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The Quest of Identity in Ahdaf Soueif's

The Map of Love

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to: My family

My friends

My teachers

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I would humbly like to praise **Allah** for all his blessings, and also for giving me the strength to finish this work. Without Him, none of this would have been made possible.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the quest of identity in the work of the Egyptian diasporic writer Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, first published in 1999. The fact that she is an Egyptian who writes in English automatically raises the quest of identity. Thus, this work celebrates the modification in the Egyptian identity during colonial and post-colonial era, and the way Egyptian identity appears nowadays. This thesis shed lights on the manner Egyptian identity is revealed in Soueif's work. It also helps to learn how constant Egyptian society is with what used to be. This research is conducted counting on the application of the post colonial theory for it is the most suitable for the subject matter. *The Map of Love* showcases an interesting identity problem that Egyptian society is undergoing, which is all resulted by successive occupations of Egypt. One of them is the British occupation, which colloquial hybridity and an identity questioning. With the constantly changing and progressing events, the Egyptian identity, or any other, will be adjusted.

Key Words: identity, postcolonial theory, orientalism, mimicry, hybridity, inter-cultural relationships, exile.

General Introduction

General Introduction

Who am I? What am I here for? Such questions have crossed the minds of most of us, searching for the answer is the journey we are in. Because literature is the reflection of the human experiences, the same things that happen to people in real life, happen also with characters in fiction. As in real life a literary work develops all different personalities and their life incidences. Fiction portrays the life events of successful characters as well as the ones of lost people and those related to them.

Creating a literary work that refers to one's ideals and beliefs is one of the best ways to preserve human experiences. The creator pays a great deal of attention to characters development in a way that serves his or her points. Hence, literature is made to teach and guide readers or audience throughout their lives. Ahdaf Soueif is one of those talented writers who entertain their readers as well as teach them about life in a very convincing manner.

Ahdaf Soueif is an Egyptian short story writer, a novelist and also a political and cultural commentator, who is still alive. She was born in 23 March 1950 in Cairo; Egypt. She was raised and educated in Egypt and England. She studied for a PhD in linguistics at the University of Lancaster. Both of her parents are university professors. Therefore, Soueif was surrounded by books written in Arabic as well as in English which allowed her to learn about both cultures. Growing up in Egypt, she experienced the various Egyptian ups and downs, one of which was the six- day –war. This shaped the author's political awareness and interest later on.¹

Soueif writes regularly for *The Guardian* in London and has a weekly column for *Al-Shorouk* in Cairo. She is as well a Palestinian activist, a shorter version of “Under the Gun: A Palestinian Journey” was primarily published in *The Guardian* and then printed in her

¹. Rosemary O'leary, “Ahdaf Soueif: Brief Biography,” Last modified December 11, 2014, <http://www.alevellitnotes.com/shortstories/Adhafsoueifbriefbiography>.

collection of essays *Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground* in 2004. She even translated to Mourid Barghouti his *I sow Ramallah* from Arabic to English in the same year. In 2008 she initiated the first Palestine festival of literature. Soueif continues up to now to publish about Egypt, Islam and the world in general.²

Ahdaf Soueif wrote two collections of short stories, *Aisha* (1983) and *Sandpiper* (1996). Her first novel is *In the Eye of the Sun* was published in 1992. However Soueif is best known for her *The Map of Love* which was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize in 1999.³ *The Map of Love* is a combination of drama and politics; a story of love and bravery of an Egyptian nationalist and an English woman set in Cairo in 1900.

Soueif is known for her dedication to the themes connected to her position as an Arab diasporic writer in the postcolonial era. As an Egyptian, her writings, mostly, take an Egyptian context. Furthermore, it tackles Egyptian culture and identity which themselves are controversial subjects in the formerly colonized counties in general; and in Egypt in particular, due to its eventful history.

To discuss the quest of identity in Soueif's *The Map of Love*, it is necessary to go over the major events in Egyptian history that led to its identity formation. Before the theme of the Egyptian identity in the post-colonial context can be discussed, this dissertation shall reveal the political, cultural and religious development of this nation from its beginnings up to the present day.

The Egyptian Historical Background

Historians have always considered Egypt to be “Om Donia”, the mother of the world. Egypt has a fine constructed and an appreciable civilization. Who could ever ignore Ancient

². Ibid.

³. Aida Edemariam, Mapping the Divide, “The Gaurdian,” last modified June 11, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/jun/11/featuresreviews.guardianreview8>.

Egypt which was, and still, is one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known? It lasted from 8000 BCE to 332 BCE. The Nile River was the main cause for this civilization to flourish the way it did. It helped the ancient Egyptians in agriculture and settlement, and provided them with the suitable atmosphere to build their long lasting monuments. The pyramids are the last standing wonder of the seven wonders of the old world.

In the 4th century, the Roman Empire split into two. Egypt was part of the eastern half; known as the Byzantine Empire. It moved into the Islamic Empire, during the seventh century after the Islamic invasions in 639. After that, the Fatimids of Tunisia conquered it in 969, and ruled it until 1171. They were the ones who built Cairo, which became the capital. Then, Egypt was ruled by the Ayyubids for nearly 80 years. After that the Mamlukes came and took over in 1250. They controlled Egypt until 1517 when it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks.⁴

The Ottoman period was not the best one the Egyptians went through. They suffered from an economic decline. Then in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte arrived to Egypt with his equipped army, he defeated the Egyptians at the battle of Pyramids. But with the help of the British navy, the Egyptians avenged their lost. However, Napoleon abandoned his army and left Egypt, and because of that, the French army was forced to surrender.⁵

After the French army left Egypt, Mohamed Ali rose to power in 1805. He was an officer in the Othman army. Ali tried to modernize his country before he was forced to withdraw by the British in 1849. Then, in 1859 the work began on the Suez Canal and it was completed in 1869. The canal was built by British and French companies. Meanwhile, Khedive Ismail who was a member of Mohamed Ali's dynasty; rose to power in 1863. Khedive continued what Ali had started; he also worked on modernizing Egypt. He borrowed from Europeans lenders

⁴. Ami Isseroff, History of Egypt, "Mid East Web Site Policy," 2007, <http://www.mideastweb.org.egypthistory.htm>.

⁵. Ibid

at high rates on interest to fund modernization then he was obliged to sell his shares in the Suez Canal to the British in 1875 in order to avoid bankruptcy. In 1882, the British and French were allowed to have a role in the Egyptian government because of their own investments in Egypt. Also because the khedive needed the British back up to maintain their rule in south Egypt and Sudan. Of course the Egyptians resented the fact that their land became a British colony. For that, there were many rebellions one of them was led by Mohamed Ahmed Ibn el-Sayed, IK the Mehdi. He was known for his achievement in defeating General Gordon in 1884. However, he passed away in a year after.⁶

In 1919 anti-British riots swept Egypt due to many prominent Egyptian officer figures such as Mustafa kamel, Sa'ad Zaghlol, Mustafa el Nahas and others. Britain recognized Egypt as an independent country in 1922. In 1923, Sa'ad Zaghlol formed the first representative government of Egypt, yet the British still controlled the Egyptian communication system, its legal system and its foreign policy. In 1936 Fuad King's successor, his son Farouk, signed an Anglo-Egyptian treaty which adjusted the size of British authority in Egypt, yet presented the British rights in the canal. However, the British army reoccupied Egypt during World War II. This event helped the Egyptians in repulsing the German Axis' invasion in 1942 at the second battle of El- Alamein. Finally, in 1947 the last British troops withdrew from Egypt.

In 1948, Egypt was defeated in war against Israel. King Farouk was responsible for the humiliation that the Egyptians were exposed to. In 1952 a group of army officers including the former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser formed the Free Officers Movement in order to force Farouk to resign his position. Gamal Addel Nasser finally nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956. He also improved the healthcare and educational systems. He died in 1970 and he was replaced by Anwar Sadat whose regime boomed the Egyptian economy, but

⁶.Ibid.

he was assassinated by extremists in 1981. Hosni Mubarak came after him to develop a considerable tourists' industry.⁷

Applied Analytical Research Methodology

Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* is the novel studied in this dissertation. This particular literary work was chosen because it tackles the theme of quest for identity. The novel tells the stories of certain people; each with his or her own problems or concerns, that is to say, similar to those of the same circumstances as the author of this work and concerns of normal Egyptian citizens.

Because the novel is written in a postcolonial context and by a diasporic postcolonial writer, the postcolonial theory is the most appropriate to tackle the issue of identity in the former colonized countries. The colonized are lost in between two sides: they have lost their old and original identity, or part of it, and they are searching for a new one, their old self and the charming colonizer.

There will be critical review to the novel in terms of the themes and the characters. The manner and the techniques that the writer used to convey her message to the western world primarily and the Arab one secondly will be discussed too. Finally, we will carry out the presentation of the quest for identity in Soueif's work, and see whether she consider her Arabic identity not just her Egyptian one. With her experiencing and suffering in exile, her Egyptian identity is pretty shaken herself and consequently, the identity of her characters.

