetheless stands in contrast with Sufi cautiousness to claim absolute and final knowledge. Mark Sedgwick notes that when : 'Asked about the origin of these rules, Shafak responded that they were shaped as I (she) kept writing the novel. It was the characters in the novel that inspired them.'(Munro 2010 qtd in Sedwig, 2017 :68), he further concludes that 'The rules are available on various websites, in English and in Arabic, having been extracted from the book by enthusiastic readers'(Mark Sedwig, 2017 :68). The significance of 'forty' in various cultural and religious contexts is commented upon by Aziz on the occasion of Ella's fortieth birthday :

> Happy birthday ! Forty is a most beautiful age for both men and women. Did you know that in mystic thought forty symbolizes the ascent from one level to a higher one and spiritual awakening ? when we mourn we mourn for forty days. When a baby is born it takes forty days for him to get ready to start life on earth. And we are in love we need to wait for forty days to be sure of our feelings.
>
> The flood of Noah lasted forty days, and while the waters destroyed life, they also washed all impurity away and enabled human beings to make a new, fresh start. In Islamic mysticism there are forty degrees between man and God.. Likewise, there are four basic stages of consciousness and ten degrees in each, making forty levels in total. Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days and nights. Muhammad was forty years old when he received the call to become a prophet.

> Buddha meditated under a linden tree for forty days Not to mention the forty rules of Shams. You receive a new mission at forty, a new lease on life ! You have reached a most auspicious number. Congratulations ! (*TFROL*, 115)

On the other hand, the multilingual book cover designs in different editions exhibit the writer's and the publishing house's shrewd drawing on the bulk of commonplace iconography related to Sufism and Islam. While the French edition is marketed with a whirling dervish motif functioning as a fetish for the Sufi Mevlevi order, most editions- if not all- share a luxurious blend of colours, ranging from golden and red with Oriental arcades topping the front cover, and featuring Arabic calligraphy for background decoration : محمد/الله. On the Penguin edition used for the purposes of this study, one can by no means miss the deliberate alignment of Muslim sacred places of prayer with modern skyscrapers, towering an imaginary city or 'a contact zone' of sorts, in front of which Ella and Aziz stand in spiritual communion, with an open-handed offering Aziz, and a text-holding attentive Ella. The bare-footed couple- clearly joining each other from separate directions- presumably East and West- after what could be assumed to be a long and arduous journey- seems to be oblivious of the surrounding vestiges of civilisation, while being absorbed in an internal journey within the self where the suggested possibility of carnal love between a man and a woman is vectorized through a more esoteric type of affection. The flagrant contrast between the protagonists and the background picture where anachronistic elements are made to rub shoulders with modern ones actually sets the tone for the narrative. The backcover, on the other hand abounds in reviews by different newspapers and magazines as prestigious as *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Metro*…..They all publicize *TFROL* as either 'A gorgeous, jewelled, luxurious book' (*The Times*) or as 'Enlightening, enthralling. An affecting paean of faith and love' (*Metro*) or else ' It is a quest infused with Sufi mysticism and verse, taking Ella and us into an *exotic* world where faith and love are heartbreakingly explored' (my emphasis), or ' With its

timely, thought-provoking message… The *Forty Rules of Love* deserves to be a *global publishing phenomenon'* (my emphasis) (*The Independent).*

My purpose in foregrounding the peritextual features of *TFROL* at this stage of the argument is to emphasize the role of reviewing in the consecration of peripheral authors , who practically have no chance to acquire visibility unless their works are read and reviewed ; and if 'the translator is a creator of literay value' according to Pierre Bourdieu, the same holds true for the reviewer whose role can be invested with similar significance. In fact, translators, reviewers, and critics are the agents or the gatekeepers of the literary field where capital is constructed and disputed, moreover, they are often 'responsible for the misunderstandings and the misreadings' (Casanova,1999 :21) , since they are 'the legislators of the World Republic of Letters' (Casanova,1999 :21), Casanova conceives of them as an 'invisible aristocracy' who determines what is literary and what is not, for her it ' becomes possible to measure the literariness (the power, prestige and volume of linguistic and literary capital) of a language, not in terms of the number of writers or readers it has, but in terms of the number of cosmopolitan intermediaries- publishers, editors, critics and especially translators- who assure the circulation of texts into the language or out it' (Casanova,1999 : 21) . With so many 'certificates of literary value' in the bag, Shafak and *TFROL* can navigate the cosmopolitan literary scene in all assurance.

When I was a child, I saw God,
I saw angels,
I watched the mysteries of the higher and lower worlds. I thought all men saw
The same. At last I realized that they did not. (Shams of Tabriz (*TFROL, epigragh*)

Although arrestingly fascinating, Shafak's representation of Shams of Tabriz is highly problematic as it is caught between two contrastive poles, as a matter of fact, besides being

the most pivotal character in *TFROL,* he stands as the main host of a polyphonic novel where a multitude of points of view compete and intermingle to capture the reader's attention and arouse his empathy. Shams's voice guides Shafak's text while thrusting all its aura on other protagonists to the extent of eclipsing them, since throughout the narrative his voice is omnipresent, and the unique energy of his mystical magnitude illuminates the set of characters who people the text. While foregrounding the 'aura' of Shams, Shafak is in reality augmenting the aura of her literary product in the book market, an aura which in turn transforms the text into a fetish object which readers compete in acquiring. Therefore, the reach and worth of Shams as the catalyst of transformation and spiritual emancipation encompass, not only the inhabitants of the book, but extends to the readers as well. In one of her interviews, Shafak maintains that '*The Forty Rules of Love* is extroverted. It radiates energy from inside out'[8]. Without ever wishing to challenge her view, I invite the reader to have a more circumspect look at the way this character is constructed in the text and to gauge the way this 'energy' permeates the internal fabric of the novel. Indeed, when encountering Shams of Tabriz for the first time as a character in *Sweet Blasphemy*, Ella the reviewer, is set to fantasize on the man rather than on the spiritual guide :

> Her thoughts turned to *Sweet Blasphemy*. She was intrigued by the character of Shams of Tabriz. 'It could be nice to have someone like him around,' she joked to herself. ' Never a dull day with a guy like him ! 'And somehow the image that popped up in her mind was of a tall, dark-looking, mysterious man with leather pants, a motorcycle jacket, and black hair that fell to his shoulders, riding a shiny red Harley-Davidson with multicolored tassels hanging from the handlebars. She smiled at the image. A handsome, sexy, Sufi motorcyclist riding fast on an empty

[8] https://www.elifsafak.us/en/roportajlar.asp?islem=roportaj&id=24

> highway ! Wouldn't it be nice to get picked up while hitchhiking by a guy like that ? (*TFROL*, 36)

In her attempt to demystify the character of Shams, Shafak takes stock of Ella's imaginary construct, which ironically invokes Rock stars or Hollywood movie icons whereby Shams sounds more like an Elvis Presley or a James Dean. Whereas the eccentric and 'provocateur' facets of the character are exploited in such a fashion as to arouse female desire for 'bad boys' ; the long-haired, good-looking and sexy Sufi motorcyclist does not look out of place, on the contrary, he is customized to fit Ella's fantasy for a modern unconventional prince charming of sorts who would rescue her from her tedious marrital life. Far from being innocent, the explicit and deliberate Americanisation of Shams catapults him within the consumerist society of Harley-Davidson highway motorcyclists, thus commodifying him for the Western reader who will readily recognize familiar semiotic markers of his own culture, and will adopt the narrative for its non-defamiliarizing potential. A technique she similarly uses in *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), which is replete with instances of signifiers of the American culture, drawing for instance on Country music and more particularly on Johnny Cash's repertoire, whose poster and songs both dramatize and vocalize Asya's rebellious temperament:

> Asya is asleep on the other side of the room with Sultan the Fifth curled up on her chest, a pair of headphones on her head, and an open book in her hand : *Totality and Infinity : An Essay on Exteriority*, by Emmanuel Levinas. There is also a CD case next to Asya's bed- Johnny Cash dressed from head to toe in black, erect against a gray, gloomy sky with a dog on one side of him and a cat on the other, staring dourly at something far beyond the frame. (*The Bastard of Istanbul*, 216)

A few lines later in *TFROL,* Shams of Tabriz , the awe-inspiring Sufi mentor, is further sketched out only to match a Nostradamus or a Raspoutine with sooth-saying powers :

> Ella then wondered what Shams would see if he read her palm. Would he explain to her why her mind turned from time to time into a coven of dark thoughts ? Or how come she felt so lonely even though she had a large, loving family ? What about the colors in her aura ? were they bright and bold ? Had anything in her life been bright and bold lately ? Or ever ? (*TFROL,*36/37)

In another instance Shafak introduces Shams of Tabriz as a Dervish / Gipsy, a rootless outcast belonging nowhere :

> I have been a wandering dervish ever since, not sleeping in the same place more than once, not eating out of the same bowl twice in a row, every day seeing different faces around me. When hungry, Iearn a few coins by interpreting dreams. In this state I roam east and west, searching for God high and low. I hunt everywhere for a life worth living and a knowledge worth knowing. Having roots nowhere, I have everywhere to go. (*TFROL*,39)

Literary critic Elena Furlanetto argues that Shafak has placed 'her American heroine alongside Rumi to catch the attention of the American readership to the utmost since she was fully aware of the recent American fascination with the Rumi phenomenon' (Furlanetto,2013 :4). In her article, *The 'Rumi Phenomenon' between Orientalism and Cosmopolitanism*, *The Case of Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love (2013)*, Furlanetto discusses the coincidence between *TFROL*'s commercial success and the renewed infatuation for Sufim in the US , after Coleman Barks' translation of Rumi's *Mathnawi* in 1997–featuring as a major reference, in addition to other works cited in the appended source section- , which marks the year Rumi was consecrated the best-selling poet in America. Shafak's endnote is

quite telling of her heavy reliance on Western translations of Rumi's poetry : 'While writing this novel I benefited greatly from my readings of the Mathnawi by R.A.Nicholson and the autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi by William Chittick. Iam indebted to the works of William Chittick, Coleman Barks, Idris Shah, Kabir Helminski, Camille Helminski, Refik Algan, Franklin D. Lewis, and Annemarie Shimmel.' (*TFROL*,Sources). This intellectual indebtedness to the Western translation machine confirms once more and, if need be, the hegemony of Western academia as a mighty and inevitable mediator both in accessing and in fashioning any understanding of major works such as the *Mathnawi.* While Shafak's acknowledgement evidently points to the intellectual subalternity of the East/Orient vis-a-vis the West in discovering and apprehending its own heritage, it concomitantly signals the potential perils of translation as a process of reconstructing knowledge in a 'one-way traffic', when '……English now assumes the mantle of exclusive medium of cosmopolitan exchange' (Spivak 2003 qtd in Mufti, 489). The most salient of these perils is the 'deterritorialization' of literature- to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari- which converts all writers in translation into '…nomads, immigrants and gypsies'(qtd in Mufti,4). Pertinently, if the consumption of Rumi's poetry is a worldwide phenomenon today, it is thanks to translation that the Western readership came to discover the mystic poet and his ecstatic poetry, and 'if the act of translating a Muslim poet is inexorably tied to questions of representation and appropriation'(Furlanetto,2013), one might wonder to what extent Rumi is lost in translation, how far the commercialized Rumi is emblematic of a re-visited Americanized version of a more humanist apolitical Islam, and to what extent the popular Sufism in the West is faithful to Sufi ethos. In this respect, Petya Tsoneva Ivanova observes :

> Such transformation can, for example, be observed in the way she (Shafak) reformulates Sufism, a heterodox branch of Islamic mysticism, into a means of breaking up tightly bordered enclosures of radical religious, cultural and social

> identities. With this sort of reclaiming a 'spiritual East', Shafak parallels Rushdie's secular translations of Sufism that dissolve it of its explicit religious significance, turning it, instead into a metaphysical version of the inward quest his protagonists undertake in their migrations. (Ivanova,2018:168)

What Furlanetto ironically calls 'the New Age Kitsch Sufism' or 'Folk Islam', with all the pejorative connotations these appellations harbour, is in reality a 'domestication' or 'oversimplification' of Sufi philosophy which in fact 'strips the concepts from their Islamic roots', she further surmises that ' By integrating the trope of the therapeutic East in her novel, Shafak participates in this long tradition of instrumentalising the East in a manner that makes it useful to the West'(Furlanetto,2013 :205). Amira El Zein further corroborates this view when she declares that : '….the popular (as opposed to the scholarly) perception of Rumi's Sufi tradition in the US does not capture the perennial philosophy to which Rumi belongs. Instead, it brings a form of vague spirituality entangled in relativity and temporality. Rumi's verse is seen as an enjoyable 'spiritual product' to be consumed in order that one may relax and become more productive after listening to it'(El Zein, 83).

Admittedly, *TFROL* exudes a sufi ambience exacerbated by Shafak's extensive use of Sufi tropes and imagery, the most conspicuous of which are the tropes of drowning and the loss of the lover, thus we find throughout the novel instances of Sufi imagery and symbolism, whereby drowning is foregrounded not as a loss of the self/life but as communion with the divine. The narrative, in fact, starts with Shams's death, drowned by his murderer in a well in Rumi's backyard , the chapter entitled *The Killer* is actually recounted by this latter :

> Beneath dark waters in a well, he is dead now. Yet his eyes follow me wherever I go, bright and imposing, like two dark stars ominously hanging in the sky above. I came to Alexandria hoping that if I traveled far enough, I could escape this

> piercing memory and stop the wail echoing inside my mind, that very last cry he gave out before his face drained of blood, his eyes bulged out, and his throat closed in an unfinished gasp, the farewell of a stabbed man. The howl of a trapped wolf. (*TFROL*,21)

Most importantly perhaps is the way Rumi and Shams's relationship is delivered in *TFROL*, artfully oscillating between master/disciple fascination, and suggestions of homoerotic love. For Rumi, the loss of his mentor and twin soul is an unbearable agony which torments him physically and spiritually after Shams had resolved to part with him :

> Barren is the world, devoid of sun, since Shams is gone. This city is a sad, cold place, and my soul is empty. I can't sleep at night, and during the day I only wander around. I am here and I am not here- a ghost among people. I can't help feeling cross at everyone. How can they go on living their lives as if nothing has changed ? How can life be the same without Shams of Tabriz ? (*TFROL*, 288)

Sixteen years after Shams' tragic death, Rumi is still faithful to the memory of his master, and is still grieving his disappearance so bitterly. The fictionalized bond between both men is configured in such a way that : 'The relationship between the two is projected as an idealized form of the humane version of Islam-Sufim. A close reading , however, reveals several contradictions that validate the suspicions of the book 'functioning within a global cultural economy -a bazaar for non-Western artefacts- the category panders to the needs of the global market producing ever more reified versions of 'other'worlds (Ghosh)' (Hufaiza Pandit,199). The contradictions in the characterization of Shams reveal Shafak's authorial crisis caught between the Scylla of credibility and the Charybdis of exotica, as a matter of course, Shams is invested with Messianic virtues as a savior in the embedded narrative *Sweet Blasphemy,* thus overshadowing the character of Aziz as eye-opener and initiator in Ella's

life. Yet, Shafak jeopardizes the figure of Shams by compromising his masculinity not only through suggestions of ascetism- which in fact fall within Sufi aesthetics, and enhance his status as spiritual guide and 'murshid', but most effectively by obliquely gesturing towards his potential 'queerness'. While Turkish critic Hufaiza Pandit offers an interesting reading of *TFROL* through gender lenses, he explores the relationship between Shams and Kimya and dwells particularly on their marriage night :

> After the guests left, I returned to the house and meditated in a quiet corner. Then I went to the room where Kimya was waiting for me. I found her sitting on the bed, wearing a white robe(……) I pulled away. ' I'm sorry, Kimya. I can't do this.' (……) Averting her eyes, she mumbled something incomprehensible, and then she said quietly, ' They'll think I wasn't a virgin. I'll have to live in shame.'(……..) With one quick move, I grabbed the knife beside the pomegranate. I glimpsed a trace of panic in Kimya's face, slowly replaced by the expression of someone who recognized a sad situation and accepted it. Without hesitation I cut my left palm. My blood dripped on our bedsheet, leaving dark crimson stains. ' Just give them this sheet. This will shut their mouths, and your name will remain pure and clean, the way it should be.' (……..) In that moment I understood what a terrible mistake I had made by marrying her. (…….) I felt a strong need to run away from everything, not only from this house, this marriage, this town, but also from this *body* (emphasis mine)I had been given.Yet the thought of seeing Rumi the next morning held me anchored here. I couldn't abandon him again. (*TFROL*,305/306/307)

For Pandit, the scene is unmistakably loaded with Christian symbols such as self-flagellation with Shams's cutting of his own hand to save Kimya's honour in the face of society, while this latter (kimya) is 'the sacrificial lamb at the altar of Shams's and Rumi's

friendship' (Pandit,2018). In a later chapter, Kimya -in her desperate attempt ' to tame the queer' to borrow from Pandit- uses all her feminine assets (with Desert Rose's assistance, the repented whore) to seduce a recalcitrant Shams, who in clear self-denial of his sexual propensities as a 'disenfranchised queer' not only shuns her but scolds her for her straightforward manners :

> Bold, bosteirous, and intelligent, Shams of Tabriz knows a great deal about love. But there is one thing he doesn 't know anything about : the pain of unrequited love. The evening Desert Rose dressed me, I was full of excitement and an audacity I didn't know I had in me.(……..) When we were alone in the room, it took me a few seconds to muster my courage. I turned my back to him, took a deep breath, and then, in one quick move, removed my shawl and slid my robe off.(……..) ' What do you think you are doing ?' he asked coldly.(……)' 'You think you want me, you think you do, but all you want is to indulge your vanity.'(……..) 'Iam disappointed in you, Kimya,'Shams said.' Now , could you please leave me ?' (……) As harsh as his words sounded, not a trace of feeling grazed his face. No anger. Not even the slightest irritation. And I couldn't tell which hurt me the most : the sharpness of his words or the blankness on his face. (*TFROL*. 318/319)

To elaborate on Pandit's interpretation, one can safely argue that this 'ménage à trois' incarnated by Rumi/Shams/kimya and perhaps even Kerra, Rumi's wife, enacts a paradigmatic triangular dynamic with active versus passive, normative versus non-normative poles. While Rumi and Shams are engulfed in an inspired/ inspiring male bond, Kimya and Kerra exemplify disempowered Oriental females in total conformity with Western constructed

fantasies of the Orient and its women as submissive and helpless under the grips of patriarchy and religious dogma, Pandit argues :

> The novel reverts back to the oriental representation of Arab-Islamic cultures fuelled ' by the slant of the Christian West and the Islamic East, which provided an added fantasy in the Orientalist mind- the 'othering' of the Muslims. Such Orientalist representations of subaltern Muslim women further calcified and institutionalized their subhuman identity and subalternized them to both local patriarchy and their Western sisters' (Hasan :2005) (Pandit, 2018)

Therefore, the failure of the triangular relationship is most amplified in the narrative by Shams's murder, which according to Pandit again, is ample proof of the homophobic intolerance of non-heterosexual love.

Shafak's enactment of self-orientalizing strategies further intensifies the exotic component of *TFROL*, by artfully infusing the narrative with appropriate doses to stimulate the metropolitan reader's touristic gaze. The use of language in *TFROL* is thus located at the complex conjuncture of conflictual cultural sites and self-exoticising strategies ; through a large dictionary of Arabic vernacular, Shafak establishes 'a space of cultural contestation'(Adil,2006), and in that she does not differ from her fellow citizen Orhan Pamuk as they both :

> Employ differing strategies to push at the boudaries of the Turkish language and to forge new ways of saying and seeing(…….) For her part, Shafak reclaims Arabic- and Farsi derived vocabulary, such usages signify a return of the repressed pre- republic, Middle Eastern and Islamic linguistic memories, at best anachronistic, at worst Kemalist, in order to fashion a post-modern linguistic aesthetic. As a result, her language is at once an aesthetic and a political challenge

to Kemalist secular literary orthodoxies of previous decades which had insisted on looking to the West for literary inspiration, while 'cleansing' Turkish literature and verse of those rich Arabic and Persian influences that had dominated Ottoman court poetry » (Alev Adil,2006 :9/10)

Accordingly, the use of Arabic in *TFROL* fomenting a revision of the linguistic legacies in Turkey, and the deliberate recuperation of the constituents of Turkish identity Alev is pertinently drawing attention to, do rewrite and further confront the official historiography through inaugurating new spaces of enunciation. The novel abounds in Arabic words such as : *madrassa, shariah, hadith, maktab, tafsir, zikr, jihad, hamam, ghazal, baraqa, baqa*, *inshallah, faqih, qibla, tasbih, saqui, ney, tariqa, hafiz*….. etc. Still, the appended glossary does not only partly bely claims of cultural resistance on the part of Shafak, since it is apparently a sign of cooperation to facilitate the Western reader's consumption of the narrative, but also situates the author and her narrative on the cusp of (un)translatability. As such, the glossary operates as a 'laissez passer' or an instruction guide in the hands of a spoilt metropolitan reader in approaching an exotically unfamiliar space, where he is pampered and spared the painstakingly task of negotiating meaning in a foreign literary terrain. Arguably, reclaiming a linguistic legacy such as Arabic functions simultaneously as a self-exoticising/foreignizing modus operandi in that it stands as a linguistic wink to the metropolitan reader and thus summons this latter's cooperation, and as a tacit invitation to rediscover the riches of an Oriental linguistic heritage. Significantly, *TFROL* retraverses The Silk Road as a transcultural dimension to position Rumi and Shams as travellers across space and temporality, Azra Ghandeharion argues : ' Rumi (…….) travels along the Silk Road in the twenty first century. With the birth of a Rumi phenomenon in the West, Silk Road artists have rediscovered and adapted him for different purposes'(Azra Ghandeharion,2019 :71). Thus, the Western fascination with Rumi performs a double take in that it remaps the 'World

Republic of Letters' by reaffirming the cultural hegemony of Oriental cultures in the medieval times, stretching from Morocco to India with the free circulation of people, cultures, goods and mostly with its spirit of social and religious tolerance when America was not even on the map. This recharting of sorts, questions the Eurocentric/Americentric division of the world literary map along a center/ periphery binarism , and re-anchors it in a multiple cultural economy invoking Janet Abu Lughod's *Before European Hegemony* (1989) in which 'Europe stands as a mere sub-system and '…… a peripheral receiving part of a much rich Mediterranean sub-system that was predominantly Muslim, and that itself interacted…… with the equally rich subsystems around the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf….'(Theo d'Haen,2010 : 10).

Pertinently, Shafak rejuvenates literary space in *TFROL* by championing a 'happy multi-culti' melting pot Konya which sets Shams of Tabriz to marvel on this Tower of Babel of sorts :

> Having thus settled down, I roamed the streets, amazed at the mixture of religions, customs, and languages permeating the air. I ran into Gypsy musicians, Arab travelers, Christian pilgrims, Jewish merchants, Buddhist priests, Frankish troubadours, Persian artists, Chinese acrobats, Indian snake charmers, Zoroastrian magicians, and Greek philosophers. In the slave market, I saw concubines with skin white as milk and hefty, dark eunuchs who had seen such atrocities that they had lost their ability to speak. In the bazaar I came across traveling barbers with bloodletting devices, fortune-tellers with crystal balls, and magicians who swallowed fire. There were pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem and vagrants who I suspected were runaway soldiers from the last Crusades. I heard people speak Venetian, Frankish, Saxon, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Hebrew, and several other dialects I couldn't even distinguish.(*TFROL*,109)

This ‘pot-pourri’ with Post-modernist flavour celebrates the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity of thirteenth century Konya at the crossroads of multiple influences,ju xtaposed to ethically-evacuated twenty-first century Boston. While acknowledging the spiritual ascendency of the East over a materialistic consumerist West, Shafak recycles Orientalist cliches which publicize Eastern culture as paradigmatic of unearthly spirituality, and thus pictures the East as a healing force for the West, in a classical and typical ‘subservient’ relationship.

2.3. *TFROL* : Intertexuality and Inter-faith Dialogue :

> Dayekh (2016,2018) believes that the heptad structure of the novel, a foreword, a section by the killer, and five other divisions pertaining to the four elemental constituents of the cosmos (fire, water, earth. wind/air) plus the ‘void’, represents the ‘seven stages on the path of Truth- seven maqamat every soul has to go through in order to attain Oneness. (As Rumi travels along the silk road, Azra Ghandeharion,81)

Because no text can claim centrality and since every single text is by definition intertexual, *TFROL* instantiates a compelling example of thematic and formal borrowings laying the ground for a complex gamut of connections across a myriad of texts which further energize a dialogical relationship between sacred and secular sources. Thus, readers of the narrative are called to simultaneously invoke Coranic, Biblical and Sufi references, furthermore, the novel is replete with allusions, quotations and translations from Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Indian legacies. In this particular section, and counter to previous studies, *TFROL* is put under scrutiny not to explore its complexity as an interdiscursive text with a multiplicity of anchorpoints, but rather to foreground to what extent intertexuality contributes to construct a marketable narrative for the metropolitan audience.

The above-cited quote by Azra Ghanderharion gestures towards an arresting analogy between the formal structure of Shafak's text constructed along a seven chapter template and the seven maqamat in Sufi philosophy – championned by Rumi in his Mathnawi- whereby believers are likely to attain spiritual transcendence and can ultimately reach unity with God. This painstakingly path involves seven stages namely : the depraved nafs where the soul is still engrossed in mundane matters, the accusing nafs wherein the self blames itself instead of others marking the start of purification, the inspired nafs or the surrender phase where the soul roams in the valley of knowledge in its pursuit of values such as humility, patience and perseverance, then emerges the serene nafs where contentment and gratitude supplant resentment and frustration. The pleasing nafs is the fifth station where the soul illuminates and radiates all that surrounds it, the sixth stage is the purified nafs leading ultimately to the seventh and final stage the insan-e-kamil or the perfect human being. This template, formulated around the central trope of the quest, embarks the reader on a journey across spiritual rather than physical stations –or 'Ahwal' in the Sufi jargon- whereby Ella/Rumi transcend the limitations that obscure their ability to seek knowledge and reach plenitude and oneness. One of the most significant Sufi motifs and best symbolic of this oneness is the هو/هو (documented hereafter) which opens Shafak's text as a subconstituent of the titular element, a most deliberate authorial choice which artfully sets the tone for the bipartite structure of the narrative, scaffolded upon two separate stories which incessantly echo each other, while evolving along a similar pattern and logic, documenting the same journey and reverberating akin human fears, anxieties and longings.

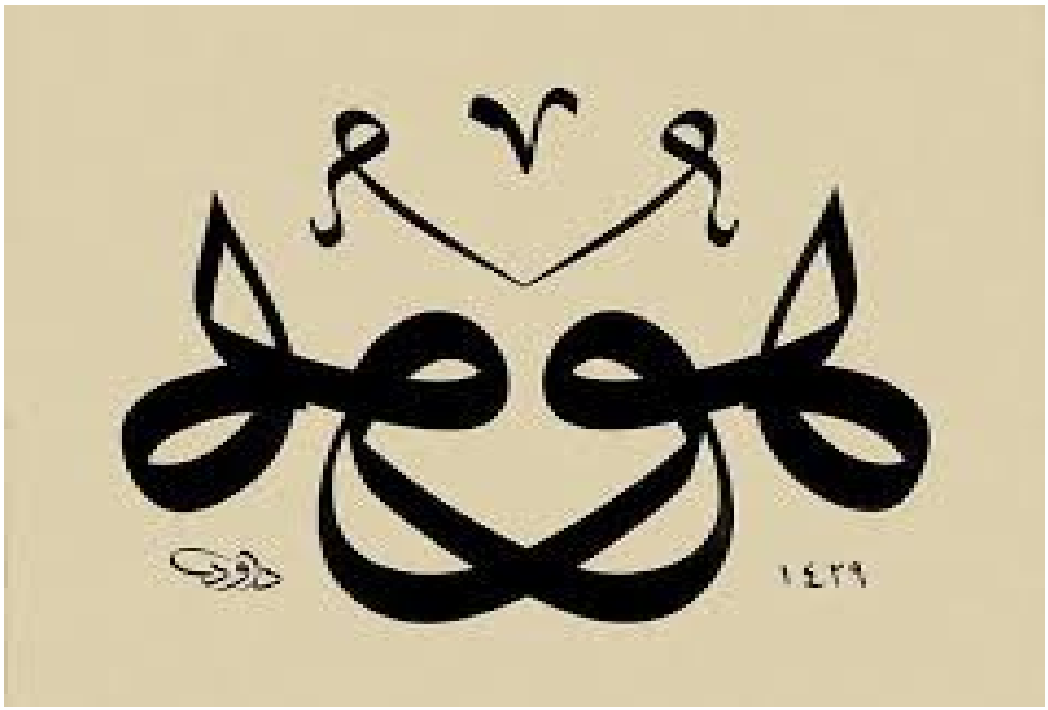

Figure 6 : Sufi symbol of the Oneness of God
https://i.pinimg.com/originals/8f/68/b0/8f68b028e4552d90f26f143e5fbdf0c1.jpg

If divine love or subsistence of God (baqa) and annihilation of the self (fana) is the ultimate vocation of such an endeavour, Shafak designedly celebrates Sufi philosophical precepts through the protagonists' maturation. Along with Rumi's, Ella's initial spiritual void invite a journey into Sufi mystical dynamics through the seven Maqamat/stations, culminating into total surrender to love. Both characters (Ella and Rumi) are embarked respectively by Aziz Zahara and Shams into an inner eye-opening odyssey which significantly enacts a transformative process of maturation and growth, a peculiarity which has-apparently prompted scholars such as Sumaya Firdous to read *TFROL* as a bildungroman or a 'novel of formation' which celebrates-among other things-'……the radical transformation of Rumi from scholar to poet, from devoted spiritual man to a visionary……'(Sumaya Firdous,2014 :561). Such an understanding not only positions *TFROL* within a longstanding Western literary tradition with its own generic conventions, but further confirms Shafak's entanglement with the book market logics and demonstrates how she flirts with Western

literary genres and styles, either in *TFROL* or in other works , to safely titillate the cosmopolitan readership in its comfort zone. Thus, her authorial linguistic, thematic and generic choices all concur to generate a market-friendly artifact.

Not only does Aziz Zahara's *Sweet Blasphemy* as a parallel account illuminate the frame narrative but it also functions as a true spiritual chaperon, dictating its logic to Ella's story to the extent that this latter is overshadowed by Rumi's tale, eventhough the partitioning and sequencing of chapters, structured along a balanced pace, might vehicle an impression of false equilibrium. Accordingly, the reader finds himself riveted to what is supposed to be a sideline text, in the same way he would apprehend *The Arabian Nights,* where Shehrazad's accounts not only counterbalance but often outweigh her own initial story. In thus fashioning her text, Shafak purposefully avails herself of Orientalist strategies which crucially replicate Western constructions of the East, and promote self-othering representations. Not only does this exoticising discourse invoke Islamic folklore, Persian anecdotes, Turkish fables but heavily and knowingly capitalizes on the conscious foreignizing of *TFROL* for the Western reader.

Morocco as a locale is mentioned by Aziz Zahara while recounting his Sufi pursuits , and while this reference to an Oriental setting is a commonplace in a narrative set in the East, it carries an Orientalist flavour in Ella's narrative, unmistakenly promoting the spiritual ascendency of the Orient : 'I spent the summer of 1997 with a group of Sufis in Morocco'(*TFROL*,232). This journey in North Africa operates an emancipatory role in Aziz's life : 'While I waited for the Sufis in Morocco to safely sneak me into Mecca and Medina, I read extensively on Sufi philosophy and poetry……,I found that my encounter with Sufism made me yearn for more.'(*TFROL*,233).

Indeed, *TFROL* and *LTA*- as it will be discussed in the next chapter- suggest a remapping of the world cartography whereby the thirteenth century is emphasized as a major temporal and geographical trajectory preceeding the EuroAmerican centrality. Accordingly, Morocco down to India are thus foregrounded as routes for free circulation of goods, people, cultures, social and religious tolerance, nodding towards Janet Abu Lughod's world systems and conforming to her rewriting of the world map.

