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Hegemony and Secular Criticism Between the Postmodern and the Postcolonial Discourses: Readings and Uses of Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*

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DEDICATION

To who accompanies me in the journey of comprehension, and in the comprehension of my journey...

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ABSTRACT

While the modern power attempted to liberate the individual from the shackles of religious persecution, it imposed on him a new mode of secular hegemony. One of the most powerful manifestations of hegemony is found in literature where writers adopt secular discourse to criticise and denigrate religion under the claim of freedom of expression. This research traces secular formations in postmodern and postcolonial literary works whose writers are originally from the Third World and shows how they enforce the power regulated by modern capitalist machineries. It is an analytical comparative study of both Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* to highlight the different ways through which these novelists contributed in fostering the grip of hegemony through the secular criticism they display in their literary works. The analysis and comparison of the linguistic and narrative constructions of the two novels demonstrate the profound relationship between secular criticism and hegemony. The relationship is built upon postmodern and postcolonial discourses that employ secular structures in literature to affirm the presence of modern power by ensuring the absence of religion. The secular presence is often portrayed as a step towards freedom and as a counter-canonical step rather than identifying it as a new canonical mode of hegemony. Thus, this research joins a current conversation in the Humanities about the complicity of Secularism with power, and shows, through a close reading to Rushdie's and Daoud's novels, the contribution of secular structures in hegemonizing literary works.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Criticism has for long been conceived as an efficient instrument to unveil error and to seek objective truth. It is largely attributed to the age of Enlightenment when thinkers started to put many concepts and convictions under the sharp scrutiny of reason. For them, reason was the sole gate to freedom and liberty from traditionally structured *ancien régime* and from the shackles of religious and political oppression. Criticism was therefore crucial to unleash the faculty of thought and to escape the immaturity spread among Europeans which Kant defined as "the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another." Thus, for the individual to be free, he had to leave behind the conceptions that had shaped his view of the world and become the master of his own mind. Religion was one of the solid conceptions that governed and guided people's world-view for many years. It had a profound presence in and impact on both the public and private sectors of life. The religious presence, however, started to noticeably retrograde in the West during the age of the Enlightenment; when the authority of the Catholic church was challenged and soon substituted by the authority of reason and logic. Although critical logic and attitude existed long before the Enlightenment, the current understanding of it was manufactured by the ideals and the ethos of that age. Hence, criticism began to be linked to the confrontation of religious power and the beliefs it conveys, and the "immaturity" that Kant described started to be attributed to religion. Accordingly, religion was conceived as an opposite of enlightenment, and as an obstacle to civilisation.

Enlightenment and civilisation were not local ambitions. After the efficient impact that the dethroning of religion had on Europe, Europeans embarked on the journey of enlightening other parts of the world under the pretext of it being a *mission civilizatrice* even when the enlightenment meant colonization and the civil-

isation meant imperialism. With the inauguration of empires, a form of knowledge on the conquered was needed to foster the grip of power. Consequently, various forms of knowledge were established including the famous institution of Orientalism, which aimed not only at knowing the orient but also at redefining it according to its interests. Along with the portrayal of the orient's culture and its redefinition, was the representation of its religions and more precisely the religion of Islam. Islam was a core authority that governed the Muslim and the Arab people's lives. So, conquering them required conquering their conception and view of Islam and eventually shaping its image throughout the whole world to justify its expansion as an enfranchisement from an oppressive religion. Therefore, a criticism of Islam and its authority was crucial for colonial enlargements because two powers cannot stand, and the fall of a particular power was a prerequisite to the rise of another.

As accounted for, colonial enlargements were accompanied by both a redefinition and a critique of the other's cultures and religions. However, even after the waves of decolonisation and the collapse of traditional empires, criticism was still present and it even witnessed its full vigor. With the beginning of the postmodern age, it was directed against universal truths and ideologies that for long shaped the history of the world, and it took it as a prime duty to subvert certainties and substitute them with incredulity and relativism. Therefore, religion in postmodernity is no longer an authority; rather, a tissue of mystifications that ought to be dethroned to open the horizon for scepticism to reign instead. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that even after decolonisation, the West could still rule and control what is known today as the Third World, yet this time not through direct domination but through consent, what was labelled by Gramsci as hegemony, and through the very criticism that was once an escape from oppression: secular criticism. Unlike Orientalism, this novel form of knowledge was not produced by western experts; on the contrary, by native writers whose latent undeclared duty was to inform their cultures and mostly shape them to serve the western global democracies. Accordingly, a secular criticism of the religions that governed the Third World was efficient to renew the domination over it under benign terms which demonise and mock religious convictions.