The Postcolonial Context

The colonial discourse emphasizes the importance of the cultural, economic, political and military dominance of colonialism. Thus, it is just to spread the idea that the whites are superior among the colonized nations. By having the colonized convinced that he is inferior,

⁷.Ibid.

it jails him in his stigma, never to recover and build himself up to compete with them. The colonized becomes neither what he originally was, nor what he wants to be.

When studying the representation of race, it is important to mention that the representation of non-white has changed through time. Over the past 19th and 20th centuries, Britain and other European power held colonies in Africa, Asia, and South America; which was mainly for economic reasons. They blame it on the imperialist expansion. Given that the Europeans controlled the media because they are the ones who brought it into existence, they used it for their own benefits at the expense of those colonized in order to justify their actions towards the colonies, they had the rest of the world believe that they were bringing a civilizing influence to the colonized countries. This is what was known as the colonial studies. Indeed it came for the colonizer's best. It formed a set of false propaganda types perpetuated by the colonizer whereby the colonized are misconceptualized in order to justify colonialism. However, postcolonial discourse was introduced to counterattack the Machiavellian colonial one and to defend the truth.

The post colonial theory investigates the events that take place when two cultures collide with each other, and colonialists are interested in every single detail i.e. from the beginning of colonization till the present day.⁸The concept of postcolonialism; deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. It refers to the post independence period according to historians. However, from the past 1970s its meaning was modified to be used by literary critics to interpret the various cultural effects of colonization. The study of the controlling power of representation in the colonized societies had begun with the text of Edward said's *Orientalism* later on some other critics adapted and developed the theory.⁹

⁸. Christopher Hutchinson, Postcolonial Thoughts: Out of Many, One People Notes on Stuart Hall's Cultural Identity and Diaspora essay, "Creative Thresholds," http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf.

⁹. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Post Colonial-Study Reader*(New York: Routledge, 1995), 87.

This theory was adopted by the colonized writers to defend their image and to falsify the colonial context. Charles E. Bressler considers post colonialism to be the approach of literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries. He neglected the literature that was written from the perspective of the colonizers, and he cared only to the one that belongs to the colonized such as: Australia, New Zealand, Africa, South America, and other places and societies.¹⁰

The postcolonial theory refers to the characteristics of society or culture from the day of colonization to the present. It discusses the disappointment that the colonized faced after the independence, their hopes and expectations of a better future vanish through the air. The reality of their homeland depresses them completely. It leaves them in a dilemma not even knowing which language to talk or which culture to embrace. G Rai believes that post colonialism despite its chronological meaning does not introduce a new world which is free from ills of colonialism. It rather suggests both continuity and change in any former European colony.¹¹

According to Ashish Nandy, colonization has two forms, the physical and the mental one. The first form comes openly cruel. The colonizers get what they want by force. However, the mental one signifies the unreasonable lie of the colonizers by which they pretend to have the responsibility and the ability to civilize the uncivilized nations. There was a massive exchange between the two nations, the flow of profit and goods along with a shift of people immigration.¹² To develop their economy, the European deprived their colonized from their own identity and culture. The postcolonial theory is collection of written forms,

¹⁰. Shrikant B. Sawant, "Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance," Dist- Sindhudurg (M.S.) 416 520: 27-28 Jan.2012: S. R. M. College, Kudal, 122.

¹¹. Jaydeep Sarangi, *A Great Orissan Pilgrim: A study of Niranjan Mohanty's Work* (New Delhi, ND: Sarup Book Publishers PVT. LTD, 2009),50.

¹². Shrikant B. Sawant, "Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance," Dist- Sindhudurg (M.S.) 416 520: 27-28 Jan.2012: S. R. M. College, Kudal, 122.

written by the colonized, explaining the subject of the colonized people to an audience of colonizers. The postcolonial discourse is the result of the work of several writers and thinkers. One of them is named Edward Said. Said was not satisfied about the way the colonized were presented in the colonial discourse. He is often considered the founder of the theory. Said has a long career in the university of Columbia. He was born in Palestine in 1947. Years later, his family moved to Egypt. He was educated in Middle East and America. Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was published in 1978. The book says that the Western power engaged in colonialism particularly Great Britain and France who created an untrue version of the Orient for Western conception that had little to do with the actual orient. By orient Said makes it clear that he means the Middle East, yet the book also discusses India, Africa and other parts of the world. Said argues that the process of building this conflict began in the sixteenth century and developed using an imperial tone in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.¹³

Said believes that knowledge authorizes power. Therefore, Western knowledge of the East leads to Western's control over the East. The writing and painting were done first along with map making and the study of Eastern languages and culture. The academic and artistic knowledge was highly useful in the economic military and political control. Representation also leads to power. The West represented the East in various ways which proves them to be what they truly are, and represent themselves sincerely.¹⁴

Gayatri Spivak is another theorist who was interested in postcolonialism. She was born and educated in India. She finished her education in the US to become lecturer in the University of Columbia. Spivak published her first essay with the title "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in 1988. Spivak title refers to the least influential in society "the subaltern". This latter is a term that refers to those of a lower economic and cultural status, those who exist

¹³. Ibid.

¹⁴. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (India: Pinguim Books, 1985), 150.

outside the power structure of a given society. Spivak, particularly, focused on subaltern women. The verb “speak” indicates the action of expressing the self freely. Moreover, she meant to say “can the lowest members of society express their concerns and have a dialogue with those in power? And also if they do speak, will they be heard?” She answers her question in the last paragraph of her essay; she writes “No, the subaltern cannot speak “She states that female intellectual must speak for the subaltern.¹⁵ The case of the subaltern is the same as the colonized one. Can the colonized speak and be heard, due to their position and with the colonized looking very down to them, even themselves; do not feel the urge to speak with their low self-esteem.

Said’s theory is about the importance of presentation in maintaining colonial control. Spivak, also talks about representation, but in her case, it is not just the colonizer who represents the colonized. Even the colonized is responsible for his own representation, because every representation is a misrepresentation.¹⁶ The colonized should work harder to clean his picture, and to show the westerns what they are really capable of doing.

Another postcolonist is called Homi Bhabha. He was born and educated in India. After that he went to Oxford for his PhD he is the director of humanity center at Harvard, and also an English lecturer. One of Bhabha’s central ideas in mimicry. This concept is related to what is known as a multicultural. For Bhabha, mimicry is the effect of doubling that takes place when one culture dominates another; some of those dominant cultures encourage the mimicry among those they dominated.¹⁷

As for the postcolonial situation, with the growing awareness of cultural overlap, it is impossible for a culture or an identity not to be influenced by other cultures and identities. As a result, the dominated is to admire and to assimilate to the culture of the dominator.

¹⁵. Christophor Flynn, "Postcolonial Theory," (video), 16 Sep. 2014.

¹⁶. Ibid.

¹⁷. Ibid.

Hybridity drags the colonized away from his or her own culture and identity, and it shapes people who are neither themselves nor their colonizers. Of course, the colonizer and the colonized would not be the same; this eventually causes a huge problem of identity in the formerly colonized countries; in a sense that it is the most damaged side of this phenomenon. Bhabha says: "Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable other." The discourse of mimicry relies on sort of contradicted ideas; in order to be successful mimicry, it must constantly produce its access and its difference". This means that no matter how perfect the mimicry was, it will always be fake and unreal. Bhabha believes that the world needs the differences that exist among with nations.¹⁸

In light of colonialism and its multiple influence on countries therefore their inhabitants, this dissertation examines the effect it has on the identity of the colonized and the most obvious changes that occur to it. It also verifies whether the Egyptians have maintained their old and original identity or not. And see if the Egyptian identity would ever be the same as it used to be?

¹⁸. Juniper Ellis, "The Location of Culture (review)," *MUSE*, April, 1995, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/26668>.

Chapter One

Comprehending The Map of Love

Introduction

This chapter discusses Ahdaf Soueif's Bildungsroman work *The Map of Love*. The summary of the story is provided. Then, characters are analysed in order to understand the story and see how each one contributes to the quest of identity. The main themes of the novel are detected and explained focusing on identity. Finally, the quest of identity in *The Map of Love* is tackled. The comprehension of the novel helps in shedding light on the subject matter, and see how does Soueif address the quest of identity in her literary work? And what are her major arguments to defend her claim?

1-Identity

The term identity refers to “sameness, oneness, state of being,” from Middle French *identité* (14C), from Medieval Latin *identitatem* (nominative *identitas*) “sameness,” from Latin *idem* (*neuter*) “the same”, later it reached the English language in 1560s as *idemtitie*.