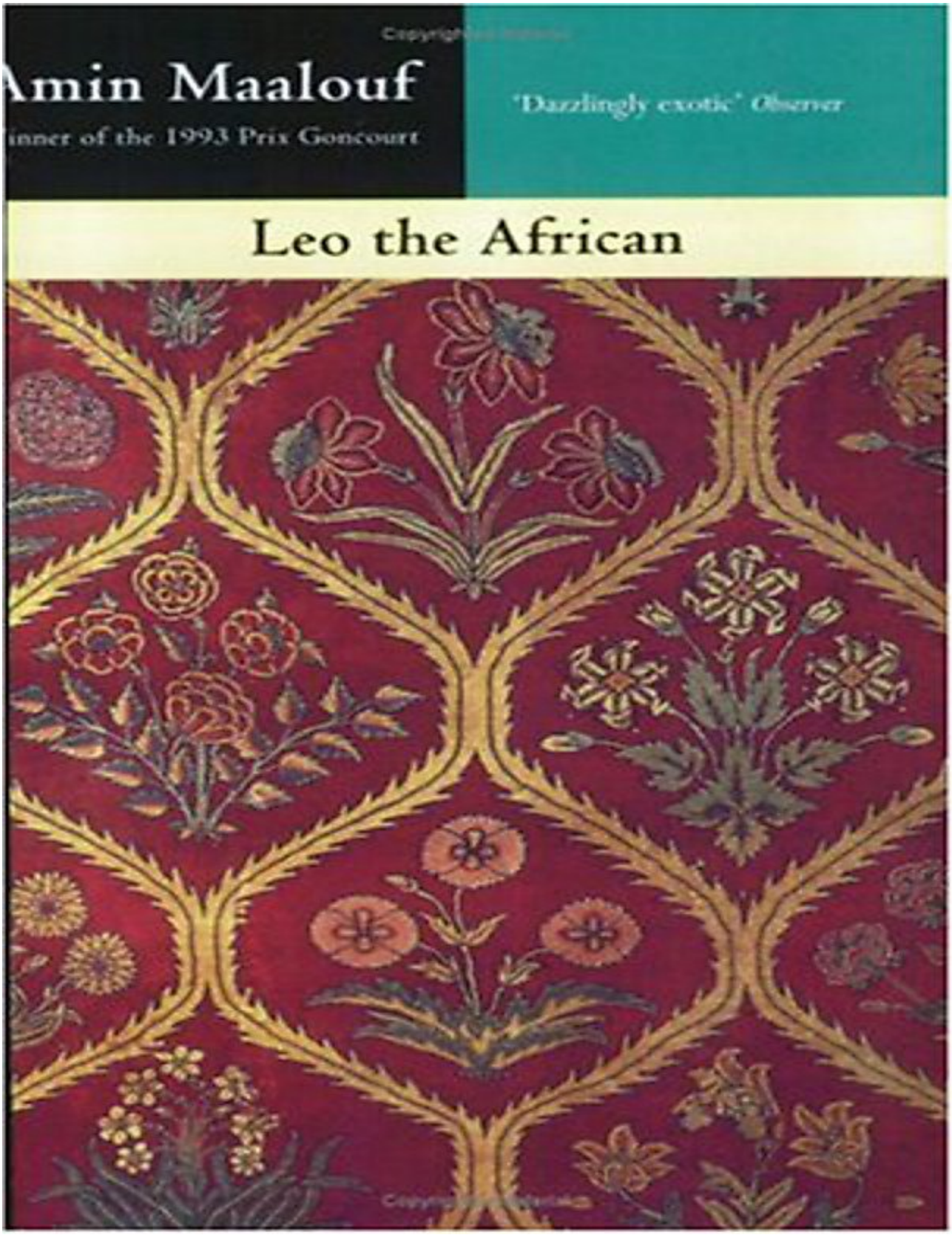

Figure7 : The Penguin version of *LTA* featuring Oriental motifs
https://m.mediaamazon.com/images/P/B0074ODE62.01._SCLZZZZZZZ_SX500_.jpg

Chapter three : Amin Maalouf's *Leo The African* : Between Self-Orientalizing and Re-constructing Identity

'Dazzlingly exotic'. *Observer*

'Maalouf's fiction offers both a model for the future and a caution, a way towards cultural understanding and an appalling measure of the consequences of failure. His is a voice which Europe cannot afford to ignore' *Guardian*

The most entertaining education we could wish for…..*Leo the African* is a celebration or the romance and power of the Arab world, its ideals and achievements. *Daily Telegraph*

I, Hasan the son of Muhammad the weigh-master, I, Jean-Leon de Medici, circumcised at the hand of a barber and baptized at the hand of a pope, I am now called the African, but I am not from Africa, nor from Europe, nor from Arabia. I am called the Granadan, the Fassi, the Zayyati, but I come from no country, from no city, no tribe. I am the son of the road, my country is the caravan, my life the most unexpected of voyages.……...From my mouth you will hear Arabic, Turkish, Castilian, Berber, Hebrew, Latin and Vulgar Italian, because all tongues and all prayers belong to me. But I belong to none of them. (*Leo The African*, 1)

This chapter explores the fictional world of Amin Maalouf both as a manifestation of World Literature in French and an exceptional diasporic voice, while problematizing Maalouf's positionality as an exophonic writer grappling with issues of language, exile, and identity. It further questions Maalouf's engagement with the essentialist logic characteristic of self-orientalist/exoticist rhetoric, and thus speculates on his involvement- by accident or by design- with the machinery of the global capitalist marketplace and the publishing industry.

This paper does by no means presume that a writer and thinker in the caliber of Amin Maalouf is an accomplice of the neo-orientalist agendas rampant in the international literary scene, it rather argues that if 'literature is produced with an audience in mind', the diasporic writer's speaking position –often performed from locations of power- not only complicates his authorial intentions and choices ; but oft compromises his work's integrity, when called upon to meet market demand along with its corollary consumerist imperatives. My argumentation tests the hypothesis that Maalouf's fiction performs a function of memory with a nostalgic/romanticised glorification of the past to facilitate a reading of the present, oscillating between historical fact and fiction, and that such an enterprise of necessity entails the endorsement of essentializing gestures and perhaps even self-orientalizing/exoticising tropes. It further contends that when writing from a metropolitan center – Paris in this occurrence- a diasporic writer might be inclined – oft against his own intentions- to negotiate the dilemma of vending his own alterity through a subtle 'staging of marginality'(Graham Huggan), while still coping with identity problematics. Being translators of sorts, diasporic writers- a coterie where Maalouf certainly belongs- are invested with a specific mission, if we believe Graham Huggan, driven as they are : 'by the demands of a metropolitan audience to produce works that seek to explain, account for, and make known the other as a means of cultural translation' (Huggan,2001:viii).

This paper does not contemplate to ventriloquize readings of Maalouf's work as a cosmopolitan corrective effort to re-read Arab Muslim history, it rather invites the reader to envisage his fictional body as a market commodity making its way through the international circuits of book trade dissemination, and to further examine the discursive strategies mobilized by both author and publisher to promote the circulation of Maalouf's texts on a planetary scale. My reading, thus, parts company with traditional assessments of Maalouf's works as counter-discursive artefacts deploying a textual instance of resistance, and much less as a celebratory paradigm of multiculturalism whereby a novel configuration of Arab-Muslim identity is charted.

3.1. Amin Maalouf and Market Valence

'Elevated to the dignity of high officer of French National Order of Merit' (2020) by President Macron in a most pompous ceremony at the Elysee in February 2020, Amin Maalouf is nothing short of a public intellectual in the contemporary French literary and mediatic landscape. Previously 'immortalised' in 2011 by his integration of the most imposing French institution, namely The French Academy of Letters, the French-Lebanese author for whom 'the question of identity never leaves my (his) mind, because mine(his) is problematic', is perhaps one of the most awarded francophone writers in the last few decades. A 'good son' of the republic, winner of prestigious French Prix Goncourt (1993) for his novel *The Rock of Tanios* (1993), the Prix Meditéranée for *Origins* (2004), recipient of Prince of Asturias Award for Literature (2010), shortlisted for the Biennial Man Booker International Prize (2011), consecrated Cultural Personality of the Year by the Sheikh Zayed book awards (2016), in addition to several honours and decorations across a long and most prolific career, Maalouf oft refered to as 'Mr East', 'Mr Shehrazade' or 'Modern day One thousand and One Nights novelist'(Marmara Life, 21 Nov 2018), stands today as a unique voice, one 'which Europe cannot afford to ignore' (The Guardian). His profile as a multi-awarded writer,

paradigmatic of the 'Levantine' pundit in the West, and the inclusion of his œuvre in the Western 'subcanon' readily invite interrogations about the degree of complicity between Western academic agendas, market demand and his authorial capitalising on self-othering. Thus, the present chapter seeks to investigate/attend to the following querries : is Maalouf not advertising for being the 'other' in the West to pander to the needs of the Western readership and publishing conglomerates ? Are his gamut of prizes not symptomatic of Western appreciation and acknowledgement of his 'political correctedness' ? Is he not the perfect prototype of the assimilated other, Maalouf who thinks that the sole 'compass to humanity today is Europe' ? How do his works position themselves within Francophone literature in particular and global literature at large ? How do his authorial choices dovetail with Western market dictates ? How does he manage 'the comfortable margin of difference'- to borrow from Stepping- to formulate consumable, palatable texts for the Western audience ? And ultimately, is Maalouf representative of World literature in French ?

An 'exophonic' author par excellence, his œuvre is crucially located within the translingual, transcultural and transnational provinces of global literature, entitling him, thus, to market competition across the international channels of dissemination. Significantly, Maalouf's trajectory as a Paris-based global writer with Lebanese origins epitomizes the predicament of self-exiled consciousness steeped in the cosmopolitan spirit, reflecting on issues as imbricated and complex as identity, migration, exile, cultural understanding and the dialogue between East and West. For the one who thinks that 'I (he) was born healthy in the arms of a dying civilisation'*(Le Nauffrage des Civilisations*,2019) the exploration of a lost world i.e Muslim and Arab culture is of necessity performed through the discursive reformulation of official historiography whereby he casts himself as a historian, a gap-filler and a fiction writer. This multi-functional vocation empowers Maalouf's fiction not only with corrective potentials, but also with rehabilitating aptitudes in that it recreates symbolic ambits

of tolerance and coexistence, while revisiting and further problematizing objective versions of history through a new lens. His re-assessment of momentous historical stations such as the crusades in *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes (1983)* or of controversial figures in the caliber of Andalusian Geographer Hassan Al Wazzan in *Leo Africanus* (1986), the eleventh-century Persian poet Omar Al Khayyam in *Samarkand* (1988), the third-century Mesopotamian founder of Manicheism Mani in *The Gardens Of Light* (1991), or seventeenth-century Balthasar in *Balthasar's Odyssey* (2000), incontestably speaks to Maalouf's deep conviction that the panacea to the present cultural clashes and religious crises lies in the fictional manipulation of historical heritage, as well as the unrelenting questioning of the past. Eventually, Maalouf's handling of Arab-Muslim and Oriental history at large imparts his works with an exceptional significance in an alarmingly conflictual world. This dissertation ambitions, perversely, to redirect emphasis from the thematic foci of Maalouf's fiction to its extratextual aspects, bearing in mind that the former are perused inasmuchas they contribute to unfold its engagement with the market dynamics at work in the international book trade system.

3.2. *Leo The African* : An Exophonic Novel at The Crossroads of Genres :

The fact that the sumtotal of Maalouf's opus is composed in French inevitably confronts us with his reality as a 'hyphenated' writer actively engaged with issues of language choice, and understandably positions him within the category of exophonic literature. First introduced by Susan Arndt, Dirk Naguscheuski and Robert Stockhammer in 2007, and despite its theoretical looseness, exophony stands by and large as a form of translingualism or other-languagedness in literature. It, thus, encompasses a wide array of writers and literatures produced in non-native languages by non-native authors. According to Chantal Wright : 'Exophony is an emerging term which has largely, although not exclusively, been used to describe the phenomenon of African literatures written in European languages, particularly in

French. (cf. Heinrichs 1992 :19)'(Chantal Right 2008 :39), it basically stands for '…….the phenomenon of a writer working in a language other than his or her mother tongue. This term avoids the imposition of a thematic straitjacket and emphasises the innovative stylistic features that can be observed in this body of texts.'(Chantal Wright :2008, 27).

Accordingly, Maalouf's physical and intellectual exiles in the 'World republic of letters' forcibly entail linguistic exile in the Francophone literary marketplace, where Paris- the city of a hundred thousand novels (Balzac)- stands as the Mecca of publishers, critics, editors, reviewers and translators, and the way he manages his status as a writer of the 'francophonie' in the city of literature par excellence, raises questions as to the compromises he is called to indulge in to ensure the circulation and distribution of his fiction. This 'writing within the grey zone' (Chantal Wright,2008) or 'born translated' literature (Walkowitz,2015) 'presupposes some kind of incompatibility and at the same time exophonic writers seek a sense of comfort in the form of a sprachmutter (Mother tongue, my translation), even if they are always imperfect, there is a tension between the comfort of the mother tongue and the concomitant lack of freedom, as opposed to the uneasiness of a second language and the freedom associated with it. This tension is central to exophonic writing.' (*International Perspectives on Multilingual Literatures*, 200). If we concede with Chantal Wright that such a tension is actually familiar to exophonic writers, it is only fair to acknowledge that it undeniably begs authorial experimentation with language, styles and forms while concurrently relegating the mother tongue to a state of 'clandestinity' -to borrow from Abdelkbir Khatibi- who eloquently and poetically evokes this linguistic estrangement as part of the lot of any bilingual writer, arabophone and francophone in this particular instance : 'When I write in French, my mother tongue retreats, crushes and goes back to the harem.'(Khatibi,2008 my translation). Yet, if Khatibi's statement obliquely gestures towards a linguistic hierarchization whereby the mother tongue is curtailed to the realm of domesticity,

this effacement of Arabic as a space of enunciation is otherwise concomitant with a persistent resonance of its underlying imaginary, which in turn contributes to generate a diaglossic discursive fabric wherein cohabitate Oriental and Western linguistic and cultural components. The text becomes, thus, a 'contact zone' where competing discourses of Eastern and Western cultural backgrounds struggle for visibility.

There is no room for speculation that if Amin Maalouf's notoriety in the Francophone literary sphere has vouchsafed market valence on his works and earned him currency as a highly 'readable' and incidentally 'canonizable' writer, the relatively belated translation of most of his texts into English has effectively contributed to their wider circulation beyond the hexagonal borders in a highly anglocentric literary market, as it is the case with his debut novel *Leo The African* or *Léon L'Africain* in its original French version- a translation-happy, prize-friendly text (Emily Apter,2014)- released as early as 1986, but which didn't make its way to the international market until 1998, featuring on the top list of bestsellers and winning him two awards namely Prix France Libre (1986) and Prix Paul Flat de L'Académie Française. Unanimously acclaimed by critics and reviewers, *Leo The African* retraces the lifestory of Arab geographer, diplomat and scholar Hasan al-Wazzan through his numerous peregrinations, and consistently chronicles his ordeal with exile and displacement through locations as disparate as Granada, Fez, Cairo and Rome. Throughout this transnational, transcultural, translinguistic and even transreligious 'rihla', Maalouf celebrates cosmopolitan spirit beautifully exemplified by Hasan/Leo, the epitome of the 'Modern' man, while purposefully positioning his narrative right from the prologue within duality, ambivalence, and multi-dimensionality. Thus, Hasan/leo is 'the African', 'the Granadan', 'the Fassi', 'the Zayyati', from him :'……you will hear Arabic, Turkish, Castilian, Berber, Hebrew, Latin and Vulgar Italian, because all tongues and all prayers belong to me (him). But I (he) belong(s) to none of them.' (*Leo The African*,1). In addition to celebrating the poetical dimension of exile,

this universalist all-encompassing spirit unreservedly advocated by the narrator/traveller- patently self-conscious of its potential to transcend all disparities be they racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious- strategically reverberates Rumi's Sufi precepts whereby he claims his unbelonging to any confining epistemes :

> I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabr, nor Moslem,
> I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land,
> nor of the sea.(Rumi)

Thus, by suggesting a revised model of Muslim-Arabness at times of religious and political turmoils, Maalouf compares to Shafak in strategically capitalizing on the current massive popularity enjoyed by Sufi spirituality in the West and while Hasan/Leo's unacknowledged identification with Rumi is performed simultaneously through textual appropriation and generic affiliation, with the fusion of the conventions of the historical novel, the travel narrative and the bildungsroman, it similarly reconnects with the quest as a narrative trope . Indeed, the internal mobility of the narrative translates in a transgeneric text travelling across different discursive modes, whereby *Leo The African* needs to be viewed in the light of a nucleus of generic affiliations and conventions. In her paper *Amin Maalouf and Pan-Orientalism(2010)*, Fida Dakroub describes Maalouf as 'the Homer of the historical novel' (27, my translation), and aptly argues that : 'The originality of Amin Maalouf's francophone historical novel dwells in its imposed gesture of mixing genres enabling it to construct- in a mongrel fashion- the heterogeneity of the francophone novel in its vocation to be Pan-Orientalist' (Fida Dakroub,96, my translation). Arguably, this heterogeneous dimension in *Leo The African* toying both with Western as well as with Arab-Oriental genres calls upon the reader to engage with a hybrid referential amalgam : 'At the level of narration, *Leo The African* uses metadiegetic narration, which is the Oriental narrative style par excellence, which *The One Thousand And One Nights* is the most pertinent exemple of.'(Fida

Dakroub,96, my translation). In establishing this generic kinship with a paradigmatic text of Oriental letters, i.e. *The One Thousand and One Nights*, Dakroub is gesturing towards the narrative modes deployed by Maalouf, which go beyond the mere courting of the travelogue and the bildungsroman as Western genres. The critic extends the analogy to al *Maqamah, al Hikayah, alkhabar and arihla* :'At the level of genre, hybrid narratives stand as a blend of precolonial authentic Arab genres such as al-maqama or al-rihla. This miscegenation is at the heart of Maalouf's historical novels. These novels present at the level of style a miscegenation resulting out of the contact between 'the coranic fact' and 'the colonial fact' (Dakroub, 99, my translation). In her effort to disentangle the Oriental and Western residues in Maalouf's fiction, Dakroub concludes that : 'The type of narration in Maalouf's historical novels gets inspiration from the European narrative experience as well as Oriental narrative genres.(……..) For Maalouf, It is actually space and time that are Oriental' (Fida Dakroub, 100). While it is irrefutable that Maalouf's fiction distinguishes itself by its generic hybridity wherein the fusion of Western and Oriental narrative genres are totally compatible, Dakroub's argumentation in favour of the bonafide vocation of what she dubbs 'pan-orientalism' in Maalouf's project falls short from questioning the essentialist discursive strategies informing this latter, a gap which this paper hopes to fill.

While daringly breaking with French literary traditions, characterized by a long history of patronage, Maalouf surprisingly dispenses with prefacing. Conventionally in French letters, authors -whether established or not- solicit an intellectual authority to preface and thus accredit their work. This strategy, very common in 'the World Republic of Letters' performed by 'agents' or 'legislators' of literariness- to borrow from Casanova- serves to validate and confer 'a certificate of literary value' (Casanova,1999) to works of art .Yet, proceeding otherwise, Maalouf is significantly- in the incipit of the novel- invoking a Western authority,

anglophone for this matter- no less than W.B.Yeats- thus placing the text under the aegis of Western patronage by claiming its affiliation to the international literary tradition :

‘ Yet do not doubt that I am also Leo Africanus the traveller’

W.B.Yeats (1865-1939)

Such a peritextual tool enhances the exophonic manoeuvr of the narrative - double-edged in essence- presumably meant to uncover Orientalist inclinations in the British poetic tradition - and the Irish one more particularly- foregrounds itself unequivocally revelatory not only of the irrefutable influence of Eastern culture on the West and the fascination of this latter with Oriental tradition, but also of the infamous colonial enterprise and the Western appropriation of Medieval ‘subaltern’ legacies. While a case can be made that Yeats’s deliberate endorsement of the personae of Leo Africanus the traveller is an overt, though ambivalent, attraction to the Oriental ‘other’- a kindred interest verbalized in his lesser-known Orientalist opus *The Gift of Harun al- Rashid-* it remains that it is definitely a claim of the cosmopolitan spirit embodied by Hasan/Leo. Having said that, there is a much more occult story behind this appropriation. Emphatically, one cannot help asking analogous questions to Claire Nally’s : ‘Yet how is it possible to identify and account for an African /Arabian writer/explorer from the sixteenth century, claiming to be a guide or influence in Yeats’s life ?’ (Claire Nally, 2010 :138). In her attempt to settle on a convincing response, Nally pertinently quotes Bernadette Andrea’s essay *The Ghost of Leo Africanus (2003)* and emphasizes how this latter ‘……assesses the colonial impetus for appropriating Leo Africanus as a cultural figure’(*Envisioning,*138). Taken together, Nally’s investigations embark the reader on a journey to the spiritual world of Yeats wherein occult forces, spirits and voices compete to guide the Irish poet. One such a voice is Leo Africanus’s which Yeats is likely to have encountered in ‘….Leo’s works reissued in a second edition.’9 Nally,

2010 :138), Leo '….was also presented in *Chamber's Biographical Dictionary* with his full name 'Al Hassan Ibn Mohammed AlWazzan' (This would have been the edition Yeats consulted about his 'spirit guide').' (*Envisioning,*138). Whilst surveying Leo's official story, Nally registers his reconversion to Islam and aptly points out that : 'As a reconverted Muslim, he partakes of traditional Orientalist symbolism signifying ' terror, devastation, the demonic hordes, of hated barbarians'(139) but promptly surmises that : ' As a catholic, he underscores Yeats's aversion to Ireland's lower middle classes. Oscillating between the two, however, suggests a marked lack of allegiance, a culpable deception implying the colonial trope of untrustworthiness' (*Envisioning,* 139). If such readings offer a nuanced account of Yeats's obssession with leo Africanus, they nonetheless avail themselves of the findings of postcolonial theory in apprehending the binary structures undergirding colonial discourse. In this respect, it can be safely conjectured that Yeats's identification with Leo Africanus is energized via a whole orientalist background, whereby an oriental agent is evidently handled with mixed feelings of ambivalence, yet still envisaged as a catalyst of modern values such as humanism, fluidity of identity but above all mobility, nomadism and unbelonging. Arguably, if Maalouf's postcolonial rendering of Hasan/Leo sounds as the vivid incarnation of the modern man, he is equally a 'cultural amphibian' according to Bernadette Andrea :

> Symptomatic of the displacements Maalouf suggests are constitutive of modernity, Leo Africanus further epitomizes the 'cultural amphibian' Edward Said proposes in *Orientalism* with reference to Shakespeare's Othello, a character similarly based on the life and writings of Leo Africanus, Said stresses that as epiphenomena of orientalism, cultural amphibians are 'always represented as outsiders having a special role to play inside Europe'. He expands his notion in *Culture and Imperialism* to include the possibility of resistance, remarking that 'these voyages in represent a still unresolved contradiction or discrepancy with

> metropolitan culture, which through co-optation, dilution, and avoidance partly acknowledges and partly refuses the effort'. The cultural amphibian produced by Orientalist discourse, in sum, may function strategically as an anticolonial subaltern. (Bernadette Andrea, Postcolonial Moves,2003 :196)

Quite early, the allegory of 'the Moor' has permeated part of the Western imaginary, materializing in a myriad of representations in different literary genres, and using a different taxonomy each time : the Blackmoor, the Mahometan, the Negro, the Muslim. Pertinently, Elizabethan drama registers insights of the Moor of which Shakespeare's *Othello*- a version of sorts of Leo Africanus- is an eloquent example. Maalouf's reactivation of this background inevitably connects his work to Western Orientalist discursivity while recycling configurations of the exotic Moor. Elsewhere, Andrea further argues that :'Leo Africanus as fictionalized by Shakespeare and Maalouf and theorized by Said is ultimately grounded in the historical Al Hasan Ibn Muhammed al- Wazzan's strategy of assimilation and dissimulation'(Bernadette Andrea, 196), an aspect which will be tackled in this chapter in due course.`

While still immersed in the process of deciphering Maalouf's text via its paratextual tresholds, one is confronted with the prerequisite yet mandatory exercise of interpreting the significance of topographical choices namely cover politics. For the purposes of this study I have been using the Abacus edition (documented above), an edition illustrating Oriental carpet-like designs, featuring yellow, green and pink floral motifs. The seeming simplicity of the illustration is apparently meant to reenable the reader's inventory of Oriental symbolism and imagery, the most salient feature of is the magic carpet. Accordingly, the cover design is actually a covert exortation to the reader in general and the Western one in particular to commence a journey in exotica. While the titular apparatus (*Leo The African*) foregrounds an imbedded oxymoronic function juxtaposing Western and non-Western appellations, further

prompting the metropolitan reader to unravel the inherent ambiguities and paradoxes of the narrative, which in turn re-energizes his Orientalist reservoir. In other versions and editions, cover strategies (as documented hereafter) exhibit an overt endorsement of an Oriental turbaned sworded effigy, in total accordance with Western conceptualizations of the ' Black moor', another instance is the Spanish version which seems to capitalize on the eponymous narrator's name, approached as a charactonym correlating the connotations of Africanhood and lionhood, both quintessentially exotic. While the back cover blurbs – appended above as epigraphs- advertise *Leo The African* as 'a *quixotic* catalogue of pirates, slave-girls and princesses', or else as 'a celebration of the *romance* and power of the Arab world', Maalouf's fiction is granted with the merit of 'offering a model for the future and a caution, a way towards *cultural understanding*' (my emphasis). This obvious emphasis exerted on both front and back covers to foreground the unfamiliar, the strange and incidentally the exotic aspects of Maalouf's work, actually fortify the outlandish scaffolding of this latter, while luring the target audience, in a typically opportunistic marketing move.

Figure 8 : An English version featuring the portrait of Muhammed Ibn Hasan al Wazan
https://i.grassets.com/images/S/compressed.photo.goodreads.com/books/1347281464l/153496.jpg

Figure 9 : The Arabic version capitalizing on the Africanness of Leo
https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/51wntFpE+DL.jpg

On account of its belatedness, the English translation is advertising Amine Maalouf as winner of the 1993 Prix Goncourt, a detail which unequivocally reveals a very common marketing strategy whereby publishing houses capitalize on authors' market valence and credentials, such as prizes as sine qua non of literary prestige (James English,2005). Put crudely, if a Prix Goncourt laureate matches a Man Booker Prize winner and if both are likely to score better in terms of sales, the former is less familiar to the English-speaking audience, and is in all likelihood more liable to augment the outlandish facet of *Leo The African* in this very occurence. Thus, when travelling out of its context (Damrosch,2003), a novel such as Maalouf's is susceptible to gain in market value while running the risk of getting 'lost in translation', however, *Leo The African* does not match this particular occurrence since the translational transfer actually ensued between two major European languages where the center/periphery dichotomy is an irrelevant scenario .

Leo the African (henceforth abbreviated as *LTA*) is designed along a four-section architecture ; 'The book of Granada', 'The book of Fez', 'The book of Cairo' and finally 'The book of Rome' with each book divided into chapters named after the main event. Yet the

evident imbalance in chapter organisation around Hasan's life as a Free Muslim in the first three chapters amounting to thirty one sections, and his account as a slave in the ultimate chapter in Rome with a total of nine sections, raises questions as to the implications of this disproportion. In this respect, Graem Harper convincingly points out that :

> What will immediately strike readers intent on getting to the events in Rome, is the great percentage of the novel (seventy five percent) devoted to the Islamic life prior to enslavement. This is clearly a function not only of the expectations of the audience but of the agenda that the Christian Arab writer has set for himself, which would ? to be at least partially revisionary of the orientalized rennaissance view. Maalouf intends to contextualize the convert and provide a solid sense of the many captivities that shaped Leo before his final capture by pirates and the various exiles imposed on him. (*Colonial and Postcolonial Incarceration*, Graem Harper 2001)

Whilst *LTA* happens to be situated at the intersection of numerous generic affiliations as argued earlier, it is quintessentially a travelogue wherein the author/narrator/traveller conflate in memoirs of sorts, dedicated to Giusepe, Leo's son, mentioned at different occasions in Hasan/Leo's journey/Rihla :

> But you will remain after me , *my son*. And you will carry the memory of me with you. And you will read my books. And this scene will come back to you : your father dressed in the Neapolitan style, aboard this galley which is conveying him towards the African coast, scribbling to himself, like a merchant working out his accounts at the end of a long journey.(*LTA,* 1)

> I was your age, my son, and I have never seen Granada again.(*LTA*,81)

> When I arrived in Cairo, my son, it had been for centuries the renowned capital of an empire, and the seat of a caliphate. When I left it, it was no more than a provincial capital. No doubt it will never regain its former glory. (*LTA*, 221)

In creating the personae of 'the son' to which the whole narrative is addressed, Maalouf furnishes the character of Hasan/Leo with authorial self-consciousness, empowered as it stands, to claim not only historical credibility, but also potential discursive thrust on future generations.

3.3. *Leo The African* : A Self-exoticising Narrative ?

The narrative based on Ibn Al Wazzan's authentic lifestory is an imaginary biography which starts in Granada, the year of Salma al-Hurra in 894 A.H (5 December 1488-14 November 1489), three years prior to the fall of the last Muslim bastion in Spain. It is in the district of *al Baisin* that Hasan's birth is celebrated in all due opulence within a typically Muslim polygamous -or more accurately bigamous- household, and a happy multi-culti environment wherein Muslims, Jews and Christians coexist in all possible and imaginable Convivencia ; indeed, the locals of Granada have their festive happennings animated by the orchestra of Danny the Jew, while the personal doctor of Boabdil , the Prince of Granada himself, is no other than Ishaq Hamun. Likewise, Hasan's mother Salma, 'al-hurra, the free, or al -'arabiyya, the Arab' (*LTA*,6) , uses amulets to get pregnant on Gaudy Sarah, the Jewish fortune-teller's counsel :

> When Sarah came back a few weeks later I was already having my morning sicknesses. That I gave her all the money I had on me, a great handful of square dirhams and maravedis, and I watched her dancing with joy, swaying her hips and tapping her feet loudly on the floor of my chamber, making the coins dance in her

> hands, the sound of their clinking together mingling with that of the juljul, the little bell which all Jewish women had to carry. (*LTA,*7)

Yet Salma's joy is short-lived as competition arises when Warda, the Christian slave, is expectant on her turn :

> (….)Muhammad came home with a beautiful Christian girl, with black braided hair, whom he had bought from a soldier who had captured her in the course of a raid into the country near Murcia. He called her Warda, set her up in a room overlooking the patio, and even talked of sending her to Ismail the Egyptian to teach her the lute, dancing and calligraphy, like any favourite of the sultans. (*LTA*,6)

In creating a harem-like atmosphere in Mohammed al Wazzan's ménage, Maalouf is deliberately calling on the Western imaginary, by invoking all the exotic cliches about Oriental domesticity. Undeniably, the representation of women in the above passage as educated entertainers or modern escort girls, reminiscent of Asian Geishas corroborates Western fantasies about Oriental female subjectivity as passive and instrumentalized commodities in the hands of Oriental men , and by the same gesture strongly conjures up the Oriental harem as an institution- even if in its domestic form- ever inflaming the Western imaginary. On the other hand, it is one instance , amid plenty, of cross-cultural desire ubiquitous in the narrative. In later chapters, Hasan is in love with Hiba, the black beauty from Timbuktu, with Nur the Circassian Princess, and much later with Maddalena, the Andalusia-born Jew, in The book of Fez the year of Timbuktu, The book of Cairo the year of the Circassian, and The book of Rome the year of the Conversa respectively. The inclination in Maalouf's text to use Shehrazad-like female figures ; beauteous, educated, mysterious, lavish entertainers, translates authorial and textual attitudes that arguably operate through a

logic of reinforcement of the ontology of the Orient, of which the writer is supposed to be an expert. The narrative is equally peppered here and there with an erotica of sorts which further fullfils the promise of exoticism :

> I kissed her passionately. Which dispensed her from confessing that as far as surprises went I had only heard the 'Bismillah' and the rest of the prayer was to follow. But that did not come to pass before the end of the night, which was deliciously endless. We were lying down beside one another, so close that my lips trembled at her whisperings. Her legs formed a pyramid ; her knees were the summit, each pressed close to the other. I touched them, they separated, as if they had just been quarelling. My Circassian ! My hands sometimes still sculpt the shape of her body. And my lips have forgotten nothing. (*LTA*,242)

Quite telling, the story of the Rumiyya's bath early in the novel further exemplifies this exoticising narrative gesture :

> 'It was said,' she told me, 'that one morning, the sultan called the members of his court to attend the Rumiyya's bath.' My mother was shocked to have to recount this ungodly act ; 'may God forgive me !' she stammered,(…….)' when the bath was over, the sultan invited all those present to drink a small bowl of the water which Soraya, had left behind, and everyone rhapsodized, in prose or in verse, about the wonderful taste which the water had absorbed.(*LTA*,15/16)

If Hasan's account abounds in markers of the exotic, the instances of cross-cultural desire cited above, undeniably illustrate how otherness was inclusively envisioned in the Arab-Muslim context. The conceptualization of the Rumi or the Rumiyya in the Arab imaginary as treacherous is actually revisited in Maalouf's text, to shift the focus on the humanity inherent in the characters that populate the novel rather than on their racial,

religious or ethnic affiliations. *LTA* subverts Western assumptions of the Arab-Muslim as inhumane, barbarious and uneducated

Strikingly enough, Hasan's/leo's birth is considered by some critics (Fida Dakroub, 2010) as a biblical reference evoking the story of Sarai, Abraham's wife, and Hagar, the Egyptian Jariya/concubine. In this respect, Fida Dakroub further explores the analogies that could be drawn between Selma, Mohammed's wife and cousin, and Warda, the Castillian slave. She even draws parallels between the circumstances of their pregnancies. If such an argumentation in favour of intertextual echoings from the Torah in Maalouf's text opens new horizons in comprehending *LTA*, it nonetheless proves a little implausible or even unconvincing at times.