Subsequently, the contention displayed in this research is that the secular criticism adopted by writers of literature that are originally from the Third World, and who employ postmodern and postcolonial discourses, might be another gate to a new form of power. Moreover, while secular criticism portrays itself and is portrayed as a propagation to freedom, liberalism and democracy against all kinds of oppression including that of colonialism and religion, it is regulated by the capitalist

free-market machinery and it reproduces the old images of domination in a "gentler" way.

Several theories, notions and concepts would contribute to the shaping of this research's contention. Also, they would contribute in the analysis of the two works selected to be scrutinised in relation to the topic: Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*. Arriving at this topic was a result of the increasing cultural debate surrounding the question of secular criticism in the current age. After being for long conceived as an antagonism to all kinds of oppression (and mainly religious), secularity started lately to be questioned and criticised. However, as the critique of secularity as an ideology or an epistemic category is brisk, tracing and analysing its formations in modern literature is still not fully probed and explored. Thus, this research puts under scrutiny the two aforementioned literary works to trace secular formations. Selecting these two literary works among several others, to both illustrate and compare, was due to some reasons. Firstly, both Rushdie and Daoud have a wide readership; the former in the Anglophone world and the latter in the Francophone world. Secondly, both were subject to zealous criticism from the religious and to ardent celebration from the secular. Thirdly, both are contributing in framing an image on the Arab Islamic world not only in the west but even in shaping a lens through which the modern Muslim individual sees himself and his "traditional backward" culture and religion. Moreover, they are both portrayed in the media as the champions of freedom of speech who defied the authorities of colonisation and religion; embracing the ideals of freedom and reason. Finally, both literary works are based on great classics renowned in the Western world in particular and the whole world in general, Rushdie's *Quichotte* on Miguel De Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* on Albert Camus's *L'Étranger*.

In short, the research aims at shedding the light on how secular formations in some postmodern and postcolonial works of literature construct another form of power. In addition, it examines the uses of religion in linguistic and narrative constructions of some texts regarded as deconstructive works or as counter-canons. It also investigates the relationship between secular literature written by novelists originally from the Third World and hegemony. At last, it aims at showing how secular criticism can be a gate to power instead of freedom. These objectives are only met through answering some questions that animate the research.

Is secular criticism a gate to freedom?

What is the relationship between secular criticism and hegemony?

To what extent are the secular postmodern and postcolonial literary discourses a break with hegemony?

Is the stance against religion in literary texts also a stance against all forms of power?

This research draws on several scholars and critics to present a plausible and credible reading and analysis of the two studied literary works. Firstly, it draws on Talal Asad and Saba Mahmoud in order to construct an understanding of secular criticism and secular formations in several cultural and critical fields and their relation to power. Secondly, it draws on Foucault, Gramsci and Althusser to reach a comprehension on the forms and figurations of power in the current age. It also considers the speculations of Edward Said, Aijaz Ahmad and Hamid Dabashi to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between literature and hegemony.

The method employed in this research is to read, analyse then compare the selected literary works for this study. That is, as Edward Said put it in *Orientalism*, "to read them first as great products of the creative or interpretive imagination then to show them as part of the relationship between culture and empire" (xxvii). Namely, the methodological approach used is the comparative approach in which Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* are compared and juxtaposed around guiding concepts. Comparison, however, does not aim merely at describing the works or at identifying their similarities and differences; most importantly, it aims at demonstrating the persistent and the frequent secular formations in the linguistic and narrative constructions. There is also the analytic approach which will be animated by analysing what Edward Said calls the "strategic location" and the "strategic formation" of each writer. This approach will help in reaching a better understanding on how those secular formations are formulated and why.

