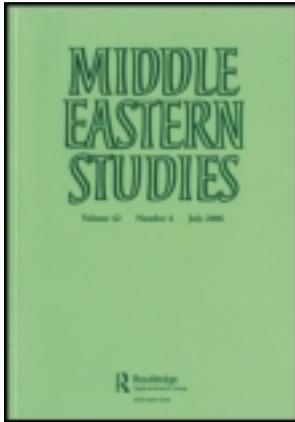


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Towards a New Ecology of Middle Eastern Identities

FRANCK SALAMEH

For nearly a century of Western academic interest in the modern Middle East, the region has been viewed and dealt with almost exclusively through cultural, political, and geographic semantics and by way of mental clichés beholden to the biases of Arabs, Arab nationalists, and Muslims. Some four decades ago British historian Elie Kedourie lamented the fact that scholarship in his field, that is, Middle East Studies as a Western academic endeavour, had in the second half of the twentieth century become a tedious and soporific preoccupation besotted with Arab disaffections, Arab fears, Arab hopes, and Arab concerns, to the neglect of other renditions of Middle Eastern histories and stories.¹ Kedourie claimed that, often evincing lack of imagination and ideological bias, Middle East experts routinely reduced an area of history and geography that is otherwise a potpourri of cultures, languages, and identities, to a monolithic universe of Arabs, Arabic-speakers, and Muslims alone; an ‘Arab World’, as it were, denuded of its pre-Arab patrimony and its post-Arab accretions.

This article will argue that, despite many religious, cultural, and linguistic similarities, and despite the dominance of an Arabist, Islamist, and Arab nationalist paradigm, the modern Middle East, like the ancient Near East, remains a patchwork of cultures, languages, ethnicities, and narratives that cannot be reduced to soothing subjective (Arab or Muslim) labels without oversimplifying and misleading. Our times’ prevalent paradigm of a monolithic, homogenous, Arab Muslim, Arabic-speaking Middle East rests on a false and unjustified assumption. It posits, based on patently European models – and caricatures accepted all too avidly by Arab nationalists and many of their Western sympathizers – that race, nationality, language, and territory run parallel in the Middle East. This is grounded in the fashionable textbook French model of ‘Frenchmen’ inhabiting a territory known as ‘France’ and speaking a language called ‘French’. In the Middle East, this approach to identity is false on account of a number of factors: namely that language, nation, nationality, and territory seldom overlap in that part of the world; and that unlike French, English, and the rest of the world’s spoken languages, Arabic *is not* a single, uniform, unified, and widely spoken ‘national’ language with clear ethno-cultural connotations.

Indeed, the Middle East is shaped by traditions and histories that seldom justify such connotations of language, territory, and ethnicity into single reductive

cognomens. Aramaic, one of the languages that preceded Arabic as the Middle East's modern *lingua franca*, was until the seventh century spoken by Aramaeans and non-Aramaeans alike; namely by Nabataeans – presumably Levantine 'proto-Arabs' – and Jews among others. Similarly, during the early centuries of the Islamic 'Golden Age', peoples from Iran to the Levant, and from Africa to Europe, spoke Arabic, yet exhibited no sense of a common Arab identity. Yet, we persist in looking at the modern Middle East as a single cohesive 'Arabic' language zone, and consequently as a uniform mono-cultural 'Arab world'. In the process we fail to recognize the region's cultural and ethnic diversity, thus contributing to further misinterpretations and false impressions.

This article will suggest that languages, and more specifically vernacular languages, are emerging today as some of the clearest and most perceptible features of (renewed, rediscovered, and restituted) self-perceptions in a modern Middle East where Arabism has run its course, and where pre-Arab identities defined by diversity and hybridity – both legitimate and recognizable categories of selfhood – preceded and survived the onslaught of twentieth century Arabism.

To begin with, a corrective to the semantics, or the 'ecology of language', commonly used in reference to the Middle East can certainly lead to more clarity about the region. For one thing, the Middle East is not – and should not be viewed as – the 'Arab World' or the exclusive preserve of Arabs and Muslims alone. The Middle East, in its modern incarnations as much as in its multiple past lives, remains a mosaic of diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, despite the dominant role that Islam and the Arabic language might play in some of its modern political manifestations. On this point, the Brill *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* notes that before the seventh century advent of Arabs to the Near East, and before their movement:

out of Arabia and across the Levant, Mesopotamia, and North Africa, the area now called the 'Arab world' had hosted many other cultures, including the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Ancient Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. . . . The legacies of these [pre-Arab] pre-Islamic peoples and cultures did not all simply disappear with the advent of the Muslim Arabs.²

As regards the presumed exclusivity and predominance of the Arabic language as the principal national and cultural tool of the entire Middle East, the Brill *Encyclopedia* casts further doubt on the presumptions of Arab dominance and homogeneity, suggesting that:

If the Arab invasions are viewed as a flood arising in Arabia and engulfing the regions from Spain to the Indus, then in parts of these regions the floodwaters bearing Arabic and Islam seem to have . . . not covered [all the Near East.] . . . Some peoples of the region resisted the forces of Arabicization, Islamicization, or both; even among those who underwent both these processes, this was not always accompanied by a total abandonment of their earlier culture. Thus, there are still pockets across the [so-called] Arab world using languages other than Arabic and practicing religions other than Islam, and there

are still groups convinced that their ancestors belonged to a people different from those of their neighbors; [that is, different from the Arab peoples.]³

Indeed, there had never been a united 'Arab world' or a cohesive 'Arab nation' antecedent to the modern twentieth century Middle Eastern state-system – which modern Islamists and Arab nationalists (*and* their Western allies) never tire of assailing and berating as 'artificial'. Even Arabian users of countless varieties of the Arabic language, that is, Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula prior to the seventh century Muslim conquest of the Levant and the Fertile Crescent, were never a coherent cohesive lot with a unified corporate identity and a single national or tribal language. Instead, pre-Islamic Arabs were at best a bevy of fractious warring tribes, rival oases and 'city-states', and opposed families and clans using a multiplicity of idioms and languages that bore little resemblance to what later became the language of the Koran, and what is today referred to as Modern Standard Arabic. Of course, much has been said about the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, having integrated those wayward and disjointed peoples into a united *Umma*, or community, during the seventh century. In reality however, Islam, like its Persian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine predecessors, simply introduced a new imperial order, another central authority, and a novel administrative language to a Middle East (and an Arabian Peninsula) that continued to be characterized by varied smaller local, ethnic, cultural, and tribal loyalties.⁴ The Prophet Muhammad did not so much unite the Arabs into a single nation as turn them into Muslims; the *Umma* or nation in question, therefore, is an Islamic, not an Arab *Umma*.