> On the seventh day after I was born my father called Hamza the barber to circumcise me, and invited all his friends to a banquet. Because of my mother's and Warda's condition, my two grand-mothers and their servants took charge of the preparation of the meal. (…….) It was the beginning of Ramadan,(……), the meal was a feast fit for a king, the main dish was *maruziya*, lamb prepared with honey, coriander,starch,almonds and pears, and walnuts, as the season was just beginning. There was also *tafaya*, goat's meat mixed with a bouquet of fresh coriander. Not to mention the chickens, the young pigeons, and the larks, in garlic and cheese sauce, the baked hare, coated with saffron, and vinegar, and dozens of other dishes which my mother so often enumerated, recalling the last great feast which took place in her house before the fury of heaven rained down upon her and her own. Listening to her as a child, I always waited impatiently for her to reach the *mujabbanat*, hot pies made of soft white cheese, dusted with cinnamon and dripping with honey, cakes made of dates or almond paste, and pastries filled with kernels and nuts, and perfumed with rose water.(*LTA*,10)

While such an appetizing buffet, rich in Oriental ambience with its panoply of flavorful spices, aromas and tastes, plunges the reader into the sophisticated world of Andalusian and Arab-Muslim culinary arts, it undeniably celebrates cuisine as a semiotic signifier of exoticism or what could be accurately labelled a 'signifying culinaria'(Atef Laouyene,2008). This anthropological exertion on Maalouf's part , besides being a manifestation of 'gastro-exotics' (Atef Laouyene,2008), similarly introduces the audience to constitutive rituals of Muslim civilisation, namely Ramadan and circumcision -apart from its instructive function in the narrative- exuding intentional self-othering/self-exoticising, first in its extensive use of vernacular (*maruziya, tafaya, mujjabanat*) openly speaking of its target market, with the tendency to foreignize the text for the reader- yet without taking her out of her comfort zone- then on account of the acknowledgement of the exotic in the familiar by the narrator, himself a self-conscious transnational subjectivity 'staging exoticism'(Huggan,2001). The narrator himself, a 'native informant' (Spivak,1991), as he stands, is actually not only 'negotiating a gap between two worlds' (Ashcroft,2015), but also attempting to seize, vehicle and share the truth about his culture of origin. Thus, If we agree with Graham Huggan's definition that exoticism is ' a kind of semiotic circuit that oscillates between the opposite poles of strangeness and familiarity' (Huggan,13), we might need to probe this constant criss-crossing in the novel to gauge Maalouf's dexterous handling of the aesthetic conventions of the exotic. The above celebration scene is meaningfully succeeded by a more detailed rendition of the circumcision celebration itself :

> When the money had all been collected, the barber asked for two powerful lamps, unsheathed his knife, recited some appropriate Qur'anic verses and leant towards me. My mother always said that the cry which I let out rang out over the whole quarter like a sign of precocious valour, and then, while I continued to scream with the whole of my tiny body, as if I had seen all the evils that were to come

> pass before my eyes, the celebrations began again with the sound of the lute, the flute, the rebeck and the tambourine until the *suhur t*he meal just before sunrise in Ramadan.(*LTA,*11)

In total compatibility with Orientalist topos, this auto-gazing gesture strategically assumes the position of the outsider to provoke feelings of dismay- no matter how mild they might be- in the putative reader vis-a-vis circumcision as a barbarian practice unjustifiably surrounded by so many rejoicing rituals amid the helpless crying of the would-be narrator, a 'third eye' of sorts. The contradiction between what is supposed to be a festive event, and the background narrative of the collapsing world of Granada, the fall of Al Andalus alltogether, along with Muslim rule in Spain, actually sketch out a dystopian tale of decadence, humiliation and ultimately of forced exile and displacement. Pertinently, the premonitory anxiety of Abu Marwan, Hasan's maternal uncle, is quite telling of the ghastly days yet to come : 'But not everyone was in the mood for the celebration. My maternal uncle, Abu Marwan, whom I called Khali, then a member of the staff of the secretariat at the Alhambra, arrived late at the feast with a sad and downcast countenance'(*LTA,*11). More significantly,Maalouf's narrative re-dramatizes the successive collapse of the last citadels of Muslim rulers in Spain, while artfully interweaving fact and fiction :

> At the beginning of the year 895, it was clear that no one suspected that such a metamorphosis would be possible. But, from the first days of the month of Muharram, the most alarming news reached us. Basta fell, followed by Purcena, and then Guadix. All the eastern part of the kingdom, where the war party was strongest, fell into the hands of the Castilians without a blow being exchanged. (*LTA*,27)

In documenting the perfid treasons which ultimately dealt a mortal blow to Andalusian reign in the Iberian peninsula, and in reporting the follies of the Granadan seraglio, and more specifically the extravagant and whimsical life of Boabdil, the ultimate Nasrid Prince of Granada, Maalouf's narrative is unmistakably –apart from its evident historical vocation- a manifest engagement with the poetics of exoticism. Indeed, *LTA*'s registering in full cognizance of the trope of the 'tearful moor in his last sigh' situate Maalouf's text within a whole Orientalist/re-Orientalist textual tradition taking stock of cliches susceptible of arousing sentiments of exotica in the West. Such a narrative gesture, in reality, re-enacts a self-exoticizing tactic which simultaneously reiterates the overused stereotype of the 'tearful moor' :

> (….), since Boabdil went into exile with no hope of ever returning, and the Rumis had allowed him to take away all that he desired. He departed into oblivion, rich but miserable, and as he passed over the last ridge from which he could still see Granada, he stood motionless for a long time, with troubled mien and his spirit frozen in torpor ; the Castilians called this place 'the Moor's last sigh', because, it was said, the fallen sultan had shed tears there, of shame and remorse. 'You weep like a woman for the kingdom which you did not defend like a man,' his mother Fatima would have said. (*LTA,* 57)

Still, the polyphony that emanates from the passage whereby Maalouf deliberately positions his version of 'the Moor's last sigh' between historical fact and fiction, with a sense of doubt looming over the whole scene, leaves the reader unresolved about the veracity of the tale as a whole , while artfully evacuating it from its 'Arab kitsch of the superficial' to borrow from Salman Rushdie(qtd in Atef Laouyene,2007), who has similarly, though differently, availed himself of Boabdil's legend in his *The Moor's Last Sigh(1995).* This recycling of a constructive myth of Orientalist representation simultaneously re-enacts

romantic sentimentality characteristic of exotic discourse while displaying alertness not to fall prey to the trap of cheap hackneyed cliches. Significantly, Maalouf's juxtaposition of variegated points of view, the narrator's, the historian's and the pamplisetic rewriter or gap-filler's, energize a more circumspect re-reading of official historiography which actually summons the reader in general and the Western one in particular, not only to cast a critical eye on a most familiar gamut of Orientalist mythos, but to question the very foundations of Orientalist rhetoric. Such tensions inherent to the fabric of the narrative materialize, elseways , in conflicting discourses artfully dramatized by characters as Astaghfirullah and Abu Khamr both allegorizing two antithetical ideological and ethical discourses in Muslim thought, respectively and ironically religious bigotry and secular hedonism. Furthermore, if Maalouf's characterization strategically engages the Arab reader in philosophical cogitation over the true reasons behind the demise of Muslim rule in Spain and the ensuing decadence of the Arab Muslim civilisation, it otherwise replicates the very contemporary conflicts between the West and Muslims echoing Western anxiety vis-a-vis fanatic tendencies in today's Islam, thereby corroborating the rhetoric of globalization within an alarmingly islamophobic/Arabophobic climate. In juxtaposing the extremist Astaghfirullah, 'I implore the pardon of God', on the one hand, to the libertine drunkard Abu Khamr ' Father of Wine', Maalouf deftly uses his text as a platform for debating and by the same token uncovering the ideological diversity and polyphony inherent to Muslim tradition :

> Astaghfirullah was the son of a Christian convert, and it was undoubtedly this which explained his zeal, while Abu Khamr was the son of qadis, which meant that he did not find it necessary to give continual proof of his attachment to dogma and tradition. The shaikh was fair, lean and choleric, while the doctor was as brown as a ripe date, fatter than a sheep on the eve of the 'Id, and an ironical and contented smile rarely left his lips. He had studied medicine from the old

> books of Hippocrates, Galen, Averroes, Avicenna, Abu'l-Qassis, Abenzoar and Maimonides, as well as more recent texts on leprosy and the plague, may God distance both of them from us. (*LTA* ,36)

If for Astaghfirullah : '….searching for new ideas at all costs was simply a vice ; what was important was to follow the teachings of the Most High as they had been understood and commented upon by the ancients'(*LTA*,38), for Abu Khamr, the epicurean doctor, on the other hand :

> The lessons of History were quite otherwise. ' The greatest epoch of Islam,' he would say, 'was when the caliphs would distribute their gold to wise men and translators, and would spend their evenings discussing philosophy and medicine in the company of half-drunk poets. And did not Andalusia flourish in the days when the vizier 'Abd al-Rahman used to say jokingly : 'O you who cry ' Hasten to the prayer!' You would do better to cry : Hasten to the bottle !' The Muslims only became weak when silence and conformity darkened their spirits' (*LTA*,38).

In this polyphonic account, Maalouf traverses the ideological, historical, political and socio-cultural landscape of fifteenth-century Andalusia in his effort to share comprehension with the reader about a sorry episode in Arab-muslim history, with the view to discern how 'intellectual activity was flourishing, and its fruits were the books which were patiently copied and circulated among learned men from China to the far West' (*LTA*, 37/38), and then how '(…)came the drying up of the spirit and of the pen. To defend themselves against the ideas and customs of the Franks, men turned Tradition into a citadel in which they shut themselves up. Granada could only produce imitators without talent or boldness.'(*LTA*,38). In decrying the intellectual decadence of the Arab-Muslim civilisation, Maalouf nods towards the dogmatism of certain Muslim religious factions vis-a-vis tradition while constructing, only

to deconstruct again , the trope of Al Andalus as an utopian multicultural setting, a beacon of knowledge and enlightenment in Medieval times. This lost paradise as a locus of religious, cultural and ethnic diversities is aestheticised as a persistent motif throughout the narrative, wherein Hasan engages with Andalusian poetics in a romantically sentimental fashion almost kitsch-like in its haunting evocation of the Granadan theme : 'A lost homeland is like the corpse of a near relative ; bury it with respect and believe in eternal life.' (*LTA*,71) While this elegiac statement, mouthed by Astaghfirullah, utilizes very secular mournful terms, and further furnishes a running leitmotif for the narrative, it incidentally encapsulates the quandary of exile in its global and modern forms betraying its global-oriented vocation.

> Granada, no city is your equal,
> Not in Egypt, not in Syria, not in Iraq,
> You are the bride
> And these lands are only your dowry.

Thus, exile together with mobility are celebrated in *LTA* as liberating paradigms within the cross-border flows of migration and displacement. Accordingly, the plight of the people of Al-andalus, bearing with the curse of dispossession of land and identity, can be readily approached through modern lenses, thereby emphasizing overlappings between autobiographical data and official historiography. The self-exiled Maalouf together with the displaced Hasan/Leo embark on an internal journey of growth and maturity, when called to relinquish their respective homelands, and experience dispossession in trans-territorial spaces. Thus, the predicament of the twentieth-century Arab Levantine Maalouf could be read in parallel with that of the fifteenth-century Andalusian Hasan/Leo, wherein the voyage from the East to the West, and then back to the East for the latter, is undertaken with an autogazing impulse which retraverses the silk road as a transcultural 'route' to re-assess the self. Indeed, Hasan al-Wazzan's sojourns in Timbuktu, Cairo, Alexandria, Tlemcem, Constantinople,

Algiers, Tunis and Mecca, sketch out a recognizable Medieval itinerary transcending racial, ethnic, religious and cultural disparities, hence furnishing the reader with a kaleidoscopic view of Oriental settings at a complex historical conjuncture of turmoil and unrest. While Maalouf's rendition of an Arab-Muslim world on the brink of collapse discursively sustains official historiography, it knowingly exerts authorial re-reading through Hasan's optic, 'a third eye' of kinds, trotting around as a voyeuristic consciouness, oft emphasizing if not exaggerating exotica. Significantly, the authentification of *LTA* as a fictional account is performed through the reference to Hasan al-Wazzan's well-known *Description of Africa* which has been a reliably informative source for Western historians over a long period of time. This recourse to an extra-diegetic discursive evidence arguably showcases a claim for more narrative authentication.

Elsewhere, Hasan/Leo's trips to Sub-saharean provinces to explore the sumptuous black kingdoms of Mali, and the mystification of the outlandish concur even further to uncover the exoticizing gestures of the narrative :

> Even if I were more eloquent, even if my pen were more obedient, I would be incapable of describing the sensation when, after weeks of exhausting journeying, one's eyes lashed by sandstorms, one's mouth swollen bwith tepid salty water, one's body burning, filthy, racked with a thousand aches, one finally sees the walls of Timbuktu. Indeed, after the desert, all cities are beautiful, all oases seem like the garden of Eden. But nowhere else did life appear so agreeable to me as in Timbuktu. (*LTA*,165)

Hasan's rendition of the rituals at Askia Muhammad Toure's court 'king of Gao, Mali and many other lands, the master of Timbuktu' (*LTA*,167) and 'the most powerful man in all the land of the Blacks' (*LTA*,216) are genuinely awe-inspiring :

> At the court of Timbuktu the ritual is exact and magnificient. When an ambassador obtains an interview with the master of the city, he must kneel before him, his face brushing against the ground (……..) the palace is not large but of a very harmonious appearance ; it was built nearly two centuries ago by an Andalusian architect known as Ishaq the Granadan (*LTA*,167).

The celebration of Black African civilisation through Hasan's rihla to Wangara, Zagzag, Kano, Bornu, Gaoga and Nubia further accentuate the exotic dimensions of Maalouf's text. Elsewhere, in the Book of Cairo, Hasan's touristic gaze does not miss to confirm and conform to Orientalist representations of the Oriental Arab. This compatibility is quite striking as it echoes outworn cliches of Oriental affability, indolence and merriment :

> Cairo at last ! In no other city does one forget so quickly that one is a foreigner. The traveller has scarcely arrived before he is caught up in a whirlwind or rumours, trivialities gossips. A hundred strangers accost him, whisper in his ear, call him to witness, jostle his shoulder the better to provoke him to the curses or the laughter which they await. From then on he is let into the secret…….(*LTA*,226/227)

Being simultaneously an exophonic and a self-exoticising text, *LTA*'s defamiliarizing vocation is best expressed in its extensive use of vernacular, as a salient feature of born-translated literature. This tendency to punctuate the narrative with linguistic exotica is often supplemented by an explanatory appendix which actually spares the metropolitan reader the 'discomfort' of diction investigation, as it is the case in Shafak's narrative, yet strikingly enough, Maalouf rennounces such a reader-friendly attitude, exhorting this latter instead, to engage in textual collaborative reading. In addition to the culinary glossary included earlier, the following list is by no means exhaustive :

Kannazin, kannaz, al-fakkak, aman, muhtasib, tabib, iblis, jihad, qaisariyya, majlis, salam alaikums, diwan, jubba, taylassan, qasba , tabla, Rumiyya, Rumis, Mihrajan, Dhu'l- Hijja, Dhu'l Qa'da, mudajjan, funduqs, ulama, anti taliqa, Alhamd ul-illah, the fatiha, Ghuraba, sura, wali, madrasas, ftat, mujahidin, maristan, khali, insha'allah', jarm, noria, jizya, bismillah, hammam, bazin, bassis, al-hashish, mizwar, Amin, labbaika Allahuma labaik.

More significantly, however, and further buttressing the self-othering/exoticising inclination in *LTA*, Maalouf intently nurtures his account with intertextual components from the Quran as well as Haddiths by the Prophet, grafted all throughout the narrative. The excerpts are often used as diatribes that invoke divine justice in the face either of human foulness, adversity or tyranny :

> Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement…..' (*LTA*,274)

> God shows to whom He will the right path, and to others the way to perdition.'(*LTA*,)

> Do not come to the prayer in a state of drunkenness !'(*LTA,33)*

> Kama takunu yuwalla alaikom : 'You will have the rulers you deserve'(*LTA*, 20)

> The angels do not enter into a house where there is a dog or a figurative representation.(*LTA*,295)

If Maalouf's characterization of Boabdil, Qansuh, or Sultan Salim is caught between anecdotal history and factual historiography, it unmistakenly reinforces Western assumptions of Arab-Muslim tyranny and despotism, and while Maalouf forebodingly warns against the

inappropriate use of religious rhetoric in Arabia, Hasan/Leo does not exempt the Christian faith, and more particularly the city of Rome where destiny leads him after his abduction : 'What is the Pope for ? What are the cardinals for ? What God is worshipped in this city of Rome, entirely given over to its luxuries and pleasures ?'(*LTA,*295), If Hans's- Leo's young friend's- invective castigates the heart of Christianity embodied by the Holy city of Rome, it shatters with painful acuity any dream of inter-faith dialogue entertained earlier by Hasan/Leo, while demonstrating the sad similitudes between Muslims and their Christian brethrens :

> The lifestyles of the prelates of Rome costs vast sums, while nothing is produced in this city of clerics ! Everything is bought in Florence, Venice, Milan and elsewhere. In order to finance the excesses of this city, the Popes have started to sell ecclesiastical titles : ten thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand ducas for a cardinal. (…..) If you pay, your sins are forgiven ! In short, The Holy Father is selling off Paradise. (*LTA,* 300,301)

While *LTA*'s last book -The Book of Rome- chronicles with extreme accuracy Leo's sojourn in Italy as a slave, then as a Christian convert, his assimilation/dissimulation tactics, mentioned earlier by Bernadette Andrea, evoke the politics of *Taqiya* known in some Muslim groups, persuasively argued by the critic. While being a radical move towards interreligious understanding, Hasan/Leo's forced conversion betrays the complexities inherent in being a cultural 'amphibian' :

> In my country the beard is standard. Not to have one is tolerated, especially for a foreigner. To shave it off after one has had a beard for many long years is a sign of abasement and humiliation. I had no intention of undergoing such an affront. Would anyone believe me if I were to say that I was ready to die for my beard

> that year ? And not only for my beard, because all the battles were confused in my mind,(….). (*LTA*,315)

In becoming a symbol of resistance, Hasan/Leo comes to exemplify rebellious otherness, and after being subjected to verbal violence and many other trying episodes : 'Barbarian, miser, pig' and worse'(*LTA*,316), he comes to the resolution to retreat to Africa while celebrating cosmopolitan spirit, fluidity of identity and religious tolerance :

> White minarets of Gammarth, noble remains of Carthage, it is in their shade that oblivion awaits me, and it is towards them that my life is drifting after so many shipwrecks. The sack of Rome after the chastisement of Cairo, the fire of Timbuktu after the fall of Granada. Is it misfortune which calls out to me, or do I call out to misfortune ? Once more, my son, I am borne along by that sea, the witness of all my wanderings, and which is now taking you towards your first exile. In Rome, you were 'the son of the Rumi'. Wherever you are, some will want to ask questions about your skin or your prayers. Beware of gratifying their instincts, my son, beware of bending before the multitude ! Muslim, Jew or Christian, they must take you as you are or lose you. When men's minds seem narrow to you, tell yourself that the land of God is broad ; broad His hands and broad His heart. Never hesitate to go far away, beyond all seas, all frontiers, all countries, all beliefs. (*LTA*,360)

This chapter has argued for the necessity to apprehend Maalouf's *Leo The African* as a self-exoticising/othering text, and has accordingly drawn attention to the strategies deployed both at the textual and paratextual levels to evidence the essentialist logic underlying the narrative. Yet, if Maalouf's entitlement to represent the Orient positions him as a 'native informant' (Spivak) - as discussed earlier- 'one who has been trained in the deep colonial

grammar' (Hamid Dabashi,13) or else more crudely as a 'broker of sorts'(Kwame Appiah), a savvy reader will discern that the self-conflicted nature of the narrative does by no means fall in the trap of abusing its own heritage. *Leo The African* has the merit to walk the tight rope of commercial success, marketability and authorial integrity, with great assurance and chutzpah.

Chapter four: Kazuo Ishiguro : The 'International' as A Third Space

Kazuo Ishiguro's novels function as World literature in two principal ways. As objects, they are written, printed, translated, circulated and read in several places. As narratives, they organize local anecdotes into global networks and then consider the ethical consequences of that process. Ishiguro's novels offer an opportunity to consider the relationship between the ontology and the phenomenology of world literature because apart from being translated, they are *written for translation*. Ishiguro composes his novels with the knowledge that they will be published in several languages almost simultaneously…….In many ways, Ishiguro has been writing for translation all along….. (Rebecca. L. Walkowitz, 2007 :219)

In novels of great emotional force has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world. (The Swedish Nobel Academy, 2017)

Ishiguro has a certain vision, a master plan, that shapes his work- each new novel that he writes constitutes another step in the construction of this larger macro-narrative. (Haruki Murakami, qtd in Nick Waight,9)

' Les beaux livres sont écrits dans une sorte de langue étrangère' (Proust, Contre Sainte Beuve,1954)

If Proust's oft quoted phrase 'Great books are written in a foreign language of sorts' (my translation) unequivocally celebrates the linguistic 'foreigness' of literary works, and by the same token posits estrangement in literature as a sine qua none of 'greatness', such a conceptualization could equally be understood beyond the aesthetics of linguistic unfamiliarity,exoticismeven,occasioned by'unegrammairededéséquilibre'(Deleuze,1993)(a grammar of imbalance) (my translation) -to borrow from Deleuze- wherein the essential prospect would ultimately target the redirection of emphasis not only to the intrinsic and ineluctable subjectivity of literary works, translating into an infidelity of sorts, but also and essentially to the extrinsic aspects involved in literary creation. Accordingly, if critics are unanimous about the requisite to read British-Japanese-born author Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction against the Modernist tradition incarnated above by the Proustian heritage – an affiliation claimed by the writer himself- there seems to be an analogous consensus not only about the originality of the author, who, by carving out a unique aesthetic space, has managed to inaugurate the genesis of a 'strangely' atypical voice in the contemporary literary scene, but mostly about the multi-facetted versatility of his oeuvre and its connection to different literary traditions. Yet, granting that the singularity of Ishiguro's fiction dwells not solely in its manifest reconnection with Modernism -though in an admittedly late version- but equally and in more overt forms, with Postmodernist aesthetics, critics have evidenced a keen interest in tracing 'Japaneseness' in his body of work, while speculating on the author's capitalization on his Oriental origins. As a matter of course, critical appreciation of Ishiguro's fiction has been chartered along two major bifurcations namely 'Japan-novels'and'post-Japan ones'(Jerrine Tan,47) whereby *A Pale View of Hills (*1982) together with *An Artist of The Floating World* (1986) stand for the first template, whereas all his subsequent texts : *The Remains of The Day* (1989), *The Unconsoled (1995)*, *When We Were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *The Buried Giant* (2015) down to *Klara and The Sun* (2021), herald his presumable entry

into the transnational 'whitefacing'(Ma,qtd in Romit Dasgupta,12) sphere. Beyond the obvious conclusion that this categorization operates an oversimplistic manichaeism,which might nonetheless carry a certain degree of significance for understanding Ishiguro's texts , literary experts have proved overzealous in tagging the author and his writing, while the former has outspokenly and reiteratively been resisting any reductive labelling, opting instead for an 'international' affiliation, which undeniably detains a number of merits as Cheng rightly argues : 'to define Ishiguro as an international writer or a World writer….. encourages readers to view his Japanese ancestry as one force among others enriching his composition and thereby to appraise him within a much broader spectrum of contemporary writers.'(Cheng qtd in Romit Dasgupta,16). Having said that, Ishiguro's readers are nevertheless confronted with the impasse of engaging with the prescriptive tendencies of critical parlance in apprehending an 'overstudied' author on the one hand, and the aesthetic challenges posed by his fiction per se, on the other. In claiming the 'worldliness' of his fiction, Ishiguro insists that : 'I am a writer who wishes to write international novels. What is an 'international' novel ? I believe it to be one, quite simply that contains a vision of life that is of importance to people of varied backgrounds around the world. It may concern characters who jet across continents but may just easily be set firmly in one small locality'(Ishiguro,British Council,18/12/2017). Not only does Ishiguro resist pigeonholing, but also reaffirms his consciousness of the local/global dialectic inherent in World literature through emphasizing the deep-seated transnational vocation of his texts, thus broaching the vexed debates surrounding the material conditions of literary production. Such an awareness- if we are to believe Rebecca Walkowitz- substantiates his own art of fiction, and is most evident in his aesthetic project which '….has led him to focus on 'shape, structure and vision', or what he calls'architecture',rather than on 'sentences' and 'phrases''(BritishCouncil).(Walkowitz,2015 :219). This 'architecture' upon which rests

Ishiguro's 'macro-narrative'- to borrow from Murakami[9] solicits readings that interrogate the contingency between 'the ontology and phenomenology of World literature'epitomized by the 'translationese' model (Walkowitz,2015)

This chapter investigates Ishigurian fiction as a site of compromise, where linguistic and non-linguistic ingredients are mobilized to engage with the international book market and its exigencies. It thus addresses his novels as commodities, and sets to uncover the complex and intricate processes whereby the author negotiates his status as a 'language migrant'(Mary Besemeres,qtd in Dasgupta,13) cognizant of the aesthetic dilemmas inherent in World Literature as well as of the stakes involved in writing for a global audience, while probing Ishiguro's aesthetic share in the current worlding of the literary. Thus, the present paper will undertake to interrogate the ambivalent position of Ishiguro as a Japanese-born Briton, and explore the way 'otherness' translates in his works, while coping with the tensions inherent in his bicultural profile ; it will further examine the motivations of the Western prize machinery in establishing Ishiguro as a literary megastar through the authentification of his œuvre with a strikingly lavish over-awardedness. Concurrently, it seeks to probe the hijacking of the majority -if not the totality- of his works by the mighty Western movie industry, which perfectly and faithfully encapsulates the essence of capitalist consummerism. This recuperation inevitably calls into scrutiny the very nature and substance of Ishiguro's fiction, besides interpellating us to the cannibalizing tendencies of the entertainment business in the West, while at the same time problematizing Ishiguro's stance caught between marketability imperatives, audience expectations and authorial integrity.

[9] Murakami qtd in Walkowitz, Unimaginable Largeness : Kazuo Ishiguro, Translation in the New World Literature,2007 NOVEL A forum on Fiction 40(3) : DOI : 10 1215/ddnov.040030216.

4.1. Kazuo Ishiguro : An International Writer Caught Between 'Japaneseness' and Britishness :

> It's very difficult for me to distinguish how much Japanese influence I've actually inherited naturally, how much I've actually generated for myself because I felt I ought to.(Kazuo Ishiguro's Turn to Fantasy, The Guardian, Feb 19, 2015)

> I think I certainly do have a tendency to create a Japaneseness about my writing when I do write books in a Japanese setting. (Kazuo Ishiguro's Turn To Fantasy, The Guardian, Feb 19 2015)

If we agree with critic Chu Chueh Cheng that : 'Asian origin did pave Ishiguro a shortcut to success' (Cheng,2005 :9), benefiting from the multicultural trend in Britain which eventuated in the burgeoning of 'a whole line of ethnic writers'(Cheng,2005 :9), and if Ishiguro himself acknowledges that 'if I didn't have a Japanese name and if I hadn't written books (….) set in Japan, it would have taken me years longer to get the kind of attention and sales that I got in England with my first two books', critics nonetheless have registered the author's '……irritation at this packaging of him as an exotic 'other''(Dasgupta,2015 :13), and at being reductively categorized as an 'ethnic Japanese', a label he perceives as '……a straightjacket, restraining him from growing as 'an artist and as a serious writer''(Dasgupta,9) . Indeed, Ishiguro's Japanese heritage 'often envelops his works with Oriental mystery' as his texts are thus 'deciphered in the codes of Japanese aesthetics'(Dasgupta,9), an aesthetics notoriously informed by a taste '….. for the nuanced, the understated, elegant but significant gesture…..'(Bruce King,10) As a matter of fact, the majority of critics are accordingly keen on apprehending the author through the lens of discursive otherness, strangeness and unfamiliarity, since he : '……evinces an extraordinary control of voice, an *uncannily*

Japanese quality emanating from his perfectly pitched English prose'[10]. This holds particularly accurate for Ishiguro 's early fiction namely *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) and *An Artist of the Floating World (1986)*, which concurrently reveal, according to most critics, his capitalization on his ethnic background through essentializing aesthetic strategies, which invite the Western reader to a journey into the depths of otherness. Yet, if this capitalization is unambiguous in his early texts, his 'post-ethnic' works deemphasize his Japanese ancestry by moving to more universal foci and themes, while continuing to be 'an undercurrent', to borrow from Romit Dasgupta, in the form of 'textual and subtextual reference'(Dasgupta,12). Indeed,'being situated between cultures' enhances the multicultural or rather bicultural dimension of Ishiguro's profile, and further problematizes critical endeavours to categorize him either as a British , postcolonial, Anglo-Japanese, Japanese writer or else as a 'language migrant'. This in turn poses challenges to understanding his fiction beyond cultural determinism and the exotic appeal it is liable to generate as Cheng aptly argues : '…… What the making and marketing of Ishiguro's alterity reveals of the cultural context in which his texts are so voraciously consumed and yet so fallaciously categorized'(Cheng,2005). At any rate, apprehending Ishiguro's fiction seems to be enmeshed at the intricate nexus of '……racial identity, commercial strategies, thematic concerns and authorial intention…..'(Cheng,2005) hence the difficulty to discern the extent to which the author is actually responsive to market imperatives, and how the design of his texts takes into account readers' expectations. At another level, the ubiquity in his texts of the '*uncannily*' quality mentioned above, and which critics agree is a common denominator in all his novels, does not solely drive home the Proustian sense of 'strangeness' and unfamiliarity, but mostly emphasizes the exotic profile of the writer and his body of work, and somehow foregrounds- if in a distinctive way- his difference or his alterity per se.

[10] Gregory Mason, *An interview with Kazuo Ishiguro*, Contemporary Literature Vol.30 No3 (Autumn 1989)pp.335-347, published by University of Wisconsin Press,334

In 1982, Ishiguro gains British citizenship after residing in the United Kingdom for more than two decades as a Japanese expatriate, three years later he is appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) six years after the release of *The Remains of The Day* (1989), winning him The Man Booker Prize and eventuating in a huge commercial success after the blockbuster film adaptation. As a matter of fact, Ishiguro's third novel , *The Remains of The Day*, initiated a new phase in his career, as the author realized that :

> By then , I was very consciously trying to write for an international audience. It was a reaction, I think, against a perceived parochialism in British fiction of the generation that preceded mine. Looking back now I don't know if that was a just charge or not. But there was a conscious feeling among my peers that we had to address an international audience and not just a British one. One of the ways I thought I could do this was to take a myth of England that was known internationally—in this case, the English butler.

In truth, by reappropriating 'the myth of the butler' as emblematic of the British culture, Ishiguro performs a wilful act of anglicizing, whereby his fiction would break loose from the Oriental optic Western critics have endorsed so far in understanding his narratives, and though the novel undeniably performs a caesura with his first two 'Japanese' texts in opting for English themes, characters and locale, critics persist in considering the author through the prism of his ethnicity. Thus, *RD* is perceived as nothing more than a 'perfectly English novel that could have been written only by a Japanese'(Pico Lyer), 'a Japanese novel in disguise'(David Gurewitch), or 'an extraordinary act of mimicry '(Hermione Lee). On the other hand, if Ishiguro's 'post-ethnification process'(Ma,qtd in Dagsupta,15)could be understandably deemed a case of 'whitefacing' as Ma argues : '…… Indeed his whitefacing could at one level be seen as both potentially subversive of hegemonic white power structures, reverting the long-standing stereotypical depictions of East-Asian characters (often

played by white actors) like Fu Manchu or Mme Butterfly in Anglo-American popular culture, and as a reaction to the earlier Orientalist constructions of himself and his works by critics….. '(Ma,79/80 qtd in Dasgupta), and if this presumed whitefacing is in itself perceived as Ishiguro's failure to acknowledge his position as Anglo-Japanese(Ma,79/80), it stands to reason that the writer is charged with '…… a deliberate apolitical evasion of the everyday realities of being a non-white immigrant person in contemporary Britain……'(Ma qtd in Dasgupta,15). In 2019, the British transplant is duly and ceremoniously knighted after a laborious literary trajectory, which earned him eight nominations to The Booker Prize, and ultimately a Nobel Prize in 2017, entitling him to be listed thirty second among the fifty best British writers since 1945 by *The Times*. Significantly, Ishiguro's canonization in Britain and elsewhere begs the question of the Western canon's perviousness to absorb diasporic authors, and the complex mechanisms undergirding canon formation, besides the criteria of selection regimenting award institutions, along with marketing strategies together with the logics of the book industry. Accordingly, the integration of his works into what David Damrosch lucidly calls 'the hypercanon' , whilst being technically part of the 'countercanon'(2006) , deeply challenges the motivations buttressing canon formation in Western literary and academic circles, and further questions the consecration of Ishiguro's fiction by the Western prize apparatus bestowing him with unprecedented 'prestige' (James English,2005). This 'prestige' industry, whereby talent is not only authenticated but also manufactured, enables opportunistic capitalization on cultural capital and artistic achievement which, in Ishiguro's instance, jibes with his wish to anglicize his texts and hence gainsay critical tendencies to regard him through the optic of racial and ethnic affiliations. Such a literary project admittedly envisions otherness in two contradictory ways ; first at the authorial level, as a Trojan horse susceptible to disrupt Western and British literature from within, and to grant further market visibility through strategically staging one's alterity while accumulating

'cultural capital' all the way through ; second, it utilizes one's 'otherness' as a springboard not only to flirt with Western genres and aesthetics, but equally to meet the desiderata of 'the games of culture'(James English,2005). In trying to account for Ishiguro's peculiarity, critics identify his genius in the way he has 'put his Japanese sources to work at the service of his craft as a Western writer to create a distinctively personal style of unusual resonance and subtlety'(Gregory Mason qtd in Anna Niedobova,2015 ;336) and while this amalgam obliquely suggests a subordination of the writer's ethnic influences, it nonetheless confirms the importance of defining Ishiguro as a World writer as Rebecca Walkowitz aptly argues : 'Ishiguro's novels offer compelling examples of the new world literature , and of what I call 'comparison literature', an emerging genre of world fiction for which global comparison is a formal as well as a thematic preoccupation' (Walkowitz,2008 :218). Conversely, Chris Holmes pinpoints a paradox in considering Ishiguro an avatar of World literature :

> The lesson for reading Ishiguro as an example of World writing, and by the objects / identities of worldliness that inhabit his novels is one of reduction and extraction. Ironically, these modes of knowing the world are the very ones that Ishiguro dismantles ; we learn not to trust those who know their place in the equation of the world, and indeed Ishiguro's twenty-first century novels are structured in order to be misidentified and misplaced in the order of the world. (Chris Holmes ish's thinking novels,3)

Arguably, the disturbing and in-built malaise Ishiguro's fiction is imbued with, should be viewed within the author's largest 'affective project of disconsolation' to borrow from Timothy Right, which unmistakably formulates an aesthetics of trauma. Furthermore, Ishiguro's toying with genres obviously lends strength to his desire to integrate the international community of writers, while it illustrates, if need be, his versatility and his

mastery of Western generic affiliations. When asked by Brian Shaffer and Cynthia Wong about his literary lineage, Ishiguro is adamant that :

> I feel that I'm very much of the Western tradition. And I'm quite often amused when reviewers make a lot of my being Japanese and try to mention the two or three authors they've vaguely heard of, comparing me to Mishima or something. It seems highly inappropriate. I've grown up reading Western fiction : Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens. (Gregory Mason Conversations with Kazuo,Ed. Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong, 2008 :4)

What is clear is that critics have been extremely divided in addressing Ishiguro ; ranging from Graham Huggan who lumps him together with 'marketable exotic novelists of canonical status' such as Salman Rushdie and Carl Philips, Pico Iyer who identifies him more as a Booker Prize winner of postcolonial background, or else Sheng-Mei-Ma who foregrounds his diasporic affiliation and considers him representative of the Asian diaspora, while considering his writing 'symptomatic of the novelist's 'split personality' and ' buried self ', without failing to mention Dominic Head who focuses on Ishiguro's immigrant profile, and takes stock of the migratory experience of the writer as 'the multicultural personae in post-war Britain', nor Bruce King's understanding of Ishiguro as part of the New Internationalist trend epitomized by Shiva Naipul, Rushdie, Emecheta or Mo ; authors who 'write about their lands or the immigrant experience from within the mainstream of British literature'(193). The way 'The same but not quite' Ishiguro navigates the cosmopolitan literary space reveals an ambivalent attitude in knowingly compromising with market dynamics while taking into account ideologies of reception and readability, strategies of production and consumption after the 'Rushdie effect', engaging thus with the 'global ecology' through aesthetic choices that fundamentally tend to capsize the assumptions of a literay system thriving on marketing exotic alterity.