This work is divided into three chapters. The first one is a theoretical attempt to trace the history of secular criticism and its portrayals of religion. It also shows how criticism shifted from being a faculty that seeks objective truth, to being an institution governed by secular formations that affirm their presence by ensuring a religious absence. Accordingly, it sheds the light on the profound relationship between hegemony and secular criticism. Moreover, it manifests the already lying

power in both postmodern and postcolonial discourses, and the ways through which secular criticism makes these discourses discreetly hegemonic. With these points being met, this chapter will finally trace the secular presence in culture and literature and their contribution to and complicity with hegemony. The second chapter is a close reading and analysis of the secular formations in Rushdie's *Quichotte*. It projects the hegemonic deconstruction and affiliation of postmodern texts. In this vein, it brings into light the covert textual structures that display a criticism of religious practices and beliefs and then shows their relation to modern power. The third chapter is an analysis of Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*. It traces the overt secular structures in the novel and demonstrates the ways through which a secular counter-canon can be canonised and used for hegemonic ends. In the conclusion, this research will highlight the points of convergence and divergence between the two novels and locate them in a larger secular cultural context that fosters the grip of modern hegemony.

CHAPTER ONE

SECULAR CRITICISM, POWER AND THE REPRESENTATION OF RELIGION IN POSTMODERN AND POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical background on the relationship between secular criticism and hegemony as manifested in postmodern and postcolonial discourses. In the modern age, the system's power lies not in its conspicuous regulations; rather, in invisible and covert systemizations that govern the smallest details of people's lives. This very invisibility permits the modern power to sneak in and govern economic, cultural and political aspects of the world. To maintain consent, new practices and ideals were foregrounded including secular criticism. Although criticism existed long before the modern age, it began to be portrayed as merely secular; and thus, as the only bearer of objective truth and the only seeker of freedom. As a result, a deep antagonism between the religious and the secular was created, and for the secular to rule the political and social scenes, it started to negate and denigrate all what is religious. Therefore, this chapter will firstly trace secular structures that originated during the age of the Enlightenment and developed from being a mere epistemological category to forming a fully-fledged political doctrine that reigns in the modern age. This political doctrine, that is secularism, used various normalising instruments including secular criticism in all its forms to hegemonize its power. Next, it examines the manifestations of hegemony in both the postmodern and the postcolonial discourses and how secular formations contributed in reproducing and reinforcing them. Secular hegemonic formations were as present in literature as they were in Academia. Hence, this chapter finally shows the role literature played and is still playing in maintaining power and to the ways secular criticism and structures are fostering the grip of this power on the modern world.

1.2. Hegemony and Secular Criticism

Criticism has a long history that can be traced back to the Ancient Greek philosophy. It was known as an effective faculty of healthy scepticism and of seeking truth. Later, it started to be molded by the powerful system that governs the intellectual and cultural scenes. As the modern system is profoundly secular, criticism began to be defined by secular terms. In being so, it regarded religion as its first antagonism, and in consequence the scepticism it entailed addressed religion in particular and aimed at debunking all its narratives.

1.2.1. A Genealogy of Criticism[1]

Scepticism has its roots in the practice of criticism or critique[2] which is used nowadays to denote a sort of dialectic and polemical rejection, an analytic or a deconstructive stance, or "the search for a secreted truth within a tissue of mystifications" (Brown 9). This understanding of criticism presumes its large capacity of unveiling error and inaccuracy that resides in texts or in the real life shaped by those texts. However, the presumption of criticism as the bearer of objective truth is in itself subject to wide criticism and is seen by some scholars as a result of systematic regulations that originated in the early years of the Enlightenment.