Even the celebrated T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), one of the twentieth century's most committed advocates of Arabism, scoffed at the idea of an 'Arab nation' and a putative cohesive 'Arab people' as such, calling them 'a manufactured people'.⁵ Lawrence described Arab unity as an illusion, akin to 'English-speaking unity . . . ; a madman's notion – for this [twentieth] century or [the] next'.⁶ He even conceded the Arabic language itself – the supposed nimbus and cement of Arabness – to have gained primacy in the Middle East *only* recently, and *only* by sheer 'accident and time', asserting that its assumed linguistic dominance did 'not mean that Syria – any more than Egypt – [was] an Arabian country', and further adding that on the Mediterranean 'sea coast there [was] little, if any, Arabic feeling or tradition'.⁷ Indeed, a number of Middle East specialists admit this idea of an ostensibly cohesive and coherent 'Arab nation' to be a Western caricature of a Western concept of identity that was never extant in the Middle East; one that, nevertheless, modern Arab nationalists pilfered and accepted wholly, never questioning its validity and suitability in a region distinguished by its variety and diversity.⁸ Joel Carmichael wrote that this notion of an Arabic-speaking 'Arab' nation represented the triumph of a Western, not an Eastern, or even an Arab conception of identity:

It was in fact the Western habit of referring to Arabic-speaking Muslims . . . as 'Arabs' because of their language – on the analogy of German-speakers as Germans, French-speakers as French and so on – that imposed itself on an East that had never regarded language as a basic social classifier. It was natural for Europeans to use the word 'Arab' about a Muslim . . . whose native language

was Arabic; they were quite indifferent to the principles of classification in the East. The oddity is simply that this European habit became the very germ that the contemporary Arab nationalist movement has sprung from.⁹

Therefore, dealing with the modern Middle East as a single homogenous Arab cultural mass, and viewing its problems – and attempting to resolve them – through the prism of its most fashionable narrative (the Arabist one), its most celebrated political snarl (the Arab–Israeli conflict), or its dominant linguistic group (the users of Arabic), is misleading and false. To most Western students of the Middle East, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Irishmen, Canadians, and Nigerians, despite speaking the same native language – that is, English – are never subsumed as members of the same (English) nation. Yet by virtue of making use of the Arabic language (or some form thereof), those same Western students of the Middle East have no compunction in assuming all ‘Arabophones’ to be Arabs, defective and spurious as this notion might be in a European context.

Yet not only are all users of Arabic *not* Arabs, the Arabic language itself is arguably *not* a single, uniform, linguistic competency, but rather a ‘language family’ of some 30 different varieties, some of which are as distinct from the others as English is distinct and different from French.¹⁰ In this regard, Harvard University linguist Wheeler Thackston wrote recently that ‘a Moroccan and an Iraqi [each speaking their own native variety of ‘Arabic’] can no more understand each other ... than can a Portuguese and a Rumanian’.¹¹

Even Edward Said, one of our times’ most passionate and articulate defenders of things Arab, admitted to the nebulous and abstruse nature of the Arabic language. He described it as a multitude of often mutually unintelligible speech forms:

var[ying] considerably between one region or country and another. The written language is quite different [from the spoken languages.] ... I grew up in a family whose spoken language was an amalgam of what was commonly spoken in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. ... But because I went to school in Cairo and spent most of my early youth there I also was fluent in [the Cairene] colloquial ... [But] if I were to try to understand an Algerian I would get more or less nowhere, so different and widely varied are the colloquials from each other once one gets away from the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. The same would be true for me with an Iraqi, Moroccan, or even a deep Gulf dialect. ... The reason for that is that classical Arabic [is] like Latin for the European colloquial languages. ... So in effect then, an educated person has two quite distinct linguistic personae. Thus ‘what do you want?’ in Lebanese or Palestinian is, when addressed to a man ... ‘shoo bidak?’ In classical [Arabic] it would be ‘madha to reed?’ ... Yet I have only known one person who actually spoke classical Arabic all the time, a Palestinian political scientist and politician whom my children used to describe as ‘the man who speaks like a book.’ ... Classical Arabic was taught in my schools, of course, but it remained of the order of a local equivalent of Latin, i.e. a dead and forbidding language.¹²

Yet, it is *this* language that remains the prism through which we view (and attempt to understand) the Middle East. Palestinian dissident, Fawaz Turki, argued this very

same Arabic language to be a key factor in the Middle East's turbulence, authoritarianism, intellectual torpor, cultural rigidity, and lack of freedoms. Turki also claimed the Arabic language to be a facilitator of the Middle East's overall dogmatic and domineering approach to identity, and its rejection of the region's inherent, millenarian diversity. Arabic is a stern, arcane, highly ordered 'dead language', he wrote; *not* natively spoken by any member of the presumed Arab nation, it leaves those associated with it mute and incapable of authentic, intimate and uninhibited discourse. In this sense, added Turki, the Arabic language enforces imperious, coerced, absolutist 'pan' conceptions of identity – whether of the pan-Islamic or pan-Arab varieties – and it inhibits Middle Easterners from reconciling themselves to the reality and finality of their region's multiple identities as expressed in a variety of 'state nationalisms'. Therefore, concludes Turki, by way of linguistic bondage, the Arabic language holds its practitioners in cultural servitude and persuades them into the faulty notion that all users of Arabic are Arabs.

Although seemingly jarring in these assertions – traditional Arabists might not take kindly to such devastating commentary – Turki might actually not be too far from the truth. The United Nation's 2002 *Arab Human Development Report* made the claim that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was alien and incomprehensible to more than half of the 300 million presumptive members of the 'Arab nation' and the 'Arab world'.¹³ Additionally, Raymond Gordon's *Ethnologue* defined MSA as the second language of 246 million non-native speakers, and a language that is:

not a first language. Used for education, official purposes, written materials, and formal speeches. Classical Arabic is used for religion and ceremonial purposes, having archaic vocabulary. Modern Standard Arabic is a modernized variety of Classical Arabic. In most Arab countries only the well educated have adequate proficiency in Standard Arabic, while over 100,500,000 do not.¹⁴

Yet Arab nationalists and their sympathizers see nothing remiss in this unhealthy sociocultural and linguistic situation. Indeed, this same MSA is still canonically approved as the sole tool of thoughtful and candid public, cultural, and political intercourse in the 'Arab world', and is still expected to be the prism through which to view and understand the whole of the multi-cultural, polyglot Middle East.