4.2. Ishiguro and the Entertainment Industry :

This chapter equally defends the postulate that Ishiguro's fiction dramatizes itself perfectly well for cinematographical adaptation and ultimately for consumption, in internalizing narrative and semiotic strategies proper to the screen, and that in so doing manages to cross generic boundaries, conclusively transmuting into popular culture with mass market valence. Yet, if constraints on length and reasons of scope and strategy prevent me from exploring in full detail the cinematographical traits in Ishiguro's texts, my argumentation will focus instead on a few compelling parallels between the author's narrative designs and filmic techniques. Surprisingly enough, Ishiguro asserts that his texts are not initially conceived for cinematographical adaptation, nor are they meant to address the juicy entertainment industry and its imperatives. As a self-confessed cinephile, he thus contends : 'I try to write un-filmable novels' or else, 'When I write a novel, I want it to be completely different from a screenplay. Iam very conscious of the difference and I want novels to work purely as novels' ; however, his long-term collaboration with the filmmaking business provokes serious reflection on his involvement with the movie industry and his acquaintance, if not mastery, of the craft of script writing. It is worth mentioning that three of Ishiguro's novels have been coveted by the big screen namely *The Remains of The Day, Never Let Me Go* and lately *An Artist of The Floating World*, while his recently released and much advertised post-Nobel prize novel *Klara and The Sun (*2021) is already being discussed as a prospective new adaptation by Sonny's 3000 Pictures. In addition to movies, Ishiguro's filmography includes *The Gourmet (1986),* a screenplay for a TV movie for the BBC, *The saddest Music in the World (2003) ,* a scenario for a musical comedy film directed by Guy Maddin , and *The White Countess (2005),* a scenario for an American-British movie production directed by James Ivory. Not only does Ishiguro's early and constant flirtation with the entertainment industry contravene the 'Bourgeois' Modernist stigmatisation of visual

arts as parasitic to literature , the only merit of which is ' to flatter the vulgarity of the savages of the twentieth century' (Virginia Woolf,), but it also ostensibly reveals the author's awareness of and adherence to cinematographical writing in terms of technique, style, structure and thematic approach. An awareness which evidentlly reverberates throughout his fictional geography, and contributes to shape 'The map of Ishiguroland' to borrow from Leslie Forbes(2000), yet forcibly compromises his authorial intentions vis-a-vis market demands, and interrogates his presumed capitulation to the dictates of market consummerism while designing his texts. Ishiguro confesses that :

> I found myself rather obsessively comparing pages from my screenplays- essentially dialogues plus directions- with pages from my published novel, and asking myself, 'is my fiction sufficiently different from a screenplay ?' Whole chunks of *Pale View* looked to me(him) awfully similar to a screenplay- dialogue followed by 'direction' followed by more dialogue. I began to feel deflated. Why bother to write a novel if it was going to offer more or less the same experience someone could have by turning on a television ? How could the novel as a form survive against the might of cinema and television if it couldn't offer something unique, something the other forms couldn't properly do ? (*AFW*, IX)

Ishiguro's manifest unease with the hegemony of the cinema industry, and his concern with generic boundaries is by no means to be mistaken for literary purism on his part , for if the author's committment to the 'novel' as a genre is undeniable as he has oft emphasized : 'If the novel survives as an important form into the next century, it will be because writers have succeeded in creating a body of literature that is convincingly international. It is my ambition to contribute to it' (qtd in Sim,20)- a committment which implicitly establishes the novel as the most marketable genre for the benefits of the World Literature industry- he has otherwise repeatedly formulated his hostility to hierarchizing genres, advocating instead , a more

encompassing vantage point whereby gauging literature should ‘take care not to set too narrowly or conservatively our definitions of what constitutes good literature’(Nobel Prize Lecture,2017). Similarly, Ishiguro calls for an inclusive vision of World literature whereby major and minor traditions would be integrated to the international canon : ‘We must widen our common literary world to include many more voices from beyond our comfort zones of the Elite first world cultures’(Nobel Prize Lecture,2017). Such a scholarly claim evidently acknowledges the existence of dynamics of exclusion at the heart of biased literary institutions, responsible for shaping international taste and promoting market visibility, while addressing direct accusations of elitism to Western institutions operating ‘a literary racism’ of sorts. This digression aside , it is noteworthy that Ishiguro teams with such Nobelized writers as William Faulkner and Harold Pinter who profitably customized their craft to Hollywood script/screen writing. A further evidence for Ishiguro’s involvement with the entertainment industry is his collaboration as a lyrics composer with Rock singers in the early seventies, which coincide with the thriving of cultural studies in Britain and the rehabilitation of popular culture in academia as he confesses in his Nobel Prize Lecture :

> I have on a number of other occasions learned crucial lessons from the voices of singers. I refer here less to the lyrics being sung than, and more to the actual singing. As we know, a human voice in song is capable of expressing an unfathomably complex blend of feelings. Over the years, specific aspects of my writing have been influenced by, among others, Bob Dylan, Nina Simone, Emmylou Harris, Ray Charles, Bruce Springsteen, Gillian Welch and my friend and collaborator Stacey Kent.

Such familiarity with the entertainment industry, in its different versions, has actually contributed to confer a chameleon-like quality to Ishiguro’s texts as he seems- according to Salman Rushdie- to engage ‘a brilliant subversion of the fictional modes in his discussion of

large themes such as death, change, pain and evil'(qtd in Wong, 2005, Ish as inter writer). Correspondingly, if we concede that he 'plays a keen game of genre jenga', to borrow from Chris Holmes(2019), Ishiguro's aesthetics forestalls an angst with the problem of generic affiliation, and emphasizes the possibility of considering World literature as a potentially commodified artform. Pertinently, Simone Murray's work on adaptation studies prove very enlightening in this respect.

More than likely, when critics like Takayki Shonaka maintain that 'Ishiguro's early works fed into and reinforced existing British stereotypes of an 'exotic' Japan' (Romit Dasgupta, 13), Ishiguro scholars such as Cynthia F. Wong 'warns against the Japaneseness of Ishiguro's work being over-emphasized' (Japan in Ish's fiction, 10), the writer himself disavows such *non sequitur* accusations, acknowledging instead his debt to Japanese movies : ' The visual images of Japan have a great poignancy for me, particularly in domestic films like those of Ozu and Naruse, set in the postwar era, the Japan I actually remember' (Gregory Mason, 336). Pertinently, Japanese critic Akinori Sakaguchi contends that 'Ishiguro was pursuing normative Japan through Ozu films' (qtd in Taketomi Ria, 1) , echoing Gregory Mason's remark that : 'Ishiguro has been able, through film, to revisit the Japan of his childhood' (East-West film journal,41). If the Japanese cinema happens to be an inspiration that has contributed to reactivate Ishiguro's memories of Japan, the writer feels particularly beholden to Ozu's domestic drama called ' Shomingeki' : ' A profound, respectable genre, and distinctively Japanese,…….concerned with ordinary people in everyday life, and it has that sort of pace : a pace which reflects the monotony and melancholy of everyday life' (qtd in Taketomi,6). Those fractured reminiscences of a distant homeland surrounded by ambiguity, trauma, separation and uprootedness find their voice in the lyrical quality and artistic sensibilities of Ozu, the most typical of Japanese directors, and more technically in his use of the *Mono No Aware,* a renowned traditional Japanese aesthetic style translated into a

cinematographical technique which explores a certain sensitiveness to 'giving up onself to tender sorrowful contemplation of a thing or scene that is the opposite to sunny, happy, and bright' 'to ephemera or the sadness of being' (qtd in Renata Reich,2013). Such pathos-oriented aesthetics finds parallels in the concept of *Huzun* in Turkish literature, and more specifically in Orhan Pamuk's fiction- *Istanbul* is a case to the point- whereby melancholizing as a creative device transfigures human experience into an aestheticizing sublimating process. Constraints on length in the present paper prevent me from elaborating in more detail on the common grounds between both notions, yet it is opportune to note that the motif of the 'wound' is ubiquitous in Ishiguro's fiction if we believe Bowdoin College : 'With the 'wound' as an appropriately macabre polaris, Ishiguro's novels may be collectively figured into an extended commentary on pain theory' (Bowdoin College,2018 :4). Yet, this literary 'masochism' of sorts does by no means fall prey to self-indulgent imminent sadness, oft contiguous with an Oriental lyrical quality, nor does it conform to the tenets of Japanese aesthetics as critics would have Ishiguro's readers believe. As a matter of course, the 'inevitable sadness' in Ishigurian fiction is far from being a typically Oriental feature, as it draws on the Beckettian sense of the futile and the absurd as Claire Messud maintains in this respect : 'As in Beckett, Ishiguro's characters, in their detached world, show us a version of our own minute preoccupations and piddling distractions, and raises life's largest questions for all of us. Is this all there is ? must it all end so soon ? Why strive ? Why persist ? What is it all for ?'(qtd in Beedham,138). Still, if Ishiguro resists the aestheticizing of 'sadness' in his fiction, he nonetheless concedes that the melancholy stamp of his authorial voice 'perhaps was something to do with me (him)' (Ria Taketomi/ ish and Japanese films).

We can further distinguish two major features in Ishiguro's narratives which, on closer inspection, seem to tinge the very substance of the majority of his texts namely the camera eye and the echo effect. Indeed, the design of most of Ishiguro's texts rests upon a repetitive

pattern which introduces the reader to the inner psychological complexity of characters using leitmotifs which are destined to become distinctively recognizable, but what is more intriguing in his fiction is the impression that the author is deliberately reiterating the very same occurrences, and that the plot is being scaffolded upon interminably similar episodes with no clear sense of direction, all materializing in an impression of no déjà-vu. In this respect, critic Price convincingly argues : 'The way that later scenes or phrases will sound like, or almost repeat, earlier scenes or phrases, and the way these repetitions will in retrospect seem to have preceded or motivated what appeared to be the originals-Ishiguro uses comparative devices like the echo to introduce complex patterns of world circulation-his comparisons link together a variety of international themes but they also prompt us to examine the shape and scale of that variety'(Price,223)

Figure 10 : Ishiguro with the cast of *Never Let Me Go*

4.3. *An Artist of The Floating World* : A Japanese Novel on the Cusp of Translatability

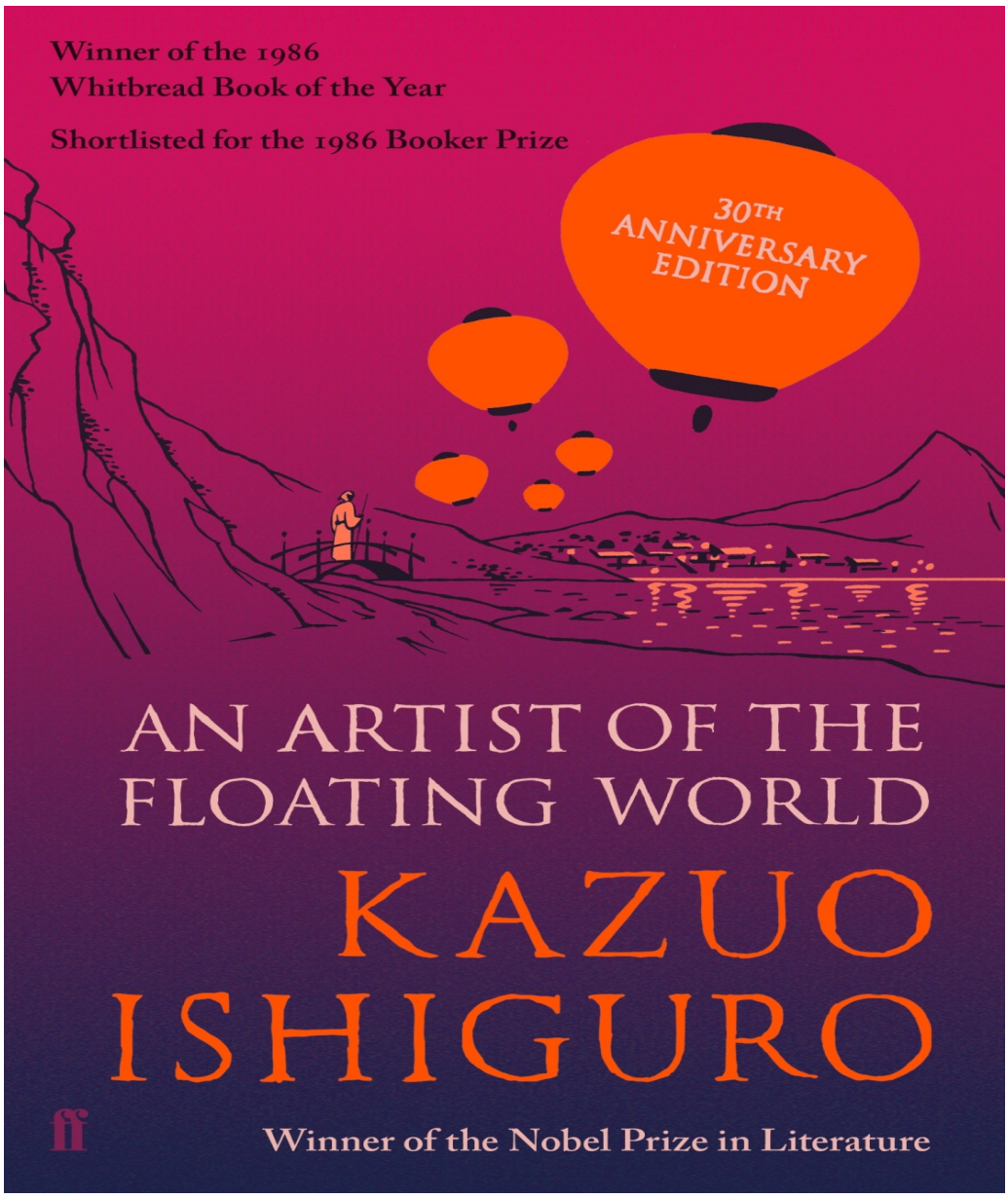

Figure 11 : The Abacus version featuring Japanese landscape and lanterns
https://static.faber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/9780571330386.jpg

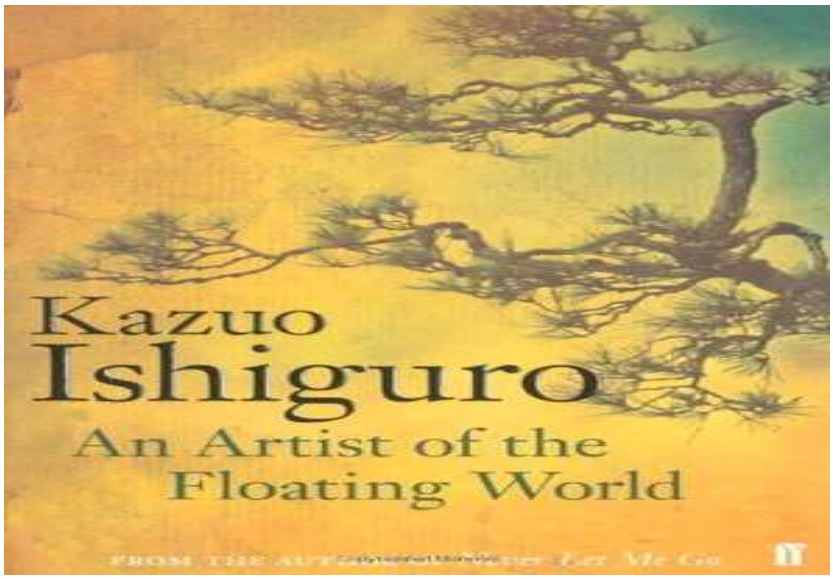

Figure 12 : Another English version
https://i.grassets.com/images/S/compressed.photo.goodreads.com/books/1327786035l/28922.jp

Figure13 :Another French version featuring lanterns
https://pictures.abebooks.com/isbn/9780571209132-us.jpg

Figure14 : The Spanish version featuring a geisha
https://www.babelio.com/couv/CVT_Un-artiste-du-monde-flottant_9426.jpeg

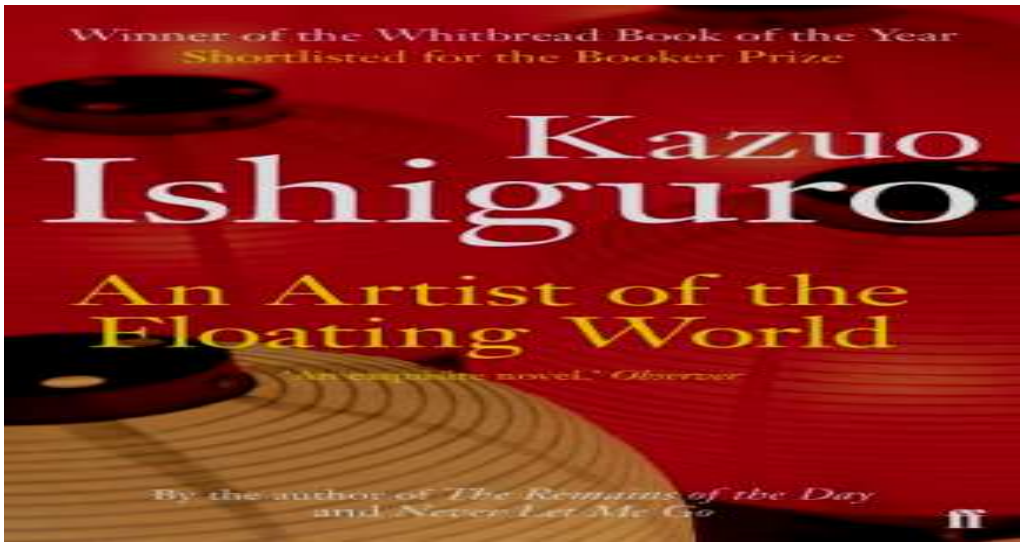

Figure15 : An English version featuring Asian landscape
https://www.noorbook.com/publice/covers_cache_jpg/6/0/a/7/01a9aefc5d0a714b935b7c0fe2b340f4.png.jpg

Figure16 : The Arabic version featuring a Japanese geisha
https://images-na.ssl-images amazon.com/images/I/41+pZkbPbL._SX318_BO1,204,203,200_.jpg

Published in 1986 by Faber&Faber, shortlisted for the 1986 Booker Prize, winner of the 1986 Whitbread Book of the Year, and included in the *Observer*'s 2015 list of the '100 best novels in English', *An Artist of The floating World* is Ishiguro's second novel after *A Pale View Of Hills* (1982) ; it is equally the author's last 'Japan novel' (Jerrine Tan), and is thus paradigmatic of Ishiguro's early aesthetic choices as he himself declares :'I should say something here about the Japanese aspect of *An Artist*. It is, in a literal sense, the most Japanese of my novels, being set entirely in Japan with only Japanese characters' (*AFW*,xi).

On the 2015 Faber edition used for the purposes of this paper, the book is eulogized on its jacket blurbs for being 'A work of precision and nuance' (*vogue*), 'An exquisite novel' (*The Observer*), or 'A work of spare elegance : refined, understated, economic' (*The Sunday Times*) or else a 'Pitch-perfect… a tour de force of unreliable narration' (*The Guardian*). If it is true that these testimonies do not overtly allude to Ishiguro's Japaneseness, the statements are genuine innuendoes that obliquely hint to Japanese aesthetics such as precision, understatement, nuance and refinement, and while the universality of such attributes is indisputable, one cannot miss the way critical appreciation and cover politics concur to gesture towards the writer's Oriental background. As a matter of fact, the book cover (as appended above) features typical Asian patterns with red lanterns hanging/floating on a crimson red backdrop of a Japanese–like fresco in which one can discern what looks like a senior male Asian character standing on a bridge, facing Asian landscape, presumably Mount Fuji , while meditating on the scenery in what seems to be more of a solitary, introspective and self-alienating gaze, keeping him aloof in his inability or reluctance to cross the bridge, paratextually prefiguring a crucial textual signifier, i.e the bridge of hesitation. Together with the title, the flagrant in-betweeness of the cover character seems to suggest the possibility of an ambience of transience, non-fixity, ephemerality and deception within an atemporal dimension ; while the title itself refers to the ' night-time world of pleasure, entertainment and drink which formed the backdrop for all our paintings' (*AFW*, 145). At another level, the delicacy of the painting , along with the titular apparatus, are 'narrative tresholds' per se, whereby extra-textuality is wittingly and heedfully manipulated to construct a confluence, together with the textuality proper to the novel. The illusory effect of the shadows of lights reflecting what looks like a city at night, hanging/ floating on the surface of water actually heightens the chimerical character of the setting, positioned as it stands between reality and fantasy. The 'floatingness' could otherwise signal the 'floatingness' of identity within the

narrative, aesthetically and verbally articulated to embark the reader on a 'floatingness' of meaning. Similarly, if critics find parallels between Ishiguro's fiction and the 'brushwork deft of Japanese paintings' (Bruce King qtd in Romit Gupta, 207), it seems both writer and publisher have availed themselves- in the different multilingual editions of the novel illustrated above- of the bulk of Asian imagery to emphasize the discourse of alterity salient in the Western literary marketplace, in this occurrence evidencing beyond doubt how Japanese origin can be an appealing marketing manoeuvr. This blatant instrumentalization of Ishiguro's ethnicity, as discussed earlier in this chapter, lays bare the writer's entanglement with the book industry dictates quite early in his career, as he plainly acknowledges in one of his interviews :

> In the first two books, I very much wanted to appeal to the Japanese side of me. By the time the second novel came out, and I was starting to get known in Great Britain, I was very conscious that I was getting cast in this role as a kind of Japanese foreign correspondent in residence in London. Newspapers and magazines would call me up because there was a Japanese book to be reviewed or a Japanese issue that I could comment on, and I started to feel very uncomfortable because I knew very little about Japan'(Japan in Ishiguro's fiction,10)

This uneasiness in being cornered in the reductive role of the 'Oriental in service' does not so much stem from the author's alledged 'ignorance' of Japan as he would have his readers believe, as much as it is out of his malaise with a constant feeling of unbelonging or displacement enhancing his feeling of being 'a kind of homeless writer' neither 'a very English English' nor a 'very Japanese Japanese' (Conversations with Kenzaburo Oe, 115). Arguably, this rather early painful experience of identity displacement strikes a cord with Ishiguro's aesthetic choices in his first texts presumably designed to exorcize his 'Japaneseness' through an approximated version of Japan, an imaginative landscape

scaffolded upon a mental and emotional construct itself feeding on memory, imagination and speculation as he confesses in an interview with Gregory Mason :

> It was of no value to me if I could claim that it's authentically set in Tokyo or not. In fact in many ways, it would play into the hands of a certain kind of a certain misreader, who wished the book to be simply some kind of realist text telling what Tokyo was like after the war (……) All these things could have been technically irksome I had had to keep referring to a map, to the actual history of Tokyo. (Nick Waight, *Memory and Ethics*,9)

It strikes us as evident that Ishiguro 'utilizes Japan more for its symbolic presence than for its actual locality', thus the way he avoids geographical particulars speaks of the author's own 'kafkaesque' sense of dislocation and unbelonging ; and further contributes to inscribe his text within the modernist tradition. Pertinently, in trying to account for the complex historical and political contexts wherein the novel was conceived, the author acknowledges that : 'This novel is set in Japan before and after the Second World War, but it was very much shaped by the Britain in which I was then living : the pressures on people in every walk of life to take political sides ; the rigid certainties, shading into self-righteousness and sinister aggression, of ardent, often youthful factions ; the agonising about the 'role of the artist' in a time of political change' (*AFW*, xii). Not only does this analogy between Thatcherist England and Post-War Japan underscore the universality of the novel's thematic foci, but equally glosses over the Japaneseness of *AFW* by positing the text against a British or international framework, which ultimately functions as a subtext informing the underlying structure of the novel. While being ubiquitous in Ishiguro's fiction, this universalism is admittedly less palpable in *AFW*, which opens with a scene set in Post-war Japan in October 1948 on the Bridge of Hesitation with a hypothetical 'if', addressing a more hypothetical reader :

> If on a sunny day you climb the steep path leading up from the little wooden bridge still referred to around here as ' the bridge of hesitation', you will not have to walk far before the roof of my house becomes visible between the tops of two gingko trees. (*AFW*, 7)

The forceful opening affiliates with kindred exemplary paragraphs -- distinctive of *The Ambassadors*, *Billy Budd* or *The Great Gatsby*-- inasmuch as it is strikingly summative. In this occurrence, it subtly gestures towards key components of the narrative, including locale, theme and atmosphere. The closing "gingko trees," for a start, confirm the Asian setting already signalled by the front cover lanterns. More specifically, the very type of these trees would remind the knowing "you" insiders of that characteristic species the extraordinary hardihood of which withstood the 1945 atom bomb desolation and hence stands as a token of the traumatic survival of the land, the people and the culture of war devastated Japan. The initiatory "if," for its part, activates a rhetorical device blending both hypothesis and courteous (if not orientalising) invitation which ushers the tempted "you" reader straight into the story and establishes her/him as a narratee who gets placed in unmediated contact with the first person "me" narrator. The stylistic features of this fifty word opening underscore the seeming simplicity of both prose and voice and encapsulate the author's conception of the novel as a telling art form. Additionally, in punctuating the opening and closure of the narrative, the Bridge of Hesitation substantially locates the text together with the reader on slippery grounds, by enhancing feelings of equivocation and uncertainty which, in turn, do not only enunciate the unreliability of Ono, the narrator, but more importantly adumbrate the unresolution of the narrative, where feelings of unacknowledged guilt are only replaced by the fakeness of unachieved recovery and rehabilitation :

> But to see how our city has been rebuilt, how things have recovered so rapidly over these years, fills me with genuine gladness. Our nation, it seems, whatever

> mistakes it may have made in the past, has now another chance to make a better go of things. One can only wish these young people well.(*AFW*, 206)

If the 'Japaneseness' of *AFW* is manifest in the setting, the characters, the use of vernacular (*tatami*, *miai*, *Migi-Hidari*, *Utamaro*, San, Sensei, Oji, etc…) , it is most evident in addressing different aspects of Japanese identity and aesthetics. Accordingly, Ishiguro's autogazing reconstructs his own alterity through the 'double consciousness' of a cosmopolitan writer with Oriental roots or 'a child of Asian diaspora' (Sheng Mei Ma), yet at the same time reaffirms throughout the narrative the universality of human ordeal. Thus, self-exoticising strategies are capitalized on in the narrative to recreate a typically Oriental atmosphere, whereby Ishiguro takes stock of a few essentializing gestures through the dramatization of a 'floatingly' decadent world of pleasure inhabited by Geishas : 'I say 'our pleasure district', but I suppose it was really nothing more than somewhere to drink, eat and talk. You would have to go into the city centre for the real pleasure quarters- for the geisha houses and theatres (*AFW*,24). At other occasions, Oriental mysticism is celebrated as a perennial long-standing family tradition :

> For throughout my years I have preserved the sense, instilled in me by my father, that the reception room of a house is a place to be revered, a place to be kept unsoiled by everyday trivialities, reserved for the receiving of important guests, or else the paying of respects at the Buddhist altar. (*AFW*,41)
>
> Then finally, he gave a sigh, looked up and said to me : ' I don't expect, Masuji, you have much time for wandering priests, do you ?'
>
> 'Wandering priests ? I suppose not.'

‘They have a lot to say about this world. I don’t pay much attention to them most of the time. But it’s only decent to be courteous to holy men, even if they strike you sometimes as nothing more than beggars. (*AFW*,44/45)

By astutely revisiting the figure of the saint ‘fakir’ or dervish, emblematic of Oriental spiritualism , while bestowing the ‘wanderer’ with divinizing soothsaying virtues, the above passage piques the curiosity of the Western readership craving for the unfamiliar, exotic aspects of the Oriental culture. This self-Orientalizing strategy is further utilized in *AFW* when depicting Japanese female subjectivity, whose agency is somehow undermined, if not eclipsed, throughout the narrative. At various instances, Ono’s two daughters, Setsuko and Noriko, are constructed as submissive domesticated Oriental figures, heedful of the dictates of patriarchy :

‘ Excuse me for mentioning this , Father. No doubt, it would have already occured to you.’

‘ What is that, Setsuko ?’

‘ I merely mention it because I gather it is very likely Noriko’s marriage negotiations will progress.’

Setsuko had begun to transfer, one by one, the fresh cuttings from out of her vase into those surrounding the altar. She was performing this task with great care, pausing after each flower to consider the effect. ‘ I merely wished to say, ‘ she went on, ‘once the negotiations begin in earnest, it may be as well if Father were to take certain precautionary steps.’

‘ Precautionary steps ? Naturally, we’ll go carefully. But what precisely did you have in mind ?’

‘ Forgive me, I was referring particularly to the investigations.’

> ‘Well, of course, we’ll be as thorough as necessary. We’ll hire the same detective as last year. He was very reliable, you may remember’
>
> Setsuko carefully repositioned a stem. ‘ Forgive me, I am no doubt expressing myself unclearly. I was, in fact, referring to *their* investigations.’
>
> ‘ I am sorry, I’m not sure I follow you. I was not aware we had anything to hide.’
>
> Setsuko gave a nervous laugh. ‘ Father must forgive me. As you know, I’ve never had a gift for conversation. Suichi is forever *scolding* me for expressing myself badly. He expresses himself so eloquently. No doubt, I should endeavour *to learn* from him.’ (*AFW*, 48/49) (my emphasis)

This admittedly longish exchange between Ono and his daughter Setsuko synopsizes the plight of Oriental femininity bound to servitude by the Father and Husband figures, both as signifiers and tokens of patriarchy. Exemplifying the exaggerated affability and self-effacement of the Oriental female, caught between an uncompromising uncollaborative father, and a ‘scolding’, belittling husband, Setsuko is urged to negotiate her womanhood through the distorting biased lens of Oriental masculinity. Yet, if Ono’s domestic obsession with marrying his younger daughter Noriko traverses the whole narrative, it actually functions as an alibi to unravel Ono’s shameful past as a government spy, and former ‘official adviser to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities’(*AFW*,182). Still, the construction of otherness in the narrative operates mutatis mutandis to the way ‘Japaneseness’ is designed. Accordingly, the ‘Other’, epitomized by the American culture and its signifiers, is castigated in various manners, through the omnipresence not only of war memories of devastation, physical and psychological traumas, but also of popular culture symbols such as Popeye Sailorman, ironically utilized to question heroism in a time of shifting values and consumerism. If Ichiro’s, Ono’s grandson’s infatuation with the anim character is overtly interrogated, it gestures towards an antithetical juxtaposition of Western versus Japanese values, while Ono,

the anti-hero, casts a chastizing eye on the fallacious potence and virility advertised by the character :

> ‘What are you doing, Ichiro ? You tell me now what you are up to.’
>
> ‘You guess, Oji !’ He said through the spinach.
>
> ‘Hmm, I don’t know, Ichiro. A man drinking sake and fighting. No ? Then you tell. Oji can’t guess .’
>
> ‘Popeye Sailorman’
>
> ‘What’s that Ichiro, ? Another of your heroes ?’
>
> ’Popeye Sailorman eats spinach. Spinach makes him strong’
>
> He thrust out his chest again and threw more punches at the air.
>
> ‘ I see, Ichiro,’ I said, laughing. ‘ Spinach is a wonderful food indeed.’
>
> ‘ Does sake make you strong ?’
>
> I smiled and shook my head. ‘Sake can make you believe you’re strong. But in reality, Ichiro, you’re no stronger than before you drank it.’(*AFW*,152)

The condemnation of the American ‘other’ as arrogant conqueror, patronizing a weaker Japan, faulted for its heedless enrollment to Americanization, is openly addressed in *AFW* when Ono and his son-in-law Suichi debate the way Japanese firms are run :

> But tell me, Taro, don’t you worry at times we might be a little too hasty in following the Americans ? I would be the first to agree many of the old ways must now be erased for ever, but don’t you think sometimes some good things are being thrown out with the bad ? Indeed, sometimes Japan has come to look like a small child learning from a *strange* adult.’ (*AFW,*185)(my emphasis)

The ‘strange’ presumptuous adult American is for Ono a mere mighty military power devoid of any refinement or taste, a tawdry ‘Nouveau Riche’ of sorts, chasing cheap exotica :

> For many years, the Kasuga Park Hotel had been amongst the most pleasant of the Western-style hotels in the city ; these days, though, the management has taken to decorating the rooms in a somewhat vulgar manner- intended, no doubt, to strike the American clientele with whom the place is popular as being charmingly ‘Japanese’(*AFW*,116).

For all intents and purposes, Ono’s tragedy as a stigmatized post-war artist and propagandist, driven by the noblest nationalistic drives, articulates one of Ishiguro’s central thematic concerns, viz. ‘People who have done things they later regret’ and how they come to terms with it’ (Graver, 1989,3). The narrative tension in *AFW* is heightened not only by the confluence of personal experience at stake against historical forces, but mostly by the ubiquitous use of narrative gaps, omissions and the author’s cinematographical ‘motion picture method’, besides the sequential mode whereby the inner complexity of characterization is intensified. These intentional authorial gaps, in turn,‘let the reader predict what the characters are thinking’ (Taketomi Ria,7), and invite him to decipher the opacity of the human soul through the least narrative intimations, investing him, thus, with a renewed agency. At another level, the way temporality is negotiated in the novel finds its preliminary justification in the author’s introduction to the narrative as Ishiguro acknowledges the Proustian ascendency in envisioning fictional time :

> I was thrilled by what I then called in my mind (and later in my notes) Proust’s’ methods of movement’- the means by which he got one episode to lead into the next. The ordering of events and scenes didn’t follow the demands of chronology,

> nor those of an unfolding linear plot. Instead, tangential thought associations, or the vagaries of memory seemed to move the novel from one section to the next. Sometimes the very fact that the present episode had been triggered by the previous one raised the question ' why ?' For what reason had these two seemingly unrelated moments been placed side by side in the narrator's mind ? I could now see an exciting, freer way of composing my novel ; one that could produce richness on the page and offer inner movements impossible movements impossible to capture on the screen. If I could go from one passage to the next according to the narrator's thought associations and drifting memories, I could compose almost in the way an abstract painter might choose to place shapes and colours around a canvas.(……) Everything I have subsequently written has been determined by the revelations that came to me during those days. (*AFW*,XI)

Still, if the Proustian paradigm seems to have partly shaped Ishiguro's sense of narrative time, it remains that he does by no means ventriloquize Proust's aesthetic temporal manipulations as Sara Danius, permanent secretary of the Nobel Academy rightly noted :'Ishiguro is someone who is very interested in understanding the past but he is not a Proustian writer, he is not out to redeem the past, he is exploring what you have to forget in order to survive in the first place as an individual or as a society'. Thus, Ishiguro's own reconfiguration handles time as a site of reconstruction rather than a locus of relinquishment and forfeiture. Pertinently, *AFW* reconstructs Post-war Japan through Ono's own perception of temporal frames, defying linearity at many occasions, yet fashioned along a logic of selection whereby the narrator conceals specific events from the readership while contemplating a potential rehabilitation. If the narrative is replete with an interminable lexicon related to memory : *recall, reminisce, remind, remember, the past, recollection, remembrance, memory, look back*, it is paradoxically premised on wilful oblivion as an exit

from a dolorous past, further unravelling how amnesia is a likely sedative recourse. Ono's initial determination to disavow his reprehensible former life as a naively indoctrinated artist, culprit of the inquisition at Kuroda's, his pupil's house, the persecution, ill treatment and ultimate handicap of this latter is indexical of his traumatic experience instructed by the second World War as a historical conjuncture, yet is shortly recuperated not as a cathartic undertaking, but rather as a prerequisite to move forwards, as Rebecca Walkowitch maintains : 'Ishiguro would have his readers see, as Ono begins to see, that what is correct has changed : Ono needs to betray his past, to display it, to question it, and to turn it away from absolutism in order to live responsibly in the present' (qtd in Timothy Right,128).