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, identity is all about sameness. This means that identity makes an individual recognizable, the same way, and each time because of the things that differentiate him or her from others, for example: his appearance, language, or even gender. But, these aspects are shared among many other individuals around the planet. Thus, the sameness of a given group of people or communities makes them identifiable from others. In other words, the sameness that people share is the so called identity.¹⁹

Identity is the aspect of humanity that characterizes both individuals and societies. All what human mind acquires from this life involve in identity formation. Identity is a process and not a found same. It can be considered as the trail left by civilization as it progresses through history. This trail is the culture, or identity of that civilization. As a process, identity

¹⁹. *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Dan McCormack (Douglas Harper, 2016).

cannot be an intentionally made; it is rather developed spontaneously according to the events that face human beings in their lifetime.²⁰

This process does not depend on events only, but also on the way people handle those events; the facilities that help them recover those experiences, and the difficulties that hinder them and stand in their paths. One of which is the climate. It should not be ignored when taking the issue of identity because it determines the kind of building and planting of a certain area. Therefore, it determines the life style of its people.

Identity can be known simply by understanding ourselves, and our environment. The search for identity should be done extensively; no aspect of life should be neglected. Identity is the reflection of all characteristics of life combined together. Any attempt to fabricate an identity, should be applied first in reality.

The life experiences that a person goes through will forcibly shape his/her identity. The same thing happens to a nation. The identity of a nation is determined by its history and all what had ever occurred to it. This dissertation tackles a literary work written by an Egyptian authoress; therefore the Egyptian identity is the main concern of this paper.

2- The Summary of *The Map of Love*:

A “Map” is a symbolic depiction that highlights relationships between elements of a given thing. The title “*the Map of Love*” points that the love does not exist in one place only, rather it exists in various regions of the world. Thus the title indicates the love relationships around the world, and the way different nations interact with one another, and also the manner this love is expressed.

²⁰. Charles Correa, “Quest for Identity,” In *Architecture and Identity*, ed. Robert Powell (Singapore: Concept Media/Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1983), 10-13.

Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* appearances politics, love, wit, and grief. It is a wonderfully accomplished and an articulated literary form that tells the intersecting stories of three women; Egyptian, American and an English woman. One of them lives a century earlier than the other two. Anna Winterbourne, Amal Al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman are the main female characters; each one comes from a different part of the planet.

Lady Anna is newly widowed English woman who arrives to British- occupied Egypt in 1900. Anna is led by her interest and curiosity towards the Egyptian culture due to the painting she saw at the museum when she used to go trying to understand and help her husband before it was too late. Anna disguises in an Arab man outfits in order to achieve her goal, yet her misfortune gets her kidnapped by an ally of a political activist. While being a hostage, Anna meets the wife Layla Al-Baroudi of her abductor and befriends her. Layla introduces her to her attorney brother Sharif who insists to help for making up for his men's mistake. He assists her in seeing the pyramids and Mt. Sinai as she wishes before getting her back safe to her people.

An odd feeling sneaks to Anna's heart during the journey towards Sharif. Sharif is a man who divorced once because his marriage lacked love. However, in the desert of Sinai and when Anna is dressed as an Arab woman, both of them develop deep feeling for each another. Anna is down in her confusion toward Sharif's silence and decides to return back to her homeland. Layla lectures her brother to make a move; and he does, he proposes marriage. They consider the consequences of such marriage on both of their lives. They marry and move in to the old house with Sharif's parents, his mother Zainab who is like any normal Egyptian housewife, and his father who rebelled against the British twenty years ago.

Anna admires every single aspect of Egyptian identity, therefore; she tries to learn the Arabic language, assimilates the culture, and of course interact with all the family members and servants. As a translator, she engaged herself in the nationalist movement by

aiding them, using her connections, to contact with anti-colonists in London, and foreign visitors in Egypt. After four years of marriage, the love couple has a baby girl named Nur al-Hayyah, the light of their life. Sarcastically, Sharif devoted his life for fighting British occupation legally and ethically; and after ten year of marriage he is thinking of retirement for the sake of taking a good care of his wife and daughter; he is assassinated. Anna travels back to England as he wished. Contact is lost between the two families.

The story develops through the eyes of Amel Al-Ghamrawi, Ahmed's daughter, while reading an old trunk of diaries and letters, some in English and some in Arabic, all belongs to the long dead Anna. Ahmed is Sharif's nephew. The novel begins in New York; in 1997: Isabel Parkman, Anna's great-granddaughter, a young divorced American woman discovers the inherited trunk in her dying mother's house. Omar Al-Ghamrawi the old Egyptian musician living in New York who she falls in love with directs her to his sister Amel in Egypt for best understanding the mysterious trunk.

After unfolding Anna's heritage which includes some papers that were written in Amel's grandmother hand-writing telling the story of her brother Sharif who falls in love with an English woman, she realizes the unexpected blood kinship.

Amel becomes addicted to the story of her father's uncle Sharif and his beloved Anna, yet she is occupied and distracted by Mubarak's regime, the Egyptian president at that time, who causes a kind of problems in her family lands. Isabel is drawn by Omar's sister's Egyptian life and problems. Only after Omar makes love to Isabel that he realizes that he was her mother's lover in 1961. Thus, she suspects him to be her father. Isabel gives birth to a baby boy she decides to name "Sharif".

Anna weaves three panels of tapestry that depict Isis, Osiris, and Horus; the ancient Egyptian deities. However, Mabrouka, the maid of the family, takes the three panels and gives one to Anna to take it with her to England, the one that is found in the trunk, another

goes to Layla to end up with Omar from his father Ahmed. The third one is lost sight of, but Isabel mysteriously finds it in her camera bag saying that it was put there by Umm Aya whom, a mysterious woman she met in al-Baroudi's old house during an unplanned walk she once had alone in Egypt. Amel investigates this claim and finds that the house for a long period of time remains inhabited and fits becoming a museum, and there is no Umm Aya anywhere near. Though Isabel story is hard to believe, yet Amel cannot seem to find another reasonable explanation.

Soueif finishes the two stories of Amel and Isabel. Amel's love story with her old friend Tareq 'Atiyya is still to be continued; after Tareq has asked to talk to her when she is free. Isabel comes to Egypt with her Sharif, and together with Amel they are waiting for Omar to finally come home.

3- Themes in *The Map of Love*

Ahdaf Soueif is a diasporic Egyptian writer whose novel- *The Map of Love* written in English deals with love, politics, female relationships, hybridity and question of identity. The story starts in the present 1967 and then, with a fluent twist, the events take place in the past in 1900 when Egypt was still a British protectorate. The reader is captured by a series of back- and- forth temporal tours between the past and the present. *The Map of Love* tackles the British colonialism and its influence on the Egyptian community after decolonization.

3-1- Education in Egypt

The false assumption which the west holds against the east that of the latter is uncivilized and uneducated also owns a particular share in this literary work. Soueif through her story tries to defend her people and shows that they are, in their own ways, what the west is trying to deny. It is just that it is different from theirs and they do not seem to comprehend it. For instance, the school that was built on Amel's family land by her great-grandfather was first set according to the needs and necessities of people who would benefit from it, and it

continued to develop, to fulfil their requirements. During a conversation with ‘Am Abu el-Ma’ati about life in land, and he talked about the school problem and the government actions; Amel start thinking: “Our school held literary classes for the adults. And in ’79 extra classes were added for the children to try to make up for the plummeting level of education they were getting.”²¹

Education means “to bring up (children), or to train”. It comes from Latin *educare* (mid-15c), source also Italian “*educare*” which is “bring out, or lead forth” and it refers to provide schooling (1580s).²² This means that education is a process of enriching the mind of knowledge, the as identity; the more a person’s mind is exposed to new things, the more educated he\she will be, thus the identity is certainly affected.

All the Egyptian main characters in the novel are educated and most of the supporting characters as well. Those that Isabel meets with Amel as well as those Anna got to know a decade ago. Amel’s friend Deena al-‘Ulama is a teacher of mathematics at Cairo University. She does lots of volunteer work for the Teacher’s Union, the human-rights organization, the Legal Aid Bureau and the Committee for the Support of the Palestinian People.²³

The few uneducated Egyptian characters are used to signify the traditional Egyptian life and the belonging to the land. One of those is ‘Am Abu el- Ma’ati; who is a *fallah* yet he believes strongly in the importance of education, he does his best to defend the school. Education is significant in identity formation, the things that a person knows or does not know shape his\her identity. The west have always considered that the east are ignorant, therefore, Soueif provide her novel with a character devoted to defend education in her land.

²¹. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 123.

²². *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Dan McCormack (Douglas Harper, 2016).

²³. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 219.

Amel al-Ghamrawi does her best to maintain the school her family once built because she is well aware of the role of education in building up nations.

Amel Al-Ghamrawi is an Egyptian divorced mother who used to live in London, and moves recently to Cairo. We view the story through her eyes, some times during her readings to Anna's trunk, and some other times while she is interacting with the other characters in the novel.