In the view of Arab intellectuals and (former) Arab nationalists like Fawaz Turki – but also according to more mainstream thinkers like Taha Husayn, Adonis, and Nizar Qabbani – Arabic is a prohibitive straitjacket that institutionalizes orthodoxy and normalizes fear of authority, fear of innovation, fear of diversity, voluntary servitude, and a resignation to a false sense of (Arab) national homogeneity.¹⁵ Turki wrote that Arabs and Middle Easterners in general remain voluntarily tethered in hallowed submission to the inertia and cruelty of the Arabic language, creating in the process strictures and constraints regimenting their personal and cultural behaviours, and normalizing their oppression, their cultural and intellectual bondage, and their curious collective negation of their own region's diversity.¹⁶ He maintained that the Arabs are not a zestful, dynamic, intellectually daring and tolerant lot simply because their revered language does not promote or encourage such instincts. On the other hand, Turki held the 'dialectal' speech-forms in the Middle East to be zestful, dynamic, audacious, spontaneous, intellectually

daring, and tolerant of diversity precisely because they have long since broken from the strictures of MSA and can no longer be viewed as telling forms or variants of the Arabic language.¹⁷

What follows is a powerful sampling of what, according to Fawaz Turki, the Arabic language does to its users. I reproduce this fragment of Turki's *Exile's Return* in its entirety because it eloquently illustrates one of this article's basic arguments; that language – especially as pertains to the 'standard' imperious MSA – can be a more merciless and, therefore, a more effective tool of tyranny and subjugation than actual physical brutality. In this passage, Turki tells the story of his rebellious 16-year-old sister, Jasmine. A child of the catacombs, having grown in the anonymity and indigence of Beirut's Palestinian refugee camps, Jasmine, we are told, has now taken a part-time job as a waitress at the Saint George's Hotel, a symbol as it were of Lebanon's mid-1960s cosmopolitanism, polish, and liberalism. Long repressed and muzzled in the squalor and hardships of Palestinian refugee camps, the young Jasmine had now begun to find her voice, diving head-first into the liberty and libertine ways of, then, the Middle East's 'sin-city', Beirut. But, cautioned Turki,

our society, our culture, our time was not ready for that kind of independence. There is a line you do not cross. Tradition is tradition. It takes as long to remove as it had taken to create. You challenge tradition, you pay with your life. One day Jasmine kissed a boy. She was seen by a friend of [my elder brother] Moussa, and he reported the sighting to my brother. When Jasmine got home, Moussa pointed at my sister and howled like an animal: 'she soiled our honor!' He turned to my dad. 'She soiled our honor', he screamed triumphantly. But Dad had already abdicated his power to Moussa. Moussa then proceeded to pummel Jasmine until she was semiconscious. Even after she cowered in the corner, he still kicked, slapped, and punched her. Such is the power of tradition, so pervasive is its grip on our instincts that no one in the house, including my ten-year-old brother, Samir, who was terrified, moved a finger to help her. She had, after all, kissed, actually kissed, a boy! No one delighted in seeing a sixteen-year-old-girl, one's own sister, one's daughter, get savaged this way, but then she had it coming, didn't she? Within less than ten minutes, Jasmine's face began to swell like a balloon. Bruises showed all over her body. What had to be done was done. *Nothing unusual here! Then we sat down to have dinner.* Samir refused to eat. Jasmine remained cowering in the corner. During dinner, mother explained that Aunt Hanan, who lived in Damascus, was going to visit soon. Dad grunted his approval. After the plates were cleared, we listened to the radio for an hour and drank tea in small glasses. Then, as if on cue, mother proceeded to take down our mattresses, pillows, and blankets, stacked neatly in a corner, and spread them on the floor. By 11:00 p.m., we all went to sleep. Things were expected to return to normal the following day. For the rest of us they did, but not for Jasmine. Something had snapped loose in her. To be sure, she returned to work and continued to go to her sewing and embroidery class, but her movements were increasingly inert and automatic. Still, the rebel in her had not been entirely crushed, for she now sought an instrument with which to avenge herself, to express her refusal to accept her world's traditions – even at the price

of her own ruin. So, one day, less than three months after her beating, she went to bed with a boy from the neighborhood. When Moussa found out, we all knew what drastic fate awaited her. Her punishment was going to be a terrible, terrible one indeed. It was just a question of the manner in which she would receive it. My sister had committed an unspeakable act beyond all understanding. Since time immemorial, women guilty of it were returned to their Glorious Maker, for presumably only He knew how to deal with them. Even Jasmine herself seemed to see no injustice in the fate that awaited her. At the time, even I saw nothing despotic or venomous in the verdict passed on my sister. I did not turn away in nauseated disbelief. I did not flinch with horror. I did not try to stop it. Tradition had long since devoured our autonomy. We could no more get outside it than we could jump out of our own skin. Moussa chose poison. He handed it to Jasmine in a cup. Jasmine stood by the dining table assuming the bored stance of someone standing in line at a movie theatre, and drank the contents. Then she lurched forward and staggered around like a bull gored by too many picks and fell dead on the floor. Dad was the first to react. He knelt over his daughter's body and howled: 'I'll join you, I'll join you soon, Jasmine, I'll join you soon, my lovely darling.' Mom started ululating those God-awful Koranic incantations of distress. And Moussa went out on the balcony, took out a gun that he had acquired for the occasion, and began to shoot rounds in the air. Now the whole neighborhood knows that we have redeemed our honor, just as tradition dictated. . . . I curse God, His world. I want to set fire to His universe. It is only my word, not His, that can feed life into a stone.¹⁸

