

Allegorical and Cultural Landscapes in the Novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Al- Nahda Arab Writers

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**Allegorical and Cultural
Landscapes in the Novels of
Nathaniel Hawthorne and Al-
Nahda Arab Writers**

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Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____

Tatheer Assim Faiq

August 2015 Brisbane

Dedication

For my beloved, mother, Suad Mohialdeen, and my dearest sister, Tania Assim Faiq, both of them inspired my life with their resilience, enlightened my heart with their love and gave me the strength to be a dreamer with a vision I hope to share with the world.

With all my love and gratitude

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Abstract

The fictional works of American author Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Arab writers, Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran share an interest in allegorical landscapes which respond to political and religious tyranny. Throughout their novels, we encounter historically specific images of political corruption and religious oppression located among the urban settings of Salem, Rome, Cairo, Paris, Baalbek, and Beirut. In this thesis, these settings are considered as cultural landscapes: geographical sites which are perceived and presented allegorically within a socio-political frame. These landscapes are drawn on both realist and symbolic levels.

Nathaniel Hawthorne presents the shameful burden of religious and political oppression. In works such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* where characters are engaged in a rebellion against their cultural institutions to show the defects of such religious and political institutions. For Hawthorne, Boston forest becomes a place that witnesses the birth of the new female rebel to defy the very foundations of the Puritan society. Rome becomes a historical setting where crime survives during the course of the rise and fall of civilisations as reflected in art galleries, churches and ruins: a reality of human destruction that is equally recognized by American and European characters.

Al- Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* draws a socio political picture of Egyptian life through the representation of nineteenth century Cairo with its complex streets and buildings. In his second part of the book, al- Muwaylihi presents a journey from Cairo to Paris in which his characters, brutalized by colonial practices, seek the values of modernity at the heart of Europe. Such a journey defied the political and Islamic institutions of his age. For al- Muwaylihi, Parisian sites are symbols of technology and modernity, while Cairo emblemizes the city of conflict as the inhabitants face new social changes through encounters with the European colonizers.

Gibran's texts, *Spirit Brides* and *Spirit Rebellious*, both present the image of a society ruled by religious and political oppressive systems. His Christian and Muslim characters rebel against the tyranny of the Church and the Mosque during the Ottoman rule. For Gibran, Beirut is the city where citizens are crushed in utter poverty. Lebanon's Valley of Qadisha becomes a symbol of eternal love of universal nationhood in the face of sectarian strife. .

Such landscapes as presented in the allegorical fictional works of these three writers show the incorporation of the concreteness of the city in the fine details of forest, streets and buildings and their symbolic depiction as the site of resistance to oppression.

I argue that the fictional landscapes found in the work of these three writers' locates their socio- political critique, this operates on different allegorical levels and through a variety of spatial and temporal settings. The cultural landscapes in these works may shift from one historical era to another, from one country to another or from the countryside to the city. These fictional allegorical landscapes may carry the names of actual sites and may refer to historical events, but are transformed out of their reality and picturesque elements to become a metaphorical representation of social and political resistance.

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Chapter One Introduction:

Cultural Landscape and Allegory in Three Nineteenth-Century Writers

The fictional works of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Arab writers, Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran present allegorical landscapes which carry the revolutionary ideas of these writers in response to the political and religious tyranny they witnessed in their own times, cultures and places. Throughout their novels, we encounter a historicised image of political corruption and religious oppression located among the urban settings of Salem, Rome, Cairo Paris, Baalbek and Beirut. In this thesis, these landscapes are classified as cultural landscapes: geographical sites which are perceived and presented allegorically within a socio-political frame. For these authors, cityscapes as well as outdoor and natural landscapes are allegorical. These landscapes are drawn on both real and symbolic levels.

For al-Muwaylihi, Parisian sites are symbols of technology and modernity, while Cairo emblemizes the city of conflict as the inhabitants face new social changes through encounters with the European colonizers. For Hawthorne, Rome is a historical setting that embraces both past and present crimes. For Gibran, Beirut is the city where citizens are crushed in utter poverty. Lebanon's Valley of Qadisha becomes a symbol of eternal love of universal nationhood in the face of sectarian strife. Such landscapes show the incorporation of the concreteness of the city in the fine details of streets and buildings and its symbolic depiction as the site of resistance to political and religious oppression. New England's colonial landscape becomes subject to ideological assumptions which are brought to the foreground through the treatment of the landscape. The relationship between culturally modified and organized spaces and regions of wilderness, the symbols of otherness and mystery, become subject to diverse ideological assumptions shown through the New England colonial landscape.

This chapter sets out to provide a conceptual framework for this investigation of the way that place, time and socio-political reality combine to form a cultural landscape that has allegorical implications in the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran. The first part of the chapter discusses the notion of cultural landscape by showing the relationship between its components of place, time and culture. The second part

explores the origin and specific development of allegorical representations of landscape, with reference to the three writers of the current study.

Cultural landscape is originally a geographical term first developed by Christopher L. Salter in his session on “Landscape in Literature” during an annual meeting of the Association of American Geographies in Seattle. This concept of landscape brings to bear values in recognition of the human cultural engagement with the natural topography.¹ Such landscapes express cultural values. Recent studies of humanistic geography show a trend towards addressing study of the realm of literature, perhaps because imaginative literature is seen to offer more insight about the human condition. The contemporary influence of imaginative literature as a source for understanding the cultural and social dimension of environmental knowledge has proved to be useful to geographers such as Douglas Pockock who cites key words in humanistic geography that are informed by literature and which open the horizons for new geographical perceptions, as he remarks:

Literature then is both a source for new insights and a testing ground for hypotheses in exploring ‘the experiential foundation of our world’. Key concepts to emerge are those which focus on insideness- outsideness, ‘our lived reciprocity’, or the dialectic between rest and movement. At- homeness and rootedness on one hand, exile and restlessness on the other, are important polar foci for study in a society increasingly mobile and a world of increasing homogenisation. The role of physical, earthy objects in our environmental experience also warrants study.²

Cultural landscape as an approach addresses place in terms of its socio-political implications. This marks a development in the traditional concept of landscape. Leonard Lutwack states how the notion of landscape is traditionally used in literature:

The term landscape once referred to all that could be seen of the earth’s surface from a single vantage point, but now has been extended to include unseen things, such as a configuration of ideas or a set of conditions, of the psychological make-up of an individual (*le paysage interieur*). Literary criticism has customarily used the term to mean a special ordering of topography, vegetation, animals, and man-made constructions in a limited area of the earth’s surface.³

According to Lutwack the representation of geographical places in literature must conform to the standards of verisimilitude as in landscape painting. To do justice to geographical sites, the writer must be committed to represent regional features such as local habits, folklore and history. Yet geography and realism has been compromised in the world of fiction. As Lutwack points out:

Specific geographical sites become associated with certain themes through custom or fashion: adventure stories and detective stories are commonly played out against the backdrops of foreign scenes for its enactment. Africa has been a favourite place for primitivistic adventure...the northern shore of the Mediterranean is the location for romantic entanglements

and disentanglements, for “running away... from bad love,” as it is said in John Knowles’s *Morning in Antibes*; Paris, the prime expatriate place; North Africa, Mexico, India, and the lands of dark-skinned natives, the places where despairing Europeans are marooned in their search for self or spiritual rebirth.⁴

Lutwack urges a more realistic approach to the perspective of human activities in regional environments. I argue that this approach is achievable with the employment of a cultural landscape that involves both nature and humans. Cultural landscape in literary works provides a reflection on the human experience of the story. Human values are expressed in literature by means of a wide range of human activity, modifying and transforming the land into a profitable environment as farmlands, cities and factories. This activity is employed by writers, for narrative purposes, often in reference to their own lived experience of regional settings, in order to locate their characters in an authentically imagined fictional world. In allegorical works the use of setting tends to be symbolic, offering little true account of geographical areas. But in some literary works, landscape is used to reflect real historical and geographical concerns.

Literature has a special ability to convey the significance of place, its past and present secrets, involving an imagined sense of the spatial and socio-political relationship between humans and their surroundings. In this sense, literary landscape goes beyond factual geographical knowledge to show a unique individual outlook as well as a general social picture of life. More specifically, in fiction, cultural landscape stands as a valid indicator of political and social changes, clearly showing colonial practices, urban, industrial and rural settings.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran, play key roles in documenting their nations’ cultural customs, habits and historical events. In their fictional works, they invite their readers to see and feel what it is like to be part of a historical struggle towards freedom. Their novels can be seen as allegories of cultural transition where the writers operate as social critics of mid- and late- nineteenth-century societies. The Puritans, Anglo-Saxon ancestors, Europeans, Egyptians and Lebanese all come together in a worldwide depiction of rebellion against oppression and tyranny framed by different cultural and colonial practices. Colonisation is a common factor for Hawthorne, al-Muwaylihi and Gibran. Whether in seventeenth- century New England or in nineteenth- century Cairo and Lebanon, the nation’s colonizers established their own authority by erecting novel colonial architectures, imposing their customs, values and lifestyles on others to fabricate a new reality on the ground.

These three writers each address a specific historical context in relation to societal structure through the representation of landscape as a means of locating the cultural politics of colonisation. The specifics of the history of each of the cities in their fiction (Boston, Rome, Cairo and Beirut) shape a worldwide view of an age of transition where both America Renaissance and Arab literary Renaissance are articulated. These writers contributed in this cultural transition. Through their fiction as well as their essays and notes, they rebelled against their current social realities and invited their readers to do so. This transition can be identified and echoed either metaphorically or plainly in these landscapes. Rome art galleries, Cairo buildings, Beirut streets, Baalbek, as well as Boston forests and Lebanon's Valley of Qadisha, all communicate the writers' views on socio-political realities of their age. Each landscape implies the revolutionary ideas of these writers as they stand against oppression and political and religious tyranny.

The American pre-civil war period is named by F.O. Matthiessen as the American Renaissance, the richest age of production of prominent literary figures: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Whitman, and Dickenson. Yet the term may serve as a reference point for a variety of disciplinary and ideological contexts. Charlene Avallone states that "renaissance" as a literary term, "has increasingly figured vaporization". There is no defined paradigm for what constitutes an American Renaissance. Most critical discourse acknowledges that the concept exists for "scholarly convenience authorization". But such positions, as Avallone argues, "obscure the tradition's role in the negotiation of cultural values, the asymmetrical distribution of cultural capital, and the maintenance of a gender hierarchy".⁵ This discourse suggests many areas of research based on ethnicity, gender, region or ideology within the nineteenth century Renaissance were either overlooked or are yet to be researched further. My concern, however, is to address the literary production of certain nineteenth century Renaissance writers' whose work can be identified in terms expressed by F.O. Matthiessen as aesthetically and nationally representative.

The three writers of the current study share a sense of national representation that is best captured in Matthiessen's terms. I believe both American Renaissance and Arabic Renaissance meet on this very perception of national representation. What Matthiessen observes of American Renaissance writers can also be applied to Arabic Renaissance writers. We perceive these writers' literary contribution as part of the social and cultural history of their nations.⁶

While Matthiessen used the term “American Renaissance” to indicate the fact that these American writers were borrowing extensively from Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, David S. Reynolds believes that “the key factor to understand is that unlike some of their contemporaries, they transformed classic themes and devices into truly American texts by fusing them with native literary materials”.⁷ Part of what labels their literary production as American is the spirit of nationalism that colours it. While this nationalist social critique might be implied and shaped in metaphorical terms, it suggests that writers of the nineteenth-century Renaissance were not isolated rebels but social ones, whose main target was social change. Reynolds states: “The typical literary text of the American Renaissance is far from being a “self-sufficient text,” sealed off from its environment”.⁸

This sense of social change relative to nationality, according to Hawthorne, is to refuse an identification with what Lauren Berlant describes as a: “self- deceptive utopian-idealist version of the National Symbolic”: thus, “Hawthorne’s ideal citizen must maintain a critical and sceptical attitude toward the officially sanctioned clarity of the “nation.”⁹ This is demonstrated in *The Scarlet Letter* where Hawthorne offered a resistance to the hegemonic mode of any construction of American national identity. He chose Salem with its shameful history around Witchcraft to be identified with the American symbolic national landscape. The novel shows a discourse of citizenship and belonging to the public sphere and how this society is oppressing the individual to the point that it becomes difficult to arbitrate personal subjectivity with the dominant culture of the social system. We are left with the landscapes of “The Market- Place”, “The Prison- Door” and the cemetery to map our way in the memory of the nation.

With such social awareness a social change may follow. In wearing the scarlet letter “A” Hester acts like a citizen acknowledging legal punishment. But her elaborate embroidery in golden thread of this very letter of shame has changed it into a state of rebellion to violate the colony’s sumptuary laws. Her transgression of the letter breaks class distinctions. By wearing her luxurious handiwork and offering her needlework as the fashion of the day reaching out to the poor and the rich alike, Hester breaks class distinction on the social fabric of the town. As Lauren Berlant points out:

Through her ornamental interpretations of class relations, Hester contributes to reinforce the proto-National Symbolic, the collectively held semiotic system essential to the production and maintenance of the Puritan law that binds her. But her embroidery does more than stage the hegemony of the upper classes. She in fact helps this new state to establish itself. One could posit that along with all meanings of the meanings of the A we know-Adultery, Angel, Angel of Mercy, Art, Affection- the A might stand for Advertising. Hester not only embellishes the

sign of its legal power so prominently on her breast- a sort of sandwich board for the state- but provides for it a much larger “alphabet”.¹⁰

The emphases upon social awareness lie at the heart of the imaginative texts of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. These works were produced at an important period for American letters, around the same time as *Representative Men*, *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre* and *Leaves of Grass*, from 1850 to 1855 and are labelled by Reynolds as representative of the literary mode of “Romantic Adventure” showing “the kind of cultural explosion” of thematic and stylistic conflicts. Each can be regarded as an “open text” where many voices and perspectives are presented. I argue that the voice of the nineteenth century Renaissance writer in America and in the Arabic World is the voice of the social critic whose literary innovation is an essential part of his response to the social values and the political environment of his nation.

Recognition of the social conditions of their nations meant that these writers sometimes held to conflicting political ideas. Hawthorne was a democrat and a conservative presenting human dignity in his character sketches, regardless of conventional political standpoints. Matthiessen states that Hawthorne praised Franklin Pierce, the 14th president of the United States, for his ability “to love that great and sacred reality-his whole; united, native country-better than the mistiness of a philanthropic theory”. According to Matthiessen the outcome was that: “Hawthorne’s views outraged everyone on the left, and their depth of spiritual integrity was doubtless lost on most of Pierce’s conservative supporters among the Southern planters and the Northern proponents of cotton interest”.¹¹

Hawthorne’s concern is the sanctity of human life which has been robbed by wars and corrupt politicians. This social consciousness of humanity is also shared by Kahlil Gibran’s humanitarian position, that all mankind are his fellow countrymen.

The interest of these writers in the theme of colonial oppression, has contributed to the way they observed their fellow citizens and their experience of nationality. To challenge the nation-state with a global image, or particularism with universalism, they employed both allegorical and cultural landscapes throughout their fiction. Their landscapes show the very intimate link between temporal and spatial dimensions of human life. The use of historical narrative with reference to historical sites and other significant cultural landscapes reflects this relationship.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mohammadd al--Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran saw in the geographical landscapes and historical sites of their countries, a metaphor for life and an

extension of their national identity. These landscapes lie at the heart of the allegorical structure of these writers' novels and enable the writers to draw a clear picture of their contemporary cultural landscapes. In other words, the past helped them to expose the present. This interest in reviving the national literary heritage and presenting historical sites and the landscapes of ruins is part of the late nineteenth-century rise of nationalism. According to Caroline Winterer, : "to excavate the classical past was to assert the modern nation on the stage of world imperial powers. Europeans jostled fiercely with one another and with the ruling Ottoman Turks for access to cherished sites that would bring glory to their major cities." ¹²

Each writer uses celebrated historical sites such as the Colosseum, and the Pyramids of Giza and Baalbek, to allegorically map their respective disillusionment with the political reality of his nation. Such allegorical landscapes indicate the interaction of these writers with their colonized social environment. These landscapes present their social critique, a form of rebellion against tyrannical political and religious systems. This perception of the socio-political reality of geographical places is based on a humanistic approach shaped by these writers' personal experiences and ideas. This author-geography relationship is the canvas where the author draws a socio-political image of his time.

Cultural landscape with its geopolitical paradigm is based on the relationship between place, time and culture. The past is constantly being recalled, represented, and made visible in these landscapes. Such landscapes bear the cultural memory of the authors' nations. It is the nostalgic cultural memory of the past represented on a specific place. To approach this we must first differentiate between the place and space. In recent post colonial studies place is a key term as place and displacement are the core of the experience of colonization and the process of identity formation. ¹³

According to Bill Ashcroft, it is the colonial intervention that changed the representation of place and the separation space from place. ¹⁴ A sense of place is rooted in cultural history and presented in many legends without becoming a concept of disputation until the interference of colonialism. This interference is done through imposing displacement on those who moved to the colonies and alienating the colonized peoples. The movement of European colonizers was to discover and occupy remote parts of the world. By doing this they created "empty space", an abstract concept independent of regions and places, to be measurable in cartography and universal maps. Consequently the concept of 'place' becomes an issue within the language itself to be experienced by those who speak the colonizer's

language as their mother tongue and those who speak it as a second language. But our concern is not with its linguistic perception as much as its impact on shaping the cultural values of both colonized and colonizers.

Many of these values were taking shape during the colonizing era in Africa, Middle East and many other parts of the world. For instance, the European colonizing powers gathered in the 1894-1895 Berlin Conference to establish colonial border making in Africa because of the conflicting interests among European nations to dominate the region. "The outcome was the division of the continent, recognizing about one thousands tribes into fifty states."¹⁵ This example shows how a place is subject to the utter control of the growing capitalist colonial powers with their competition over natural resources and political dominance.

This colonized landscape presents a perceptive of the relationship between place and the socio-political reality. Gabriel Popescu states that territorial state boarder in its socio-political conception presents a conceptualisation of space that prevailed over centuries. That is: "a transition from a relative understanding of space as multidimensional, fluid, and made up of a collection of places to an absolute understanding of place as unidimensional, stable, and uniform".¹⁶ This very perception of place as a unified one dimensional setting to embrace the colonial experience is also responsible for transforming place into the pot where different cultures of the colonized and colonizers are transferred to each other. Therefore, landscapes become the product of continuous cultural, economic, and political exchanges among different races and religions. This cultural geography outlook defines my use of the cultural landscape term. It is a landscape where cultural memories are grounded and ever present.

Cultural landscape lies in the relationship between culture and geography. Cultural factors shape the humanistic geography defined by the eminent geographer Yi-Fu Tuan in a letter addressed to "Dear Colleague" at the University of Minnesota in 2004. Yi-Fu Tuan distinguishes humanistic geography from human geography on the bases of culture. He points out that:

Human geography studies human relationships... Human geography's optimism lies in its belief that asymmetrical relationships and exploitation can be removed, or reversed. What human geography does not consider, and what humanistic geography does, is the role they play in nearly all human contacts and exchanges.¹⁷

This above quotation shows the strengthening ties between the geographical landscape and culture across interdisciplinary studies. The concept of place is not only binding different branches of knowledge but is also related to the very existence of mankind legacy. Place has

been subject to the intermingling of nature and culture since ancient civilisations. Simon Schama writes:

Objectively, of course, the various ecosystems that sustain life on the planet proceed independently of human agency, just as they operated before the hectic ascendancy of *Homo sapiens*. But it is also true that it is difficult to think of a single such natural system that has not, for better or worse, been substantially modified by human culture. Nor is this simply the work of the industrial centuries. It has been happening since the days of ancient Mesopotamia. It is coeval with writing, with the entirety of our social existence. And it is this irreversibly modified world, from the polar caps to the equatorial forests, that is all the nature we have.¹⁸

It is human culture that creates the sense of place by changing geographical space into cognitive values. Yi-Fu Tuan distinguishes between place and space on the basis of established cultural values:

Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood in the broader frame of space, it is the people who have given it meaning The space that we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with the individual and cultural group.¹⁹

By doing so, Tuan also divides space and time. He states that:

From the security and stability of place, we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice-versa. Furthermore if we think of space as that which allows movement, the place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. Time creates change and this affects the concept of space.²⁰

Accordingly the notion of place is related to time, in other words, place mirrors historically specific events. Place and time come together to determine national cultural values. These writers explored in this thesis express nostalgia for particular times and this is reflected in their choice of specific places. In each novel, the writer presents a historical panorama showing an image of historic national rebellion, recalling the remote past in the present landscape.

Allegory enables these writers to conceive places as composite experiences. Landscape allegorically compounds the experience of past and present. These fictional works reflect a social image of a spatio--temporal world. The distances covered by these writers as they travel between America and Europe, or the Arab world and Europe, expresses a concept of time as well as space. They excavate the history of their given nation to further their contemporary social critique. This was a deliberate literary strategy to bring contemporary issues to the fore. If we consider that the life of a nation is history recalled, then the landscape of the past can be seen as vital to the present one. The sense of place enriches the sense of time. As Yi-Fu Tuan observes, "Place as time made visible, or place as memorial to times past" brings to light the importance of the past in shaping human cultural identity.²¹

History is defined by nations' cultural heritage. To strengthen the sense of nationalism, heritage needs to be made accessible. These writers recreated historical landscapes, as well as exploring specific literary means to tell the story of the past in order to shape present understandings. Hawthorne's historical romance and Al-Muwaylihi's adoption of the *maqama* are literary forms that are rooted deep in the literary heritage of their nations. The choices of literary genres of their allegories anchor time in a captured image where national history is written.

Despite the difference in literary innovations of these writers, they shared same thematic treatment of the past. Both literary forms, romance and *maqama* as well as Gibran's short story experiment, enable these writers to visually depict landscapes in their historical contexts. The patriotic myth of the heroic ancestor is at the heart of each writer's treatment of the past as embraced by historical landscapes.

For Hawthorne, the New England setting with its witchcraft stories is only showing the ideological intolerance of Puritanism in America. His choice to draw the landscape of the Boston cemetery and prison in *The Scarlet Letter* reflects this thematic depiction of the Puritan tyrannical attitude. According to Michael Davitt Bell, Hawthorne's main historical theme of New England is the "transformation of the English character in the American Wilderness".²² It is the transformation of the cultural values between Europe and America. These values may include the concepts of freedom and beauty, for example. All are reflected in the choice of landscape imagery. Hawthorne's forest replaced England's green and fertile fields. Landscape becomes a force in history to determine forms and styles of the English life from that of the New England American life. Hawthorne's main concern is to understand the historical relations of his seventeenth-century New England landscape and the founding fathers of Puritanism. Instead of glorifying the past, Hawthorne exposed its tyrannical forces. Such forces are so much reflected in stereotyping the figures of the Puritan founding fathers of New England.

In "The Custom- House", Hawthorne linked landscape presentation to the historical record of the Puritan ancestors. His narrator starts describing his hometown only to establish his own feeling about its past:

This old town of Salem-my native place, though I have dwelt much away from it, both in boyhood and maturer years-possesses, or did possess, a hold on my affections, the force of which I have never realized, during my seasons of actual residence here. Indeed, so far as its physical aspect is concerned, with its flat, unvaried surface, covered chiefly with wooden houses, few or none of which pretend to architectural beauty,-its irregularity, which is neither picturesque nor quaint, but only tame,-its long and lazy street lounging wearisomely through the whole extent of the peninsula, with Gallows Hill and New Guinea at one end, and a view

of the almshouse at the other,- such being the features of my native town, it would be quite as reasonable to form a sentimental attachment to a disarranged checker- board. And yet, though invariably happiest elsewhere, there is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase, I must be content to call affection. The sentiment is probably assignable to the deep and aged roots which my family has struck into the soil.²³

Hawthorne's attachment towards the Salem landscape cannot be separated from his affection towards the past. The narrator describes his affection as the "sentiment [that] has likewise its moral quality".²⁴ Because of the crimes of the past the narrator is still haunted by his evil ancestor who affected his "boyish imagination". Hawthorne describes his own ancestor, John Hathorne, who was one of three judges in the Salem witch trials in 1692, as:

Bearded, sable- cloaked and steeple- crowned progenitor, - who came so early, with his Bible, and the sword, and trode the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure, as a man of war and peace...He was a soldier, a legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the Church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil. He was likewise a bitter persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate an incident of his severity towards a woman of their sect, which will last longer; it is to be feared, than any record of his better deeds.²⁵

Hawthorne's sketch shows a subjective historical image of the first Puritan settlers through his historical romance, *The Scarlet Letter*. His image shows the heroes who defied the Puritan founders, like Ann Hutchinson and the Quakers. He shows how such romantic rebels live and grow up on the soil of their tyrannical ancestors. This drove him away from the historian sentiment that particularly idealized the founders of the New World.²⁶ Bell argues that the seventeenth- century past of *The Scarlet Letter*, is the objective historical past. But the past of the prefaces is "the past of the historical imagination". The parting of the two types of 'the past' is accurate despite the structural relationship between the preface and the fictional story.²⁷ I believe Hawthorne's engagement with the past is an engagement with the actual present since the past provides the social critique needed to depict the spirit of rebellion throughout his art- that is, to expose the oppressive forces of the past and how they continue to reshape the actual present. The soil of the New England landscape with all its buried stories of the Puritan ancestors becomes the setting for nineteenth- century social drama.

Nancy Bentley's book *The Ethnography of Manners* shows an ethnographic approach to literary interpretation of Hawthorne's fiction as well as other novelists' works. It reflects the value of this social drama in examining cultural transformations from the point of a socially engaged observer, as these writers were in their own societies. For Bentley, fiction: "constitutes one of the activities through which writers order and circulate the authority to write about society in the first place. Novel writing is itself one of infinite ways in which a

society goes about inventing, testing, and altering its claims to legitimacy”.²⁸ The writer creates an authority to place the discourse of social life and cultural practises within the world of his fiction. It is a process of reshaping history through the bond of a place. This intimate relationship between landscape, history and the actual present social reality is also the landscape employment in the Arabic writers’ texts of the current study.

The colonial cityscape is the paradigm of Al-Muwaylihi presentation of Cairo. The change of times and social transformation is at the heart of his texts. Geographical boundaries of the fictional world of *Haith Isa Ibn Hisham* are only to show the cultural transformation of Egypt in a colonial era. Al-Muwaylihi depicts the cityscape of Cairo in relation to the imperial history of the Ottomans, and the impact of the European colonising powers, to present a cultural image of Egypt caught in the late nineteenth century. The concept of culture used here is according to Stuart Hall’s definition of culture as “the lived practices or practical ideologies which enable a society, group or class to experience, define, interpret and make sense of its conditions of existence”.²⁹ Al-Muwaylihi’s engagement with the past is to demonstrate how nineteenth century Arab society in Egypt was subject to the process of reform in the name of Westernization, a process which aimed actually to alienate traditional identities.

The main character is the Pasha, a resurrected figure from the Past, is contemplating on the losses of many cultural values and practices. He tries to discover his hometown in the new Age of modernization. This era shows the ills of materialism which changed all of the society including the main Islamic institution. All Islamic scholars are ridiculed throughout the text for their materialistic derives. Egyptian citizens are described as blindly and foolishly imitating European tourists. But most important is al-Muwaylihi’s attack on the corrupt political and legal systems run by the British colonial administrators. The Cairo cityscape shows this in the everyday reality of British military troops. Since the 1870s many European constables were assigned to help in policing the European quarters of Cairo and other Egyptian cities like Alexandria and Port Said.³⁰ Court run by foreign judges, new luxurious buildings to accommodate the Europeans, Westernised restaurants and night clubs existed alongside the old Cairene landscape with its poor houses and narrow streets. Both Ottoman and European powers is represented in architectural forms and the urban planning of Cairo. Cairo landscapes recall a bygone past too in its castles, buildings and streets. Past and present occupy al-Muwaylihi’s representation of landscape as part of the social drama of cultural transactions between the Arab world and the West.

This very nineteenth-century era in the Arab world witnessed the cultural movement known in Arabic as *al-nahda* (renaissance). It involves contact with Europe from a trans-cultural viewpoint. This contact started much earlier. Historical events such as Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the French annexation of Algeria in 1830, followed by British colonialism, all affected the Arabic society in its educational system and culture. Yet the *al-nahda* era witnessed more cultural transactions through Arabic missions to Europe and translation activities. This was associated with the rise of national identity and resistance to colonial occupation. Geographical landscape comes to define these transactions. The word Arabic comes to describe a large geographical space on the bases of language. But it is the nationalist use of the word to affiliate other political meanings and it becomes a card of identity shared by different ethnical and religious communities in the Arab homeland to face the European political interventions.

The second Arabic writer discussed in this thesis, Khalil Gibran, represents the Syro-American School. He communicated to Arabic literature the spirit of English Romanticism in the shape of the conflict of the individual rebel and society. His ideas concerning liberation of the Arabic homeland from the foreign occupation were expressed through his poetic style. The Romantic American Transcendentalism also influenced Gibran's work especially in his interpretation of nature. As Aida Imangulieva states, Gibran "like the Transcendentalists, understood nature as an inalienable part" and "saw in nature, like the Romantics, the ideals of freedom, harmony, beauty and naturalness".³¹ Gibran's landscapes show the beauty of Lebanon valleys and mountains, the ugliness of Beirut streets where poor people are doomed to suffer, and the ruins and the historical sites of Lebanon where the course of the rise and decline of civilizations took place. In each of these landscapes, Gibran presents the struggle of mankind to achieve spiritual and social freedom. He draws the evil of religious and political systems to criticise the social reality of the Arabic world at his age.

The visual artistic representation of landscape images in these writers' novels is very much connected to the experience of living the historical moment on the part of their readers. In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger points out that landscape and art enable us to have the consciousness of history and the "cultural mystification of the past", as a perfect way of seeing the world. Berger writes:

(The world as- it – is more than pure objective fact, it includes consciousness.) ...History always constitutes the relation between a present and its past. Consequently fear of the present leads to mystification of the past. The past is not for living in; it is a well of consciousness from which we draw in order to act....When we 'see' a landscape, we situate ourselves in it. If

we 'saw' the art of the past, we would situate ourselves in history. When we are prevented from seeing it, we are deprived of the history that belongs to us.³²

In each of these writers' work cultural landscapes present historical eras and the very concept of time as visible and captured in images reflecting the political and social atmosphere of their age. They share the experience of travelling across different parts of the world as a personal occurrence but most importantly as a historical event marking a transitional period of the history of their nation. During the mid- and late- nineteenth century both Americans and Arabs travelled to Europe as part of social phenomena. Also Arabs travelled to America as part of one of the biggest immigration movements in history. These writers pictured this era of their national history where journeys across the Atlantic and the Mediterranean were a necessary step in international transactions.

Literary landscape marks the distinction between art and culture on one hand and nature in its primitive form on the other hand. According to W.J.T. Mitchell:

Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package.³³

The dualism of nature and culture is an important theme in the literature of the Nineteenth century as well as in the definition of the cultural landscape itself, in relation to the cultural politics of colonial reinscriptions of nationalist values. The expert in humanistic geography, Carl O. Sauer considered culture as the force of shaping the physical environment of the earth. He defines cultural landscape as being: "fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural is the medium, and the cultural landscape is the result".³⁴ Landscape embodied in the concept of place, becomes the medium for colonial discourse.

Bill Ashcroft has pointed out that the impact of colonialism in changing the concept of space by affecting life of the colonized, he states that:

Locales became shaped by social influences quite distant from them, such as spatial technologies, colonizing languages, or, indeed, the very conception of place that those languages came to transmit. The movement of European society through the world, the 'discovery' and occupation of remote regions, was the necessary basis for the creation of what could be called 'empty space'. Cartography and the creation of universal maps established space as a measurable, abstract concept independent of any particular place or region. Significantly, the severing of time from space provides a basis for their recombination in relation to social activity.... 'place', which is in some senses left behind by modernity, becomes an anxious and contested site of the link between language and identity, a possible site of those local realities that the universal separation of time, space and place leaves virtually untouched.³⁵

Landscape shows a subjective philosophical attitude to the colonial experiences as undertaken by these writers. It also connects place to historical time.

This is very much the case with American identification with the notion of the Holy Land. According to John Davis:

It was only natural that the scriptural language the colonists used to describe both their errand and themselves would be brought to bear on the one great reality that confronted their every undertaking: the land. The new Massachusetts wilderness was seen as “desert”-with the biblical capability of becoming a land of milk and honey... the New World topography became dotted with Canaans, Bethlehems, and Goshens. Such a molding of the cultural landscape helped lead to the inherited familiarity that later Americans, less steeped in Puritan metaphor, nevertheless felt for the Holy Land.³⁶

In the case of Hawthorne, religious beliefs and national values are attached to the American wilderness. The natural scenery and topographical reality of the American continent has been transformed into the Holy Land scriptural narrative, and been subject to traditional Puritan symbolism, only to invoke a controlling notion of nationality.

Robert E. Abrams traced the representations of American wilderness and the socio-cultural paradigm attached to it. According to Abrams and his contemporary scholarship, artificiality and theatricality in representing American wilderness was an attempt to repress the “counter-history of indigenous populations” in inhabited places. Many such representations of wilderness were aiming at preparing the ground for settlements motivated by socio-economic factors. Therefore, wilderness can be seen as a product of culture. As Simon Schama writes of the American wilderness:

The wilderness, after all, does not locate itself, does not name itself. It was an act of Congress in 1864 that established Yosemite Valley as a place of sacred significance for the nation, during the war which marked the moment of Fall in the American garden. Nor could the wilderness venerate itself. It needed hallowing visitations from New England preachers like Thomas Starr King, photographers like Leander Weed, Edward Muybridge, and Carleton Watkins, painters in oil like Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, and painters in prose like John Muir to represent it as the holy park of the West, the site of anew birth; a redemption for the national agony; an American-creation. The strangely unearthly topography of the place, with brilliant meadows carpeting the valley flush to the sheer cliff walls of Cathedral Rock, The Merced River winding through the tall grass, lent itself perfectly to this vision of a democratic terrestrial paradise.³⁷

American politicians, preachers and artists have created the concept of the American wilderness as a national emblem and wild nature began to be included into the aesthetic of the sublime. Consequently, for Americans wilderness meant in Yi-Fu Tuan’s words “generativity”.³⁸ Wilderness landscape is no more regarded only as the earth’s topography but

also a symbol to generate meanings of American civilisation. Wilderness landscape has transcended into a notion of American national identity.

Landscape can express political values: like the topography of Paris with its dominating figure of the Eiffel Tower is an example of how a landscape can be a monument of culture and represents the politics of colonialism. In this image, Paris is a landscape of the myth of science and a cultural symbol of the power of technology. It is also a landscape that signifies a gesture of defiance to be felt by an oppressive, expansionist colonial power. When such political meanings are infused in the Tower landscape, it becomes a visible power having cultural functions. Regarding the Eiffle Tower, Roland Barthes states:

Like man himself , who is the only one not to know his own glance, the Tower is the only blind point of the total optical system of which it is the center and Paris the circumference . But in this movement which seems to limit it, the Tower acquires a new power: an object when we look at it, it becomes a lookout in its turn when we visit it , and now constitutes an object, simultaneously extended and collected beneath it, that Paris which just now was looking at it. The Tower is an object which sees, a glance which is seen; it is a complete verb, both active and passive, in which no *voice* (as we see in grammar) is defective... Glance, object, symbol, such is the infinite circuit of functions which permits it always to be something much more than the Eiffle Tower.³⁹

An element of cityscape like the Eiffel Tower thus becomes part of human emotional status, as it reflects the cultural and ideological bonds of the human observers.

Cultural landscapes as portrayed in the novels of these writers also record the geographic and economic status of the fictive societies. Literary description of landscape is the bond between the inner and the outer worlds of the characters and their natural surroundings. Such binding relationships were emphasized by nineteenth- century novelists who used cultural landscape to present the fineness of details of human life. Landscape becomes an ideological canvas to reflect the intellectual atmosphere of the age of these writers. Each writer places his characters in a representative geographical and metaphorical landscape reflecting an intellectual cultural stand.

Hawthorne's landscape, where his character Hester tries to establish her vision of freedom in the forest of the Black Man devil legend, is a typical Puritan "landscape of difficulty", a term used by Leonard Lutwack and described as:

A kind of moral geography springs from man's ability to adapt himself to hostile environments. Mountains, observes Roland Barthes, "seem to encourage a morality of effort and solitude." The Puritans almost welcomed the hardships of the American continent because it constituted a new Sinai; they "*needed* a Wilderness to be voices in." The Puritan transvaluation of Christian holiness into virtue and power emerges later in the middle-class ideal of a hero such as Robinson Crusoe, who wins a moral victory for himself by making the best of being shipwrecked on a deserted island.⁴⁰

Isolation and solitude are part of both Crusoe and Hester's quest and the journey for self discovery. Crusoe's quest is religious but I believe Hester's quest takes the shape of a moral secular one. Yet embracing the hardship of the journey is very Puritan in both cases. The forest being a part of American wilderness is the place where the Puritan established their society and announced their dogma to be the dominant culture. Ironically enough it is also the very place where Hester rebelled against Puritan persecution. This individual isolation from society can be applied to the physicality of colonial towns. Hawthorne's treatment of the alienation theme is expressed very much by geography. According to Janis P. Stout:

The tension between the Puritan village and the still alien forest is Hawthorne's most aesthetically satisfying development of the values he associated with the relationship of urban and rural settings. The complex relationship of Hester and Dimmesdale to society and their behaviour in the forest have implications in numerous overlapping categories of meaning. It is largely because of this multilevel tension between town and forest that *The Scarlet Letter* is so rich a work.⁴¹

Hawthorne plays with the actual geography of his New England setting, with its real Salem prison, cemetery and forest, and the quality of the human life inhabiting it. The prison with its ugly dim architecture attracts our attention to the Salem townsmen wearing sad black coloured garments. On the other hand, the forest with its beautiful brook and red rose bush is the home of Pearl, the child dressed in her mother's knitted scarlet gown and departing the oppressive Puritan town. The Salem landscape becomes an essential part of the historical colonial journey of America; a journey that took place between the allegorical City of God and the city of man. Similarly, al-Muwaylihi's landscape of the Citadel of Salah al-Din crowned by the Muhammad Ali mosque is an adaptation of the actual site he portrays. In his writing it appears as a fallen landscape where the empire's past are marked at every step. This is the polar opposite of the Eiffel Tower as an emblem of technology and colonial power.

On the other hand, Gibran's Baalbek resists identification with any specific civilization. While it belongs to the Roman Empire as a holy place, it is also claimed by the Phoenicians. Moreover, the Arabs believe Baalbek Terrace to have been part of the cyclopean walls from the times of Cain and Abel, threading an Islamic narrative through the city. For Gibran, Baalbeck's landscape figures a divided identity that resembles his own life torn between the Middle East and The United States.

Whether drawn from geographical realities or the writer's imagination, these landscapes serve allegorical ends. They allegorise struggle against tyrannical powers. They are also transcending into another level above geography.

To demonstrate how a place can transcend out of its geographical reality to become a private place where the writer is engaged with socio-political concerns, I refer to Gaston Bachelard's argument in *The Poetics of Space*. Bachelard considers how the universe is reflected in a place; for instance, the immensity of the forest gives meaning to the visible world. He states that: "We do not have to be long in the woods to experience the always rather anxious impression of going deeper and deeper into a limitless world. Soon, if we do not know where we are going, we no longer know where we are".⁴²

The forest, for example, has become the source of all impressions and the incarnation of the indefinite universe. According to Bachelard the imagination summons this "primal image" from the physical properties of space but quickly rises above them in a dream vision that is almost independent of reality. Therefore, the relationship between an inhabited house and the universe changes the geometry of space by attaching it to different metaphors of fear, solitude, refuge, protection, the act of imposing a force and the act of resistance. Such human virtues attributed to the space, suggest a direct relation between place and man.

In Bachelard's words: a "house that has been experienced is not an inert box," but "apprehended in its dream potentiality, becomes a nest in the world, and we shall live there in complete confidence if, in our dreams, we really participate in the sense of security of our first home". The house inhabited by human and different sorts of creatures is identified with the universe and becomes "the cell of a body with its walls close together". Eventually his house, this geometrical shape, this space, has entered "anthropo-cosmology" domain and becomes "an instrument of topo-analysis". The visible and tangible reality of the house, the "geometrical object", which is subject to simple rational explanation, totally changes into the metaphorical realm, as the house becomes "a space for cheer and intimacy, space that is supposed to condense and defend intimacy".⁴³

Bachelard's argument is that the house- conventionally seen as a space of withdrawal from the world – is in actuality a place of utmost engagement with the universe. Bachelard demonstrates how the sum of experiences within the house already shapes one's relationship to fundamental forces. In other words, writing about the house is effectively writing about the world. Bachelard is primarily interested in homes not any kind of space. But I would like to apply his analysis to some places of a personal relevance to the writers of the current study. These place could be Hawthorne's Custom House building in Boston or al-Muwaylih's Egyptian Court of Appeal. It can also be an open space like the forest, home of Hawthorne's Hester, or the countryside, the birthplace of Gibran's Marta. These and many others diverse

landscapes of Hawthorne, al-Muwaylihi and Gibran become metaphorically the home where they are engaged with global concerns. Unlike Bachelard's notion of a house that defends intimacy, the three writers' home has become a place of conflict and hectic social life in different parts of the world. In other words the landscape becomes the allegory of man's survival in a world where the battle against oppression and tyranny continues. Consequently, the relation of personal experience to the public form is expressed in the cultural landscape where we have the representations of history, diverse kind of memory, knowledge, personal recollections and experiences and national legacies.

Whereas cultural landscape is based on lived human qualities, allegorical landscape is based on symbolism and the artist's mental vision. Landscape in literary texts consists of the notable natural and architectural features that form the setting. But in allegorical texts the landscape consists of images that transform the setting along more visionary lines reflecting the mental state of the fictional characters within the symbolic structure of the work. In this sense, forests, farms, gardens, villages and cities, temples, churches, castles, prisons, caves, and mountains are recruited to the writer's socio political objectives. The allegorical is a constant preoccupation for Hawthorne, al- Muwaylihi and Gibran despite the fact that the literary forms they practise differ markedly. While Hawthorne continues the allegorical legacy of his Western culture, the Arabic writers introduced this allegorical mode into the newly developed Arabic novel.

The origin of allegory as a mode of thinking and a form of expression is quite different in the Western and Arabic parts of the world. Allegory was a vital element in the Biblical and Classical traditions which shaped Western culture. Allegorical interpretations used by theologians or poets have been seen as important to intellectual movements in what are called the ages of faith in Medieval and Renaissance Europe.⁴⁴ Allegory has had an influential although contested significance for some scholars in reflecting upon the philosophical perception of spirituality. Durant Robertson in his discussion of Western medieval allegory, for instance, defines biblical allegory as the narrative that consists of three classifications of transference of meaning: "Those principles in a text which referred to the Church were called allegorical; those which refer to the spiritual constitution of an individual tropological, and those which referred to the afterlife, anagogical."⁴⁵

Unlike the Western application of allegory in Biblical interpretations, the Islamic conceptions of possible allegorical interpretations in the Quran is debatable and lies outside the mainstream Islamic theology. Those who believe in the accessible allegorical style of the

Quran claim that several levels of meanings complement each other in a one pattern : the literal exoteric meaning (*zahir*), the allegorical esoteric meaning (*batin*), the moral prescriptive meaning (*hadd*) which is concerned with instructions of conduct and behaviour, and the mystical spiritual meaning (*matla*). According to Alfred Ivry these divisions of meaning have been compared to the divisions of the biblical allegory.⁴⁶

The historical spread of Christianity in the Arab lands arguably had some cross cultural influences in terms of the Arab conception of allegory. Alfred Ivry has pointed out that:

Muslim exegetes were following in the allegorical footsteps of their Jewish and Christian predecessors, if not as well in the steps of the Stoics. The guardians and transmitters of each of these cultures invested their classical texts with meaning they believed inherent in them, though not previously explicated.⁴⁷

The religious practices of different beliefs in both Western, Asian and Arab cultures, establishes the sense of allegory attached to external nature. Throughout human history, the forest has always been attached to divine characteristics. Some cultures transformed the forest into magical totems. Some trees were considered to be sacred because of association with a saint or a prophet, for example, the tree under which the Buddha received enlightenment and the tree in the form of a cross used for the crucifixion of Jesus in Christianity. Same with Islam in the very early years of its emergence, Muslims did their pilgrimage around a tree instead of Mecca which was occupied by the pagan Arabs at that time. Many cultures attached religious or spiritual attributes to trees and forests. Natural landscapes were allegorically interpreted in the way of representing a concept, as a person or an event stands only for something else.

Allegory and cultural perception are thus closely connected. Deriving meanings from the metaphoric and figurative language within a logical system is a mental process. Peter Crisp argues that this process involves abstract personifications based on cultural beliefs. Such beliefs become connectors to attach the conceptual idea to another referent apart from the primary referent in the text expression. This has moved allegory from the linguistic dimension to the non-linguistic one. Therefore, allegory breaks the boundaries of the narrow rhetoric definition to a wide scope of historical as well as cultural definitions. This is due to the fact that as Crisp puts it: “allegory is motivated by the very nature of human cognition”.⁴⁸ It is the engagement of allegory with cultural and moral questions that gives way to the shift of allegorical perceptions to be on the part of the reader. The reader conjures up more signs meant by the author in an allegorical text as new cultural debates emerge. This interpretation

depends on the reader's reaction to the figurative nature of the text. Visual representation of place as a key focus of the current study is so important in interpretation of any allegorical texts.