Amel is a doctor thus she speaks French, English and, of course Arabic. She articulates in a pure Egyptian dialect and very humble manners. Sometimes she has her friend Tahiyya, the doorman's wife, for a cup of tea; other times she has the man who is responsible for their family land, 'Am Abu al-ma'ati, as welcomed guest in her apartment in Cairo.

Amel is very much into reading, in a sense that when she got her hands on Anna's trunk; she did not hesitate a bit and started reading it right away. She is quickly taken by Anna and Sharif and their love and sacrifice. She is a caring person even when she did not know how; she rushes to Tawasi to help Al-Falahin with the problem of the school their kids are studying in. Amel is loyal to the extreme; she detests the fact that her old best friend Tareq 'Atiyya is hiring some Israelis to work in his favour neglecting what they are doing in Palestine.

Tareq decides to let the Israelis' business go because Amel does not like it. She takes Isabel with her to Tawasi where this latter gets to communicate with the natives and sees the Egyptian way of living. They also go to the office where they meet some old friends of Amel, they exchange ideas about Mubarak's regime. Isabel learns about the Egyptians and vice versa.

Amel acts in a rather humorous way, she never takes Tareq seriously. She is drawn into the trunks and forgets about life in the other side her door. There is more in her of a listener than of a talker, she listens to Isabel, Tahiyya and 'Am Abu el- Ma'ati, the son of her father's

chief man on the farm. She, as well, teaches Isabel Arabic, the latter goes: Umm: mother (also the top of the head) .Ummah: nation, hence ammama: to nationalise Amma: to lead the prayers, hence Imam Religious lead.²⁴

Amel al-Ghamrawi inherited her position and respect among people in Tawasi from her well known father Ahmed al-Ghamrawi. ‘Am Abu el-Ma’ati asks her to use her connections to talk to the government. She granted her position because of her education that gives her a better understanding to the world around her which is very obvious during her conversations with Tahiyya and ‘Am Abu el-ma’ati.

3-2- The Theme of Love

The Map of Love is a love saga, first between two different, but related couples, second between two distinct worlds, the west and the east. One couple is a decade older than the other, that of the English lady Anna Winterbourne and the Egyptian gentleman Sharif Basha al-Baroudi. The contemporary couple are the American Isabel Parkman and the Egyptian Omar al- Ghamrawi. The author draws a comparison between love in the past and nowadays in which she chose a traditional Egyptian hero, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi to be the man that the English women Anna falls in love with.

Anna comes to Egypt to see the “real” Egypt and Egyptians. She and Sharif meet in none romantic circumstances when she is kidnapped mistakenly by his men. This incident, ironically, helps her to achieve her goal to learn what she is curious about. She sees the ‘real Egyptian identity’ and admires it; she even adopts it after marrying her beloved, Sharif.

The second love story is between the American Isabel Parkman who intends to come to Egypt in a business trip to write about it in the newspaper she works for. Accidentally, her Egyptian beloved man Omar advises her to go and discover the truth about her great-grandmother’s trunk. Indeed both of the male main characters represent the westernized

²⁴. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 164.

Egyptian elites; Yet Omar is different from Sharif in term of mentality. Sharif lived in France for a while that he articulates in perfect French. Omar lives an American loose life; he represents a more open-minded Egyptian man.

The two love affairs are lived and dealt with differently; each is lived according to the era the couple is in. Sharif and Anna share a traditional love story i.e. they fell for each other; got married, and had a baby girl Nur al-Hayyat. They both have conservative principles and ideas they cannot just neglect. Omar and Isabel live a more modern and westernized kind of relationship. They also get a child, only before marriage.

The reason why the two love affairs are lived differently is because of the difference in identities of the characters. Considering the first couple, Anna and Sharif were both looking to love and be loved, Sharif has divorced his Egyptian wife because, to him, she could not, and cannot live up to his ideas and beliefs. Anna came to Egypt because of her unsuccessful married life with a previous British soldier. She and Sharif live an almost perfect life though the critical circumstances for both, especially Anna who has to let go her 'own' people. She assimilates to the Egyptian life style with ease, and accepts and embraces the differences between the two cultures.

However, Isabel and Omar have a dissimilar love affair. Omar is not as in love as his great-granduncle was toward the English woman, unlike Isabel who is certain about her feelings. After a period of unsuccessful marriage to an "American", she is divorced to be interested in a man who is different from her. She is very positive that their story is meant to be; more than ever when she learns about his love affair with her mother Jasmine. Yet, he is very troubled by the age difference between him Isabel.

The cultural-intermarriages is a theme by which Soueif challenges the world view about the colonized as being inferior and less valued than the colonizer. Both western women in the story obtain happiness next to Egyptian men; the happiness they lacked with their western

men. The unshakable love between the two protagonists permits them to overcome all disagreement, if any. Given that cultural differences exist between them, there lies little conflict in their married life or any personal conflict that may hinder their relationship.

Love is possible; it links authentically people around the globe despite their identities, cultural differences or political interests. This link definitely has modified not only races or ethnicities of these people, but also their identities. Love cross- culture makes it seem as if all human beings are the same, one big family. They all aim for the same things which are happiness and peace. It is only the governments and power seekers who take that aesthetic value of life for granted.

People are neither trained to love, nor born with that aspect in character. This feeling is built up through time and experiences. It is transferred from an individual to another and from a community to another. The way people practice love is the response to the life experiences they ever had.²⁵ That is to say, they construct up a particular awareness of love, which interferes in their identity formation. In this story of love, multiple characters experience those feelings differently. Each one of them loves according to his\her identity. For instance, Isabel Parkman, who was dying to fearlessly fall in love, Ms Parkman is a creative and an open-minded person, she expresses her thoughts shamelessly. She aims to learn the Arabic language.

She is an American divorced young lady. She is a New Yorker journalist who travels to Egypt's Cairo to do some business, and like she is advised by an Egyptian musician, named Omar, whom she fancies to take her great-grandmother's trunk to his sister Amel. Isabel is a positive day-dreamer who never cares for the age difference between her and Omar. She easily opens her heart to Amel and tells her all about herself.

²⁵. Karissa Sanbonmatsu, "How You Know You're in Love: Epigenetics, Stress & Gender Identity," TEDxABQ (video), October 7, 2014.

Isabel is liked by every single Egyptian who interacts with her whether a man or a woman. She treats others respectfully. Though she was not that close to her mother, yet she has always respected her. Even Omar loves her too, but he does not let himself be taken by his feelings especially when he knew that he was her dead mother's lover.

3-3- The Palestinian Case

Ahdaf Soueif is known for her interest in the Palestinian case, yet she did not get her chance to make a move till *the Guardian*, the newspaper she works for, suggested the series of Intifada. Her voyage to Palestine helped her considerably in writing the book in hands. *The Map of Love* indulged in political events. Most of them actually occurred in the Egyptian history. By doing so, Soueif tries to affect change at home and reach out worldwide for support.²⁶

Soueif's story includes lots of politics; whether in the colonial era or in the post-colonial one because this Egyptian diasporic writer wishes for her audience to sympathise with Egyptian society. Soueif makes it personal in terms of the suffering of the various Egyptian characters due to British occupation. She narrates a story of regular people living their lives casually, but because of political instability; a person may get killed any second. Though not clearly stated, but Sharif's death was because of the chaos that characterized Egypt at the time; as Layla declares about the death of her brother Sharif:

They have not yet found out who did it. They say it could be Coptic fanatics in retaliation for Boutros Basha's assassination. They say it could be Muslim fanatics for my brother's position on women's rights and because he married Anna and was known to wear her image on a chain round his neck, and so that the Copts would be

²⁶. Yvette Katherine Leboeuf, *The Diasporic Writer in the Post-colonial Context: The Case of Ahdaf Soueif* (Canada: University of Ottawa, 2012), 75.

blamed. They say it could be British agents to get the Copts blamed and increase the divisions in the country and rid themselves of a national leader.²⁷

Soueif included the Palestinian case in order to drive the world attention, support and sympathy for it. This indicates that Soueif is concerned with the Arabic unity, and she considers her Arabic identity not just the Egyptian one.

Life in the exile seems to trouble the author considering her own experience in Diaspora. All of the main Egyptian characters, and some of the supporting characters, travel outside Egypt for a specific purpose and return back home to settle down and continue their lives. It is only then when they find their peace- of- mind. They sometimes feel the urge to go back to where they originally belong, go back where it all started. Like the case of Amal who travels from London to Cairo, and then Tawasi in Upper Egypt.

The Map of Love is a fictional love story in a real context, the places, the events, and sometimes even the characters. Sharif is a national activist; and Omar is deeply involved in the Palestinian case. Most of Sharif's friends are real figures such as Qasem Amin who used to defend women's rights; he wrote a book called *The Liberation of Women*. His friend Muhammad 'Abdu contracts his in marriage to an English women.²⁸ These characters contribute to the explanation of the image Soueif is showing of how the Egyptians are developed, educated and most of all civilized like the west.