At another level, if sadness saturates *AFW,* the tragic death of Kenji, Ono's son - not unfolded until a late stage in the first chapter , is introduced only as an aftermath of the war, eskewing the excruciating affliction of bereavement, while being very vigilant not to fall into the trap of self-indulgence and complacency :

> It had taken more than a year for my son's ashes to arrive from Manchuria. The communists, we were constantly told, had made everything difficult there. Then when his ashes finally came, along with those of the twenty–three other young men who had died attempting that hopeless charge across the minefield, there were no assurances the ashes were in fact Kenji's and Kenji's alone. (AFW, 56 /57)

Without ever wishing to sound incoherent, it is relevant to note that the above passage is somehow reminiscent of Albert Camus's notorious opening scene in *The Stranger,* whereby death is demystified, desacralised even, and so are the adjacent sentiments of mourning and grief. Yet, if Ishiguro's silencing of pain is perhaps less a sign of cynicism, it is once anew a harbinger of Oriental minimalism and decency in the face of adversity. Elseways, despite its

irrefutable 'Japaneseness', the narrative showcases Ishiguro's willingness to claim the universality of his thematic choices in a strategic manoeuvr to situate himself at the intersection of a global/glocal vantage point. This is most evident in the way the author capitalizes on the way Japanese subjectivity can be approached, beyond the confines of straightjacketting racial and cultural specificities. Thus, Ishiguro's questioning of the 'raison d être' of art and artist joins fundamental debates in the West about the roles art is called to perform in society, and its limitations- if not failings- to operate social and political changes :

> My concern is with art. And with artists like you. Talented young artists, not yet irreversibly blinkered by that enclosed little world you all inhabit. The Okada-Shingen exists to help the likes of you open your eyes and produce work of genuine value for these difficult times.'
>
> 'Forgive me, Matsuda, but it strikes me it's you who are in fact the naive one. An artist's concern is to capture beauty wherever he finds it.(*AFW,*172)

While this is hardly a new controversy, of course, its relevance is energized by inviting reflection on the validity of Ono's yielding to a beguiling organicity of the artist/intellectual, leading him to partake in disgraceful actions against his former disciple Kuroda. Thus, Ono's compromising adherence to the ideologies of the state apparatus, his naive entanglement with the 'nationalist/militarist' project, along with his inability to preserve his artistic integrity, not only speak of his tragic fall as a Japanese artist, but effectively rehearse the universality of ethical dilemmas such as human weakness and lack of clairvoyance in times of turmoil. This universality is emphasized throughout the narrative when even musical tastes in Japan can be astonishingly kindred to those in the West :

‘ You know, Miss Noriko,’ Taro went on,’ I once acquired a set of recordings of a Bach piano concerto. I was very fond of it, but my mother was forever criticizing it and chastising my poor taste (……)

‘ My son is talking nonsense, Miss Noriko. I’ve never criticized Bach’s work as a whole. But tell me, don’t you agree Chopin is more eloquent so far as the piano is concerned ?’((*AFW*,118)

If Japanese Oriental ears are both sensitive to and cognizant of the universal musical repertoire, it strikes us as obvious that Ishiguro drives at demystifying the Oriental’s impenetrability and strangeness by visualizing this latter within a more humanistic perspective, which challenges the racist trope of inscrutability.

My discussion of *AFW* ultimately takes up a most perplexing issue namely language choice. In this respect, Ishiguro admits that if *AFW* is composed in formal English, the narrator ‘is supposed to be narrating in Japanese, it’s just that the reader is getting it in English. In a way, the language has to be almost like a pseudotranslation, which means that I can’t be too fluent and I can’t use too many Western colloquialisms. It has to be almost like subtitles, to suggest that behind the English language there’s a foreign language going on’ (Conversations with Ish,13). This duality, where the text seems to be deliberately enmeshed, leaves too many questions begging ; firstly, the internal inconsistencies generated by linguistic and cultural estrangements the reader is called to handle, eventuate in a frustration of sorts which disempowers the reader, encumbered as he stands, by the exigency to mentally reconstruct an unfamiliar cultural setting ; secondly, the narrative engages the reader in a translational transfer which runs the risk of compromising its credibility, thirdly the virtual distance separating the actual language of the text and the supposedly suppressed language inevitably create interminable semantic gaps, which forcefully establish *AFW* as a translated

text, even in its English version. Finally, *AFW* manages to secure its international-ness by initially enacting translation processes within the text itself, and exhorting the reader to consider translational transfer as a possibility.

Chapter five: Kiran Desai : *The Inheritance of Loss* or The Post-Postcolonial Going Global

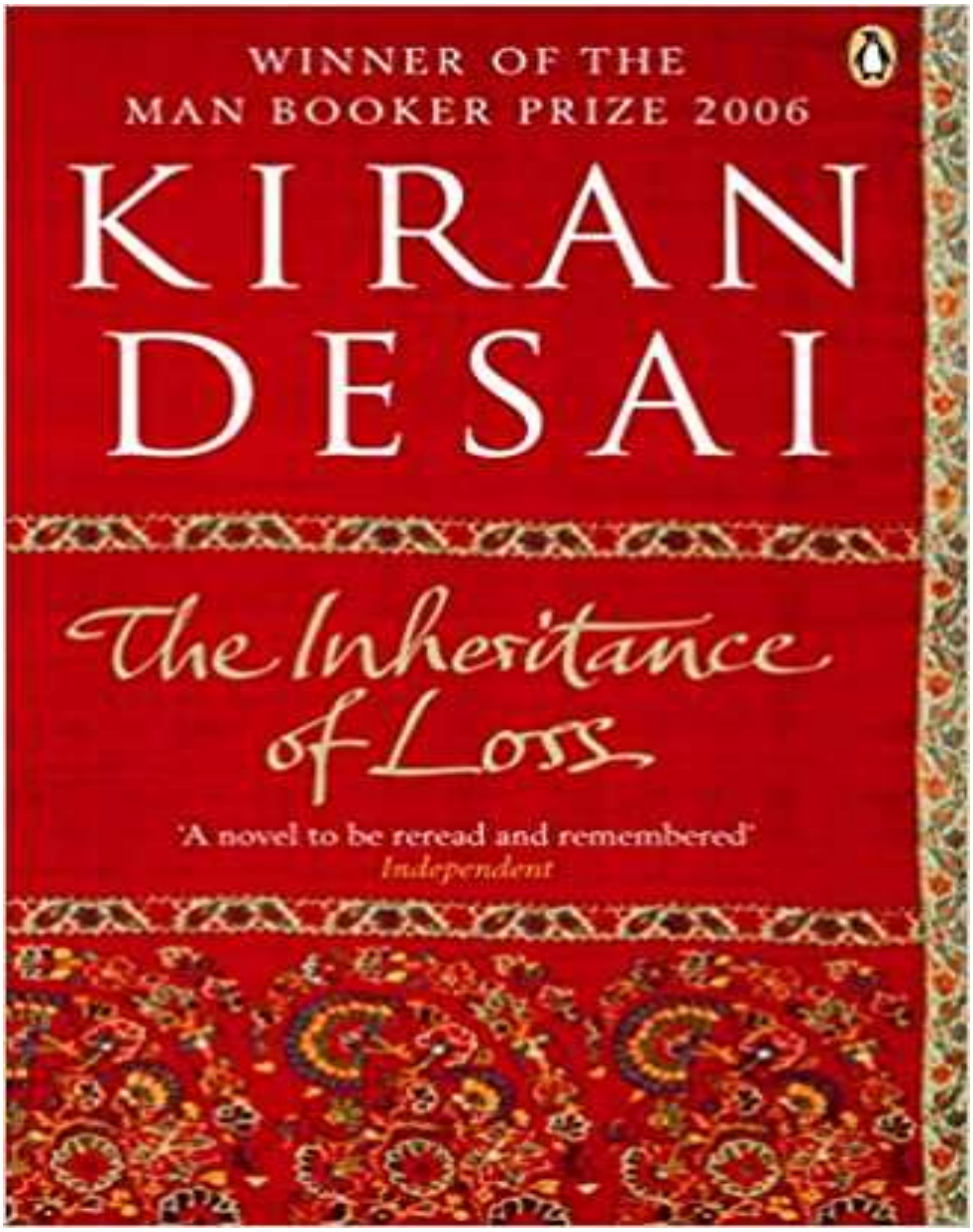

Figure 17: The Penguin version featuring Oriental motifs
https://cdn.penguin.co.uk/dam-assets/books/9780141027289/9780141027289-jacket-large.jpg

> Indian Writing in English (IWE) has changed considerably since the Indian economic liberalization of the 1990's. In this context, re-orientalism has become a recurrent discourse by which the East creates new narratives about its identity. (Anna Mendes,621)
>
> Each Booker winning novel ' has captured the essence of India at a particular time (Politics of the Man Booker prize,132)
>
> [*The Inheritance Of Loss]* Continues the fine tradition of Book Winners set in India, such as *The God of Small Things* and *Midnight's Children*. It's a great Winner. (Rodney Troubridge, Guardian)
>
> 'Kiran is a terrific writer. This book richly fulfils the promise of her first'
>
> (Salman Rushdie)
>
> 'A welcome proof that India's encounter with the English language , far from proving abortive, continues to give birth to new children , endowed with lavish gifts' (Salman Rushdie)

The debates surrounding Indian Writing in English (IWE), as an epiphenomenon of World Literature and an emergent literary topography, simultaneously verify and further establish its essence as an intrinsically hyphenated artform, located at the intersection of Postcolonial, transnational and global situs. Fundamentally, the complexity and sophistication of such debates have contributed to generate a quasi-new category, foregrounding its discursive and aesthetic contours, while continuing to energize and reshape the world of Anglophone literature. Pertinently, critics seem to correlate the unprecedented momentum IWE has acquired over the last few decades with the publication of Rushdie's *Midnight's*

Children (1981), the Booker of Bookers , which registers a crucial moment not solely in the history of contemporary Indian literature but equally and more meaningfully in World Literature as a whole, as Bill Aschroft perceptively acknowledges :

> For most critics, and possibly for most readers, contemporary Indian fiction entered a decisive , cosmopolitan and globally popular phase with the publication of *Midnight's Children* in 1981. The following decades have witnessed the growth of a literature that has been outward looking, confident and increasingly widely read. It is arguable that in that time the Indian literary diaspora has had a greater impact on English literature than writing from any other nation. (Ashcroft, 2013 :29).

What Ashcroft chooses to dub 'the Rushdie Revolution', announcing 'the birth of Postmodernism in Indian literature in English'(Ashcroft,2013 :29), marks a genuine paradigm shift which has translated into a postmodern, dystopian, anti-nationalist vision in Indian literature, in total rupture with previous tendencies to romanticize the very idea of the nation, and of India itself, and can actually be used as a blueprint ' to follow the trajectory of subsequent Booker Prize winners, the inheritors of Rushdie's prize-winning revolution, to understand how India came to be re-written'(Ashcroft,2013 :29). Thus, if *Midnight's Children* 'can be regarded as the founding text of a new generation' (Ashcroft, 2013 :29), all fiction produced subsequently might accordingly be envisionned as a manifestation of the 'post-Rushdie' phenomenon. Notwithstanding, such a reading does not only fail to do justice to the diversity and indisputable vibrancy of contemporary Indian fiction in English, but it also unjustifiably tends to downplay the uniqueness of Postcolonial Indian writers, reduced to be Rushdie's heirs or '*Midnight*'s heirs', to borrow from Ashcroft. The 'Rushdie effect' is in fact very much similar to the 'Achebe effect' for Sub-Saharan Anglophone literature, and if Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991) can be apprehended as part of that effect, it hardly

compares to *Midnight's Children* in terms of regional impact. Thus, if labouring under Rushdie's overpowering Godfather figure might be an exemplary case of anxiety of influence in the Bloomian sense, critics elsewhere denounce the impact of this latter as 'so authoritative that the Indian English novel still seems to be in his clutches as if he has linguistically colonized the 'other' writers' (*Politics of the Man Booker* prize,131). Along the same line of thought , if Rushdie comes to function as a gatekeeper for Indian Writing in English and 'frequently embraces the idea of acting as patron for upcoming writers, and granted a seal of approval to Desai with his words full of praise'(Anna Mendes,*Prizing Sameness*,21) -as the above epigraph illustrates- it seems evident that he is self-consciously playing 'the postcolonial card' or the 'Rushdie card' (mendes,29), while unequivocally capitalizing on his own market currency, to grant authentification to his 'literary offspring' and to redistribute literay capital as Mendes aptly argues :

> If Desai is packaged, priced and thrown out on the market with the help of exoticizing marketing strategies, is not Rushdie, the postcolonial lobbyist, the one playing the postcolonial card , is he not displaying a self-awareness of the field of meaning already constructed around the label 'Rushdie' ? (……) Is he strategically playing with the perception, established in both the publishing industry and in academic circles of 'Rushdie' as a buzzword ? Or is he an unavoidable part of the global cultural economy and its marketing tactic of commodifying a postcolonial writer ? (Prizing sameness, Mendes,28)

It is noteworthy that despite her 'literary pedigree' with a mother writer nominated for the Booker three times, recipient of a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for *Fire on the Mountain* and a Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea* in 1982 and a preface to *Midnight's Children*, Kiran Desai's visibility as an Indian diasporic author did not materialize until 'the connections to Rushdie and the parallels with his work had been drawn,(…) Desai and her

work made ready for metropolitan consumption. The prior history of her commodification as a postcolonial author, ……, serve the commercial logic of the Booker prize' (Mendes,27/28). Hailed as 'one of Rushdie's daughters', Desai's eligibility to the Booker ostentatiously divulges the politics working at the heart of the prize institution, and uncovers how this latter 'acts as a ''consumer guide to serious literary fiction '. This, it might be added, is what makes the British literary prize such a huge promotional venture and hence responsible for the hypervisility of Indian fiction written in English in the global market, a role that led Graham Huggan to understand it as 'a popular retailer of the 'postcolonial exotic''(Mendes,22). Indeed, the involvement of the Booker institution as a literary patron- with its notoriously disgraceful history- with global market dynamics, and its share in manufacturing cultural capital and influentially shaping the international canon and literary tastes, significantly problematize the political agendas behind the criteria of selection, speaking of its status as 'an instance of prizing cultural otherness'(Hugan,2001) according to Graham Huggan, eloquently echoed by James English who likewise notes that : 'The investment of foreign symbolic capital in emergent symbolic markets has been seen (…) as a means of sustaining less overtly and directly the old patterns of imperial control over symbolic economies and hence over cultural practice itself' (qtd in Mendes,27).

Accordingly, if the postcolonial Indian writer is to be 'unavoidably apprehended as 'a product in the global literary marketplace, held to standards of financial visibility'(Mendes,25), and if consumming India as a 'literalised consumer item'(Huggan,59) positions postcolonial Indian writers precariously between the Scylla of managing literary stardom within the global marketplace along with the ensuing commodification it eventuates, and the Charybdis of challenging Western metanarratives, it strikes us as obvious that such prizing of the contemporary Indian novel in English finds its rationale in its liability to be recuperated by the metropolitan publishing industry as incarnated by the Booker with an

explicit 'penchant for rewarding postcolonial fictions'(Mendes) in general, and Indian ones in particular. This cooptation inevitably picks on the vexed issue of tokenism, whose spectre is 'haunting the prize, or the accusation of winning, because of 'brownie points'(as Arunthati Roy put it after receiving the Booker)' (Mendes,22). What critics have come to label 'The Brown Culture', or the discourse of 'dark India' encapsulated by IWE, operating explicit politics of exoticisation of South Asian culture, raises questions about 'the prominent place of India as a setting and subject for fictions celebrated by the Booker' (Indianness, Amit ray,10), and the close ties betwween early 'Raj nostalgia' or 'imperialist nostalgia' to use Renato Rosaldo's phrase, and metropolitan consumption. Significantly, the Booker records attest to prioritizing Indianness, as Indian critic Amit Ray rightly maintains : 'In the past twenty five years, the prize has been awarded to three Indians, Rushdie in 1981, Arundhati Roy in 1997 and most recently in 2006 to Kiran Desai for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. In addition, diasporic Indian authors are regularly on the short list (of six or seven novels)' (Amit Ray,129/130), to the extent that when a British writer gets awarded , it is an anomaly of sorts according to Pico Iyer :'When a traditional English name takes the prize(….) A.S.Byatt, say or kingsley Amis- it seems almost anomalous'(qtd in Mendes,24).

Thus, it can be safely conjectured that *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) might be credited for energizing the 'Rushdie effect' in its turn, though for a short while, as Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*(2008) was unsurprisingly Bookered two years following the publication of Kiran Desai's novel. Significantly, if the year 2021 marks an exception with the consecration of Scottish-American novelist Stuart Douglas for his debut novel *Shuggie Bain*, it otherwise reveals the likelihood of a questionable politics of quota privileging particular national affiliations over others, responsive as it stands, not only to market demand but equally to passing fads in literature. Furthermore, the recent crowning of both French-Senegalese writer David Diop for his novel *Frére D'âme* (2021) translated by British Anna Moschovakis, and

Jordanian novelist Jalal Barjas for his fictional opus in Arabic, *Notebooks of the Bookseller,* might read as an attempt to further widen the scope of the Booker, in its international version, to include Francophone and Arabophone literature, albeit in translation and despite the Brexit divorce.

The present chapter accordingly addresses Kiran Desai less as a post-Rushdian Indian author simultaneously handling and dispensing with Rushdie's all too pervasive and admittedly intimidating ascendency, than as a post-postcolonial writer part of the 'Brown Culture', and representative of the third wave Indian diaspora, stretching her concerns to issues that transcend the anti-colonial to embrace larger scopes, such as the transnational, cross-cultural and global. The 'post-postcolonial' is herein used as a category that expands the postcolonial beyond its temporal and geographical frameworks, with a bifold postness which forcibly entails an engagement with the critical and aesthetic concerns of things postcolonial, while at the same time distancing itself from it through a cogent use of a much more complex and more encompassing literary topography with a multiplicity of foci as Desai avers :

> The vocabulary of immigration, of exile, of translation, inevitably overlaps with a realization of the multiple options for reinvention, of myriad perspectives, shifting truths, telling of lies- the great big wobbliness of it all. In a world obsessed with national boundaries and belonging, as a novelist working with a form also traditionally obsessed with place, it was my journey to come to this thought, that the less structured, the multiple may be a possible location for fiction, perhaps a more ethical location in general. (Kiran Desai the novelist Nimsarkar)

Similarly, this section seeks to investigate the extent to which Desai is responsive to the precepts of the global literary market, and how this awareness aesthetically translates into narratives- two so far- which not only engage reflection upon diasporic experience within a

global context, but articulate a challenging discursivity going well beyond the cultural categories of the postcolonial and ultimately locating itself within a wider transnational topos. The argument will correspondingly test the hypothesis that the recuperation of Desai's fiction by the Western book market needs to be viewed within a gamut of self-exoticizing/orientalizing strategies deployed both by writer and publisher to titillate the Western readership, and to cater for the market dictates of metropolitan consumption. This contention will concurrently strive to drive home evidence that Desai as a representative of IWE, is of necessity and choice entangled within a market logic which positions her fiction in a site of compromise, whereby this latter is compelled to walk the tight rope between emancipatory tendencies to break loose from reductive niche market literature, and the lure of hypervisibility and prizing. Put differently, caught between the appeal of 'litterati gliterati' careerism and artistic integrity.

5.1. *The Inheritance of Loss* : A Global/Glocal Text or How Diaspora Writes Home :

> The characters of my story are entirely fictional, but these journeys…. As well as my own provided insight into what it means to travel between East and West and it is this I wanted to capture. The fact that I live this particular life is no accident. It was my inheritance. (Desai in the rediff interview,2006)[11]

Released in 2006, *The Inheritance of Loss* is Kiran Desai's second text after her debut novel *Hullabaloo in The Guava Orchard* (1998), hailed by critics and winner of the Betty Trask award, Winner of The Man Booker Prize 2006, selected as one of the Publishers Weekly Best Books of the Year 2006, as one of The New York Times Review 100 Notable Books of the Year, and as an ALA Notable Book of the Year 2006, finalist for the NBCC

[11] https://www.rediff.com/news/2006/jan/30inter1a.htm

Award for Fiction 2006, shortlisted for the Orange Prize 2007, longlisted for The Dublin Impac Award A Book Sense Selection, and winner of the National Book Critics Circle award. Indeed, *IL* has garnered much critical scrutiny and its author put into the limelight, yet , the majority of critics contend that the novel 'for all its individual sparkle and originality is nothing if not a post-Rushdie novel' (Prizing sameness,26). If this putative Rushdiesque quality- or 'Rushdieitis' to borrow from Christopher Holmes- perceived in Desai's fiction further emphasizes Rushdie's impactful thrust, it otherwise obliquely gestures towards the intertexual sites of enunciation he might invest in her narrative, and while the possibility of such literary imbrication is quite plausible, it is purposefully bracketted off as extraneous to the immediate concerns of this research.

From the outset, Desai's text ostensibly foregrounds its global vocation with a most compelling paratextual device, namely Jorge Luis Borges's poem *The Boast of Quietness*. When asked in an interview about this particular choice, she seems to find justification in the fact that :

> This poem reflects the souls of the characters in the novel well. When you go to another country as a migrant, there are difficulties that you experience. The real important thing isn't just your own story. There are many people's stories like yours, and there are people who share the same fate, just as there are many books in a genre on literary shelves, but you tell your own story. I selected this poem because it conveys similar feelings to readers. In the same way, when you look at the migration stories of Latin Americans and Mexicans, you can feel the parallels between all migrants' stories. For this reason, Borges is a writer in whom I have a

lot of trust in when it comes to conveying those feelings. (Kiran Desai, Interview 2010)[12]

Pertinently, the intellectual affinities Kiran recognizes in Borges, as a canonized global voice, aesthetically situate her text within the tradition of transnational literature, and incidentally invoke the community of first generation World Literature authors. In claiming such an affiliation, Desai is not only granting her text international cachet as a translinguistic, transcultural and border-crossing narrative, but most importantly, broaching conversation with a well-established literary figure, and by so doing dispelling any doubts about her artistic and literary loyalties.

Boast of Quietness

Writings of light assault the darkness, more prodigious than meteors.

The tall unknowable city takes over the countryside.

Sure of my life and my death, I observe the ambitious and would like to understand them.

Their day is greedy as a lariat in the air.

Their night is a rest from the rage within steel, quick to attack.

They speak of humanity.

My humanity is in feeling we are all voices of the same poverty.

They speak of homeland.

[12] Kiran Desai: *you are what you read,* Sunday's Zaman, published online September 12, 2010. Consulted on December 7, 2014. URL: http://www.todayszaman.com/arts-culture_kiran-desai-you-are-what-you-read_221398.html

My homeland is the rhythm of a guitar, a few portraits, an old sword,

The willow grove's visible prayer as evening falls.

Time is living me.

More silent than my shadow, I pass through the loftily covetous multitude.

They are indispensable, singular, worthy of tomorrow.

My name is someone and anyone.

I walk slowly, like one who comes so far away he doesn't expect to arrive.

The poem's prime treshold further plunges the reader into the oxymoronic spirit of the narrative in so much as Boast of Quietness comes to stand for two antithetical semantic fields, resonating in striking fashion with the novel's titular apparatus. Thus, Inheritance versus Loss if juxtaposed to boast and quietness establish meaningful dichotomies for the reader, and invite the latter to envision the text within an a-priori syntactic site of contradiction and paradox. While divesting inheritance of its empowering potential via the immediate annexation of an antipodal nominal unit, which emphasizes the bankrupcy of a presumably capacitating legacy, the oxymoron is reiteratively intensified through Borges's savyy use of a most intriguing lexis, opposing boast as denotative of gasconade and bombast to quietness, teeming in connotations of serenity, reticence, reserve, and even an ascetic austerity of sorts. Initially, such authorial strategies fashion a singular fictional ambience for the reader, and solicit her to glean the thematic topography of the narrative by obliquely furnishing a cogent foretaste. Humanity, homeland, time, poverty, estrangement, such are the leitmotifs in Borges's lyrical piece which serves to frame Desai's text, and if the choice of poetry as a generic affiliation is in itself telling, it substantiates anew, if need be, the lyrical propensity

within ‘Oriental’ writing, a quality previously detected in shafak and Ishiguro, a facet, which for all intents and purposes, will be tackled in due course in this chapter.

The ‘I’ speaker in the epigraph ‘who observe(s) the ambitious and would like to understand them’, whose ‘name is someone and anyone’, the one who ‘walks slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn’t expect to arrive’, stands as the voice of the shared global proletariat, oppressed and dehumanized in ‘the tall unknowable city’, by neo-capitalism and industrialization. Borges’s lyrical personae finds its perfect reincarnation in the character of Biju in *IL,* and his migration to New York, a Janus-faced metropole, quintessentially multicultural and capitalist, or a ‘cultural laboratory’ of sorts, to use Stuart Hall’s phrasing. The tribulations of Biju as an illegal Indian migrant in the city’s eateries, his grappling with displacement, alienation, oppression, racism and stark exploitation as a ‘labor diasporic’ subject, lacking in cultural and economic capitals, replicate both the transnational and transcultural dilemmas which ‘disrupt the triumphalist master narrative of globalization’ as a whole, and further subvert the myth of the American dream, and if Novelist(Desai) borrows from Poet(Borges) the allegory of the homeless deprecate but quiet migrant agent, she wittingly departs from the confines of a ‘national’ to a ‘transnational’ allegory, the chief vocation of which is ‘to tell the world’ instead of ‘ telling the nation’.

Thus, the universality of the human condition trumpetted throughout the narrative is enacted through a systematic evacuation of the fixed notions of identity and belonging, wherein the affective dissonances of the diasporized subject disrupt and destabilize the alledgedly bona fide discourse or ‘facile talk’ of globalization. Yet, if we agree with Ronit Frenkel that ‘As astute as Desai’s delineation of colonialism and globalization may be, the unrelenting pathos of her novel enforces the idea of ‘third world’ victimhood whether through her characters’ interaction with the West, with one another or with fate in general’(Ronit Frenkel,81), such a reflection rekindles the debate over the Booker and its selection politics in

the sense that '….. the Prize is mediated by a politics of loss in terms of assessing postcolonial fiction from India and South Africa, where texts must fulfill Western stereotypes of what I term 'postcolonial pathos' in order to contend seriously for this award'(Frenkel,77), it is equally undeniable that the narrative is highly chastizing of global imbalances, though it vehicles no 'transformative horizons'(Sabo,2015) for immigrant and diasporic communities. Accordingly, Biju's incapacity to accommodate to the Western North American context, with its structures of power and privilege- reverting him back to his own culture thereby exemplifying what Stuart Hall identifies as 'the promise of redemptive return'- is itself epitomized by what Arjun Appadurai inventively describes as the 'diaspora of despair' versus 'the diaspora of hope'.

While Appadurai's reading of the concept of diaspora enables a revision of the dynamics underlying transnational and transcultural sites or what he terms 'ethnoscapes', Desai's conceptualization of the notions of 'diaspora and immigration remain incomplete narratives without their contextualization as the outcome of historical forces such as British colonialism and American neo-imperialism, which help explain the formation of Indian diasporic groups in the UK and the USA'(Oana Sabo,2015:381). Indeed, if the novel performs a constant criss-crossing between the past and the present to account for the complexity of the Indian diaspora in its contemporary configuration, it is mainly to the fact that 'Desai re-conceptualizes the Indian diaspora not only in relation to different diasporic groups but also in the context of global capitalism. She historicizes her Indian protagonists' diasporic journeys to highlight the parallels between Indian diasporas in the colonial past and in the neoliberal present, showing how late-capitalism, like colonialism before it, operates along a similar logic of exclusion of the racial other'(Sabo,380). Basically, the chief merit of such a historical perspective is the ideological continuum it seems to establish between the different versions of imperialism as an enterprise, which further stresses the compulsion to envision the Indian diaspora within the

confluence of a three–fold rhetoric wherein compete the three discourses of nationalism, colonialisn and globalization. Accordingly, if the juxtaposition of Judge Jemubhai Pattel's journey in a racially biased and hostile post-war England, and Biju's account of wretchedness in America as a diasporic subject, explicitly suggests emotional and historical parallels, it otherwise emphasizes the need to consider 'colonial, postcolonial and postnational spaces' if Jarayam Uma is to be believed, for he (Jemubhai) 'needs to strategize performance of his perceived identity to survive in these spaces'. The experience of displacement, thus, begs notions of mimicry, subalternity, hybridity, third space, liminality, desire, resistance, dislocation, etc, calling for a reactivation of postcolonial tropes . In other words, to understand judge Pattel's predicament in colonial England, Desai expects and invites the reader to draw on postcolonial findings to fully grasp the thrust of his quandary :

> For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things, and elderly ladies, even the hapless-blue-haired, spotted, faces like collapsing pumpkins-moved over when he sat next to them in the bus, so he knew that whatever they had, they were secure in their conviction that it wasn't even remotely as bad as what *he* had. The young and beautiful were no kinder ; girls held their noses and giggled, 'Phew, he stinks of curry ! (IL,39)

> Eventually, he felt barely human at all, leaped when touched on the arm as if from an unbearable intimacy, dreaded and agonized over even a ' How-do-you-do-lovely-day' with the fat woman dressed in friendly pinks who ran the corner store. ' What can I get you ? Say that again, duck…' she said to his mumble, leaned forward to scoop his words, but his voice ran back and out as he dissolved into tears of self-pity at the casual affection. (IL,40)

If Judge Pattel's social and linguistic alienation in colonial England on account of his racial affiliation, and the concomittant internalization of inferiority sentiments, his excessive anglophilia, his deep fractured sense of identity, all in turn sketch the portrait of the 'mimic man' in the way Homi Bhabha has perceptively delienated, it otherwise underscores the overarching economy of shame which 'does not disappear in the discursive strategies of mimicry through which the ambivalences of identity and its hybridization are revealed but remains implicit as the primary affective structure that moves the subject either towards the identificatory processes of affiliation and mimicry or the self-valorizing, foundationalist practices of essentialism that help stabilize identity within the closed structures of racial and ethnicist stereotypes'(Zlatan filipovic,206/207). It is noteworthy that kindred feelings of shame are shared by Ono, Kazuo Ishiguro's protagonist in *AFW*, and while it is true that the catalyst in Ono's case is definitely at a remove from Jemubha's, shame is formative for both. While the former is indocrinated by the militarist Japanese regime, the latter apprehends himself and his own culture through the inferiority complex internalized via his contact with the colonizer. Yet, if both are blind to the material realities of their own subjectivities, agencies and their surroundings, they gradully develop an awareness, perhaps not of what makes their demise, but at least of the fakeness of the ethical foundations sustaining their respective worlds , and thus manage to extricate themselves from the deafening effect of their echo-chambers :

> But Bose swung rapidly to another position- satisfaction either way- but depth, resolution. Still a question for Bose : should he damn the past or find some sense in it ? Drunk, eyes aswim with tears, ' Bastards !' he said with such bitterness. 'What bastards they were !' raising his voice as if attempting to grant himself conviction. ' *Goras*-get away with everything don't they ? *Bloody white people*. They're responsible for all the crimes of the century !'Silence.