Leonard Lutwack argues that allegories such as *The Faerie Queen*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*, depend upon a conventional stereotype of place. He states that:

Although figurative correspondence rather than mimetic fidelity is the objective in this kind of writing, places in allegories always retain some degree of specificity, much more in Spenser, certainly, than in Malory or Bunyan. But even if they do not, they have a literary function to perform and it is a mistake to discount them, as some historians of ideas have done, because they lack naturalistic detail.⁴⁹

The cultural framework, in relation to the place imagery presents a problem of the function of allegory. We tend to stereotype the garden image, for instance, to signify Eden. This imprisons the landscape of the garden in one autonomous viewpoint within certain traditions. But we cannot dismiss the fact that, historically, allegory had played an important role in historical understandings. As C. S. Lewis state:

When you accepted the exodus of Israel from Egypt as a type of the soul's escape from sin you did not on that account abolish the exodus as a historical event. Usk treats courtly love as a symbol of divine love, but for that reason does not cease to treat courtly love. It is a mischievous error to suppose that in an allegory the author is "really" talking about the thing symbolized, and not at all about the thing that symbolizes; the very essence of the art is to talk about both.⁵⁰

With all its abstractions allegory as a mood of thinking is connected to the real world, just as the allegorical sites portrayed in the fiction of nineteenth century writers Hawthorne, al-Muwaylihi and Gibran are connected to the social and political realities of time and place.

Angus Fletcher states that allegorical images including place imagery have sensual quality which is reflected in allegorical paintings and emblematic poetry where the image is "sharply drawn" to have the power to embody a definite idea or an abstraction. This allegorical imagery which becomes an isolated emblem is capable of existing by itself and has the function of what Fletcher terms "daemonic efficacy" which means its powerful effect is emotive not realistic. Fletcher uses the term allegorists' "stock in trade" to show the use of certain allegorical images to be attached to certain concepts such the stars governing human affairs or a signet ring with a magic power.⁵¹ Yet, I argue that this allegorical imagery of place contributes most efficiently to the cultural landscape of any literary text. Allegory transcends the landscape to be the miniature copy of the social world. We can take a step back in time and see this clearly demonstrated in Phillip Spenser's gardens for instance.

The gardens of *The Faerie Queen* are places which show forces of confrontation among desire, truth, fantasy and reality, such gardens as Robert Harbison states: show “art’s failure to make our lives as paradisiacal as it prospects”.⁵² The world of allegory is where characters are destroyed in self deception. But this is also the deceptive world of a social utopia intended by Spenser. Spenser’s representation of gardens demonstrates spaces of sensual longing and self- reflection in the social world around the poet. The desire is symbolised by the formal manifestations of a desire to reform nature into a human social sphere. Consequently the social world is presented by these very gardens.

The garden metaphor was developed in later centuries to be at the heart of the ideologies that served the establishment of the New World in America. The garden metaphor shaped the American Romantic idealization of the virgin soil of the new continent as it echoed the pastoral scenery of the classical Arcadia and the biblical Garden of Eden.⁵³ Eventually the garden landscape becomes a symbol of American national pride. The garden/farm motive is set against wilderness to show the image of the American hero who is able to transform the land into the Eden of the New World, the productive land of profit. Yet the American landscape whether it is the garden or the wilderness has been idealised romantically to be the emblem of nationality. Leonard Lutwack observes that original settlers of America secularized the land either due to religious reasons because they idealized the land as God given destiny or the interest in nature as an adventurous venture as part of the romantic idealism of nature. As Lutwack states:

Violence and theft to gain possession of the land, wastefulness in its use- these characterized the American’s relationship with the land in the past and still influence his relationship with the land in the present. Running counter to these tendencies, however, were the efforts of settlers to sacralise the land, first when religious groups saw it as their God- given destiny and later, in the early nineteenth century, when the vogue for nature worship was imported from Europe and found abundant material in the wild landscape of America. Later, as settlers moved out of the forested Eastern seaboard, which bore resemblances to European landforms, they sought to endow the more forbidding landscape of the West and Southeast with meaning by associating it with ancient Indian civilizations.⁵⁴

In spite of the fact that many American experiences to discover wilderness have ended in land exploitation and a competition for profit, America’s image as the garden of the world or the earthly paradise- continues to persist as the social allegory of progress and power on both materialistic and spiritual levels.

As this introductory chapter has argued, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi and Kahlil Gibran followed a similar mode of employing allegorical places as signifiers of social life. Their allegorical fiction is the fruit of the intellectual atmosphere of

their age. Each writer was a social critic of his age with many political and definitely educational roles to offer his community.

According to David S. Reynolds, Hawthorne's allegorical fiction was responding to the age of "noisy, blood-besmeared American popular culture".⁵⁵ As Reynolds states: "The controlling devices he used—allegory, history, symbol, tight structure, tonal restraint—covered such stereotypes as the justified pariah and the oxymoronic oppressor into mythic figures that transcended the popular culture they grew from."⁵⁶ Hawthorne was interested in those who stood outside the social system and their responsiveness to evil. He was interested in actual crimes of his day in particular the "Salem Murder" which became a momentous cultural event in 1830. It was the murder of Salem Captain Joseph White, a wealthy retired merchant, who was killed by a local criminal Richard Crowninshield who was hired by two brothers from a prominent family, John Francis and Joseph Knapp. The remorseful Crowninshield was driven insane during the trial. The brothers remained very cool criminals. One of them was joking and laughing in a way of adding a sense of entertainment to the trial. The Knapp trial was reported by sensational press that was well received by an American public who were very interested in the crime's details. These two brothers contributed to the development of the stereotype cool criminal, on whom Hawthorne built his sketch of Roger Chillingworth, as a cold malicious character in *The Scarlet Letter* and used such legal disputes for his theme of the crime in *The House of the Seven Gables*.⁵⁷

Hawthorne tried to show the consequences of crime, the fall from innocence after being exposed to the act of crime, and the torment of guilt. Like his American fellow citizens, he was driven by both emotions of horror and sympathy towards the Knapp criminals. The prosecuting attorney during this crime case, Daniel Webster, described the contradictory feeling of the American public. Such feelings are reflected in Hawthorne's fiction in dealing with the theme of crime. Webster states:

A kind of morbid interest for felon was created within us, and following the course of the young and imaginative, the very horridness of the crime rendered it attractive. The monster presented to us, was rendered beautiful by its superlative ugliness. So strangely was the mind of man constructed, that pleasure could be gathered from the elements of pain, and beauty seen in the Gorgon head of horror.⁵⁸

As readers of Hawthorne's fiction we may experience such emotions. David S. Reynolds has pointed out that Hawthorne drew his dark crime themes from the massive anthology of *The Record of Crimes in the United States* published in 1833. It "consists of twenty-three biographies of famous American criminals: wife stabbers, husband prisoners,

child murderers, pirates, counterfeiters, and rapists". This was the main source of the information of Hawthorne's notebook in 1838.⁵⁹ Yet, Hawthorne depicted evil in a larger cultural and historical context. Hawthorne's presentation of evil takes the shape of long established cultural traditions of political and religious persecution.

But Hawthorne's art reflects also his dissatisfaction with the politics of the day. As a conservative Hawthorne spoke against the doctrine of abolition. He believed that the Constitution was legitimate and essential to bind all the States. He opposed any interference with the Southern States. But after the disunion declaration of the South States, Hawthorne supported the North like all Northern Democrats.⁶⁰ He was particularly an activist in the politics of his day. He visited the Congress many times as well as the White House. His article entitled "Chiefly About War Matters" in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862, reflects most of his observations on war as he visited some of the battle-fields during that year. In a letter written at his house in Conrad, Hawthorne expressed his enthusiasm but also his scepticism about the war. Yet the letter shows his complete devotion to the political cause of his country. He writes:

The war, strange to say, has had a beneficial effect upon my spirits, which were flagging woefully before it broke out. Bu it was delightful to share in the heroic sentiment of the time, and feel that I had a country-a consciousness which seemed to make me young again. One thing, as regards this matter, I regret, and one I am glad of. The regrettable thing is that I am too old to shoulder a musket myself, ... Meantime (though I approve of the war as much as any man), I don't quite understand what we are fighting for, or what definite result can be expected. If we pummel the South ever hard, they will love us none the better for it; and even if we subjugate them, our next step should be to cut them adrift. If we are fighting for the annihilation of slavery, to be sure, it may be a wise object, and offers a tangible result, and the only one which is consistent with a future reunion between North and South. A continuance of the war would soon make this plain to us, and we should see the expediency of preparing our black brethren for future citizenship by allowing them to fight for their own liberties and educating them through heroic influences.⁶¹

Hawthorne's allegorical fiction shows the longing for spiritual freedom. In another part of the world, in Egypt and Lebanon, Arab writers were engaged in the hectic social life of the nineteenth- century Arabic world. Like Hawthorne these authors share a specific interest in drawing the landscape into their interventionist fictions. Allegories of both al-Muwaylihi and Gibran depicted political evil of the British occupation practices, as well as the oppressive Ottoman regime. Most importantly these allegories reflected the very reality of a nation in transition, as new cultural transactions and influences were taking place as an outcome of Western cultural influences. Both writers tried their hand in travelogue, journalism, social study articles, fiction and pseudo-fiction, as part of the Arabic intellectual atmosphere of their

age. Experimentation in literary forms is the essence of the Arabic Renaissance of the nineteenth century. The Arabic novel evolved with these writers in response to the social life, and set out to portray social conditions of various classes of the Arabic society. The imperial powers were present in the everyday life situations that these writers depicted. These situations are transformed from the Arabic world to Europe itself where the colonized are presented through the lenses of the colonial powers. This is reflected in universal expositions.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of so-called universal expositions in the Western world to celebrate the growth of imperialism and colonialism as a universal power that should control and dominate the non-Western parts of the world in order to create the global market. These expositions reflect the cross-cultural exchanges between the West and East. According to Zeynep Celik:

The exposition buildings reflect socio-political and cultural trends crucial to an understanding of nineteenth-century transformations both in the West and in the world of Islam. For example, the placement of pavilions on the exhibitions grounds revealed the world order as mapped by Western powers. The architectural styles of these pavilions embodied the colonizers' concept of Islamic culture as well as the struggle of certain Muslim nations to define contemporary image, integrating historical heritage with modernization.⁶²

Al-Muwaylihi is one of the Muslim intellectuals who reported the 1889 Paris exposition with its most celebrated Eiffel Tower. He called the tower the Eighth Wonder and dedicated to its factual description a whole chapter in his *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*. Al-Muwaylihi expressed his admiration to the European advanced technical development, but at the same time communicated his doubts about the Western culture, exposing the serious social problems created by the colonialists. His novel is the first to deal with the problem of bringing in European traditions to the East through bad imitations.

Gibran's social role is reflected in his anticlericalism as he targeted the religious institutions represented by both the mosque and the church in the Arabic world under the regime of the Ottoman Empire. Yet, he also contributed to another definition of nationalism in his adopted home the United States and was a leading prominent figure of *al-mahjar* (emigrants) poets. This definition of Diasporic nationalism of the Syrian emigrants there enabled them to be part of the Arabic world cultural atmosphere.

The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of nationalism in the Arab world. At the turn of the twentieth century, nationalism reflected in many political and ideological shapes, became a compelling force in the Arab world. On both side of the Atlantic, Syrians and Arab intellectuals were concerned about the quick transformations and the tides of cultural changes in the Arab world. Affected by the atmosphere of conflicting

ideologies and debates in their homeland, Syrians in the *mahjar* (the land of immigration), the United States, suffered the turmoil of religious factionalism within the Syrian communities. During 1890s, sectarianism and religious differences was a major problem, which prevented Syrians from expressing a united political stand concerning the Arab world.⁶³ The main theme of Gibran' allegorical fiction is the call for collaboration and solidarity between different religious sects in order to face the oppressive regimes that had taken hold of their homeland. Gibran expressed his nationalistic spirit and his new social vision to achieve a progressive Arabic society in almost all his writings. A struggle against the tyrants is a simple definition of his social vision. He believed a war against the Ottoman Empire is essential for freedom. According to Jean Gibran:

His [Gibran's] commitment to war as a means of gaining his country's freedom caused him to guard closely his Arabic ties just the time when he was forming commitments within the American literary community. His conflicting loyalties caused him anguish and guilt. The distance between Arab nationalists and his pacifist American friends was to him a "gulf that had to be crossed every day," and this tore at him.⁶⁴

In both parts of the world, Gibran lived his life as a revolutionary dreaming of freedom. He was a sceptic of political schemes of the day. But he never stopped hopping for a better future for his nation.

Allegorical style helped these writers use visuality to portray their landscapes. The allegorical presentation of landscape is shaped by the conceptual relation between allegory, culture and the visual. Suzanne Akbari draws a distinction between the rhetorical approach of studying allegory as a trope and an iconographic approach of studying allegorical imagery. She argues that meanings cannot be entirely expressed by language since "allegory creates the meaning within the reader" as he encounters the image.⁶⁵

Therefore, figurative representations can mean different things to different readers. The only way to get the meaning is to study the cultural context from which the text emerged. Landscape imagery can provide keys to that context. Malcolm Andrews observes that we should look at allegorical landscape paintings in terms of grasping a perspective on the human drama behind it. In his discussion on Lorenzo Lotto's *St Jerome in the Wilderness* painting, Andrews observes:

The question is how we are to integrate the landscape with the figure so that the combination offers us a coherent, readable narrative. Is the landscape there to reinforce mood and feeling, the drama of the story, or is it being enlisted allegorically to articulate Jerome's spiritual quest? Or are the two mixed? To what extent are buildings, trees, flowers, cornfields and rivers, however naturalistically rendered, each invested with coded meanings, such that if we fail to grasp their symbolic significance we have failed to understand the picture as a whole?⁶⁶ I believe same can be applied in studying the fictional allegorical landscape.

Each writer in the current study presents a different set of landscape representations invested with moral and political meanings and inspired by his own cultural background. For example al-Muwaylihi illustrates the image of the crowds gathering in Egypt or France. While both Hawthorne and Gibran shared the Western notion of tranquillity. Their characters are indulged in reflective contemplation outside the public dimension in the course of their novels. The three of them represented the mainstream culture of their nations and they used nature as the key to their perception of cultural landscape at the allegorical level. The aesthetic aspects of their treatment of natural scenery, such a colour and scenery are employed allegorically to serve their themes of resistance.

Despite the fact that landscape- consciousness of every culture is historically distinct and subjective, a fact that has been demonstrated in these three writers' employment of colour imagery, we can still see how the three writers share historical perspectives and imply codes of gestural meaning in their employment of landscape. The three authors employ shapes, colours, spatial arrangements and other visible features of landscape, only to act as an inductive of rebellion against specific social realities.

An openness to the contemplation of patterns lies at the heart of the allegorical landscapes used by the novelists discussed in this current study. In Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, landscapes are conceived around the parallel relationships between the colour of the flower at the prison gate, the creative artistic embroidery of the scarlet letter as a shame badge worn by Hester as she gets out of the prison, and contemplations on meanings of freedom as the natural outcome of rebellion against tyranny. The black flower at the threshold of the prison is to utilize a symbol of nature to show the blackness and cruelties of Seventeenth century New England Puritans. On the other hand the scarlet letter worn by Hester with its red colour is connected to Pearl, embodied in the wild red rose in the forest. This rose floral imagery connected to the child Pearl, conveys the theme of spiritual growth, love and rebellion. Gibran's Lebanon is described as a white, snowy, and difficult land where the purity of his saint / prostitute character, Marta, lies at the heart of comparing her to Lebanon the land of forefathers and the land of everlasting love. Marta's little boy selling flowers on Beirut streets, is an incarnation of his mother's love and her great sacrifices to raise him.

Al-Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* opens with the graveyard scene and takes his readers on a journey through both Cairo and Paris streets. The narrator Isa and a resurrected figure from death, the Pasha, undertake the journey. When these characters, accompanied by a friend, arrived in the Egyptian quarter at the Paris World Exposition, they are pleased to find

the Egyptian atmosphere, but they soon feel uncomfortable and embarrassed by the belly-dancers inside what is built resemble a mosque. Also Egyptian streets a badly presented as being very dirty, dusty buildings with faded paint, and overcrowded with musicians, male and female dancers, artisans and donkey drivers. Isa and Pasha leave Paris in shame because of the eroticised and commercialized presentation of their country. These street images of both Cairo and Paris are so much connected to the brown colour of earth. Though al- Muwaylihi's text has no colour imagery, colour is definitely implied.

Zeynep Celik states that commerce and entertainment ends were reflected in the mosque representation in Paris World Expositions. In 1889 for instance, when Muhammad Amin Fikri, an Egyptian visitor, wrote a note showing his disgust on the mosque representation: "Its external form as a mosque was all that there was. As for the interior, it had been set up a coffee house, where Egyptian girls performed dances with young males, and dervishes whirled."⁶⁷ The same negative representation of the Orient was carried on in all other Paris expositions. This marks a total distortion of the cultural image of the Orient presented by a dominant colonial power to international audiences. This demonstration of Egyptian picturesque landscapes and culture as reflected in Paris expositions served imperial political agendas. This is reflected in locating the street presentations of the world countries.

In the Paris World Exposition of 1900, streets of different nations were planned in a more visible location and organized in a way that:

Nations considered more important were given larger sites facing both the river and the street. The allocation of space to Islamic countries in the 1900 exposition made evident a hierarchical classification. The Ottoman Empire and Persia, both sovereign nations, had their pavilions on the Rue des Nations. The Ottoman Empire, perceived as more important politically, also faced the embankment and was located between the pavilions of Italy and the United States, whereas Persia's much smaller pavilion sat on the back row, between Peru and Luxembourg. Egypt, now accepted as a British colony, was with the other colonies in the Trocadero Park.⁶⁸

Apart from the political dimension of the above discussion, landscape presentation has successfully connected Westerners to the exotic lands of the Orient and Islamic nations with their sights, food music and dance.

This thesis tries to establish the position that the three writers are far from being isolated rebels. They are actively involved in cultural cross influences and dynamics between America and Europe on one hand, and the Arabic world and Europe on the other hand. With all their literary contributions, allegorical fiction becomes part of a social movement that witnessed the emergence of American nationalism in the first part of the nineteenth century,

or Arabic nationalism in mid and later nineteenth century. And landscape becomes the fertile ground for all social and political conflicts of these writers' nations.

These three writers shared the allegorical employment of landscapes to recall the past in the actual present to expose and criticise its social reality. Their landscapes reflect the image of resistance to the oppressive religious and political authorities. They travelled across the continents in different parts of the world to draw landscapes of international cultural exchanges to present a global image of mankind's struggle towards freedom.

This thesis contributes to the comparative literature studies. According to my knowledge it is the first to place Nathaniel Hawthorne in a worldwide literary scene in a comparative study with nineteenth-century Arabic writers shedding light on the rich literary tradition of America and the Arabic world. It examines the role of landscape in allegorical fiction of each of these writers. The thesis works over interdisciplinary research borrowing the term "cultural landscape" from geography. It contributes to colonial studies through exploring the cultural and geopolitical relations between East and West during the nineteenth century and how this has greatly influenced the rise and development of the Arabic Novel. The thesis deals with three distinguished literary genres: romance, *maqama* and short story used by Hawthorne, al-Muwaylihi and Gibran. It examines how these technical innovations are employed to serve allegorical fiction in relation to the cultural landscape. The choice of these writers is due to the fact that each one of them is a social critic of his age; this contributes directly to the theme of resistance which this thesis explores in relation to the cultural landscape.

Chapter Two considers Hawthorne's representation of the historically burdened landscapes of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* with a specific focus on the way that Puritan New England speaks to the condition of nineteenth century western polity. The thesis examines Hawthorne's landscape representation in a variety of ways. Throughout the two novels of the current study, *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*, landscape becomes the bearer of historical evidence: either of the Puritan seventeenth century New England or Hawthorne's contemporary nineteenth century America and Europe. These landscapes share a common allegorical purpose: to signify the cultural burden of social shame presented in a global image of human history. The shame signified is that of the oppressed, who in turn become oppressors, causing the New World to become no different from the Old. Hawthorne's choice of geographical setting and historical eras throws the narrative of

individual rebellion against the oppressive religious and political forces into even sharper relief.

Chapter Three examines the way that Muhammad Al- Muwaylihi's text *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* explores the subtle language of political critique found in urban descriptions of Cairo as a setting for encounters between colonized Egyptians and Western tourists. A clear aim of the text is to give voice to the colonized Egyptians as they encounter the Western tourists in everyday situations in Cairo. After its initial exposition, the text then takes the reader to Paris to show how Cairo, as a representation of the East, is deceptively exhibited through a colonized presentation. *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* sets out to remedy the orientalist European bias by offering an account of a middle-eastern cultural encounter with a Western city, as described through the eyes of the Egyptian characters.

Chapter Four examines Gibran's *Spirit Brides* and *Spirit Rebellious* in light of their exploration of anticlerical allegory as a means to synthesize religious differences. For Gibran the church and the Islamic Ottoman state represent a corrupt social system that should be challenged by a rebellion against both authorities. His beloved Lebanon becomes a symbol of eternal love for every Lebanese despite religion or race.

In the Conclusion, the thesis argues the importance of cultural landscape as a form of politicised allegory. Understanding the significance of urban or landscape descriptions opens the way for finding cross-cultural affinities between seemingly disparate authors.

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Chapter Two

Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Forest and the Gallery of Rome

This study deals with two novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). I will argue that Hawthorne engages with themes of oppression and tyranny by placing his characters in an allegorically charged landscape. Hawthorne's landscapes become galleries of shame, directing the reader's attention to question the terrible consequences of crime and oppression throughout different historical eras. In these works, individual crime comes to mean a larger notion of social crime. Each novel shows a journey crossing the Atlantic, between the old continent of Europe and the new world of America, indicating the fact that Hawthorne is concerned with presenting a landscape that represents worldwide historical as well as contemporary concerns. Whether in America or Europe, Hawthorne's characters are still facing the same oppressive forces in a historical setting which connects the New World to the Old one. Therefore, Hawthorne's landscapes, whether natural or urban, occupy both worlds to show one reality of oppression and the suffering of those who rebel against it. Hawthorne's life experiences and personal involvement in the social life of his day must have given him a fuller perspective on the socio-political reality of his age and shaped his presentations of the cultural landscapes in his allegorical fiction.

Hawthorne's career in politics is reflected in his letters to B. Pike, the democratic politician who was associated with Hawthorne in the Custom Houses of Boston and Salem. Randall Stewart edited these letters and writes an account of Hawthorne activities according to these letters.¹ Hawthorne started his political activities as early as 1837, when he was appointed as the historian of an exploring expedition to the South Seas. This post was the result of the efforts of his friends, Horatio Bridge, Franklin Pierce and Jonathan Cilley. Then George Bancroft appointed him in 1839 as the treasurer in the Boston Custom House. He resigned from the office in 1841 after less than a year of his marriage, and joined the Brook Farm project. In 1846, he was appointed surveyor at Salem Custom House. He was removed from his post in 1849. The last political appointment for Hawthorne was the consulship at Liverpool from August 1853 to August 1857.

Hawthorne was involved in politics. Despite the financial reasons for holding these offices, he was concerned about contributing to the public service through knowledge and the

power of sympathy. Hawthorne stated in a letter to Sophia Peabody dated March, 15, 1840, that he disliked politicians. He writes:

I do detest all offices- all, at least, that are held on a political tenure. And I want nothing to do with politicians- they are not men; they cease to be men, in becoming politicians. Their hearts wither away, and die out of their bodies. Their consciences are turned to India- rubber- or to some substance as black as that, and which will stretch as much. One thing, if no more, I have gained by my Custom- House experience- to know a politician. It is a knowledge which no previous thought, or power of sympathy, could have taught me, because the animal, or the machine rather, is not in nature.²

Hawthorne's spirit of resisting the type of politicians he mentioned above whom he detested most is the reason for his active astute participation in contemporary political movement. His political involvement reflects aspects of his character as Stewart mentioned "his democracy, his loyalty to his friends, his practicality, his shrewdness, his skill in diplomacy, and his remarkable sense of humor."³ All these personal traits are added to his eagerness to achieve a social change. Social justice is his main concern. His fiction reveals his tendency to expose evil forces within political and social systems. According to my reading of his *The Scarlet Letter*, the past serves only to allegorically engage the present in mankind's struggle towards freedom.

Hawthorne represents landscape in a variety of ways. Throughout the two novels of the current study, landscape becomes the bearer of historical evidence: either of the Puritan's seventeenth-century New England or Hawthorne's contemporary nineteenth-century America and Europe. These landscapes share a common allegorical purpose: to signify the cultural burden of social shame presented in a global image of human history. The shame signified is that of the oppressed, who in turn become oppressors, causing the New World to become no different from the Old. Hawthorne's choice of geographical setting and historical era throws the narrative of individual rebellion against the oppressive religious and political forces into even sharper relief. The historical sites of seventeenth-century Puritan New England in *The Scarlet Letter* or nineteenth-century Rome in *The Marble Faun* are both allegorical landscapes embracing such rebellion. This dark pressure of historical background intensifies the need of the characters to seek spiritual freedom. Hawthorne's settings, such as the Custom House building, the forests, castles, art galleries, churches, and the many other cultural sites in which the events of the novels take place, become in turn galleries of representation, showing images of human agony caught in a struggle against evil criminal forces. The shame depicted here is ultimately that of the excess of oppressive systems. Hawthorne's landscapes function metaphorically beyond their spatio-temporal limitations.

Hawthorne's landscapes may be thought of as the bridge between what is real and what is fictional. Most of the locations in Hawthorne's novels are historical ones. They are real places that have kept the same names until the present day. At the same time these landscapes become more than picturesque scenery in a historical era: they are also a setting for cultural transformations and influences. Yet they challenge our understanding of human history through presenting their "lights" and "shadows" against the "gray" area of narrative fiction, as Hawthorne himself describes his tales in his preface to *The House of Seven Gables*:

[The author] may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public... The point of view in which this tale comes under the romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend, prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad day-light, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect.⁴

The lights and shadows of the images are drawn against the picturesque landscape in which Hawthorne's characters and his themes operate.

Hawthorne states in *The Scarlet Letter* that American romance negotiates a certain territory, situated somewhere between the real world and the fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet. This may explain the various levels of meanings behind Hawthorne's fiction. His landscapes and characters are found in this "neutral territory": a space where the restrictions and laws of the actual world do not apply. Culture and history frame the landscapes of Hawthorne's fiction, embodied in the strong relationship between past and present which dominates the lives of his characters and their communities. In this chapter, I contend that his two novels complete a global picture where human rebellion against oppression is disguised in a shameful manner under the garment of religious practices and political ambitions.

Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* in 1849. It won him much fame and was warmly received abroad. According to Robert Cantwell, the first edition of 4,000 copies was sold out in only ten days.⁵ It was followed by many other editions; some were sold out before their release to the bookshops. It sold approximately 8,000 copies in Hawthorne's lifetime. As A. Robert Lee states, the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* together with Hawthorne's earlier story collections, *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) and *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), won him wide approval in America as the artificer whose "lights and shades" dazzle his readers in

America as well as in England.⁶ We may discover these lights and shades in the very beginning of the novel, with Hawthorne's descriptions of the Custom House, which runs to almost a fifth of the narrative length. Hawthorne's sense of place is conceived with his imaginative art. He stated that his position as the writer is the "Proofs of the authenticity of the narrative therein contained" (4). The historical account of the Custom House is foreshadowing his narrative as "a faint representation" based on actuality to give latitude to his story of the scarlet letter "A".

The Scarlet Letter is a story about human frailty and sorrow as the consequence of the original sin. Temptation is presented as a fatalistic force. But the sinful act is not dealt with in the context of a religious dogma. Rather, sin becomes that of the oppressive religious and political system, not of the individual. Moreover, sin means something different to each individual. The central male character, Dimmesdale, is obsessed with the religious concept of sin. This is reflected in his illness, a metaphor of his self-torment due to his adultery being disguised in the holy garment of a priest. For Hester, however, sin is never a violation of God's law. Her adultery is a violation of the law of the community and its insufficient moral code. Her embroidery of the letter "A" reflects this spirit of rebellion. Redemption comes not in the form of a religious dogma but in terms of a secular earthly love that shapes man's destiny. Consequently, Hawthorne's cultural resistance is drawn in his characters' rebellious acts against religious or political institutions.

Hawthorne's novels reserve a tragic fate for many of his characters. As Beverly Havilland observes, Hawthorne's choice of allegory was "esthetically anachronistic... it went against the spirit of every passage of hope for a better world that the audience of the utopian 1840s yearned for and devoured".⁷ Hawthorne did not tell people what they wanted to hear. He exposed a kind of evil that originated not in the Christian doctrine of Total Depravity which enslaves mankind to sin, but in their cultural institutions. The community is enslaved by a religious tyrannical system. Hawthorne found in allegory a suitable form of literature that enabled him to express his dissatisfaction with Puritanism as a religious system that confined and suppressed individuals.

The response of Hawthorne's fans and friends to the dark world of *The Scarlet Letter* confirms the sense of sadness and loss arising from his observations of the New England establishment. Hawthorne's friend Hermann Melville describes Hawthorne's tragic tone as the "blackness" in Hawthorne's work. Melville points out in his essay, "Hawthorne and his Mosses", that this "blackness" emerges from Hawthorne's Calvinistic sense of depravity and

original sin.⁸ In other words, it expresses the author's cast of mind. In contrast, Henry James found nothing bitter or morbid in Hawthorne's views: "The development of Hawthorne's mind was not toward sadness"; the note of depression, despair and disposition cannot be found in his imagination.⁹

Hawthorne himself was concerned about the solemn effect that his novels may have on his readers. He was concerned that *The Scarlet Letter* was too sad to meet his audience's taste. As he wrote to his publisher James T. Fields:

The book is made up entirely of 'The Scarlet Letter', it will be too somber. I found it impossible to relieve the shadows of the story with so much light as I would gladly have thrown in. Keeping so close to its point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people and disgust some. Is it safe, then to stake the fate of the book entirely on this one chance? ... However, I am willing to leave these considerations to your judgment, and should not be sorry to have you decide for the separate publication.¹⁰

Hawthorne was appointed to his position in the Salem Custom House, but was removed from his post after the defeat of the Democrats in 1848, under the humiliating allegations that he lacked administrative competence. Losing his job was a distressing experience.¹¹ He had to live on the money saved by his wife Sophia and her craft of hand-decorated lampshades and hand screens. He led a poor life and grieved the loss of his mother, who passed away two months later, which was a terrible shock for him.

The Scarlet Letter was written during this era in Hawthorne's life. His sadness and anger can be felt throughout the novel. The events of this period in his life were compounded by the historical and cultural significance of the place in which he lived, and this profoundly affected the tenor of his writing. It is this very spot in the New World of Puritan America that is carrying the grief and the pain of ages of politicians who destroyed people's lives. He wrote "The Custom-House" as an introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, but only to connect his contemporary morbid political scene with that of Hester's seventeenth-century one. In other words, the crimes of the Puritans continued on through time and space.

Of course, the novel carries much more than historical facts about oppression and tyranny. In its time it was also a ground-breaking text, for the way it portrayed passionate female rebels who have their own self-expressive motives to stand against repressive forces in their societies. I contend that Hester and Pearl are different visions of womanhood. They belong to different times and ended up living in different parts of the world. This suggests the idea of a global universal version of womanhood. The Salem Custom House period is important for different stages of Hawthorne's writing career and life. The Custom House in

Hawthorne's novel belongs to the artist who is telling the story of the first settlers of Boston and is quite different from the Custom House where Hawthorne worked in surveyorship and struggled to write. Art and creativity are at the core of the novel and the writer himself.

Hawthorne expected that his duties at Salem Custom House would not be too time-consuming and that he would have much free time for literature, with the intention of writing mythological stories for children. But instead he wrote very little, mostly book reviews.¹² Nina Baym has observed how Hawthorne's sense of frustration with his creative writing can be felt in his letter addressed to C.W. Webber in December 1848, as Hawthorne writes: "At last, by main strength, I have wrenched and torn an idea out of my miserable brain, or rather, the fragments of an idea, like a tooth ill-drawn, and leaving the roots to torture me." The story referred to in this letter is Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" of which he states that he had "many impediments to struggle against to be able to write."¹³ Despite all his difficulties, his work at Salem Custom House proved to be very valuable for writing *The Scarlet Letter*.

Hawthorne's concern about the reception of his book is reflected in the Custom House introduction. According to Robert Cantwell, it was James Fields, a partner in William Ticknor's publishing house, who insisted on publishing *The Scarlet Letter* in a book and not as one story included in a book of stories. It was published in a "desperate haste" and the long introduction of the Custom House, according to Cantwell:

[Is] valuable as it is for its information on the custom service, and remarkable as it is as a demonstration of Hawthorne's versatility, with its humour, its sharp caricatures, and its bland account graft, is inappropriate as an introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*. It was rushed into print, so hurriedly that there was no time to correct passages in which Hawthorne referred to the nonexistent other stories in the volume. Hawthorne wanted to make the book less shocking. He wanted to dilute its subject matter with other topics. The fierce attack on Salem in 'The Custom-House' is in effect a lightning rod to protect the novel itself.¹⁴

I believe that the Custom House introduction is necessary to bring about the connection of the present with the past, and to enhance the story's main topic, which is the transformation of the Puritan symbol of shame into a universal artistic symbol of rebellion and freedom. As demonstrated within this extract is Hawthorne's concern about the tone of his story and how this would impact on his readers and his reputation. The theme of rebellion in this novel can be seen from two perspectives, or temporal phases. Firstly it is explored through the narrative of Hester's Puritan oppressors. Secondly, the narrative can be seen as a comment on the authority of the Boston politicians in Hawthorne's own time. *The Scarlet Letter* could be read, therefore, as an act of rebellion against judgment of the community. Although religious authority is the upfront oppressive force in the historical Puritan community, the rebellion is

not to be taken against the divinity. Rather, we may get the feeling that God is remote or entirely missing in the text. By applying art to her letter, Hester is altering its literal meaning and thereby standing against the magistrates who condemned her to wear it. Nina Baym states that:

Hawthorne and Hester both wrestle with the problem of bringing together the artist's "idea", which is nonsocial and even nonverbal, and the eventful product. At the most basic level the writer must use language, social construct, for his expression. Thereby his product becomes social even if his idea is not. Pearl, the antisocial creature, must be transformed into the letter A. Ultimately, artistic conceptions that are expressive but perhaps not meaningful in a declarative sense must acquire meanings through the form in which they are expressed, meanings that may be irrelevant to and even at odds with the conception.¹⁵

As is exemplified with the emblem of Hester's embroidery, the "scarlet letter" starts as an individual artistic expression and culminates as an act of social rebellion. It also ended the isolation and exclusion of Hester from her society, as her craft reached her community with embroidered gloves and ruffwear. Her needlework becomes a fashion reaching the entire town.

Hester represents the artist, a word that generally speaking, in itself, could carry defiance against the foundations of Puritan society. The Puritans found in the imaginative world of arts the devil's work, that would lead people to commit the sin of pride or defiance against God as the artist is attempting to be like God the Creator. As Claudia Durst Johnson states: they casted off all paintings and statues from their churches, and prohibited musical and theatrical performances and any sorts of amusement. They allowed only useful arts to flourish within their communities such as needlework for designing household objects and tombstone carving. Many tombstones were decorated with "flowers, sometimes cupid-like figures carrying open books or closed coffins, crossbones, and hourglasses symbolic of the passage of time."¹⁶ Needlework enhances Hester's social role. She contributes creatively to the mainstream of artistic traditions. Metaphorically, she herself stands for the art of the living people, the art of home decorations and family clothing as a rival to the art of tombstones in cemeteries.

Giving birth to Pearl is another way in which Hester communicates her feelings of anger, pride, and resentment towards her community. Pearl renounces the patriarchic system symbolized by her father and the magistrates. She is the child of Hester's defiance. Hester rejects the meaning of the letter, the symbol of guilt attached to the letter, so she rejects the patriarchic judgment that punished her.

According to Nina Baym, Hawthorne has created “an authoritarian state with a Victorian moral outlook” in order to show the struggle within such a state of two groups of people regardless of their religious status. An example would be the powerful elders acting as ministers combining the state’s legal and moral strands in one communal authority. Such power is “diffuse and impersonal”. The patriarchal nature of this “Puritan oligarchy” is vital to Hawthorne’s fictional design which contrasts youth (Dimmesdale) and elderly, women and men.¹⁷ I believe this kind of analysis supports the rebellious passion of each and every group included. Dimmesdale is a troubled guilt-stricken Puritan who is inflicting self-punishment to face the old establishment authority of his elders and their restrictions. He is rebelling against the law of public humiliation. Hester presents the divine mother who is establishing a future vision of womanhood. Both mother and daughter are establishing life outside their oppressive male-dominated Puritan community. The letter of shame turns to be a letter of dignity and honour. As Hawthorne tells us:

Man had marked this woman’s sin by a scarlet letter which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her, save it were sinful like herself. God, as direct consequence of the sin which man thus punished, had given her a lovely child, whose place was on that same dishonored bosom, to connect her parent for ever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven! Yet these thoughts affected Hester Prynne less with hope than apprehension. She knew that her deed had been evil, she could have no faith, therefore, that its results would be for good. Day after day, she looked fearfully into the child’s expanding nature; ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being. (81)

Hester’s pain is an attempt to endure the suffering caused by irrational doubt of the nature of guilt. She assures herself that her child is the fruit of a heavenly scheme placing her as the mother higher than earthly man’s punishment. She refuses the social naming of her deed as a disgrace as well as the meaning of her punishment. Pearl becomes an embodiment of her mother’s art and creativity. Her appearance reminds all town-dwellers of Hester’s recognition of a guiltless deed. Pearl is a visual reminder of the scarlet letter in defiance:

Her mother, in contriving the child’s garb, had allowed the gorgeous tendencies of her imagination their full play; arraying her in a crimson velvet tunic, of a peculiar cut, abundantly embroidered with fantasies and flourishes of gold thread... It was a remarkable attribute of this garb, and, indeed, of the child’s whole appearance, that it irresistibly and inevitably reminded the beholder of the token which Hester Prynne was doomed to wear upon her bosom. It was the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life! (93)

The letter as a dead symbol of shame is brought to life as a very different symbol of vitality and many future expectations of a transformed vision of life. A version of future stays outside

the social domain of those who first created the symbol. The symbol doesn't belong to them anymore. It is changed forever.

"A" also represents art, with which Hester transforms the letter into an icon of her pride as she wears it in shining embroidery to face her oppressors. It is the badge of shame which doesn't belong to Hester but to her society. Discovering the "A" letter on the second floor of the Custom House may symbolize the place where it was found. Deanna Fernie suggests the room itself might be the attic space representing the letter in shape in its unattended state. The way to the Custom House is through a pavement that :

has grass enough growing in its chinks to show that it has not, of late days, been worn by any multitudinous resort of business. In some months of the year, however, there often chanced a forenoon when affairs move onward with livelier tread. Such occasions might remind the elderly citizen of that period before the last war with England, when Salem was a port by itself; not scorned, as she is now, by her own merchants and ship-owners, who permit her wharves to crumble to ruin, while their ventures go to swell, needlessly and imperceptibly, the mighty flood of commerce at New York or Boston. (5)

This image of ruin and materialistic exploitation of place becomes identified with the time-worn letter "A" described as "the rag of scarlet cloth" (30), in its package of "ancient yellow parchment. This envelop had the air of an official record of some period long past" and "faded red tape" (28), with "traces about it of gold embroidery, which, however, was greatly frayed and defaced" (30). We have the fragmentary image of the letter, mirroring the fragmentary landscape surrounding it. Hawthorne states that he experienced a sensation that is not 'physical' but has the effect of 'burning heat' by placing the letter on his breast, "as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let fall upon the floor" (31). Once again this scene mirrors the prison landscape where:

The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pigweed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison. (46)

The rusty red colour of this scene directs us to the red colour mentioned as the rose colour and made relevant to historical incidents: "rose-bush, by a strange chance, has kept alive in history". Metaphorically, the soil is also coloured red with the innocent blood of the prisoners who received the capital punishment. The death penalty was applied to many seventeenth-century New England crime categories, including non-violent acts like: the rebellion against parents, church, or state, idolatry, blasphemous speech, cursing a parent,

witchcraft and idolatry. The source of law was a small number of legislators and clergy who were acting according to what they believed to be specific scriptural authority from Old Testament books: Exodus, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Numbers, and Samuel.¹⁸ Blinded by their own interpretations of the scriptures, the Puritans imprisoned and killed their own ideological and political opponents, as in the case of Anne Hutchinson and the Quakers, who believed that all people had God – and in Christian terminology Christ – as the inner light within them that is to guide them and be saved. This posed a threat to the Puritan doctrine based on depravity and the elect group saved by God. Quakers welcomed all women. This presence of the women in Quakers' meeting-house was threatening to weaken the ministers' control over the political and religious structure of New England.

Execution was carried out horrifically in witches' arrests in Salem 1692. According to Claudia Durst Johnson's account of the witchcraft trials, the horror started when several young girls in the Reverend Samuel Parris' Salem house were arrested for dancing in the forest and taking part in games to foretell the future:

Among the many arrested were Sarah Goode and her four-year-old daughter, Dorcas. Community leaders began to encourage citizens to turn in their neighbours as witches. Often the only way to avoid being arrested oneself was to accuse someone else first. Once accused, the only way to escape execution was to 'confess.' Hysteria and arrests began to mount. Throughout the spring, people were arrested and held in prison without benefits of trial. Soon the Salem jail was overflowing, and those accused of witchcraft were packed into the Boston jail.¹⁹

Natural scenery outside the prison door, in the form of a rose, takes us back to the red embroidered "A". Both are symbols of rebellion in the face of oppression and tyranny, what Hawthorne called "the black flower of civilized society" of the New World, as cited in the above extract. Landscape and art thus carry on the spirit of Hester Prynne's rebellious quest for spiritual freedom.

From the first chapter onwards, Salem landscape carries recurring allusions in the scaffold and forest scenes, and the prison and the rose images, which point to Ann Hutchinson, only to present the history of Hester Prynne in the Puritan past. The scarlet letter "A" discovered in the Custom House building with its embroidered red and gold, is part of the history of that Puritan America and the artwork craft of its culture. Hawthorne tells us at the moment of this discovery that "The past was not dead", "the habit of bygone days awoke in me". From the ground floor of the Custom House, he moves to a second storey. He enters "a large room, in which the brick-work and naked rafters have never been covered with panelling and plaster" (27). He finds his way through "musty papers", "rubbish", "bundles of official

documents”; it is simply an “airy hall”, a space that is both historically literal and imagined. He finds a ‘small package’ of the letter “A” bound in red tape, under the seal of Governor Shirley, Massachusetts’ governor 1741-49 and 1753-56 and given to Mr. Surveyor Jonathan Pue (29). Hawthorne finds an official record concerning this mysterious package. The package contains “a certain affair of fine cloth”, embroidered in faded gold. This art, this “mystic symbol” burns its holder and its story lies in the historical account of Mr. Pue; it is the story of Hester Prynne, “noteworthy personage” (31). Hawthorne starts within the “deserted chamber of the Custom House to have the proof to unfold “the groundwork of a tale” in the process of retelling the past with the transformation of “fact” into “fiction” and presenting his “moral blossom” gift. The story is showing art as the imaginative alteration in history into a myth of freedom. The narrator narrates the tale in a room during a moonlight night. Art and external nature are our only means to comprehend the reality of crime and shame in human history.

The Custom House becomes America’s house of the nation; the entrance is guarded by “an enormous specimen of American eagle” with its “unhappy foul”, its fierce and mischievous nature. The story is told in every corner of the Custom House. The special relation to Hawthorne’s job and his artistic imagination created the story, a story told in a colonized world full of malice.