In the Middle East, this is the terrible fate awaiting those who dare break with orthodoxy, those who dare flaunt their difference, those who dare demand cultural and linguistic humanism – or humanism and humanity *tout court* – and celebrate their personal, national, ethnic, and linguistic specificity and independence. Turki's is certainly a searing indictment of patriarchy and misogyny in the Middle East. But, clearly, his underlying message is that patriarchy and misogyny are symptoms of more deeply-rooted pathologies ensconced in the brutality and imperiousness of a language (that no one *can* or *dares* speak). It is the Arabic language and linguistic authoritarianism which create the repressive conditions through which Middle Easterners are forced into a self-imposed mutism, and are 'devoured' by a tradition that demands undivided allegiance to a single culture.¹⁹ Even those opposed to these conditions, the Samirs and the other battered quiet majorities in the Middle East, are acquiescent and resigned to their own bondage. Thus, all of the users of the Arabic language, especially those advocating on its behalf, reluctant advocates as they might be, are complicit in the crimes committed in the name of MSA and for the sake of MSA and the unity and conformity that it mandates. Yet Turki dares bellow out a rebellious cry against this language in the final sentence of his sister's ordeal: 'I want to set fire to [God's] universe', he said; 'it is only my word [my language], not His, that can feed life into a stone.'²⁰

Ultimately, what Turki was trying to demonstrate with 'it is my word, not His [that is not Allah's and the Koran's] that can feed life into a stone' was that his own spoken idiom (the dialect of Palestinian refugees in Beirut, which closely resembled

Beirut Sunni vernaculars) was the language of life, vitality, and freedom. His premise (elaborated earlier in his narrative) was that what we wrongly refer to as Arabic constitutes at least three distinct languages that are as different from each other as Chaucer's English is different from Churchill's and from the varieties of African-American, Scottish, Irish, and the rest. In his description of his sister's ordeal, Turki was alluding to a well-known theory of language (the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis) which argues that it is linguistic structure and/or linguistic behaviour that influences and determines culture and social structure. Whorf argued that languages, rather than their speakers, can be sexist, repressive, tyrannical, romantic, moderate, tolerant, and so on, because the shape and organization of their languages determines the contours and characteristics of their culture.²¹ Therefore, the indictment Turki was handing down was certainly one directed at Arab society (repression, misogyny, absence of freedom, etc.), but in his view this was a society shaped by language, Modern Standard Arabic (and its progenitor, Classical or Koranic Arabic) and that it was the language that needed to be overhauled (or done away with) before tending to the problems of society. In the same vein (and by the same *cris de coeur*), Turki was making the case for his native language, his dialect, his 'word' not God's, as he bellowed out his final cry.

It is true that cultures mould and nourish the languages of their practitioners. But that is not necessarily the case with Modern Standard Arabic. MSA is not merely the language of Qoran and the liturgy of over a billion Muslims. Arabic is God and Tradition incarnate. Hundreds of millions of Arabs and Muslims, even those with inadequate knowledge and understanding of MSA, believe Arabic to be the hallowed language of God, and therefore a pristine primordial idiom that must not be sullied with the trivialities of language, dialects, and narratives that dwell outside of its well-ordered universe.²² According to the Syrian poet Adonis, MSA is not a 'natural' medium for spontaneous human intercourse; it is rather a fixed, divinely inspired complex of immutable cultural patterns, legal conventions, and behavioural norms; in that sense, the Arabic language (whether in its divine Qoranic form or its Modern Standard incarnation) counters and abrogates all that is defined by human free will, and demands undivided submission to its divine autarchy.²³ *This* is the tradition – ensconced in language – that Jasmine had to contend with, and *this* was Jasmine's true oppressor in Turki's eyes.²⁴

If we can read Jasmine as metaphor, then she must surely stand as a symbol for those silent Middle Easterners, minority peoples upholding narratives and cultural references that ostensibly betray the unitary orthodoxies of the Arabic language and its keepers. The emotional savaging of Jasmine and the severe physical punishment meted out against her were 'nothing unusual' noted Turki. Her fate was that of those who dare raise so much as a whimper in the face of orthodoxy. Turki's poignant 'and then we sat down to have dinner' after his sister's vicious beating is a pungent statement on the brutality of tradition – as embodied in language – and the resigned quietude of those subjected to it. 'What had to be done was done', and no one dared object, conceded Turki. Indeed, the minutiae of his subsequent description – 'we listened to the radio for an hour and drank tea in small glasses ...' – with its exquisite Proustian attention to detail, perhaps trivial detail, is a chilling reminder of the banality of cruelty and the perfunctory manner in which those who deviate from the Arabist praxis can be marginalized, or worse, disposed of.

Indeed, Arab nationalist ideologues like Sati' al-Husri and Michel Aflaq elevated this form of cruelty – meted out to those rejecting Arabism – to the level of a national ethos, nay a national duty and a limitless source of national pride and joy – a form of joy and pleasure approaching carnal-sexual reward. Being merciless and brutal to the point of physically and metaphorically annihilating those Middle Easterners advocating non-Arab narratives and non-Arab identities became one of the creeds of Michel Aflaq's Baath (*Anglice* Resurrection) Party.²⁵ Aflaq exhorted Arab nationalists to be pitiless and cruel to those putative members of the Arab nation who have gone astray, rejecting the Arabness with which they were anointed. He preached that Arab nationalists

be merciless to themselves as well. ... be imbued with a powerful hatred, a hatred unto death, towards any individuals who embody an idea contrary to the idea of Arab nationalism. ... An idea that is opposed to ours does not emerge *ex nihilo*: it is the outcome of individuals who must themselves be annihilated, so that their very idea might in turn also be annihilated. The existence of an enemy of our idea vivifies it and sends the blood coursing in our veins. Any action that does not call forth in us living emotions and does not make us feel the spasms of love ... that does not make our blood race in our veins and our pulse beat faster, is a sterile action.²⁶

Aflaq's liberal use of vocabulary ordinarily associated with love – physical, sexual love – is neither gratuitous nor frivolous here. His are allusions to the base carnal gratification that cruelty and physical violence are believed to engender in sadistic psychopaths – only the psychopaths that Aflaq is egging on in this passage might have been the sexually repressed youth of his Arab nation; a youth whose inhibited sexuality is invited to find release in an orgy of violence against 'strayed Arabs'. This is the same parochial, possessive, despotic Arab nationalist as Fawaz Turki's brother Moussa, a conservative bully who beat his own (sexually) liberated sister nearly to death, only to subsequently force her to drink a poison-chalice he had himself brought to her lips – her just reward for having strayed from cultural exigencies and norms. In the tradition of Aflaq, Moussa was a bully and cold-blooded murderer who, as soon as he has killed his own sister, proudly struts to his balcony, brandishes a handgun – perhaps a phallic symbol of his own repressed manhood – and spurts out staccato rounds of his *baroud d'honneur* in the air; a 'gun-salute' as it were, broadcasting the death of an apostate and an errant family member, and reclaiming his challenged virility.