The political identity is self-conscious; it often leads to the anti-imperial movements which is the case of Sharif and his nationalists. Sharif is charismatic Egyptian nationalist, a true gentleman, who does all he can to free his country from the British occupation; legally. He usually dresses in his formal dress of the Council with a tarbush. He speaks Arabic and French correctly. Yet, he does only when necessary. Mr. Al-Baroudi is extremely proud of

²⁷. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 506.

²⁸. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 318.

his identity, as an Egyptian, he considers his national identity to be the one that unite his people together against “the other”.

Moreover, with the Palestinian case, Egyptians were motivated by their Arabic identity and they felt the urge to be there for Palestine and Palestinians, like the case of Omar and Amel al-Ghamrawi. Omar is a prominent musician living in New York. He is deeply involved in the Palestinian politics. However, this character assimilates to founder of the postcolonial theory Edward Said.²⁹

3-4- Stereotypes about the East

The term stereotype refers to a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, particularly an idea that is mistaken.³⁰ Some of the stereotypes of the Arabs that the West holds are detected in the novel, of course for the sake of falsifying and correcting them. Anna winterbourne represents the western mind. She keeps on saying ‘in the oriental tales I have read...’which signifies the faith they have in what they read and hear about the orient. While discovering Egypt and its people, she realises that none of the stereotypes are true. For instance, when she is abducted, the first reasonable explanation that comes to her mind after seeing Layla is that due to the man clothing on her; she is mistaken to a man that the orient woman, Layla, fancies.

These stereotypes make it difficult for human beings to go along, it makes them focus more on the differences between them rather than appreciating the things they have in common. They ignore the so called humanity or brotherhood of all human kind; let alone the innate fine feelings they may share with one another such as love and respect, which is the reason behind wars in this world. Omar al-Ghamrawi experiences those feelings personally in

²⁹. Fatiha KaïdBerrahal, *The cartography of Arabness and Transnational Feminism in FadiaFaqir’sMy Name is Selma and AhdafSoueif’s (Catégorie parente: Revue Makalid, 2011), 71.*

³⁰. Cambridge Dictionaries Online (Cambridge University Press, 2016), <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

his ex-marriage life. When his mother asks him about the reason behind his divorce; he answers lightly: “We both discovered I was an Arab.”³¹

Lady Anna is a well articulated, courageous and an open-minded widow who travels to British occupied Egypt in order to explore the new world that she discovered in a museum after her desperate struggle in helping her husband to get out of his misery. She maintains the good relationship with her father-in-law Sir Charles. Even when she is in Egypt they regularly write for one another. As seen before, the summary of the novel, Anna fits in Egypt because she is modest and makes some new friends. The dearest to her heart is Sharif’s sister, Layla, who teaches her Arabic, and her curiosity and interest push her to learn more about Egyptian culture.

Anna, as a protagonist, does much of the speaking. She is a classy English woman who behaves in precise manners; not like most of the women in general and Egyptian women in particular. Anna speaks in delicate language that is very understandable by others, or at least those who speak English. For Sharif and his sister Layla, she communicates with them in French “We cannot speak each other’s languages. We have to use the French.”³² She expresses her mind freely and sincerely, yet she is not very talkative.

Lady Winterbourne is extremely curious about Egypt, she is a person who comes to it because of paintings, she is not an ignorant considering that she reads and writes a lot. Despite her loss, she is very optimistic about life and adventurous in throwing herself in the unknown for the sake knowledge. Anna has always wished to be taken by love. She was orphaned young therefore she lacked parental love and taking care of. She considers marriage to have the chance to love and be loved; thus to be happy.

³¹. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 334.

³². Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 272.

People respect her because of her class and behaviours. She never intends harm for any one; on the contrary she always wishes them well. Anna tries constantly to help people around her, English as well as Egyptians. She sacrificed her English life in order to unite with her beloved Sharif. Her Egyptian family-in-law was fond of her. She never hesitated to help the nationalists when they needed a translator.

Anna is very content with her feelings. She never allows her emotions show to strangers. She acts in a calm and patient way i.e. Even when she was abducted she did not panic what so ever. Lady Anna is fearless and stubborn when she aims to get something. She is intelligent and interesting to exchange ideas with.

Anna winterbourne is a fine-looking lady. She has a soft golden hair, a fair skin and beautiful violet eyes. She dresses in an elegant English women clothing, there were three times only when she disguises in an Arab men outfit in order to experience Egypt freely, and at one time, she wears an Arab women dress in her journey with Sharif to Sinai, when they developed sweet sentiment for each another.

Though Anna is an educated woman, her general understanding to the orient is shaped by the way the latter are stereotyped. The interaction between groups of people constructs stereotypes. Later, it leads to certain discrimination among human beings. Considering *the Map of Love*, Anna behaves according to what she has heard about Egyptians and how they are “uncivilized”. The social identity is influenced by relationships between groups.³³ Thus, it is affected by stereotypes. Dr. Simon Moss argues that if an individual is to hear how he\she is stereotyped, it is directly subjected to his\her identity. I.e. the fact that Egyptians, particularly Sharif’s men, are stereotyped as uncivilized and dangerous pushes them to kidnap Anna even though the consequences they will later face.

³³. Simon Moss, Stereotype and Social Identity Threat, “Sico Tests,” last modified September 20, 2010, <http://www.sicotests.com/psyarticle.asp?id=391>.

Gender stereotypes also affect people's actions. Thinking that if she looks like a man, she will not be harassed, Anna dresses an Arab man clothing in order to safely discover Egypt, but she realises that it is not easy too to be a man. She is kidnapped because of her "man's appearance".

Every culture has their own stereotypes; of course, it is unfair to judge the whole nation by the way they are stereotyped. It comes across many people of society, yet there are some who do not fit into those stereotypes. Like the case of Anna Winterbourne, who can be considered as a typical British person according to her manners and the fact that she preserves her emotions to herself, let alone her posh British life style. But she is not a complaining person, nor a hater of confrontation woman; while British are considered to be.

Conclusion

The identity of individuals is formed by all social constructions, and the social identity is affected by the entire universe. Everything that occurs in life touches the identity of whoever is exposed to it. For that reason, identity keeps on updating and changing till Allah knows when.

Chapter Two

Hybridity in *The Map of Love*

Introduction

People's interactions with one another; cause the so called culture melange. When people's minds are opened to new ideas, individuals automatically shape a modified understanding to the world that surrounds them. Their identity is reshaped according to the new experiences they just had. This process is known as hybridity. The term hybrid usually used to describe the offspring of two animals or plants of different types, especially as produced through human manipulation for specific better genetic characteristics.¹ Generally it means a mixture of two very different things. However, it is also used to refer to a person or a group who is produced by cross-cultural interactions.

1- The Theme of Hybridity of the Egyptian Identity

In this global world, and with the massive spread of mass media; it becomes impossible for either individuals, or groups to be alienated; in order not to get the original identity affected by the others'. Edward Said believes that: "no one today is purely one thing."² Each one of us owns a bit, if not a lot of another, the more experiences a person has the more hybrid he or she becomes. The trail that imperialism has left behind is undeniable especially the way it influenced identities and cultures.

As a diasporic writer herself, Soueif grew up moving from Egypt to Britain and back; and returned back to Britain to finish her education. Therefore, in her works she as well treats the theme of hybrid identities. A hybrid identity refers to the state when the identity of people or a nation is no longer the same as it originally was because of the interaction with "other" identities. This happens mostly due to colonialism. The latter affects both the colonized and the colonizer, yet the colonized is more damaged by it because of its status, the latter always

1. *Online Dictionary*, Browse Dictionary, LLC, 2016.

2. Amin Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (USA: State University of New York Press, 2005), 127.

look down to themselves, therefore they try to copy the “other”, and this theme is often discussed in the postcolonial literature.

Hybridity in the novel is shown mainly within characters; whether in the manner they think or the manner they behave. Taking Sharif as a sample, he is an Egyptian who lived once in France for a period of time, thus, he communicates in a “perfect” French, as Anna said, as if how can an Egyptian man articulate in a language that is not his mother tongue. Moreover, she tried to tease him and said: “You are not an Arab anyway. Not properly”.¹

Knowing oneself helps much to differentiate between the hybrid and the original self. Soueif, by her novel, tries to encourage the Egyptians to first know themselves, then to make an effective move for constructing a better Egypt in particular and the world in general. She aims to nourish the Arab awareness in order not to fall in the trap that is netted to them by the westerners.

This novel reveals the interactions of the self with “the other” on the way people of the same race behave toward one another, and toward outsiders. Of course it is affected by the way they view themselves first, and then the other. Both Egyptians and British consider Egypt to be far away from development and have a long path to go in order to reach the modern world.² Egyptians are proud, to the extreme, of their ancient civilization. After colonialism was ended, they were looking up to the bright future that waits for them. Unfortunately they kept on meeting the disappointment ever since. During a conversation between Amel al-Ghamrawi and her friends; Amel’s friend Deena says: “The British came in at a crucial point in history in our history. They froze our development: our move towards democracy, towards education, industrialization, towards modernity, Amel replies: we have now fifty years, fifty-six years of our own, of national government, and what have we

1. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 154.