Hawthorne’s biographer, Robert Cantwell, writes an account of Hawthorne’s duties at the Custom House, and points out how moving in the town streets around Salem Custom House was part of Hawthorne’s daily routine:

[Hawthorne’s] duties at the beginning of his term in the Custom House are not known. The records were destroyed by fire in 1894. There were three or four measures on duty. Their function was to tally the cargoes as they were unloaded. There was a small office where the measures awaited their calls to duty, with a coal fire in the salamander stove, desks, chairs, and the morning newspapers, the sailing schedules of the packets on the walls. Hawthorne walked to the Post Office after breakfast, thence to the Custom House, and, if there were no calls for him, sat down at the measurers’ fire and read the Morning Post. At about nine-thirty he walked to the Athenaeum and read the current magazines until noon. He stopped again at the Custom House to see if a ship was ready, and after walking the length of Washington Street ate dinner, and returned to the Custom House about two. At six o’clock he sailed forth, ate oysters for his supper, brought the evening papers, and returned to his room between seven and eight o’clock, read a book, and went to bed at ten.²⁰

The above account of Hawthorne’s activities may reflect Hawthorne’s interest about moving in different streets and I contend this may explain the focus on the landscape in the creation of his art. Every street has a story of its own and the city has the story of a nation, building itself around boundaries that have changed over ages. Hawthorne is telling us the story of the new

colony and its wilderness, a story that upset his fellow citizens, who referred to the “Custom House Introduction” as “a despicable lampoon” and considered it a literary manifesto to attack Hawthorne’s own community.²¹

Colonialism lies at the heart of the history of the early settlers’ dreams of a perfect community. They attempted to achieve human perfection and build an Eden on this earthly world, but they brought the values and beliefs of the Old World with them. Obviously, therefore, the attempt to inscribe a perfect world on the New World landscape is never possible because of selfishness, cruelty, self-obsession and the cultural reality of evil which they carry with them from their homelands. We are reminded here, of the history of America and how the settlement of the New World was meant to be a “City upon a Hill”, the phrase used by John Winthrop (1587-1649). Winthrop was one of the Puritan leaders who established Massachusetts Bay Colony.²² Winthrop appears in Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* in Chapter XII “The Minister’s Vigil”; the event which brings the characters together is the death of Governor Winthrop. Hawthorne tells us how the Puritan Utopia went wrong for those who built the prison and cemetery as the embodiment of their attitude to life. Such an attitude that supposedly is governed by the irrefutable God’s anger against them for the Fall and the wicked human nature. Death and punishment are the pillars of their foundation. Isaac Jonson is one of Boston’s first settlers; the prison, cemetery, and church were built on land he provided. As Hawthorne narrates, it is the landscape of death that lies at the very heart of their vision of Eden:

The founders of a new colony, whatever their Utopia of human virtue among, and their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison. In accordance with this rule, it may safely be assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the vicinity of Cornhill, almost seasonably as they marked out the first burial ground on Isaac Jonson’s lot. (44)

Colonialism is reflected in a kind of preoccupation with external nature. Hawthorne’s use of natural scenery is part of the cultural tradition of his age. In nineteenth-century novels, landscape reflects the humanized environment, showing real descriptions of the settlers or the original inhabitants as well the economy of the regions.

Leo Marx examines the American pastoral tradition and how it was applied to the real world of politics, with Jefferson’s notion of the pastoral ideal in the new world as the “Virgilian pasture” or the “Land of happiness”. According to Marx such ideas found their way into the works of two American figures: Robert Beverley and Tench Coxe, who presented the American “geo-political landscape”. Beverley used the metaphor of “the new

garden of the world” to describe the state of Virginia as “nature’s garden” or “a paradise of abundance” full of fruits and flowers and merry sounds of the Mock birds, and deriving its name from the concept of the purity of a virgin and innocence of people.²³ Landscape becomes a utopia placed on the American soil, despite even the crimes committed against the Indians, which Beverley himself recorded. But this American myth of Eden means also the real man-made cultivated land that requires hard work and improvement with the employment of machinery. Marx points out how this machine becomes part of the American myth, with Coxe as a representative of the capitalist and nationalist society. Coxe says, “By wind and water machines we can make pig and bar iron, nail roads, tire, sheet-iron, sheet-copper, sheet-brass, anchors, meal of all kinds, gunpowder”. He is foreshadowing the future of the American economy within a topographical study that regards the sun as a bleaching factor to produce a competitive product of cotton.²⁴

Leo Marx has also argued that American city planners have been interested in some of America’s pastoral literature showing the balance of “bucolic and the urban”, reflecting a tradition of “urban pastoralism” as a social construct.²⁵ Throughout Hawthorne’s fiction, we can see this balance of both the city and external nature expressed in pastoral landscapes or landscapes of wilderness. But according to James L. Machor, Hawthorne’s tradition of this urban versus pastoral landscapes is ironic. He states that:

Hawthorne composed an ironic version of urban pastoralism by dramatizing the relation of that ideal to actuality and by analysing the human response to that relationship. Hawthorne’s sophisticated treatment of the ideal seems to have been a product of his allegorical habit of thought... His allegorical method led him to perceive history as a record of man trapped in time, where change tyrannizes over efforts to conform material and social reality to an unchanging ideal.²⁶

Hawthorne is showing the city as far from being the place to embrace ideals of civilization. Hawthorne is telling the story of wilderness and uninhabited places of the New World with an imaginative history of man set in a hostile landscape, and struggling to build a new space to embrace his or her freedom. Wilderness symbolized in *The Scarlet Letter* forest becomes a space for a new version of individual freedom that never existed in what was believed to be the Eden of a Puritan town. Hawthorne’s appreciation of natural scenery puts nature at the heart of his philosophical views concerning man, his or her moral consciousness, reality and his or her own aesthetic experiences. He is concerned with the law of community represented in the images which are to be discussed later, such as images of the black flower symbolizing prison, and that of the forest with the brook symbolizing the flow of individual

freedom. The Custom House is an embodiment of the feeling of enclosure within the context of a larger social perspective. It has come to mean a place of memory and history.

The garden and the wilderness are metaphorically mentioned throughout *The Scarlet Letter*, as Pearl, whom I argue to be the fruit of rebellion and the future female rebel, is identified with both. Salem landscapes witness how oppressive religious and political systems never attempt to respond; in fact, they explicitly oppose the demands of love and spiritual freedom. These systems crush the motivational needs of individuals. The result is a moral chaos and a cultural burden of tyranny. Pearl is “that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower” (81). “[T]he infant was worthy to have been brought forth in Eden; worthy to have been left there, to be the plaything of the angels, after the world’s first parents were driven out” (82). Pearl is the worthy citizen of the New World, of that dream of Eden or the fulfilled dream of the Promised Land. Yet, Pearl is the wildflower of the forest, the wilderness, the home of the black man. Her mother recognizes

[Her] wild, desperate, defiant mood, the flightiness of her temper, and even some of the very cloud shapes of gloom and despondency that had brooded in her heart. They were now illuminated by the morning radiance of a young child’s disposition, but later in the day of earthly existence might be prolific of the storm and whirlwind. (83)

Pearl is the wild spirit of the universe that resists being kept in isolation. She is shining both “the wild-flower prettiness of a peasant-baby, and the pomp, in little, of an infant princess” (82). Her appearance and symbolic meanings are open to possibilities and visions beyond the historical limits of her community. She does exist beyond a comprehensive meaning exactly, signifying radical possibilities, in the same way as the scarlet letter itself does.

According to Charles Swann, the appearance of the scarlet letter is unusual in that it is not recognizable; though its letter shape has been established, its meaning remains as a possibility. A story is needed in order to be worthy of interpretation: hence, the very existence of *The Scarlet Letter* is history, the history of both Hawthorne’s personal history and the public history.²⁷

Swann argues that Hawthorne’s major works of the years between 1849, when Hawthorne left his job at the Salem Custom House, and 1853, when he started his job in England as consul in Liverpool, are intended to write “history, politics and the problematic nature of the contemporary.”²⁸ And Hawthorne’s “historical imagination” makes it possible for Hawthorne to recreate history. Swann describes the historical connection of the Custom House to Hawthorne’s art: “one purpose of the ‘Custom-House’ is, then, to demonstrate that

the past can be reconstructed through the sympathetic and informed imagination – an imagination whose other name should be the historical sense.”²⁹ The Custom House becomes the space where fiction reaches the real world. Hester’s story symbolized by the scarlet letter brings us face to face with the reality of old New England. Stories of people and stories of places become one difficult task. This is demonstrated in Hawthorne’s attempt to recreate people of the past as he is also recreating Salem landscapes. We can see how Hawthorne’s art is picturing people and places, as exemplified in this description of the old General at the Custom House building:

There he used to sit, gazing with a somewhat dim serenity of aspect at the figures that came and went; amid the rustle of papers, the administering of oaths, the discussion of business, and the casual talk of the office; all which sounds and circumstances seemed but indistinctly to impress his senses, and hardly to make their way into his inner sphere of contemplation... The framework of his nature, originally strong and massive, was not yet crumbled into ruin. To observe and define his character, however... was as difficult a task as to trace and build up a new, in imagination, an old fortress, like Ticonderoga, from a view of its gray and broken ruins. Here and there, perchance, the walls may remain almost complete; but elsewhere may be only a shapeless mound, cumbrous with its very strength, and overgrown, through long years of peace and neglect, with grass and alien weeds. (19-20)

All “sounds and circumstances” are fragments of history have no values to describe the General as a character without a reality lies deep in his own consciousness. Same consciousness lies in Ticonderoga landscape.³⁰ It is a place where waterfalls continue in its grace and beauty despite the painful history of war that lies beneath the ruined fortress. The voices of the crucial battles in the war of 1812 in that town are not heard anymore. The town and the General defy a contemporary perception of their true nature. Hawthorne tells us: “What I saw in him - as evidently as the indestructible ramparts of Old Ticonderoga already cited as the most appropriate simile - were the features of stubborn and ponderous endurance” (21). Human ruin and natural ruin are themes of one story composed in Hawthorne’s imaginative history, which tells the story of the wilderness that is to be feared, flattened, while its native people should be enslaved and brought into control by the new settlers’ guns.

Ticonderoga was the setting of the historic battles during both the French Indians Wars and the American Revolutionary War. It was first constructed by the French in the 1750s and then became part of Crown Point town in 1804. By the end of the eighteenth century the Ticonderoga was a source of wood products. Hawthorne states how places and their external nature tell their own stories of the past:

The nature that is developed in earth and sky was, in one sense, hidden from me; and all the imaginative delight, where with it had been spiritualized, passed away out of my mind. A gift, a faculty if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me. There would have

been something sad, unutterably dreary, in all this, had I not been conscious that it lay at my own option to recall whatever was valuable in the past. (25)

Hawthorne's history is that of the wilderness and the civilized. The first European settlers of the New World sought wilderness as insecure environment inhabited by the primitive and against which civilization had its fight. The notion of civilization has so much to do with building a Western paradise on this wilderness. According to Roderick Frazier Nash:

The New World rekindled the traditional European notion that an earthly paradise lay somewhere in the west. As the reports of the first explorers filtered back the Old World began to believe that America might be the place of which it had dreamed since antiquity. One theme in the paradise myth stressed the material and sensual attributes of the new land... however; European portrayals of a material paradise in the New World completely ignored the 'wilderness' aspect, as inconsistent with the idea of beneficent nature. Illogically, they exempted America from the adverse conditions of life in other uncivilized places.³¹

The Puritan goal was to shape a garden from the wilds and to convert the world from its wilderness state, to change the state of chaotic moral vacuum of a cursed land into a state of enlightening and order of civilization, according to the view of their Bible. They believed themselves to be the latest line of Christian groups who had changed the wild to build Eden on earth through following God's path according to Biblical prophecies. Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) associated wilderness with the ungodly. This concept was developed as a metaphor in Christian themes, as depicted by John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where wilderness becomes a symbol of evil anarchy opposing any Christian teachings.³²

Others saw in the wilderness an opportunity for useful products and resemblance to the orchards in England. This is reflected in the literature of the early settlers. Thomas Pownall wrote as he was describing his trips in America during the 1750s: "with what an overflowing Joy does the Heart melt, while one views the Banks where rising Farms, new Fields, or flowering Orchards begin to illuminate this Face of Nature; nothing can be more delightful to the Eye, nothing go with more penetrating Sensation to the Heart."³³ Also Zebulon Pike described in a 1806 journey record the wild prairies close to Osage River as "the future seats of husbandry". Zenas Leonard writes how mountains were "greeted with enlivening sound of the workman's hammer and the merry whistle of the ploughboy".³⁴

Roderick Frazier Nash states:

The 'Wilderness-work' of establishing the town of Concord, Massachusetts portrayed in graphic detail the struggle through 'unknown woods' swamps, and flesh-tearing thickets. The town founders wandered lost for days in bewildering gloom of the dense forest. Finally came back-breaking labor of carving fields from the wilderness. Later generations who settled forested regions reported similar hardships. On every frontier obtaining cleared land, the

symbol of civilization... Military metaphors in diaries and memorials of the frontier period were used to depict wilderness as 'enemy' which had to be 'conquered', 'subdued', 'vanquished' by a 'pioneer army'.... Historians of westward expansion chose the same figure: 'they conquered the wilderness, they subdued the forests, and they reduced the land to fruitful subjection'.³⁵

The taming of wilderness was the mission of the frontiersman's life. This mission was to be taken on the path of building a civilized nation: a notion that may falsely suggest that wilderness is the savage's home.

Roderick Nash states that Hawthorne's writing is an example of the nineteenth-century Puritan conception of wilderness as man's dark and untamed heart, and this exploration with the wilderness theme climaxed in his novel *The Scarlet Letter*, where: "The primeval forest he creates around seventeenth-century Salem represents and accentuates the 'moral wilderness' in which Hester Prynne wandered so long."³⁶ Hester started her journey toward the freedom from social exclusion imposed by the Puritan tyrannical system in that very forest.

The forest bears the emotional turmoil of both Hester and Dimmesdale:

They sat down again, side by side, and hand clasped in hand, on the mossy trunk of the fallen tree. Life had never brought them a gloomier hour; it was the point whither their pathway had so long been tending, and darkening ever, as it stole along; and yet enclosed a charm that made them linger upon it, and claim another, and, after all, another moment. The forest was obscure around them, and creaked with a blast that was passing through it. The boughs were tossing heavily above their heads; while one solemn old tree groaned dolefully to another, as if telling the sad story of the pair that sat beneath, or constrained to forebode evil to come. And yet they lingered. How dreary looked the forest-track that led backward to the settlement, where Hester Prynne must take up again the burden of her ignominy, and the minister the hollow mockery of his good name! So they lingered an instant longer. No golden light had ever been so precious as gloom of this dark forest. (176)

Only in the forest can they be parents watching their child. Only the forest embraces them and shares their story. This special relation comes at the core of the novel. The darkness of the forest is changed into daylight. Shame disappears and sunshine captures the scene. Pearl points the finger to the letter of shame on her mother's breast but there is no reflection on this on the brook; instead there is the image of little Pearl under sunshine. The brook becomes the dividing space of two different worlds: a world of the past and its shame and the future and its rebellion. The forest is transformed forever. It is no longer the place where a repentant is lost on his way to heaven, but the place where heaven graces its blessings to those who resist penitence.

Colours enabled Hawthorne to transfer his readers throughout his allegorical levels. Red represents the sin committed by Hester as shown by the scarlet letter "A" she is forced to

wear on her bosom. But red is the colour used to represent Pearl, who is referred to throughout the novel as: “Ruby”, “Coral”, and “Red rose and a little bird of scarlet plumage”. I believe that having Pearl playing in the forest transforms the forest image into the garden or a playground where the Blake Man’s legend of the devil has no place. It is this very forest where Pearl grows as its red flower to be set in contrast with the black flower near the prison gate at the city. Switching the forest into a garden image could be read as part of switching the Devil legend to be reflected on the Puritan ministers. In a conversation with her oppressor, Roger Chillingworth, Hester inquired: “Why dost thou smile at me?” And being troubled by his looks she continues, “Are thou like the Blake Man that hunts the forest round about us? Hast thou enticed me into a bond that will prove the ruin of my soul?” (72).

The forest is depicted as the place of the devil incarnated by the black man according to the Europeans colonizers; however it turns out that they themselves were doing his malice. In one scene Hester accompanies her lover Dimmesdale in a walk along the shores of the peninsula, or the wooden hills of the neighbouring country, the border of another reality where “the whiteness of the clergyman’s good fame”, in Hawthorne’s words, is protected (164). This image of the pious clergyman belongs doesn’t belong to the Puritan New England society. It belongs to somewhere else behind the hills and across the borders of a neighbouring country. Probably such a country does not even exist.

Later in the novel she cannot find him in these roads so she goes to the forest on the other side. This time she is accompanied by her little child Pearl. The forest is described as:

Stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester’s mind, it imaged not a miss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering. The day was chill and somber. Overhead was a gray expanse of cloud, slightly stirred, however, by a breeze; so that a gleam of flick-erring sunshine might now and then be seen as its solitary play along the path. Pearl said: ‘Mother the sunshine doesn’t love you. It turns away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom. Now see! There it is, playing, a good way off. Stand you here and let me run and catch it. I am but a child. It will not flee from me, for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!’... ‘Nor ever will my child,’ said Hester. (167)

Sunshine finds its way to Pearl and the future. Pearl asks her mother to tell her the story of the black man whom she believes hunts the forest, carrying a book with him: a big heavy book, a description that fits very much to the Puritan ministers. Hester acknowledges that she met him once, having in mind the tyrannical Puritan figures that punished her to wear the scarlet letter.

Images of vegetation at the prison scene suggest memories of those who died in rebellion and those who rebel for a better future. “The rose – bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that

originally overshadowed it,- or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison door” (46).

The novel begins with phrases indicating the dichotomy or lack of morality of a dying rigid tyrannical Puritan regime on one hand, and a code of moral consciousness symbolized in the ever-growing beautiful nature on the other hand. Such phrases include: “black flower of civilised society”, the wild rose of Nature and the narrator’s “sweet moral blossom”, iron prison door, and the iron men of Puritan Boston authority. The blackened facade which seems “never to have known a youthful era” and the red roses that ornament its threshold is a landscape of everlasting wilderness world where “the deep heart of nature” can be “pity and be kind”. In contrast to the work of civilisation, the “unnatural” prison is identified with the act of crime as being “more antique than anything else in the New World”.

Hawthorne wrote a biographical sketch of Ann Hutchinson printed by Salem Gazette in 1830. Ann Hutchinson was a public figure excommunicated from Massachusetts Bay in 1638. By mentioning Ann Hutchinson at the very beginning of his novel, I believe Hawthorne is suggesting that his novel is about the story of women’s bravery, the public figure. His fictional heroine reflects the rebellious spirit of that historical public figure. Hester becomes an ideal of the female rebel. Hawthorne gave Hester the same voice of Ann Hutchinson to speak and act in public like defying rebel.

Ann Hutchinson was born in 1591 in England. She was a highly educated religious young woman and was under the influence of a Puritan minister, John Cotton. Ann, her husband and children followed John Cotton to Boston. She became responsible for helping ailing and aged people in need. Later on she started to teach morning church sermons to a group of woman, putting herself in what was thought to be a male privilege. Her religious sessions became very widespread, attracting many new women and men as well. She became a more popular religious teacher than any ministers in the Massachusetts Bay. She was accused by the authorities of encouraging sexual misbehaviour and more dangerously the heresy of antinomianism.³⁷ According to Christianity antinomianism is a denial of the fixed applicability of moral laws and a belief that salvation is attained only through faith and divine grace, meaning defiance to the religious role of the ministers.

Hester faces her community with “burning blush” and “haughty smile”, suggesting excessive and abundant qualities of a lady, a version of feminine qualities which do not apply to her townsmen’s understanding of ladylike appearances. These qualities are probably unknown to the world of Hawthorne’s as well. As Amy Scherager Lang states:

Hester, in some ways typical of those lusty, overripe English women of whom the paler and more genteel women of nineteenth-century New England are the 'fair descendents', is nonetheless free of the moral and material coarseness that characterizes the 'matrons' of the crowd. Not yet the reduced, refined, and desexualized lady of Hawthorne's own age... Hester stands rather as a transitional figure between two types of womanhood. What moves her away from one and toward the other is not so much for her sin as the heightened consciousness of sin imparted by the atmosphere of Puritan New England, a heightened consciousness which is, 'The Custom-House' suggests, a prerequisite to art.³⁸

The idea of Hester the artist suggests a resistance to being classified as a lady of any specific community or any age. She is the individual artist who creates her own vision of womanhood. Giving birth to Pearl suggests she is the creator of the future woman. In some way this is also the case of Hawthorne writing about the Custom House. It is the artist who transfers the Custom House out of its historical age to be a space where history meets the present. It is the Custom House where Hawthorne dives into history to tell the story of the scarlet letter. History and art create the story.

Unlike Ann Hutchinson, Hawthorne's Hester opens the possibility of a social triumph by breaking her imprisonment. They wanted to exclude her but she came in. "Her prison-door was now open, and she came forth into the sunshine, which falling on all alike, seemed to her sick and morbid heart, as if meant for no other purpose than to reveal the scarlet letter on her breast" (72). The scene is of "lurid triumph". Hester triumphantly didn't give up her individuality as the "accumulating days, and added years, would pile up their mystery upon the heap of shame", and she refused to become "the general symbol at which the preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion" (73). She is the "mother of the babe that would hereafter be a woman" (73). I believe Hester is the mother of the new future version of womanhood. Her motherhood has freed her from shame. The scaffold landscape shows how shame dynamics have been shifted. Hester's attempt to hide the letter by having her child in her arms is drawing another image as the letter becomes an emblem of rebellion and is protected by the baby girl, the future woman. Hester feels protected as she faces the public. Therefore, as Benjamin Kilborne observes, the very quality of shame as a desire to disappear is turned into a desire to be recognized. Kilborne states how Hester's scarlet letter may function as a way that is similar to the Middle Eastern tradition of the Envy Eye:

Hester seems full of defiance, of fire, of wildness, and of independence of mind, all of which she uses her shame to express. Despite her pain (or perhaps because of it), she is not at the mercy of the outside world... Hester can use the scarlet letter as a mirror to ward off the evil gazes of those around her, to turn them back on those who wish her harm.³⁹

The mirror imagery is at the heart of the novel, revealing a hidden truth. Hester sees herself as “a woman in solitude”; she “fancied that she beheld, not her own miniature portrait, but another face, in the small black mirror of Pearl’s eye” (88). Hester sees her fears reflected in Pearl’s eye. Pearl as Hester’s alter ego mirrors the image of freedom that Hester longs to embrace. The child is the happy daughter playing in sunshine while Hester remains in shadow attached to her burden. Michael L. Lasser discusses the mirror imagery of *The Scarlet Letter*. He suggests that Hester is saved by Pearl who represents her “own femininity reborn”.⁴⁰ Pearl mirrors the passion of her parents rather than reflecting their socially-inscribed guilt. Pearl is the love incarnate.

In discussing Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Ernest Sandern uses the term “grand passion” instead of the “sinful passion” as a prevailing force in Hawthorne’s allegories. For Sandern *The Scarlet Letter* is a story of “lovers” not “sinners”. Love is “self-justifying passion”. “It works for their [Hester and Dimmesdale] moral development”.⁴¹ Only with love they are able to achieve resolutions that suit their nature. Hester’s love freed her from the community. Pearl is transformed from being an allegorical projection of Hester’s sin and transformed into a complete loving human being, who accompanies Hester back to Europe, the Old World, revising the American dream. Dimmesdale’s love becomes his torment so he escapes to death. Only at death he finds peace. It is love that releases them from the iron barricade of that Puritan society. This true love becomes a passion of a struggle between the self and the community towards achieving spiritual freedom, a struggle that is so much articulated on different countries. Such is Hester’s journey back and forth between the New World and the Old one.

These different lands, different public or private places all show the individuals’ frustration and struggle. As Susan Elizabeth Sweeny states in her discussion on the novel, in regard to the relationship between the sense of alienation and exclusion on one hand, and private and public spaces on the other hand, or in her words, “the persistent imagery of space, architecture, and liminality throughout Hawthorne’s novel”, then:

The Scarlet Letter is organized around three major scenes, each a spectacle of public punishment on the scaffold in the marketplace; and it is haunted by psychological distance between those public spaces and more private spaces, such as Hester’s solitary prison cell, her little cottage on the outskirts of Salem, The closet where Arthur Dimmesdale prays and punishes himself, and the secluded space in the forest where he meets Hester and Pearl. The novel’s design thus confirms Gaston Bachelard’s theories about architecture’s importance to human consciousness, as well as Michel Foucault’s theories about disciplinary power – in particular surveillance and spectacles of public punishment – and its relevance to narrative authority and narrative technique. More precisely, *The Scarlet Letter* illustrates Hawthorne’s

own concern for the vexed, torturous, even contradictory relationship between the external persona and the interior of a heart. ⁴²

The idea of Hester living in both worlds is highly significant. Landscapes across both the Old World and the New one suggest the idea of a birthplace, hiding and revealing identities and generating a new sense of identity:

It may seem marvellous, that, with the world before her, -kept by no restrictive clause of her condemnation within the limits of the Puritan settlement, so remote and so obscure, -free to return to her birthplace, or to any other European land, and there hide her character and identity under a new exterior, as completely as if emerging into another state of being - and having also the passes of the dark, inscrutable forest open to her, where the wilderness of her nature might assimilate itself with a people whose customs and life were alien from the law that had condemned her, -it may seem marvellous that this woman should still call that place her home, where, and where only, she must needs be the type of shame. But there is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghost-like, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime. (73)

I assume Hester's return to the spot mentioned above is a return to the forest that allegorically lies in-between both worlds: the very spot with which her "wilderness of nature" and might coincide her with both worlds. Yet space, time and allegory become overlapping domains for the future of Hester. Hester's "another state of being" belongs to different worlds, times, and also Hawthorne's choice of allegory that gives a global image of human agony.

I argue that the passion of *The Scarlet Letter* characters is that of the idealistic archetypal characters who must suffer on the path of ruin to gain moral growth. Hawthorne's characters face evil and its tragic consequences as some of them fall prey to its trap. They seek salvation in a new moral dogma of love and human sympathy. The salvation is not Christian in shape, but rather devoted to a more universal progress of human community. *The Scarlet Letter* provides the example of this archetypal quest. Hester and Dimmesdale are more than lovers. They are seekers of spiritual freedom. Their social roles in the community are distinctive despite any attempts to alienate them. Hester is the artist of embroidery. "A", Hester's letter of shame becomes a symbol of pride and artistic beauty. Dimmesdale is the scholar described as:

The young divine, whose scholar-like renown still lived in Oxford, was considered by his more fervent admirers as little less than heaven-ordained apostle, destined should he live and labor for the ordinary term of life, to do as great deeds for the now feeble New England Church as the early Fathers had achieved for the infancy of Christian faith. (109)

This above extract shows a leading role expected of Dimmesdale by his community. Both Hester and Dimmesdale are fulfilling social leading roles as they try to establish love in an environment where a cemetery and prison are the landmarks.

Hawthorne's departure from the tradition of Medieval and Renaissance allegory is part of the new nineteenth-century allegory tradition. Deborah Madsen argues that the radical change of what is virtue and truth in moral standards led nineteenth-century allegorists, including Hawthorne, to transform allegory from what she classifies as Protestant allegory to the Romantic one which is detached from any biblical interpretations. According to Madsen, allegory is bound to Puritanism throughout the centuries because of its didactic purpose of interpreting the Scripture. Renaissance allegories were regarded as scriptural proof texts interpreting the Book of Revelation in historical, spiritual and ecclesiastical terms. Virtue of faith is a matter of sanctification of an individual soul in a life process involved in the Christological sense of the Scripture.⁴³ Nineteenth-century allegorists found themselves interested in secular daily life matters and engaged in a process of revolutionary cultural transactions and changes.

Hawthorne used allegorical landscape to invent a different image of the archetypal quest. It differs from the one found in Medieval and Renaissance literature. The repentant pilgrim who is setting his holy journey on the path of fundamental Christian Orthodoxy is replaced in Hawthorne's fiction by the sinner, the common citizen who is undergoing a secular life-experience on the path of skepticism. Therefore, both Dimmesdale and Hester become pilgrims. In earlier allegories like John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), the forest is a place of temptation and seduction that is transformed in *The Scarlet Letter* to a place where Pearl, the fruit of love and freedom, grows. Pearl is not the fruit of sin but the reward of a possible salvation of future womanhood. Hawthorne draws the forest with its trees and the brook as a place of life in contrast to the Puritan beliefs of the forest as the Black Man's evil residence. It is a place where Pearl plays and points her small fingers in a baby-like manner. She is unconsciously opposing her father's views of her as an elfish spirit connected with his morbid childhood legends:

Pearl stretched out her hands, with the small forefinger extended, and pointing evidently towards her mother's breast. And beneath, in the mirror of the brook, there was the flower-girdled and sunny image of little Pearl, pointing her small forefinger too. (188)

The protagonist of Bunyan's allegory, Christian, leaves his home, wife and children to save his soul. Dimmesdale's main spiritual torture is caused by his separation of his lover and child. Christian is directed by Mr. Worldly Wiseman into seeking deliverance from his burden

of sins in the Village of Morality. The figure of the Evangelist, the personification of the religious system, stops him from going there and threatens to crush anyone going to that village. The Evangelist directs Christian to the Place of Deliverance of the Cross of Calvary, considering it as the only place to get rid of sins. His path is clear and straight and the goal is the Celestial City. And his hope of getting a relief from his anguish lies only in Christianity.

In contrast, Hester and Dimmesdale, by committing adultery, have violated the rules of the religious system which suppresses them. They cross the way to a worldly morality where they seek spiritual freedom, leaving behind the Christian way. Salvation, whether granted or not, can be achieved only through morality originated in the human heart. This Salvation comes only through love and sympathy. To find it, the characters must undergo a quest and experience a journey that connects different worlds. The fire of hell is placed not on Hester and Dimmesdale's path but in the eyes of Roger Chillingworth who believes himself to be the divine agent to torment them: "the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or, let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Bunyan's awful doorway in the hill-side, and quivered on the pilgrim's face" (118).

Hawthorne's landscape bears his characters' emotional turmoil. The forest scene reflects Dimmesdale's struggle to live with a distorted identity when his private one is different from his public identity within the Puritan community. He tells Hester:

Of penitence, there has been none! Else, I should long ago have thrown off these garments of mock holiness, and have shown myself to mankind as they will see me at the judgment-seat. Happy are you, Hester that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine in secret! Thou little knowest what a relief it is, after the torment of seven years' cheat, to look into an eye that recognizes me for what I am! Had I one friend-or were it my worst enemy!-to whom, when sickened with the praises of all other men, I could daily betake myself, and be known as the vilest of all sinners, methinks my soul might keep itself alive thereby. Even thus of truth would save me! But, now, it is all falsehood!-all emptiness!-all death! (173)

The psychological exploration of both Dimmesdale and Hester's behaviour leads to the fulfilment of their social roles, and how they try hard to mediate between their own subversive impulses and the conventional expectations of their society, in which they live and interact with the public. Whereas Dimmesdale has lost his social function, and starts to regard himself as the vile sinner in times of falsehood and death, Hester regains hers.

Dimmesdale is openly exhorting Hester to name her child's father while secretly of course urging her to do just the opposite. He succeeds in deceiving above all himself. His confession turns privacy into public spectacle. What he reveals is less an inner "impulse" than an outward sign, a letter – the same letter that Hester has been wearing, all along, as a badge of shame. Returning from the forest, he realizes his "inner man" and has just thrown her letter

and her cap like “a cast off garment” but this understanding of this “revolution in the sphere of thought and feeling” reveals only Dimmesdale’s failure to be the lover, father, and the religious leader. Dimmesdale sets out from the beginning to end his self-deception and to deceive the superficial Puritan Orthodoxy and its vision of pity.

On the other hand Hester has established herself as the one who empowers other women with her comfort, help and hope. She is able to see the brighter side of a future life. Hence her scarlet letter has finally ceased to be the badge of shame which is so much the moral behind Hawthorne’s tale:

The scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world’s scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence, too. And, as Hester Prynne had no selfish ends, nor lived in any measure for her own profit and enjoyment, people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and mighty trouble. Women, more especially, -in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion, -or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought, -came to Hester’s cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted them and counseled them as best as she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven’s own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and women on a surer ground of mutual happiness. Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the trust test of a life successful to such an end! (234-5)

According to Michael Davitt Bell, Hester in the scaffold scene is “a central character in an allegorical social drama – what contemporary sociologists would call a symbolic degradation ritual – and she thinks of her performance in overtly theatrical terms”.⁴⁴ She ascended a flight of wooden steps, and was thus displayed to the surrounding multitude. All other conceptions of her identity are engulfed by her allegorical, deviant social role, and she herself fully conspires, or attempts to conspire, in this eradication of her inner personality: “She turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter and even touched it with her fingers, to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes! -these were her realities, -all else had vanished” (56). Hester accordingly throughout the novel is described as a general symbol at which the Puritan preacher and moralist might point against woman’s frailty and sinful passion. This deceptive image hides the reality of her strength as an individual trying to liberate her enslaved society. Her looks, laughs and her needlework all are individual, impulsive modes of expression to connect with others and become part of her society.

David Van Leer states that Hester's throwing away the scarlet letter "into infinite space" in the forest may echo Emerson's concept of nature when he proposes that man is returning to faith and reason "in the woods" and man is uplifted "into infinite space". Same with Hester's wandering in the forest "without a clue in the dark labyrinth of mind", sounds to recall Emerson who states that without divine influx, idealism "leave me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end". Hester's wandering in the dark labyrinth suggests the classical romantic metaphor of wandering and labyrinth. Leer also observes that Hester is not a proto-Romantic figure caught in a Calvinistic society. She does possess both Puritan and Transcendental traits.⁴⁵ I believe Hester is a new version of female rebels who belong to Hawthorne's contemporary American Romanticism that cannot be uprooted entirely from its Puritan origins.

The idea of a sinful land is one of the notions of the Puritans, as the case with Richard Mather (1596-1669) the Puritan clergyman in colonial Boston. Mather defended his departure from England because of the dangers of remaining in a sinful land. He argued that: "The removing from Old England to New... to be not only lawful, but also necessary". By remaining in corrupt places, he wrote, "We do endanger ourselves to be corrupted", "is a Tempting of God"; Mather reminded himself that it was a Christian duty to flee from a fearful place of desolations to a place "where one may have well-grounded hope of preservation, and of God's protection, is necessary to them that are free".⁴⁶ To Mather and others New England was such a place. According to Michael Metcalf (1590-1664), the highly-successful businessman who was forced to leave England, New England was the "good land", the refuge for God's chosen people according to the Puritan faith.⁴⁷ It is the land described by John Winthrop as "the very high lands, lying in many hills very unequal" and there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden".⁴⁸ American wilderness motivated the Puritan colonists' interest in geography and natural history.

William Hubbard states in his history of New England that early Puritans like Francis Higginson used to make untrue generalizations in describing New England as the country that "aboundeth naturally with store of roots of great variety and good to eat", where "turnips, parsnips and carrots are here both bigger and sweeter than is ordinarily to be found in England". The "black fat earth" of Massachusetts was lacking only in good Christians to control this abundant land.⁴⁹ In other words the land signifies the New Canaan. Biblical references to the wilderness provided the metaphor to describe the New World. The wilderness has transported to America the Old World heritage. It transferred all biblical

concepts of wilderness as a desert or wasteland. The stone walls which surrounded the medieval towns were a metaphor of God's Hedge. The separation of the forest from their towns reflected this very same metaphor. The Puritans whom Hawthorne presents in his tales are showing their distrust of the forest and their unwillingness to allow it to be part of their societies. It remained the Black Man's realm outside their collective society. Hawthorne's establishing social life reflected in another version of society located in the forest, is to rebel against this Puritan tradition. The forest has become Pearl's home.

Hawthorne's vision of a collective society revolves around Pearl as the rebellious spirit incarnate. The child embodies the celestial spirit who is not confined to the conventional limits of heaven and earth and their rules. She is placed outside the religious Christian path to heaven as well as the authority of the Puritans and their earthly ways of controlling the New World. The child is the vision of the future womanhood. In the end she achieves a materialistic being, suggesting an influential role in Hawthorne's vision of a new society. Within the course of the novel she is the wealthy heiress in the end. What applies to Pearl could apply to the forest; it is the new Eden on earth, with its brook as the stream of time carrying all stories of the Black Man as well as Pearl's symbolic reflection, to become the heart of the New World, or in other words, a landscape of revolution in the New World.

Roy R. Male states that Hester named the child Pearl, the name of the precious pearl in biblical stories (Matt. 13: 45-46) the *pretiosa margarita* which has been the symbol of Christ and also as the undefiled or the redeemed soul in baptism.⁵⁰ Pearl comes to symbolize not the sin and its embodiment in the scarlet letter, but purity, grace and a future vision of freedom of both man and woman, who have fallen to an earthly human world.

In this novel, recognition of the meaning of landscape is the means for gaining a better perspective of the truth, emphasizing our tools of perception of seeing and witnessing – in other words entering the forest and reaching out to Hawthorne's characters with our human sympathy. Roy R. Male analyses Hester Prynne's transformation as follows:

Hester attains her most nearly complete vision in the first third of the book. She is seen: the object of 'universal observation', she feels the 'heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes upon her' as she represents a living sermon to those who witness the spectacle. 'Transfigured' by the scarlet letter, she discovers that the platform offers perspective in every direction. It enables her to look inward and backward to her parents, her former home, and her guilt; downward to the living realities of her present, the infant and the letter, and, for the only time in the book, upward, to the balcony where authority is seated. The clarity of her vision at this point is emphasized by the 'recognition' scene. Though forced upon her by the community, it is an open recognition of guilt. Standing on her pedestal, Hester squarely faces the stranger who could not be buried in the sea or the wilderness and fixes her gaze upon him.⁵¹

A vision of a universal truth has been attached to Hester. The landscapes of wilderness and sea have presented the setting where her oppressor Roger Chillingworth was not buried, but survived as the dark forces of mankind's crimes and tyranny accumulated in front of her. I contend that wilderness and the sea provide Hester with a realm where she does battle, in order to gain her humanized vision of rebellion against such forces.

On the other hand Dimmesdale's guilt symbolizes decay and death of whatever moral standards that a seventeenth-century Puritan clergyman may stand for. John W. Shroeder suggests in his discussion of the heart imagery in Hawthorne's fiction, that Dimmesdale's buried guilt has been associated with the images of graveyard.⁵² This is so much reflected in Hawthorne's narration. "He [Chillingworth] now dug into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold; or, rather, like a sexton delving into a grave, possibly in a quest for a jewel that had been buried on the dead man's bosom, but likely to find nothing save mortality and corruption" (117). And also: "Wherefore not, since all the powers of nature call so earnestly for the confession of sin, that these black weeds have sprung up out of a buried heart, to make manifest an unspoken crime?" (119). This heart metaphor as a graveyard landscape covered by black weeds, comes here to reflect a moral signpost of the torment, defeat and finally death, of not only Dimmesdale but the whole religious institutional system that he used to represent. According to my reading of the novel, the Puritan oppressive system that punished Hester is unable to stand up to face those who rebel against it. This very system is buried in history with all its shame of unspoken crimes. Shifting the shame of sin to those who believe themselves to be the holy is what this entire novel is about. Hester's future image of the female rebel is symbolized in Pearl and associated with the unburdened heart of the child. Pearl is immersed in the big universe, emblematised through images of land and sea, as she plays and collects useful herbs and beautiful sea-weed. In Hawthorne's vision of the joyful child at play, he writes that she "flirted fancifully with her image in a pool of water, beckoning the phantom forth, and – as it declined to venture – seeking a passage for herself into its sphere of impalpable earth and unattainable sky" (160). Pearl is the uncovered truth of the future that is rising and departing out of New England just like the play boats she makes: "She made little boats out of birch-bark, and freighted them with snail-shells, and sent out more ventures on the mighty deep than any merchant in New England" (160). Then she continues playing: "She took up the white foam, that streaked the line of the advancing tide, and threw it upon the breeze, scampering after it, with winged footsteps, as to catch the great snow-flakes ere they fell" until she found "the little gray bird, with a white breast... that little

being that was as wild as the sea-breeze, or as wild as Pearl herself... Her final employment was to gather sea-weeds, of various kinds, and make herself a scarf, or mantle, and a headdress, and thus assume the aspect of a little mermaid (160). The mermaid rising out of the child and decorating her garment as she took "some eel-grass, and imitated, as best as she could, on her own bosom... A letter A, -but freshly green, instead of scarlet! The child bent her chin upon her breast, and contemplated this device with strange interest; even as if the one only thing for which she had been sent into the world was to make out its hidden import" (161). Pearl tells her mother "It is the great letter A. Thou hast taught me in the horn-book" (161). Whether she meant the alphabet book or a prayer book to teach spelling, the letter remains essential forever. Exposing the letter and changing its symbol is the very act of Hawthorne's female rebel against the New England Puritans.

Hawthorne's engagement with religion is part of his portrayal of American history. Puritanism was involved in the early foundation of American political liberty. As a nation, America is founded on the Puritans' belief of themselves to be the "chosen people" of the Old Testament. They believed themselves to be elected by God. This election was predestined and America was their Promised Land. They were chosen by God and given the full power to do His will. This outlook provided self-justification for all Puritan persecutions such as the Salem witch trials that took place during 1692-1693.

Hawthorne does not show us the church as a place for worship or in Christian terminology the House of Christ. The church is part of a system where the priest is a conscience-stricken Dimmesdale. He is the respectable minister and an image of social hypocrisy. He looks powerful in the eyes of the public while he is so weak, begging his sin-partner, Hester for help: "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!" (177).⁵³ His religion cannot help him because he believes in the morbid Calvinistic view of God's wrath as he says, "The judgment of God is on me". The reply comes from Hester who rebelled against this religious system. She says, "Heaven would show mercy... hadst thou but the strength to take advantage of it" (177). Hester's strength is a result of her moral vision. She believes in a morality that is not clouded by any prescribed standards drawn by the Puritans. She never acknowledges her sin.

This example illustrates the idea of moral confusion in determination of who are the sinners or the saints, and the need for a rebellious act in order to achieve spiritual freedom. This rebellion is carried on against the background of both American and European historical

landscapes. Landscape becomes functional in Hawthorne's novels. It allegorically carries cultural bearings as it provides historical and geographical setting to this act of rebellion.

Olivia Gatti Taylor points out that Hawthorne's interest in spiritual matters led him to investigate religious material. She cited a list compiled by Marian Kesselring of the books borrowed by Hawthorne from Salem Athenaeum in the years 1828 and 1850. This list includes works written by Protestant theologians such as Thomas Fuller's *The Holy and Profane States*, and Francis Blackburne's *The Confessional or A Full and Free Inquiry into The Right... of establishing systematic Confessions and doctrines of Protestant Churches*.⁵⁴ Such readings helped Hawthorne to build the historical and cultural settings of his novels. He is interested in the psychological effects of the cold, confined and hostile environment of the Puritans on the individuals. He draws historical landscapes as pictorial images connecting the actual geographical features with imaginary elements.

Recently critics have engaged in a variety of allegorical levels of interpretation in *The Scarlet Letter*. The letter "A" which is the Puritan symbol of adultery is interpreted in different ways. Emily Budick suggests "A" refers to the word "Absolute" as the essence of the Puritan ideology, shifting the letter that is supposed to be the shame of adulteress to shameful Puritan practices, revealing the national shame.⁵⁵ Laura Doyle points out that Hawthorne is not preoccupied with the sin of adultery or his ancestors' crimes, but colonization itself. The allegorical interpretation ironically sets colonization, with all its ill practices, as the foundation of Anglo-Atlantic freedom, with the letter "A" as a code to mean "Across the Atlantic".⁵⁶

To complete Hawthorne's picture of the rebellion against oppressive evil forces, Hawthorne wrote his novel, *The Marble Faun*, after he himself crossed the ocean and travelled to the Old continent. *The Marble Faun* shows Hawthorne's resistance to adherence to any religious dogma. The story is narrated in Rome where characters belong to both American Puritanism and Roman Catholicism, but all are trapped in the same dilemma, facing the unspeakable horror of human history of crime and shame.

In both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*, landscapes are incorporated with artworks presenting a canvas for the moral quest. The art embroidery of the scarlet "A" meets the wide range of paintings and sculptures all over *The Marble Faun* in its European landscapes. Also Hawthorne is presenting the vision of the independent working creative artist woman as the core of his moral allegories of both novels. Following Hester's model, *The Marble Faun* shows another vision of the strong woman challenging the male control.

According to David Leverenz, “Hawthorne struggles with contemporary norms of manhood, especially his shame at not being a provider for his family in the 1840s”.⁵⁷ During the 1840s and 1850s, Hawthorne met and was a friend of many independent women who participated in the public realm, such as Elizabeth Peabody and Margaret Fuller. He also admired Fanny Fern’s novel, *Ruth Hall* (1855), which is the story of the triumph of a woman writer. He also had friendships with other women writers in Europe, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Grace Greenwood, and those in other professions such as Maria Mitchell, an astronomer, and Harriet Hosmer, a sculptor.⁵⁸ Like his female friends, Hawthorne’s female characters find a vocation outside their home and marriage boundaries.

Much of Hawthorne’s engagement with European landscapes is biographical. He used his personal experiences to give a full account of landscape descriptions while their allegorical content reflects his engagement with a global image of depicting forces of evil in man’s heart. Hawthorne’s European sojourn started on his arrival in England in 1853 for four years as the American consul to Liverpool till his return to America in 1860. Since his arrival in Europe, he cherished his time, exploring visual arts, especially during his stay in Manchester for six weeks and a year and a half in Italy.⁵⁹ Most of the artworks described in his novel have an impact on the fictional thematic dimension.