With Aflaq's prescription above, as with Moussa's deliberate and brutal reaction to his sister's straying from the herd, there seems to be a state of ecstasy, clearly preceded by some sort of anticipatory arousal as a prelude to meting out beastly punishment against those rejecting Arabism. 'Blood coursing in our veins', 'pulse beating faster', and 'spasms of love', are part of a phraseology that would otherwise belong in the vocabulary of love were they not disturbing references to the 'carnal rewards' of acts of brutality rained on those who stand in the way of tradition and the nation. And so, with such morbid celebration of, and exhortation to brutality hardwired into Arabism's political and linguistic DNA, executed with almost religious fervour, what chance is there for those who

advocate for separate non-Arab identities? What chance is there of providing alternatives to reductive Arab nationalist and Islamist orthodoxies? The answer is ‘not much’, especially when mainstream scholarship and prevalent assumptions on the Middle East continue to validate and normalize such monistic notions of Middle Eastern identities.

Alas, those are the exigencies of our times, and those are the prevalent paradigms of a presumably homogenous *Arab* Middle East; patterns and perceptions that rest on unjustified assumptions, but ones that are all too avidly accepted, codified, and normalized by so many of those plodding through the labyrinths of Middle Eastern identities today. Yet the Middle East is hardly the monolithic exclusive preserve of Arabs and Muslims alone. It is a universe where varied, age-old cultures have for millennia cavorted, collided, mingled, and bloomed. The Middle East is not so much an ‘Arab world’ as it is a diverse, multiform, polyglot cocktail of multiple ‘worlds’: a syncretistic pantheon and a patchwork of hybrid ethnicities, languages, and narratives; a millenarian universe of varied cultures and civilizations (including those spawned by Muslims and Arabs) where peoples and times touch and blend *without* dissolving each other, and where languages and histories mesh and fuse *without* getting confused with one another.

A number of Middle Eastern thinkers today – mainly Levantines – have begun mining for such expansive cosmopolitan parameters of identity uncluttered by linguistic and religious orthodoxies. Georges Naccache (1902–72), a twentieth century Lebanese diplomat and author, was one such exponent of a diverse, ‘bastardized’, multiform self-perception. He viewed his tiny sliver of Lebanese mountains, strewn about the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, as a millenarian meeting-place of peoples, languages, and cultures, impossible to slot into a single soothing ‘nationalist’ label.²⁷ Amin Maalouf (b. 1949) is another such Lebanese author dedicated to the idea of Lebanon as a cacophony of peoples and narratives rooted in everlasting motion. Indeed, Maalouf dedicated the corpus of his literary output to the elaboration and celebration of such identities that hallowed complex hybridity and a *métissage* of cultures and languages. He described his homeland, Lebanon, as:

Attachment to the ancestral soil and longing for exile; a sanctuary and a passageway in one; a land of milk and honey, and blood; neither Heaven, nor Hell; but rather, Purgatory. [A perch from where], over there, in the distance, I could see the sea; my cramped plot of sea, narrow and distant, ever moving forward, ever rising towards the horizon, like an endless road.²⁸

Maalouf’s conception of identity – defined by fluidity, movement, and everlasting permutation and metamorphosis – is clearly at odds with Arabism’s advocacy for a compulsory Arabness. ‘Every person who speaks Arabic is an Arab’ wrote a twentieth century seer of Arab nationalism:

Every individual associated with an Arabic-speaking people is an Arab. If he does not recognize his Arabness, and if he not proud of his Arabness, then we must look for the reason . . . But under no circumstances should we say: ‘as long as he does not wish to be an Arab, and as long as he is disdainful of his

Arabness, then he is not an Arab.' *He is an Arab regardless of his own wishes.* Whether ignorant, indifferent, recalcitrant or disloyal, he is an Arab, but an Arab without consciousness or feelings, and perhaps even without conscience.²⁹

Maalouf would counter this disquieting exhortation to embrace a domineering Arabness with an exquisite tribute to the ecumenical, pantheistic nature of Middle Eastern identities – perhaps more specifically a validation of his own Lebanon's cosmopolitan personality. Speaking of Leo Africanus, a fifteenth century character in his eponymous novel *Léon l'Africain*, Maalouf describes himself – and by association the entire Levant – thus:

I, Hasan, the son of Muhammad the scale-master, I, Jean-Léon de Médici, circumcised at the hands of a barber and baptized at the hands of a pope, I am now called the African, but I am not from Africa, nor from Europe, nor from Arabia . . . I come from no country, from no city, no tribe. I am the son of the road; a wayfarer . . . From my mouth you will hear Arabic, Turkish, Castilian, Berber, Hebrew, Latin and Italian vulgari, because all tongues and all prayers belong to me. But I belong to none of them.³⁰

This is clearly a canvas bursting with infinitely more complex colours and layers of identity; a far broader and more fluid perception of 'the self' – and acceptance of 'the other' as such – bereft of the strict disturbing orthodoxy demanded by Arab nationalism. This is an identity which, in Maalouf's view, provides a more authentic and accurate portrayal of the Middle Eastern mosaic: always nationalities made up of multiple nationalities; always peoples straddling multiple traditions; always linguistic humanists wielding multiple languages that are syntheses of centuries of civilizational and cultural intercourse.

Yet Lebanon is hardly alone in daring to shed the baggage of reductive Arabism, and exhuming suppressed pre-Arab identities. The works of Egypt's Ali Salem, a disciple of Taha Husayn's, offers a pungent indictment of the insularity and thuggish instincts of Arabism (as elaborated by Husri), and attempts to provide an ecumenical *sui generis* Egyptian cosmopolitanism as an alternative. In the short satire excerpted below, *The Odd Man and the Sea*, a verbal duel erupts between an anthropomorphic Arab nationalism and a humanistic Egyptianism, each trying to convince the other of the validity of *their* own history and *their* own perception of identity. The outcome of the duel, though predictably ominous, still highlights the repressive intuitions of Arabism, juxtaposing them to the noble fluidity and grace of an expansive, tolerant Egyptian identity. Salem writes:

I'm at a popular café in our street, the Nile Valley Street, which is a branch of the broad Arab League Avenue. I usually sit in this café sipping my coffee and playing the only game that suits me: the game of thinking.