In an essay entitled "Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism", the notable anthropologist Talal Asad revisits criticism and stresses the importance of writing a genealogy both to the concept and the practice. He rejects the simplistic Foucauldian view to critical attitude as a sign of enlightenment and in consequence he seeks to analyse the factors that paved the way to such attitude and such understanding of it. In his 1978 essay "What is Critique?", Foucault attributes the birth of critical attitude to the modern west which in return drew heavily on the Kantian enterprise of the Three Critiques[3] and other smaller polemical practices by different scholars. In doing so, he suggests that criticism is a faculty that the modern west inaugurated and is, as a matter of fact, characterised by. Thus, to be modern, to be enlightened, is to embrace and to own a sense of critical attitude (Asad 47). Asad, therefore, departs from similar recurrent understandings of criticism to demonstrate their inaccuracy, and to insist on the importance of regarding criticism in its historical contexts, namely, the importance of tracing its genealogy.

The word criticism emerges from the Greek verb *krino*, which means "to judge", "to fight" or "to decide" (Asad 48). Seemingly, the term used to have judicial connotations and uses that may refer to the attempt of discerning right from wrong or good from evil; then acting, justly, upon this discernment. Yet even in this sense, *krino* did not suggest the meaning of possessing final truth but of seeking it, nor did it aim at confronting a particular evil at the expense of another but at confronting

[1] A genealogy of criticism, and a large scholarship on its beginnings, is not yet fully established. Therefore, this part is not an attempt to present a detailed genealogy, rather, it is an attempt to stress on the importance of writing one.

[2] Some philosophers including Karl Marx and Judith Butler make a strict distinction between critique and criticism. This study, however, does follow the footsteps of Talal Asad in his essay "Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism" in which he does not make the same distinction since it is not a detailed study on the meaning of critique or criticism as much as it is a study on secular formations in criticism.

[3] The Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Practical Reason, and the Critique of Judgement.

all guises of evil. However, as the term traversed through time and history, as it reached the threshold of modern west and became *criticism*, its meaning took a new path and its practices suggested new uses that both shaped and were shaped by the call to enlighten, to *modernise*.

Therefore, the current understanding of criticism was first originated in the age of Enlightenment, or the so-called age of reason, which is a period that altered the history of knowledge and shaped the modern age. During that age, many thinkers and philosophers started to question the credibility of religious beliefs and developed a sense of scepticism in all mystic traditions. Scepticism that characterised the enlightenment, however, was not merely a concept, but also a practice through which its practitioners sought to supplant the authority of religious dogma with the authority of reason. Accordingly, criticising the long tradition of religion was the first crucial step to dethrone it and substitute it with a more credible power; a power that unleashes human mind and shatters the censorship exercised on the individual's freedom and liberty.

1.2.2. On the Secularity of Criticism

In his book *The World, the Text and the critic*, Edward Said describes criticism as "always situated, sceptical, *secular*, reflectively open to its own failings" (26; emphasis added). Said's understanding of criticism seems to be derived from the Enlightenment philosophers' understanding of the term. Hume, for instance, claims that given the fallibility of our mental faculties, criticism is then "open to its own failings". However, even when it emerged in Europe as an antagonism to religious authority, it was directed against all kinds of unreasonable, unverified authorities. Thus, Said's use of the word "secular" to define criticism denotes that criticism cannot be but secular. Yet if criticism cannot be but secular, is its subject merely religion? An answer to this question is presented by Said himself. He sees that the duty of criticism is to "think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom" (40). Therefore, for Said, every shape of control that poses a threat to human freedom must be subject to criticism. Namely, the goal of this practice itself is to liberate individuals from all sorts of tyranny.

Marxist literary critic Aijaz Ahmed makes some notes on Said's use of the word in his *In Theory*. He attributes the use of "secular" in the title to the influence of the

very power that Said seeks to oppose which is "the dominant American ideology" (218). Ahmad contends that Said could simply use the word "oppositional"; which is a word that Said himself described as the "one word" he would use "consistently along with criticism" (40). In this vein, the notion of secular criticism which he introduces shows his profound secular affiliation that "affirms itself by negating and denigrating its other" (Furani 3). This other, as Said shows in the last essay of the same book, is the religious and all what seem to follow its traces. For Said, unlike secular criticism that is established on the grounds of healthy scepticism to defy the authority of culture and other systems, religious criticism operates as an "agent of closure" that shuts off the realms of human investigation through a religion which role is to furnish us with "systems of authority and with canons of order" (*The World, the Text and the critic* 290).