Hawthorne’s first encounter with European landscapes was a challenging experience. In France the fields covered with snow did not resemble New England’s brown fields or the green ones of England where he lived for five years. There were always comparisons between American and European landscapes. But Hawthorne was mainly interested in the relation of these landscapes to the past. He writes about his French experiences in his *French and Italian Notes*:

This morning we went again to the Duomo of the popes; and this time we allowed the custode, or sacristan, to show us the curiosities of it. He led us into a chapel apart, and showed us the old Gothic tomb of Pope lies beneath one of those beautiful and venerable canopies of stone which look at once so lightly and so solemn. I know not how many hundred years old it is, but everything of Gothic origin has a faculty of conveying the idea of age; whereas classic forms seem to have nothing to do with time, and lose the kind of impressiveness that arises from suggestions of decay and the past.⁶⁰

He devoted several pages in his notebooks to the description of the Cathedral and recorded his first impressions. Sophia also made notes about how they were happy to stay of Hotel du Loure. According to Raymond E. Hull, Hawthorne’s arrival in Rome was far from pleasant. Hawthorne and his family arrived “half-frozen”. Hawthorne described Rome in his notebooks:

Cold, mistiness, evil smells, narrow lanes between tall, ugly, meanlooking whitewashed houses, sour bread, pavements most uncomfortable to the feet, enormous prices for poor living, beggars, pickpockets, ancient temples and broken monuments with filth at base, and clothes hanging to dry about them, French soldiers, monks, and priests of every degree, a shabby population smoking bad cigars-these would have been some of the points of my description.⁶¹

He gathered the sense of the historical importance of the city. He later wrote in his notebook:

But I am in Rome, Rome, *Rome!* I have stood in the Forum, and beneath the Arch of Titus, at the end of the Sacra Via. I have wandered about the Coliseum, the stupendous grandeur of which equals my dream and hope... I have climbed the Capitoline and stood before the Capitol, by the side of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius... I have been into the Pantheon, whose sublime portico quietly rises out of the region of criticism into its own sphere... And I have been to St. Peter's! There alone in Rome is perpetual summer!⁶²

Hawthorne also visited the Church of the Capuchins where he saw the graves of long dead monks. Later he visited the gallery of the Palazzo Barberini where the portrait of Beatrice Cenci by Guido is. This painting immediately captured the imagination of Hawthorne who visited it frequently in an attempt to have a descriptive record of it. It later became the main theme of his *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne writes about his experience upon looking at the portrait:

Yesterday afternoon we went to the Barberini picture-gallery to take a farewell look at the Beatrice Cenci, which I have twice visited before since our return from Florence. I attempted a description of it at my first visit, more than a year ago, but the picture is quite indescribable and unaccountable in its effect, for if you attempt to analyse it you can never succeed in getting at the secret of its fascination. Its peculiar expression eludes a straightforward glance, and can only be caught by side glimpsers, or when the eye falls upon it casually as it were, and without thinking to discover anything, as if the picture had a life and consciousness of its own, and were resolved not to betray its secret of grief or guilt, though it were the full expression of it when it imagines itself unseen. I think no other such magical effect can ever have been wrought by pencil. I looked close into its eyes, with determination to see all that there was in them, and could see nothing that might not have been in any young girl's eyes; and yet, a moment afterwards, there was the expression- seen aside, and vanishing in a moment- of a being unhumanized by fate, and gazing at me out of a remote and inaccessible region, where she was frightened to be alone, but where sympathy could reach her. The mouth is beyond measure touching; the lips apart, looking as innocent as a baby's after it has been crying. The picture can never be copied.⁶³

Hawthorne's record of the portrait echoes all the themes of his *The Marble Faun*: guilt, crime, innocent, art and a remote historical landscape that lies deep in the past of humanity and continues to hunt human consciousness. Many of Hawthorne's impressions of art works were recorded in his notebook and later became part of his novel.

While travelling in Europe, Hawthorne met many American sculptors in Rome and Florence and he watched how famous Hiram Powers and Thomas Crawford tried to sculpt

statues of American politicians. Thomas Crawford (1831-1857) was in Rome, and was working on the design of his Virginia Washington Monument, the statue of a star of five rays, each ray with a statue of historic American figures such as Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson. The statue was to be surmounted by a plinth on which stands the statue of George Washington.⁶⁴

America was personified in different statues by American artists in Europe. As the American representative in England, Hawthorne watched how his nation embodied in its political foreheads, is represented in art and marble sculptures.⁶⁵ Also in Rome, Hawthorne and his family visited one of their acquaintances back in New England, William Wetmore Story, an American artist and writer who introduced Hawthorne to many other American artists in Rome. Hawthorne mentioned Story with another two artists: C.G. Thompson who painted Hawthorne's portrait in Boston and Maria Louisa Lander, who was to make a bust of Hawthorne, in his preface to *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne states in his preface that the unfinished Cleopatra bust in Story's studio was to be Kenyon's Cleopatra statue in the novel:

The author laid felonious hands upon a certain bust of Milton, and a statue of a pearl-diver, which he found in the studio of Mr. Paul Akers, and secretly conveyed them to the premises of his imaginary friend, in the Via Frezza. Not content even with these spoils, he committed a further robbery upon a magnificent statue of Cleopatra, the production of Mr. William W. Story, an artist whom his country and the world will not long fail to appreciate. (V)⁶⁶

Hawthorne also mentioned Paul Akers, the American sculptor, who accompanied him on a visit to St. Peter's. Hawthorne also visited many studios of American artists such as that of George Loring Brown, and that of Edward Bartholomew.

Hawthorne's travelling adventure and life in Europe was the material for *Our Old Home*, a collection of sketches dealing with English scenery, life, and manners published in 1863. While in Italy, Hawthorne kept a notebook that provided material for his final complete novel, which was published in England as *Transformation* and in America as *The Marble Faun* in 1860. These notes are full of sightseeing and art gallery descriptions. According to Deanna Fernie, Hawthorne's fictional treatment of artworks is echoing the eighteenth-century theory of sympathy, in which the beholder completes what the artist or the writer makes of a piece of art to the extent that it becomes a truism in his fiction. But this theory of response also troubled Hawthorne, for how does the author or the artist control his beholder's response if he or she leaves undecided conception on canvas?⁶⁷ Hawthorne directs our attention to the problem of interpretation as he is dealing with artworks. I believe he is doing the same in his panoramic presentation of landscapes. The Roman ruins are no different from Hilda sketches

and Donatello's bust or Hester's embroidery. Their fragmentary nature is the largest obstacle for the beholder. The idea of landscape and man as parallel to ruins and relics prevails in both novels, and art becomes a symbol of man's potential imagination throughout history.

The Marble Faun is all about crime, which is a reality since Adam's fall. The novel deals with the concept of crime in human history. Crime is reflected in paintings, sculptures, historical ruins and life. The characters have to live and deal with its consequences, resulted in moral confusion. The only way out of their moral estrangement is to find love and sympathy in the human heart. As John Michael writes:

The moral of the stones is that of both romance and history: each one reads according to his or her own lights and the knowledge of this is all the wisdom there is. This wisdom is to be found not in the stones themselves but in the connecting string, the ties of sympathy and a version, the narration thread constitutes interpretation.⁶⁸

Here, Hawthorne draws our attention to the reality of man's fall out of context of any religious dogma, regardless of whether it is fortunate or not. History and romance come together in the narrative where intellectual idealism faces evil. Donatello, the character who is allegorically depicted as a faun-like figure, is elevated by crime to a human condition of guilt. Helda, the angel-like figure is humanized by crime to be a person who experiences the grief and consequences of guilt. Her idealistic world is destroyed by Donatello's crime, yet she finds in her heart sympathy and forgiveness.

Hawthorne draws thematic parallels between fictional characters and famous paintings. *The Marble Faun* is inspired by Guido Reni's Beatrice Cenci. The thematic subject of the painting – incestuous crime and guilt – inspires the novel. This can also be seen in his descriptions of two towers. One tower is where Helda the American Protestant character resides. The other is Donatello's tower, the European Catholic character. In fact, their faiths signify the unity of the two worlds. There is no reference to any theological matters. The different cultural background of the characters emphasizes the dissatisfaction of the characters with their own environment. This is a strong motive for the moral quest. As Kenyon says, "Rome is not like one of our New England villages, where we need the permission of each individual neighbor for every act that we do, every word that we utter and every friend that we make and keep" (66). This simply highlights the sense of restless hearts seeking refuge somewhere else.

Helda resides in a high tower that contains a shrine to the virgin with a twenty-four-hour burning lamp. The lamp must be lit even at daytime as part of her duty. Helda appears dressed in white clothes and feeds a flock of white doves. Miriam remarks: "how like a dove

she is herself, the fair, pure creature! The other doves know her for a sister, I am sure” (30). Helda is a symbol of idealism of her American Puritan identity. She is the “New England girl, whose perceptions of form and expressions were wonderfully clear and delicate” (2). She wanders alone in an art gallery of the old masters, the classic painters of the Pre-Reformation past. With her purity of heart she tries to understand life as well as art by visiting the gallery where she allegorically encounters a different Catholic world. Yet she remains morally confused. At Kenyon's studio, Helda looks at Reni's sketch of St. Michael. She perceives this winged figure with a drawn sword, and a dragon at his feet as the most beautiful and divine figure because St. Michael turns his eyes away from the demon in a painful disgust. She thinks this is an image where evil is denied. But after the murder in the novel takes place she realizes that evil does exist so close to the human heart. As she paints a copy of Beatrice's painting she feels distressed and wonders if she herself is sustained with guilt.

This relation of the tower, art and an idealized character trapped in moral confusion occurs again in Donatello's tower. He is described as the innocent faun-like character who commits a crime. He lives in a tower that is more than six hundred years old. The place is so historically distinctive as to be visited by an English magician coming from a far distance just to pay the visit. But Donatello himself is unable to understand the value of this place. The tower was used as prison cells where a famous monk was imprisoned. Kenyon, addressing Donatello, remarks: “your tower resembles the spiritual experience of many a sinful soul, which nevertheless, may struggle upward into the pure air and light of Heaven at last” (158). Donatello and Kenyon climb the tower, passing a pair of owls which reside there in a forlorn room. Donatello's bedroom is full of artworks:

Several ugly prints, representing suffering of the Saviour and the martyrdom of the saints, hung on the wall; and behind the crucifix, there was a good copy of Titian's Magdalen of the Pitti Palace, clad only in the flow of her golden ringlets. She had a confident look (but it was Titian's fault, not the penitent woman's) as if expecting to win heaven by the free display of her earthly charms. Inside of a glass case appeared an image of the sacred Bambino, in the guise of a little waxen boy, very prettily made, reclining among flowers, like a Cupid, and holding up a heart that resembled a bit of red sealing wax. A small vase of precious marble was full of holy water. Beneath the crucifix, on a table, lay a human skull. (158).

Most of these artworks are connected to Catholic themes. Donatello put his finger in the holy water vase and recoiled in fear: “I have no right to make the sacred symbol on a sinful breast” (158). This reflects how he is morally confused. The skull itself that has been kept in his family for centuries is a work of art representing the skull of an unhappy knight who “loved the fountain lady and lost her by a bloodstain. He lived and died in sin upon him” (158). This

obsession with sin by the two characters Helda and Donatello, who belong to culturally different worlds, reflects a moral confusion that unites them.

At the top of the tower where Donatello and Kenyon stand, Hawthorne uses visual images to draw the majestic landscape allegorically to reflect doubts and uncertainty, such as: “ominous shadow from the clouds” (159). Donatello is unable to comprehend hope as illustrated in the green colour of a shrub growing at the very roof of the tower:

It was the only green thing there; and Heaven knows how its seeds had ever been planted, at that airy height, or how it had found nourishment for its small life in the chinks of the stones; for it had no earth, and nothing more like soil than crumbling mortar, which had been crammed into the services in a long past-age. (160)

Blinded by idealism, Kenyon exclaims, “The shrub has its moral, or it would have perished long ago... it is for your use and edification, since you have had it before your eyes all your lifetime, and now moved to ask what may be its lesson” (160). The shrub teaches Donatello nothing because he can see only an ugly worm that might have killed it. This scene shows the obsession with the conception of evil as a corroding force in life which is the very same idea originated by religious institutions.

The sense of loss of hope and joy in the above extract echoes the same effect of the Sylvan Dance scene as the music stopped when “the harp strings were broken, the violin out of tune”, and “the flautist out of breath” (53). What Hawthorne describes as the “Arcadia and the Golden Age” is the moment when the dancers resemble “satyrs, fauns, and nymphs, with Pan in the midst of them, had been disporting themselves in these venerable woods”. They immediately change into ordinary people “sheltered themselves in the weary commonplace of daily life”; this happens the moment that “the sylvan pageant had utterly disappeared” and the “merrymakers lingered among the trees” are gone. “The spell is broken” because the music stopped and the audience are left with “people’s gate of Rome—a tract where the crimes and calamities of ages, the many battles, blood recklessly poured out, and deaths of myriads have corrupted all the soil, creating an influence that makes the air deadly to human lungs” (53). Arcadia as the symbol of idealism disappears on the realization of evil on its soil and that man is no longer a perfect marble statue in a merry show but a fragmentary block of clay.

The notion of perfection and idealism is always associated with the softness and beauty of the marble Faun of Praxiteles, while reality of the falling man is embodied in Kenyon’s unfinished fragmentary bust, this bust made by the American artist to embody the obscure Italian Donatello. Hawthorne’s play with nationalities is only to connect the journey across the Atlantic between both the Old and the New worlds. It also reflects the moral quest

associated with this journey. The unfinished bust symbolizes the struggle of the artist, the writer and the fictional character to seek spiritual freedom. This journey in geography and history between the two worlds is also embodied in the novel landscape. The Trevi fountain scene takes us back to America with the mentioning of the one and thirty sister states, national prosperity and cleansing the national flag of stains which might suggest the slavery in American history. The fountain landscape occurs also in Donatello's family house, and this time is associated with European history. The ruined fountain at Donatello's family house of Monte Beni is a symbol of the decay of the ancient European family that owns it. The structure of this fountain represents a myth in which the water nymph abandons the source when it is poisoned by the bloodstain of the knight who was drinking from it. This same myth has come to be identified with the fall of Donatello. Crime ruined Donatello, the Faun-like figure himself. But metaphorically the ruin is that of any human encounter with crime. Donatello is the figure in-between humanity, the god of forest and animal spirit as all are symbolized by the faun.

The allegory of decay and transformation is connected to the idea of fragments. Hawthorne writes in his "Rappaccini's Daughter": "It might once have been the pleasure garden of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with rare art, but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments"⁶⁹. This shapes the theme of *The Marble Faun*. Ruined landscapes reflect the moral ruins in humanity and both American and European characters are left with fragments of truth about their moral quest. They can only reach a perception of this truth through human sympathy and Art. Art itself is a liberator of human imagination from the enclosure of spatial and time restraints, and most importantly race.

Paul Giles points out that *The Marble Faun* "emphasizes its transnational agenda by setting itself in Rome and organizing itself around elaborate dialogues between the values of American Puritanism and Italian Catholicism"⁷⁰. Hawthorne's feeling about Rome must have been different from England where there is so much of the incomprehensible sophistication of the unfamiliar. Hawthorne's Miriam is described to be the English of a blood relative connection to an Italian family. She is the hybrid of both England and Italy with the suggestion of an Anglo-Jewish origin. Her mysterious "mythical" race sets her as a romantic notion of the free soul that is detached from an earthly reality. She is set outside the spheres of our comprehension of nationality and geography. She resists idealism; she states that she

refuses to be associated with the image of Cleopatra, Kenyon's celebrated statue, saying, "I am not of her sisterhood" (78). Cleopatra's statue is made of marble, which is described thus:

Transitory language is pure, white, undecaying substance. It insures immortality to whatever is wrought in it, and therefore makes it a religious obligation to commit no idea to its mighty guardianship, save such as may repay the marble for its faithful care, its incorruptible fidelity, by warming it with an ethereal life. Under this aspect, marble assumes a sacred character; and no man should dare to touch it unless he feels within himself a certain consecration and a priesthood, the only evidence of which, for the public eye, will be the high treatment of heroic subjects, or the delicate evolution of spiritual, through material beauty. (82)

Marble is the material which suits perfectly the portrayal of beauty and heroism. It definitely suits the Egyptian queen with her "full Nubian lips, and other characteristics of the Egyptian physiognomy" and her "beauty shone out richer, warmer, more triumphantly beyond comparison" (76). But "she might spring upon you like a tigress, and stop the very breath that you were now drawing midway in your throat". Cleopatra is the enchanter Queen and the slave image. We are told that, "there was a great smoldering furnace deep down in the woman's heart" (76). She is an image of female sovereign subjugation.

Luther S. Luedtke points out such images of queens: Zenobia of Syria, Cleopatra of Egypt became popular in Western culture since 1835, and Hawthorne used these images of captivity to create his characters as either angels or demons like Hilda and Miriam. Both display strong emotional capacity which brings their defeat at last before male authority.⁷¹ Hilda the idealist is described as "the ethereal type, and incompatible with any shadow of darkness or evil" (77). While Miriam is described by Donatello who "was half startled" at seeing her, as a "dusky woman with long dark hair, who threw up her arms with a wild gesture of tragic despair, and appeared to beckon him into the darkness along with her" (23).

A combination of personal traits of both heroines may show us the way in which the symbolism of Hawthorne's womanhood is embodied in Cleopatra statue. Both women share their captivity of shame through the burden of Donatello's crime of passion and their suffering into a moral quest. But Cleopatra's statue points to a deeper presumption beyond the female-male relationship, to a wider notion of defying the patriarchal system that crushes and suppresses individuals. The cross-cultural and racial relationships throughout the novel move through time and space to present Hawthorne's nineteenth-century images of individuality. In this regard Cleopatra's womanhood is the artistic creativity of individual women artists at the time of Hawthorne. According to Kumiko Mukai, "Miriam's painterly art is closely intertwined with the values that Victorian bourgeois culture associated with Jewishness"⁷² According to Peter Gay, cited by Mukai, the "autonomy that nineteenth-century painters,

writers, or composers claimed was often achieved not in the face of bourgeois but with their aid".⁷³ Hawthorne's presentation of Miriam, according to Mukai, is coloured by "casual racism and anti-Semitism of most white Christians of his time... [Hawthorne's] description of the Jewish ghetto reveals his recognition of and repugnance toward Jewish people of that time", and this ghetto according to Griselda Pollock, cited in Mukai's argument is reflected in a sense of "ambivalent spectacle" or "tourist attraction" for American visitors of Europe".⁷⁴ According to this argument, then, Miriam's individuality is set as a symbol of alienation and deviation in an unorthodox manner, reflecting a cultural image that goes beyond what the Victorians consider typical of a feminist artist. This role of the feminist artist is defined by the Royal Academy as the "hegemonic definitions of bourgeois femineity as dependent and domestic" in contrast to "professional status contested emergent codes of masculine professionalism".⁷⁵

I believe Miriam's wealthy background sets her aside from commercial art in a market context, and drives her to a deeper representation of the role of a woman artist in Victorian Europe. She is an individual creativity seeking recognition beyond the restrains of an oppressive orthodox social system. She is the creative imagination set free over bonds of geography and European Victorian cultural recognition. She is the mysterious temptress for being the spirit of the exotic. She "let her fancy run off into wilder fables than any which German ingenuity or Italian superstition had contrived" (18). Miriam's deepest evaluation of art lies at the heart of Hawthorne's. It could be summed up with one word – "sympathy". All Miriam's works are self-portraits expressed in much sympathy and passion. Therefore they were accepted by patrons of modern art, despite the lack of merits. Mukai states that, "Hawthorne writes in his notebook that he likes Dutch and Flemish pictures, especially the works of Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, Paul Potter, and Teniers, because he feels 'human sympathies' as a result of viewing these pictures".⁷⁶

In her sketch of the Capuchin model, Miriam cannot feel any sympathy for him. This takes us to the idea of the fragmentation in our sympathetic readings of artworks and the Hawthorne landscape ruin image. In the following extract, the detachment from artworks is reflected in a fragmentary language with the mention of the detached skeletons of the catacomb. It is the ruins that cut apart any mode of communication when a lack of sympathy prevails during a struggle against evil:

Owing, it may be, to the moral estrangement-this chill remoteness of their position-there have come to us but a few vague whisperings of what passed in Miriam's interview that afternoon with the sinister personage who had dogged her footsteps ever since the visit to the catacomb. In weaving these mystic utterances into a continuous scene, we undertake a task resembling in

perplexity that of gathering up and piecing together the fragments of a letter which has been torn and scattered to the winds. Many words of deep significance, many entire sentences, and those possibly important ones, have flown too far on the winged breeze to be recovered... Of so much we are sure, that there seemed to be a sadly mysterious fascination in the influence of this ill-omened person over Miriam; it was such as beasts and reptiles of subtle and evil nature sometimes exercise upon their victims. (55)

Miriam's melancholic feelings are part of being disconnected from the others, which is, in a way, symbolized by the use of fragmentary sentences. But most importantly it signals the way she is being trapped in "evil passions" and "evil deeds". The catacomb is mentioned in this extract only to foreshadow the crime that is to happen. Miriam's connection to her evil oppressor is like the iron chain, "of which some of the massive links were round her feminine waist, and the others in his ruthless hand-or which, perhaps, bound the pair together by a bond equally torturing to each" (55). Her persecutor held her in a thralldom, which she escaped by another identity. Miriam states in the end, "It will be death!" (58), in other words, a final scene of decay and ruin to be so much identified with the broken skeletons of the Catacomb, a picturesque landscape of death.

Landscapes provide an essential way of locating the historical transformations of civilization and colonialism. In Hawthorne's fiction, they become part of the thematic dimensions. The Gothic architecture of the Square of Perugia in Rome surrounding the statue of Pope Julius reflects a view of history connecting different eras and exposing the struggle of humankind towards spiritual freedom. History gives Hawthorne perspective to spirituality and the question of ethical standards.

He connects allegorically the real crimes in human history with his fictional ones. The Italian Tarpeian Rock is the place where the Romans used to torture their traitors to death. It is the very place where Donatello and Miriam discuss their evil plans. The Tarpeian landscape is first approached by the characters through a road:

A long misty wreath, just dense enough to catch a little moonshine, floated above the houses, midway towards the hilly line, and showed the course of the unseen river. Far away on the right, the moon gleamed on the dome of St. Peter's as well as on many lesser and nearer domes... For it was from this point... that many famous Roman caught his last glimpse of his native city, and of all other earthly things. This is one of the sides of the Tarpeian Rock. (102)

We are told how encountering the Roman ruins leave us with "ambiguity" and "half-knowledge". Starting from the moonlit domes and houses' roofs and arriving at this dark spot of the "Traitor Leap", we are shown a metaphoric image of the course of history, coming to the spot where Roman political criminals were thrown from the "very summit on which stood the Senate House and Jove's Temple, emblems of the institutions which they sought to

violate. It symbolizes how sudden was the fall in those days from the utmost height of ambition to its profound ruin” (103). The image of St. Peter’s dome and Jove’s Temple says so much about the identity of the Roman, and in other words the human ruin, an identity that belongs to all eras of mankind’s history. The edge of “the ominous precipice” of this very scenery where Miriam and Donatello stood is the danger of what would be “a fatal fall”. This fall is that of “an overburdened heart” upon “those stones” (104). At this point the historic association of the landscape embraces Miriam as being unconsciously both “an actor and sufferer in the scene” (105). The allegorical significance of the Italian ruins is that crime continues as a decaying force in many generations. On the other hand, the statue of Julius III symbolically embraces Donatello and Miriam’s confession and their new mature humanitarian role in life. The different eras of the Italian civilization are connected allegorically with the character development of Donatello. Historical locations and Rome’s Capitoline Museum embrace Donatello’s sense of guilt, self-hatred, hopelessness and confession.

Gothic architecture is used by Hawthorne to add an atmosphere of fear and irrationality to the psychological conflict of guilt of his characters. Moreover, Udo Nattermann observes that Gothic elements in *The Marble Faun* reflect a cultural dimension. The novel deals with:

A cross-cultural encounter... the conflict between cultures. Approach and retreat-that peculiarly ambivalent response the Gothic invites-becomes the central cultural metaphor in the *Marble Faun*. The relationship of the American characters to their European friends and to the Italian environment is expressed in terms of a dialectic of repulsion and attraction, distance and nearness... The Gothic emotion of dread and – desire lies at its very heart.⁷⁷

For Nattermann, the relationship between humans and place is governed by Gothic elements of attraction and repulsion. Characters try to establish ties among each other as well as between themselves and artworks in a pattern of attraction and repulsion. For example, Miriam, who wants to be so close to Beatrice, says, “If I could only get within her consciousness! If I could but clasp Beatrice Cenci’s ghost, and draw it into myself I would give my life to know whether she thought herself innocent, or the great criminal since time began” (39). Hilda and Kenyon search for the Roman historical locations where they experience terror and amusement.

According to the geographers, places like the Italian ruins are considered landscapes of “Signatures of Sacred Space”, places that are associated with religious rituals and historical beliefs. The “architectural signatures” of such places transform the meaning of sacredness to

the space around it, connecting an everyday life scene to the cultural heritage of ancestry.⁷⁸ Such landscapes are sacred only because of the human rituals that removed them from the everyday concrete landscapes and repositioned them in everyday metaphoric levels of spiritual life. C. L. Salter observes that:

Each signature plays a particular role in the creation of the total image and, as such, contributes in a unique way to the analysis of field, a neighborhood, a street, a single building, an entire city, or a region in whatever space the cultural geographer is exploring. Signatures range from predominantly visual features such as settlement patterns, house types, gardens, or clothing, to more subtle manifestations, such as types of entertainment and cuisine. All of them share a common bond: they serve as cultural or individual hallmarks. And, these hallmarks enrich life just as they enrich literature.⁷⁹

This is the case with many historic and religious sites throughout *The Marble Faun*.

The uniqueness of such landscapes is what is meant by the word “signature”. Such uniqueness is represented by specific prototypes of human expression reflected in cultural landmarks. Hawthorne’s images of Italy reflect this very cultural uniqueness.

Sidney Moss, in his discussion of *The Marble Faun*, has pointed out that Hawthorne introduces Italy as being:

‘Venerable with threefold antiquity’, ‘Etruscan, Roman [and] Christian’... Hawthorne variously links Etruria to the Golden Age, to the Garden of Eden, and to Arcadia, by which analogies he identifies the region as prelapsarian and morally equivalent to Italy when-in his words-“Italy was yet guiltless of Rome” In contrast with Etruria, ancient Rome –“that old tract where the crimes and calamities of ages... have corrupted all the soil”-is identified as postlapsarian, the time when fallen man was evicted from Eden and wandered sinful and sorrowing without hope of redemption. In contrast with ancient Rome, modern Rome is identified with what Hawthorne calls “better civilization of Christianity”... Hawthorne continually reminds us of this ‘threefold antiquity’, of these three stages in Italy’s development. And these periods are represented by the three statues that are central to the novel. Praxiteles’ Faun represents Etruria, the statue of Marcus Aurelius represents pre-Christian Rome, and the statue of Pope Julius III represents Christianity.⁸⁰

Hawthorne presents the streets of Rome as “a shapeless confusion of modern edifices, piled rudely up with the ancient brick and stone, and over the domes of Christian churches, built on the old pavements of heathen temples” with “the edge of the desolate Forum (where Roman washerwomen hang out their linen to the sun)”, all this is not far in distance from where “rises the great sweep of the Coliseum, with the blue sky brightening through its upper tier of arches” (1). This cityscape of the blue sky and mountains and the lively sense of daily activities accompanied in the course of history is soon to be contrasted with the Roman ruins.

Frederick Crews has pointed out that: “Hawthorne’s attitude towards the past springs directly from more ‘primordial’ concerns; the history of the nation interests him only as it is metaphorical of individual mental strife” as he argues that Hawthorne’s interest in history is only as a means to investigate individual psychology.⁸¹ As we have seen, Hawthorne’s Rome

presented an embodiment of human experience and man's challenge in seeking spiritual freedom. No one can control or even predict the course of such a quest. Probably the nature of this moral quest is the reason behind why Henry James thought of *The Marble Faun* as a book that lacks authoritativeness in terms of atmosphere, as he states "that penalty of seeming factitious... which is always the result of an artist's attempt to project himself into an atmosphere in which he has not a transmitted and inherited property".⁸² But the novel is setting its landscapes allegorically, in which losing contact with reality is to be identified with the artist's creative imagination, especially as he was struggling to adjust with the European "other" experience. Hawthorne writes about his experience when he first settled in Rome:

I understand now the force of the story of Diogenes when asked the Conqueror, as the only favour he could do him, to stand out of his sunshine, there being such a difference in these Southern climes of Europe between sun and shade. If my wits had not been too much congealed, and my fingers too numb, I should like impressions, during the last fortnight; it would have shown up modern Rome in an aspect in which it has never yet been depicted. But I have grown somewhat acclimated and first freshness of my discomfort has worn off, so that I shall never be able to express how I dislike the place, and how wretched I have been in it; and soon, I suppose, warmer weather will come, and perhaps reconciles me to Rome against my will. Cold, mistiness, evil smells, narrow lanes between tall, ugly mean-looking, white-washed houses, sour bread, pavements most uncomfortable to the feet, enormous prices for poor living, beggars, pickpockets, ancient temples and broken monuments with filth... French soldiers, monks, and priests of every degree, a shabby population smoking bad cigars—these would have been some of the points of my description... old Rome does seem to lie here like a dead and mostly decayed corpse, retaining here and there a trace of the noble shape it was, but with a sort of fungous growth upon it, and no life but of the worms that creep in and out.⁸³

This passage shows a detailed description of Rome by a frustrated writer whose daughter Una has taken the "Roman fever".⁸⁴ But it reflects Hawthorne's preoccupation with the theme of decay and ruin. The old Rome is more than a cityscape that no longer exists but the glory and joy that is no more. Rome today is a representation to history and the fallen empires of the past. It has come in Hawthorne's fiction to represent connoting evil and decay. But this very city provided Hawthorne with the setting that has come to be a main character that accompanies the characters. This development in the use of landscape helped him to present reality in his Italian romance.

Whether it is Salem or Rome the landscape offers a vision of reality of a fallen world that is timeless, universal and will forever call upon the human heart to face the past with its crimes, to expose the shame in the history of mankind. John Gatta states that Hawthorne's fiction implies historiographic views at different levels. First, the romances are "concerned with moral and spiritual progress" of the individual human heart. Second, the texts metaphorically involve the progress of America in social history and increase to "a

mythopoetic level the traditional apocalyptic imagery of light and garden iconography and in doing so imply a Judeo-Christian providential historiography".⁸⁵ The religious elements connected to his landscapes indicates the ambivalent progress of history. This history is dominated with the culture of tyranny and the moral quest for freedom. According to Steven Frye:

Hawthorne makes use of framing devices, introductions, metafictional and intersexual tale sequences, to embody ambiguity and thematic polyvalence. In romances such as *The House of Seven Gables*, *The Marble Faun*, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne is a master practitioner of the ambiguous gothic, wherein the 'Actual and the Imaginary', the natural and the supernatural, each offer potential explanations for events within the narrative. In his sense, because of deliberate intent and literary practice, Hawthorne's romances, his long fiction and romantic tales, can be seen early examples of aesthetic dialogism.⁸⁶

Hawthorne's landscapes reflect this sense of history as Hawthorne's account of the seventeenth-century Salem Custom House is foreshadowing the autobiographical account of the nineteenth-century Custom House. The Italian Tarpeian Rock is where Miriam and Donatello discuss their present plans within the course of the novel. The Roman history is metaphorically uncovering the characters' evil plans. This sense of history goes beyond the materialistic levels of categorizing historical facts, into the realm of spiritual approach to the experience of knowing. Hawthorne's symbols do not only rely on the solid reality of historical eras but also take us higher into a realm of phenomenal spirituality. Michael T. Gilmore has pointed out that Hawthorne

labours to find some way to check the intrusions of legibility, while at the same time he strives to fashion a mediated or indirect mode of revelation that respects the need to 'be true', as the text has it without surrounding the right to privacy. Another way of framing this, which suggest something of Hawthorne's proleptic insight, would be to say that against the tyranny of knowing, he champions distanced and guarded forms of disclosure... He [Hawthorne] turns his searchlight on the Puritans from a present already conscious of privacy's value. And he gestures toward a future where new technologies of protected transparency were incubating in response to modernity's apparent chaos.⁸⁷

The "tyranny of knowing" is when the public and private domains are no longer following the legibility and transparency that characterizes cultural practises. Characters become merely representative of a bygone oppressive community. His female rebel could not possess the reality of femininity of his historical Salem. He defies the everyday reality by taking us into the reality-imagination in-between world of romance.

We may find throughout the two novels that fictional stories and human history come together and are presented equally in art and fiction along the fictional story timeline. Hence a brook, a forest, a castle and an art gallery are changed forever in Hawthorne's fiction. Each of these landscapes demands a new understanding of our engagement with its aesthetic

experience. Such engagement should enable us to understand how the picturesque images, architectures and geographies of Hawthorne's landscapes are shifted in his fictional context into an image of wider spheres of mankind's history.

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⁶ A. Robert Lee, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays* (London: Vision Press, 1982), p. 49.

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Chapter Three

The Colonized Streets:

Al-Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*

1- *Al-Nahda* and Narrative Innovations

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of the novel in its primary stages as a major genre of the Arabic literary Renaissance, known in the Arabic world as *al-Nahda*. At this time, narrative form began to be considered by Arabic writers as a new mode of writing, connecting Arab writers and their readers. Through this connection, changing ideas could be explored. There are many reasons for this new narrative development: the spread of secular and scientific education, the rise of national movements pervading the Arab world as a reaction to recent colonial practices, the impact of the West more broadly in the region, and the Arabic writers themselves, who sought to mobilise public support for social, political, religious and educational reforms.

While many Arabic writers of the mid-late nineteenth century were consciously seeking cultural and political change, some believed in a revival of classical literary techniques to be the first step of a new literary renaissance. This view was reflected in the influence of the long-standing Arabic *maqama* tradition upon the composition of novels produced at the time. Muhammed al-Muwaylihi (1858-1930) is recognised as a significant figure in the development of modern Arabic prose fiction.¹ The path that al-Muwaylihi chose was to adapt this classical technique, marrying it with stylistic borrowings from contemporary Western narrative. The resulting allegorical novel was a new literary form that enabled him, and others, to revive classical techniques in Arabic literature such as the *maqama* while also inventing a new medium for reflecting the social ills of his day. The allegorical novel is considered by some Arabic scholars as the first prominent attempt to write an Arabic novel.² Other writers chose to depart entirely from Arabic literary tradition and try their hands at Western narrative technique. This was the choice of Khalil Gibran when he came to write his short fiction.

These two trends in the early developments of the Arabic novel – the revival of classical traditions such as the *maqama* and the break with these traditions – are unified by

deployment of the allegorical mode. The study of allegory is neglected to some extent in Arabic critical literature, perhaps due to the fact that this is a Western term, arising in part from cultural traditions in which secular and religious meanings diverged. However, as this discussion will clearly demonstrate, allegory offered an important vehicle for writers of social criticism in the nineteenth-century Arabic world. The cultural influence of allegory in Western literature is comparable with that in Arabic literature. Allegorical style enabled Arabic writers to move beyond the limitations of narrating the historical facts of conflicted worlds, travelling from one city to another, protesting against what they perceived as the dark forces of political and religious oppression, and trying to draw new social realities.

These nineteenth-century Arabic literary innovations are a topic of ongoing debate among Arabic scholars, who argue the extent to which the Arabic novel originated in Western literary borrowings, or is strongly rooted in pre-Islamic narrative literature.³ The significance of earlier narrative modes was in turn overlooked for centuries, largely due to an emphasis on poetry as the dominant Arabic literary genre up to the nineteenth century. The broad consensus within the literary historiography suggests that the rise of the Arabic novel in the nineteenth century was for the same reasons as the rise of the novel in Europe: a result of intellectual and social changes and global cultural interaction, including colonial occupation.

Faruq Khurshid has traced the fictional roots of Arabic literary history and confirmed the accumulation of a wide range of written fictional texts.⁴ He points out that the analysis of the rise of the Arabic novel as an outcome of the influence of translated European literature on nineteenth-century Arabic writers overlooks a long fictional tradition, which dates back to Pre-Islamic storytellers⁵. Khurshid further points out that Arabic scholars have focused on studying all types of Arabic verse within their intellectual and historical contexts over centuries. However, the study of prose has been limited to a small range of literary forms such as rhymed prose (*saja*), proverbs, speeches (*khutab*), argumentative letters (*rasail*) and bureaucratic letter-writing (the chancery).⁶ Khurshid hypothesizes the existence of a body of lost prose writing in the pre-Islamic era and argues that Arabic historians must have discarded whatever did not meet their aesthetic standards. Apart from this supposed Pre-Islamic lost heritage, Khurshid traces the roots of the fictional narrative to all modes of prose writing in the successive ages of Arabic history, including religious homilies in mosques, historical accounts of battles, biographies, folk sagas, and imaginative folk epics and tales such as *Fi Bilad al-Sindbad* and *Kitab Alf Laylah wa-laylah* (The Thousand Nights and a Night).

The complexity of this discussion is further reflected in a point made by Shawqi Dayf, who states that the problem of underestimating prose heritage in Arabic literature is due to the fact that pervasive semantic changes occurred throughout the unwritten narrations of Pre-Islamic Age storytellers, which were transmitted orally.⁷ This theory of the evolution of the Arabic novel as emerging from an antecedent Arabic narrative is supported by recent Arabic scholars such as Gamal al-Ghitani and Sabry Hafez.⁸

Aside from this debate concerning the origins of the Arabic novel, the interest of nineteenth-century *al-Nahda* in translating European literature, and their concomitant Western literary borrowings, arguably affected literary innovation in epistemological, philosophical and political ways. These in turn also contributed to the development of the Arabic novel.

Matti Moosa argues that Arab writers found suitable models for their own new work in the translation of European novels partly because, in his words, they have “limited fictional models to build on and since there was a lack of knowledge and technique, a lack of incentive”⁹. Moosa also points out that:

Most of these translations were from French because of the ever increasing influence of French culture in Egypt, through Muhammad Ali’s contact with France, and in Syria, through the work of the French Jesuit missions. After the establishment of the Syrian Protestant college (the present American University of Beirut), Arab writers began to translate from English as well. The translations, most of which were of second-rate romantic fiction, found a ready audience – although they were anathematized by many Arab traditionalists as ‘immoral’.¹⁰

According to Moosa, the immigrant Christian Lebanese writers in Egypt, who fled the Ottoman massacre of 1860, were engaged in journalism and translating European fiction, most of which were hasty and cheap translations and were rejected by some scholars for nourishing dishonourable affections. Hence a rivalry emerged which led to intensified control of the literary field and this motivated a revival of the *maqama* tradition by Egyptian writers.¹¹

Translations of Western fiction not only influenced Arabic literature and the development of the Arabic novel. They also helped to change the Arabic language. This is reflected in the many words and forms and themes borrowed from the West. Moreover, scholars such as Andre Lefevere comment that translation into Arabic in the nineteenth century “can tell us about the changes in the self-image that Arab culture underwent”.¹² This may be reflected in the Arabic encounter with the European Other, with all its cultural bearings, which contributed, at least indirectly, to the new Arabic Renaissance of the nineteenth century.

The *maqama* rests at the heart of the theoretical debate on the rise of the Arabic novel. It represents the presence of an indigenous traditional literary form that dates back to the Arabic Middle Ages literature within the newly emerging Arabic novel. The decision by al-Muwaylihi to draw on the *maqama* tradition in writing *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, demonstrates his leading role as an innovator of Arabic narrative writing. His acknowledgement of the importance of the *maqama* in Arabic culture is evidence that he set out to resist full adherence to Western literary borrowings. At the same time, the *maqama* became a nineteenth-century literary mode in which he and others could articulate a modern social critique through the newly developing fictional genre.

As Mohamad Salah Omari observes, the *maqama* has thus had a dual role in influencing the development of the Arabic Novel. Firstly, it gives Arabic writers a shared cultural “authenticity” and, secondly, it enables them to challenge the “European versions of the novel” in the process of developing a new Arabic narrative form. This is due to the domestic nature of *maqama* as a mode of narrative which belongs to the cultural traditions of different parts of the Arab world. Omari sets his argument within the context of the relationship between development of the Arabic novel and the rise of Arabic nationalism.¹³ The emergence of this important literary adaptation cannot be separated from the complex matrix of cultural tradition, national identity and social critique that was articulated in al-Muwaylihi’s *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* at this time.

2- The *Maqama*: A Historical Overview

The *maqama* (plural *maqamat*) is a form of literature categorized between poetry and prose, written in rhymed prose (*saja*). The meaning of the word *maqama* is “to stand” in a discussion addressing people. *Maqama* comes to mean “assembly”. For centuries, the people of the Arabic world were accustomed to assembling together at public places, such as markets, and listening to the recitation of poems and other forms of literary expression. The *maqama* writer would position his narrator, traditionally named Isa Ibn Hisham, within different locations where he would address a crowd, telling of his adventures. The *maqama* presents a street-picture that reflects the culture of medieval Islamic countries. In every episode of his adventures, the narrator meets merchants, clerics, peasants, sultans (kings), scholars, and poets. He travels to the great cities of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, and others. Some

of these cities were used as the titles of the *maqama*, such as: Mosul, Basra, Samara, and Baghdad.

The *maqama* was invented by Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani (969-1007), born in Hamathah in Iran, of Arabic ethnic origin. His *maqamat* are a collection from the tenth century of 400 episodic stories, only 52 of which have survived. These *maqamat* are short narratives full of colourful escapades and encounters recounted by the archetypal narrator Isa bin Hisham. They are also sources of information on Arabic poets, scientists and the treatment of various subjects in Islamic theology. The main character is the imaginary adventurer Abu al Fatih al Askandarani whose sense of humour makes him a lovable personality, and a very smart one, who overcomes life's hardships. A century later, Muhammad al-Qasim al-Hariri (1054-1122), born in Basra in Iraq, wrote his collection, *Al Hariri Maqamat* (known as *The Assemblies of al-Hariri*). It consists of 50 anecdotes written in stylized rhymed prose. It was used as a textbook for rhetoric and lexicography, and its popularity was so widespread that it was customarily memorized by scholars of the age from Damascus and Baghdad, the main capitals of the then-Islamic political state, to al-Andalous in Spain. It influenced writers such as the Jewish author in Spain, Solomon Harizi, who wrote a collection of *maqamat* in Hebrew.¹⁴ Due to the scope of its popularity, some scholars have drawn an analogy between European types of fiction, particularly the picaresque, and the Arabic *maqama*. Shawqi Dayf, for example, states that the *maqama* was introduced to Europe as a result of intellectual interrelations between East and West in medieval times. He points out that the Al Hariri *maqamat* were translated into Latin, German, and English. Dayf also links the Spanish rogue novel to the *maqama* on the basis of similarities between the style of the Spanish picaresque and the mischievous fictitious characters of Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari of Badi al-Zaman and Abu Zayd al-Saruji in the *maqamat* of al-Hariri. Fakhri Abu al Saud believes that the *maqamat* of Badi al-Zaman occupies as crucial a place in Arabic literature as that held by works of Addison and Steele in English literature. This parallel can be traced to literary qualities, such as the individualistic portrayal of the characters, the recognition of social consciousness as a part of the overall tone of the work, technical use of artistic devices, and unity of thought.¹⁵ Such views may shed light on the importance of this genre in Arabic literature.

In order to demonstrate the structure and nature of the *maqama*, I provide the following extract: "The *Maqama* of Armenia XXXVI". This is a full rendition of one of the *Maqamat of Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani* translated by W. J. Prendergast in 1915:

Isa Ibn Hisham related to us and said: When I was returning from trading with Armenia, the desert guided us to its children and we stumbled on them upon the outskirts thereof. They

made our camels kneel down in that land of the ostrich, while they cleared our provision bags, and eased our camels of their burdens, and we remained all day in the hands of the band. The thong held us bound in groups and our horses were forcibly tied up, until night followed up with its darkness and the Pleiades extended its rays.

Then they went in the direction of the hinder part of the desert and we betook ourselves to the front thereof, and thus we continued till the beauty of the dawn arose from behind the veil of modesty, and the sword of the morning was drawn from the sheath of darkness. But the sun arose upon nought except hair and skin. We ceased not to be in perils, averting their hindrances, and in the wastes traversing their surface, till we arrived at Merágha. And each one of us attached himself to a companion and took a road. There came unto me a youth with wretchedness apparent upon him and an old worn-out garment over him, surnamed Abul Fath al- Iskanderi ... Then we journeyed on till we came to a village, and we begged food of its inhabitants. So a young man from among the people hastened to his house and brought us a large bowl whose utmost capacity milk had filled. We sipped it until we finished it. Then we asked them for bread, but they refused it except on payment of the price. Al-Iskanderí asked: 'What aileth ye that ye are generous with the milk but refuse the bread except on payment?' The boy answered: 'This milk was in a large vessel and a mouse fell into it. Therefore we give it as alms to travellers.' Al-Iskanderí exclaimed: 'Good God!' and he seized the bowl and smashed it. Then the boy shouted: 'Alas the loss! Alas my spoilation!' Then did our flesh creep, our stomachs were turned and we got rid of what we had eaten. And I said: 'This is the reward for what we did yesterday.' And Abul Fath Iskanderi incited saying:

O soul be not squeamish, for the hardy hath no qualms, He who associates with Time eats, the while, fat and lean. Therefore wear for one season for the new, and put on for another the old.¹⁶

The style of *maqama* as in the typical example above is a highly ornamental language which employs simile and metaphor, with a loose episodic structure. Having in mind that each *maqama* inscribes a different event and theme, the work may be seen as a mere collection of brief narratives, lacking genuine unity. Humour is a major characteristic of the *maqama* with an educational purpose residing behind it. In some *maqamat* the narrator appears in the role of a preacher, whenever the topic is about religion and entails a debate against an atheist. Some *maqamat* have animals as their central figures such as “The *Maqama al Asadiyya*” (The Lion *Maqama*), in which the author provides a detailed description of the lion’s process of growing and the various names in Arabic attached to it. The same applies to “*Maqama al-Hamadania*” when the full knowledge of the Arabian horse is given for educational purposes.