> ‘Well’(…..) ‘ one thing we’re lucky for , is that they didn’t stay, thank God. At least they left…..’
>
> Still nothing from the judge.(……..)
>
> Then the judge burst out, despite himself : ‘ YES !YES !YES ! They were bad. They were part of it.(…..). (IL,206)

At disparate temporal and geographical conjunctures, Biju is subjected to the same disdainful contempt Judge Pattel had formerly experienced in England, whereby the germane scenario of ‘the black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia and grotesquerie’ (Bhabha qtd in filipovic, 2017:209) gets reiterated :

> *Biju had started his second year* in America at Pinocchio’s Italian Restaurant, stirring vats of spluttering Bolognese, as over a speaker an opera singer sang of love and murder, revenge and heartbreak.
>
> ‘He smells,’ said the owner’s wife. ‘I think I’m allergic to his hair oil.’ She had hoped for men from the poorer parts of Europe- Bulgarians perhaps, or Czechoslovakians. At least they might have something in common with them like religion and skin color, grandfathers who ate cured sausages and looked like them, too, but they weren’t coming in numbers great enough or they weren’t coming desperate enough, she wasn’t sure….
>
> The owner bought soap and toothpaste , toothbrush, shampoo plus conditioner, Q-tips, nail clippers, and most important of all, deodorant, and told Biju he’d picked up some things he might need…..……‘You’ve tried,’ his wife said, comforting him a few days later when they couldn’t detect any difference in Biju. ‘ You even *bought* the soap,’ she said. (*IL*,48/49)

While this polarity obviously locates the displaced subject in the 'liminal' space , confronting him with the predicament of his plethora of disjunctures and dissonances, it posits Judge Pattel in sharp contrast with Biju, in the way each character utilizes stratagems and defenses to manage their respective estrangement in Western locations and to negotiate their agency. As a matter of course, the former is crippled by his very disavowal of what constitutes his Indianness, and the disempowering impact of his 'affective drama'(Arendt qtd in filipovic, 2017 :205) on his subjectivity, whereby his ego is cornered by the Western white gaze further entangling him within 'the structural aerobics of shame', which 'fixes the colonized subject in an impasse between the burning need to find refuge in the evasive strategies of identification and the reality of the ontological impossibility to do so'(filipovic,207), whereas the latter realizes through a romantic construction of 'home' that displacement is synonymous with self-alienation, estrangement and further impoverishment, finding valorization in his national affiliation, which triggers his ultimate resolution to go back to India. While the two characters come to epitomize subalternity in Western locations of power, laying bare the unnuanced vision whereby the West apprehends alterity, Biju's juxtaposition with other 'subaltern' second class citizens of the world, indicates with painful acuity the undifferentiated global alienation of the world population on account of its socio-economic background. Thus, Bulgarians and Czechoslovakians, as a low-cost working force of Europe, are at the bottom of the social ladder with analogous trajectories of exile, displacement and marginalization, victimized as they stand by global economic injustice and transnational capitalism. Still, sensitive to the hierarchization logics in categorizing ethnicities, Desai unfailingly registers the stratification of races 'Here in America where, every nationality confirmed its stereotype-' (*IL*,23). Whether at *the Baby Bistro*, *Le colonial*, the *Stars and Stripes Diner*, Biju is confronted with his reality as a low caste Desi. For critic Oana Sabo 'These disparities are translated into the hierarchical structure of these restaurants,

where colonial centre and periphery exist as two sides of the same coin..' (Sabo,387) : 'Above, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian. And when a Paki was hired, it was Mexican, Indian, Pakistani. (….) On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native, Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian.*(IL*,21). In narrating '….a shared , global story of displacement and dispossession' to borrow from Sabo (Sabo, 2015, 382), Desai weaves a heterogeneous brotherhood of 'the wretched of the earth' de-emphasizing racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic discrepancies at the expense of social rank and class affiliation, while envisioning both as inescapable fatalities. Accordingly, Biju's displacement to a Western locale does by no means enable a promotional movement upwards and much less class-bordering , but it contrarily rehearses similar material and ideological structures to keep him within the confines of his socio-economic rank. Significantly, Desai's awareness of the impossibility to approach diaspora through homogenizing lenses translates in textually juxtaposing three sorts of diasporas as Sabo rightly argues :

> ….. the novel juxtaposes three types of Indian diasporas. The first diaspora of indentured labour- which is marked by the displacement of Indian indentured labourers to the Caribbean and East and South Africa during British colonialism (Mishra,1996 :422)- is exemplified when Biju learns that the Indian diaspora is scattered not only in the middle East but also in Guyana, Trinidad, Madagascar, and elsewhere(24). The second is the post-1965 diaspora, characterized by mobility, and represented by Indian college students in New York. Biju, who is a low caste member of the third, contemporary labour diaspora, briefly crosses paths with them- an episode that shows that poverty, class and migration in South Asian contexts are closely linked. (Sabo, 380/381)

The scene Sabo is referring to, actually discloses the construction of the concept of diaspora in Desai's narrative as a fundamentally complex paradigm which dispells any sense

of uniformity. Being a diasporic herself, the author apposes Biju's own experience in New York as an Indian poor and exploited 'other' to privileged Indian students, replicating thus, analogous class asymmetries salient at home :

> One evening, Biju was sent to deliver hot-and-sour soups and egg foo yong to three Indian girls, students (……) The girl who answered the buzzer smiled, shiny teeth, shiny eyes through shiny glasses. She took the bag and went to collect the money. (…..) They had a self-righteousness common to many Indian women of the English-speaking upper-educated, went out to Mimosa brunches, ate their Dadi 's roti with adept fingers, donned a sari or smacked on elastic shorts for aerobics, could say ' *Namaste, Kusum Auntie, aayiye, baethiye, khayiye !*' as easily as 'Shit' they took to short hair quickly, were eager for Western-style romance, and happy for a traditional ceremony with lots of jewelry (……) they considered themselves uniquely positioned to lecture everyone on a variety of topics : accounting professors on accounting, Vermonters on the fall foliage, Indians on America. They were poised ; they were impressive ; in the United States, where luckily it was still assumed that Indian women were downtrodden, they were lauded as extraordinary- which had the unfortunate result of making them even more of what they already were.(…..) The shiny –eyed girl said it many ways so that the meaning might be conveyed from every angle- that he might comprehend their friendliness completely in this meeting between Indians abroad of different classes and languages, rich and poor, north and south, top caste bottom caste.(*IL*, 49/50)

In shedding light on class distinctions which cristallize and validate the impossibility of social mobility either at home or elsewhere, Desai , herself a privileged diasporic, seems to suggest that geographical and spatial movements do not necessarily coincide with class

enfranchisement or emancipation. While planning the encounter between low-caste Biju and elite Indian girls in Cosmopolitan New York, deceivingly and ironically configured as a contact zone where any possibility of genuine bonding or communion is aborted before it even takes place, Desai designs the city along visibility and invisibility spheres, and any exchange between both eventuates either in deep incomprehension or conflict. Thus, Biju's excruciating journey in the disenchanting ghettoes of the 'the city of dreams'- besides interrogating the fake promises of globalization- is a series of failed encounters between the visible capitalist restaurant owners and the invisible proletariat or 'the losers of the globalized world' to borrow from Jennie Anderson (2014). Arguably, not only does Biju's travel/travail (Masterson qtd in Anderson,2014) articulate the author's critique of world inequalities, but at the same time functions as a consciousness-raising project, urging Biju and his fellow illegals to rethink their prejudices through cross-ethnic interactions and the confluence of composite diasporic cartographies and narratives. A pertinent example is Saeed Saeed, a Zanzibari Muslim, who confounds all of Hinduist Biju's biases :

> Saeed was kind and he was not Paki. Therefore he was OK ?
>
> The cow was not an Indian cow, therefore it was not holy ?
>
> Therefore he liked Muslims and hated only Pakis ?
>
> Therefore he liked Saeed, but he hated the general lot of Muslims ?
>
> Therefore he liked Muslims and Pakis and India should see it was all wrong and hand over Kashmir ?
>
> No, no, how could that be and-
>
> This was but a small portion of the dilemma. He remembered what they said about black people at home. Once a man from his village who worked in the city had said :' Be careful of the *hubshi*. Ha ha, in their own country they live like monkeys in the trees. They come to India and become men.' (…)

Therefore he hated all black people but liked Saeed ?

Therefore there was nothing wrong with black people and Saeed ?

Or Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, or anyone else…. ???(*IL*, 76)

Indeed, Biju's internal dilemma triggered by his encounter with Saeed Saeed questions his whole belief system based on 'This habit of hate '(*IL*,77), while he notes the contradiction between '…. an awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India.'(*IL*,77). Yet, if Biju's hatred is fuelled less by real discrimination than by mere ignorance, Judge Pattel's bitterness and enmity stand unjustified, and if the former challenges the validity of his attitude, while acknowledging its ungrounded nature, the latter fails to recognize his vulnerability and fragmentation and proves consistent in his adverse sentiments towards himself and his whole race, convinced, as he stands, of the indisputable superiority of the white man, pathetic in his exertion to look whiter : ' His face seemed distanced by what looked like white powder over dark skin- or was it just the vapor ?' (*IL*,33), or in his adamant certitude that : 'An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one'(*IL*,168). Elsewhere, Desai's text is replete with instances of mimic characters ; lola and Noni, residents at Mon Ami, who take pride in their 'almost but not quite' British accent, in 'Their washing line sagged under a load of Marks and Spencer panties,'(*IL*,44), as their 'suitcases were stuffed with Marmite , Oxo bouillon cubes, Knorr soup packets, After Eights, Daffodil bulbs, and renewed supplies of Boots cucumber lotion- and Marks and Spencer underwear- the essence, quintessence, of Englishness (…..)'(*IL*, 46/47). Even their literary tastes - Lola has a preference for Trollope, Wodehouse and Agatha Christie- replicate the tensions of a readership caught within '….the imbrication between local and Western cultures and languages'(Sabo,383) gesturing towards '…. this hybrid reality , which is also a linguistic

reality for diasporas' (383) as Oana Sabo pertinently argues : '….Desai satirizes an Indian readership obsessed with the Romantic notion of native culture, because this view associates writers' identity with their place of origin, calling into question the authenticity of Indian writers residing abroad' (Sabo, 384/385). This is best illustrated in *IL* by Lola's criticism of V.S.Naipul :

> I won't last the month,' said Lola. ' Almost through,' she thumped *A Bend in the River*, 'uphill task-'
>
> ' Superb writer,' said Noni. ' First-class. One of the best books I've ever read.'
>
> ' Oh I don't know,' Lola said, ' I think he's strange. Stuck in the past…. He has not progressed. Colonial neurosis, he's never freed himself from it. Quite a different thing now. In fact.' She said (…….)
>
> ' Well, I don't like to agree with you, but maybe you have a point,' Noni conceded. 'After all, why isn't he writing of where he lives now ? Why isn't he taking up, say, race riots in Manchester ?'(*IL*,46)

5.2. Kiran Desai: A Market Commodity ?

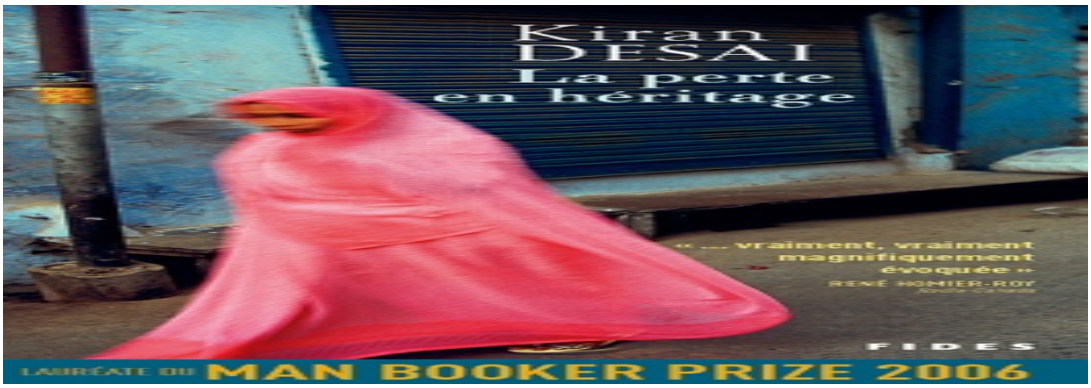

Figure18 : The French version featuring an Indian woman dressed in Indian clothes.
https://books.google.co.ma/books/content?id=vvmgSu7UBccC&printsec=frontcover&img=1&zoom=1&edge=curl&imgtk=AFLRE730YByM6lO5btXaWNXunBJOmegkHjkYKqHe7092oUqHhvqTXHFp4qOBvPi7s1vhMca_Adot_ZAxmcaQnSq4tC4to-eqrw-K1vj9-0x7sSDKGSO6tUwixYRA-o_h6GR15I-mLjSC

Figure19 : The Spanish version featuring henna-dyed hands.
https://static.fnacstatic.com/multimedia/PT/images_produits/PT/ZoomPE/4/3/2/9786/A-Heranca-do-Vazio.jpg

Figure 20 : Another French version featuring a butterfly and hinting to metamorphosis. https://p6.storage.canallblog.com/60/55/192400/19945395.jpg

Figure21 : The Dutch version featuring a luggage symbolizing transcontinental movement. https://images2.medimops.eu/product/c0401b/M03833305215-large.jpg.

Since its publication in 2006, the market valence of *IL* has substantially gained in sales figures, making room for Desai on the chart of bestselling authors, and thereby raising interrogations about her potential complicity with Western publishing conglomerates. Yet, If the charge of self-othering seems to be the kismet of most global writers in their struggle to ensure an international audience, not only do the compromises differ from one author to another, but authorial strategies register discrepancies in every single global narrative. This applies in exemplary fashion to *IL*, where it is interesting to note a conscious handling of

paratextual devices to promote its marketability. Thus, in its multilingual editions- as illustrated above-the publisher takes stock of a set of motifs ranging from veiled Indian female to butterfly in the French version, to henna-decorated female hands with typically South Asian Mehndi designs, to a luggage accessory in the German edition, gesturing towards a transcontinental trip. If the French and Spanish versions seem to capitalize on the local aspects of the narrative with the absence of any real textual signifiers or references ; they explicitly tease the Western readership's appetite for exotic markers of the Oriental Indian culture, in foregrounding the Purdah tradition or the imposed invisibility on Indian women, standing in contradiction with the translocal, transnational and transcultural vocations of Desai's narrative. This marketing strategy, in fact, conforms to a particular Western agenda still heedful of advertising and vending a backward East represented by its downtrodden silenced women. Similarly, the Penguin English edition used for the purposes of this chapter uses richly red and golden ornamented tapestry motifs, evoking a whole Oriental tradition once emblematic of the Silk Road, a road which initiated commercial, cultural, linguistic and religious exchanges, and effectively charted trajectories of mutual understanding between East and West. The Silk Road, along which travelled Shams of Tabriz and Leo The African, in their spiritual exploratory quests to comprehend the 'other' and embrace alterity, a Sufi pursuit for the former to encounter Rumi and initiate him to the secrets of mystical love, and a journey in captivity for the latter whereby he comes to terms with cross-cultural , cross-linguistic and cross-religious discrepancies between the Orient and the Occident. Indeed, the forced displacement of Leo The African from North African locales to Western territories, his infiltration of the finest and mightiest circles of the Italian religious authorities, his worldliness avant- la-lettre, all confirm not only his predestination to hobnob the highest social ranks, but also his flexibility and elasticity. While Leo's cultural and economic capitals are once again corroborated by his aptitude to adapt and mingle with the Italian Bourgeoisie,

Biju's deficiency in both baffle his pathetic journey in America and significantly impede his social and financial promotions, verifying the platitude that geographical mobility does not necessarily imply social emancipation.

Reading *IL* as a market commodity of necessity assumes uncovering the dynamics of worlding which entitle it to the status of best-seller, and incidentally questions the textual and paratextual components catalyzed to augment its tradability. Notwithstanding, Desai's re-writing of India in its interconnectedness to the world ironically thwarts the Western reader's expectations, in resisting the eager demand for exoticism, and purposefully circumventing the bulk of self-othering/self-exoticising strategies commonly used to match the exigencies of the Cosmopolitan marketplace. Pertinently, the author's portrayal of Indian women matches two opposing directions ; the character of Nimi, Judge Jemubhai's apparently submissive wife, is sketched in such a fashion as to adhere to the Western understanding of Indian female subjectivity, yet at the same time she is to be envisaged as the first casualty of her husband's self-deprecation, eventuated by colonial hate.

Accordingly, Nimi's victimization by Jemubhai is an oblique accusation of India's victimization by colonial England ; her innocence, her beauty and her candidness are prejudiced by Jemubhai's schizophrenia, as is breath-taking virgin India by imperial Britain. Her belated rebellion in the face of violence, physical and moral abuses is to be read in parallel with India's insurgengy against British rule :' Which ? Are you bloody stupid, I ask you ?!' Silence. With fear that grew as she spoke the words, summoning up the same spirit of the powder-puff night, she defied him. To his amazed ears and her own shocked ears, as if waking up to a moment of clarity before death, she said : '*You are the one who is stupid*.'(*IL*,304). The outcome of Nimi and Jemubhai's toxic marriage is their granddaughter Sai, raised in a typical English convent, hybrid in every possible way and epitomising modern India with all its contradictions and paradoxes. For Oana Sabo, the character of Sai is 'Desai's

narrative consciousness'(Sabo, 385), since the novel itself '….. favours a diasporic consciousness embodied by Sai ,who reads the nation as always embedded politically and culturally in the world, and who acknowledges the effects of global powers on small nations. Because of her awareness of such local-global dialectics(….) she attempts to draw parallels between minority subjects across nation-states..…' (Sabo,385). Thus, Sai incarnates the writer's challenge to the rigidity of identity as she ultimately declares : 'Never again could she think there was but one narrative and that this narrative belonged only to herself, that she might create her own happiness and live safely within it.' (*IL*,323). In fact, the multiplicity of narratives in *IL* reaffirms the fragmentation inherent to the global condition, and suggests that the tensions eventuated by this fragmentation are part of the hybrid reality of diasporic subjectivities as Sabo pertinently argues : 'As a broken journey, immigration thus requires a mode of narration that vacillates between visions of wholeness and the fragmentation of immigrant subjects and diasporic communities in the hostland'(Sabo,381). She additionally points out how 'Desai herself recognizes what she calls a loss of 'vision of wholeness' inherent in her own diasporic journey from India to England and the USA (Watchel,2007 : 99). The implications for her writing about transnational issues are that « (she) would have half-stories and quarter-stories, but (she) wouldn't have a whole story in that entirely contained single world'(Wachtel,2007:99) »(Sabo,381).

In configuring India in its relation to the world, Desai posits her text at a remove from the self-essentializing gestures which would potentially augment the market appeal of her narrative, yet simultaneously by intently 'going global', she enhances the worldliness of her narrative, and creates a certain familiarity with the global audience. Elsewhere, if *IL*'s rendition of India manages to eschew cheap exotica, it inevitably constructs 'home' in terms of a politics of loss which fulfills what Ronit Frenkel terms 'Western stereotypes of postcolonial pathos'(77), previously mentioned above. Such pathos can be performed through

the activation of 'the discourse' of 'Dark India' which critic Anna Christina Mendes argues is '…..not only a re-Orientalist practice, but also most relevantly a re-Orientalist strategy'(Mendes,2015 :708). While Desai is attentive not to fall prey to what Mendes dubbs ' the vicarious indulgence in poverty literature', as it is the case with other Indian writers such as Aravind Adiga in *The White Tiger*(2008), her narrative does not fail to record instances of local destitution, squalor and shocking promiscuity intensified by the white nun's gaze on her way to Cho Oyu together with Sai :

> Out of the window, from Dehra Dun to Delhi, Delhi to Siliguri, they viewed a panorama of village life and India looked as old as ever. Women walked by with firewood on their heads, too poor for blouses under their saris. ' Shame, shame, I know your name,' said the nun, feeling jolly. Then she felt less jolly. It was early in the morning and the railway tracks were lined with bare bottoms. Close up, they could see dozens of people defecating onto the tracks, rinsing their bottoms with water from a can. ' Dirty people.' She said, ' poverty is no excuse, no it isn't, no don't try and tell me that. Why must they do such things here ?'
>
> ' Because of the drop,' said an earnest bespectacled scholar seated next to her, ' the ground drops to the railway track, so it is a good place.'
>
> The nun didn't answer. And to the people who defecated, those on the train were so beside the point- not even the same species- that they didn't care if passersby saw their straining rears any more than if a sparrow were witness to them. On and on. (*IL*,30)

To such scatological scenes ubiquitous in Bollywood movies, Desai juxtaposes a contradistinct India with its majestic mountains , imposing valleys and rivers and mind-

blowing nature, an India which subjugates Western expatriate residents such as Swiss Father Booty and Uncle Potty, hood-winked as they stand to Kalimpong, despite the upheaval occasioned by the Nepali insurrection and the exhortation to leave the country for illegal residence after a forty five year- stay, as far as Father Booty is concerned : 'He knew he was a foreigner but had lost the notion that he was anything but an Indian foreigner….'(*IL*,220). The romanticising of India as a locale in reality contributes to sketch an essentialized setting, advertised as early as in the opening paragraph : '*All day*, the colors had been those of dusk mist moving like a water creature across the great flanks of mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths. Briefly visible above the vapor,Kanchenjunga was a far peak whittled out of ice, gathering the last of the light, , a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its summit. (*IL*,1)

A timeless , ageless, fixed India entangled in internal hostilities and local conflicts, and where rule desolation, despair and backwardness :

> Sai and the cook had inflated the globe, attached it to the axis with the provided screws. Rarely was there something unexpected in the mail and never anything beautiful. They looked at the deserts, the mountains, the fresh spring colors of green and yellow, the snow at the poles ; somewhere on this glorious orb was Biju. They searched out New York and Sai attempted to explain to the cook why it was night there when it was day here, just as Sister Alice had demonstrated in St. Augustine's with an orange and a flashlight. The cook found it strange that India went first with the day, a funny back-to front fact that didn't seem mirrored by any other circumstance involving the two nations.(*IL*,18)

At another level, Desai's resistance to the hegemony of the global can be detected in her use of vernacular, echoeing Rushdie's contention that ' To conquer English may be to

complete the process of making ourselves free(17).'(Rushdie,qtd in Kiran kuman Golla,91). Pertinenly, *IL* abounds in Indian vernacular : *huzoor, bhai, hubshi, choksee, salwars, kurtas, sahib, jhora, pitaji, haveli, palki, chahije, bhenchoots, nakhra, pakoras, bandar, choorva, kolhapuri, babaji, puja, tikka massala, sovar ka baccha*…….. In this respect, Critic Tessa Hadley maintains that :

> Indian novels in English are always sprinkled with an untranslatable residue (puja, bhai, jhora- although Desai uses these sparingly, never merely as exotic signifiers) : the italics indicate the incomplete fit of English, its insufficiency to the Indian whole. But the poor fit of language to experience works both ways : the thinking that gets done in English, and which is not expressible differently, is also part of the Indian composite. This model of a literature with an in-built linguistic insufficiency, one which doesn't pretend to offer a complete translation of experience, appears distinctively contemporary as a way of imagining the novel in a future of coverging cultures. (the future of the predominance of English, and its hegemonic propensity, are entangled uncomfortably in that future too). (Exotic to Whom ?, Tessa Hadley)

If we agree with Tessa Hadley that vernacularization betrays 'insufficiency' on both sides, namely English and Indian, it not only translates linguistic resistance on the part of the author, but it undeniably and deliberately contributes to build a certain degree of untranslatability of the kind Emily Apter and Spivak champion, and which tends to celebrate the 'untranslatable' for being 'the particularity and irreducibility of idiom' (Spivak, 2012). Still, apart from its resisting potentials, the untranslatable speaks of the age of globalization and the ensuing hybridity it occasions, embarassing the frustration of the global citizen and further amplifying his fractured sense of linguistic affiliation.

Thus, akin to *LTA, AFW* or *TFROL, IL* adheres to the aesthetic choices of global fiction by problematizing language choice, and this is evident even in Desai's final note to the editor which she starts with a typically Oriental curtsy : *My Salaams,* in an astute move to Indianize/indigenize English, not only the colonizer's language but the lingua franca of the world, using lexis which has infiltrated the English repertoire. Critic Jill Didur(2011) suggests that in using 'Hinglish', Desai is intently infusing her narrative with 'a couleur locale', whereby one can confidently argue, she is deconstructing and resisting the hegemonic global thrust of English and the domination of the Anglophone 'Mcculture' over the world, while at the same time celebrating linguistic and cultural diversities.

Chapter six : Amine Maalouf, Elif Shafak, Kiran Desai and Kazuo Ishiguro: Between Self-othering and Remapping World Literature

6.1. *LTA* and *TFROL* : Rerouting the Silk Road or Remapping the World Cartography :

If Elif Shafak and Amine Maalouf stand today for true literary franchises in the international marketplace, clustering both authors might understandably be taxed as critically inappropriate, not only on account of the obvious discrepancy of profile and caliber, but equally due to matters of canonicity and literary prestige. While it is practically quasi-impossible to unburden one's perception of those disparities, this particular procedural undertaking is dictated by the mainstay premise of the present paper which rests in large part on probing worlding dynamics and marketing strategies as promoted by diasporic writers such as Maalouf and Shafak, simultaneously entangled, as they stand, with the market drive to commodify their texts, and the call to resist the sway of the Western publishing industry. The kindred market currency enjoyed by both writers in the Western bookmarket does not by any means bracket off Amine Maalouf's de facto synchronic and authorial ascendencies, and if more than two decades actually separate the release of *LTA*(1986*)* and *TFROL(*2009), the commercial success eventuated by both texts raises a host of akin interrogations related to the ingredients mobilized by both authors to formulate market-conscious artefacts, and further emphasizes the need to apprehend their texts as market commodities, engaging the complex circuits of production, dissemination and consumption.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, Janet Abu Lughod's ambitious project in *Before European Hegemony*(1989) to rechart the topography of world systems through a reconfiguration of the economic world map, translating thereby into a revisited literary template, effectively foregrounds the thirteenth century as a major temporal and geographical

trajectory, whereby the Orient presumably holds ascendency and thereof subverts over the Euro-American centrality. Accordingly, the route from medieval Morocco to the Red Sea and The Gulf of Persia down to India is underscored in such a vision as a channel for the free circulation of goods, people and culture. Revisionist in essence, Abu Lughod's world systems and subsystems stress the predominance of the Muslim civilisation in the Mediterranean area over the European component, which would stand as no more than a subsystem itself dependent on other similar subsystems as Theo D'haen aptly argues :'Looking at things now from Abu Lughod's map, we might conclude that 'Europe' that is to say the area covered by Abu Lughod's first sub-system, was in fact the peripheral receiving part of a much rich Mediterranean sub-system that was predominantly Muslim, and that itself interacted with subsystems around the Red sea and the Persian Gulf'(Mapping World Lit,10). Still, if Abu Lughod's corrective effort has been much lauded for its critical audacity, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to note its belatedness to Maalouf's fictional project which actually started in 1986 with *LTA* and materialized in more substantial forms with all his subsequent texts. Pertinently, not only does Maalouf's historical rewriting unearth Oriental Arab Muslim historical, cultural and spiritual legacies, but it more importantly invites the Western reader to reconsider his Eurocentred perspective through the fictional manipulation of official historiography, furnishing thus a revisited history of the world through an Islamic lens. Similarly, while the temporal gap between *LTA* and *TFROL* arguably positions the latter in a belated and potentially 'anxious' stance, Elif Shafak's literary venture is no less history-oriented as her œuvre registers more than one attempt at revamping historical legacy, with works such as *Pinhan* (*The Hidden*)(1997), *Sehrin Aynalari (Mirrors of the City)*(1999) or *The Architect's Apprentice* (2013). If all these narratives are clear evidence of Shafak's keen interest in history in general and Sufism in particular, this fascination reaches its paroxysm in *TFROL*, coinciding with the renewed popularity of Sufi mysticism in the West after the

publication of Rumi's *Mathnawi* by Coleman Barks in 1997, and the ensuing consecration of Rumi as the best selling poet in America as previously discussed in this dissertation. Clearly motivated by market incentives along with the direct impact of the prevalent Islamophobic atmosphere in the West, if Shafak's literary 'opportunism' seems to favour market needs over aesthetic ones, she nonetheless carries concerns which go beyond the actual dissemination of her fiction, and thereby contributes to anchor world literature elsewhere than in the metropolitan center. It is thus a telling coincidence that the French version of *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), translated by Aline Azoulay and published by Flammarion in 2007, boasts Amine Maalouf in its preface, identifying Shafak as the bearer of the 'old dream- ill-treated today- of an Orient with diverse languages and faiths' (my translation, *La Bâtarde D'Istanbul*). In recognizing affinities with the Turkish author, Maalouf grants this latter 'a certificate of literary value' (Casanova) by acting as a legislator or 'an agent of literariness', in total conformity with a long-established tradition of patronage in the French literary milieu, a favour she dutifully returns when commenting on the jacket blurb of the recent publication of his latest book *Adrift : How Our World Lost Its Way (2020)* translated from the French version *Naufrage de Civilisations (*2019) : 'Sharp intellect, tender heart. Maalouf is not only a brilliant storyteller and a wise thinker, he is one of our last remaining bridge builders between cultures, nations, tribes'.

Importantly, Maalouf's preface perceptively acknowledges in Shafak's fiction a literary posterity credited with the painstakingly task of passionately rehabilitating the ideal he recognizes as that of his own 'betrayed generation'. It is thus not surprising to Maalouf that :'Turkey is today the spotting soil of a great literature, born out of fractures, wounds, disequilibriums and uncertainties'(Preface, my translation). Shafak stands in this respect as the epitome of all the dilemmas of a homeland, glorious with its rich and intense historical legacies synopsised by a sublime and millenary metropole, where different races and

ethnicities rub shoulders :'Serbians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Polish in rupture of ban, Christians escaping Mesopotamia, Jews chased away from Spain', Constantinople 'where in the ninth century, a Greek deputy would thank his Lebanese colleague at the parliament for having translated *the Iliad and the Odyssey* into Arabic. Constantinople, where three centuries earlier, an architect of Armenian origin had constructed the most sumptuous mosques'(*La Bâtarde D'Istanbul*).(My translation). Retrospectively and without ever wishing to sound platitudinous, Maalouf's preface might read as a prescriptive exhortation to Turkish writers in general and to Shafak in particular, to capitalize on a heritage holding huge and limitless promises of cohabitation and tolerance. Three years ensuing Maalouf's preface, Shafak releases *The Architect's Apprentice* in 2013, as if wilfully and compliantly responding not only to his literary disenchantment, but to that of a whole generation he describes as 'incurable dreamers'.

Significantly, the revisited account of the illustrious Turkish architect *Mimar Sinan* stretches across various locales and settings, while celebrating the Ottoman Empire's impressive architecture and splendid buildings designed along a rare sense of 'harmony and balance'. Through this captivating tale, Shafak pays hommage to sixteenth-century Istanbul/Constantinople as a beacon of civilisation and a cross-cultural site where Indian twelve -year old Jahan is entrusted with the mission of delivering a gift from the Shah of India to Sultan Suleiman, thus registering familiar trajectories along the Silk Road . In a similar fashion, Shafak's vivid, complex and multilayered tale- if outspokenly historical- registers anew the resurfacing of the writer's profound interest in Sufism, hence establishing a thematic continuity with *TFROL*, and inscribing itself within the author's wider aesthetic project of celebrating Sufi universal love. There are actually more interesting lines of parallel that grow out of juxtaposing Shafak and Maalouf, yet due to immediate reasons of scope and size, this exercise will focus particularly on intertexting *TFROL* and *LTA* and will eventually pick up

the thread of space and how the Orient is represented in both narratives, while being attentive to the reconfiguration of the world map.

As a matter of course, Shafak's rewriting of the thirteenth century as a key timeframe for understanding the history of Sufism as one of the shaping forces of the Muslim civilisation starts in Samarkand in the year 1242 in the first part of Sweet Blasphemy entitled : 'Earth : THE THINGS THAT ARE SOLID, ABSORBED , AND STILL', when Shams of Tabriz has a premonitory vision of his death and his first ever vision of Rumi, his disciple and soulmate :

> Beeswax candles flickered in front of my eyes above the cracked wooden table. The vision that took hold of me this evening was a most lucid one. There was a big house with a courtyard full of yellow roses in bloom (…..) In a little while, a middle-aged man with a kind face, broad shoulders, and deep-set hazel eyes walked out of the house, looking for me. His expression was vexed, and his eyes were immensely sad.
>
> ' Shams, Shams, where are you ?' he shouted left and right.
>
> I opened my mouth to answer, but no sound came out of my lips.(….) My eyes were fixed on the moon as if waiting for an explanation from the skies for my murder. (*TFROL*,27)

After Samarkand, Uzbekistan, the birthplace of eleventh-century poet and philosopher Omar Khayyam, famous for his *Rubaiyat* and honoured by Maalouf in his 1988 novel *Samarkand,* the next station in Shams's journey is no other than the city of Baghdad which 'overflows with refugees running away from the Mongol army'(*TFROL*,46), an islamic site which 'can take pride in being a center of trade, crafts and poetry'(*TFROL*,47), still, a metropole where bigotry and religious fundamentalism thrive as incarnated by the character of the high judge 'renowned for his dislike of Sufism'(*TFROL*,46), and who makes it manifest

that his visit to the dervish lodge meant that '……he kept an eye on all the Sufis in the area'(*TFROL*,46). The fervent discussion that ensues between Shams and the judge betrays the growing religious dogmatism in 'Dar al Islam' : 'You Sufis make everything too complicated. The same with philosophers and poets ! Why the need for so many words ? Human beings are simple creatures with simple needs. It falls upon the leaders to see to their needs and make sure they do not go astray. That requires applying the sharia to perfection. (*TFROL*,49)

In textually rehearsing the ideological schism within Islamic discourse between fanatics and mystics, Shafak enables a diagnosis of the crisis of the actual Muslim community caught between a literal faithfulness to the Coranic text and the latitude of exegesis as echoed in Shams's words : 'The sharia is like a candle,' said Shams of Tabriz. ' It provides us with much valuable light. But let us not forget that a candle helps us to go from one place to another in the dark. If we forget where we are headed and instead concentrate on the candle, what good is it ?'.(*TFROL*,50)

This exchange retranscribes in a similar fashion the confrontation between fanatic Astaghfirullah and Epicurean Abu khamr in *LTA,* and stretches the analogy even further by sampling the end of the Abbassid Era for the former and the end of the Convivenzia age for the latter, as indexical of the beginning of the decline of Islamic civilisation. The condemnation of the extremist religious rethoric simultaneously by Shafak and Maalouf needs to be thus understood in the light of the contemporary rampant Islamophobia in the West, and can incidentally be read as a discursive effort to anatomize the ills of the Muslim faith in the present time, while lending strength to the actual global discourse about Islam. Still, while *LTA* furnishes a more nuanced vision of Muslims and foregrounds the notion of exile as a correlate of religious intolerance in Andalusia, *TFROL* constructs Sufism as a Muslim spiritual tradition with far-reaching mystical and aesthetic potentials against the dogmatism of

Muslim orthodoxy. Accordingly, by eventually acknowledging in the murder of Shams of Tabriz a failure of the Muslim faith to incorporate difference and polyphony, it disappointingly fails to recognize similar inclinations in other creeds. The character of Kerra, Rumi's wife, for example, serves to instantiate a space of religious tolerance in the narrative whereby the movement from one creed to another can be effected on fluid and unconflictual grounds, showcasing that interfaith dialogue is possible when believers are cognizant of the inherent interconnectedness between religions :

> I was alone in the kitchen(….), I started molding a shape out of a ball of dough. I sculpted a small, soft Mother Mary. My Mother Mary. With the help of a knife, I carved her long robe and her face, calm and compassionate.(….)
>
> 'What is it that you are making , Kerra ?'(…)
>
> I saw Shams(…)
>
> ' Is that Mary ?' he asked,(….). 'Why, she is beautiful. Do you miss Mary ?'
>
> ' I converted long ago, I am a Muslim woman,' I answered curtly.(*TFROL*,298/299)

What would sound like apostasy in this passage is swiftly recuperated by Shams :

> Christians, Jews , and Muslims are like those travelers. While they quarrel about the outer form, the Sufi is after the essence,'(…) What I am trying to say is, there is no reason for you to miss Mother Mary, because you don't need to abandon her in the first place. As a Muslim woman you can still feel attached to her.'(…) Religions are like rivers : They all flow to the same sea. (*TFROL*,/299)

This exchange between Kerra and Shams takes place in Konya, significantly situated in the second part of the narrative entitled : Water : THE THINGS THAT ARE FLUID, CHANGING , AND UNPREDICTABLE. In Konya Turkey, the reader is introduced to a gamut of characters as complex and controversial as Hassan the Beggar, Suleiman the Drunk, The Zealot, Bybars the Warrior, or else Desert Rose the Harlot. This latter openly invokes biblical references to a central figure namely Maria Magdalena, Jesus's apostle, who after a life spent in prostitution and promiscuity, retreats into a sainthood-like existence. Desert Rose's resolution to seek sanctuary in Rumi's home, while craving for Shams's spiritual guidance forcibly aligns her with Magdalena who tragically witnesses the crucifixion of Jesus, just as Desert Rose is a resident at Rumi's abode where Shams is mercilessly murdered. This capitalization on Christian motifs posits Shams as a Jesus-like figure surrounded not only by faithful disciples, but equally by sly and cold-blooded traitors. Shafak's polyphonic narrative is scaffolded by Ella's and Aziz's love story, which embarks the reader in totally different temporal and spatial dimensions, from the thirteenth century forward to the twenty first century in the year 2008 and from Oriental locations to Western settings. If dull, mundane, and loveless, Ella's life in Northampton is soon illuminated by a virtual romance with Aziz, a Dutch Sufi leading a nomadic life just as Shams is. The transmuting virtue of reading *Sweet Blasphemy* leads Jewish American Ella into an initiating inner journey from Northampton to Boston, then to Konya, the cradle of Sufism, only to see Aziz pass away after a long struggle with cancer : 'Aziz was buried in Konya, following in the steps of his beloved Rumi'(*TFROL*,348). The love lesson Ella learns in Konya, the fortieth and last is that :

> A life without love is of no account. Don't ask yourself what kind of love you should seek, spiritual or material, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western….. Divisions only lead to more divisions. Love has no labels, no definitions. It is what it is , pure and simple'.