Accordingly, the understanding of criticism in the modern age as merely secular deserves to be put under scrutiny because it influenced several works of non-fiction and fiction. It is believed that in being secular, criticism becomes the sign of the modern individual's unprecedented search for truth and call for freedom. However, in undermining a particular religious power (or any other form of control) and in claiming the pursuit of freedom, secular criticism gives rise to another form of power. As Asad demonstrates, there are multitude of activities that lie under the label "criticism"; including evaluating, judging, censoring, mocking and so forth. This shows that as secular criticism regards the liberty of one, it disregards the liberty of another: the judged, the censored and the mocked (109). Thus, criticism nowadays is governed by many norms and standards which the modern power shapes as it also shapes the very definitions of freedom, domination and truth. For Asad:

> While the freedom to criticize is represented as being at once a right and a duty of the modern individual, its truth-producing capacity remains subject to disciplinary criteria, while its material conditions of existence (laboratories, buildings, research funds, publishing houses, personal computers, etc.) are provided and watched over by corporate and state power to ensure that citizens can be useful. ("Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism" 54)

In this passage, Asad shows how the act of criticism is often subject to manipulation and modulation; for the very institutions that make this criticism possible for the critic and available to readership are owned and controlled by the power which functions to assure that these products serve its interests of latent dominion. Hence,

secular criticism is present in many fields from the academic to the literary. It may also take many forms, from evaluation and judging, mocking and ridiculing to silencing and censoring, thus creating new modes of modern authority that venerates freedom and disregards "injury".

1.2.3. Secularism, Hegemonic Order and Injury

The secular as an epistemic category that influenced criticism has a direct connection with secularism as a fully-fledged political doctrine. For many scholars, including Talal Asad, Charles Taylor and Saba Mahmoud, secularism is not simply the separation of religious practices and laws from the state; rather, it is the articulation of new understandings and approaches to religion, politics and the law. An articulation and a redefinition that would suit the modern modes of governance[4]. Accordingly, an efficient uprooting of previous conceptualisations of religion which was a central power in premodern societies was needed for the modern democratic state to build deeply-rooted tenets of power with the constellation of its capitalistic machineries. Religion was thus portrayed as the main opposite to modernity since it has, for modern democracy, a long history of tyrannical rule, violence and deluding superstition. As a result, it was perceived as the prime obstacle which confronts freedom. In being so, religion was slowly secluded from public sectors and situated in private life where it could no longer be the source of morality, ethics, or authority of the state since the latter became openly secular.

However, even if freedom from "transcendence"[5] was secularism's formal claim, it contributed in shaping latent constraints through transcending the individual's right to know the workings of power ("Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism" 30). In his book *Formations of the Secular*, Asad argues that the most defining feature of modern liberal politics is "neither compulsion (force) nor negotiation (consent) but the statecraft that uses "self-discipline" and "participation," "law" and "economy" as elements of political strategy" (3). Namely, modern power is practiced through various forms that are hard to identify as power since they are perceived as institutions that facilitate the individuals' daily social and private life and their welfare including schools, universities, markets and justice courts. In effect, if liberal politics was occupied with confronting hegemonic forces in its early phases, it is now the ally of global power; it frames its prospects, it propagates and promotes

[4]See Asad, Talal, et al. Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech. Townsend Center for the Humanities, University of California, 2009.

[5]The religious and the metaphysical.

them and it normalises its ideology to modern agents latently creating a new form of hegemonic order. The normalisation of the modern secular agenda was exercised through various means. All of which integrate a transformative effect that aims at shaping or redefining particular visions. This transformative effect is sometimes fulfilled despite the moral and spiritual injury exercised through it on the individuals who diverge from the system's ruling ideology.