One night, the people around me were immersed in playing dominos, cards and backgammon while I was flying far away on a board of my thoughts. I was thinking that I love the sea, the Mediterranean, in Arabic the 'white sea.' It was close to me when I was a child in my hometown of Damietta. And I was close to it – only some kilometers away. I used to go to its shore with my friends on

bicycle. Several times, we went there on foot. You may consider me one of its followers or disciples, and definitely I'm one of its residents. I still remember that I used to stare at its surface looking for the far horizon, as if I wanted to see my neighbors there, in Italy, Greece, Spain and France. They are Europe and I'm Africa. We are neighbors, separated by two continents, unified by one sea.

While I was flying above the clouds, he appeared in front of me. He was almost my age, but quite different. His face reflected deep feelings of piety and certainty, while my own betrayed puzzlement and fear of the unknown.

He said: 'All the people around are engrossed in doing something useful, why do you sit around doing nothing?'

'I'm thinking, sir.'

'Of what?'

'Of the sea, of the Mediterranean.'

'Why don't you think of the Red Sea?'

'I don't know it. The few times I went there, I didn't feel any affection toward it. It's beautiful, however, yet something in it makes me feel desolate.'

'But you feel affection for the Mediterranean?' he asked.

'Yes, it's one of the human rights to love the sea.'

A cruel look crept upon his face, I felt restless. Once again he started asking questions:

'Do you feel that you belong to the Mediterranean?'

'Egypt itself is of the Mediterranean', I responded. 'One day, thousands of years ago, this sea was just a lake, crossed by ships loaded with thoughts and art toward Greece, carrying the product of minds and souls, returning from there, loaded with other products of minds and souls.'

'You didn't mention that you are an Arab', he pointed out.

'The Arabs are my fathers, but the Egyptians are my forefathers; do you advise me to inherit from my fathers and ignore the treasures left to me by my forefathers?' I asked him.

'I don't advise you, I order you' he said!³¹

In the main, what Ali Salem appears to be attempting in this dialogue is a validation of identity – namely a validation of Egyptian identity – as a construct distinguished by its very diversity and complexity, rather than by some narrow chauvinistic exclusivism. Egypt itself is the product of the Mediterranean, Salem tells his Arabist interlocutor when the latter attempts to confine the land of the Nile to a fixed demarcation. Yet unlike Arabism, Salem's Egyptian nationalism – really a form of universalist, humanistic patriotism – hardly displays the 'anti-other' parochialisms of his opponent; 'the Arabs are my fathers' admits Salem to his prosecutor; 'but the Egyptians are my forefathers; do you advise me to inherit from my [Arab] fathers and ignore the treasures left to me by my [Egyptian] forefathers?' asks a perplexed Salem? He does not negate his kinship to the Arabs, but at the same time he refuses to disengage from his equally relevant non-Arab and pre-Arab ancestry. However, the domineering Arabist responds with lapidary brevity truly worthy of the canon preached by Husri and Aflaq: 'I do not advise, I order you!' he affirms. But Salem, the ever witty and subtle satirist, does not allow Arabism to escape his scalpel unscathed. In the conclusion of his piece Salem's narrator, now resigned to

the whims of his tormentor, is carried back in time to nineteenth century Egypt, where roads and modern forms of communication are non-existent, where mules are the common mode of transportation, where firewood and candlelight are the sole source of energy and lighting, and where individual freedoms and freedom of conscience are still unheard of fairytales – the stuff of a still unfathomable future. The pungent statement of such a conclusion was clearly to demonstrate that relinquishing a single component of one's identity – in order to satisfy the whims and assuage the fears of a dominant and domineering one – devalues human beings, stunts their need for movement and progress, and cages their elastic and expansive parameters of selfhood in outmoded dogmas that halt culture and progress, rather than nurture and perpetuate them.

Over half a century prior to Ali Salem's *The Odd Man and the Sea*, expansive, inclusive conceptions of identity similar to his were already being elaborated in Lebanon. The past 15 centuries of Lebanon's history, wrote Michel Chiha, presumably 15 centuries of Arab domination

should not make us oblivious or disrespectful of the fifty centuries that preceded them! ... even if relying entirely on conjecture, the blood, the civilization, and the language of today's Lebanese cannot possibly be anything if not the legacy and synthesis of fifty centuries of progenitors and ancestors.³²

Yet in addition to their apparent Lebanese inspiration, Ali Salem's ideas did have indigenous Egyptian antecedents; more exactly in the form of a local Mediterraneanism that flourished during the 1920s and 1930s, and which was spearheaded through the works and the person of Taha Husayn (1889–1973). Considered by many the doyen of modern Arabic literature, Husayn nevertheless viewed Egypt as crucible and heir to the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, *not* an outcome of an Arab lineage. Indeed, Husayn believed Egyptian and Arab cultures to be irreconcilable polar opposites, stressing that Egypt's only sure path to modernity and progress had to pass through disengaging from Arab history, shedding Arab accretions, and reclaiming Egypt's ancient Pharaonic legacy.

In his *Future of Culture in Egypt*, his magnum opus published in 1939, Husayn defined Egyptian identity and placed it squarely at the centre of a Levantine–European–Mediterranean cultural triangle. Egyptians are not Easterners, he wrote; rather their affinities lay with the cultures of the Greeks, Italians, Phoenicians, and French.³³ Yet Husayn's most brazen attempt at severing Egypt from its Arab accretions tackled the issue of language. 'Arabic in Egypt is now virtually a foreign language', he wrote; 'nobody speaks it at home or school or the streets or in clubs; it is not even used in [the] al-Azhar [Islamic university] itself.'³⁴ The spoken language of the Egyptians, Husayn maintained, 'is definitely *not* Arabic, despite [its] partial resemblance to it'.³⁵ Husayn advocated for the normalization and codification of Egypt's spoken demotic, calling for the replacement of the Arabic script with a writing system that served 'the cause of clarity ... [and rendered the sounds of Egypt's spoken idiom] accurately and fully, with due regard for speed and economy of effort'.³⁶ This attempt at normalizing and intellectualizing colloquial Egyptian – which in Husayn's view would ultimately sever Egypt's linguistic and cultural ties with the Arab world – was a by-product of an early 1920s Middle East becoming

slowly attuned to the linguistic modernization, secularization, and scriptal Romanization ventures that Mustapha Kemal Atatürk was prescribing for Turkey. Yet, like Ali Salem's character in *The Odd Man and the Sea*, and like Fawaz Turki's Jasmine, Husayn was browbeaten and stymied in his efforts to disentangle from Arabism's embrace. Yet the lure of vernacular languages have not been snuffed out entirely in a Middle East where MSA is still not a universal spoken language. And hard as they might try, the efforts of Arab nationalists at suppressing the multiple identities of the Middle East have yet to succeed.