2. Nathan Anderson, *The Map of Love by Ahdaf Soueif* (North Carolina: NoveLists EBSCO Publishing, 2001), 4.

done?”¹ They finally realised that not only Britain is blamed for Egypt’s situation today, but also Egyptians are responsible for their status.

Egyptians admiration for British culture and identity is pretty obvious in this literary work. Anna winterbourne once experienced the way her people appear to native Egyptians; she says: “the oddest thing of all was that I suddenly saw them as bright, exotic creatures, walking in a kind of magical space, oblivious to all around them; at ease chatting to each other as though they were out for a stroll in the park, while the people, pushed aside, watched and waited for them to pass”.² By contrast, the British people never took them into consideration. When Anna is kidnapped and Sharif insisted to help; she said: “how dare he dictate to me?”³ This sentence declares the western’s view point about the orientals as if they were not as human as they, western, are. They look very down to them.

Soueif appoints at the Egyptians lack of solidarity, due to differences that exists in their society such as the religious dissimilarities, Egypt inhabits Muslims and Copts. In a conversation between Sharif and his friend Sheikh Rashid Rida, the latter says: “indeed we are divided enough already,”⁴ this division makes it easy for the outsiders to sense the weakness of the nation. When Amel al-Ghamrawi goes to the police station to help ‘Am Abu el-Ma’ati; the soldier who is guarding the “markaz”, as Soueif named it, prevented the women that accompanied her to enter; he says: “No natives.” Amel replies: “Natives? These people are your people.” Then, “Impossible” the soldier says.⁵ The Egyptians themselves do not treat one another with respect, how could they expect others to respect them. The original Egyptians are the ones to be neglected. In other words the more hybrid you are appreciable

1. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 223.

2. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 195.

3. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 143.

4. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 317.

5. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 438.

you will be. Like the case of Amel, who is a Palestinian-Egyptian that used to live in London, and she recently moved back to Cairo. As if they feel more proud of their hybrid identities than of their originality.

1-1-Culture and Identity

Culture meant “the farming of land” from Middle French “culture”, and directly from Latin “cultura”, a cultivating and agriculture (mid-15c). The figurative sense of “cultivation through education” appeared in (c.1500). From 1805, its meaning developed to “the intellectual side of civilization”. It was until 1867 when the term was considered as “collective customs and achievements of people.”¹ Moreover, it is all ways of living built up by a group of human being and passed out from generation to another.²

However, culture is all what can be seen as a way of life of a particular society, for example, the language they talk, the way they dress, their habits, their beliefs and so on. It is passed from one generation to another through the process of socialization. It is modified randomly due to globalization and assimilation to other cultures. In *The Map of Love*, the Egyptian culture is modifies from what used to be, yet there are still some figures that represents the preceding one.

Some of the cultural aspects are familiar to all society members, and it is wide spread among people. This one is called dominant culture. It is accepted and shared by the majority of the society members. Whereas, the subculture is a smaller culture adopted by a minority in society within the same culture, it is only a bit diverse from the dominant one. They have more in common than the differences. Moreover, another culture is known as the folk culture; which is held by local communities to be identified and varied from other groups of ordinary

1. *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Dan McCormack (Douglas Harper, 2016).

2. *Online Dictionary*, Browse Dictionary, LLC, 2016.

people. However, there is also the High culture; which refers to a cultural product that is admired and appreciated by the elites and the upper middle class.¹

Identity is partly chosen and partly acquired. It is chosen because of the various modifications in one's behaviour that is determined by his or her will. If this person no more like a particular aspect of his or her character, or for example, a Christian is convinced and wants to converted to Islam, his religious identity will automatically change. Thus, this person is no longer identified as a Christian; he is a Muslim. Identity is also acquired because the individual responses to the attitudes of people surrounding him\her in given society. Therefore, with the cultural progression the identity also changes.

Considering the Egyptian society, it is composed of multiple cultures. The national one is considered to be the dominant. The Egyptians still look up to their great ancient civilization which differentiates them from others of the whole world. They celebrate the presence of the "*Fallah*" and the advantages of the land. And of course, they are very cheer about the Nile River which was the reason for the whole Egyptian civilization. No matter how hybrid they are due to the preceding conquests of Egypt since ever, they all consider themselves to be Egyptians, geographically united.

In *The Map of Love*, The main male protagonist is a nationalist who does all he can to defend his country and his people. Sharif Basha al-Baroudi represents most of modern Egyptians who aim for a better Egypt; that is free from all types of colonialism. And they try to promote the citizens' way of thinking in order to have them working together hand in hand; men and women.

The Arabic identity of Egyptians is a controversial topic. Some of the Egyptians trust that the Arabic is just a language they acquired from the Arab conquest, and that they are not

1. Milena Miladinovic, Forming Your Cultural Identity, ICL blog (blog), July 23, 2013, <http://www.afs.org/blog/icl/?p=3606>.

obliged to intervene in other Arabs' businesses. Whereas, others believe that Egypt belongs to the so called Arabism. Ahdaf Soueif considers her Arabic identity and it is shown clearly in her work *The Map of Love*. Omar al-Ghamrawi is a political activist in the Palestinian case. Omar and his sister Amel are both dedicated supporters to Palestine. She detests the fact that her friend Tareq 'Attiya was about to hire the Israelis in a business of his: "But how can you do it? How can you bring Israelis into you land? ...I am shocked. I am amazed. After all these years, all these wars, and what about the Palestinian case?"¹

This proves the Arab solidarity and shows that they help one another. Egypt is part of the Arab world regardless of the fact that they believed it or not. In view of this fictional literary work, all of the Egyptian main characters are biologically related to Palestinians. Al-Ghamrawis brother and sister have a Palestinian mother. As for al-Baroudis, they have a Palestinian cousin.

Soueif is very proud of her Arabic language and she believes that it is "that" interesting which makes foreigners aim to learn it or at least comprehend it. Both the English woman Anna Winterbourne and the American one Isabel Parkman were looking forward to learn the Arabic language, and in their programs of their visit to Egypt.

1-2-Language and Identity:

The language people use forms an important part of the sense of who they are and what their identities are. With the several identities that exist in this world, such as ethnic, national, religious and gender group; there is a particular kind of language for each. Not necessary a distinct language for each, but it differs in the use of words or expressions.

Ahdaf Soueif was first exposed to English literature in her mother's library i.e. she developed her English language as well as culture through those readings. She, later, went to England to study for a doctorate in linguistics. Her education in English together with the

1. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 202.

Egyptian hybrid identity and language, Egypt being a British former protectorate, formed a piece of literature that speaks both languages; English and Arabic.

All the main characters in *The Map of Love* are chosen deliberately from a specific category in the Egyptian society in order to convey a particular meaning. The modern Egyptian identity is represented by those political elites and intellectuals in the novel, noting that they are mostly bilingual and educated abroad; in France, England and America.¹ Both Sharif and Layla al-Baroudi speak French, and Omar and Amel al- Ghamrawi articulate in a well structured English language.

The sociolinguistic term ‘bilingualism’ is defined as the ability to speak and/or write in two languages. This talent can be gained by multiple approaches, yet the most common one is colonialism. This, of course, affects the social identity as well as the identity of individuals. One of the forms of two languages mixed together is the so called code switching. This phenomenon occurs consciously and unconsciously in bilingual societies.² This form is used in a wide range in the narrative of Soueif’s *The Map of Love* which clearly indicates her identity.

The characters are bilingual and the novel is multilingual. The author used Arabic, English and French languages; all these three are used affectively to bear the wealthy history of the Egyptian culture and identity. Soueif included Egyptian dialect which added a special aesthetic soul to the work, for example, “Ya setti hasal kheir, isn’t the lady well, al-hamdul-Allah.”³ Sometimes, she the characters speak the Arabic language translated; Sharif said when he learned that his mother had told his sister about the conversation they had: “You women!

1. Reem Bassiouny, *Language and identity in Modern Egypt* (Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 84.

2. Mohammed Albakry, and Pasty Hunter Hancock. “Code Switching in Ahdaf Soueif’s *The Map of Love*,” Middle Tennessee State University, USA. SAGA Population, (2008): 17, 221, doi: 10.1177/0963947008092502.

3. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 149.

A bean does not have time to get wet in your mouths.”¹ This is an Arabic saying, and it means that women talk too much.

Soueif offers a unique delight while reading her novel, the way she moved from English to Arabic was very creative. In both generations western ladies, Anna and Isabel, were taught the Arabic language, based on their request, by Layla and Amel respectively. They were both interested in learning the Arabic language because of their curiosity about the Arabic identity in general and the Egyptian one in particular. Language, consciously and unconsciously, reveals the identity of the individuals and society.