Late medieval *maqama* appeared again after the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258, but they were mere imitations of al Hariri *maqama*, lacking the picaresque descriptions of the rough life of the streets, which is the primary literary mode of this genre. Yet despite artistic limitations some of these *maqamat* introduced the development of travel literature. This point can be exemplified in the case of Ibn al-Kazaruni *maqama*, in which he gives a detailed description of Baghdad as a ruined city. The narrator takes a journey from Tabriz in Iran to Baghdad. When he arrives there he meets one of the natives and asks him about the city. This person describes what the city used to be, the court of the caliph and the feasts to be

held there. The story concludes with Quranic verses that the two characters will lead a God-fearing life. The greatest significance of this work is its realistic account of thirteenth-century Baghdad. From the fourteenth century up to the nineteenth century *maqama* was of little literary value and any rhymed prose writings including the oral argument (*munazara*) were named as *maqama*.¹⁷ Their topics continued to vary between religious accounts, as in eulogizing the life of the Muslim Prophet, or secular accounts, portraying agricultural or erotic themes.

In modern Arabic literature and specifically in the nineteenth century, a number of Arabic writers revived the *maqama* genre: Ahmad al-Barbir (1747-1811), Niquala al-Turk (1763-1828), Nasif al-Yaziji (1800-1871), Ahmed Fairs al-Shidyaq (1804-1887), and Hafiz Ibrahim (1872-1932). But according to the mainstream Arabic scholars, the *maqama* works of all these writers were unsighted imitation of medieval Arabic *maqamat*.¹⁸ As Mossa states, al-Yaziji *maqamat* are anachronistic in nature because of their “blindly imitative use of pre-Islamic and Islamic settings and themes”, while al-Shidyaq’s *maqamat* are autobiographical with an absence of plot and an unrealistic portrayal of the characters’ sentiment. These declines in narrative structure and content gradually led to the general inadequacy of the form. It is only with al-Muwaylihi’s *maqama* that the successful revival of the traditional genre emerged, as a modern modified form of a fictional romance narrative, described by Moosa as a “genuine effort to create a literary mode in the Western manner”.¹⁹

The success of al-Muwaylihi in this regard, however, is not merely due to his textual inventiveness. More crucially, the success of his contribution to the emergence of the Arabic novel is due to the fact that his work flourished in the context of open encounter with colonialist Europe, reflecting the spirit of *al-Nahda*.

3- The Colonized Streets: Al-Muwaylihi’s *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*

The current study discusses *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* as a social critique in relation the importance of setting and urban landscape. A clear aim of the text is to give voice to the colonized Egyptians as they encounter the Western tourists in everyday situations in Cairo. After its initial exposition, the narrative then takes the reader to Paris to show how Cairo, as a representation of the East, is deceptively exhibited through a colonized presentation. *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* sets out to remedy the orientalist European bias by offering an account of a

middle-eastern cultural encounter with a Western city, as described through the eyes of the Egyptian characters.

The fictional characters of the text move through actual places rich in history. Streets and buildings in both Cairo and Paris are conveyed by al-Muwaylihi's narrator Isa. The urban landscape of Cairo shows a British colonial obsession with military force and administration, with the aim of gaining control for external aims. At the same time, the novel sets out to show how corrupt Egyptian political and religious systems imposed domestic oppression and materialistic exploitation on its people. The portrait of the urban landscape of Cairo shows the rhythm of life in a colonized era. Allegorically, however, the author goes beyond the nineteenth century to show the history of a nation caught up in a succession of foreign invasions. Hence the character of Pasha, an Ottoman descendant, plays the role of interlocutor of the ever-present past: a living past that can be seen in the streets and the architecture of the historical buildings.

The author Mohammadd al-Muwaylihi was born in 1858. He was educated in a school run by the Jesuit order for the aristocrat class. His father Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi was a famed journalist and the founder of the publishing house *Jamiyyat al-Maarif* which produced many works, including the dictionary *Taj al-Arus* and the *Rasail of al-Hamadhani*. According to the biographical account of Abid al-Nasir Muhammad al-Saiid, al-Muwaylihi met many of his father's intellectual friends, among whom were Jamall al-din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduha.²⁰ Both figures were influential Islamic religious reformers. Mohammad's education and encounter with intellectual figures helped him to establish the ideological bases for his criticism of such fundamental institutions as al-Azhar in his *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham* in which he advocates the modernity of Islam in the way of rejecting the *taqlid* (the unquestionable imitation of traditional interpretations). By ridiculing the materialistic side of al-Azhar *ulama*, al-Muwaylihi shows a refusal of their dogma and a resistance to their religious authority. His education enabled him to participate in the nineteenth-century movement of Islamic reforms, which aimed at ending superstitions and misunderstanding of religious texts.

In 1882, he became a clerk in the Ministry of Justice only for a short time, as he was arrested distributing a leaflet titled "Al-Janna tahtazilal al suyuf" ('Paradise Under the Shadow of Swords'), written by his father on the behalf of the nationalists led by Ahmad Urabi in a riotous revolt against British occupation. He was put on trial before military court and condemned to death but with the help of his father's influential friends and, because of

his youth, the sentence was commuted to exile. He joined his father in Italy and travelled to many European countries.

Al-Muwaylihi's life in Europe was a rich experience that added greatly to his artistic skills as both a journalist and fiction writer. He studied Latin, Italian and French. He contributed to his father's many publications in France and England such as: *Al-Ittihad* (The Union) newspaper and *Al-Khhlafa and Al-Anba* newspaper (The news of the political regime run by the Caliph). He also assisted Jamal ad- Din al-Afghani in the publication of *Al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*. Al-Afghani (1838-1897) is the prominent political activist and the founder of the Islamic Modernism movement in the nineteenth century. Such experiences must have shaped al-Muwaylihi's outlook concerning his views towards the Pan-Islamic movement. In Istanbul where his father was appointed a member of the Education Council, al-Muwaylihi transcribed the *Risalat al-ghufrann* (The Epistle of Forgiveness) by the famous Arabic poet Abu al-Ala al-Maari.²¹ He was a poet who affected al-Muwaylihi in different ways, as is reflected in the numerous quotes of his poetry inserted in al-Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*.

In 1887, at the end of five years of exile, al-Muwaylihi returned to Cairo and occupied some temporary jobs. In 1898 he assisted his father in producing *Misbah al Sharq* (The Lamp of the Orient) newspaper, where he wrote *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* besides many articles dealing with political topics: the British occupation, the religious reform movement, Oriental and Western customs and nationalism.

To evaluate al-Muwaylihi's contribution to Arab nationalism as a movement, we need to see this in the context of the age with many factors at play. This period was dominated by the reign of Muhammad Ali and the Arabic revolution. The political turmoil at this time affected the educational system. Moreover, Arabic language became a significant factor. Journalism also played a vital role in combining these factors together. In the field of journalism, al-Muwaylihi's family played a very distinctive leading role. Al-Muwaylihi's revival, defence and perfect demonstration of Arabic language, as well as his long established career in journalism, show his support for Arab nationalism in the way of carrying on his social criticism. Arab nationalism emerged in the nineteenth century as a struggle for rights and independence against imperialism through the establishment of a possible political and economic entity that could resist Western powers. According to John Marlow, Arabic nationalism, a "domestic movement", can be seen as a reaction to Western powers, which developed out of a growing consciousness of a common interest and a common tradition within the Arab world.²² The beginning of Arab nationalism can be dated back to the

Bonaparte occupation of Egypt in 1798. This event exposed the Ottoman Empire to the cultural influences of the Western world, in particular Western liberalism. Marlow states that Western liberalism and Islam modernization are the main factors of developing Arab nationalism. Liberalism was expressed in terms of parliament democracy. Islamic modernism was an attempt at reimplementation of the principles of Islam in restated Islamic interpretations for a new way of life to face European influences.²³

The connection of Islamic modernization with democratic resistance goes back to the early Arab Muslim Rashidun Caliphate, the Rightly Guided, who attributed the duty of the ruler to serve the will of the public. And the public had the right to resist the ruler.²⁴ Unlike other Muslim historical eras, there was no divine right attributed to the ruler. The revival of this fundamental Islamic principle plays a role in the nationalist movement.

Western liberalism expressed in European ideologies influenced Egypt during French and British occupations. Such influences were very observable in the reign of Muhammad Ali who was the Vassal of the Ottoman Sultan and then became independent from the Sultan in 1834. Despite the fact that he was an Albanian officer, he had the ambition to lead an Arab Empire. He ruled Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine and Hejaz which included the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. But he lost all these states except Egypt because of later political development engineered by the British.

Muhammad Ali's policy in Egypt was to build bridges with the West by hiring European experts to plan for the modernization of Egypt. Foreign influences made their way in the Arab world through the Christian missionaries. Historical sources indicate that Ibrahim Pasha (Muhammad Ali's son and governor of Syria) changed many regulations to encourage both the Catholic missions which had been in Syria since the seventeenth century and the new current Protestant missionaries. At the same time he established state schools for Muslims as part of an Arabization policy. In all these missions and state schools the language of instruction was Arabic. Textbooks were printed in Arabic from the Government Press in Cairo. Arabic was the language of instruction in all science studies except law, which was taught in French. Up to 1882, education was free. This may explain the huge number of literary and scientific publications of Arab authors during the Renaissance of the nineteenth century. The scientific publications were in mathematics and astronomy, medicine and pharmacy, and the law and jurisdiction.

In fact the roles of the Arabic language in education and Islamic reform were all connected in one way or another as a way of facing European regional invasion. This can be

seen in the various contributions of nineteenth-century intellectuals such as Rifa al-Tahtawi whose publications express the spirit of the Arabic Renaissance. Rifa al-Tahtawi was considered to be the first historian of Egypt. His book *Anwar Twfiq al-Jalel Fi Akbar Musar Watwtheq Bani Ismael* (Guided by the Light of God to Document the News of Egypt and the Offspring of Ismael), traced the broad history of Egypt, the European discoveries of Egyptian archaeology. He dedicated the second part of the book to the life of the Muslim prophet. He also was a prominent linguist with many publications in Arabic linguistics and grammar and in education planning for both boys and girls.²⁵ Apart from being an historian and taking a leading role as an Islamic reformist, al-Tahtawi's interest in Arabic linguistics and grammar was a further reflection of his battle against European influences.

With al-Tahtawi and al-Muwaylihi, many Arabic writers confronted the British campaign against the Arabic standard language.²⁶ According to Abd al-Rahman al-Rafii, the British occupation of Egypt resulted in a decline in education. The British had put an end to free education, cancelled the plans of building new schools and adopted the English language to be the language of instruction in all schools instead of Arabic.²⁷

In Egypt, the British made many attempts to replace standard Arabic with the Egyptian colloquial language (al-lugha al-amayah). William Willcocks (1852-1932), the British civil engineer who built the first Aswan Dam, talked of the creativity of Egyptian inventions and claimed that the standard Arabic language was the main obstacle for them. He argued that writing Egyptian books in the Egyptian colloquial language would far improve their creativity. Another British colonial figure, Selden Willmore, who wrote a pedagogical book about the Egyptian colloquial language, *The Spoken Arabic in Egypt*, advocated the use of colloquial language in the written form as the only vital and dynamic language compared with what he called the difficult and static standard Arabic.²⁸ This was a colonial perspective which was, arguably, designed to position English as the authoritative lingua franca of the day.

Such British claims were the motivation behind the establishment of the Academy of Arabic Language in 1892 by Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Twfeq al-Bakri, Hamza Fatihallah and many others. Moreover, as Yusuf Ramitsh states: the idea of an Egyptian university, run by Egyptians, was ridiculed for many decades before the nationalist group, who collected the necessary private funds, inaugurated it. Al-Muwaylihi attended the opening event of the first Egyptian University in 1908. Establishing this university was in defiance of the British Consul-General, the Earl of Cromer, who had come

under attack by Egyptian nationalist activists in the late nineteenth century. He had set up a system of education which gave a selective group of Egyptians access to full education, including foreign language training, particularly in English, while the majority of people were only taught basic literacy in local schools.²⁹ The system also involved sending university students to study abroad in England and France. In the higher education context, Cromer attempted to direct the advocates of the Arabic educational movement towards an international curriculum of study. But the opening of the new Egyptian university in 1908 signalled the gathering strength of the nationalist movement. That same year, the nationalists managed to replace English with Arabic as the language of instruction in schools.³⁰ This indicates that the Arabic language reflects a significant spectrum of Arabic nationality. As the language of the Quran, which is considered the authoritative linguistic source, it was regarded as having an important role in creating a sense of unity needed by the emerging nation.

Al-Muwaylihi's family's contribution to both the revival of the Arabic linguistics and literature and Arabic nationalism is expressed in their leading role in Egyptian journalism, as closely allied with significant events in the wider history of publishing in Egypt. The first printing machine was brought to Egypt by the French in 1798. But its print production stopped after the French troops left Egypt. In 1821, Muhammad Ali established the Bolaq Press. During the following decades several small publishing houses appeared, such as the Coptic Press in 1860 which was called later al-Watan Press (Homeland Press), Wadi al-Nile, owned by Abu Saud Afindi in 1860, and Jamaet al-Maarif al-Musria (The Egyptian Marriif Publishing House), established by Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi in 1868.

Al-Muwaylihi's Bolaq Press publishing house was the busiest of them, with a steady publication output.³¹ In particular, Al-Muwaylihi's press had a significant role in the revival of Arabic literary heritage through the publication of old Arabic manuscripts such as *Al Mathal al-Sair (The Public Proverb)* of Ibn Athir, *Taj al-Lugha and Sahah al-Arabia (The Crown of Language and Arabic Dictionary)* of Al-Jawahari, and *Faqih al-Lugha (Philology of the Language)* of Thalibi. According to the orientalist Charles Adams who translated works of Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, al-Muwaylihi established the first Arabic Renaissance Society, established in 1876 and carrying the name Jameat al-Maarif. Adams' statement was also supported by Arab scholars like Muhammad Kalifa al-Tunisi.³²

Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi's society received the patronage of the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail Pasha who reigned 1863-1879. The Khedive's son, Muhammad Twafiq Pasha, was in charge of the society, which received popularity and expanded rapidly to include 940

members after only two years of establishment. The members were representative of many classes of the Egyptian community such as al-Azhar ulamas like Sheik Mustafa al-Urosi, owners of Publication Houses like Mustafa Afindi, merchants like Muhammad al Muwayli's uncle Abd al-Salam al-Muwaylihi, significant political figures and prominent poets like Mahmoud Sami el-Baroudi.³³

Through the Bolaq Press and the society Muhammad al-Muwaylihi played an important role in the Arabic Literary Renaissance. His contribution took the form of published essays and research in various political, social, historical and literary subjects. These essays were published in his father's newspaper *Misbah al-Sharq*, and many others including *Al-Muqatam*, *Al-Muaid*, *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Muqtataf*.

Muhammad al-Muwaylihi refuted all Wilmore's claims concerning the Egyptian colloquial language in a series of anonymous essays titled "*Al-Saham al-Kaib*" (The Mistaken Arrow), published in *Misbah al-Sharq*. He built his objection on two pillars: religious and academic. Al-Muwaylihi stated that this invitation to use Egyptian colloquial language was intended to destroy Islam as the cultural foundation of the society: a last-resort attempt by Western missionaries to weaken the influence of Islam by attacking its linguistic influence. Al-Muwaylihi associated these attempts with the intention of making the Egyptians rewrite their religious sources in colloquial language, which might lead to the loss or misunderstanding of meaning, as had happened when Greek became the language of the Bible.³⁴

Al-Muwaylihi's second objection was based on academic reasons. He wrote that:

Western orientalisks have made the mistake of dividing the Arabic language into two categories: the classic standard Arabic of medieval literature and they have wrongly imagined that Arabic authors might have spent fifty or sixty years studying such a language used by al-Jahiz and al-Zamaqshari in old times. The second is the colloquial language. They missed a third language which is the right standard Arabic based on Arabic syntax and is pure of any confusing sophistications. There is also another language of belles letters linked to the bureaucratic class which adapted the illustrate language of the poor educated. The fact is that all these categories are related to one Arabic language.³⁵

Al-Muwaylihi further demonstrated that Wilmore made a semantic error in his choice of examples to show the difference of the Arabic standard and colloquial Egyptian. Each word taken by Wilmore as colloquial was exactly the same word in Arabic standard, with the only difference being its phonetics. For instance the colloquial word "*wish*" is the same as the standard "*wigjh*"; both words mean "face". The different pronunciation of Arabic letters does not change the words. Al-Muwaylihi proved how Egyptians were actually using the same words found in Arabic standard dictionaries.³⁶

Al-Muwaylihi expressed his satisfaction in the development of the Arabic language at the hands of literary figures of his age. The spread of journalism at this time helped to encourage public usage of more complex vocabularies and correct syntax. Further, Al-Muwaylihi advanced the use of standard Arabic as the medium of communication with the wider non-Arabic Muslim world. Arabic words could be found in every Muslim nation's vocabularies. Non-Arabs were able to understand the standard Arabic though not fully, although he recognised that Egyptian or Tunisian colloquial accents, for example, would always remain local. His work asserted the importance of the revival of Arabic literature in order to make literacy acquisition and production available more widely to Egyptians especially in the countryside. He thus asserted the importance of schools and education as serving the nation in its new global identity.

Al-Muwaylihi was a prominent activist member of The Academy of Arabic Language, which he himself established in association with others as previously mentioned. He also wrote a series of historical and philosophical essays entitled "Al-Shajaa ind al-Arabs" (Bravery in Arabs) dealing with Arabic historical figures and placing them in the world history of philosophy, published in *Al-Muqtataf* in 1895. He gave a full account of the Arabic beliefs, superstitions, habits and poetry in another series of historical essays entitled "Rumuz al Arab Watakeulihim" (Symbols and Fantasy of the Arabs). To introduce al-Muwaylihi's way of tackling such topics in a simple, lively manner, I quote here from his description of Bedouin life in an essay published in *Al-Muqtataf* in December 1895:

Whatever the souls miss and the sights seek to see and the hearts look forward in civilization, is the status of nations at the times of Bedouin life with its naive morality, easy habits, and adherence to strange beliefs. The role of the Bedouin era in the development of nations is like childhood in the process of growing in man's life. A child doesn't have the judgment power so he or she can easily believe whatever said and narrated, may accept any pretexts and reside happily in fantasy. Despite the improbability of all that. People are passionate to read about these times to feel the joy of having the big gap of historical eras. To enjoy the recognition of these times ignorance so they feel the value of their knowledge. Therefore, Greek and Roman mythologies have ever been taught in the West. And Arab souls are longing to the Pre-Islamic beliefs and symbols, specifically most of which were not written or documented except in some poetry and fragmentary stories in the mouths of few narrators can be found in the folds of books. So if a scholar found one of these, he would believe it to be most beneficial.³⁷

Al-Muwaylihi's political essays, written under a variety of pseudonyms, carried a harsh political satire, as in his essay "Al-Huria al-Muatadila Wa Anwan al-Saada "Moderate Freedom and the Source of Happiness", signed by "an Egyptian who knows his town very well" and published in *Al-Muqatam* in 1894. Other essays published in the same newspaper were signed by "al Badi", a name which might refer to Badi al Zaman al Hamadani, the

author of the traditional *maqamat*. At the head of each of his articles appearing in this newspaper, al-Muwaylihi was described by the editor as “a distinguished man of letters in Egypt whose eloquence will fascinate all those who are fond of literature”.³⁸ Throughout these political essays, al-Muwaylihi attacked comprehensively the British monarchy and its occupation, the Egyptian political parties and the Legislative Council.³⁹ These essays were well-received by the public and the intellectual elite. This led to invitations to contribute to other newspapers by many editors like Salim Surkis, who called al Muwaylihi the creative Badi of their age.⁴⁰

The majority of his political satire appeared in *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, published in *Misbah al Sharq* newspaper, which became a favourite of the public. The reviewers wrote their admiration of the quality of the essays published in the newspaper. And part of the fame attributed to the newspaper was because of *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*. As one of the reviewers states: “I was reading *Al-Misbah* while I was in Europe before visiting the Paris Exhibition. I read all the descriptions of the palaces and galleries in *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* and felt as if I were really there. When later I visited the Exhibition and actually entered these galleries it looked as if I was reading *Al-Misbah*”.⁴¹

Al-Muwaylihi referred to the fame of *Misbah Al-Sharq* newspaper in one of the fictional episodes in *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* as the Pasha presents his law case in The Committee of Surveillance. The inspector stated:

I haven't studied the files on the case and the details of the defence yet. But the part of the Attorney's speech which has been published in *Misbah al-Sharq* is not intended to convey any idea of reproach because of your rank. On the contrary, its aim is to make it clear that it is not the right of people of high rank, however important they may be.⁴²

Other newspapers celebrated the first anniversary of *Misbah Al-Sharq* as a gesture of its importance in Egypt's journalistic scene. As was written in *Al-Muqatam* on the 18th of April, 1899:

Misbah Al-Sharq finished its first year last Thursday. This celebrated newspaper is edited by the two great famous writers: His Excellency Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi and his honour, his son Muhammad al-Muwaylihi. Despite our disagreement with the political views presented in its essays, we highly appreciate its enchanting eloquence and its humorous approach. Actually its harshest satire changes its enemies to dear friends because of its courtesy and warm hearty topics.⁴³

The success of the newspaper left many influences on the literary scene of al-Muwaylihi's age and made a strong platform to his social criticism. We may understand Al-Muwaylihi's literary contribution in the light of the nineteenth-century Arabic Renaissance as an attempt at

self-identification and self-expression. Arabic language and the social spectrum were employed by a quest for new literary expression. This finds its way in the revival of *maqama* within the new novel genre. In my view, this sense of expression is at the core of Al-Muwaylih's conception of Arabic nationalism. This ideology was both a creed and a dogma, and he found many ways of conveying a sense of Egyptian nationalist identity through literary expression. The issue of identity and autonomy was central to the culture and context of the nation-state.

In *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, nationalism is reflected in a collective communal identity as shown in the shared public space of the city. Streets, museums, gardens, palaces and courts encapsulated the confusion of the national identity of Egypt in an age of transition. The work portrays the cityscape and its social scenes of Cairo at the turn of the century. Space functions as the indicator of a culture caught between tradition and modernity. The reader moves with Isa and the Pasha through the old city, with its dark Ottoman streets and the new European districts of Cairo in Ismailiya and Azbakiya, full of architectural splendour, past the opera house, palaces and the theatre, with their wide well-lit streets. In this work, urban space becomes an allegory of the confrontation between the old and the new. The courts are represented as social institutions that define the new system of jurisdiction. Concomitantly they stand for the new social order as Egypt attempts to push back the pall of colonialism. To find a national identity in this newly-emerging city is precisely the struggle for the characters of *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, a struggle or conflict which is illuminated and shaped by the spatial dimensions of the urban landscape they inhabit.

Hadith Isa ibn Hisham first appeared in a serial weekly publication under the title "Fatra min al-Zaman" (A Period of Time) between April 1898 and August 1903. The essays were then collected and published in book form in 1907. A second version of the revised edition appeared in 1912 and a third one in 1923. In 1927 the Egyptian Ministry of Education decided to adopt the book as a school textbook and asked al-Muwaylihi to prepare a fourth revision of the work, including the Second Journey and the exclusion of controversial episodes where the writer attacks political and religious institutions of Egyptian social life, as well as anti-British and anti-government passages. Al-Muwaylihi agreed on these censorship terms and prepared this fourth edition.⁴⁴ This revised edition appeared in the following publications: the fifth edition in 1935, the sixth in 1943, the seventh in 1947, *Al-Halal* Book in two volumes in 1959, the National Publishing House in Cairo in 1964, *Dar Al-Turath* (The Heritage) Publishing House in Beirut in 1969 and *Dar al-Shaab* (The People) Publishing

House in Egypt in 1969. The subsequent publication of the work gives the idea of its tremendous reception by the reading public over the course of time.

Most of the excluded passages include political satire and jokes about the monarchy. For example, this can be shown in the following excised passage from chapter ten, when Isa and Pasha met prominent figures from the age of Muhammad Ali, who tells them:

The Late Muhammad Ali inherited from the period the unsettling shout which never left him thereafter. In his council chamber, he used to roar like a lion and the effect almost stopped your heart beating. A European painter for whom the late master was sitting for a portrait died because of it; the chamberlain warned him in advance so that he would not be startled, but he could not stand it and died at the spot. Where are there governors like Lazoghly and where can one find shouts of such a kind in men like him?⁴⁵

The above extract shows Muhammad Ali yelling loudly, as a trait of great men of history, though here it causes the death of a foreigner painter who is painting Muhammad Ali's portrait, and dies of fright when Ali screams. Another example in which the attack appears much harsher is in the passage where Muhammad Ali promotes one of his officers to be a governor in Sudan. Here Muhammad Ali explains that only two words are needed for any ruler: money and a whip.

I know of another example of his gift for succinct summary. He gave orders that Hasan Pasha al-Injirkoylu was to be appointed governor of the Sudan; the latter refused the post and pointed out that he could not speak Arabic. 'How can I govern and regulate the affairs of a people.' He asked, 'when I do not know a single letter of their language?' Muhammad Ali called him and said:- 'You do not need to know the language to supervise the laws nor is it a necessary tool for governing without which the regime would be ineffective. For your job, you need only two words of Arabic to keep on your tongue; they are 'fulus' (money) and 'kurbash' (whip).

If Hassan Pasha had reflected that Muhammad Ali ruled the Egyptian people for a long time and conquered Arab lands without ever speaking the Arabic language in his life or being prevented by this fact from running government affairs efficiently and building up authority, then he would never have used such an excuse. On this subject, one of the most incredible stories tells how Muhammad Ali ordered the citizens of the capital to form a military reserve and appointed officers from Bulaq entered and Subhi Pasha was acting as interpreter; Muhammad Ali spoke to him in a manner which made it necessary for them to thank him. One of them said:- 'We are overwhelmed, Sire', a phrase which was very commonly used at that time by the populace to express pleasure and approval. Muhammad Ali looked angry, for he had taken on his back laughing. So what is the point of knowing Arabic when Arabs use these low and uncouth phrases when they are addressing their Amir?

Quite a few people have governed the Egyptian people without knowing their language, Nubar Pasha and the others among them.⁴⁶

The above long extract in which Isa and Pasha continue telling stories of Muhammad Ali, shows the role of language in furthering misunderstanding between the Arab subjects and their Turk rulers of the time. Representatives of the public praised Muhammad Ali but he felt offended that they mistook the Arabic phrase with the Turkish one. The Ottoman ignorance of

the Arabic language is a matter of ridicule for al-Muwaylihi who, with his contemporary citizens regarded the language as much more than a means of communication, considering it also a vehicle for the shared cultural tradition of Arabs. Such satirical portraits by al-Muwaylihi attacked the essence of Ottoman political institutions.

Al-Muwaylihi's text is concerned with how the Egyptians of his time were living an era of cultural transition. Through his narrator, Isa, he connects different historical ages by giving a record of many events within the course of the text. In fact, the whole structure of the text represents al-Muwaylihi's social reform programme. In *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham* he chose the traditional Arabic *maqama* to be modelled on a Western technique of allegory, at the same time extending the single event tradition of the *maqama* to relate a long series of events over the course of two journeys: one inside Egypt and the other to Paris, which take place over 600 pages. This innovative approach to narrative form embodied his commitment to a revival of Arabic heritage, which was essential to his social reforms in the process of welcoming Western cultural influences in the Arabic world.

The digressive nature of the text takes the reader to an allegorical realm where historical figures and places are identified metaphorically, as will be discussed further on through close textual analyses. The diverse landscape and temporal settings provide various cultural outlooks and also establish the background for what one takes to be a global conversation about history intended by the author. In particular, the streets and cities offer the author a tangible record of the historical transition of a colonized memory.

Al-Muwaylihi sets a part of his story at the time of Muhammad Ali, as conveyed through the character of Pasha, but he also presents Cairo at the end of the nineteenth century. His characters commence their journey in Cairo but end in Paris. This global image of what is Eastern and what is Western in the mind's eye of both the European tourists in Cairo and al-Muwaylihi's characters in Paris, gives the reader an image of an age caught in transition.

By the nineteenth century, the travelogue as a genre marked a diversity of textual and aesthetic models and a mode of narrative construction. Allegorically, at least, Al-Muwaylihi's text can be viewed as part of a wide range of travelogue literature. Descriptions of encounters with Europe through travel provided a literary mode that could define new social and intercultural relations. This contributed greatly to the discourse of modernity and nationalism that emerged in Egypt during the nineteenth century.

The importance of the travelogue is indicated by the fact that Muhammad Ali sent the prominent intellectual Rifa'a Rafi al-Tahtawi (1802-1873) to Paris on supervision duty. On

his return to Cairo after five years, al-Tahtawi's book about his experiences *Takhlis al-Ibris fi Talkhis Bariz* appeared in 1834. This book gives his readers a detailed insight into Western society in France, describing the duties of the Egyptian delegation in a brief chapter and dedicating most of the book to description of French habits, religions, dressing costumes, food, health provisions and French political history.⁴⁷ The book was set for educational purposes and served to inform future diplomatic, military and governing policy makers. It would remain the most influential and widely read text in *al-Nahda* literature.

It was al-Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, however, that gave Egyptian and Arab readers a critical description of Western society, showing the eye-catching lights of Paris and its materialistic reality. The encounter with the European 'other' was important to the Egyptian nationalist awakening, for its positive and negative realisations. *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, with its exploration of far-flung places, falls into the larger realm of a universal experience where even faraway China is included as a topic of conversation, as we will see in the textual analyses of the Second Journey, below. This involvement with a global perception of the world best explains the engagement with colonised/colonizer relationships as reflected in al-Muwaylihi's writings.

The landscape of Cairo as a colonial city shows echoes of the colonized people who are unacknowledged by the European tourists. The ideas communicated in this work essentially coalesce around the issue of resistance to European assumptions about Arabic culture, language and social practices, within the framework of colonial and domestic political oppressions. In the novel, Cairo streets become a map of military force and colonial administration. Control and surveillance of people's movements was a major purpose in planning and reshaping colonized cities, enforcing a new reality on the ground. Cairo streets become a diagram of new schemes instilled by the British, but at the same time they show Egyptian attitudes and actions in an attempt to resist the assimilation forced by the colonizing British presence. Submitting or protesting to authority is thus correlated with spatial structures through an account of urban landscape. The terrain of the city inscribes a double layer of meaning: indigenous and introduced. According to Michael Given, this mapping out of two discourses through geographical constructs can be termed "rival geography", in which both colonized and colonizers participate. This geographical discourse constitutes the alternative landscapes the characters experience, while their interpretations of their experiences of place in the novel form the narrative. We may thus derive both a fictional account and a historical document from the text.⁴⁸

Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham shows another attitude, however: a historical voice represented by the character of Pasha which conveys the Egyptian landscape through the lenses of different historical eras. Cairo was reshaped and expanded in every historical age to suit different colonizers. Under the rule of the Ottomans or the Europeans, many buildings in Cairo were erected to suit the residence of the foreign communities. Al-Muwaylihi used the name of the narrator, Isa Ibn Hisham, who is the same narrator of *Maqamat of Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani* in the title of his work. Al-Muwaylihi's text is entitled *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* (the narration of Isa Ibn Hisham) with the subtitle *Fatra Min al-Zamin* (A Period of Time). According to Roger Allen this is intended by al-Muwaylihi to draw attention to the connection of the classical *maqama* tradition and his episodic narrative.⁴⁹ In addition, his chapters and some passages start with the phrase *qal Isa Ibn Hisham* (Isa Ibn Hisham said) and this mirrors, in a formal manner, the way that narrative episodes open in al-Hamadani's work.

Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham opens with a figure rising from death and coming from a previous historical era of political nationalist resistance, the reign of Muhammad Ali. As the text has it, a grave had opened and a man of dignity and noble birth appeared, speaking in Arabic and Turkish, ordering for his clothes and horse to be brought from his house. The text opens with Isa's dream:

In his story Isa ibn Hisham told us: In a dream, I saw myself walking among the tombs and gravestones in the Imam Shafii cemetery. It was a brilliant moonlight, bright enough to blot out the stars in the sky; in fact, so gleaming was the light, one could have threaded a pearl and watched a speck of dust. As I stood there amid the graves on top of the tombstones, I was contemplating man's arrogance and conceit, his sense of his own glory, his pride, his total obsession with his pretensions, his excessive desires, his ideas of self-aggrandizement, and the way he chooses to forget about the grave... Deep in thought I continued my walk. I recalled the words of the sage poet, Abu al-Ala al-Mari:

'Tread lightly, for methinks the surface of the earth is made only from these bodies.

It would be bad for us to treat our forefathers and ancestors lightly even if they did live long ago.

Walk slowly abroad, if you are able, and do not strut arrogantly over the remains of God's people...'

Deep in my thought about the extraordinary things which Fate brings about, I was trying to probe the secrets of the resurrection. Suddenly, there was a violent tremor behind me which almost put an end to my life. In terror I looked behind me. I discovered that one of the graves had opened, and a man appeared. He was tall and imposing, carrying himself with a splendid dignity and majesty. He displayed all the signs of nobility and high birth. I felt as stunned and terrified as Moses on the day when the mountain was destroyed... As you now see and hear, the following conversation occurred; at times it was in Turkish and at other times in Arabic...

Isa ibn Hisham: 'My name is Isa ibn Hisham, my profession is the art of writing, and I came here to find some inspiration by visiting the tombs. I find it more effective than listening to sermons from the pulpits.'

Man from the grave: 'Well then, secretary Isa, where's your inkwell and notebook?'

Isa ibn Hisham: 'I am not a secretary in the Treasury or Secretariat, I'm an author.'

Man from the grave: 'Never mind! Go then my good author, and look for my clothes and bring me my horse, Dahman!'

Isa ibn Hisham: 'But I have no idea where your house is Sir!'

Man from the grave (in disgust): 'Tell me for heaven's sake, which country are you from? You can't be an Egyptian. There's no one in the whole country who doesn't know where my house is. I'm Ahmad Pasha al-Manikali, the Egyptian Minister of War!'

Isa ibn Hisham: 'Believe me Pasha, I'm from pure Egyptian stock. The only reason why I don't know where you live is that houses in Egypt are no longer known by the names of their owners, but by the names of their street, lane, and number. If you would be so kind as to tell me the street, lane, and number of your house, I will go there and bring you the things you've requested.'

Pasha (annoyed): 'It's clear to me that you're out of your mind, my dear author! Since when have houses had numbers to be known by? Some kind of government legislation or army regulations?'⁵⁰

This opening of the text provides a creative demonstration of the changing times and the new profession of the "author", unknown to the Pasha and the new organization of Cairo streets and houses. The idea that the traditional narrator of *maqama* is an author in al-Muwaylihi's *maqama* significantly shifts the authority of the text (*isnad*) to the writer himself. Whether Isa speaks for al-Muwaylihi or not, still the writer takes it upon himself the authority to tell the story. Having in mind that it is the story of Egypt in an age of transition, al-Muwaylihi ascribes a very important social role to the position of writers in society, a position that has many political and historical roles to be fulfilled. The identity of the Pasha is Ahmad Pasha al-Manikali who was the Minister of War during the reign of Muhammad Ali, and left a wealthy (*waqaf*) property to be given to the religious institution for charity purposes.⁵¹ Cairo the Ottoman city of passwords and secrecy has changed into a readable map, with public numerals and signs. This is indicated in the following conversation after Isa has given his overcoat to the Pasha:

Pasha: Well, necessity has its own rules! But then, I have disguised myself in even shabbier clothes than this while accompanying our late revered master, Ibrahim Pasha, on the nights he used to spend in the city so that he could see for himself how people were faring. But what's to be done. How can we get in?

Isa: What do you mean?

Pasha: Have you forgotten that we're in the last third of the night? There's no one on duty who'll be able to recognize me in this overcoat, and I haven't got the password with me. How can we get the gates opened?

Isa: You've just told me, Sir, that you don't know anything about houses having numbers. Well, I don't know anything about a 'password'. I've never heard of such a thing.

Pasha (laughing contemptuously): Didn't I say you must be a foreigner? Don't you know that the "password" is a word issued each night from the Citadel to the officer of the watch and all the guardhouses and gates? No one is allowed to travel at night unless he has memorized this word and can repeat it to the gatekeeper, whereupon the gate is opened for him. It is given out in secret to the people who ask the government for it so that they can carry on their business at night. It's changed every night. So, one night, it will be 'Lentils.' The next night 'Greens', the next night 'Pigeons', the next 'Fowls', and so on.⁵²

The dark image of secret passages in the city reflects the privilege of few cultural elite in the Ottoman Cairo. Al-Muwaylihi may be referring to the scheming spies who are roaming the city as part of the Ottoman concept of law and order. According to Ehud R. Toledano⁵³: the Ottoman-Egyptian social political status created a system of espionage which surveilled the private and public domain of the city dwellers. The police and *shaykh* (who are different from the religion *shaykh*), were the eyes and ears of the authorities. They implemented the Ottoman-Egyptian concept of law, order and prosperity according to the political institution's vision. This demanded the creation of an urban control system. The Ottoman rulers kept the organizing system, which was established during the French occupation, dividing Cairo into eight quarters, known as "eighths" (*thumn*, pl. *athman*). The *thumn* was divided into smaller street units; each was called the *hara*. The urban hierarchy of Cairo involved eight *shaykhs* of quarters in charge of these eight quarters. They worked as agents of the authority and carried out their duties with the public through their many deputies (*wakils*, pl. *wakala*). After the *sheikhs* of quarters followed by their deputies, come the *sheikhs* of neighbourhoods in charge of each *hara*. Such a system was used to bring the authority closer to the public and to deal with occasional problems and disputes. The *sheikhs* had the power to impose decisions without involving the police and had the power to prevent undesirable people from residing in their quarters. But the *sheikhs*' most important task was to collect accurate information on all individuals residing in their quarter or neighbourhood and to maintain the archives and case-histories of individuals in their territories.⁵⁴

Al-Muwaylih presents these *shaykhs* in his text as having the authority to approve the identification of the Pasha and their materialistic and opportunistic practices in partnership with the police:

Isa ibn Hisham said: We now stood before the secretary to put together the Pasha's identification dossier. The secretary asked whether he had anyone to stand bail for him. I put myself forward as surety for him, but they wouldn't accept my offer without verification from the Shaykh of the Quarter. I was at loss as to what to do; where could I find the Shaykh of the Quarter at a moment's notice? One of the policemen whispered in my ear that I should go outside; I would find the Shaykh of the Quarter at the door. I should give him ten piastres, he said, for verifying the bail. The policeman caught up with me, pointed out the Shaykh of the Quarter, and even acted as go-between in handing over the fee for the verification. Then he turned to the rest of the policemen who were busy hitting the plaintiffs. There was a great commotion going on, but the policemen kept trying to keep them all quiet in case they woke up the Adjutant.⁵⁵

Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham starts with a dream vision unmoored from a real time and place. This technique enabled him to give a historical perspective through the portrayal of the Pasha character in his old costumes and a historical point of view of events. The work opens with

Isa narrating his dream as he was in Imam Shafii cemetery where he was contemplating mankind's arrogance and deception, excessive desires and pretensions, and glory and pride, when he met the resurrected Pasha. From the very beginning of the narration al-Muwaylihi challenges our perception of the traditional genre. The traditional *maqama* opens every event with the words "Isa said" (*qal*), for the purpose of providing the authenticity of the story (*isnad*). This technique of authorial address first originated from the study of witness accounts of the sayings of the Prophet of Islam, from different times. This intended authenticity contradicts the form of the text as a dream vision. In my view, this is intended by al-Muwaylihi to indicate that his text has many authentic voices who are responsible for narrating his story, quite apart from the Isa of the *maqama* tradition.

Al-Muwaylihi's application of a dream vision allegory differs from the use of dreams in Arabic literature. Dreams have a significant value in the ancient Arabic traditions of presenting and interpreting dreams, especially those of bringing back the dead. This can be traced back to the chronicles of Abu Ali ibn al-Banna who lived in Baghdad in the eleventh century.⁵⁶ But some critics believe that European works might have inspired Muwaylihi, for example Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Hugo's *Les Burgraves*. Roger Allen demonstrates a close parallel between *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* and the works of French writers Le Comte de Volney and Edmond Abou.⁵⁷ Volney spent four years travelling in Egypt and Syria and his work on the philosophy of history was translated into Arabic under the title *Athar al-Umam* (Archaeology of Nations) by Shakir Shuqayr (1850-1896). Volney is the more likely candidate to have influenced al-Muwaylihi. In Volney's work a supernatural being appears in a Syrian graveyard, accompanies the narrator and presents a factual account on different topics in a question-and-answer form. There are clear echoes of the opening of al-Muwaylihi's *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*.⁵⁸

Samuel Moreh argues that al-Muwaylihi's work was inspired by the dream and a critique of morals in *Ghabat al-Haqq* (Forest of Justice), a dream vision allegory by the Syrian Christian poet and writer Fransis Fath Allah Marrash (1836-1873) who inspired both al-Muwaylihi in his *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* and Gibran in his long poem *al-Mawakip* (The Procession) and his novel *Al-Ajniha al-Mutakassira* (The Broken Wings).⁵⁹

Marrash's allegory is a war between the army of civilization (*jaysh al-tamaddun*) and the army of the kingdom of Servitude (*Mamlakat al-Ubudiyya*). The work starts with a dream where the author finds himself in a forest in an assembly of the king and queen of freedom (*Malik and Malkat al-Hurriyya*) who are discussing the steps to be taken

after the defeat of the king of Servitude. This employment of the dream vision technique is modelled on Western medieval allegories. Its theme is about the authorial notion of modernity, but the work is caught in an abstract representation of such notions. We must say that its allegorical structure has been an inspiration for al-Muwaylihi. But *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* differs in its cultural ideas and takes allegory into the Egyptian everyday life in an allegorical journey through history, reflecting the spirit of a Reformist Egypt. Al-Muwaylihi's allegory shows the cultural aspirations in a colonial world where the West represents a source of knowledge and civilization but at the same time a threat to the nation and its great cultural heritage.

Muwaylihi's skill in rhyming prose shows, as Allen puts it, "his mastery of the Arabic language and a certain change in outlook towards the *maqama* tradition".⁶⁰ For Allen Muwaylihi used *maqama* for descriptive function, introducing his chapters in rhyming prose and describing the scenes when the characters are to act their roles while chapters in the middle of the text have full passages of rhyming prose, and "are amalgamations of at least two episodes".⁶¹ His mastery of the Arabic language enabled him to modify the *maqama* successfully to suite his long narrative. He believed Arabic literature to offer the best linguistic means for communication.

Muwaylihi criticized Ahmad Shawqi, the prominent neoclassical poet of the Arabic world, for writing in his preface to his *Diwan al-Shawqiyyat* (Poetry of Shawqi) in 1898, that European poetry was more successful in describing nature. Al-Muwaylihi ridiculed Shawqi in many of his essays, emphasizing the fact that there were no themes in European literature surpass those used in Arabic literature including external nature description. Al-Muwaylihi believed the opposite was true and invited Arab poets to go back to their Arabic heritage.⁶²

Throughout the work descriptive passages illustrate scenes of nature with powerful imagery and the use of lines of poetry. For example in chapter eight, the Pasha explains his nostalgia and sense of loss as the times change. Being lost, unable to find his way, he compares his sadness to that of the classical Arab poets al-Farazdaq and Kuthayyir, who wrote poems lamenting the loss of their beloveds: Azza and Nawar respectively. Al-Muwaylihi then followed this scene with a line of poetry to emphasize the sense of loss of a glorious past.

The Pasha and I kept going round in circles... We questioned passers-by and travelers about mosques and fountains, and found the effort more taxing than enquiring about plush meadows in the middle of an arid desert. We felt like a thirsty man asking for bowls of water. We could not find anyone to guide us to the object of our research.