In her essay "Religious Reason and Secular Affect", Saba Mahmoud asks the question of "what constitutes moral injury in our secular world today?" (70). She analyses various discourses that the liberal ideology attributes to free speech and secular criticism, and demonstrates how they cause a serious moral injury. The injury, although moral, is serious; because these discourses and images targeted signs and personas that several individuals and groups revere and wholeheartedly follow in their everyday life in its smallest details. This kind of attachment, for Mahmoud, is best understood in Aristotle's notion of *schesis*[6] which captures "a sense of embodied habitation and intimate proximity" (76). Therefore, to attack or mock these signs and personas is to attack and mock the individuals and groups themselves as they are in a psychophysiological and emotional relation with them. For this reason, the kind of representation that constitutes moral injury is not merely criticism or free speech, rather a transformative act that requires the individuals to change their beliefs to fit in a liberal secular system and culture.

Situated in this context, Asad asks: "Are property rights in a work of art infringed if it is publicly reproduced in a distorted form?" ("Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism" 28). For him, if the modern law exercises a penalty on those who reproduce distorted representations of works of art, why does it fail in exercising the same penalty on those who distort and misrepresent religious works and symbols? He answers this in his book *Genealogies of Religion*, in which he contends that insulting religious identity through different forms of writing and representing, and thus causing a moral injury is a concept that secular law finds it hard to cope with because it cannot "quantify the damage in monetary terms" (282). That is, since no material damage can be proved and thus no financial compensation is deserved, the injury is disregarded and this, for Asad, is understandable in a fully capitalist society. Accordingly, along with the impact of media and image, the liberal secular structures and representations found in scholarship and knowledge production in general can be the most powerful although the most discreet; for their ideologues are

[6]The Oxford English Dictionary defines Aristotle's notion of schesis as "the manner in which a thing is related to something else".

often portrayed as the seekers of objective truth and as the warriors against superstitions. Therefore, after subverting religious authenticity through secular criticism, universities and many institutions occupied with producing knowledge became the "churches of the secular world" (Trilling 5).

1.3. The Contribution of Secular Uses to Hegemonize the Postmodern and the Postcolonial Discourses

"The churches of the secular world" were governed by different postmodern discourses. They employed a poststructuralist language to subvert old "grand narratives" and open the gates for smaller local narratives. The central grand narrative to be subverted was the religious; as it prevented capitalist systems from maintaining the power they seek. Thus, the secularisation of discourses and practices was a crucial step to hegemonize the modern age. Moreover, with the foreclosing of grand narratives and the foregrounding of local ones, a new postcolonial discourse was generated. It used postmodern structures and epistemes to criticise former colonial powers. However, in doing so, it disregarded the power that postmodernism entails and conformed to its hegemonic secularity. Therefore, to understand secular power formations that could penetrate the postmodern and the postcolonial terrain, one has to know what Postmodernism and Postcolonialism are, and more importantly, what they *are not*.

1.3.1. Postmodernism and the Postmodern Age as a Panopticon

Broadly speaking, postmodernism denotes the different stark changes that the world has witnessed (and is still witnessing) in all spheres of life, including literature, architecture, education, culture and philosophy, since the 1950s (Cuddon 689). Yet this definition alone is neither accurate nor sufficient; as postmodernism is "amorphous by nature" (690). During the 1970s, the term was brought into use by the American literary critic Ihab Hassan, who recognised the rise of a "postmodern" literature and also "postmodern" social attitudes (Bertens 141). However, the constellation of notions that one attributes to postmodernism were first launched and identified in Jean François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* (1979). In his account of the present condition, Lyotard purports that it is essentially characterised by the end of what he calls "grand narratives" or "metanarratives" that were ruling the world

and the individuals' conception of it, and were substituted by other "benign rule of limited, local narratives" (Bertens 141). In short, Lyotard defines postmodernism as an "incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv). This incredulity paved the way to smaller narratives that were sometimes conflicting and irreconcilable, resulting inevitable chaos and huge undecidability. For example, great theories and systems like those presented in religion, philosophy, politics and ideological trends started to be deemed as big myths that reigned for too long and it was high time to get overthrown and replaced by local trends of rule and thought.