The core of Anna Winterbourne and Isabel Parkman’s journeys is to discover the eastern world; the way they live, the way women are treated and forced to wear Hijab, are they oppressed or they enjoy their rights the same way as men do? There was one time when Isabel tried to work on an Arabic word, she tried to translate it to English with its different and distinct varieties, and she was amazed of the multiple words that can be derived only from the term “Umm” as a root for many others. Such goes: “Umm: mother, Ummah: nation, hence ammama: to nationalise ...etc”.² Then she said: “So how can they say Arabic is a patriarchal language?”³ i.e. how is it that the Arabic society is a patriarchal society, but the Arabic language is not? It is either a paradoxical reality, or the Arabic world is not “that” patriarchal as it seems.

Soueif have included various Arabic terms such as proper names like Nur al-Hayat who is Anna’s daughter which means “light of my life”. Also some nouns that refer to some Egyptian places or items like “the Markaz”;⁴ which is the police station. And of course some

1. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 284.

2. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 164.

3. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 165.

4. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 438.

titles in the Egyptian dialect like “Basha” and it is an Ottoman title that is roughly equivalent to ‘Lord’.¹

The reason for the frequent use of Arabic expressions may reside in Soueif’s concern with translation. Rather than translating to bring the text’s meaning closer to the reader, the author opts in many cases for maintaining the texture of the original Arabic and preserving its connotation. Many of the words and phrases used in the novel carry heavy sociocultural implications that would have been lost if represented by an English word or phrase.²

Anna Winterbourne and the two members of al-Baroudis , Sharif and Layla, converse in French. All of the three use the same foreign language to express distinct identities which is what Sharif finds even; there was a time when Anna asked him if he was troubled for not being able to speak to her in Arabic, and that they ought to use French. He answered: “No, it makes foreigners of us both.”³ Here Soueif claims the equality of the various world nations, that is to say the equality of the human race though the cultural differences. None can resist love.

With the change in identity, a change in the way people explain themselves occurs. However, it sometimes causes kinds of disagreements between people due to the language expansion. Nerlich believes that: “Flexibility. Language is constituted by social conventions. These social conventions allow for change and flexibility, and some disagreements between speakers. Still, it is not a dead end to try to describe semantics; we just have to allow for loose ends, and for the possibility of change and flexibility.”⁴ In other words, the misunderstandings in communications help to enrich the meaning of the language used.

1. Soueif, *The Map of Love*, 520.

2. Mohammed Albakry, and Pasty Hunter Hancock. “Code Switching in Ahdaf Soueif’s *The Map of Love*” Middle Tennessee State University, USA. SAGA Population, (2008): 17, 226, doi: 10.1177/0963947008092502.

3. Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 157.

4. Brigitte Nerlich, et al., eds. *Polisemy: flexible patterns of meanings in mind and language* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), 162.

Soueif considers that it is not language that separate people, it is rather their thoughts. It is true that the language reflects the identity of the individual thus the society that the latter belongs to, yet identity is not necessarily the reason why they get along. “You make more effort, you make sure you understand, and you are understood. Sometimes, I think because we use the same words, we assume we mean the same things.”¹ Sometime a person cannot make himself \herself understood even to those whom he shares with the same identity and language, because people constantly assume the agreement between language and the message that it conveys, and this only leads to more disagreements. Intercultural relationships require more effort because of the distinction between people from different cultures which means that they truly care for one another.

1-3-Gender and Identity

The word gender referred to “kind, sort, class” (c.1300). From Old French “genre, kind, species, character”. From the Latin word “*genus*: race, stock, family , rank, order”. Also, it came as “gene: female and male, sex” from Indo-European roots. Its grammatical use in English extended from late 14c. However, in 1963, it started to express the social attributes and biological qualities.² Moreover, the expression gender is used to describe either male or female genres as distinguished by social and cultural roles and behaviours.

As a diasporic, postcolonial and a feminist writer, Ahdaf Soueif, in her works, explores the themes of life in the exile and circumstances that undergoes it. She views the experience through both male and female perspectives, yet she concentrates on the way the latter handles it. She depicts the way women survive the suffering of the different obstacles that they daily face whether in their home land or the host one.

1. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 272.

2. *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Dan McCormack (Douglas Harper, 2016).

One other thing that cannot be missed in this novel is women's relationships with each other. The solidarity among them and the friendship they hold to one another is phenomenal. Anna Winterbourne befriended Layla al-Baroudi. Her brother Sharif and Anna would not get together if she did not take the right measure by talking to him and encouraging him to propose to Anna. The same for Amel al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman, they met and got along because of the latter's emotion towards Amel's brother Omar. She helped in bringing them together.

Soueif, through her writings, affirms "the quest of personal identity"¹ in the social context which prescribes gender roles. She believes in general equality and that men and women are equal participant in constructing this world. Moreover, she challenges these roles and raises "the quest for national identity."² She declares that Egypt was liberated and rebuilt by equally both genders. There is no diversity in their nationality, and they both love Egypt the same way. The only difference is in the way they partake their Egyptian identity. Men face death in favour of their countries, such as the case of Sharif al-Baroudi who was assassinated unjustly in front of his house. On the other hand, women face a destiny that is even worse, for instance the mothers of the "Shohadaa" whom have to be patient, Sharif's mother Zainab said the shahada for him and closed his eyes when passed away. Women were widowed and left, sometimes, with their children to live an unbearable sadness for their beloved ones. Not to mention that they were treated unethically by the colonizers.

In order to prove that women are as strong as men, Soueif puts her main female character Anna Winterbourne in men's clothes, Arab men clothes. Anna disguised because she desperately wanted to explore Egypt freely and its various breath-taking monuments. However, she was abducted by men and also rescued by one, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi.

1. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 97.

2. Peter Melville Logan, *The Encyclopedia of the Novel* (The United Kingdom: Willy Black well, 2011), 64 .

Soueif claims that women are in need for men not because the first are worthless, but because they complete one another and together they make an improved world.

To support her idea of women greatness, Soueif includes the very symbolic Egyptian deity “Isis”. The myth of Isis says that she was the great loving mother, it is believed that she was the loyal sister and as well the good wife of Osiris. She also made all Egypt rich with her fecundity.¹ This deity represents the Egyptian women in their strength and their willingness to love and back up their country next to men.

By travelling to western countries, the orient women discover a new way of living, and they are considered differently. They are more relaxed about their behaviours because there is no such a thing as a particular women’s behaviour in the western world, or at least not as restricted as in the eastern one. Therefore, a vague impression of gender roles starts to emerge in their conscious which is directly reflected in their attitudes.² The novel holds a certain comparison between Egyptian women and western ones. The first are controlled by society and religion and they entirely depend on men. Whereas, the latter are free to express themselves, and they are not guided by anything but their wills. The old Egyptian women, with their lack of confidence, asked Amel al-Ghamrawi for help with the government when they held their men in prison considering that she used to live in London, which means that she is no longer a pure Egyptian woman as they are in terms of ideas and identity due to her exposure to the western identity.

1. Dorman, Peter F. “Ancient Egyptian Religion.” Encyclopedia Britannica. Last modified February 22, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ancient-Egyptian-religion>.

2. Sharif Gemie, *Women's Writing and Muslim Societies: The Search for Dialogue, 1920-present* (Britain: Sharif Gemie, 2012), 47.

1-4- Identity and Religion

Religion a set of beliefs and practices related to the purpose of universe, and how the human matters are handled. It is generally agreed on by a number of figures or sects.¹ It is deeply related to identity formation. It implies a certain commitment in the person's identity, which leads to particular behaviours that are governed by society and how religiously strict it is. The loose behaviours among people in a community affect the religious identity of the individuals to reach for the whole society. *The Map of Love* is not the most religious Egyptian novel considering the Egyptian Muslim society.

Most of Soueif's characters are Muslims. However, this aspect of their cultural identity is largely disconnected from their political aspiration as well as their actions.² None of the Egyptian characters behave totally in an Islamic manner especially Omar al-Ghamrawi with his loose American manners, Sharif and Layla al-Baroudi are more traditional in their actions.

Carlo Caldarola concluded that religion does not hinder societies' development, yet its influence cannot be neglected especially if one society holds multiple religions because it leads to a certain complexity. However, various stereotypes are hold against most of the religions around the world.³

Anna Winterbourne and Isabel Parkman came to Egypt holding an idea about the Egyptian religious way of life especially the fact that Muslim women need to wear the veil. Which is to them crucial to both women and men: crucial to women in a sense that the Islam oppresses them and does not give them the freedom to dress the way they feel like.⁴ It is Unjust to men;

1. *Online Dictionary*, Browse Dictionary, LLC, 2016.

2. Nawar Al-Hassan Golley, *Arab women's lives retold: exploring identity through writing* (Florida: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 130.

3. Carlo Caldarola, *Religion and societies: Asia and the Middle East* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982), 325.