There are lessons that Middle East scholars and Middle Easterners besotted by Arabist and Islamist orthodoxies can draw from European events that led to the amicable, civil divorce of French, Spanish, and other Latin 'vernacular' languages from the stifling embrace of Church Latin – and consequently from reductive, hegemonic supra-identities. This is, of course, a very sensitive issue, as linguistic reform often necessitates profound psychological and emotional conditioning, especially in deeply religious societies where the 'prestige' language is often associated with a dominant – often a domineering – religious mystique. Linguistic reform does not happen overnight. Even in France, the abandoning of Latin and its replacement by a codified vernacular 'French' in the early sixteenth century was a process centuries in the making, and it remains to this day a work in progress. But it was nevertheless audacious writers and literati, undaunted by the gravitas and authority of Latin (linguistic and theological) orthodoxy, who undertook the task of elevating a previously lowly French vernacular to the level of a prestigious national language. One of the militant 'anti-Latin lobbies' at the forefront of this mission was a group of dialectal poets called *La Brigade* – originally troubadours who would soon adopt the sobriquet *La Pléiade*. The basic document elaborating *La Pléiade*'s role as a literary and linguistic avant-garde was a 'manifesto' entitled *Déffence et illustration de la langue Françoyse*, penned in 1549 by Joachim Du Bellay. The *Déffence* was essentially a denunciation of Latin and advocacy on behalf of the French vernacular. Like Dante's own fourteenth century defence and promotion of his Tuscan dialect in *De vulgari eloquentia* – which became the blueprint of an emerging 'Italian' language – Du Bellay's French *Déffence* extolled the virtues of vernacular French language(s) and encouraged sixteenth century French poets, writers, and administrators to make use of French – as opposed to Latin – in their creative, literary, and state functions. In a *Déffence* chapter entitled 'Exhortation to the French', Du Bellay lamented the fact that Frenchmen of his time were 'so hard on [themselves, using] *foreign languages* as if [they] were ashamed to use [their] own [native speech forms]'; 'you must not be ashamed of writing in your own language!' advised Du Bellay.³⁷

Incidentally, this debate is notably similar to those broached by a number of Middle Eastern activists and thinkers throughout the twentieth century, arguing for discarding MSA and adopting local vernaculars as prestigious, intellectual, national, and official languages. Alas, the Middle East still lacks the clout of a figure such as France's François I; a contemporary of Du Bellay, and an enlightened ruler who was unafraid of standing up to the orthodoxy of Church Latin, shoring up *La Pléiade*'s case in the promotion of local vernacular languages as official national idioms and languages of state and culture. Yet, for long centuries after François I and *La Pléiade*, Latin remained and persisted as the dominant language of some scholarly

disciplines, namely theology and philosophy. Even during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, students at the Sorbonne who were caught speaking French on university grounds – or in the surrounding *Quartier Latin* – were castigated and risked being expelled from university. Indeed, the Sorbonne’s famed Latin Quarter earned its sobriquet precisely because for long after the waning and disappearance of Latin it remained a sanctuary – an ivory tower, as it were – where only Latin was allowed as a spoken language. Even René Descartes (1596–1659), the father of Cartesian logic and French *rationalisme*, felt compelled to apologize for having dared use vernacular French – as opposed to Latin – when writing his famous treatise, *Discours de la méthode*, close to a century after Du Bellay’s *Déffence*. His contemporaries, especially language purists in many official and intellectual circles (very much akin to Arab nationalists and advocates of today’s MSA) castigated Descartes, arguing French to be too divisive and too vulgar to be worthy of scientific, philosophic, and literary writing. Yet, an undaunted Descartes wrote in his Introduction:

If I choose to write in French, which is the language of my country, rather than in Latin, which is the language of my teachers, it is because I hope that those who rely purely on their natural and sheer sense of reason will be the better judges of my opinions than those who still swear by ancient books. And those who meld reason with learning, the only ones I incline to have as judges of my own work, will not, I should hope, be partial to Latin to the point of refusing to hear my arguments out simply because I happen to express them in the vulgar [French] language.³⁸

Although Descartes would ultimately continue vacillating between Latin and French in his subsequent work, he was a pioneer in that he had written the first seminal philosophical treatise of his time (and arguably of all times) in a lowly popular *vulgare* previously considered unfit for critical thinking and serious intellectual endeavours. Yet he wrote in the *vulgare* not because he was averse to the prestige and philosophical language of his time; he wrote in the French vernacular simply because it was his natural language, the one he, his readers, and his uneducated countrymen felt most comfortable and most intimate with. It was French, its lexicon, ambiguities, and grammatical peculiarities that best transmitted the realities and the challenges of Descartes’ surroundings and worldviews. To write in the vernacular French – as opposed to Latin – was to function in a language that reflected Descartes’ cultural milieu, his intellectual references, his popular domain, and his historical accretions.

This same argument can be made today with regard to those putative Arabophones who elect to put their thoughts on paper in their native *vulgari* rather than in their region’s traditional, dominant, prestige language; MSA. Like Descartes, they choose to do so not because they are averse to MSA, nor because they are ineffective in it – to the contrary, most of the modern intellectuals who opt for their vernacular languages are brilliant and articulate Arabists. However, like Descartes and those who preceded him in French, the Middle East’s vernacular advocates elect to work in their *vulgari* because MSA is no longer their spoken idiom and – like Latin – it is no longer capable of reflecting the realities and challenges of their modern world. To move about in the modern Middle East’s vernacular languages is

to negotiate a new universe in idioms with long-standing pedigrees and a present rooted in settled life and information superhighways, where the languages of paved roads, renewable energy, hybrid cars, and space-shuttles are the norm. MSA, on the other hand, venerable as it might be, was devised for – and for long remained bound to – the strictures of theology and austere desert life. It was a reflection of different times and bygone atavistic societies rooted in a harsh, insular desert ethos at variance with the cosmopolitan humanism, liberalism, and hybridity articulated by the ethnically and culturally varied peoples of the modern Middle East; native users of a multiplicity of often mutually incomprehensible vernacular languages.