In his book *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Capitalism*, Jameson contrasts the postmodern condition with the modern one, which despite all the changes that it witnessed, it still believed in some realities and truths and it sought to offer a critique to the processes of commodification and an endeavour to make it transcend itself (x). Conversely, postmodernism subverted all universal truths that people found refuge in. For Jameson, the end of modernism coincided with the reframing of the classical imperialist world system; when the worlds pioneering powers accomplished the journey of under-developing "Third World" countries and have already started the mission of developing their underdevelopment (47). However, there were many portrayals of postmodernism as merely aesthetic and highly apolitical despite all its power manifestations. However, what was disregarded and ignored is that even the aesthetic formations were profoundly tied to capitalism as Jameson claims:

> What has happened is that aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to aeroplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation. Such economic necessities then find recognition in the varied kinds of institutional support available for the newer art, from foundations and grants to museums and other forms of patronage. (4-5)

That is, art started to get involved with the market and in consequence it was moulded by it. And like many productions, it became the agent and the instrument through which both the artist and the recipient of art (the client) were manipulated and regulated to meet economic needs. As a result, the old distinction between "high" and "low" culture was blurred, and the new globalised and globalising culture of science fiction, fantasy, romance and kitsch reigned instead. With the rise

of postmodernism, one could hardly recognise the "best that has been known and thought"; for all the tastes were standardised, and if anyone attempts to innovate a new "touchstone" in order to distinguish the high culture from the low one, he will be accused of blocking local small narratives and stripping them from their very "right" to express *freely* in this "brave new world".

However, as postmodernism subverted universal truths, as it gave voice to the voiceless and as it allowed the blocked narratives to embark in the journey of expression; it also, and before all, shaped a systematic block on "any adequate consciousness of the structure of the imperial system" (Jameson 50). Namely, the system that was and is still structured and ruled by the market and that succeeded in imposing its authority even on the most distant territories of the current world. Thus, the recipients of the globalised age did not only mistake the imperial western economic system for another one (that is false consciousness), rather, they were not even conscious of it as a system in the first place, since postmodernism convinced its agents that it is the age of democracy and liberalism, not of ideology and domination. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault provides an erudite study of modern power. He analyses the development of the ways of discipline and punishment from cruel killing and torture to mostly tender and modest ways of ruling and imprisoning. However, this change is not genuinely a product of a humanistic-oriented reform, but a way to a more efficient and dynamic control. This "gentle" modern mode of punishment enables the system to penetrate other important social, political and economic institutions like schools, hospitals and markets. For Foucault, "to punish less, perhaps; but certainly, to punish better" (82). That is to rule, frame and control under tender labels or under no labels at all, the kind of control that sees everything and everyone but cannot be seen:

> This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded... in which the individual is constantly located, located and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact model of the *disciplinary mechanism*. (Foucault 197; emphasis added)

Hence, Foucault demonstrates the ways through which the modern state gains its effective "disciplinary mechanism", this mechanism centralises the use of absolute supervision where the subject's actions are constantly observed and his personal

information often known and rarely personalised. After supervision, there is the normalising judgment. It functions through correcting "abnormal" behaviours and aims at normalising them. Namely, modern power does not exercise punish or torture on its subjects when they perform (what is according to its definitions) deviant attitudes and actions; rather, it regulates these behaviours so that they correspond with the social standards and "norms" that it contributed itself in shaping. The third form of control is examination. This latter links both observation and normalising judgment to produce the suitable knowledge, be it scholarly or literary, about its subjects which allow it to exercise power accordingly. The new social regulation that the modern world is performing, was analogised by Foucault to the *Panopticon*[7] a kind of prison that the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham designed (Bertens 125). Bentham's prison is composed of set of cells that are constructed around one central position through which the residents of the cells are observed. The prisoner, however, is never aware of this act of surveillance through which he is visible to a highly invisible power, and more precisely, one that gains its force through this particular invisibility.

In short, despite the end of old colonial rule in which the colonized was under a direct concrete imprisonment, the present postmodern age acts like that Panopticon, in which "its citizens, are the bearers of [their] own figurative, mental imprisonment" (Bertens 126). They are always subject to various disciplinary mechanisms that foster the ruling power; mechanisms that are traversed through schools, churches and mosques, hospitals, markets and all what Althusser calls "state apparatuses". Hence, a "fictious relation" between power and its subjects is born, yet its fictionalized nature does not make it less real; on the contrary, it is its very fiction that makes it most real, and that enables its solid resistance to mapping and identification. It operates in, sneaks to and penetrates all aspects of social and personal life.