4. Josh Cerreti, Seeing Muslim Women by western eyes, "The Feminist Wire," last modified 2 August, 2012, <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2012/08/seeingmuslimwomenwithwesterneyes/>.

because they do not get to enjoy their beautiful women. For instance, the painting of William Holman Hunt “A Scene in Cairo; The Lantern- Maker’s Courtship, 1854-61” depicts an Egyptian man feeling his fiancée’s face through the veil.

When Anna first tried the veil, she was out going to the Suez; she was astonished by the way it made her feel. Supposedly, to them, it prisons women and forbids her from acting in certain manners, yet Anna found it “a most liberating thing.” True; she felt invisible, but she liked the way she could see or do anything she wanted without getting caught.¹

The dislocation of the characters in this story led them to lessen their religious commitment and most of them acquired new habits that are impossible to fit in the Islamic religion, for instance, the fact that Oman al-Ghamrawi committed adultery with a woman, Isabel Parkman, whom he was later suspected to be her father. This assimilation to the western culture destroys the ethics of the Islamic society.

Modernity has a great influence on religious identity. “The challenges of modernity appeared to threaten the very existence of Islam.”² The true Islamic identity keeps on vanishing due to globalization which blinds people’s eyes about the truth and let go of their Islamic values. Soueif, through her work, tries to remind the world in general and Muslims in particular of what happens when we let go of Allah and having faith in him. Omar al-Ghamrawi was troubled most times in the story; he could not find his peace of mind.

As long as a person believes strongly in something, or some god; things will work out. Like the case of Mabrouka, al-Baroudi’s maid, who believes in ancient Egyptian religion of the three deities Isis, Osiris and Horus and their magical power. The myth implies that they will reunite the family; which is why she gave one tapestry panel of one of the deities to both Anna and Layla after Sharif’s death when Anna was living for good. However, it did work,

1. Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 195.

2. Macrae C. Neil, et al., eds. *Stereotypes and Stereotyping* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1996), 60.

and what Mabrouka aimed for was successfully achieved. Though it took long, eventually it did in the succeeding generations.

Due to the various events that occurred in the Egyptians' lives, their identity has been shaped from what used to be. There are still some few old people that hold on to their old identity such as Mabrouka and 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati. Whereas, for the younger generations, they no longer know what they truly are.

2-The Quest of Identity in *The Map of Love*

The quest of identity is not newly raised; rather it has always been a controversial topic that occupied people's minds. Thus, it is widely discussed on different levels, locally and internationally. The thing that makes it approachable is that it cannot be hidden or manipulated. It can be known by what a person does, and what s\he does not do. As for literature, the authors can be interpreted by what they write and what they do not. Both literature and identity affect one another, and affected by the outside world.

Ahdaf Soueif, through her love saga, *The Map of Love*, raises the question of identity in the Egyptian society in particular and in the whole world in general. With globalization the world has turned into a small village, every community has become aware of the other societies. The intercultural relationships made it impossible to have a pure one thing. People started to learn one another's languages for an acceding communication. This process is both beneficial and harmful. It is beneficial because human beings need one another to better endure this world. One can benefit from the other's experiences, and it is also recommended in the Islamic religion. However, it is harmful due to the bad habits that might be spread around the globe.

None of the Egyptian protagonists is purely Egyptian; neither biologically nor culturally. Both of al-Baroudis _brother and sister- and al-Ghamrawis' articulate in a foreign language besides their own mother tongues. Sharif and Layla al-Baroudi speak the French language, as

for Omar and Amel al-Ghamrawi, they talk the English language next to their Arabic. Since that they have learned these foreign language each one in its own context, with it, they acquired the culture as well.

Every person, place or an idea is hybrid, and nothing is original. Each new thing that emerges in life is certainly inspired by something already existed. Concerning identity, neither individuals nor society drop their old identity and acquire a new one; they simply add up to their old one. Therefore, they get to the point of questioning their identity. And this is made known clearly in Soueif's *The Map of Love*. Every single aspect about it indicates the quest of identity. A kind of comparison is drawn between what used to be and what it is nowadays. The life in Tawasi mirrors the preceding life style of the Egyptians, though not the original one, yet it is less hybrid then the way of life in Cairo or Alexandria.

The American divorcee Isabel Parkman turned out to be holding Egyptian blood in her veins, she got it from her Egyptian grandmother Nur al-Hayah, "the light of life". The name itself is very symbolic to Soueif's message. The author tries to advise her readers not to give up hope about life. Everything happens for a reason, and no matter what happens the love will always succeed.

The historical events are dominant in this literary work in order to provide it with credibility. The British imperialism affected Egyptians in a way or another. Their identity was modified inevitably for good and it will never be the same. They no longer strongly believe in the myths as they used to do. For instance, Mabrouka, the family maid, appreciates the old Egyptian superstitions like reading the cup of coffee in order to know your fortune, and she also believes in miraculous powers of their Egyptian deities

Mabrouka deliberately gives one panel to each of Anna and Layla believing that the mythical and magical power of the three deities shall bring them back together; the two parents; then the child. Thus, the two families would be joined together eventually. And

indeed; Mabrouka's expectation were true. Soueif claims the reliability of the Egyptian beliefs, culture and identity.

The story shows that gender role is not restricted to certain manners, and if a person neglected some restrictions; society would be a total chaos. Amel al-Ghamrawi behaves very strong when she goes to the police station, the way she stood up for the helpless men and their wives in Tawasi was very courageous. Whereas, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi supports women and he does all he can to help them survive the new circumstances in life and that does not make him less manly. It is not only society that determines gender roles; it is rather life and experiences that help to shape the gender identity of a person.

Any identity of any country what so ever would be affected by any outsider influence. The more the two countries interact with one another the more the identity of both is modified due to the culture melange. Algeria, for instance, after its long exposure to the French culture; the majority of Algerians no longer use their mother tongue to communicate with one another, and even the Arabic language is neglected and fully blended by French, only in some areas that were a bit far from the French culture. In those places, even the Islamic culture kept preserved a bit safe from hybridity for a longer period of time.

Conclusion

Soueif used plenty of repetition, if not to say that the whole story of Anna and Sharif was repeated with Omar and Isabel. Both women are western and the men are Egyptians. The first befriended their lover's sisters Layla and Amel respectively. Both of the love couple had unsuccessful marriages. Both generations fought for the school in Tawasi. Even the museum was recurred, Anna visited a museum in her home land, and Isabel went to the one in Egypt which used to be al-Baroudi's house. History repeats itself, which is what Soueif is trying to say. She is warning her readers from the potential danger may be heading towards the Arabs in general and Egyptians in particular, a danger that threaten their lives and identities.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The Map of Love is an Egyptian novel written in English, which is confusing. Why did not Ahdaf Soueif write her literary work in Arabic since that it is her mother tongue? Why did she have to go and write an “Egyptian” narrative in foreign language? What does that tell the world about her identity? Obviously, the work in hand provokes the question of identity of both Soueif and the other Egyptians.

The love between the colonizer and the colonized is a unique one. The colonizer sees his benefit in the colonized. While, oddly; the latter admires and looks up to his colonized. He continues to assimilate him in all what he does. Eventually, the colonized become neither the colonizer nor himself, and this puts him in a dilemma; not being able to identify his true self.

All the Egyptian characters in the novel are intensely proud of their Egyptian identity. Whether the elites Egyptians, or the common ones; they all appreciate the land and the Egyptian heritage. They admit their religious and Arabic identity and think of it as an undivided part of their identity. Neither have they neglected the British deep effect on their identity. This is represented by Sharif al-Baroubi and Anna Winterbourne’s daughter, Nur al-Hayah, as a new Egyptian-British identity.

Their previous Egyptian identity will never be the same; it will always be the combination of the past and the present. The British affect on the Egyptian identity will maintain in to shape people’s culture and behaviour for eternity.

The quest of identity extends with the American imperialism and the influence it leaves on societies’ identity. The influence it has on the Egyptian identity is reflected by the new born baby Sharif al-Ghamrawi, the son of Omar al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman. The result of this intercultural relationships is the partly Egyptian-British, partly American identity, not to mention previous effect of the British colonialism.

The formation of identity is a process that never ends; our identity continues to be modified with each single event that takes place in our lives. The upcoming unknown things in life are the things that determine our fate. Like Amel al-Ghamrawi said; “We always know how the story ends, what we do not know is what happens long the way.”⁷⁰ People are required to be content with their identities and their lives to better experience the journey.

With the massive change that occurs to societies and individuals’ lives, people are constantly left questioning their identity. A person is to wonder if there is any possibility for the very first identity to fade away or at least not to appear on ones existence. And if not, would a person ever be sure about him\herself and what they truly are! Shakespeare said that “we know what we are, but not what we may be.” *The Map of Love* reflects both Egyptian identity and western one; according its creator and her identity that is affected by the west.

⁷⁰ . Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 74.

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