‘Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire !

‘The universe turns differently when fire loves water.’(*TFROL*,350)

For Shafak, rewriting the silk road is charted along spiritual lines tracing back the genesis of Sufism, as a long misunderstood and ostracized tradition, born in Konya, Turkey but eventually radiating all over the world. The two parallel accounts are confronted through divergent temporal and spatial components whereby contemporary Western values are subordinated to medieval Oriental ones, registering thus the ascendency of Oriental spiritualism. While this fictional choice enacts an essentialist gesture in Shafak’s narrative, it inadvertently adheres to a logic of justification, which endeavours to account and apologize for the rise of extremism in Muslim communities through the preaching of an unnuanced conceptualization of love.

Conversely, *LTA*’s narrative line follows the trajectory of Hasan’s exile from Spain, down to Morocco, stretching to African countries, Egypt, then Italy, and finally back to North Africa. Constructed as a bildungsroman, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, *LTA* envisions space as a site of formation or growth with an accumulative effect, whereby the protagonist gradually gains understanding of the deep changes of an Orient betrayed by its own internal conflicts. Thus, the end of Muslim supremacy in al Andalus registers a migratory movement flowing all over North Africa, and Morocco in particular, standing as a locus of displacement and unbelonging, but mostly as a gateway to a larger Oriental topography. The Book of Fez, which happens to be the second and bulkiest part of Hasan’s account, documents the geography of the Medieval city with its alleyways, hammams, funduks, maristans, madrasas, condolence ceremonies, porters, etc :

> Before Fez, I had never set foot in a city, never observed the swarming activity of the alleyways, never felt that powerful breath on my face, like the wind from the sea, heavy with cries and smells. Of course I was born in Granada, the stately

> capital of the kingdom of Andalus, but it was already late in the century, and I knew it only in its death agonies, emptied of its citizens and its souls, humiliated, faded (…) Fez was entirely different, and I had all my youth to discover it. (…) I came towards it on the back of a mule, a poor sort of conqueror, half-asleep. (…) All round Fez, as far as the eye could see, were ranges of hills ornamented with countless houses in brick and stone, many of which were decorated with glazed tiles like the houses of Granada. On the left is the quarter of the Andalusians, founded centuries ago by emigrants from Cordoba ; on the right is the quarter of the people of Qairawan, with the mosque and the school of the Quarawiyyin in the middle. (LTA,83/84)

Through young Hasan's chronicle, Maalouf furnishes the Western reader with an accurate picture of the city premised on Ibn al Wazzan's *Description of Africa,* which historians concede was of great succor to the West in discovering North Africa :

> It was not, however the proximity of these unfortunates that upset my father, but the presence of a very different group of people. Having visited Fez in his youth, he still remembered the reputation of certain hostelries, which was so disgusting that no honest man would cross their thresholds or address a word to their proprietors, because they were inhabited by those men who were called al-hiwa. As I have written in my description of Africa, the manuscript of which remains in Rome, these were men who habitually dressed as women, with make up and adornments, who shaved their beards, spoke only in high voices and spent their days spinning wool. The people of Fez only saw them at funerals, because it was customary to hire them alongside the females mourners to heighten the sadness . It must be said that each of them had his own male concubine with whom he carried

> on like a wife with her husband. May the Most High guide us from the paths of error ! (*LTA*, 89/90)

Pertinently, Ibn al Wazzan‘s meticulously detailed rendition of the city of Fez is highly palpable in Maalouf’s intertexting, which apart from the obvious incentive of authentification, registers not only how Oriental space was judiciouly architected along inclusion and exclusion dynamics, but mainly how the Oriental culture addressed its ‘other’, be it homosexuals or lepers, spatially placed at a removal from sites of moral and social normality. The sad story of Mariam, Hasan’s sister, sheds lights on the way leprosy for the Orient, just as for the West, was instrumentalized by the official discourse to stigmatize alterity and difference, and if Zerouali’s bitter vengeance in sending Mariam to the lepers’s quarter after declining his proposal can be superficially interpreted as a sheer case of retaliation, it nonetheless carries evidence of how patriarchy managed to curtail female power deemed potentially transgressive of social norms. In this respect, one cannot help calling to mind Foucault’s archeological study on madness as a surrogate to leprosy in medieval Europe, and how the ‘strange disappearance’ of this malady : ‘was not the long-sought effect of obscure medical practices but the spontaneous result of segregation, and also the consequence, after the Crusades, of the break of the Eastern sources of the infection’(Foucault,1965 :6). Besides Orientalizing leprosy and deeming it as the plague of contact with alterity, Foucault documents how leprosariums and the figure of the leper as a site of the ‘liminal’ par excellence continued to be inscribed, even after their disappearance ‘within a sacred circle’(Foucault,1965 :6).While Maalouf’s text registers how leprosy was anathemized, it does not fail to sketch a portrait- quite gloomy rather- of the maristan, the only medical institution in medieval Fez :

> In the hospice of Fez there are six nurses, a maintenance man, twelve attendants, two cooks, five refuse collectors, a porter, a gardener, a director, an assistant and

> three secretaries, all decently paid, as well as a large number of sick people. But, as God is my witness, there is not a single doctor. When a sick person arrives, he is put into a room, with someone to look after him, but without receiving any treatement at all, until he either dies or is cured.(*LTA*,177)

Significantly, the only patients in the maristan of Sidi Frej, where Hasan al-Wazzan once held the position of secretary for two years stretching from 1507 to 1509, are madmen whose :

> feet are always kept in chains, for fear that they might otherwise do damage. Their ward is at the end of the corridor whose walls are strenghtened with thick joists, and only the more experienced attendants dare to go near them. The one who gives them their meals is armed with a stout stick, and if he sees that one of them is excited, he gives him a good beating which either calms him down or knocks him out.(*LTA*,177)

In addition to the bleak portrayal of medical establishments in the city of Fez mainly on account of corruption and misuse of funds, *LTA* registers the cohabitation of leprosy and madness as two facets of otherness in the Oriental imaginary, contrary to what Foucault's *History of Madness*(1965) certifies about the European context. For Foucault, madness in Europe supplanted leprosy while highjacking similar structures and semiotic circuits : 'Leprosy disappeared, the leper vanished, or almost, from memory, these structures remained. Often in these same places, the formulas of exclusion would be repeated, strangely similar two or three centuries later. Poor vagabonds, criminals and 'deranged minds' would take the part played by the leper….'(Foucault,1965,7).

As previously discussed in this dissertation, the young Hasan's *rihla* to Timbuktu, Tlemcen, Cairo, Alexandria, Constantinople, Algiers, Tunis and Mecca remaps the silk road

as a transcultural route reactivating the utopia of a harmoniously multicultural Orient in a world on the brink of collapse. This itinerary ultimately leads Hasan/Leo to Rome and the Vatican, initially as a prisoner, then as a protege of the Pope himself. In Rome, wherein Leo becomes a Christian convert after one year of indocrination, he maturates an insider/outsider outlook on the Western culture, and more precisely on the intrigue surrounding Pope Leo X in the vatican, a world which Anton Shammas qualifies as 'pontifically trite'(Anton Shammas, 1989). Significantly, Maalouf does not miss to dramatize an encounter between Hasan/Leo and Italian Renaissance artists on the day of his baptism : 'On that day it was crammed with cardinals, bishops, ambassadors and numerous proteges of Leo X, poets, painters, sculptors, glittering with brocade, pearls and precious stones. Even Raphael of Urbino was there, the divine Raphael as the admirers of his art used to call him(…) (*LTA*,296)

As a Renaissance man, Hasan/Leo attunes his senses to the arts of the day and exhibits fascination as a Muslim scholar and traveller with Italian architecture, as he visits the basilica of St Peter, the Castel San Angelo, the new palace of Cardinal Farnese in Rome ' Idle city…. Holy city…. Eternal city….'(*LTA*,301). His first encounter with Master Francesco Guicciardini, governor of Modena and a diplomat in His Holiness' service, broaches an exchange between both men whereby Hasan displays his linguistic skills before his interlocutor who blames himself for ignoring Arabic : 'I do not myself speak Arabic, which is nevertheless spoken all around the Mediterrenean'(*LTA*,290) thus reiterating the momentous role played by Arab Muslim civilisation in a major 'world system' (Abu Lughod,1994), and thereby obliquely verifying its ascendency. During his tête a tête with Pope Leo X himself, Hasan/Leo ventures to draw a compelling analogy between the Muslim and Christian faiths in having recourse to war and finding 'nothing scandalous in that'(*LTA*,292) since 'The Caliphs, the successors of the Prophet, have always commanded armies and governed states'(*LTA*,292). The exchange between the two men leads Hasan to acknowledge that the

golden age of Islam coincided with the Caliphate, and that the advent of the Sultanate inaugurated the supremacy of politics over religion : 'As long as the caliphs were rulers, Islam was radiant with culture. Religion reigned peaceably over the affairs of the world. Since then, it is force which rules, and the faith is often nothing but a sword in the hands of the sultan'(*LTA*,292).

This sorry state of affairs, which the protagonist ascribes to a secular state of sorts, capitalizing on religion only as a veneer for political ends, finds reverberations in the vatican where Leo comes to realize the hollowness and fakeness of the papal institution as representative of the Roman Catholic church :

> I want you to keep this vision of wretchedness constantly in front of you when you see how the princes of the church live, all those cardinals who own three palaces each, where they compete in sumptuousness and debbauchery, where they organize feast after feast, with twelve kinds of fish, eight salads, five sorts of sweets. And the Pope himself ? Have you seen him having the elephant which the King of Portugal gave him paraded up and down with great pride ? Have you seen him throw gold pieces at his jesters ? Have you seen him hunting on his estate at Magalia, in long leather boots, riding behind a bear or a wild boar, surrounded by his sixty eight dogs ? Have you seen his falcons and goshawks, brought for gold from Candia and Armenia ? (*LTA*,299)

In delivering such an uncompromising verdict on the bankrupcy of the religious authority in the West, while similarly faulting the Muslim civilisation for its ideological and ethical slippages, Maalouf's text contemplates to identify, without a certain degree of uneasiness, the reasons of demise of the Arab-Muslim culture exiled and chased from its last bastions, yet equally condemns the evacuation of Christianity from its value-system, and further registers

the ideological crisis within the faith itself and the emergence of opposing sects such as Lutheranism, leading to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, and calling into question the authority of the church. Simultaneously, Hasan/Leo's travelogue documents the growing expansion of the Ottoman empire in Anatolia and all over the world, under the reign of Sultan Salim 'the Grim' (*LTA*, 259) whose opulent looks conform to the image of the Oriental ruler : 'He had no beard but a bushy moustache which he fingered endlessly ; his complexion seemed ashen, his eyes too large for his face and slanting slightly. On his turban, which he wore small and tightly wound, was a ruby encrusted in a golden flower. At his right ear hung a pearl in the shape of a pear'*(LTA*.260). The narrative celebrates the 'strange city' of Constantinople 'so weighed down with history, but at the same time so new, both in its stones and its people' (*LTA*,258), a multi-ethnic, multiracial but mostly multi-confessional site where 'In the suqs, the turbans of the Turks and the skull caps of the Christians and Jews mingle without hatred or resentment'(*LTA*,258).

This dream of an Orient rich in its cultural differences, harmonious in the multiplicity of its creeds, challenging in its 'civilisational' stakes, encompassing in its spirituality is a long-held chimera, the promises of which can be found both in Maalouf's and Shafak's texts. While the latter capitalizes on the transformative potentials of Sufism for contemporary generations to apprehend modernity, and better fathom the complex realities of the humankind in the era of globalization ; the former suggests a fresher perspective on the contradictions and ambiguities surrounding Muslim civilisation against a model of cultural understanding and mutual comprehension. Indeed, far from any critical parti pris, one can safely conjecture that Maalouf's project investigates larger scopes, displaying throughout his fictional corpus a rare consistency and coherence both on the thematic, aesthetic and linguistic levels, translating his concerns as an exiled Oriental, with ambitions of bridge-building and cultural dialogue. Conversely, Shafak's celebration of the Oriental spiritual legacy seems to

pay heed to market exigencies, and the fluctuations of literary trends in the West. Accordingly, *TFROL* versus *LTA* are paradigmatic of two disparate conceptualizations of 'self-othering', which admittedly inscribe the 'self-exotic' within the familiar/ strange dynamic, yet, activate different aesthetic strategies to vend alterity. It is perhaps not an overstatement to say that *TFROL* does not hold the necessary components of canonicity, for it will ever remain in the category of literary crazes, while *LTA* boasts all the ingredients of a counter-canonical work- to invoke Damrosch- and can thus be daringly identified as part and parcel of the contemporary canon. Ultimately, and if it is true that both texts champion the values and dimensions of modernity, the most salient of which are exile and unbelonging, *LTA* more than *TFROL* adheres more cogently to the dilemmas of living in a growingly cross-cultural environment, so that we can only join our voices to Hasan/ Leo's :'Between the Andalus which I left and the paradise which is promised to me life is only a crossing. I go nowhere, I desire nothing, I cling to nothing, I have faith in my passion for living, in my instinct to search for happiness, as well as in Providence'. (*LTA*,261)

6.2 . Kiran Desai and Kazuo Ishiguro : Worlding Diasporic Literature Between the Local and the Global

'Une Œuvre non traduite n'est lue qu'à moitiè''(Ernest Renan in Kilito *Je Parle* ,63)

If *AFW* (1986) and *IL* (2006) can readily be categorized as diasporic texts, intertexting both narratives might nonetheless pose critical challenges which go well beyond generic and thematic considerations, on account not only of the synchronic distance separating the two works- two decades-, but more importantly on dissemination, consumption , and ultimately of collaboration, it is otherwise intriguing to register how each narrative manages its marketability and commodification within the international book market. Accordingly, the present chapter will probe how *AFW* and *IL* chart respective trajectories on the international

literary arena, and examine the way both artefacts attempt to reformulate visible structures of the world, while knowingly capitalizing on their cultural otherness in their race to ensure market valence and visibility, and strategically subverting Western assumptions about alterity.

If two decades separate the publication of *AFW* and *IL* as mentioned above, one forcibly needs to halt at the significance of *AWF* in Ishiguro's literary career and reflect on the writer's authorial mobility from 'typical Japanese' to ' typical universal', to borrow from critic Jane Hu who rightly wonders : 'How did Kazuo Ishiguro evolve from a celebrated novelist of the postwar Japanese experience to a universal paragon of so-called Anglophone literature ?'(Jane Hu, 2021 :123). This flexibility, or more accurately aesthetic maturation, is perceived by Hu as indexical of a characteristic generic framework namely the Asian Anglophone historical novel which she contends underpins the sum total of Ishiguro's fiction :

> Ishiguro's œuvre thus models in condensed miniature the trajectory of the historical novel since Walter Scott's germinal *Waverley* (1814) (Hu,2021: 125).

As early as *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) in which Ishiguro experiments with '.the tropes of the gothic novel(Hu, 125), to flirting with 'the kunstlerroman'(Hu,125) in *AFW*, moving to the 'Manor house fiction'(Hu) in *The Remains of The Day* (1989), then trying his hand at 'modernist surrealism'(Hu,125) in *The Unconsoled* (1995), toying with 'the detective novel'(Hu,125) in *When We Were Orphans*(2000), then futurism and fantasy in *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *The Buried Giant* (2015) respectively. According to Hu, this versatility and generic variety reveals if 'read in continuum' that 'Ishiguro's novels emphasize how novelistic representations of national histories are predicated on the genericness of British historical fiction. As Ishiguro has increasingly experimented with speculative genre fiction, we can see how stereotypes of Asian inscrutability in his early work are in fact part of a broader fiction about generic characters' (Hu,125). Hu documents how Ishiguro in his

preliminary drafts of *AFW* had never contemplated to set it in Japan but more likely '….in 1980s England with a young Japanese employee at a British firm as its protagonist'. Though the novel is ultimately set in postwar Japan featuring the imperial apologist and former war propagandist, Masuji Ono, Ishiguro's initial blueprints reveal a rather different story that traffics far more in stereotypes about Britishness' (Hu,132). If anything, this initial sketch confirms once more Ishiguro's cosmopolitan amibition in his early aesthetic choices, and verifies anew that the scope and scape of his texts transcend local or parochial bearings. The choice of an anonymous Asian locale and his intent in not naming the setting substantiates the global vocation of *AFW,* premised, as it is, on the local/global dialectic which suffuses the narrative with a universal dimension. Thus, *AFW* envisions a post-WW II locale, wherein disillusioned Ono revisits the past and unwittingly questions his life achievements with a rare complacency, complicated by a quasi-insular detachment from the rest of the world, in an inimical attitude towards the hegemony of American culture and politics. In shedding light on human and material desolations, the narrative condemns the American gung-hoo belligerence around the world, further magnified by the fake and facile discourse of globalization, a discourse gainsaid even further by *IL.*

Importantly and as discussed earlier in this dissertation, the flux from local to global spheres in Desai's text is confused by the imbrication of different rhetorics namely postcolonialism and globalization, which when aligned together, foreground the economy of loss, and emphasize the pernicious sequels of the neo-capitalist system worldwide. It is noteworthy that both *AFW* and *IL* share a concern with individual agency when confronted with the sweeping dehumanization of neo-capitalism. Pertinently, while Masuji Ono comes to realize, in narrative retrospection and with the clarity of hindsight, his enslavement by the mighty nationalist militarist ideology, and the collapse of all his value system against the ethical codes of post-war times, Biju surrenders the global chase on account of his sentiments

of alienation and estrangement, and chooses instead to disengage himself from global pursuits, suggesting thus a dissonance within the global/local dialectic. Yet, the disenchantment with the discourse of globalization in *AFW* and *IL* takes different directions since Ishiguro's text seems to be more of an invitation to the reader to interrogate the new world system dominated by American values such as military might and consumerism, since America is apprehended as 'a parvenu' with no cultural capital or historical heritage, as opposed to Japan, whose ancestral culture is being dispossessed and denied ascendency. This civilisational clash wherein Japan obviously plays the part of the vanquished rehearses a universal unevenness similarly brought under scrutiny in *IL* which juxtaposes not only India to the US, but all the Borgesian 'voices of poverty' to the signifiers of capitalist exploitation. Fittingly, both narratives tease out the complexity of post-independence/post-war malaise while exploring how the confrontation between local and global might result in postcolonial cynicism or ethical evacuation. If Ono reluctantly comes to acknowledge the inadequacy and anachronism of his belief system in post-war Japan, Judge Pattel is likewise beffuddled by his identity slippages, and his perplexed attitude towards his very own culture, people and self. Indeed, both men stand for vestigial or antiquated modes of thinking which have failed to address purposefully occluded realities such as historical factuality and identity trouble, in typical self-denial. Yet, while *AWF* de-emphasizes the validity of the nation state as a suitable framework for understanding the complexity of modern plight, it otherwise invites reflection on the actual world system governed by market logics and economic supremacy, which in turn gestures towards the imbalances in the new world order. On the other hand, *IL* reconstructs cognition of the world along an epistemic reconfiguration which attempts to offer new paradigms in comprehending worldliness both as a reality and process but certainly as no panacea to the world's ills. It is indeed under the 'messy' sky of Mahattan that Biju is seized by fear of losing his soul and identity : 'And if he

continued on here ? What would happen ? Would he, like Harish-Harry, manufacture a fake version of himself and using what he had created as clues, understand himself backward ? Life was not about life for him anymore, and death-what would even that mean to him ? it would have nothing to do with death' (*IL*,268). Thus, the absurdity of life in exile and the longing for his homeland convince Biju to return to Kalimpong only to be robbed and dispossessed of all his belongings exactly as Mr Kakkar had warned him :

> ……., 'You are sure you want to go back ??' he said alarmed, ……..
>
> 'You're making a big mistake……'don't be completely crazy- all those relatives asking for money ! Even strangers are asking for money- maybe they just try, you know, maybe you shit and dollars come out. I'm telling you my friend, they will get you ; if they won't, the robbers will ; if the robbers won't, some disease will ; if not some disease, the heat will, if not the heat, those mad Sardarjis will bring down your plane before you even arrive.'
>
> While Biju had been away, Indira Gandhi had been assassinated by the Sikhs in the name of their homeland ; Rajiv Gandhi had taken over- (*IL*,268/ 269)

Such a bleak picture counterbalances Biju's imagined and romanticized idea of home, for once back home, Biju '…..felt himself slowly shrink back to size, the enormous anxiety of being a foreigner ebbing- that unbearable arrogance and shame of the immigrant. Nobody paid attention to him here, and if they said anything at all, their words were easy, unconcerned. He looked about for the first time in God knows how long, his vision unblurred and he found that he could see clearly.' (*IL*,300). Yet, soon after the robbers deprive him of all his properties 'Darkness fell and he sat right in the middle of the path- without his baggage, without his savings, worst of all, without his pride. Back from America with far less than he'd ever had.'(*IL*,317), only to wonder 'Why had he left? Why had he left? He'd been a

fool. He thought of Harish-Harry- ' Go for a rest and then return.' Mr Kakkar, the travel agent who had warned him- ' My friend, I am telling you, you are making a big mistake'(*IL*,318). Architected along geographical and spatial binarisms, Desai's narrative oscillates between a constructed image of the West- America in this occurrence- and home epitomized by India and Kalimpong in particular. This duality between the imaginary and material realities involved in conceptualizing space not only upsets/capsizes any a-priori assumptions about locale, but more importantly disturbs the bifold contrast between local/global, by further rejecting any monolithic conceptualizations. Such a vision heightens the vulnerability of modern subjectivities caught between national/local uniqueness and the lure of cosmopolitan membership , which is shortly jettisoned by the ideological crisis of neo-capitalism and globalization. Significantly, the weight of global structures on individual entities can be perceived in more obvious ways in *IL* ,which prioritizes the hegemony of global systems over subjective agency, than in *AFW,* which envisages the individual in his conflictual relationship with his environment, manipulated by political and ideological agendas, as he stands, yet in total harmony with his local anxieties couched in a typically post-war 'naivety'. In reality, Ono's failure and refusal to acknowledge the impact of the new world order is counter-argued in the narrative by the evidence that Japan is part of the international community, and is subjected to the influence of global flows. The postcolonial malaise driving Judge Pattel, Biju and the rest of characters in *IL* finds no echo in *AFW* wherein the real plight resides in challenging microscopic personal history with macroscopic national agendas.

6.3. *AFW* and *IL* : Two Narratives Navigating Their Way through the Global Market :

In one of her interviews, Kiran Desai confessed that 'No one wanted (her) book' as it was turning into '…..a monster, growing out of control'[13], yet the truth is, it sold more than 2,396 copies immediately after it was long-listed for the Booker, and witnessed a sales boost with an average of five hundred copies a week after she was short-listed for the ditto. Correspondingly, the critical accolade received by *AFW* rests in large part on its short-listing for the 1986 Booker Prize and its subsequent nomination for the Whitbread Book of the Year Award (1986). Without ever intending to question the aesthetic quality nor the literary merit of both texts, it strikes us as obvious that the Booker Prize is undeniably a much coveted 'holy grail' for most if not all writers- to borrow from Aravind Adiga, and apart from the financial appeal it surely operates on the community of contemporary novelists worldwide- 50,000 pounds cash award- the impetus it represents for their careers is much more far-reaching and consequential.

Pertinently, Rebecca Walkowitz notes that : 'Since winning The Booker Prize in 1989, he has been an avid participant in international book tours, which he says have made him more self-conscious about the cultural and the linguistic diversity of his readers'(Walkowitz,219), a consciousness which actively translates in his fiction offering '….compelling examples of the new World Literature', according to Walkowitz, or what she chooses to label 'comparison literature'. She further maintains that '….this emerging genre of World Literature for which global comparison is as formal as well as a thematic preoccupation' (Walkowitz,218) does not only allow new ways of thinking, but most importantly furnishes us with novel global paradigms whereby it becomes possible to invoke absent structures such as nation, culture and

[13] https://www.rediff.com/news/2006/oct/15kiran.htm

English. If such categories are admittedly occulted in literature as Simon Gikandi wonders : 'What are we going to do with these other categories-nation, culture and English-which function as the absent structure that shapes and yet haunts global culture and the idea of literature itself' (qtd in Walkowitz, 218), it is only fair to acknowledge that Ishiguro's fiction 'forces us to see that a new conception of 'global culture' if it is to be something other than an enlargement of national culture, will require a new idea of literature itself' (Walkowitz,219). This destabilization of the very notion of the literary is in reality an urge to reformulate visible structures of the world by rethinking long-held assumptions of alterity. In both *AFW* and *IL*, the Western reader is summoned to flexibly reconsider her Western-centric monolithic version of history and the grand narrative of nation by claiming a global sense of history and moving- as discussed in earlier chapters- from championing national allegories to transnational or global ones. Thus, Japanese and Indian narratives are envisaged in their complex interconnectedness to international history, calling for a reconfiguration of world systems and arguably for a new understanding of literature. The complexity reaches its finest when the reader learns that Gyan's-Sai's lover- great grandfather '…swore allegiance to the Crown, and off he went, the beginning of over a hundred years of family commitment to the wars of the English' (*IL*,142). The account unfolds as follows :

> At the beginning, the promise had held true-all Gyan's great- grandfather did was march for many prosperous years, and he acquired a wife and three sons. But then they sent him to Mesopotamia where Turkish bullets made a sieve of his heart and he leaked to death on the battlefield. As a kindness to the family , that they might not lose their income, the army employed his eldest son, although the famous buffalo, by now, was dead, and the new recruit was spindly. Indian soldiers fought in Burma, in Gibraltar, in Egypt, in Italy. Two months short of(……..), the

> spindly soldier was killed in Burma, shakily defending the British against the Japanese(…..). (*IL*,142)

This re-reading of contemporary history operates a rehabilitation of the marginalized, and establishes explicit correlations between the atrocities perpetrated by colonialism, and the legitimate feelings of resentment among postcolonial subjects such as Biju and his fellow dishwasher Achootan, who have to cope with the white man's arrogance in locations of power, where pauperism and destitution have cornered them :

> These white people' Said Achootan.(….) 'Shit! But at least this country is better than England,' he said. ' At least they have some hypocrisy here, They believe they are good people and you get some relief. There they shout at you openly on the street, 'Go back to where you came from.' He had spent eight years in Canterbury, and he had responded by shouting a line Biju was to hear many times over, for he repeated it several times a week : Your father came to *my* country and took *my* bread, and now I have come to your country to get *my* bread back.(*IL*,135)

Apart from registering the deep indignation of the community of subalterns, this 'speaking back' of sorts textually reproduces the rhetoric of postcolonial fiction, and aesthetically both sets the tone and makes room for Desai's narrative within the 'writing back' project. Additionally, *IL*'s ambition exceeds being a mere condemnation of the politics of colonialism to that of a reassessment of the global order through which the novel itself has to negotiate its way, by traversing the circuits of dissemination and translation. In identifying the insufficiency and inadequacy of postcolonial aesthetics to apprehend global crises, *IL* and *AWF* respectively solicit expansive frameworks and larger geographical and historical horizons, aware as they stand, of the significance of mobility as a key aspect of the global

novel. While the inner mobility of the narratives, particularly *IL*, affiliates with the translinguistic and transcultural vocations of the texts as market commodities traficking and trotting around the cosmopolitan book circuits, it is only fair to halt at the ambivalent function of vernacular in both texts and underline the purposeful play between familiarity and unfamiliarity promoted by both narratives. Indeed as discussed earlier in this research, *IL* and *AFW* construct a certain extent of untranslatability which manages in the long run to engage the reader-admittedly in a superficial way- in the culture-specific 'habitus' of the texts, while discursively advertising its resistance to the uniformisation of the literary. This linguistic 'defamiliarization' or intentful estrangement positions both texts wihin their cultures of origin, which ultimately act not only as agents of resistance but in subtler ways as exotic features, exemplifying self-othering strategies so familiar to the international book market.

If both Desai and Ishiguro are perfectly cognizant of the stakes involved in writing for a global literary audience located in northern metropoles, they are obviously vigilant not to fall prey to the trap of becoming 'polite works of ethical universal relevance' as critic Tim Parks argues (2010,25). Yet, writing in English for a global readership means having to deal with highly complex issues, namely audience and linguistic variety, as Rebecca Walkowitz convincingly debates :

> To write in English for global audiences, therefore, is to write for a heterogeneous group of readers : those who are proficient in several languages, those who may be less-than-proficient in English, and those who may be proficient in one version of English but not proficient in another. This diversity creates an enormous range of English- language geographies, writers and audiences. It also means that readers of English-language texts are likely to have very different experiences. The work will be foreign, strange or difficult to some ; it will be familiar to others- Anglophone novelists are thus managing comparative beginnings from the

> start and must find ways to register internal multilingualism (within English) even as their works travel out into additional national languages(beyond English). (Walkowitz, 2015 :18)

Pertinently, while *IL* and *AFW* build discursive sites which oscillate between the will to defy the triumphalist discourse of globalization and the need to respond and cater to the demand for exoticism in the Western market, the concern with reaching larger audiences makes 'Many English-language writers draw attention to the unevenness of the global marketplace and sometimes try to remediate that unevenness by welcoming translation, by devising strategies of multilingualism that can survive global circulation, and by emphasizing translation's crucial role in the development of the English-language novel'(Walkowitz, 2015 :19). Correspondingly, the category 'Born-Translated' novels championed by Walkowitz, to which *IL* and *AFW* surely affiliate with :

> …….often focus on geographies in which English is not the principal tongue. These works purposefully break with the unique assignment of languages, geographies and states in which one place is imagined to correspond to one language and one people, who are the users of that language. Born-translated works articulate this break by extending, sometimes radically, the practice of self translation, a term that translation specialists have often limited to authors who produce both an original work and the translation of that original work. (Walkowitz,2015 :19)

If such a portrait calls to mind Elif Shafak and the linguistic journey her texts have to survive, as she 'preempts translation' to borrow from Walkowitz, since she originally composes her novels in Turkish, then self-translates them in English, Desai's and Ishiguro's cases are slightly different, for if it is not a case of self-translation per se, there is still

collaboration between writer and translator. Originally written in English- the global language par excellence- *IL* and *AFW* are nonetheless meant for larger audiences, conceivable only through translational transfer which is intrinsic to global literature, considered '…..as medium and origin rather than as afterthought' (Walkowitz,2015:5), for translation is by no means :

> …..secondary or incidental to these works. It is a condition of their production. Globalization bears on all writers working in English today. However, it bears on them differently. Some works of fiction are sure to be translated. Others hope to achieve it. Some novelists are closely tied to the mass market, some to prestige cultures, and others to avant-garde communities. But even those novelists who won't plan on translation participate in a literary system attuned to multiple formats, media or languages. Born-translated novels approach this system opportunistically. (Walkowitz,2015 :5)

This literary opportunism, inherent to the contemporary global condition, locates works such as *IL* and *AFW* at the heart of market dynamics, based as it stands, on commercial demand and astutely handled by international publishing conglomerates. Accordingly, for both works to be in the pipeline of multilingual/multinational networks, translation is a prerequisite for circulation and international recognition. In this respect, Walkowitz persuasively underscores the essential function operated by translation in disseminating born-translated fiction :

> …..,born-translated works are notable because they highlight the effects of circulation on production. Not only are they quickly and widely translated, they are also engaged in thinking about that process. They increase translation's visibility, both historically and proleptically : they are trying to be translated, but in important ways they are also trying to keep being translated. They find ways to

register their debts to translation even as they travel into additional languages. (Walkowitz,2015 :6)

This debt to the field transcends the unquestionable aesthetic value of translation as a praxis, to its material conditions as quintessentially part of a transaction governed by market logics. Significantly, the immediate access to wider markets and, by the same token, to a larger readership is augmented by the sensitiveness to cultural specificity displayed in the different multilingual versions. In truth, the cover politics instrumentalized in *IL* and *AFW* disclose the unequivocal mobilization of paratextual marketing strategies, which capitalize on cultural particularities, such is the case with *IL* in its various translations in French, Spanish, German, and Russian (see previous chapter on Desai). These two latter advertise the suitcase iconography which emphasizes transcontinental movement and unambiguously stresses the centrality of mobility to the global spirit, on the other hand, the French and Spanish covers capitalize more overtly on Oriental signifiers which actually do not refer to any true textual anchor. Accordingly, the packaging politics of Desai's text reveals a genuine concern with audience sensibilities and seems to avail itself of the supply of cliches and stereotypes related to the Eastern culture. Similarly, the way *AFW* is packaged for a multilingual readership singles out different aspects related to the narrative, stretching from the theme of floatingness to Japanese imagery refering the reader to Japanese arts acting ,as mentioned earlier, as narrative tresholds to the novel. Thus, the circulation of global narratives is in large part indebted to the confluence of exertions by different agents such as publishers, translators, reviewers, critics or what John Hall calls 'the gatekeepers of the global literary system'.