At this point the Pasha began to remember the locations of streets and houses, he would say the endowment was here and then here, and that what Almighty brings about is glorious. He shortened his pace while weeping at the sight of the ruins and old houses, and his sighs grew ever longer. He seemed like the lover of Azza or Nawar:
'Question these ruins and make your weeping an answer; in tears you will find both question and answer'.⁶³

The physical descriptions of Cairo, Alexandria and Paris introduce a new focus on urban portrayal. As Kamran Rastegar points out, this is a new perspective in Arabic literature; the city is “a new key character” and an indication of the modernity of the text. The visual register of the city emphasizes the nature of experience, as in Rastegar’s words: “a panoptic vista is used to introduce the qualities of a social space”.⁶⁴

Al-Muwaylihi’s use of urban space and its social and historical realities is part of worldwide nineteenth-century architectural theories. These theories demonstrate the idea of synthesizing histories and architectural landscapes. According to such ideas, Cairo connects the Islamic world to the ancient world. The prominent Victorian architectural historian, James Fergusson (1808-1886) believed Cairo minarets are connected to the built culture of ancient civilizations. He points out that the Cairo landscape:

Rests on the fact of its being a modern reproduction of the style of the same ancient places of Nineveh and Babylon, using the same thick walls of imperfectly burned brick, and covering them with the same brilliant coloured decorations of glazed and painted tiles and bricks, carrying this species of decoration to an extent never attempted in other parts of the world.⁶⁵

Bringing the Islamic world and the ancient one together makes Cairo’s streets and buildings representative of national identity. It may be noted here, that this is a central idea in the theory of John Ruskin (1819-1900) who refers to landscape as a key characteristic of nation. In “The Poetry of Architecture” Ruskin describes how landscape characterises nationhood in Europe: portraying the cottages of England, France and Italy as typical. Similarly, with Egypt, its landscape and cityscapes express a national spirit. As he expresses it:

[In Egypt] we find a climate inducing a perpetual state of heavy feverish excitement, fostered by great magnificence of natural phenomena, and increased by the general custom of exposing the head continually to the sun, so that, as in a dreaming fever, we imagine distorted creatures and countenances moving and living in the quiet objects of the chamber.⁶⁶

Ruskin’s theory of Landscape and Ethnicity is significant for its attempt to show the extent to which spatial representation suggests so much about the cultural transactions between East and West. In *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin draws an association between art and nation. To convey his impression of Byzantine art, he uses terms such as “mystic”, “mythical”, “symbolic”, having “want of freedom”, “petrification”, “formalism” and “monotony”. This

linguistic characterisation is set in comparison to the way he describes Islamic art as “exquisite”, “fantastic” having “excitement”, “enchantment”, and “evanescence”.⁶⁷ For him, the two cultural traditions are competing with each other and, from the ninth to eleventh century, the architecture of Venice and Cairo were both representatives of Byzantine and Islamic influences.

Venice and Cairo as cities are, for Ruskin, a mixture of cultures from what he thinks of as North and South, traits that we now identify with West and East. This is reflected in his description of Ducal Palace in Venice:

Opposite in their character and mission, alike in their magnificence of energy, they came from the North and the South, the glacier torrent and lava stream: they met and contended over the wreck of the Roman Empire, and the very centre of the struggle, the point of pause of both, the dead water of opposite eddies, charged with embayed fragments of the Roman wreck, is VENICE. The Ducal palace of Venice contains the three elements in exactly equal proportions- the Roman, the Lombard, and the Arab. It is the central building of the world.⁶⁸

In a related way, Al-Muwaylihi uses Cairo’s landscape as a key agent of cultural and historical synthesis. Past and present come together within the reality of the city. The first place to be visited by Isa and the Pasha, as they start their tour in Cairo, is the Citadel of Salah al-Din crowned by the Muhammad Ali mosque. All the tales narrated by the Pasha along their way are to establish his position as a witness of the past glorified by what he believes to be Egypt influential rulers like Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha. The Citadel Square is the first landscape, or rather cityscape, we encounter in Egypt which embraces the conflict over Egypt’s tumultuous past. This is signified by the proximity of both the tomb of Mohammad Ali and the statue of Ibrahim Pasha created by Charles Cordier. The Pasha pays his respects, denouncing in eloquent Turkish the Mamluk tyrants. Al-Muwaylihi uses The Citadel Square to show how the geography of the city is shaped by historical forces in Cairo.

The area’s history goes back to medieval times when a pavilion named the “Dome of the Wind” was first created in 810 by Cairo governor Hatim Ibn Hartama. This became a great military base between 1176 and 1183 by Salah ad-Din who fortified it to protect it against the Crusades. During the Ottoman rule of Egypt from 1517 till the early twentieth century, the Citadel became a symbol of a royal city and a landmark fortress. They changed the names of its enclosures; as an example, the Lower Enclosure’s name was changed to Al-Azab Enclosure named after the Ottoman military Al-Azab regiment. The name means “bachelor”. Those Ottoman soldiers were not allowed to get married till they retired. They also rebuilt the area’s largest tower, which is 25 meters tall with a diameter of 24 meters.

From the sixteenth century till the French occupation of Egypt, the Ottoman military rules changed and their soldiers started to marry and have their own houses inside the Citadel. Many historians consider the Ottoman ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha, who came to power in 180, the builder of modern Egypt.⁶⁹ He altered the building, establishing his Harem Palace and a private domain in the Northern Enclosure and opening the Southern Enclosure to the public. The Citadel became a symbol of the dynastic period. Harem Palace became the family residence for the Khedive until the government moved to Abdeen Palace. Later on during the British occupation, the palace served as a British military hospital and was returned to Egyptian rule after the Second World War. The historical background of the Citadel explains its significance, being the first location we as readers encounter in Isa and the Pasha's tour in al-Muawylah's text.

The idea behind the account of the history of the Citadel is to show how a city was pressed into accepting governance by its colonizers. The conversation quoted above, between Isa and the Pasha, about house numbers and passwords sheds light on the challenge faced by the Ottomans and Europeans when they first came to Cairo as its foreign rulers. It is this very act of instilling order that shapes the image of the Orient to the Europeans.

In a letter written by Gustave Flaubert in January 1850, he portrays Egypt as a place of vivid chaos, which shocks the Western travellers:

What can I say about it all? What can I write you? As yet I am scarcely over the initial bedazzlement... each detail reaches out to grip you; pinches you; and the more you concentrate on it the less you grasp the whole. Then gradually all this becomes harmonious and the pieces fall into place of themselves, in accordance with the laws of perspective. But the first days, by God, it is such a bewildering chaos of colours.⁷⁰

For Flaubert, Cairo streets were haunted by the past and were full of strangers in strange clothes, living within a social order which, to him, appeared to lack sense or structure.

The idea of imposing order on the space comes in disguise with many city designs carried by the British. The architecture of the exterior landscape of Egypt represented every aspect of the interior life of the Egyptians, such as their social costumes and their encounters with the political powers of the ruling monarchy and the European colonization. In the 1840s, James Wild designed most of the buildings in Cairo for the residence of the British community. At the same time he led the project of expanding Cairo and the Europeanization of the city. He often disguised himself in local dress to gain access to Cairo mosques, baths and many public places.⁷¹

Europeans were aiming to see the popular Orientalist vision of Cairo that had been presented in the Paris World Exhibition, but instead many of the European dignitaries who visited Egypt during the nineteenth century were housed in the Gezira Palace built by Khedive Ismail in 1867 with its five hundred rooms.⁷² Looking southeast of the palace, the guests could see the Citadel of Salah al-Din as well as hundreds of minarets of the old city. We can say that Europeans were presented here with the royal Khedive Cairo rather than the old Islamic one. To impress their visitors, the Ottoman rulers, as was the case with Khedive Ismail, dedicated much of Egypt's wealth to the planning of city modernization in a European model according to foreign consultants. Jean-Pierre Barillet-Deschamps, the landscape architect who participated in planning Paris Exposition Universelle in 1867, was commissioned to design the gardens of Gezira palace.⁷³ Ottoman rulers tried to show Cairo as an emblem of modernity. Egyptian Khedives imported conceptions of municipal order from Europe and broadened the urban environment of Egyptian capital cities Cairo, Port Said, and Ismailiyya on the Sues Canal, by rebuilding these cities in an imitation model of nineteenth-century Paris. The Egyptian urban landscape started to include wide boulevards, public parks, and landscaped roads with many Western-styled coffee shops. Although coffee shops go back to the fifteenth-century Arabic landscape, they became more common in the nineteenth century as a public space where individuals could regularly meet to read aloud newspapers, as well as play backgammon (*tawula*) and smoke hookah (*narghile*).⁷⁴

The question of how far Cairo was identified as an old Islamic city during the nineteenth century is important in order to appreciate al-Muwaylih's descriptive account of Cairo. According to Ibn Khaldun, the prominent medieval geographer and philosopher, the Islamic city can be defined as a city that must have a congregational Friday mosque (*jami*) and it must have a chief bazaar (*suq*) nearby. A third physical feature, the public bath (*hammam*) can also be added to the list. William Marcais states that Western Orientalists who studied the Islamic city considered Islam to be an urban religion, as the mosque created the city, in spite of the fact that Islam was also carried by nomads.⁷⁵ Yet al-Muwaylih's urban landscape of Cairo does not seem to apply to this definition.

Al-Muwaylihi's vision of Cairo shows us a city on the eve of Westernization where the old Islamic centre with the world's largest ancient mosque, Al-Azhar, is only a small part of a larger urban space. In fact, most of al-Muwaylihi's descriptions are of the other Western parts of the city, where museums, theatres, nightclubs, luxurious hotels and buildings of the British subjects are located. This physical reality of the new nineteenth-century Cairo shows a

cultural landscape where Islamic modernization and secularism are the new realities. To arrive at al-Muwaylihi's picture of Al-Azhar and Cairo, we may look at the actual location of this prominent institution in the Islamic life of the Muslim world.

Al-Azhar Street is a large crowded avenue which divides the medieval area of Cairo into two parts, leading to the ancient mosque. On that street stands the office of the grand Imam, Sheikh of Al-Azhar and his administration. Al-Azhar's mosque minarets are integrated within the larger area of Islamic Cairo in a highly symbolic way within the urban landscape. It is bursting with life and crowded in the same way as the nearby Darb al-Ahmar, Khan al-Khalili and Husayn Mosque. For centuries and up to our present day, Al-Azhar has been the centre of Sunni Islamic Knowledge. The overall view of Al-Azhar is that it represents the Sunni moderate stand against both radical Islamism and secularism. This grand Islamic foundation, established in 970 in Cairo, has a leading role amongst the whole Islamic world in delivering al-Fatwa (Islamic opinions on urgent contemporary matters that are to be followed by all Muslims of all nationalities) and to provide the world with training preachers in proselytization (*al-Dawa*). Al-Azhar *ulama* specialists in religious knowledge represent a religious authority that has varied through the ages. As the symbol of Islamic Cairo, Al-Azhar stands at the heart of a meeting point between the old and the new within the cultural life of Cairo, and more specifically with respect to the nineteenth-century movement of Islamic modernization. This centre of transmission of religious knowledge became the place where the debates of Islamic reforms were going on at the time al-Muwaylihi was writing. Allegorically Al-Azhar Street divided nineteenth-century Egyptian *ulama* into orthodox traditionalist and reformist.

During the nineteenth century, Al-Azhar became the heart of a Cairian landscape where the conflict of identity between traditional and modern takes place. The urban space of Al-Azhar became the metropolitan centre that attracted people from the countryside to study in Cairo. Students from rural Egypt who sought better social status came to Cairo and lived in houses in the neighbourhood of the ancient mosque. They are called the *mujawirin* (neighbours). In his chronicles, the nineteenth-century Al-Azhar scholar Abderrahman Hassan Jabarti (1754-1882) described the *ulama* as having an important social role but ironically limited achievements, being in a state of decline in comparison to Western knowledge. But he also described some *ulama* as heroic figures, resisting any unjust rule in the name of God while other *ulama* were materialistic and politically opportunistic. Jabarti also described the contrast between the living conditions of the poor *mujawirin* and the wealthy aristocratic

ulama who were subservient to the political power. This resulted in an uprising on the part of the *majawirin* and a political and social division on the *ulama* as they reacted towards that rebellion. Al-Azhar was no longer so homogeneous as a religious community.⁷⁶ Orthodox *ulama* insisted on their defence of traditional values against what they believed to be the moral corruption of Westernization. They claimed that nations could only become strong by being true to their religion and customary dress. The Ottoman government supported Al-Azhar *ulama* as well as the restoration of Islamic monuments like the famous Umayyad Mosque in Syria, as part of the needed state image in the eyes of the empire's subjects. Such news usually appeared in the official gazettes published in most Arabic capitals. Therefore, the *ulama* received the imperial patronage and worked as an essential part of the state. They were part of the Military Council, the Council of Public Works, the Council of Police, the Council of State, and the legislative body of the state.⁷⁷ It seems that the role played by the orthodox *ulama*, to safeguard the empire's Islamic character and to oppose European imperialism, suited the Ottoman rules.

We must consider that the Ottomans and the Egyptians needed the idea of a unified Islam to be the essence of their policies in Empire-building and state citizenship. They were equally facing the Christian missionary activities within the Ottoman Empire, and the spread of radical Islamism of Wahhabism, which was established in the Arabic peninsula. Also there was the threat of Shiism in the south of Iraq. Shiism is the religion of Persia, the Ottoman rival for control of the Middle East.⁷⁸ To face all these threats the Ottomans made the printing of the Quran a state monopoly, in addition to pamphlets dealing with classic Islamic religious texts.

In his *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, al-Muwaylih ridiculed the position of the *ulama* in state-building and exposed their opportunistic schemes, as in the conversation of two al-Azhar *ulama* in the following extract:

Fifth (Notable): 'What is the use of reading about it, what benefit do we get from the war?'

Sixth: 'God forgive us both. Don't you realize that we get an enormous benefit from it; I have heard a great deal about it in the High Council. They concluded that this war will keep foreigners busy and will lessen the pressure which they are bringing to bear on our government. In this way, we will have a free hand, everything will be changed and we will get a Nationalist Ministry'.⁷⁹

Al-Muwaylih was an advocate of the Islamic modernists, who followed European social theories and applied them to provide a new reading of their history as well as current affairs. He also contributed to the unified Islam movement, or as it was to be known, the Pan-Islamic movement. In 1908, Al-Muwaylih wrote a series of articles entitled "*Kalima Mafrada*" (The

One Word), appearing under his name in al-Muayyad newspaper. In these articles, as described by Roger Allen, al-Muwaylihi started by quoting in Arabic what Dante writes on the Prophet of Islam in the Divine Comedy, and demanded that all Muslims should rally to the cause of their religion instead of sitting helpless and watching gross insult upon it.⁸⁰ These articles were indirectly mentioned by Sir Ronald Storrs:

The Italians of Alexandria have chosen this juncture for proposing that the Municipality should erect a large statue to Dante, which plan, seeing that Dante placed Muhammad and Ali in hell with the other Schismatics, cleft from chin to tank with their insides hanging out, is meeting with frantic opposition from united Islam.⁸¹

Al-Muwaylihi's articles were welcomed by the Egyptian public as well the intellectual elite. Storrs records that Princess Nazli, who held a circle of literary salons was herself disgusted with Dante. Al-Muwaylihi was one of the members of the princess' circle. Also, Princess Nazli was married to Salim Abu Hajib, a close friend of al-Muwaylihi and the one who was to publish in partnership with al-Muwaylihi's brother Khalil, al-Muwaylihi's philosophical book *Ilaj al-Nafs* (Cure for the Soul) after the death of al-Muwaylihi in February 1930.⁸² This close relationship with the princess establishes the fact that al-Muwaylihi was very influential among the Egyptian literary elite. Al-Muwaylihi was highly regarded for his defence on Islam. He was invited to attend the opening of the Hijaz railway for the Muslim pilgrims. He travelled to al-Madina and contributed to a series of articles on the railway, which appeared in al-Muayyad newspaper.

It is worth mentioning that such an event as the railway opening has a wider significance as a celebrated nationalist event. Nationalism can be viewed in the light of the discourse of al-Muwaylihi's age, as an ideology that deals with the organization of society and treats citizens according to their social responsibilities. Such ideology emerged in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire as the outcome of market relations within the empire and the new transportation technologies such as railroads and steamships.⁸³

Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham shows how buildings and houses differ between the old Cairo, where middleclass and poor Egyptians live, and the superb residential areas of Cairo where Europeans live in their large mansions and palaces, such as al Ezbekiyya, the place of the opera house, theatres and the nightclubs. This is a place where wealthy Egyptians visit to listen to English music and watch the Italian opera. Al-Muwaylihi presents a picture of the different leisure and entertaining places in relation to social status, as in the following conversation between the attorney and his visitors:

Second Visitor: ‘Never mind! Tell me, are you still going to keep your appointment with us to go to our friend’s house to see that famous belly-dancer?’

Attorney: ‘I must ask your indulgence, but I can’t make it. In the first place, I don’t like that type of dancing. Only locals and peasants enjoy that sort of thing. Secondly, I’ve invited Mademoiselle X, the actress at the opera, and two of her colleagues to dine with me at Sante in the Ezbekiyya Quarter. Afterwards, we’re going to have some fun and visit Khan al-Khalili, Qasbat Rudwan, the Tombs of the Caliphs, and other ancient sites in the city’.⁸⁴

The Egyptian indulgence in gambling and drinking culture reflects a mistaken conception of modernity. According to Omar D. Foda, who studied the beer industry in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century:

Alcohol served as an ideal commodity for the effendi to perform modernity because its conception achieved a double effect: while linking its Egyptian drinker to the ‘modern’ European, who drank on social occasions, it separated him from both the non-elite and the religious Egyptian, who viewed alcohol as socially suspect at best or as religious anathema at worst.⁸⁵

We may not take Foda’s view as a generalisation but it certainly supports the social class distinction in Egyptian society, which was divided between the effendi class, wearing the tarbush, and the sheik class, wearing the turban. This is a division that has much to do with the perception of modernity, more than a mere lifestyle issue, and much to do with the educated effendi class pretensions of modernity. There is also an economic division between the rich and the poor, which is obviously reflected in Cairo’s urban landscape. The best example of the rich district is the Ismailiyya.

Ismailiyya is described fully in the text as a European paradise in Cairo with its villas and gardens, as Isa narrates in the following extract:

We reached the Ismailiya quarter. When the Pasha saw the mansions, houses, palaces, and villas, he was entranced by the gardens and bowers which formed part of them. He kept sniffing the scent of sweet basil and anemones. He stopped us and broke the silence by asking in astonishment: ‘Please tell me what place this gleaming paradise occupies in the city of Cairo?’ ‘This is the Ismailiyya,’ I replied. ‘Ismail [Khedive Ismail] laid out the plans for it as part of his project to adorn the Nile Valley. Today important and wealthy men live here, but in your day it was just a barren wasteland. There were no houses or palaces. All you would have seen was the barren acacia tree growing; the only flowers were the tragacanth or sayal thorn; the only birds, owls, crows, falcons and eagles. Of mankind you would have encountered only plundering brigands, murderers, or killers lying in wait.’⁸⁶

We discover the cultural differences of Cairo districts as Isa and the Pasha are summoned to face a legal charge: they move from the Parquet to the Native Court, then to the Committee of Surveillance, and finally to the Court of Appeal as the highest juridical institution, with its foreign judges situated in the Ismailiyya. This district of Cairo was

described by J. McCoan in the late-nineteenth century as “a handsome European town intersected by broad, well-paved and gas-lit boulevards”.⁸⁷

Isa explains to the Pasha the changes of names of jobs and places, in other words the cultural changes that occurred in Cairo under the British rule. Both start their journey in modernized parts of Cairo. A case of assault against a donkeyman brings the Pasha to prison. This imprisonment has the significance of showing the corruption in the juridical system, as in the conversation of the attorney and his friend:

First Visitor: (after greeting the Attorney and sitting down) ‘You rogue, why did you leave yesterday before the game was over?’

Attorney: ‘It was long past midnight, and I had so many cases to deal with that I had to get up early.’

Second Visitor: ‘Whoever heard of cases keeping anyone away from his friends’ company? That excuse is only handy when you ‘re talking to people who aren’t familiar with the Parquet’s business and cases! Don’t you realize that some of your colleagues only spend an hour a day on cases? Let me just mention A. He’s satisfied just to give them a look for a moment. He doesn’t even bother to study them in detail, but relies instead on his wide experience in order to discover the relevant facts, Furthermore, now that there is no longer any disagreement or bad feeling between the Parquet and the police, the best thing to do is to be satisfied with police evidence or return it to them for completion. There’s no point in reopening inquiries afterwards and wasting time in vain on something which may cause bad feelings and arguments all over again.’

Attorney: ‘I do too. But, as far as possible, one must adhere to outward appearances.’⁸⁸

It is very clear from the extract above that there is foul-play in the police system. The trial with its slow procedures and the account of the actions of corrupted police officers gives al-Muwaylihi the first target of his severe attack on the Sharia Court and the legal systems. The jurisdiction system in Egypt was at that time, and continued to be, based not wholly on Islamic Sharia laws but on secular jurisdiction. This marks a stage of civil development towards secularization, though it brings a condemnation of the Pasha, who symbolizes the conservative Muslims of the past age who are opposed to any change that may touch upon their religious practices.

Descriptive passages give the narrative a realist perspective with authorial comment. The author describes the crowded Court, mentioning many examples of people exchanging insults and abuse, punching one another: women are shouting and screaming, howling and wailing laments while their children are crying. A man and a woman are challenging each other with obscene vulgar language and dragging a crying boy by the hand as if they want to divide him. A crying woman demands female judges since justice cannot be attained with men taking the side of each other against women. Finally clerks in the court are busy arguing with swearing oaths on whose donkey won a race, claiming that his family organized the race

for generations and after a while they start joking and settling a matter of the sum of a bribe to be received. These local issues are entangled with other political issues in legislation and roles of the British, but such serious matters are always narrated through simple daily life situations. For example, this is expressed through the quiet atmosphere in the police station during the British inspector's visit, where the police officers are happy because he cannot understand the language and it is easy for them to manipulate him and continue receiving bribes.

The British ruler Cromer's period started in 1883 after the Urabi revolt in 1882, and continued for twenty-four years. Ending many disputes with the French on financial affairs, the British decided to have all key government departments (Finance, Justice, Public Works and Army) in their administration, with a policy reflected in the famous metaphor of 'British heads and Egyptian hands'. This policy changed later on, to the more stringently colonial catchphrase of 'British heads and British hands', as more British officials were appointed.

Frustration and resentment at the political situation is presented throughout *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*. In many chapters there are conversations where Egyptians discuss the huge salaries of the British and express their pessimism in response to the scant opportunity for employment or promotion. Some give a cynical observation and wish that France would regain its power in Egypt. Moreover, the characters complain that Egyptians have to face the bias of foreign judges in financial disputes, as with Isa's discussion of the British views on the civil rights of the Egyptians in chapter 5:

The Mixed Courts (which have foreign judges) specialize in investing allegations between native people and foreigners, and amongst foreigners themselves on matters of civil rights (by which I mean cases involving money). Foreigners have a greater right to wealth because they work harder. Egyptians on the other hand are more naturally suited to poverty and deserve this fate all the more because they are negligent and lethargic. As a result, the majority of cases in which these courts have competence to pass judgment inevitably result in Egyptians being deprived of their money and property.⁸⁹

The criticism that foreign judges and employees, as well as the Egyptian corrupt judges, conduct a system without proper communication and justice is clearly illustrated in the court scenes. At the Native Court, the Pasha lawyer is obsessed by the overly-careful phrasing of his defense language. Being concerned about the minutiae of articles and phrases as he writes down the "requisite principles" and the "subsidiary questions" proves a waste of time. The lawyer is unable to read his notes at court because the Egyptian judge keeps on interrupting him many times, asking for a brief account of the event, hurrying him on and finally preferring to listen to the Attorney instead. The reason given for this is that the judge needs to

deliver verdicts on thirty cases before lunch time as he is invited to the banquet of a friend at noon and must be on time for his meal.

In contrast with the above situation, the foreign chief judge of the prestigious Court of Appeal tries to listen attentively to the Pasha and his lawyer. No interruptions are heard in this court. The secret behind this is that some of the judges have not read the notes of the case in appeal and needed to hear about it from the long Attorney's speech, as well as the accused lawyers. Moreover, the case note is a summary written in Arabic form, but in foreign characters so they can read it. The lack of knowledge about the details of these cases, including the Pasha's, does not prevent the chief judge from delivering his verdict on an average of ten cases within the duration of one hour spent at the consultation chamber. The verdict on the Pasha's case, who was previously give a twelve-month sentence of imprisonment at the Native Court is now changed. The chief judge pronounces the Pasha innocent.

Al-Muwaylih's satire is directed against the judicial system in Egypt which differed from any other Ottoman province. Due to the commercial significance of Egypt, the Ottomans introduced reforms including commercial and penal codes modelled on the French legal system, in order to legally protect the foreigners living within the Ottoman Empire and to secure their business and trade. Jasper Brinton states, "... worst among the evils for which this state of affairs was responsible was the feeling of injustice which it engendered on the part of the native Egyptians".⁹⁰ There was a need for more legal reforms at the time of Khedive in 1867. But such reforms were done in a memorandum written by Nubar Pasha, an Armenian who did not speak Arabic. He led a committee of European experts who decided that foreign judges would be in the majority to deal with disputes between Egyptians and foreigners. And the civil code adopted was based on European legislation. The French Code was chosen because French language dominated the education in Egypt as well as its intellectual life.

Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham shows through several chapters, dedicated to the trial of the Pasha, the inadequacy of the judicial system which is built on bureaucracy and ruled by incompetent judges. These chapters also show the reality of a new social hierarchy unknown to the Pasha. The court becomes the space where a concern about society is supposed to be the goal and hence where rational patriotic duty should be performed. Unfortunately this is not the case in *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*. The chain of legal institutions, starting with the police station and ending with the Appeal Court, represent a colonial reality which resides above any

social hierarchy, in other words a foreign judge is the higher social authority. Nevertheless the text reflects a notion of the community which is imbued in a patriotic understanding of national duty. Nationalism is implied in the conversation between Isa and the Pasha on the topic of society. The Pasha asks what is the society? As he heard the State of Prosecutor is acting on the behalf of society. The Pasha also didn't understand how his case is among the crowd of litigants.

Words such as "crowd" and "society" were key terms in the discourse of nineteenth-century Arabic nationalism, a topic that was discussed in Egyptian social life everywhere, such as schools, cafés, and the luxurious salons of the rich landowning families. The nationalism that is implied in al-Muwaylihi's text is an awareness of the community as a driving force in the political life of Egypt. Of great importance is the idea that a voice must be given to the Egyptian common citizens to discuss and participate in decisions about their own society.

The following chapter in al-Muwaylihi's satire is directed against the institution of religion. Both Isa and the Pasha live in seclusion from society, spending time reading and discussing poetry and thinking of the failure of the people who spend their life in gambling clubs. This habit was new to an Islamic society and occurred in imitation of Western cultural habits. Although the sciences had spread, arts had advanced, publishing had widely increased, giving greater access to information and culture, many people were still preoccupied in futile pleasure-seeking rather than reading the books which they bought only as decoration. This image of the Egyptian society of the time reflected the writer's concern about high- and middle-classes rather than the less privileged and poor working people.

The two characters decide to visit contemporary *majalis* (public meetings) where the Islamic *ulama* gather. The narrator describes the *ulama* to be the light of faith, comparable to the stars and a source of spiritual guidance, the calling on humankind to the knowledge of their Creator. This highly-unique status only serves to intensify the ridicule of the religious institution. The *Shaykhs* compare the profit of owning building and houses to that of the ownership of lands. The buildings are more profitable when they are located in a rich district and the householders are Europeans who have smaller families than Muslims and thus exert less weight on the structure. Other Sheiks discuss the need for having a French company's insurance for buildings, and as a reaction of his view, all the *shaykhs* show resentment and pray to God to save them from the curse of such heresy. Then they hear of a marriage ceremony, and they are all in a hurry to go, so that they will not miss the feast or the gifts

which they are to receive. Later on they will leave the wedding, after the feast, but one of them stays to enjoy the dancing - making an Islamic theological justification of singing and dancing.

This caricatured image of Islamic foundational ideals is presented in a lively humorous style that broadened the reception of the work, despite the shocking satire of the *Shaykhs* who are the graduates of the great al-Azhar institution. Muwaylihi's harsh satire is only to enlarge on his theme of social and religious reforms. Al-Muwaylihi was a strong advocate of the movement to modernising Islam during the nineteenth century. Like other reformers, he set out to end the blind acceptance of dogmas from religious authority.

The clash of East and West is pictured in the wedding chapter. Following Western customs, the family invites all the influential people including the *ulama* to their wedding party in big hotels, despite the fact that they never socialize with them. By doing so they gain fame and prestige. They also give money and invitation tickets to the hotel interpreters to distribute to the tourists. The greedy interpreters sell the free invitation tickets to the tourists, who think it is an Oriental custom to pay a fixed price to attend the wedding. The bridegroom is honoured with the tourists' presence; he rushes to give them a friendly welcome and places them above all influential people and serves them all night, forgetting about any other attendees. He takes the wives of the tourists to see his harem (women of the family and of kin relation) and his pride. The female tourists take with them boxes which the Pasha thinks are gifts to the bride, but turn out to be equipment to take pictures of the Egyptian women in their fancy wedding dresses. The tourists joke at these pictures of Muslim women and sell them back in Europe as objects of ridicule.

The depiction of Muslim women in a Muslim harem in nineteenth-century paintings badly affected Western opinions of the culture of the middle-east. These paintings were viewed as realistic portrayals of Islamic societies. According to Shahin Khattak, Western viewers seemed to ignore the fact that imaginative qualities of such paintings do not provide a realistic view of social behaviour, but reflect the imagination of the artist. The result was a distorted image of Muslims. Paintings such as the "Odalisque" by Ingres, as Khattak has pointed out, were often inspired by a non-Oriental source; moreover the artist drew the frivolous and eccentric harem image out of his own imagination. Ingres started a trend with this painting that was followed by Renoir and Matisse. This led to a general nineteenth-century Western view that Muslim women spent their life in states of indolence, drinking coffee and smoking hookah. These views were transferred in photographic postcards.⁹¹ With

the absence of witnesses this unrealistic erotic image of the inner harem was taken for granted in the West.

Westernizing pretensions are also reflected in the chapter concerning Al-Giza. The Great Pyramid at Giza was the viewing platform for the European tourists. The Bedouin Egyptians would carry the Europeans on their shoulders to the top to observe the view.⁹² This was also a subject of imitation among members of the Egyptian upper-middle-class. But the main theme of al-Muwaylihi's Al-Giza chapter is how Egyptians deal with their own past – that is, how a nostalgia for a past marked by class distinction, and an aristocracy which kept the hierarchy of social order, can hinder any attempt to build a modern society.

This point is exemplified in the following extract of the Pasha's reaction to al-Giza museum:

Isa ibn Hisham said: We reached the al-Giza Palace and antiquities museum where tourists from all countries in the world can be seen. We entered a park with streams flowing through it, as though it were heaven itself. The Pasha took one look at the paths that were so neatly laid out and decorated walks with their crazy-paving, and assumed that the whole area was carpeted with coloured rugs. He found this difficult to understand and was on the point of taking his shoes off. 'This isn't an upholstered carpet' I told him 'it is just an ordinary path. They are just stones and pebbles, not rugs and skins'... We found the lion kept in a private compartments and snakes locked in bottles, tigers in separate quarters, baby ostriches in alcoves, jackals kept in domed buildings and gazelles in tents. 'To whom these gardens belong?' the Pasha asked. 'How can animals live here? I've never heard of wild lions being kept in girls' quarters before, nor of migrant desert animals in secluded apartments,' 'Praise to Almighty Creator!' I replied. This is the palace of Ismail, son of Ibrahim. In the past its chambers would often serve as starting point on the path to the very moon of the sky; its stairs were stages to high positions. When the owner yelled 'Servant', some people would be miserable, others unhappy. In fact Misery and Generosity were both at his beck and call and responded quicker than echo's rebound. Anyone who should shelter in the shadow of these walls passed over by disasters of fate and fortune. Here decisions were made, rules formulated, and orders cancelled and confirmed. Here precious necklaces were torn off virgin's necks and tossed with scattered flowers and decorate silver streams... Here to the sound of the lute and mandolin songstresses used to sing, and their songs would be answered by the cooing of turtle doves on the tree branches. But all that is past. Today this palace is debased; it's been turned into a public garden, ground to be trodden by upper and lower class feet alike. The soil is hired out, and the produce of the trees is bought and sold. The cries of vulture and roars of lions resound here now, and every section is filled with howls of wolves and the snarls of lynxes. All glory and esteem, all splendour, might power and authority that it had have vanished. The book spoke truly when it said:
In this house, in this place, on this throne, I saw that the king had fallen.⁹³

Al-Muwaylihi satirizes the Pasha's anti-modernist views, which are typical of some conservative Egyptians, and constitutes the first reflection on the Egyptian ignorance when dealing with the past. The Pasha's feeling is a nostalgia for the past – in particular, for the privileges enjoyed by the Tutco-Egyptian aristocracy class and a resentment towards modern trends that brought equal opportunities and public access. Al-Muwaylihi's main concern is to

highlight the cultural dilemma of approaching the past. He is not showing a definite notion of how modernity can be defined for Egypt, rather seeking an understanding of how a great past civilization can be a step towards building the ideas and practices of modernity.

The second reflection of Egyptian ignorance when dealing with the past is the underestimation of their own civilization, which has been appreciated and studied by foreigners. This is illustrated in a comic conversation between a son and father, who metaphorically stand for two generations, discussing relics:

The father: I can see nothing about these monuments to glorify. They're nothing more than unsaleable merchandise; they're like something that doesn't sell well or worn-out property and tatty furniture that people have taken out of their homes...

The son: How can you fail to notice the way these civilized Western visitors to our country are falling over each other to acquire a single piece of this art for huge sums of money?... God knows how I wish we had available in Arabic books to tell us about the value of these monuments like the ones in foreign languages! Then you'd realize the things you don't appreciate at the moment.⁹⁴

In all these chapters al-Muwaylihi presents a sociological and historical picture of contemporary Egyptian life, mixing fact and fiction. The first part ends with a chapter about Western civilization, where the author condemns the Eastern people who adopted the trivialities of Western culture. The Pasha expresses his wish to visit Western countries and learn about their true culture.

“*Al-Rihla al-Thanya*” (The Second Journey) is the second part of the work. Isa and the Pasha, accompanied by a friend, travel to Paris. The narrator describes the city as the wonder of the world – that if it was seen by the Roman or the Persian Emperors, they would never boast of their capital cities and Aristotle would not be proud of being a citizen of Athens. Here Paris is seen as a utopia: the source of knowledge, justice and civilization. He also describes his fascination with its people, who work hard all the time. The friend asks Isa to hold off his judgment till they fully explore the city, and mentions different types of Orientals: students and tourists who come to Europe and leave with romance in their heads about it.

Al-Muwaylihi gives a full visual account of Paris by describing how different it is from Cairo. Showing a two contrasted images of both Parisian and popular of Egyptian roads at his age. Isa describes his first encounter with Paris, as he arrives with the Pasha and their friend:

We wander in large courtyards where tribes are not called or summons and army troops do not gather. The crowd of people looks like the resurrection of the dead. People walk the streets as the sea tides. The streets are full of lights which change the night into a day, blinds the sight and perhaps fool the cock to announce the beginning of the morning... the houses are decorated with flowers in different shapes... these houses are mountains compared to ants' holes and planets in the galaxy compared to the houses of spiders.⁹⁵

Al-Muwaylihi continues exaggerating the striking beauty of Paris. The urban landscape of the great European capital signifies its modernity in contrast with Cairo, but at the same time points to the socio-political reality of the two cities. The occupants of Cairo's dark roads are soldiers and tribes, while the brightly-lit Parisian streets are full of people, shops and inns. This exaggerated admiration of Paris foregrounds the cultural problem of romanticizing the West, in its denigration of the Arabic Egypt.

Al-Muwaylihi describes the society itself in a comparative context, having two social situations of two different cities contrasted in the same narrative. His way of describing Paris refers to its dissimilarities from Cairo. This dissimilarity goes beyond the physical description to address cultural issues. The most important issue connected with the cultural geography of Cairo is the people's reaction to modernity.

There is always a cheerful tone of embracing the urban landscape of Paris for its modernity. Describing The Mirror Palace he writes:

Isa Ibn Hisham said: We walked to a magnificent palace suitable for kings with a Latin statement written on its wall: Here Man can ascend to the galaxy planets and reach the infinite. As we entered we saw it crowded with people, we walked with them to a large room of a fifteen- meter length and a ten- meter wide divided in a two and a half meter of triangle glass filled with electric lamps. One can see one's reflection everywhere if he ever wanted to exist few steps forward and he hits the glass and people laughed and were amazed...

The wise man said: this idea of inventing buildings as a puzzle is so old in history. We knew the ancient Egyptians did it in their temples near Mores Lake on the ancient city known as crocodile... But what the ancients built in stone, the modernizers built with glass.⁹⁶

The Crystal Palace that was erected for the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 witnessed the erection of the first large-scale glass building. From that moment, glass became an emblem of modernity. According to Alfred Gotthold Meyer, glass architecture ended the traditional architecture based on stone and wood with the "contrast of light and shadow", and opened an age of architecture that creates "light-space" and the "striving for lightness". It ended the conflict between light and shadow, as the outside and the inside was the same.⁹⁷ It is interesting to see how al-Muwaylihi captures the global contemporary discourse about modernity in architecture.

The social critical insight is the Muwalyihi's contribution to the travelogue genre in Arabic literature. What is interesting is that he chose the Exhibition to give a full description as a symbol of technological achievement. But the idea of exhibiting could indicate hiding other realities. It could be a metaphor of the whole cultural problem in the encounter with the West: what is exhibited and what is real. Perhaps this can be set in contrast to the previous

concept of exhibition, with the foolish behaviour of his fellow countrymen in imitating the West in superficial appearances.

Timothy Mitchell has pointed out that Arab travellers of this period were fascinated by spectacular representations of European cities. In the last decade of the nineteenth century there were many publications in Cairo dealing with descriptions of journeys to Europe, visiting a world exhibition or an international congress of Orientalists.⁹⁸ The Arabs applied the attitude of looking at the world as an exhibition in their writings. This attitude is inherent in European colonial action where the European spectacles “set the world as a picture” in their engagement with the Orient.⁹⁹ Arabs and Europeans encountered the world as a picture. For Mitchell, this is only to reflect an imperial political reality: exhibitions, zoos, museums, theatrical performances and operas, and any other spectacles were indications of the imperial technique in rendering history, progress and culture. Truth becomes an object of mere representation. As we read al-Muwaylahi’s text we might wonder: is this Paris or a dream of it?

Al-Muwaylihi presents the Orientalists as contributors to Arabic culture. As Isa and the Pasha are sitting in a restaurant, they witness a conversation of three French men. The topic is China and how to open it to European trade. One of them insists that the French technological advancement should force countries to open their markets to European investment. The other says it is the role of civilized Europe to impose cultural changes on barbaric people like the Chinese, even through military action. The third man, older than his two companions, rejects such views and explains the rights of the Chinese to be satisfied in their own culture and their own civilization.

The old man who defends the rights of the Chinese is an Orientalist scholar, who introduces himself to Isa, the Pasha and their friend. They establish a mutually collaborative relationship. He offers to accompany them in their journey so he can teach them about the West and they teach him about the East. They express their joy to be led and enlightened by his ideas during their journey.

According to Edward Said, Anglo-American and French writers divided the world into the Occident and the Orient in order to distance themselves from the other or the true Orient. He has pointed out that political-intellectual culture created Orientalism, which is part of the Western perspective, but not the Orient.¹⁰⁰ This shows the unwillingness of most Western intellectuals to accept the other. The geo-political concerns shaped most of the Western views of the Oriental other. It suited the colonizing powers to view the other as savages or

uncivilized. Said's twentieth-century theory contradicts al-Muwaylihi's nineteenth-century representation of Western Orientalists. He presents them as friends to the Arabs, who are more willing to help than condemn the other. This is why we perceive his text as resisting cultural constraints. Unlike many Arab writers, al-Muwaylihi felt the need for a journey that connects the colonized with the colonizers. For him the Orientalists can help this journey take place. Therefore within the allegorical level of his work, he named the French Orientalist as the Wiseman and chose this character to be the deliverer of his own advice to the Eastern people at the end of *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*.

The Parisian landscape becomes the setting of many discussions concerning science and art. As Isa, the Pasha and the French Orientalist visit the World Exhibition, these discussions continue. For instance, when visiting the painting gallery, Isa reflects on the need for studying art in Egypt as a cultural call for benefitting from Egyptian history. Some conversations occur on the jobs of women as art models, and whether a painter has the right to paint naked women in the graveyard, offending the people in charge there; this is an issue which has been the debate in current French newspapers. They also discuss issues of consuming and capitalism and the history of Alexandre Eiffel's tower. Such conversations are aimed to educate and entertain al-Muwaylihi's readers.

Isa narrates what the Wiseman tells him and the Pasha, as they are astonished at the beauty of the Exhibition:

I see the Wiseman shrugs his shoulders and says 'don't you think that such a glorious scene and a great structure with all the fortune spent on it as well as the efforts may last for years, it might last for months or days, nothing will remain except these two' and he points at two large palaces as high as mountains in splendour. Hence the Pasha starts asking him questions and I translate for him.

The Pasha asks 'How much was the funding of the Exhibition?'

The Wiseman: 'The French government participated with twenty million francs, Paris Council with twenty millions francs and a one collaborated company participated with sixty millions. The company issued sixty- five million tickets for the Exhibition.'

The Pasha 'And what the purpose of it?'

The Wiseman 'Investment and profit. It is to advertise business and industries.'

The Pasha 'Is it profitable?'

The Wiseman It was expected to be so but the all are disappointed. The company estimation of visitors number was sixty-five million over a duration of two hundred and four days, but till now this number hasn't reach ten million while have of the duration time has passed. Till now seventy companies announced they are broke and the last one was 'Cairo Street' yesterday. I saw them selling their furniture according to a court order. The company presented your city in a great space where monkeys, donkeys, camels and snakes were engaged in entertaining show. The donkey was sold with nineteen francs while the original price was forty. The same with the camels they were sold with twenty-five francs.¹⁰¹

In the above extract and throughout this part of the text, al-Muwaylihi presents a critical reading of Western power and capitalist exploitation, while at the same time evoking

admiration for its great achievements. This shows much more than the representation of culture through urban landscape, which enhances his fictional narrative by importing trans-cultural examples during Isa and the Pasha's visit to Paris. It is also an effort to offer reflection on the global economic and political system and contemporary world conflicts. For this author, an openness to the West and its ideas was a necessary step towards building a critical perspective of the conditions of his homeland state. At the same time, his satire warned that Egypt should be aware of the grim realities of Western capitalistic exploitation.

Al-Muwaylihi presents the problem of exhibiting "Cairo" as a commodity in the Paris World Exhibition. This was in fact a problem that intimidated many Egyptian delegates, who used to visit Paris before attending the Annual International Congress of Orientalists held in Stockholm.¹⁰² The Egyptian part of the Exhibition was built by the French to represent a winding street of Cairo, featuring many houses with overhanging upper stories, and a mosque. The paint of the buildings was dirty and the whole scene was set in a planned chaotic atmosphere.

The artifice of this scene is the only part of the Exhibition of which Isa and the Pasha feel ashamed. Here they encounter belly-dancers dressed obscenely. They meet a man dressed in the traditional Islamic cloth of clerics, having a glass of wine in his hand, who writes something in Arabic for some French people. The French are deceived and believe the writing to be verses from the Quran. Another man acts in a short comic play, acting as a teacher in the Islamic traditional schools at that time, which were called *Kutab* (the word is derived from the noun "book"); he beats children to make them read while French people laugh at the play. These characters are not authentic Egyptians at all, although they used to live in Egypt. One of them is Syrian, and all are hired by a French company to act in this offending manner for commercial purposes. The Cairo streets imitate the haphazard manner of a bazaar. Frenchmen dressed as Orientals sell perfumes and turbushes, and donkeys with their drivers fill these crowded streets.¹⁰³

This intended misrepresentation of Cairo was a demonstration of nineteenth-century European mischievous and degrading ways of profit making. Although there is no separation from the process of such representation and the world of politics, al-Muwaylihi does not elaborate on the point. He encapsulates his satirical remark in the title of this chapter, dealing with the Egyptian exhibit as "The Slander Against Homeland".¹⁰⁴

As this chapter has set out to show, the main cultural contribution of al-Muwaylihi's text is to show a panoramic view of a colonized city in an age of transition.

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- ¹ Muhamad Mustafa Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 185.
- ² Hoda Elssada, *Gender, Nation, and the Arabic Novel 1892-2008* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), xviii.
- ³ Karman Rastegar, *Literary Modernity Between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions* (Oxon: Rutledge, 2007), 3-11.
- ⁴ Khurshid, Faruq. *Fil- Riwaya al- Arabia Asr al- Tajmi* (Arabic Novel at the Era of Literary Assembly), (Beirut: Dar al- Shuruq, 1982),20-40.
- ⁵ Pre-Islamic history is known in Arabic as “*al-jahiliyyah*”, a time when an elaborate, orally transmitted corpus of poetry was passed down from one generation to another by the “bards”.
- ⁶ Khurshid, *Fil-Riwaya*, 29.
- ⁷ Khurshid, *Fil-Riwaya*, 32.
- ⁸ Kurshid, *Fil-Riwaya*, 20.
- ⁹ Moosa’s argument that Arab writers were inspired by European literature because their own tradition was “limited” in terms of providing literary models has been widely criticised. His views seem to neglect evidence that suggests otherwise.
- ¹⁰ Matii Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction* (New York: Three Continents Press, 1997), x-xi.
- ¹¹ Moosa, *Modern Arabic Fiction*, 98.
- ¹² Andre Lefevere, “Translations: It Genealogy in the West,” in *Translation, History and Culture*, eds. Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere (New York: Pinter, 1990), 27.
- ¹³ Mohamad-Salah Omari, *Nationalism, Islam and World Literature: Sites of Confluence in the Writings of Mohmud al- Masadi* (London: Routledge, 2006), 248.
- ¹⁴ Julia Ashtialy, “Abbasid Belles-Letters” in *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, ed. Julia Ashtialy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34.
- ¹⁵ Mossa, *Modern Arabic Fiction*, 93-120.
- ¹⁶ Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani, *Maqamat of Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadani* (Forgotten Books.Org, 2008), 143. Kindle eBook.
- ¹⁷ Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), 330.
- ¹⁸ Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, 121-156.
- ¹⁹ Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, 99.
- ²⁰ The subsequent account of the biographical information is based on Abid al-Nasir Muhammad al-Saiid, *Biography of al-Mohammad al-Muwaylihi* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1983).