Some 60 years ago, speaking of the ‘Lebanese paradox’ which, in its cultural and linguistic diversity represented a microcosm of the modern Middle East, Lebanese thinker Michel Chiha wrote that:

Conquerors and their conquests have all come, gone, and faded away; yet we [the Lebanese] have remained. We are the meeting place into which peoples flock and assimilate regardless of their origins. We are the crossroads where varied civilizations drop in on one another, and where be vies of beliefs, languages and cultural rituals salute each other in solemn veneration. We are above all a Mediterranean nation, but a nation, like the Mediterranean itself, discerning and sensitive to the stirring music of universal poetry.³⁹

This is the Middle East! Not an ‘Arab world’, but a diverse human and cultural space, composed of Arabs, to be sure, but teeming with non-Arabs and non-Arabophones as well; a space with topologies, climates, histories, languages, and geographies favourable to diverse cultural and human compositions, synthesizing centuries of intellectual, linguistic, and ethno-national intercourse and traffic. It is only with understanding, acceptance, and celebration of this reality that one can begin to approach – and consequently, perhaps resolve – the troubles and chronic outbursts of violence plaguing the modern Middle East.

Notes

1. E. Kedourie, ‘Not So Grand Illusions’, *New York Review of Books*, Vol.9, No.9 (23 Nov. 1967).
2. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, general editor K. Versteegh (Brill, 2009), 3 July 2009, http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=eall_title_eall (accessed 21 Oct. 2009).
3. *Ibid.*
4. E. Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism; A History* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.28–9.
5. T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York and London: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1991), p.33.
6. Karsh, *Imperialism*, p.7.
7. *Ibid.*, p.128. See also E. and I. Karsh’s *Empires of the Sand; The Struggle for the Mastery of the Middle East, 1789–1923* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.173.
8. E. Kedourie, ‘Not So Grand Illusions’, *New York Review of Books*, Vol.9, No.9 (23 Nov. 1967).
9. J. Carmichael, *The Shaping of the Arabs; A Study in Ethnic Identity* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p.309.
10. S. Farah, ‘So You’d Like to Learn Arabic. Got a Decade or so?’, *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 Jan. 2002.
11. W. Thackston, *The Vernacular Arabic of the Lebanon* (Cambridge, MA: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2003), p.vii.

12. E. Said, 'Living in Arabic', *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Cairo), Feb. 2004.
13. See the United Nations Development Programme's *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2002), p.51. See also 'How the Arabs Compare: Arab Human Development Report', *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.IX, No.1 (Fall 2002), pp.59–67.
14. R.G. Gordon, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Dallas: SIL International, 2005), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=arb (accessed 1 March 2009).
15. F. Turki, *Exile's Return; The Making of a Palestinian- American* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp.120–26.
16. *Ibid.*, 120–26.
17. *Ibid.*, p.124.
18. *Ibid.*, pp.58–61 (emphasis added).
19. *Ibid.*, pp.58–61.
20. *Ibid.*, pp.58–61.
21. R. Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Malden, MA and London: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp.220–21.
22. M. Safouan, *Why Are the Arabs Not Free? The Politics of Writing* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p.54.
23. Adonis, *Al-Thabit wal-Mutahawwil, Vol. I*, 4th edition (Beirut: Dar al-'Awda, 1983), pp.107–8. Adonis publishes under this 'nom de plume'. His given name is Ali Ahmad Said Asbar. He hails from a Syrian Alawite region and was born during a period when the Alawites were not particularly enthralled with the idea of Arab nationalism and when they were still considered apostates by mainstream Islam (today, they are of course the 'spearheads' of Arab nationalism, and Lebanon's Moussa Al-Sadr issued a Fatwa in 1977 declaring the Alawites 'followers of Shi'i Islam'). In any case, Ali Ahmad Said Asbar was unable to get published in an 'Arab world' that looked askance at the name 'Ali' in the late 1940s. That is part of the reason he adopted the ostensibly (religiously and ideologically) neutral 'Adonis'. That is, of course, ostensibly neutral, because Adonis was also making a statement with his adopted name; a name borrowed from Phoenician and Greek mythology (Pagan non-Arab tradition) was at once an assault on Arab nationalism and its symbols, and a rejection of 'religious' identities (mainly Islam). But that's another essay.
24. Turki, *Exile's Return*, p.61.
25. M. Aflaq, *Fii Sabil el-Ba'th* (Beirut: Dar at-Tali'a, 1963), pp.40–41.
26. *Ibid.*, pp.40–41.
27. G. Naccache, 'Nationalisme culturel, renaissance arabe, autodafés ...', in *Un rêve Libanais; 1943–1972* (Paris: Editions FMA, 1983), pp.36, 49.
28. A. Maalouf, *Le rocher de Tanios* (Paris: Grasset, 1993), pp.276–7.
29. A.K.S. Al-Husri, *Abhaath Muchtaara fi al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya* [Selected Works in Arab Nationalism] (Beirut: Markaz Diraasat al-Wihda al-'Arabiyya, 1985), p.80 (emphasis added).
30. A. Maalouf, *Léon l'Africain* (Paris: Livres de poches, 1987), p.2.
31. A. Salem, 'The Odd Man and the Sea', *The Beirut Daily Star*, 17 Aug. 2004.
32. M. Chiha, *Le Liban d'aujourd'hui (1942)* (Beirut: Editions du Trident, 1961), pp.49–52.
33. T. Husayn, *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (Washington, DC: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954), pp.4–5.
34. *Ibid.*, pp.86–7.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p.89.
37. J.-B. Nadeau and J. Barlow, *The Story of French* (New York: St-Martin's Press, 2006), p.56 (emphasis added).
38. R. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (Paris: Edition G.F., 1966), p.95.
39. M. Chiha, *Visage et présence du Liban*, 2nd edition (Beyrouth: Le Cénacle libanais, 1984), p.49.