A central issue to the debate on World literature is the fate of literary works outside their immediate literary environments, are they 'lost' or 'found' in translational transfer, do they gain in border-crossing and transnational mobility ?. If circulation stands as a mainstay parameter for gauging worldliness in literature and if translation heightens a work's status as

World literature, as Damrosch adamantly maintains, it is noteworthy that literary artefacts have the tendency to obliquely summon the global reader '……to experience the text as a delayed or detoured object, a book that began somewhere else' (Walkowitz,2015 :25). In this light, the global literary 'ecology', for all its ebb and flow, seems to be regimented along 'the imperial forces of literary globalization', which envision World Literature along two distinctive paradigms : as 'a container for various national literatures, it privileges source : distinct geographies, countable languages, individual genius, designated readers and the principle of positive collectivism. When World literature seems instead to be a series of emerging works, not a product but a process, it privileges target : the analysis of convergences and divergences across literary histories' (Walkowitz,2015: 25).

6.4. E.Shafak, K. Desai, A. Maalouf and K. Ishiguro : World Literature in The Age of Digital Reading

> The digital literary sphere is no mere appendage to the world of print-it is where literary reputations are made, movements are born, and readers passionately engage with their favourite works and authors. (Simone Murray, 2018)

> Most major publishers exist within enormous media conglomerates eager to see the literary endlessly repurposed. For them literature is not necessarily a shelf of books, although such an image has its uses. Instead the literary is a set of ideas about cultural value – associated with meaning, agency, inquiry, exploration, self-discovery, and interpretation, for example – which circulate well beyond the publishing industry, permeating film, television, radio, and digital media. We suggest that the literary is increasingly shorthand for a set of generative values and experiences that are produced to be accessed across all media.(Sarah Brouillette, 2015:142)

When a heavyweight writer and a literary franchise as iconic and market-friendly as Salman Rushdie lately declared that he is considering the prospect of dispensing with traditional publishing, and trusting the digital world with his latest literary opus, is it legitimate to feel alarmed as an audience and be concerned -rather justifiably- about the future of print literature, as journalist Julian Novitz wonders in his article entitled : *Is Salman Rushdie's decision to publish on Substack the death of the novel ?*[14]. In truth , using the online newsletter subscription service Substack, launched in 2017, signals for Novitz : 'a surprising inroad into one of the areas associated with trade publishing- literary fiction- and certainly makes for a good news story. He is the first significant literary novelist to publish a substantial work of fiction via the platform and Rushdie himself talks jokingly about helping to kill off the print book with this move'(The Conversation,Sept 14,2021). While the anxiety about the ebbing of the 'Gutenberian' print culture (Simone Murray, 2019 :1) is arguably well-founded, and while critic Simone Murray admits that 'reports of the book's death have been greatly exaggerated' (Murray,2018), it is quite evident that for Rushdie, embracing the digital has ostensibly the merit of not only extricating literature from the all-too-often pervasive hold of 'gatekeepers', but more importantly of managing a space for free expression both for readers and authors : "I feel that, with this new world of information technology, literature has not yet found a really original space in there. Just whatever comes into my head, it just gives me a way of saying something immediately, without mediators or gatekeepers," (Rushdie, The New York Times, published Sept 1 2021 updated Sept 14 2021)

If 'literary markets might be studied as sites of conflict and controversy over the ownership of intellectual property' (Sarah Brouillette, 2015 :140), the stakes in the book industry are forcibly and growingly shifting from the realm of print book to the digital sphere.

[14] https://theconversation.com/is-salman-rushdies-decision-to-publish-on-substack-the-death-of-the-novel-167530.

This major bifurcation has not only imposed ebooks : '……as one of the popular means of reading…….Ebooks are a combination of hardware and software working together for the purpose of serving people's reading habits'(Morgan 1999 qtd in The politics of ebooks,211), but more significantly '…….has led to the transformation of power relationships between stakeholders, raising questions about the social, political and economic factors at play in the transition from printed books to ebooks'(Striphas 2009 qtd in The politics of Books,212). Thus, the praxes of writing and reading have forcibly morphed into totally new ecologies with novel configurations, whereby the bifold and correlate concepts of authorship and readership need to be viewed through a new lens. In fact :

> Digital technologies present fundamental challenges to traditional conceptions and practices of authorship. Digital texts are typically open to 'readerly' manipulation and digital publishing has allowed more democratic forms of authorship such as self-publishing and crowd-funded publishing. Paradoxically, the digital domain has triggered further elevation of the celebrity author figure, with author maintained social media accounts providing readers with daily, or even real time communion with favourite authors. Authorship thus stands at a fascinating point : at once sacralised more than ever yet, in theory at least, never more accessible to a mass public. (Simone Murray, 2019 :1)

Not only does this transmutation inevitably generate interactive dynamics which disentangle readers from the 'read-only' logic (Murray,2019 :13) wherein classical print culture casts them, but it chiefly assumes that authors are readily prone to engage with digital platforms for self-promotion, as Murray persuasively argues : 'Authors are expected to generate much of their own marketing and publicity 'buzz' for a new title through announcements via their homepage, email newsletters, blog, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, Youtube book trailers and the like' (Zwar, Throsby and Longfen, 2015 :6 ;

Murray,2016,2018). For Murray, there is no doubt that 'twenty-first century authorship has become an exercise in entrepreneurialism' (Murray,19), which envisages writers as 'media persona', and ultimately 'threatens to become an author's main work, with self-publicity and readership cultivation crowding out time for actual writing (Zwar, Throsby and Logden,2015 :5). While such a reading might sound excessive in overrating the impact of digitization on contemporary authors, it finds nonetheless itself justified by the recent mushrooming of literary festivals with a constellation of adjacent, yet no less potent, manifestations such as book signings, author readings and panel sessions. In this regard, Murray argues that : 'Literary festivals have come to constitute their own annual circuit and are indisputably red-letter days on the literary calendar'(Murray,2019 :20), wherein the author '…..acts as hybrid promoter, brand spokesman and potentially also political activist'(Murray,2019 :20). This 'entrepreneurial' spirit can be further traced in the proliferation of creative writing classes and seminars in Western academia, monitored and tutored by 'techno-enthusiast' authors- to borrow from Murray- mindful as they stand, of nurturing their media persona : '……would–be authors graduating from universities' burgeoning creative writing and MFA programs are urged at all turns to take their authorial career into their own hands and to fashion a saleable persona '(Homer,2015 qtd in Murray,2019 :19/20).

Because no writing is above marketing, the increasing might of the digital is intractably luring contemporary authors to engage with e-publishing, if not as a primary and sole platform, but surely as part of the publishing entreprise as a whole, with its tacit promise of mainstream success. In this respect, Aarthi Vadde rightly argues : 'Whether a cause of chagrin or excitment, the digital domain of publishing culture is definitely changing the ways in which contemporary writers, artists, and audiences conceive of their creative works and creative selves'(Amateur creativity,27), emphatically, the digitization of the print industry and

its heavy investment in the e-world have not only fostered new ways to appreciate literary artefacts, but have above all revolutionized the topography of writing, and turned the act of reading itself into a measurable exercise.[15] In her insightful article *Your E-book is reading You*(2012), Alexandra Alter maintains that : 'For centuries, reading has largely been a solitary and private act , an intimate exchange between the reader and the words on the page. But the rise of digital books has prompted a profound shift in the way we read, transforming the activity into something measurable and quasi-public'(Alter,The Wall Street Journal, july 19,2012 This reconceptualization, according to Simone Murray, has not solely rehabilitated the reader into a writer himself, thus eroding any distinctions between author and reader, but has also contributed to refashion the role of the literary critic. Granted, the notion of the text itself has been reconceived as it has veered from 'typographical fixity to one of assumed textual mutability' (Murray,2019 :13) which tends to reinscribe the act of writing within a performative rather than a summative economy,[16] reminiscient as it is, of the Barthesian notion of the 'writerly' versus the 'readerly'. On the other hand, free access to publication has operated a 'democratization', nay a desacralization, of authorship simultaneously empowering and entitling readers to transform into writers in their own right, while blurring the lines between both praxes. If it is true that the digitization of reading within the 'literary blogosphere'(Murray,2018 :14) is scaffolded by a robust datafication system which tends to process information about reading facts and figures through an algorithmic system, the main protagonists of this revolution, according to Alter, are Amazon, Apple and Google on account of their aptitude to :

[15] Sarah Brouillette and Christopher Doody, Literary market and literary property,45

[16] Murray, Simone, Authorship, 2019

> ……easily track how far readers are getting in books, how long they spend reading them, and which search terms they use to find books. Book apps for tablets like the iPad, Kindle Fire and Nook record how many times readers open the app and how much time they spend reading. Retailers and some publishers are beginning to sift through the data, gaining unprecedented insight into how people engage with books.(updated July 19 2012)

This e-reading data generated by giant publishing conglomerates and collected through different digital reading devices and apps, help pin down the readership's profiles, habits, tastes and preferences, and further complicate the very act of reading, which is not only monitored but also controlled through the judicious use of various reading experiences which are in turn monetized. Significantly, the 'ebook ecosystem', to borrow from critic Yoonmo Sang(2017), is governed by power dynamics and market forces which reveal a stark concentration of ownership in the book market :'The publishing industry has long been described as oligopolistic. Only a handful of publishers, owned by media conglomerates such as News Corporation and CBS Corporation, account for the bulk of the industry's revenue and market share'(Yoonmo Sang,215). In truth, the warfare over market shares raises profound concerns about the free dissemination of literary digital goods :

> Market forces such as Amazon's monopsony power, regulate business practices and condition the potential for business success in the ebook market. Online retailers such as Google and Apple are becoming increasingly involved in shaping the ebook market. In a battle with Hachette Book Group, Amazon removed pre-orders of Hachette books, delayed the shipping of Hachette books without reasonable cause, and reduced discounts on Hachette's titles in the United States(Garside 2014). The recent conflict between the Hachette publishing group and Amazon demonstrates that Amazon is capable of exerting market dominance over

> publishers in the ebook market. This can potentially limit the diversity of cultural expression as well as dissemination of information in society. (Yoonmo Sang,2017 :215).

This monopolisation of the digital literary world is further confirmed by recent statistics which reveal that back 'In 2013, Amazon held 60 per cent of the ebook market, followed by Barnes and Noble (27 per cent) and Apple (less than 10 per cent)……'(Yoonman, 2017 :216). While emphasizing the hegemony of Amazon over the ebook industry would sound almost like a truism, it is nonetheless noteworthy to underscore the kindred concentration prevalent in the print publishing business :

> In July 2013, there was an historic merger between Penguin Group and Random House, so that the so-called Big Six became the Big Five (i.e. Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, Hachette, Macmillan). The five largest publishers in the United States account for more than 60 percent of the revenue generated by the publishing industry (DeMasi2014). (Yoonmo Sang,2017 215).

Such concentration of ownership has recently stirred intense controversy worldwide, materializing in judicial pursuits against Penguin Random House, sued by the American justice department for attempting to acquire their market competitor Simon and Schuster, and hence of monopolizing the Anglophone book market. An analogous instance in the Francophone book industry is the fusion of Hachette and Editis, which only reinforced the long-standing flagrant domination of French publishing group Hachette. It stands to reason that such cases of hegemony over the cultural and intellectual spheres seem to be a source of apprehension not only for experts and professionals but also for governments, who are fundamentally concerned about this 'mogulisation' of literary capital by mega corporations.

The major concern is that such a constellation of market forces might affect the diversity of the literary landscape, and ultimately authors and readers, as Merrick B. Garland declared at the occasion of the legal proceedings against Penguin Random : 'American authors and consumers will pay the price of this anticompetitive merger - lower advances for authors and ultimately fewer books and less variety for consumers.' [17]

This last section of the present research seeks to investigate how the four worlded and worldly narratives, which make the substance of this dissertation, manage their ways through the publishing industry and the ebook market both as print and digital goods. It would be similarly interesting to ponder the circuits of circulation and dissemination whereby *TFOL*, *LTA*, *IL* and *AFW* navigate their ways respectively within the international marketplace. The discussion will also tackle how the four authors promote their media persona through interaction with the audience, and involvement in mediatic events such as book festivals, and entanglement with the agendas of the book industry in its print and digital forms.

As mentioned in chapters one and five, *TFROL* and *IL* were first published by the multinational Penguin conglomerate before its merger with Random House. The publishing giant boasts a record replete with the most prestigious bestselling authors, with a marketing strategy often described as 'aggressive'. On its digital platform, Penguin offers a large spectrum of rubrics and a panoply of services to its bibliophiles including a rubric for bestsellers, a classics collection, a book bundle, a children's section, and a crime and fiction bundles in the fiction category, to a non-fiction section where readers can purchase books about art, architecture, photography, food, health, business, etc. While the market visibility granted by the Penguin brand is indisputable, the relatively low-cost strategy of its products is another asset to be reckoned with ; the Penguin editions of *TFROL* and *IL* cost no more than

[17] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/books/penguin-random-house-simon-schuster-merger-lawsuit.html

eight pounds ninety nine featuring on price tagged editions contrary to *AFW*'s Faber and Faber edition or *LTA*'s Abacus'version. It is noteworthy, however, that Shafak quit Farrar Strauss and Giroux -affiliated with Faber And Faber- to British publisher Marion Boyars, to settle for an ultimate collaboration with American mogul Penguin.

6.5. Shafak, Desai, Maalouf and Ishiguro and Media Persona :

'In my country, politics shouts and art whispers' Elif Shafak confided at the Worlds Literature Festival (Worlds Literature Festival,2015 Provocation :Elif Shafak).While being perfectly aware of the impossibility to keep her art apolitical, which she considers a luxury for a middle Eastern author, and while acknowledging the feminist insights in blurring boundaries between the personal and the political, isn't Shafak capitalizing on her Turkishness to construct an author function which highly corresponds to the Western assumptions of the Oriental writer, martyr of political persecution and internalized self-censorship ? Significantly, the Turkish author never misses an opportunity to stress the cultural and political specificities of her national affiliation-often apologetically- not solely to account for her aesthetic choices, but equally to find favour in the eyes of the Western audience inclined , as it stands, to perceive the East through a 'pity politics'(Adil,2006), as mentioned in chapter two. By being politically-incorrect at the national level, Shafak's fiction aspires for cosmopolitan correctedness through constantly denouncing the absence of democracy in Turkey and the ubiquity of 'tension, intimidation and polarization'(Turkey and the loss of democracy,2017). For Shafak, the Turkish government mistakes majoritarianism for true democracy, actually a 'dark, dull and dangerous form of authoritarianism' in a country which 'has become the biggest jailer for journalists surpassing even China's sad records'. The correlation she establishes extends to Russia which Shafak grants with a multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic past, and hence with a dream of grandeur, very much shared by

Turkey itself, as 'they both come from very strong state traditions'[18]. If anything, this deliberate analogy with communist states such as China and Russia repositions the Anglo-American capitalist West within a falsely comfortable ideological rhetoric, which obviously misses to question the paradoxes inherent in the very discursive formations upon which it is predicated. Whether by accident or by design, Shafak thus invests Western capitalism with a supposedly inherent 'righteousness', dictating its own hegemonic conceptualization of democracy to the rest of the world. This authorial alignement with the 'politically-correct' rehearses the dichotomous binarism, whereby the 'democratic' capitalist West stands as antithetical to the despotic Orient, thus amplifying the already existing chasm between both entities. Shafak's endorsement of women rights, LGBT rights- bearing in mind that she did her coming out as a bisexual in the last couple of years- is an unequivocal adherence to the Western value system, while leaving unproblematized the deep inequalities of a global world order heedless of cultural and political specificities. A London-based author, she casts an outsider vantage point on her own culture from Anglophone locations of power, where she is involved with Western academia, and forcibly evolves within its hegemonic logic of intellectual supremacy, depending thus on the capitalist machinery for the dissemination and circulation of her fiction. In such conjunctures, intellectual integrity or resistance to the discourse of globalization is next to a luxury, an attitude which Shafak shares with Maalouf, Desai , Ishiguro and many more authors who have settled in Western metropoles and who are accordingly called upon to play the Western capitalist system.

The commodification of the 'literary' by Western academia through the creation and proliferation of creative writing seminars, taught either by award-winning novelists or simply by high profile authors with international market valence as mentioned above , is clear evidence of the way 'minor' literatures are being recuperated by the Western university, as an

[18] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLhcvjon_us

arbitrer of excellence and intellectual taste, a center where knowledge and power are produced, and more importantly as a literary gatekeeper which establishes the standards of canonizability. As a matter of fact, if both Shafak and Desai are solicited by American and British universities to share their expertise, they knowingly partake in architecturing novel ways of consumming literature, enhanced by the handiness of digital platforms, whereby the same authors publicize for their own crafts while intimating writing processes, rituals and tips. Such has been the case lately of the digital press advertising Ishiguro's vision of writing :

> 7 Bits Of Writing Advice From Kazuo Ishiguro
>
> 1. Take Breaks, You Need Them
>
> 'When it comes to the writing of novels, however, the consensus seems to be that after four hours or so of continuous writing, diminishing returns set in.'– The Guardian
>
> Kazuo Ishiguro admits that breaks are important to his work.
>
> A break is recommended at least every 15 to 20 minutes. Typing for hours can be physically and mentally exhausting.
>
> Creativity is more difficult when you are asleep at the keys. Stretch between paragraphs or scenes. Take regular breaks in your writing day. Have lunch. Drink coffee.
>
> 2. Viewpoint Choice Is Power
>
> 'I am not really that interested in what happened. I'm much more interested in what the narrator thinks happened. That battle people have with themselves about what they think they did or who they think they are.' – *The Irish Times*
>
> A character is seldom all-knowing about the story's plot. It all depends on which viewpoint (point of view) you use.

Their discovery is like the reader's journey through the pages. It's how you surprise the reader with things the narrator did not necessarily know at the start.

Ishiguro distinguishes between what the character thinks happened, versus what actually happened. He uses the unreliable narrator technique. Do you see that wiggle room in your story? The potential exists in almost every plot.

3. Stories Are Important

'When we create stories for movies or just stories that we tell each other when we meet, this is something very, very fundamental.' – *The Washington Post*

Ishiguro had this to say when asked about the merit of a Nobel Prize for Literature.

Stories are important, and everyone has them. We tell our stories on taxis, buses, and social media networks: pay attention to everyday storytelling as a writer.

These stories can teach you how people speak, and how plots reflect in real life.

Writers can learn how to construct strong characters, and built better dialogue**.** All by watching real-life happen, and paying attention to it.

4.Writing Needs Planning (& Not)

'Most writers have certain things that they decide quite consciously, and other things they decide less consciously.' **–** *The Paris Review (No. 196)*

Great scenes can often happen spontaneously. But intricate plots can require planning to write well. Ishiguro distinguished between the two acts. Subconscious writing can meet conscious planning to create excellent stories.

Plan your plot, but allow for free writing to create scenes. It allows room to improvise your scene, but plan your plot!

5. Writing Is (A Lot Of) Work

'Don't take on a creative project lightly**.'** – *An Interview With Richard Beard*
I remember a time when I thought it was a good idea to start A New Great Novel about every week. A year would produce several starts, but never a finished book I could publish.

Once a story begins, it becomes a tangible project. Once it exists, there are expectations: a beginning, an ending, and hours of your time as its writer.

Are you okay with this?

If the answer is yes, then you are not taking on your creative project 'lightly' as Ishiguro warns against.

6. Explore New Topics

'Write what you know is the most stupid thing I've heard. It encourages people to write a dull autobiography. It's the reverse of firing the imagination and potential of writers.' – *Shortlist*

Write what you know, but learn new things.
Fiction thrives thanks to intricacies, technicalities and trivia. Do you enjoy, for example, the medical puzzles in a show like *House*? Its writers learned new things, and wrote what they learned – but not quite just what they know.
Stephen King's latest novels don't, for example, resemble *Carrie* at all. As a writer, he's learned new things.

7. Allusions Can Ruin The Message
'I don't like to work with literary allusions all that much.' – *Guernica Mag, Mythic Retreat Interview*

Literary allusions can impair basic readability. Allusions can even make literature difficult to translate into other languages.

> Aim for a high readability, especially in fiction. (Writing advice from Kazuo Ishiguro, 8th November 2021)

If it is true that such literary recipes are no invention of the day, the demystification of the writing exercise and the desacralization of the author figure have largely contributed to the devaluation of authorship in the digital era with the phenomenal rise of digital self-publication as Murray points out in citing Pugh: 'the most dramatic aspect of digital culture on the publishing world has been to democratise authorship (Pugh,2005) :the advent of technological access to publication by almost anyone…'(Simone Murray,12/13). Not only has this self-publishing phenomenon served to re-empower the reader, but it has also generated a new type of 'hybrid reader-critics in the form of beta-readers' (Simone Murray,12/13)), who furnish the literary blogosphere with interactive customer reviews and Goodread profiles, while engaging in interactive exchanges with authors and novelists about their texts. When asked about the role of social media in a writer's career, Shafak declared that :

> Social media is a bit like the moon. It has a bright side that radiates light. And then it has a dark side that we haven't talked about for a long time but we must. So I don't overromanticise social media. At the same time, I find it important that writers speak up and speak out—both in the public space and the digital space.(Elif Shafak, Writing Routines)

Indeed, ensuring visibility both at the print and digital levels is definitely de rigueur for any author willing to publish since 'having a vibrant social media 'platform' has become in some quarters a prerequisite for gaining a book contract, as publishers try to minimise their risk by catering to already quantifiable communities of interest (Marshall, 2006 :47, Clark and Philips, 2008 :88, Katz,2010 :47, Thompson, 2010 :86). (Murray, 19). Be it Shafak, Desai, Maalouf or Ishiguro, all are compelled to observe appropriate ' netiquette' to borrow from Murray(21), in order to negotiate a viable space for their fiction within the digital landscape.

The four writers' reader communities, on different digital platforms and especially on the online retail giant Amazon, reveal the way customers tend to be invested with a 'purchase authority'which entitles them to act as unacknowledged critics and reviewers :

> Adnan Soysal
>
> *1.0 out of 5 stars* mission impossible
>
> Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 9 June 2020
>
> Verified Purchase
>
> Gave up after four pages after concluding that it will be a hopeless effort, and a waste of time.
>
> It is unclear, with full of long descriptions of the settings extremely boring. I do not see a story is coming up in this novel. Even then on this style, I can not proceed. (Amazon reviews)

This Amazon reader 'review'of *IL* , with a rating option from one to five stars, confers to the audience a quantitative tool for literary appreciation which, it is true, might hold a huge impact on the community of readers, yet which could ultimately contribute to the degradation of literary standards and tastes. While the customer/reader's dismissal of Desai's narrative as 'boring', on account of its long descriptions and lack of a real storyline may sound legitimate, it nonetheless lends strength to unlearned superficial readings which might, in the long run, affect other readers' perceptions of literariness.

> *5.0 out of 5 stars* The Global Witness
>
> Reviewed in the United States on March 12, 2003
>
> Verified Purchase
>
> The story of Leo Africanus or Hassan Al Wazan is a truly fascinating tale. Amin Maalouf has done an outstanding job in creating a very readable largely

biographical work of a remarkable man. While a fiction there are no historical inaccuracies and a tremendous degree of accuracy in corroborating the event of this magnificent work with actual history.

A wonderful aspect of Leo Africanus is the pitfalls it avoided. Amin Maalouf did not attempt to paint a picture that support a certain vision of history or advances a certain agenda. This is a common theme in modern day work on history and especially historical fiction. The one agenda that Amin Maalouf may have had in mind and advanced beautifully is that the world is full of wonderful people; they come in different religions, different colors and different ethnicity and they speak different languages. The world is also full of many awful people from different religions, cultures and colors. Reading Leo Africanus one feels a direct witness to the fall of Andalusia to the Spanish and its aftermath, the fall of Cairo to the Ottomans and its aftermath and the fall of Rome to the Lutherans. Globalization and the "global village" and easy travel may have made the world smaller in our time, for Hassan Al Wazan too, nearly 600 years ago traveling the globe and fitting in was a way of life. Exceptional historical and cultural education, beautifully written and well translated.

43 people found this helpful

The mention ’43 people found this helpful’ acts as a promotional tool for marketing *LTA* as an Amazon goods, subjected to fluctuations of supply and demand. While invoking the community of readers as arbitrers of taste, potential customers are invited to join an anonymous and virtually amorphous entity, which through its very vagueness and unnameability operates as a catalyst of consumption by mimetism. The reading experience is thus measured and controlled through a ranking system which avails the audience with a

rating option whereby ‘shopping for books on Amazon’ ranges from very poor, neutral to very good :

How would you rate your experience shopping for books on Amazon today?

Very poor		Neutral		Great

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on October 1, 2017

Verified Purchase

Really, the four stars are for the quality of the writing rather than the story itself, which I found meandering and hard to follow. Ono is the artist of the title, and in the early chapters it's hinted at that he has committed some heinous crime during the war years. But as the story progresses, told with irritating flashback reminiscences it's never really made that clear what exactly it is that Ono has done that has so alienated him from his erstwhile colleagues. The plot itself centres on his attempts to arrange a marriage for his remaining daughter, the first marriage plan having fallen through for unspecified reasons. Instead of any great reveal, however, the story simply fizzles out. Ultimately a disappointment, especially read after some of his others, notably Never let me go and The remains of the day, but like I said earlier, four stars for some fine writing. Not the Ishiguru I'd recommend first though.

12 people found this helpful.[19]

When Kazuo Ishiguro, the third Japanese Nobel laureate in literature (2017), after Kawabata(1968) and Oe Kenzaburo(1994), becomes a ‘disppointment’ for Amazon customers, and *AFW* fails to meet the standards of a ‘recommendable’ text, one is confronted

[19] See Amazon reader reviews

with the reality of newly empowered audiences, who contribute to a new age of desacralization of the author figure, and establish novel criteria for literary appreciation. The digital space has thus turned into a stock exchange of literary value, where customers have readily supplanted gatekeepers and literary intermediaries, conferring certification to works of art and acting accordingly as the new legislators of the 'world republic of letters'.

CONCLUSION

In its attempt to find a niche for itself, this dissertation has modestly positioned itself within the ongoing debates on World Literature, and has thus endeavoured to invite the reader to embrace fresher perspectives in reading World Literature authors. In this concluding section, my purpose is three-fold. In the first instance, I wish to examine the findings I have exposed thus far, and in conjunction with this first objective, I intend to evaluate the implications of these findings for a reassessment of the current conditions of dissemination and consumption of global fiction. Secondly, I undertake to proceed to a self-assessment of my own research and to respond to any potential objections to its conclusions and emphases. Finally, I will attempt to make room for unanswered querries which this dissertation might have incidentally raised, yet which could not be addressed on account of limitations of size and scope but are no less worthy of critical speculation.

The foregoing chapters have investigated the whole entreprise of worlding literary works and have demonstrated how the latter are located within larger spheres of meaning, thus, initiating the iconizing of authorial figures as marketing brands and consequential franchises. This concern with marketability actually confronts global writers with the dilemma of walking the tight rope between market cooptation and the lure of the prizing system on the one hand, and the resistance to being fetishicised on the other. This research has cogently argued that sampling authors such as Shafak, Maalouf , Ishiguro or Desai, verifies the fact that worlding literature can be conjugated along different national, linguistic, cultural and aesthetic affiliations, and that the stakes manifestly reside in restoring the balance between capitalizing on their respective cultural differences by mobilizing self-othering/exoticizing strategies to enhance the consumption of their works and augment their market valence, versus building a certain amount of resistance to the discourse of

globalization. In addressing the four narratives which make the substance of this study as market commodities, the emphasis has been laid on the dynamics involved in circuiting the global literary market, and has thus disclosed the verbal and non-verbal strategies mobilized by authors and publishers to promote cultural alterity. These strategies, as discussed in the previous chapters, appropriate paratextual components such as covers, blurbs, reviews, prefaces, news, etc, to construct narrative tresholds which manifestly bespeak authorial anxiety about writing for a global audience, and thus, call into question the position of World Literature writers vis-a vis the discourse of globalization, while further problematizing their status within the cosmopolitan market.

While Shafak's and Maalouf's rereading of Arab Muslim history operates a discursive manipulation which not only remaps the world cartography, but more importantly designs textualities as 'contact zones' where cohabitate a plethora of diaglossic discursive layers, Ishiguro's and Desai's texts stand as 'global allegories' formulating visible structures of the the world, which demarcate themselves from postcolonial aesthetics. Yet, as disputed in the previous chapters, if the vocation of the four respective projects goes beyond inscribing themselves within the postcolonial framework, they do not fail, however, to reactivate postcolonial tropes such as hybridity, diaspora, subalternity, mimicry, transculturalism, exoticisization, etc. This research has maintained that World Literature authors are caught in the labyrinthine predicament of being commodified to match the imperatives of the Western market, and build a certain amount of resistance, and it has thus been interesting to note how this intricate position has largely contributed to shape their linguistic, thematic and aesthetic choices, and how it incidentally translates in their narratives. These narratives, as a matter of course, construct spaces of enunciation where cultural, linguistic and aesthetic discursive fabrics not only cohabitate, but also compete for visibility. This polyphony translates, if in various forms and degrees, in generic experimentation whereby texualities become

transgeneric spaces, soliciting readerly flexibility, and engaging the audience in a literay journey which, in turn, recuperates Western and Oriental aesthetics. Such is the case in Maalouf's narrative which experiments with generic affiliations such as *arihla*, *al Maqamah* or *al Hikaya,* while capitalizing on the metadiegetic mode, paradigmatic of Oriental narration. Conversely, Shafak's text toys with Western genres through the juxtaposition of various discursive forms such as poems, emails, letters, and lists. While both texts redress inconsistencies in the Western conceptualization of world systems, by re-affirming the ascendency of the East over the West, they thus rectify Western epistemic violence and rehabilitate Oriental space through fictitional manipulation. This discursive resistance is further corroborated by a certain ratio of untranslatability which defies the hegemonic discourse of globalization via the extensive use of vernacular. Indeed, the four narratives feature peripheral lexis stretching from Arabic, Turkish, Japanese and Indian, simultaneously heightening textual unsolvability, and enhancing exoticism. Whether in *TFROL*, *LTA*, *AFW* or *IL*, authorial choice is actually problematized by the subtle balance maintained between meeting the reader's expectations and the latter's orchestrated engagement with verbal exotica. Thus, in pandering to market demand, the four texts play the tight rope between titillating the Western readership by advertising self-essentializing gestures on the one hand, and assuming a calculated resistance which forcibly augments their marketability on the other. It is equaly interesting to register a propensity to pamper the Western reader through the use of an appended glossary, particularly in *TFROL*, whereby the writer openly comfounds the initial veneer of resistance built by textual untranslatables throughout the narrative.

In like manner, the four narratives share stylistic attributes such as lyricism and pathos, the use of which capitalizes on linguistic and situational lyricality to arouse empathetic engagement on the part of the reader by instrumentalizing sentiments of victimhood.

Accordingly, The poetic vocation in the four texts invokes literary authorities ranging from Yeats (*LTA*), Borges *(IL*), Rumi (*TFROL*), which actually contributes to shape the reader's reception and the very act of reading per se. Indeed, the prevalent 'Huzun'(Pamuk) distinctive of Oriental discursivity reaches its paroxysm in *AFW*, wherein Ishiguro activates the 'echo effect' with a repetitive pattern peculiar to the poetic tradition and its aesthetic codes, in addition to the melancholizing effect of the *Mono No Aware* technique, borrowed from Japanese cinematography, whereby human experience is simultaneously aestheticized and sublimated. Ultimately, apprehending the four authors as market franchises enables a reassessment of the far-reaching role of digital literature in disseminating global fiction, and in gauging its readability within the international literary sphere. In the light of the recent reconceptualization of the notions of authorship and readership- both as statuses and praxes- in the digital era, this dissertation has scrutinized the implications on refashioning the literary ecology along the current empowerment of audiences, who have come to contribute to a new age of desacralization of the author figure, and to establish novel criteria for literary appreciation. Thus, one is ultimately confronted with the reality of the digital space as a stock exchange of literary value, where readers/customers stand for the new literary intermediaries.

If reading World Literature beyond the parameters of circulation, translatability and spatial configurations enables its perspectivizing along different paradigms such as paratexuality, the present research can unpresumptuously pretend to fill a gap in current scholarship by investing paratextual components with the potential to uncover the underlying market strategies deployed to vend alterity within the international book trade system. Still, for reasons of scope and design, it has admittedly failed to address the no less controversial issue of the prizing system and award institutions, as part and parcel of the whole literary machinery. In fact, the emphasis laid on the 'Bookerization' of World Literature authors does by no means imply a disregard for other -at least similarly influential if not more so- awards.

Incidentally, the periodic-almost ritualistic- disputation triggered off by the Booker prize, as well as the Nobel, casts shadows over other awards such as the Pullitzer and the Goncourt, while raising questions about the nature and substance of prizes as such, and the motivations animating the prizing machine. If it is true that the Booker holds an unparalleled prestige worldwide, it obviously operates along market logics which cater for complex imperatives which not only regiment the global literary marketplace, but constantly redefine its rules, and while the scope of this research has failed to make room for a debate on the prizing system and its intricacies -as stated above-, it can at least invite reflection on the conditions surrounding awarding, and thus interpellate the reader to interrogate the discrepancies between Anglophone and Francophone prize versions such as the Booker and the Goncourt, drawing attention to the existence of a junior variant of the Goncourt i.e the Goncourt des lycéens, which does not find an equivalent in the Booker edition. Arguably, drawing such analogies serves to shed light on the particularities pertaining to every respective literary context, with its own cultural and linguistic sensibilities. Having said that, and if the lucrative appeal of prizing is practically irresistible, the Goncourt as well as the Booker inscribe themselves within a wider geopolitical framework, animated not solely by economic imperatives, but mostly by cultural and linguistic stakes informed by neocolonial agendas in the global era.

As this research draws to a close, my last words would serve to formulate a long-held wish that in the not-so-distant future, prizing itself would break loose from Euro/Anglocentrism, and hopefully manage to overcome the cultural hegemony of the so-called center. Thus, the 'World Republic of Letters' would stretch its confines and settle for a capital in the 'periphery', where new paradigms for literary appreciation and incidentally for prizing would manage to refashion the face of the actual literary ecology.

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