²¹ Yousif Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi and Ithra Fi al-Adab al-Arabi al-Hadith (The Family of al-Muwaylihi and their Influence on Modern Arabic Literature)* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1980), 91-112.

²² John Marlow, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism: A Study in Power Politics* (London: The Cresset Press, 1961), 2-55.

²³ Marlow, *Arab Nationalism*, 2-55.

²⁴ The Rashidun Caliphate (Rightly Guided) era started in 632 and ended in 661. The term is attributed to the first four Muslim rulers: Abu Baker, Umar, Uthman and Ali. These were the closest friends of the Muslim Prophet and took control after his death in 632, which marks the tenth year after establishing Islam in Medina.

²⁵ Muhammad Kalif Ahmad, *Maalim Al-Tatwar al-Hadith Fi Allugha al-Arabia Waadabaha (Trends of Modernization in the Linguistics and Literature of the Arabic Language)* (Cairo: Isa al-Babli al-Halabi Publishing House, 1961), 31.

²⁶ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 56.

²⁷ Abd al-Rahman al-Rafii, *Musar Wa al-Sudan Fi Awail Ahd al-Ahtelal (Egypt and Sudan at the Beginning of the Occupation Era)* (Cairo: Sharakat Maktabat and Mustafa al-Babli al-Halabi Publishing House, 1942), 216.

²⁸ Nafosa Zakaria Said, *Tariq al-Daua Ila al-Amayah Waatharaha Fi Musar (The History of Adopting the Egyptian Colloquial Language and its Influence on Egypt)* (Alexandaria: Dar al-Thaqafa Publishing House, 1964), 32.

²⁹ Hilary Kalmbach, "Training Teachers how to Teach: Transnational Exchange and the Introduction of Social-Scientific Pedagogy in 1890s Egypt," in *The Long 1890s in Egypt: Colonial Quiescence, Subterranean Resistance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 87-117.

³⁰ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 56.

³¹ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 136.

³² Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 139-140.

³³ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 144.

³⁴ Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, *Musbah al-Sharq (The Mistaken Arrow)*, cited in Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 220.

³⁵ Al-Muwaylihi, *Musbah al-Sharq*, 225.

³⁶ Al-Muwaylihi, *Musbah al-Sharq*, 220.

³⁷ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 186.

³⁸ These articles were published in *Al-Muqatam* between December 1887 and 1894. The quote is cited in Roger Allen, *A Period of Time: A Study of Muhammad Al-Muwaylihi's Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, 1992), 6.

³⁹ The Legislative Council was established in 1883 and ended in 1913. It consisted of 30 members. Four of them were appointed by the Khedive of Egypt to be the president and one assistant while other members were to be elected.

⁴⁰ Allen, *A Period of Time*, 157.

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- ⁴¹ Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 165.
- ⁴² Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, trans. Roger Allen, in Allen, *A Period of Time*, 142.
- ⁴³ Kamal Mustafa, *Al-Sahafa Waladab Fi Mait Yum (Journalism and Literature in One Hundred Days)* (Cairo: Al-Anwar Publishing House, 1938), 167.
- ⁴⁴ Mustafa, *Al-Sahafa Waladab*, 347.
- ⁴⁵ Roger Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham: The Excluded Passages," *Die Welt des Islams* 12 (1969): 74-89.
- ⁴⁶ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 74-89.
- ⁴⁷ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 74-89.
- ⁴⁸ Michael Given, *The Archaeology of the Colonized* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 19.
- ⁴⁹ Allen, *A Period of Time*, 15.
- ⁵⁰ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 108.
- ⁵¹ Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi, *Asr Muhammad Ali (The Age of Muhammad Ali)* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Musrya, 1951), 191, 308.
- ⁵² Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 109.
- ⁵³ Ehud R. Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 39.
- ⁵⁴ Toledano, *State and Society*, 221-225.
- ⁵⁵ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 115.
- ⁵⁶ Raymond T. Stock, *Dreams of Departure: The Last Dreams Published in the Nobel Laureate's Lifetime by Najib Mahfuz* (Cairo: American University Press, 2007), 211.
- ⁵⁷ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 30.
- ⁵⁸ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 32.
- ⁵⁹ Samuel Moreh, *Studies In Modern Arabic Prose And Poetry* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 95.
- ⁶⁰ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 65.
- ⁶¹ Allen, "Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham," 65.
- ⁶² Moreh, *Studies*, 104.
- ⁶³ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 155.
- ⁶⁴ Karman Rastegar, *Literary Modernity between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions in Nineteenth-Century Arabic, English and Persian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 90.
- ⁶⁵ Mark Crinson, *Empire Building* (London: Routledge, 1996), 43.

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- ⁶⁶ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, vol. 35, (London: George Allen, 1903-12), 118.
- ⁶⁷ Ruskin, *John Ruskin*, vol. 9, 41.
- ⁶⁸ Ruskin, *John Ruskin*, vol. 9, 38.
- ⁶⁹ See Nezar Alsayyad, *Cairo: Histories of a City* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), and Toledano, *State and Society*.
- ⁷⁰ Gustav Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour: A Narrative Drawn from Gustav Flaubert's Travel Notes & Letters*, ed. Francis Steegmuller (London: Penguin, 1979), 79.
- ⁷¹ James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 95-105.
- ⁷² Alsayyad, *Cairo*, 222.
- ⁷³ Alsayyad, *Cairo*, 223.
- ⁷⁴ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 108.
- ⁷⁵ Cited in Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 155-176.
- ⁷⁶ Malika Zaghal, "Cairo as Capital of Islamic Institutions? Al-Azhar Islamic University, the State and the City," in *Cairo Contested Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman (Cairo: The American University Press, 2009), 63-83.
- ⁷⁷ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 135-136.
- ⁷⁸ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 133.
- ⁷⁹ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 244.
- ⁸⁰ Allen, *A Period of Time*, 12.
- ⁸¹ Cited in Allen, *A Period of Time*, 12.
- ⁸² See Ramitsh, *Usrat al-Muwaylihi*, 275-313.
- ⁸³ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 200.
- ⁸⁴ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 123.
- ⁸⁵ Omar D. Foda, "The Pyramid and the Crown: The Egyptian Beer Industry from 1897 to 1963," *Middle East Studies* 46 (2014): 138-158.
- ⁸⁶ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 145.
- ⁸⁷ James Carlile McCoan, *Egypt As It Is* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1877), 49.
- ⁸⁸ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 122-123.
- ⁸⁹ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 131.

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- ⁹⁰ Jasper Brinton, *The Mixed Courts of Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 205.
- ⁹¹ Shahin Kuli Khan Kattak, *Islam and the Victorians: Nineteenth-Century Perceptions of Muslim Practices and Beliefs* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 88.
- ⁹² Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1988), 16.
- ⁹³ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 361.
- ⁹⁴ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*, 364.
- ⁹⁵ Muhammad Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham or Fatra min al-Zaman*, 4th edition, (Cairo: Religious Culture Publications, 1927), 378.
- ⁹⁶ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham or Fatra min al-Zaman*, 423.
- ⁹⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1986), 45.
- ⁹⁸ Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 6.
- ⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 6.
- ¹⁰⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 329-333.
- ¹⁰¹ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham or Fatra min al-Zaman*, 400-401.
- ¹⁰² Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, 2.
- ¹⁰³ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham or Fatra min al-Zaman*, 437-441.
- ¹⁰⁴ Al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham or Fatra min al-Zaman*, 434.

Chapter Four

An Image Caught in Tyranny: Gibran's Anticlericalism

This chapter offers a reading of Khalil Gibran's allegorical fictional work as social criticism. He explores rebellion against both Christian and Muslim religious tyranny. Gibran challenged any traditions of obedience to religious and political hierarchy. His fictional allegories, *Spirit Brides* and *Spirit Rebellious*, are modelled in a message of anticlericalism as an attempt to synthesize religious differences. For him, Christians and Muslims should seek the kingdom of God in this world by rebelling against corrupt religious and political institutions. The church and the Islamic Ottoman state represent the corrupt social system that should be changed by a rebellion against both authorities. He uses his Christian and Muslim rebels to create a world that is neither West or East, nor Christian or Muslim. It is a humanitarian view of a political and social struggle. His beloved Lebanon becomes a symbol of eternal love for every Lebanese despite religion or race. His political engagement and vision of rebellion is demonstrated in showing his countrymen, as well as his global audience, the ugliness of political and religious tyranny. His fictional writing presents a poetic and philosophical narrative on the impact of these tyrannical forces in destroying Lebanon. Presenting this very image is an act of rebellion against the religious authority in Gibran's times and a call for a social change to be received by his readers.

On the other hand, Gibran's love for Lebanon symbolizes his dream of humanitarianism. He disavows international borders as he writes in his *A Tear and a Smile*: "Absolve me from things of pomp and state / For the earth in its all is my land / And all mankind my countrymen."¹ For Gibran the struggle and bloodshed on the soil of Lebanon symbolizes the possibility of a global rebellion against tyranny. Lebanon has become the allegory of this struggle towards freedom. His landscape of a timeless place allegorically refers to a continuity of mankind's rebellion against oppression. A timeless universal quest for freedom is a reality in mankind's history. But Gibran also locates his allegorical fiction in Lebanon to illustrate this struggle on historical bases and to expose both political and religious oppressors in the Arabic world.

Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins' biography of Gibran states the significance of Lebanon as the setting of Gibran's fiction:

All of Gibran's early writings were set in Lebanon. This land of mystic beauty became his solace, his source of imagination, and in later years his object of yearning. The place of his childhood and adolescence, the mountains and valleys of northern Lebanon, became for him the epitome of beauty and unity, evoking in him a profound sense of reconciliation far away from the sad cries of humanity. The heroes in his early writings who fearlessly challenge the ecclesiastical and political status quo, although their names and situations vary, in essence unmistakably represent Gibran himself.²

The setting of his fiction is Besharri in Lebanon, which is Gibran's hometown. It is a fortress-village whose origins are rooted back to an ancient era in mankind's history. Known as Phoenicia, it represents one of the oldest civilizations. Also it is the land which many different races tried to colonize: Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, crusading Europeans, Arabs and Turks.³ Gibran lived in the entanglements of Lebanese history and he synthesizes this experience in his writing. Moving allegorically from one historical epoch to another, he was able to show the Lebanese religious strife in symbolic colourful images.

The following historical background of Lebanese religious strife shows why Gibran situated his image of a Muslim-Christian united rebellion in this country and how Gibran's image of this dual-religion rebellion is illuminating to his worldwide readers. Also, presenting this strife throughout his fiction is highly significant to his role as a social-activist writer, facing this sectarian violence of a national heritage.

In the ancient Semitic language, Lebanon means "white", named for the snow-capped peaks of its mountains. Different religions – principally the Maronites and the Druze – shaped political life in Lebanon. Their religious antagonism culminated in 1860 when thousands of Maronites were killed by Druze forces aligned with the Muslim ruler (*wali*) of Damascus. Feelings of hostility and ensuing religious strife persisted throughout the nineteenth century. The Lebanese in all their sects suffered, like all Arab countries, from the ignorance, illiteracy, injustices, and savagery of the Ottoman rule. But they differ in the way that they received foreign support for their cause, which turned out to be another enormous fuel for the sectarian strife. According to Albert Hourani, "Each European consulate was a centre of influence, around which there grew a group of protected subjects... European protection extended indeed beyond individuals to whole communities".⁴ Also Europeans' ideological stands contributed to the negative historical account of the Ottoman Empire's cultural legacy. Such stands were also followed by Arab nationalists. According to Donald Quataert,

The nationalist sentiments that pervaded most nineteenth – and twentieth-century history writing seriously have obstructed our assessment and appreciation of the Ottoman legacy. The biases come from many sides. West and central Europeans rightly feared Ottoman imperial

expansion until the late seventeenth century. Remarkably, these old fears have persisted into the present day and arguably have been transformed into cultural prejudices... Moreover, nationalist histories have dismissed the place of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious political formation in historical evolution.⁵

The Arab nationalist history-writing, as well as the imperial European discourse, treated Ottomans as the oppressors that brought nothing but the destruction of national values. Such views denied the progress and aspects of modernity of Ottoman imperial state-building. Ussama Makdisi argues that the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of “modern Ottoman imperialism”, reflected in a set of imperial practices and discourses. Makdisi states that:

Ottoman reformers sought to reshape, improve and ultimately discipline Arab peripheries of the Ottoman Empire as an integral part of a project of imperial renewal and modernization. Furthermore, Ottoman reformers consistently imagined the Arab provinces as subordinate parts of an Ottoman state despite the development of a language of secular nationalism. The Arab peripheries of the empire became a proving ground for Ottoman modernity – physical places that signified both what the modern Ottoman was not, i.e. backwards, primitive and savage and, in addition, the Arab peripheries constituted metaphorical spaces in which Istanbul-centered reformers elaborated a notion what Ottoman modernity was, i.e. rational, scientific and civilized, attributes which were defined against a notion of a premodern periphery... The primary concern of all Ottoman reformers in the nineteenth century was to maintain the integrity of the empire in the face of European encroachment.⁶

Both Ottoman and European interventions were continuous in the Arab world throughout the nineteenth century. This was expressed not only in military terms, but also in supporting different ethnic and religious sects of the region. In Mount Lebanon, the sectarian strife was mainly between the Maronites and the Druzes.

The Maronite sect was formed during the division in the Byzantine church in the fifth century A.D. The Maronite Church was established in Lebanon in 749. The Maronites are followers of a monk, St. Maron (d.410) living in Syria. They suffered persecution by Muslim Caliphates of Damascus and Baghdad and escaped from Syria to the mountains of north Lebanon. But according to Matti Moosa, the Maronites began to play an influential role in politics during the eighteenth century when some of the ruling Shihabi princes converted to Christianity and joined the Maronite Church. During the middle of the nineteenth century, Maronites became even more powerful. Moosa points out that:

Maronites Patriarchs voiced their opinions on almost every issue. They came to be considered not only as the patriarchs and heads of their community but the ‘Patriarchs of Lebanon.’ Thus to the Maronites, Lebanon and Maronitism became synonymous. Furthermore, the Maronite began to consider themselves a unique community which by religion and culture was distinct from a predominantly Muslim Arab world.⁷

On the other hand, the Druzes represent the other rival political power to the Maronites. The Druz religion entered Lebanon in about 1020. The Druzes are originally followers of the Ismaili doctrine in Egypt. But the main foreign political oppression was carried out by the Ottomans, who ruled Lebanon from 1516 to 1818. Lebanon was ruled by a feudal system of governments dominated by the clergy and *emirs* (princes) or nobility. Lebanon was part of Great Syria which includes Lebanon, Syria and Palestine as part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Sultans encouraged the clergy feudalism to exert fearful suppression over the Lebanese peasants. The role of corrupt politics was played by the leaders of all the religious factions.

According to Joseph P. Ghougassian, the 1860s massacre opened the door for five European states to interfere, in the name of religious protection. France claimed the protection of the Maronite Catholics. Russia supported the Greek Orthodox. England backed the Druzes. The Austro-Hungarian role was the guidance of Catholic sects of the Eastern Churches. Prussia also interfered in political institutions.⁸ The European diplomatic pressure resulted in the establishment of the *Mustasarrifate* of Mount Lebanon. This was an Ottoman Empire's subdivision. It indicated that Lebanon be partitioned into Christian and Druze sections. This administrative system enhanced the religious sectarian division of the Lebanese people and helped to empower the rich clergy and the feudal governors. European consuls and missionaries were involved not in helping the exploited poor but in everyday politics. This imperial arrogance changed even the geography of Lebanon and shaped its demographic reality up to the present date.

According to the historical account of Kamal Salibi of modern Lebanon, the European intervention in Lebanon played a significant role in the sectarian war. Due to the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, Arabic provinces were divided to be under French and British occupation at the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. In 1920 France took over Syria and Lebanon through the mandate from the League of the Nations. The religious sectarian troubles increased as a result of the foreign occupation statute "divide to rule". The political compromises and the changing demographic trends during Lebanon's colonial period of the nineteenth century were the main reasons of the bloody civil Lebanese War in 1975-1990.⁹

Gibran responded to this historical account of a Lebanon full of sectarian divisions in a message addressed to both parents and their children. He tried to educate the young generations not to imitate their forefathers in submitting to foreign political powers. Also, he advised parents on educating their children to "Liberate them from the slavery of imitation

and traditions and they will remain free in chains and prisons”.¹⁰ For Gibran this liberation can only be achieved through his social reform vision, simply expressed in: “Knowledge, wealth, rectitude, freedom of speech and work and all that makes man the image of the Gods comes from the struggle and diligence of the individual and cannot be obtained by political partisanship, by belonging to the State or by relying on the Constitution”.¹¹ He believed in the infinite capacity of individuals to rebel against both Ottoman and European political oppressions.

Wail S. Hassan points out that Gibran’s social critique is directed against Arab cultural dependency on Europe. These views of Gibran were expressed in *Al-Hilal* magazine, which ran a survey of Arab intellectuals’ views on the impact of Western civilization on Arab *Nahda*. Gibran argues that:

under the conditions of European hegemony over the entire Arab world, Arab renaissance is no more than slavish mimicry of Western thought and tastes, a superficial veneer of modernity, and that a true renaissance embodied in economic cooperation among Arab countries and their political unity and independence—the goal of many Arab nationalists of that period—would never be permitted under Western economic and military dominance, which pursues the policy of divide and conquer.¹²

Gibran’s social idealism motivated his political commitment. During the Syrian famine in World War I, Gibran became the secretary of the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief Committee to raise funds for his country. He believed that the famine had been planned by the Ottoman Turkish government and believed the same Armenian genocide committed by the Turkish troops, was occurring again to the Christian inhabitants of Mount Lebanon as 80,000 had already died because of the famine. The committee agreed with Gibran that the Turkish government caused this tragedy to punish the Syrian leaders who supported the allies. Gibran made all necessary contacts with the State department in Washington to successfully provide funding.¹³ Back in Lebanon Gibran’s friend Auyb Tabet, who organized the First Arab Congress in Paris, was charged with treason and sentenced to death. Gibran’s friend’s case was like many Christian and Muslim nationalists, who were tortured and put to death by the Ottoman government. The danger of persecution in the hands of the Turkish government was also expected in America. Turkish spies were watching the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief committee’s activities in New York. Suheil Bushrui cites Gibran’s writing that: “If *any* Syrian in America displeases Turkey, his relatives are killed”. Gibran also wrote: “That is why the U.S. Syrians are so infinitely cautious and watchful”.¹⁴

Despite all these dangers Gibran continued as an activist, supporting his home country, and communicated his social activities through his own literary production. This was

the case in his poem “Dead Are My People”, published in Al-Funon Magazine during the Syrian famine. In this poem, Gibran appealed to his fellow exiles and Arab emigrants in the States to support the relief fundraising. The poem also shows a restless heart of the poet who is tortured by living at ease in a far away land:

My people died of hunger, and he who
Did not perish from starvation was
Butchered with the sword; and I am
Here in this distant land, roaming
Amongst a joyful people who sleep
Upon soft beds, and smile at the days
While the days smile upon them.¹⁵

Gibran as an emigrant in the U.S. tried to identify himself with Lebanon as home. Being away made him more attached and nostalgic for his home country. This sentiment was the main motive to develop a well-defined sense of identity in an age of a growing national consciousness in the Arab world. Gibran’s longing for Lebanon is clearly reflected in his letter dated in 1908 to his friend Ammen Guraieb who travelled there. Gibran writes:

You are now in the other part of the great, but small, globe, while I am still in clamorous and noisy Boston. You are in the East and I am in the West... When you are in a beautiful spot or among learned people, or by the side of old ruins, or on the top of a high mountain, whisper my name so that my soul will go to Lebanon and hover around you and share with you the pleasure of life and all life’s meanings and secrets. Remember me when you see the sun rising from behind Mount Sunnin or Farm El Mizab. Think of me when you see the sun coming down toward its setting, spreading its red garment upon the mountains and valleys as if shedding blood instead of tears as it bids Lebanon farewell. Recall my name when you see the shepherds sitting in the shadow of trees and blowing their reeds and filling the silent field with soothing music as did Apollo when he was exiled to this world. Think of me when you see the damsels carrying their earthenware jars filled with water upon their shoulders. Remember me when you see the Lebanese villager plowing the earth before the face of the sun, with beads of sweat adorning his forehead while his back is bent under the heavy duty of labor. Remember me when you hear the songs and hymns that Nature has woven from the sinews of moonlight, mingled with the aromatic scent of the valleys, mixed with the frolicsome breeze of the Holy Cedars, and poured into the hearts of the Lebanese... Love and longing my dear Ameen, are the beginning and the end of our deeds.¹⁶

Gibran’s aspirations hovered between the East and the West. And until the end of his life he was trapped in both. In a letter dated in 1925 to his friend May Ziadeh, the famous Lebanese-Palestinian poet, essayist and translator who was a key feminist al-Nahda figure, Gibran wrote:

The day will come when I will be leaving for the Orient. My longing for my country almost melts my heart. Had it not been for this cage which I have woven with my own hands, I would have caught the first boat sailing towards the Orient. But what man is capable of leaving an edifice on whose construction he has spent all his life, even though that edifice is his own prison? It is difficult to get rid of it in one day.¹⁷

Literature becomes the mirror of Gibran's social activities and the call for rebellion against political corruption in the Arab world. This rebellion takes the shape of spiritual resistance.

In 1911 Gibran formed a society called "*Al- Halakat Al- Dhahabiya*" (The Golden Sessions) as a social activity to call for reforms and resistance to the Ottomans.¹⁸ However, as my thesis will argue, his allegorical Arabic fiction was, and still is, a more influential social act than his political activities. Gibran's anti-religious tone is very much emphasized in his third book in Arabic: *Spirits Rebellious* (*Al-Arwah Al- Mutamarridah*) published in New York by the Arabic Immigrant Press in 1908. The book agitated both the Maronite Church and Ottoman state officials. It was censored and burned in Beirut Marketplace by the Ottoman Syrian government, and he himself was excommunicated from the Catholic Maronite church and exiled from Lebanon.¹⁹ Yet for Gibran the most fearful consequences of all this was losing the genuine relationship with his readers. He wrote in a letter to his cousin Nakhli Gibran in *A Self Portrait*, translated by Anthony Ferris:

I am not sure whether the Arabic-speaking world remains as friendly to me as it has been in the past three years. I say this because the apparition of enmity has already appeared. The people in Syria are calling me heretic, and the intelligentsia in Egypt vilifies me, saying, 'He is the enemy of just laws, of family ties, and of old traditions.' Those writers are telling the truth, because I do not love man-made laws and I abhor the traditions that our ancestors left us. This hatred is the fruit of my love for the sacred and spiritual kindness which should be the source of every law upon the earth, for kindness is the shadow of God in man... Will my teaching ever be received by the Arab world, or will it die away and disappear like a shadow?²⁰

Gibran not only shocked his usually conservative Christian and Muslim Arab readers with his anticlericalism theme, but also introduced an alternative authority of the orthodox religious scripture interpretations. He challenged both religions with a vision of the sainthood of sinners and a dogma of acceptance of suicide and violence, to establish his belief in the sacred heart and love. As will be discussed later, Marta, Gibran's prostitute character, is depicted as the saint and a Christ figure. Some of his female characters commit suicide to defend their love and rebel against arranged marriages.

Gibran's authoritarian voice of love breaks religious boundaries. He made himself the poet and the prophet who communicates a message of love to transcend religious differences. This is in a way a rebellion against the religious authority and its patriarchal tyranny. Gibran named the hero of his *The Prophet* al-Mustafa, meaning "the chosen", which is the name of the Prophet of Islam, in order to draw a character of a religious authority and essential divinity who belongs to no specific religion and gives the message that religion and temple are embodied in one's daily life. This may explain why his bestselling book *The Prophet*,

written in English and published in 1923, was not translated into Arabic till 1966, although it was translated into more than forty languages.²¹

The Prophet shows the peak of what Wail S. Hassan calls the “self-orientalising” of Gibran since he becomes the romantic poet who brings along the mysticism of the Orient to his Western reader. But Gibran’s *The Prophet* remains outside the mainstream of the Arabic poetic tradition which could regard a poet as a sage but never a prophet. Hassan compares Gibran to the great Arabic poet of the Abbasid era, al-Mutanabbi, who declared himself a prophet and ever since was the subject of controversial debates concerning the false, according to the religious taboo in Arabic Islamic and Christian cultures. In the Arabic world a prophecy is a divine authorization given to biblical characters; according to Muslims, prophecy ended with the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, the last prophet. Therefore, in Hassan’s words:

Gibran’s prophetic stance, a self-orientalizing development of his Romantic proclivity, could not be expressed in works addressed to Arab audiences, both because of the infamy that such a posture would incur and because self-orientalizing would be superfluous to begin with. A title such as *The Prophet* would have been deeply offensive to Arab readers, Christians and Muslims, and even though the book was later translated into Arabic, it remains, together with his other books translated from English into Arabic, far less known than his earlier Arabic works.²²

The Prophet is about the hermit Mustafa, who has lived in exile for twelve years. He decides to depart his adoptive country for his country of birth. Gibran’s fictional character Mustafa returns to his birthplace in another work *The Gardens of the Prophet* (1933), only to find himself an outcast. This work remained unfinished after the death of Gibran. The two books reflect Gibran’s sense of alienation in both America and the Arab world.

The debate on censoring Gibran’s *The Prophet* continued to the late-twentieth century and more likely to our present day. In *Al-Ahram Weekly* Newspaper published in Cairo in August 1999, the Egyptian chief censor’s deputy Mustafa Taye was reported saying that, “the Censorship Department has decided to refer *The Prophet* to the Islamic Research Centre [of Al-Azhar] because the book contains illustrations that could be perceived as representing the Prophet Mohamed”,²³ though Gibran’s illustrations by no means refer to the Prophet of Islam, and his Mustafa character is a reflection of a personal myth that doesn’t belong to any institutionalised religion.

In fact, censorship of Gibran’s works during his lifetime included not only his literary works but his private letters as well. The Ottoman censors banned Gibran’s articles published

in Syria and all papers whether published in Cairo, New York or South America, and most of his private mail was openly read by employees in the censor's office in Cairo.²⁴

The Ottoman Printing Law was established in 1857 to regulate the licensing of publishers and censorship. Due to this law, printing establishments in Istanbul were subject to review by the Council of Education and the Ministry of Police. In provinces such as Lebanon and Cairo, the *vali* (governor) acted as the middleman between the applicant and agencies in Istanbul. A licensed printer was required to submit a copy of all publications to the council before publication. All books were sent to Istanbul for approval. But this was not practical for daily and weekly periodical publications. The Press Law did not describe the day-to-day details of censorship but provided a post-publication mechanism to assure the Ottoman regime's full control of the press.²⁵

Gibran's concept of rebellion against religious tyranny reflects the social relation between individuals and their oppressors and at the same time captures the historical epoch in Levant politics. His fiction is a unifying historical image of a fragmented Lebanon. He used history to unite the generations of different civilizations which were established and ruined on the same soil of Lebanon throughout the history of mankind.

Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran's biographical accounts of Gibran show Gibran's personal encounter with religious persecution, and how his family experiences formed the basis for his anticlericalism theme. He was born in 1883 to a Maronite family in Besharri, a mountainous area in Northern Lebanon. Gibran's great-grandfather's name appears in a petition from the townspeople of Besharri asking for protection from the Turks during the Druze and Christian massacres of 1860. Gibran's mother Kamila Rahme came from a distinguished priestly family. She and her father were engaged in the intrigue of church politics.²⁶

At an early age Gibran realized the hypocrisy and discrimination against his family done by the ruling clerics. Gibran's father was poor, unable to provide for his family, and spent his time gambling and drinking alcohol. He brought scandal and shame to his family, after he took a new house in return for political loyalty to a corrupt and powerful local leader of the al-Dahir clan.²⁷ Gibran's mother represents the victimized female-figure in his art that becomes a symbol of Lebanon oppressed by greedy priests and unjust rulers. In one of his portraits he writes, "The face of my mother is that of my nation".²⁸ The character of his mother, as she appears in his writing, represents both love and courage. She was the victim of

suppressing religious authorities but at the same time the rebel who established a new life for her family and refused to be the traditional subservient woman.

Gibran himself grew in the atmosphere of religious snobbery and persecution, as Lebanon became a troubled region where religious hatred was fostered between Christian and Muslim populations. Gibran was unable to receive any formal education because of his poverty.²⁹ But he found his way to the world of history and language in regular visits to a village priest, Father Yusif, who taught him the Bible in both Syrian and Arabic languages and introduced him to the world of mysticism outside the organized religion of the orthodox clergy.³⁰ His anticlericalism is targeted against the misuse of power and the greed of religious institutions, but not the mystic clerics.

In 1895, Kamila Gibran left her husband in jail and emigrated with her children, including the twelve-year-old Gibran to America, leaving behind the poverty and disgrace of their life in Lebanon. Gibran's mother's immigration was part of a major wave of Syrian immigration to America as a result of centuries of political discrimination under Ottoman rule, and economic reasons. The Syrian population were the first Arabic-speaking immigrants to arrive in America in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Many restrictions on immigration were lifted by the Ottoman government in 1898 to allow Lebanese, as part of the greater Syria region, to travel freely, provided they retained Ottoman citizenship. To protect immigrants from abuse and exploitation, a group of Syrians petitioned the Ottoman council in the United States to help female and elderly travellers. As Sarah M. A. Gualtieri points out: By 1908, when the petition was drafted, women had become a significant portion of the Syrian migration flow into the United States. Between 1899 and 1914 – corresponding to the peak years of Syrian migration to the United States – women made up 32 percent of the total, a high figure especially in relation to other Mediterranean immigrants groups.³¹

Gibran's family settled in Boston's South End, which hosted the second-largest Syrian community in America, next to New York, where many of Gibran's cousins and friends had emigrated from Besharrie.³² The cultural side of Boston, such as the world of the theatre, the opera and art galleries, nourished and subsequently influenced Gibran's artistic talent.

Although deeply influenced by western literature and culture, Gibran's work is still distinctive as genuine Arabic innovation. His theme of anticlericalism is a real portrait of his contemporary Arab world reflected in mystical messages. According to his biographer Alexander Najjar, Gibran wrote to Mary Haskell: "The air is full of cries", and "one cannot breathe without getting the taste of blood".³³ Yet Gibran's fictional world is full of hope and

optimism, since his characters struggle in their journey toward a perfect world, rebelling against clerical feudalism, which marked nineteenth-century Arabic communities and traditions that bound Eastern women. Also Gibran's rebellion takes a literary form in rejecting Arabic classical literary traditions and establishing his poetic language and the use of the prose poem, a genre that he introduced to Arabic literature.³⁴

John Walbridge points out that the nature of Gibran's art is characterized by Arabic aesthetic, not American, since he was an Arabic writer who wrote in English.³⁵ Gibran was a critic of both the East and the West throughout his spiritual tackling of down-to-earth subjects. As Kalil S. Hawi states:

The prevalent belief among his [Gibran's] Arab friends is that: He declared his revolt against the West by means of the spirit of the East, just as before he had declared his revolt against the backwardness of the East, drawing his inspiration from what is pure in the spirit of the Western renaissance.³⁶

Gibran dealt with human struggle in his earthly living and his seeking of hope and love in a highly-spiritual manner. At the same time, his themes of religious oppression, exile, nostalgia of a glorious Arabic past and personal longing for his homeland Lebanon, marked a linkage between literature and politics. His fiction reflects a rebellion against the political reality of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Arab world.

Gibran believed that a better future can only be obtained by struggle, not dreaming. As he wrote in his *Handful of Beach Sand*: "They told me: if you see a slave sleeping, do not wake him least he be dreaming of freedom. I told them: If you see a slave sleeping, wake him and explain to him freedom".³⁷ He expresses the idea of rebellion through allegorical landscapes which are dominant in two collections of his allegorical fiction: *Spirit Brides* and *Spirit Rebellious*. Here he breaks the religious boundaries of obedience and shows what he believes to be the dark oppressiveness of institutionalized religions.

Arayis Al-Muruj is his second book in Arabic, published in New York by the Immigrant Press in 1906, translated as *Spirit Brides* by Juan R. I. Cole or *The Nymphs of the Valley* by H. M. Nahmad. It is a collection of three allegories: "The Ash of Centuries and the Immortal Flame", "Marta Al-Banyiah", and "Yuhanna the Madman". The setting of these stories is Northern Lebanon.

Throughout the fictional world of this collection, with its different kinds of love, there is one ever-lasting love, crossing different centuries, uniting Christian and Islamic lovers on the same setting of the Roman Temple ruins in Baalbek. This love is Gibran's own love to his Lebanon: a love blessed by the gods and prohibited by the clergy, whose greed for wealth and

power destroyed the nation. Perhaps due to the sensitivity of his Arabic Muslim readers, Gibran didn't use Muslim clerks as the tyrant characters in his work, but instead he used his Christian clergy. He drew on his own personal experiences with the church practices, as recorded in many biographical accounts of his family's background concerning his grandfather's encounter with the Maronite church. Yet, Gibran carried his attack on both Christian and Muslim clerics.

The first story of *Spirit Brides*, "The Ash of Centuries and the Immortal Flame" is about a young man, Nathan, who prays to a goddess to spare the life of his beloved. Two thousand years later a young man named Ali al- Husaini explores the goddess temple and is almost overwhelmed by love. The next morning he meets a young girl and they recognize each other instantly: they are Nathan and his beloved reincarnated. Their love survived for thousands of years and is born again with them. Nathan is a son of a high priest, and prays to Astarte, the Phoenician goddess of love and beauty, to save his beloved who is ill. But his beloved dies. His grief drives him out of his mind and he wanders aimlessly in Baalbek, or as it was known, the City of the Sun.

As night grew quiescent life sought repose in the City of the Sun, and lamps were extinguished in the dwellings strewn around the mighty temples that nestled in groves of olive and laurel trees. The moon rose, spilling its rays upon white marble pillars that, looming like titans in the quiet of the night, stood guard over the sacrificial altars of the gods. The columns gazed with wonder and bewilderment toward the towers of Lebanon, perched among rocky debris on the ridges of faraway hills. In that hour filled with magic stillness, wherein slumbering souls are united with their infinite dreams, Nathan, the son of the High Priest Hiram, arrived bearing a torch and entered into the temple of Astarte... He cried out, in a voice rendered faint by painful travails and broken by cruel lovesickness: 'Thy compassion, O supreme Astarte! Compassion, O goddess of love and beauty. Have mercy upon me and stay thou the hand of death from my beloved'.³⁸

The "City of the Sun" landscape is embodied in Lebanon; it turns to be a temple of love, beauty and magic. But the City of the Sun, Baalbek, has forever changed. It is now a landscape of ruins represented metaphorically in an image of defeat after a combat. Lebanon becomes the place of agony and longing for a bygone past.

The day dwindled, the light faded, and the sun gathered up its ash from the plains of Baalbek. Ali al-Husaini returned at the head of his flock to the remains of the temple and seated himself amidst fallen pillars that resembled the ribs of an abandoned soldier, rent by combat and stripped by the elements... Ali closed his tear-filled eyes and stretched out his hands like a supplicant seeking compassion. His spirit quaked within him incessantly, unleashing staccato sighs composed partly of abject suffering and partly ardent longing. In a voice indistinguishable from a sigh, save in the faint resonance of the words, he said: 'Who are you who are close to my heart, remote from my gaze, who separates me from myself and binds my present to a distant and forgotten past? Are you a vision, a houri come from the world of eternity to demonstrate to me the vanity of life and frailty of human beings?'³⁹

This second part of the story of the Muslim character Ali al-Husaini is entitled “Spring, I, 890 After the Coming of Jesus the Nazarene”. This combination of a Christian title for a story about a Muslim hero is significantly symbolic. It implies Gibran’s message of the one love to Lebanon, a love that is never to be compromised by religion. One love is of all the Lebanese. The incarnation of Nathan and his beloved becomes allegorically the love of the eternal Lebanon that never changes, despite all wars and sectarian strife.

The landscape of the story, Baalbek, becomes the allegory of state and religion. Baalbek has a historical significance as the union of powerful world colonizers and institutional religious establishment. In 27 BC, the Roman emperor Augustus built the grandest temple of antiquity, the Temple of Jupiter in Baalbek, to be a majestic structure as a symbol of the Roman Empire in the heart of a holy place. According to Dell Upton’s account, Baalbek was a religious centre devoted to Baal, given the name of *Heliopolis*, the City of the Sun, during the Phoenician times. Also the Arabs believe Baalbek Terrace to be the cyclopean walls back into the times of Cain and Abel. Yet since the mid-eighteenth century up to present times, Baalbek has presented cultural disputes in archaeological history. Many nations claim Baalbek as part of their ancient civilisations’ heritage, over varied archaeologically constructed stories of the Roman Baalbek. Baalbek’s ruins were thoroughly studied and introduced to the European readers by the Irish bishop Richard in his *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries* (1745), and by Robert Wood in his *The Ruins of Ballbec, otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria* (1745). Wood considered Baalbek a heritage of the Europeans. Consequently, in cultural terms, this paved the way for the Europeans to reclaim Lebanon as a colony.⁴⁰

Upton cites the observation of the nineteenth-century French traveller Alphonse de Lamartine, who travelled to Baalbek in the 1830s:

We were Christians – this was enough [to Baalbek’s Greek Christians]; common religion is the strongest bond of Sympathy among nations. A common idea between man and man is more than a common country... and the Christians of the East... always look upon the Christians of the West as their present protectors and future deliverers. The moment has arrived, I think, for transporting into the heart of Asia a European colony, which would carry back modern civilization to those regions from whence ancient colonization came... Nothing would be easier than to raise up a new monument on those desolate territories.⁴¹

Gibran implies the cultural anti-message of the European one illustrated above. Baalbek becomes the cradle of love, of the brotherhood of fellow citizens. Allegorically, Baalbek becomes the ruin of European political interferences, which promoted Lebanon’s historical sectarian strife. Gibran altered archaeological disputes about Baalbek’s innate cultural

identity, whether Roman, European, Ottoman, or Arabic, combining its ethnically-diverse population into one Lebanon. Though Gibran didn't mention these archaeological disputes, his poetic philosophical vision in treating Baalbek as an eternal national emblem of Lebanon probably indicates his awareness of all that history. Gibran meant to evoke that polyglot and varied history of the region that emerges out of his vision of a more cosmopolitan and inclusive Lebanon. His fictional hero Nathan, who was reincarnated as Ali al-Husaini, found the eternal love of Lebanon in a passage of the history of mankind, out of the context of empire, culture and institutional religions. Here, love is the divine law with which to build authentic societies.

Gibran tells the story of a shepherd boy who wakes up to see his beloved next to him, and it turns out that both are reincarnated after thousands of years. The boy is described as “a Bedouin who had never delighted in the songs of women”,⁴² but finds love in a ruined temple. He uses this story to demonstrate that love is not a dream in tranquillity, but an eternal reality existing to the end of time. Political regimes of all historical eras collapse, priests pass away and Nathan's love continues. Nathan's and consequently al-Husaini's beloved represents Gibran's Lebanon. According to Gibran's belief in the sacredness of the human heart, love becomes a religion. This religion has its own sacrifices and martyrdom. Love becomes the utter fulfilment of struggle in life. This idealistic vision of love is employed in a struggle against religious and political oppressive forces that deny love.

This love can only be regained by rebellion against the tyranny of the Ottoman Islamic State and the Church. These allegorical images are drawn in the figurative language of the pagan musical ceremonies at the beginning of the story, in contrast to the dark silent atmosphere where Ali al-Husaini sits watching his sheep; this emphasizes the sense of loss, and motivates the narrative of cultural resistance. Lebanon under the control of institutionalized religious authority is a landscape of darkness and agony.

Gibran describes Baalbek, the City of the Sun, in terms of two historical eras of the history of mankind: the pagan era and the monotheistic one. The same landscape witnesses a love story that continues forever. But the City of the Sun is described, after the monotheistic religions are established and the religious strife for power has started, as dark and fearful ruins in the middle of the night:

Ali glanced at the ruined temple, his drowsiness abruptly dissipating into an ethereal wakefulness. The remnants of the defaced alter appeared; the position of the scattered pillars and crumbling foundations stood revealed... He remembered these pillars standing proudly upright. He recalled silver lamps and thuribles ranged about a revered statuette. He remembered worthy priests offering up sacrifices before an alter embellished with leaves of

ivory and gold. He called to mind young girls beating drums and youths chanting hymns to the goddess of love and beauty.⁴³

The landscape of Baalbek evokes darkness and loneliness, with the only sound being Ali's flute. This same spot witnessed singing and celebration at 116 BC. With this reference, Gibran is signifying the bitterness and hardship that institutionalized religions brought to humanity. The narrative starts with a love story born at the time of pagan gods, and unites the lovers forever; it ends with a story of death, imprisonment, loneliness and solitude at the time of priests and governors who judge and rule in the name of God. For Gibran there is no consolation with religious tyrants. Nazik Saba Yard uses the term "Gibran's revolution" in her Arabic study of *Spirit Brides* as she argues that the language used through most of the characters' conversations, can't be used by simple characters like peasants for instance. These conversations are Gibran's sermons addressed to the clerics of his age.⁴⁴ Rebellion is the only path to be followed by generation after generation of Christians and Muslims. This vision of rebellion is not taking shape in any defined action, apart from denouncing tyrannical forces.

In the second story, "Marta al-Baniya" of *Spirit Brides*, Gibran introduces Lebanon in different allegorical images: as Marta, the seduced country girl, and the wretched city of Beirut. The story is about a poor and innocent village girl, an orphan, who is seduced and then cast aside by a rich man from Beirut. By then she has already given birth to a child. She is condemned to work as a prostitute in order to feed herself and her child. The invisible narrator hears about her story and visits her at her death-bed.

The setting of the story shifts from the beautiful countryside valleys at the beginning of the story where Marta has been raised to the dirty streets of Beirut after she has been seduced and cast away by a rich man. She has already had his child, and condemned to work as a prostitute to feed herself and her child. The narrator tells us a story of a prostitute on her death bed as he meets her son. Marta is an orphan. Her father died at her birth and her mother died when she was ten. Marta is significantly named after her village, Ban, which is situated in the north of Lebanon in the holy Valley of Qadisha. This association builds the basis of the political allegory. Marta disappeared from her village at the age of sixteen and appeared in Beirut in a successive chapter. The chapter begins by establishing a time frame: the autumn of 1900 and the narrator's contemplation on youth as a dream – "Youth is a delicious dream, the savor of which is stolen by the riddles of textbooks that render it a harsh vigil".⁴⁵ Sitting on

the balcony of the house, listening to the noisy street vendors in the crowded city square, the narrator observes a five-year-old boy.

The boy is described as “wearing tattered rags and hauling on his shoulders a tray of layered flowers”,⁴⁶ as he approaches the narrator to sell his flowers. The child turns out to be Marta’s son. Now Marta is sick, dying at home. This is an indication of the passage of time in the life of the nation. She becomes associated with the urban life of Lebanon and the transformation of society governed by a corrupt political system. Marta’s house is situated in “those grubby alleys where the air ferments with the gasps of death, among those decrepit buildings where felons commit their crimes, hiding behind curtains of gloom, and in those winding back alleys that bend first to the right and then to the left like black vipers”.⁴⁷ Her son is described as being “possessed by virtue of his youth and purity of heart, a rare courage. But no one would share it who knew the cunning ruses that the toughs practice in this city, a city that Easterners call the Bride of Syria and the jewel in the diadem of emperors”.⁴⁸ Here Marta and Beirut became united as a symbol of misery.

Marta is a representative of the poor and the oppressed. They are saved by their rebellion against their oppressors. Gibran conveys rebellion embodied in this story in the unconditional love to create life in the face of oppressive forces that destroy life. Marta’s story continues in her son’s story, in the continuation of love, which becomes the essence of life itself. The poor have the immortal role in life while the rich and powerful will perish. Also the continuation of Marta’s life in the narrator’s memories is paralleled with the disappearance of her seducer.

Khalil S. Hawi observes a Christian allegory associated with the theme of imitating Christ in Gibran’s “Marta Al-Banyiah”, on the part of the narrator, who hears Marta’s story and visits her on her death-bed to comfort her with a long Christian sermon so that she dies in peace. He plays the part of Jesus in visiting the sick and comforting the poor.⁴⁹

I contend that the role of the narrator in this story is humanitarian, not religious. His anonymity in the story signifies his dissociation from any specific religion. This is reinforced when Marta’s confession is not heard by the priests but a fellow citizen, who rebels against the orthodox religions by acknowledging Marta’s image of sainthood, despite her grave sins. Selling and buying is the topic of Marta’s conversation with the narrator: “What do you want, man? Are you here to buy my last days of life, to defile them with your cravings?”⁵⁰ The narrator answer that he is a Lebanese who has lived near the cedar forest, that is the holy Valley of Qadisha.

This landscape identification with purity and compassion reflects Gibran's image of nature as a mother figure. Nature for him is the spirit of love embodied in a living thing. Gibran is also using external nature to draw his landscape of rebellion. Marta used to wander in Lebanon's mountains and fields and became part of the beauty of nature. Her agony and death take place in the dirty streets of the city with its man-made laws, signed in the name of God.

The narrator tells Marta that she should take comfort for being "the crushed flower and not a trampling foot",⁵¹ since the tyrants and oppressors are everlastingly cursed. She dies in peace after a confession of her sins. This confession is not addressed to a priest but to the narrator. Marta is buried in an abandoned field far from the city. The priests refused to pray over her dead body or even to allow her burial in a cemetery where the cross is put over the tombs. Gibran shifted the roles of sinners and saints. His apparently-sinful heroine Marta is valued over the priests: she is the chaste pure soul that remains untouched by the corrupt body. She is symbolically compared to the living seeds that never die, even under soil covered with snow, in contrast to the spikes of grain left outside the threshing floor that will be taken by the ants of the earth or the birds, and never enter the granary of the field's owner.

She is also given the redeeming power, as she purified her son's childhood with her agony and tears. Gibran describes the moment of Marta's death:

After a profound calm, like the caress of spirits in flight, she raised her eyes, veiled in the shadow of hope, and said quietly, 'Hidden justice, concealed behind these terrifying images, you hear the lamentation of my soul, now commended to God, and the cry of my negligent heart. From you alone I ask and you I implore, have mercy and train my son with your right hand, and receive my spirit with your left.' Her strength faded and her sighs grew. She looked at her son with a mournful, pitying gaze. Her eyes slowly closed, and in a voice that approximated silence she said, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Forgive us our trespasses...' Her voice broke off, though her lips still worked for a while. When they stopped, all movement in her body faded away. Then she quivered and moaned, and her face drained of color, and her spirit emanated forth. Her eyes continued to stare at what could not be seen.⁵²

This Christian prayer said by Marta establishes her position as being above the Church that denied her a decent Christian burial for being a prostitute. She does not need a priest at her death bed. She has earned her own kind of priesthood as a reward for her sacrifice and love to her son. She dies with her eyes staring at "what could not be seen". Perhaps her eyes stare at a future vision of hope and justice that could not be recognized in her time but would be so at her son's.

The story ends with two characters standing on her grave: her son accompanied by another boy, a stranger who is like the narrator, who has no name, no defined religion or race.

When dawn came, the body of Marta al-Baniyah was placed in a wooden coffin, lifted up by two indigent pall-bearers, and buried in an abandoned field far from the city. The priests declined to pray over her remains, refusing to allow her bones to rest in any cemetery where the cross stands sentinel over the tombs. No one escorted her to that distant grave site save her son and another young man whom life's misfortunes had taught compassion.⁵³

The stranger and the narrator are fellow citizens offering solace and comfort in the face of social cruelty and exploitation. They have learned compassion by suffering and misery, compassion that is missing in institutionalized religions. For Gibran the clergy are busy with chants and praises and they cannot hear the cry of the orphans and the poor. In *Spirit Rebellious*, Gibran fully shows the exploitation of the clergy to the poor, as will be discussed later.

Gibran's allegorical fiction shows the naked truth of a society torn by religious strife and prejudice, in the same way his paintings present naked bodies crying in pain. His fictional characters are stripped of any social identities, to be archetypal rebels. I think it is Gibran's intention to make them look like the same people with troubled hearts, whether their names are stereotypically Christian or Muslim or, as in many occasions, unknown. Despite the fact that names in the Middle East are part of the conflict of religious identities according to a sociolinguistic perspective, Gibran is using names to articulate a one-group identity of cultural rebels. For instance in "The Ash of Centuries and the Immortal Flame", Gibran uses the Hebrew name Nathan and the Islamic name Ali to name two characters having the same beloved who are allegorically representative of Lebanon. This same love was forbidden them by priests yet lives as an immortal emotional force in both characters, to defy oppression and overcome death.

In *Spirit Brides*, Gibran romanticizes the country as the place of spiritualism while presenting the city as the trap of materialism. He describes Marta as:

The girl who had only yesterday enjoyed safety among the trees of the valleys today suffered the torments of poverty and heartache in the city. The orphan who had passed her youth in the palm of nature, herding cattle in lovely fields, had descended along the bank of the river to the corrupt city and become a prey to the claws of misery and distress.⁵⁴

Nature for him is the sanctuary of lovers. Like the English Romantic poets, Gibran is a pantheist. He considers man to be an organic part of nature.⁵⁵ In Gibran's fiction we are reminded of Wordsworth's images of the village and the city and of Shelley's division of mankind into tyrants and slaves. Nature for Gibran is the source of love and freedom. On the other hand, religion and society are the oppressive forces dragging man into slavery.

Gibran's allegorical rebellion goes along with revolutionizing the language itself. Gibran's Arabic fiction is considered a total breaking with Arabic classical traditions and a

creation of a poetic language, which has been termed later on by Arabic scholars as Gibranism, influencing many twentieth-century Arabic poets. This style is marked by the drumbeat of his incantations and repetitions, the excessive use of words with emotional immediacy and value, words like love, beauty and justice. For example, Gibran's description of Marta's son in *Spirit Brides*:

I looked into his small, sallow face and pondered his eyes, with their dark circles, the mascara of poverty and wretchedness, his slightly open mouth like a deep wound in a pained countenance, his bare, skinny wrists, his slight, haggard frame, stooped beneath the tray of flowers, like the wilted stalk of a yellow rose amidst high grass. I mulled over all these sights in an instant, demonstrating my sympathy with smiles more bitter than tears, the sort of smiles that are torn from our inmost hearts and appear upon our lips and that, were we to leave them alone, would rise and spill forth from the corners of our eyes.⁵⁶

Gibran starts the passage with the narrator looking at the boy as a detached observer. Then he describes the boy's eyes as dark holes because of the boy's sickly thinness, the mouth as an open wound and the whole body as if visually minimized under the tray of flowers. The eyes and the mouth are metaphorical representations of the story to be witnessed and told by the narrator. The narrator, who is going to be a vibrant participant in the story, becomes sadly sympathetic, unable to cover his bitterness with a smile. The passage is packed with references to wounds, bitterness and sickness. It shows the minute details not only of the grieved face of the child and his wretchedness but the feeling and facial expression of utter sadness of the narrator. This passage is an illustration of Gibran's use of poetic prose, which marks the beginning of a new literary form as a means of social criticism with appeal to nineteenth-century Arabic readers. According to Roger Allen, Gibran includes the poetic in *Spirit Brides* as part of "transtextual" and "trans-generic" writings, in connection to the introduction of a modern narrative form, which can be considered as an early trend in Arabic novel development.⁵⁷ To Allen and many scholars, Gibran's mixing of verse and prose is part of a wide experimental field of literary production in the Arabic *al-Nahda*.

Shmuel Moreh has pointed out that Arab Christian writers, being under the influence of the West, tried with their poetic language to fill the gap between poetry and prose, despite what he claims to be "their Muslim opponents". He believes the Arab Christian writers were trying to adopt the language of the Catholic and Protestant translations of the Bible, as the Bible is written in lyrical prose and the Christian Arabic liturgies and prayers are written in verse form. Moreh even uses the term "Christian Arabic Style" to name Gibran's poetic language as an intermediate form between poetry and prose.⁵⁸

Arguably the poetic language of Gibran's fiction has nothing to do with his religion. There are no "Muslim Opponents" for the mixing of verse and prose. Indeed, one of the most popular Arabic classical traditions used by Arabic writers is the classical *maqama* form, which consists of rhyming prose. Also prosaic poetry is used by all Arabic poets during the twentieth century as a latter development of Arabic poetry. Mixing verse and prose is a matter of literary innovation as raised in certain epochs of literary history and used in the same way by all Arab writers, Muslim and Christian. Gibran's innovation is part of the attempt of nineteenth-century Arab writers to break the classical rules and seek new identities. This is certainly the outcome of the European and American cultural transactions and literary influences.

Gibran's fiction is described by John Walbridge as lacking the skill of subtle characterization and complex plots, full of highly mystical ideas, and imagery revolving on one static image, just like his paintings.⁵⁹ But, as I will show, there is considerable dramatic action to be drawn from within one "static" image. If we take the death of Marta as a static image we can read so much revolutionary action of a suppressed social class and the spirit of scepticism of religious conventions. Marta's name is symbolic, implying a story of Christian faith. Marta is originally an Aramaic name meaning "the lady" and is associated with St. Martha. According to Eastern Catholic tradition Martha is a biblical character. She is a faithful follower of Jesus, witnessing the Crucifixion and being one of the myrrh-bearing women who came later to the tomb to anoint their lord. In alluding to the faithful biblical Martha who dedicated her life to Christ's teachings, the life of Gibran's fictional Marta is dedicated to her son. Marta's death is exposing the hypocrisy of the priests as representative of institutionalized religions, and paving the way to a new phase of life where her child would grow to his adulthood: a life full of human compassion cherished in Gibran's religion of passion and sacredness of the human heart.

Gibran gives a final stroke to the clergy in "Yuhanna the Madman". The story is about a young man, Yuhanna, who has nourished himself in the beauty of the Lebanon countryside and enjoyed the grace of the words of Jesus in the Bible. But he cannot find Jesus' teachings in the church, where he regularly attends the service, or in the attitudes and lifestyles of the monks and priests. He is treated roughly by some monks from a rich monastery when his cattle stray onto their land. They end by imprisoning him, provoked by his accusations of hypocrisy. His mother has to pay for his release. Yuhanna now embarks on a crusade, trying to urge people to rebel against the priests, in the name of true Christianity. But people cannot

follow him. Yuhanna is arrested but remains silent at court, imitating Jesus. As a result people become suspicious of him, and he becomes alienated from the world. He wanders and cries in the wilderness, defined by people as the mad man.

Yuhanna describes the clergy to be the false Messiahs, the liars acting against the teachings of Christ:

In their feast days and celebrations they boldly raise their voices, saying, 'Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, and to the people, joy.' But does it honor your heavenly Father for his name to be pronounced by sinful lips and lying tongues? And is there peace on earth when the children of misery expend their powers in their fields under the harsh sun in order to feed the mouths of the powerful and fill the bellies of the tyrant? Do the people possess joy when the wretched look with defeated eyes at death the way the vanquished looks on a savior? What is peace sweet Jesus?... is it in needy bodies sleeping on stone beds, wishing for the slop that priests of the monastery throw to their fattened pigs, but which they cannot have? What is joy, beautiful Jesus? Is it for a prince to buy with spare silver the abilities of men and the honor of women, and for us to be silent and remain slaves in spirit and in flesh to those who dazzle our eyes with the slimmer of their golden medallions or the gleam of their gems and satiny robes?⁶⁰

This extract shows the extravagance and richness of the clergy while the poor are awaiting their death as a saviour from their wretchedness.

Yuhanna has been raised roving in Lebanese fields with the book of Jesus, knowing that Jesus' teachings are not to be found in the Church services which he attends. He reads the Gospel in secret against the instructions of his father and the Church:

During the long nights he stayed up until his father slept, then opened a wooden cabinet and took out the New Testament, reading from it secretly by feeble light of a lamp. He cast a wary eye from time to time on his slumbering father, who had forbidden him to read that book because the priests forbade the simple of heart to delve into the secrets of Jesus' teaching, and withheld from them the blessings of the Church should they do so.⁶¹

Excommunication is a threat to the devout believers. It is easily given by the Church for any disobedience. The Church not only demands full guardianship on the Bible but also on land, possessing extensive land in a wealthy monastery called "The Monastery of Elisha the Prophet". One day Yuhanna's cattle go astray on the land of the monastery. He ends up in prison for accusing the monks of hypocrisy. As soon as he is set free, he starts a public crusade against the Church by giving speeches to his fellow peasants and farmers.

Yuhanna's voice "exhibited a sublime power that immobilized the bodies of the monks and provoked rage and fury in their souls".⁶² He is identified with the power of rebellion. In the crowd, he finds a power that "galvanized his soul" but makes him "a prisoner of his will". Rebellion becomes a mentally-tormenting obsession, alienating the rebel from life, yet changing the life of generations. The people in the crowd around Yuhanna are

divided between those who are pleased, appreciating his speeches, and those who are angry, saying, “We never heard anything like this raving from our fathers and grandfathers; we don’t want to hear it now”.⁶³ But Yuhanna’s message reaches them all. The silence of fear is broken. Yuhanna’s speeches are conversations with the Christ in Biblical language, beseeching upon God to banish the priests, described as merchants from the temple of Christ. This reflects how the authority is finally shifted from the clergy.

‘Reach out your hand, Jesus the Powerful, and have mercy, for the hand of the despot is strong upon us. Or send death to lead us to graves where we can sleep peacefully, sheltered in the shadow of your cross until the day of your second coming. For life is no life as far as we are concerned, but a jet-black night in which evil phantoms strive to outdo one another, or a ravine crawling with horrifying snakes. Days are not days for us, but keen sword blades that the night hides in their covers on our beds and the morning unsheathes above our heads when our love of survival drags us to the fields. Show compassion, Jesus, on these masses gathered in your name on the day of your resurrection from the dead, and have mercy on their degradation and frailty.’ Yuhanna stood there conversing confidently with the heavens, while the crowd around him ran the gamut from pleased appreciation to angry condemnation. One shouted, ‘He only spoke the truth, and he’s talking about us before heaven because we are oppressed.’ The one next to him said, ‘He is possessed, speaking with the tongue of an evil spirit.’ ‘We never heard anything like this raving from our fathers and grandfathers, and we don’t want to hear it now!’ Yet another whispered into the ear of his friend, ‘I felt a magical tremor jolt my heart when I heard his voice. He is speaking with a strange power.’⁶⁴

Gibran’s attempt of uniting religions is shown in his footnotes of page (9) in *The Spirit Brides*, where he cites a Quranic verse: “You were dead and He brought you back to life, then He will cause you to die and revive you, then ye shall return unto him”, followed by Buddha saying: “Yesterday we were in this life and we have now come again, and we shall return until we become perfect like gods”. This is added to the fact that his heroes are Christians and results in Gibran’s intended image of one destiny of all mankind. This destiny of creation and death is also a destiny of struggle and rebellions in life. With this message, Gibran tries to authenticate a cultural unity uncompromised by religious differentiation.

Hawi recalls that in one of Gibran’s articles addressed to his Muslim readers, entitled “From Muslim Rituals” and written in 1911, Gibran warns Muslims that the Ottoman state might devastate Islam through its oppressive political administration. He finds in religion a united ground for his Christian and Muslim fellow citizens. He declares that as a Christian he “kept Jesus in one half of his bosom and ‘Muhammad’ in the other half”. This attempt of uniting Arab Christian and Muslims was not meant by Gibran to be a fusion of two religions, but rather an approach to having followers of both religions in one national entity on an equal religious basis.⁶⁵

Gibran's religion of love and passion shows some aspects of religious syncretism. In his thinking he approaches the Muslim Sufis who changed the ascetic motive of fear of God to the devotional and mystical motive of love of God. This Sufi nature of love is to be found in Syriac Christian mysticism.⁶⁶ We may understand that Gibran carried his rebellion against religious institutions not because of any doctrinaire opposition to religious teachings, but due to the corruption and misuse of power disguised by the cloaks of religion. The Holy Law or the Shariia Law is one of the perilous manifestations of the misuse of power that Gibran tackles in *Spirit Rebellious*.

Spirit Rebellious includes a collection of four stories. In the translation by Anthony Ferris, only three stories are included: "Khalil the Heretic", "Madam Rose Hanie" and "The Cry of the Graves", excluding the fourth one, "The Bridal Bed". These stories present the rebellion of simple people: a woman's emancipation from her husband, a bride's escape from an unwanted marriage through death, and a heretic's call for freedom. This rebellion is against the brutal actions of feudal lords in nineteenth-century Lebanon, who ruled with the blessings of the clergy.

"The Cry of the Graves" shows the unjust implementing of The Holy Law or the Shariia Law and religious oppression. The tyrant character is the Ameer, also spelled Emir, who stands for Arabic rulers. His name is not mentioned but his character is drawn in the same way as Sheik Abbas in "Khalil the Heretic", as a tyrant. The story opens with:

The Ameer sat cross-legged upon the judgment seat and on each side of him sat the wise ones of the country, in whose wrinkled faces were reflected the pages of tomes and books. About the Ameer stood soldiers grasping swords and holding aloft lance. The people stood before him. Some, sightseers come out of love of a spectacle; others, anxious watchers awaiting the passing of judgment on a kinsman. But they all stood with bowed heads and bated breath and humble eyes as though a glance from the Ameer were a force instilling fear and terror in their hearts and souls.⁶⁷

The Ameer passes judgment on three criminals: a proud young man who killed an official, a beautiful adulterous woman, and a very poor old man who stole the altar chalices from a monastery church. The Ameer orders them to be killed: beheaded, stoned naked, and hanged respectively, and their bodies are to be left to be eaten by animals.

Three people come to mourn and bury the dead and each explains to the narrator his or her story. A girl comes to bury her young lover. She explains that the Ameer's official had set a very high tax on her father's land as a pretext for abducting her but the young man, her fiancé, intervened to protect her. The second is a young man come to bury the adulteress, and it turns to be that they were in love but her father had married her to a man she did not like.

He had come to see her but they were caught and falsely accused of adultery. The third is a poor woman who appears to bury the old man. She explains that he had been a servant of the monastery, but when he became weak and old, the monks had dismissed him with nothing, leaving him and his family starving. The three people leave after putting marks on the graves of their loved ones: a sword, a bunch of flowers, and a simple wooden cross.

The narrator wonders what kind of Holy Law allows the ruler to destroy an enemy, steal money or lands from helpless subjects and seduce women. He reflects on the Holy Law that in the name of justice opposes one crime with a more serious one, and the stoning of the adulteress by men who commit sins and practice vileness behind the curtains at night.

When a man destroys his fellow, people say that such one is a murderer. When one who is set in authority destroys, it is said that this one is a faithful judge. And when a man robs the monastery they call him a thief; but when the Ameer would rob him of his life, they say that the Ameer is a virtuous prince. A woman is unfaithful to her lord and master, so the people say that she is an adulterous and whore. But when the Ameer drives her out in her nakedness and has her stoned by the multitude, they say that is a noble Ameer. The shedding of blood is forbidden. Who, then, has sanctioned it to the ruler? To steal property is a crime. But who has made a virtue of stealing souls? The faithfulness of women is an abomination. But who has made the stoning of bodies a pleasantness? Shall we meet evil with greater evil and say: this is the law; and fight corruption with more corruption and proclaim it moral? Shall we overcome a crime with a greater crime and call it justice? Has the Ameer never struck down a foe in his life or robbed the weaker among his followers of lands and goods? Has he never beguiled a beautiful woman? Is he innocent of all wrongdoing that it is allowed him to condemn to death the murderer and hang the thief and stone the harlot?... And the law - what is law? Who has seen it descend with the sunlight from heavens? What human being has seen the heart of God and known His will in mankind? In what age have angels walked among men, saying: "Deny to the weak the light of existence and destroy the fallen with the edge of the sword and trample upon the sinner with feet of iron?"⁶⁸

Unlike the other stories, the church is not mentioned in "The Cry of the Graves". The focus is on a more dangerous issue than power manipulating and illegal richness. It is the law, the most important pillar of any society. The story can be read as an attempt to draw attention to the social demands of secular sources for legal legislations. The target of rebellion could be the jurisdiction which was dominated by religious legislations, mostly Islamic during the Ottoman rule.

The story indirectly touches upon the prevailing attitude of most conservative Muslim clerics, the *ulama* who set themselves to defend the stagnant thinking (*taqlid*), opposing the independent Islamic judgment carried out by the Islamic reformist. The conservative *ulama* tried to revive the early Islamic thinking as a safeguard against new Western influences, while the reformists led by Jamal ad-Din al Afgani (1839-1897) and Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905), were revising Islamic thinking in the spirit of reformation. Gibran shared his social

reform attitude and the emphasis on spirituality versus materiality with Islamic reformists. He was part of the Arab nationalism movement that emerged during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Its aim was to build a secular state without conflicting with the advocates of the Pan-Islam movement, which denies national differences within the Muslim world.

Hawi explains such relation because Arab nationalists:

Had no clear-cut theory of the separation of religious life from that of a State, they tend to regard religious life as a personal matter, in order to establish the principles of nationalism as a foundation for the unity of all religious communities. The slogan 'Religion is for God, the Fatherland is for all' became a frequent theme for their pens.⁶⁹

As an Arab Christian, Gibran also offered the inspiration of secular intellectualism to many Muslim thinkers. This relationship between Arab nationalists like Gibran and Islamists can be best perceived in the light of a broader definition of Arab nationalism. James P. Jankowski has pointed out that:

The new historians of Arab nationalism posit that Arab nationalism has never had a single, agreed-upon meaning but rather multiple meanings based on how different groups constructed their identities and needs. They argue that although nationalist elites may have superimposed national identities on all other identities – family, town and village, religion, class, or profession – Arabs formed a multiplicity of societies or groupings each with its own set of identities and interests. Undoubtedly under the circumstances of European colonialism a number of groups or communities began to construct national identities, but the meanings and strength of these identities likely differed from one group to the next according to their particular usefulness.⁷⁰

Gibran's "The Cry of the Graves", with its both Muslim and Christian victims, exemplifies Gibran's attempt to reunite his fellow citizens whether Muslims or Christians in a one struggle for social justice and liberty. He deals with social issues not in a realistic but an idealistic manner. He is not concerned with peculiarities of the Lebanese life. He tries to present the human situation within a universal frame. This is evident in how he addresses Liberty in "Khalil the Heretic":

Until when shall we bear the scorn of the ages? Many a stone have we been dragging, and many a yoke has been placed upon our necks. Until when shall we bear this human outrage? The Egyptian slavery, the Babylon exile, the tyranny of Persia, the despotism of the Romans, and the greed of Europe.... Hear us, Oh Liberty; Bring mercy, Oh Daughter of Athens; Rescue us, Oh Sister of Rome; Advise us, Oh Companion of Moses; Help us, Oh Beloved of Mohammed; Teach us, Oh Bride of Jesus; Strengthen our hearts so we may live; Or harden our enemies so we may perish And live in peace eternally.⁷¹

The struggle for liberty frees his countrymen from religious tyranny and unites them in peace. This is an image of brotherhood in the face of sectarian religious strife. There is either victory or defeat to the whole nation.

Gibran suggests here that a revolt is needed by Christians and Muslims to employ social reforms. This call for revolution is implied clearly in his provocative descriptions of the corruption of both Christian clergy and the Muslim governmental officials of authoritarian governments in the Arabic world. The corruption of the church stands allegorically for the corruption in Muslim institutions as well. The tyranny is one evil disguised in both Christian and Muslim masks. *Spirit Rebellious* shows a partnership between the Church and the State of Muslim rulers.

The State of nineteenth-century Lebanon is the Ottoman administration run by Muslim clerics. Both are united in suppressing poor people; this is reflected for instance in the Emir story in “The Cry of the Graves”. My reading of Gibran’s rebellion against oppressive forces reflected in the role of both Christian and Muslim clerics is supported by the facts of his use of Islamic names as well as Christian names, unnamed narrators and the mention of the Holy Law or the Islamic Shariia law.

In *Spirit Rebellious*, the palace of Sheik Abbas, the Muslim Emir is on the same road, the “winding trail” of the Christian Deir Kizhaya. Khalil stands on that road starving, unable to get help from both places. As presented in the following extract:

Sheik Abbas was looked upon as a prince by the people of a solitary village in North Lebanon. His mansion stood in the midst of those poor villagers' huts like a healthy giant amidst the sickly dwarfs. He lived amid luxury while they pursued an existence of penury. They obeyed him and bowed reverently before him as he spoke to them. It seemed as though the power of mind had appointed him its official interpreter and spokesman. His anger would make them tremble and scatter like autumn leaves before a strong wind. If he were to slap one's face, it would be heresy on the individual's part to move or lift his head or make any attempt to discover why the blow had come. If he smiled at a man, the villagers would consider the person thus honoured as the most fortunate.⁷²

This symbolizes both the Emir and Christian clergy as powers of oppression, offering no shelter to the weak. The obedience required by the Emir from his subjects is also drawn in the same fearful way of that required by the clergy at Deir Kizhaya. A monk should obey the clergy like soldiers in an army:

A monk in a convent is like a soldier in the battlefield who is required to obey the orders of his leader regardless of their nature. I heard that a man could not become a monk unless he did away with his will, his thoughts, his desires, and all that pertains to the mind.⁷³

Khalil refuses obedience and therefore he is expelled from the church and driven away from the village as well. In his Arabic fiction, Gibran is a different writer from the one known in the West. He is the revolutionary who calls for social reform. As an innovator and social commentator, his radicalism lies in his establishment of a new Arabic literary style which

challenges traditional forms as well as topics. Barbara Young, who was one of Gibran's intimate friends, points out: "The West knows him as a poet and painter, and as the author of *The Prophet*, that 'little black book'... a man with a vast spiritual vision and a dream, a gentle person, loving and beloved, with a priceless sense of humor and a divine gift for friendship".⁷⁴ In the Arab world, he is politically engaged in the cause of his nation. His fiction and poetry are inspired by sharp social and political authority and the painful struggle to change them.

Gibran is calling for a culture of rebellion that prescribes to no national or political sectarian and racist borders. His images engulf the human heart in the face of discrimination, segregation and prejudice caused by tyrannical political regimes and religious institutions. This engagement with rebellion is to build a new national identity within his contemporary Arab community, which is characterized by blind obedience to religious and political authorities. In this period, the novel offered a modern literary national medium that communicated best with Arabic readers, who were preoccupied with the ideology of the rising nationalism during the struggle against foreign occupations. Kamran Rastegar has pointed out that Arab writers sought the newly developed novel genre as a transformation in literary practice to suit the national-literature model, deriving from the conventions of "novelism" and "nationalism".⁷⁵

Gibran used his innovation in fiction to carry out severe social criticism in a new literary style that dealt with political national movements. His allegorical fiction illustrates the consequences of tyrannical and authoritarian regimes. His fiction shows the persecuted society of the whole Arab world micronized in the image of his beloved Lebanon, attacking corrupted domestic political regimes and foreign colonial powers. He expressed great hope for national independence, liberation and progress. But he was by no means a politician. According to Hawi, there is an unpublished play written by Gibran with a sketch called "Free Syria" which "defines Gibran's belief in Syrian nationalism with great clarity, distinguishing it from both Lebanese and Arab nationalism, and showing us that nationalism lived in his mind, even at this late stage, side by side with internationalism".⁷⁶ Gibran called for "separateness in togetherness" and rejected any political measures that might ignore the identity of Lebanon and precipitate the disappearance of Lebanon from the Arab environment.⁷⁷ The two countries of Syria and Lebanon are separate entities, but are united in one cause: political independence from foreign occupation. This is the cause of the Arabic world after the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, and the betrayal from the West with its imposed British and French mandates.

Nationalism, for Gibran, is reflected in his famous saying, mentioned in the quotation below, that is: “You have your Lebanon and I have my Lebanon”. In this he opposes all political stands that divide the nation into religious sectarian parties. He uses an allegorical style to draw the cross lines of the social reality of Lebanon. Poverty, greed, oppression, and women enslaved in marriage as well as prostitution, are dreadful facts of a society set in a warring scheme under the name of nationalism.

In 1920, he wrote the following extracts, cited in *The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran*:

You have your Lebanon and its dilemma. I have my Lebanon and its beauty. Your Lebanon is an arena for men from the West and men from the East. My Lebanon is a flock of birds fluttering in the early morning as shepherds lead their sheep into the meadow and rising in the evening as farmers return from their fields and vineyards.⁷⁸

He condemns the way the politicians are implementing Imperialist scenarios of dividing the nation, and blindly following the West:

Yours are those whose souls were born in the hospitals of the West; they are as ship without rudder or sail upon a raging sea... They are strong and eloquent among themselves but weak and dumb among Europeans. They are brave, the liberators and the reformers, but only in their own area. But they are cowards, always led backwards by the Europeans. They are those who croak like frogs boasting that they have rid themselves of their ancient, tyrannical enemy, but the truth of the matter is that this tyrannical enemy still hides within their own souls. They are the slaves for whom time had exchanged rusty chains for shiny ones so that they thought themselves free. These are the children of your Lebanon.⁷⁹

Gibran’s Lebanon is that of people, not politicians. He believed his Lebanon would endure forever, while the Lebanon of struggles and religious prejudices will end. Gibran is the rebellious mystic who lives in East and West, trying to find one identity of a free man who is able to escape imprisonment. His characters defy laws and traditions and believe in love of the virtuous spirit. This love gives them the pretext to break even the sanctity of marriage.

Gibran’s characters as well as his images are mostly allegorical, not naturalistic. They stand for the revolutionary spirit of their author. Lebanon becomes the beloved of a sincere youth, and at the same time the bride who faces an evil priest, and is to be wedded to a greedy lustful old man. Images of the subjected bride, the heretic or the victim of the Holy Law all reflect the image of a society run by a totalitarian authority. In his fiction, Gibran delivered a message that affected the Arab culture which was dominated by Muslim and Christian clerics. He is one of the nineteenth-century writers who called for a cultural change shaped in a cultural rebellion, against blind obedience and religious tyranny.

Gibran's book, like his other writings, does not show a coherent political view or definite social reform, but it gives his readers the message of the necessity to defy the Church-State authority. N. Naimy has pointed out: "Gibran far from deserves the title of social reformer. To be a reformer in revolt against something is to be in possession of a positive alternative. But nowhere do Gibran's heroes strike us as having any real alternative".⁸⁰ Naimy states that Gibran calls for a "Christless church" and "systemless society". But such an interpretation overlooks the fact that in countries ruled by dictatorship or authoritarian regimes, the word has the value of the bullet. Any social reforms start with public awakening, which in turn would result in social rebellions. I believe in this sense Gibran might be regarded as a political activist and a social reformist.

Gibran suffered from the prejudice and misunderstanding of his critical reviewers in literary circles. According to Irfan Shahid, Gibran's *The Prophet* outsold all American poets from Whitman to Eliot, yet:

Gibran was excluded from the American canon of American literature. He was excluded from both *The Dictionary of National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, *Who's Who in America* and the two-volume anthology, *The Heath of American Literature* does not mention him although it includes Cuban American Jose Marti who spent a short time in America and wrote mainly in Spanish... Strangely the name of Gibran that is included in *Who's Who* is that of his relative who with his wife Jean co-authored the biography of Gibran.⁸¹

In the Arabic world, Gibran was an influential part of a dramatic period in Arabic literary history. He wrote many political articles on Arabic nationalism in New York Syrian newspapers: *Mirat al-Gharb* (The Mirror of the West), *al-Saih* (The Tourist), and *al-Funon* (The Arts). In *al-Funon*, he wrote a series of Islamic heroes representing the great eras of Arabic culture, beginning from the age of pre-Islamic poetry to the Arab rule in Andalusia, to the age of Sufi philosophy, up to his contemporary era. He also supplied the series with a collection of drawings out of his imagination.⁸²

He called for an Arab reawakening to end superstitions and religious authority. He presented the Islamic heritage in the same way he did with his account on Jesus in *Jesus the Son of Man*, as mystical accounts inspiring love and reconciliation away from organized and orthodox religions.

His friend Barbara Young records that someone asked Gibran, "What is the mystic?" and he answered smiling, "Nothing very secret nor formidable just someone who has drawn aside one more veil".⁸³ This veil is an inner truth of life that can never be obtained without love. Gibran's characters are lovers challenging the forces of hatred and tyranny that are disguised under the garments of religious clerics. In his writing, Gibran shifted the role of

authority to be embraced by his fictional rebels. His outlaw characters, the prostitute and the heretic, represent the voice of a rebellious generation facing the authoritarian ideological oppression.

¹ Kahlil Gibran, *A Tear and a Smile*, trans. H. M. Nahmad (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1954), 78.

² Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins, *Kahlil Gibran: Man and Poet: A New Biography* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999), 59.

³ Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran: His Life and World* (New York: Interlink Books, 1991), 9.

⁴ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 39.

⁵ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 195.

⁶ Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, eds. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philip and Stefan Weber (Wurzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 30.

⁷ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2005), 2.

⁸ Joseph P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran: Wings of Thought: The People's Philosopher* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1973), 20.

⁹ Kamal S. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 20-27.

¹⁰ Kahlil S. Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran: His Background, Character and Works* (Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1963), 153.

¹¹ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 153.

¹² Kahlil Gibran, *Nusus Kharij al-Majmu*, ed. Antoine al-Qawwal (Beirut: Dar Amwaj, 1993): 235-44. Cited in Wail S. Hassan, "Gibran and Orientalism," in *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*, ed. Layla al-Maleh (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 80.

¹³ Bushrui and Jenkins, *Kahlil Gibran*, 159.

¹⁴ Bushrui and Jenkins, *Kahlil Gibran*, 160.

¹⁵ Kahlil Gibran, *A Treasury of Kahlil Gibran*, ed. Martin L. Wolf, trans. Anthony R. Ferris (London: Heinemann, 1976), 339.

¹⁶ Kahlil Gibran, *A Self-Portrait*, trans. Anthony R. Ferris (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), 33-34.

¹⁷ Gibran, *A Self-Portrait*, 34.

¹⁸ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 101.

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- ¹⁹ Ghougassian, *Wings of Thought*, 27.
- ²⁰ Kahlil Gibran, *A Self-Portrait*, 27-28.
- ²¹ Alexandre Najjar, *Kahlil Gibran: A Biography* (London: Saqi, 2008), 150.
- ²² Hassan, "Gibran and Orientalism," 81.
- ²³ Nadia Abou El-Magd, "The Prophet is Back," *Al-Ahram Weekly* 441, August 5-11, 1999.
- ²⁴ Bushrui and Jenkins, *Kahlil Gibran*, 207-9.
- ²⁵ Donald J. Cioeta, "Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no. 2 (1979): 167-186.
- ²⁶ Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 10.
- ²⁷ Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 12.
- ²⁸ Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 67.
- ²⁹ Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 15.
- ³⁰ Barbara Young, *This Man From Lebanon: A Study of Kahlil Gibran* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 97.
- ³¹ Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2009), 40.
- ³² Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 25.
- ³³ Alexandre Najjar, *Kahlil Gibran: Author of the Prophet*, trans. Rae Azkoul (London: Saqi, 2008), 113.
- ³⁴ Najjar, *A Biography*, 89.
- ³⁵ John Walbridge, "Gibran, his Aesthetic, and his Moral Universe," *Juan Cole's Kahlil Gibran Page*, accessed October 26, 2011, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/jrcole/gibran/papers/gibwal1.htm>.
- ³⁶ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 111.
- ³⁷ "Kahlil Gibran," *Poemhunter.com*, accessed September 2, 2012, www.poemhunter.com/kahlil-gibran/poems/.
- ³⁸ Kahlil Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, trans. Juan R. I. Cole (California: White Cloud Press, 1993), 3-4.
- ³⁹ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 15.
- ⁴⁰ Dell Upton, "Starting from Baalbek: Noah, Solomon, Saladin, and the Fluidity of Architectural History," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68, no. 4 (2009): 457-464.
- ⁴¹ Upton, "Starting from Baalbek," 459.
- ⁴² Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 15.

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- ⁴³ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 12.
- ⁴⁴ Nazik Saba Yard, *Arayis Al-Muruj A Study on Kahlil Gibran* (Beirut: Nofal Publishing House, 1994), 14.
- ⁴⁵ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 32.
- ⁴⁶ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 33.
- ⁴⁷ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 35.
- ⁴⁸ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 35.
- ⁴⁹ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 129.
- ⁵⁰ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 36.
- ⁵¹ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 40.
- ⁵² Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 43-44.
- ⁵³ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 44.
- ⁵⁴ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 34.
- ⁵⁵ Aida Imangulieva, *Gibran, Rihani and Naimy: East-West Interactions in Early Twentieth-Century Arab Literature* (Oxford: Inner Frane Press, 2009), 58.
- ⁵⁶ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 33.
- ⁵⁷ Roger Allen, "Rewriting Literary History: The Case of the Arabic Novel," in *Arabic Literary Thresholds: Sites of Rhetorical Turn in Contemporary Scholarship*, ed. Muhsin al-Musawi (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 11.
- ⁵⁸ Shmuel Moreh, *Studies in Modern Arabic Prose And Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 3-7.
- ⁵⁹ Walbridge, "Gibran."
- ⁶⁰ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 63.
- ⁶¹ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 48.
- ⁶² Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 58.
- ⁶³ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 67.
- ⁶⁴ Gibran, *Spirit Brides*, 64.
- ⁶⁵ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 157-159.
- ⁶⁶ H. A. R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 71.
- ⁶⁷ Kahlil Gibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, trans. Anthony R. Ferris (New York: Castle Books, 1993), 24.
- ⁶⁸ Gibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, 30-31.

⁶⁹ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 42.

⁷⁰ James P. Jankowski, *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 274.

⁷¹ Gibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, 114-116.

⁷² Gibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, 47.

⁷³ Gibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, 58.

⁷⁴ Young, *This Man From Lebanon*, 4.

⁷⁵ Kamran Rastegar, *Literary Modernity between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions in Nineteenth-Century Arabic, English and Persian Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 145.

⁷⁶ Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 219.

⁷⁷ Mikhail Naimy, *Kahlil Gibran: A Biography*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 89.

⁷⁸ Cited in *The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran*, eds. and trans. Martin L. Wolf, Anthony R. Ferris and Andrew Dib Sherfan (University Park: Pennsylvania State University reprint by Castle, 1985), 752.

⁷⁹ Wolf, Ferris and Sherfan, *Treasured Writings*, 752.

⁸⁰ Mikhail Naimy, "The Mind and Thought of Khalil Gibran," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 5 (1974): 55-71.

⁸¹ Irfan Shahid, "Gibran and the American Literary Canon: The Problem of The Prophet," in *Tradition, Modernity And Postmodernity*, eds. Kamal Abdel-Malek and Wael Halaq (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 322.

⁸² Gibran and Gibran, *His Life and World*, 250.

⁸³ Young, *This Man From Lebanon*, 95.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to analyse the works of three different nineteenth century writers who contributed in different ways to draw one picture of a landscape of resistance. Throughout their allegorical fiction both urban spaces and natural sceneries, have been changed out of their geographical reality, to be part of a larger global canvas of resistance. Cities with their streets and art galleries, forests and valleys with their brooks and cottages, as well as historical sites and ruins have become the setting of an ongoing rebellion against oppressive religious and political systems.

This study has approached these cultural landscapes in terms of the socio-political realities experienced by each writer. The landscapes of Salem, Rome, Cairo, Paris, Baalbek and Beirut offer richly allegorised sites of resistance in the face of oppressive political systems, colonial humiliations, and religious corruption.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Muhammad al-Muwaylih's and Kahlil Gibran experimented with diverse literary forms such as the romance, the *maqama* and the short story genre, each yielding new ways to present landscapes allegorically. Hawthorne's settings do more than simply frame the action; they thematically express the tyranny of Puritan New England, its notions of unpardonable sin, fortunate fall, isolation, crime and guilt, and the influence of the past upon the present. His choice of the Romance genre enables him to loosen the strictures demanded of realist fiction, drawing the reader into a speculative realm which nevertheless remains tethered to the real in ways that foregrounds the relation between the writer and imaginatively reconceived history. His novels explore history through the eyes of the rebellious artist whose vision both takes in, and provokes political and religious persecution. The oppressive and tyrannical European and American settings etch the experience of fall into the landscape. Art proves the only way to both realize and overcome political and religious oppression.

In The Scarlet Letter, Hester, as an artist, draws the punitive authority represented by the scarlet letter A within the ambit of her creative embroidery as an expression of defiance. So too her retreat to the forest is not an exile, but the location from which to mark the end of her exclusion from community. Her artistic authority reaches out to the community under new terms, establishing the foundations of a new social reality founded in an act of creative rebellion. The forest, then, embodies the landscape of resistance, demonstrating a new version of seventeenth century Salem forged from the dynamic relationship of art, history, and landscape.

Landscapes function metaphorically beyond their spatio-temporal limitations between what is real and what is fictional. In *The Marble Faun*, the ruined fountain at Donatello's family house of Monte Beni is a symbol of the decay of the ancient European family that owns it. The structure of this fountain represents a myth in which the water nymph abandons the source when it is poisoned by the bloodstain of the knight who was drinking from it. This historical myth connects both the place and artistic creation. At the same time, this very myth has come to be identified with the fall of Donatello. Crime ruined Donatello, the Faun-like figure himself. But metaphorically the ruin takes place in an actual history of civilizational the rise and fall, an allegory of decay and transformation reflected in Kenyon's unfinished, fragmentary bust. The unfinished bust symbolizes the struggle of the artist, the writer and the fictional character seeking spiritual freedom. This struggle brings geography and history between the two worlds and is reflected by the quest to establish a new artistic vision. Hawthorne's settings, such as the Custom House building, the forests, castles, art galleries, churches, and other locations offer a stage for the representation of human struggle against evil forces.

Muhammad al-Muwaylihi draws on the *maqama* tradition in writing *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham*. His programme of social reform rests on the revival of an Arabic literary heritage that remains open to Western literary borrowings. The *maqama* emerged as a nineteenth-century literary mode in which al-Muwaylihi and others could articulate a modern social critique through the newly developing fictional genre.

The fictional characters of *Hadith Isa Ibn Hisham* move through actual places rich in history. Streets and buildings in both Cairo and Paris are vividly realised by al-Muwaylihi's narrator Isa. These detailed landscapes aspire to a sense of geopolitical reality. The urban landscape of Cairo reveals the British colonial obsession with military force and administration. The foreign colonizers - whether Ottomans, French or British - drew a new map for the geography of Cairo to establish their military bases, luxurious residential mansions, courts, and entertainments, that utterly dominated Egyptian society in political and cultural terms. At the same time corrupt domestic political and religious systems imposed another social reality of oppression and exploitation of the local population. Allegorically, however, the author goes beyond the novel's present in the nineteenth century to show the history of a nation caught up in a succession of foreign invasions. Hence the character of Pasha, as an Ottoman descendant, plays the role of interlocutor of the ever-present past: a living past that can be seen in the streets and the architecture of the historical buildings.

Al- Muwaylihi also draws the urban landscape of Paris, the great European capital to signify its modernity in contrast with Cairo. Geographical place comes to point to the socio-political reality of the two cities. The occupants of Cairo's dark roads are soldiers and tribes, while the brightly-lit Parisian streets are full of people, shops and inns that can experience "Cairo" as a commodity spectacle staged at the Paris World Exhibition.

The historical narrative of imperial expansion and despotic political rule provoked change in the Arab world in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The novel affords a means to resist political realities, a medium to express the nationalist ideals. Al- Muwaylihi's innovative merging of the twelfth century *maqama* with the contemporary nineteenth century western allegorical novel form represents one of the most profound conversations between the Orient and the Occident. Whereas both addressed the theme of political evil and religious oppression using contemporary ideological discourse, Gibran is the outsider who articulates a world of mysticism and spirituality.

Gibran draws on actual locations between Beirut and the Qadisha Valley, yet his focus is drawn beyond the specific geopolitical borders to confront institutionalized religions in any form, especially where they coincide with State interests. For Gibran, the church and the Islamic Ottoman state represent the corrupt social system that demands rebellion. He employs his fictional Christian and Muslim rebels in the service of a new world that is neither Western or Eastern, nor Christian or Muslim. His is a syncretised humanitarian view of a political and social struggle. Gibran's Lebanon becomes an abstract symbol of eternal love threatened by the ugliness of political and religious tyranny. Gibran's march towards social change involves exposing the destructive impact of oppressive religious and political systems through art. His is among the first attempts to adapt the short story form to the conventions of Arabic literature. His poetic style becomes the medium that assumes the shape of his rebellion in that it resists categorization as a single language. Unlike both Hawthorne and Al- Muwaylihi who representative particular regional and national forms of literature, Gibran's poems and tales do not sit so easily within a specific literary tradition His subsequent popularity across a number of reading publics speaks to his capacity to universalise the specific political complexities of Lebanon.

The three writers of the present study called for social reforms of their own societies to reconceive the nation. These writers' fiction offers geographies of memory. The term is used by Amy Mills to show the interaction of cultural transformation and the national identity. Mills suggests that:

The geography of memory- that is, the social space through and on which memory is constructed- is complex and constituted together with the production of memory itself. Memory and narrative are always grounded in locality. The ways in which we imagine, narrate, and practice the social relationships that make up who we are always occur in specific places; thus the relationship to place is constitutive of identity.¹

And such is the relationship of the writers of this study as they walked down the streets of the cities they described and reflected on the past to present allegorically enhanced culturally dense landscapes that map the politics of their engagement with struggle against religious and political oppression. As we have seen in previous chapters their personal experiences have coloured these landscapes with symbols, emotions and nostalgia. Despite differences in culture, history and geography, these writers found a common resource in distinctive and politically articulate landscape.

¹Amy Mills, *The Landscape of Memory Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul*, (Athens: the University of Georgia Press, 2010), 205.

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