1.3.2. Revisiting the Postcolonial Narrative

Just like postmodernism, the definition of terms marked with "post" is often contested, including postcoloniality. It is likewise causing an endless debate on its meaning and identification, especially that its theorisation is developing with a rapid pace ever since the publication of Said's important text *Orientalism* in 1978. Many critics, then, have been attempting to give their accounts of what the shape of a

[7]The term has its origins in the Greek word which denotes "seeing". The idea was based on Jeremy's brother idea of the "central inspection principle" which makes the training and supervision of workers by their masters easier. Jeremy adapted this principle to fit his conception of a proposed prison which he called the "Inspection House".

"postcolonial project" looks like and how it should be.

Simon During defines postcolonialism as "the need in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism to achieve an identity *uncontaminated* by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images" (qtd in. Xie 6). It is then, as many suggest, both a call and an attempt to disestablish Eurocentric norms in literary and critical disciplines and to present a counter-discourse to the canons of imperialism that have been for long shaped by colonialism. However, several other critics doubt the possibility of creating a purely local postcolonial project that rejects Eurocentric critical foundations in their entirety. For Hutcheon, postcoloniality itself makes it impossible for its identity to ever be "uncontaminated"; for it employs its subversive discourse within the formerly colonial culture and not outside it (Xie 7). Situated in this context, the Indian literary critic Gayatri Spivak contends in her book *Outside in the Teaching Machine* that postcoloniality is in itself the "heritage of imperialism in the rest of the globe" (280). She demonstrates how the "political claims that are most urgent in decolonised space are tacitly recognised as coded within the *legacy* of imperialism" including the claims of nationalism, democracy and socialism (281, emphasis added). Thus, according to Spivak, for the postcolonial critic and subject to resist this already contaminated legacy, he has to take a *deconstructive* position towards its cultural norms that enabled him to communicate in and outside the metropolis.

In his article "Politics of Literary Postcoloniality", Aijaz Ahmad revisits these uses of the term "postcoloniality" and argues against Spivak's definition. Despite his incongruence with several Eurocentric critical notions, he refuses to attribute every notion that originated in the West and that the critic decides to adopt to the "heritage of imperialism" (6). Furthermore, he questions the term itself as it started to be applicable not only to what is called "Third World" but also to the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and other nations that have not been under traditional colonial rule. For him, as a consequence of this large applicability, "colonialism" becomes evacuated of its very meaning and postcolonialism "becomes a "post" not only of colonialism but of an indeterminate larger thing" (9-10). Moreover, he contends that in accepting indefinite categories like precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, one can no longer speak of "determinate histories of determinate structures" like the shape of the colonial or the postcolonial state. Also, one would regard the complex history of a particular nation as merely entangled with this loose meaning of colonialism; and thus, no history before or after colonialism would worth accounting for even if it is fiercely participating in the making of these nations' his-

tory (10).

Along with Aijaz Ahmad, many critics rethink the term "postcoloniality", analyse its "undecidable terrain" and point out to the conditions that shape its discourse and make it possible. Academics like Anne McClintock and Ella Shohat take issue with the term as it suggests that colonialism is now an issue related to the past: a "legacy" as Spivak puts it. They also argue that its discourse fails to address the issue of contemporary power relations and their complicity with global capitalism (Xie 7). McClintock, for instance, observes that the term "postcolonial studies" became more palatable to Academia than "minority studies" or "Third World studies" because it is characterised by an "academic marketability" (8). Thus, the postcolonial, according to these critics, did not only fail in criticising modern capitalism and its global regulating effects, it was also engaged with its machinery. More to the point, Ahmad, in his previously mentioned article, suggests that, in the modern times, one should not centralise the question of the colonial and postcolonial as much as centralising the urgent issue of capitalist modernity (7).

After the large wave of decolonisation, the formerly colonized lands witnessed the rise of nation-states that were led by national bourgeoisies and that contributed in the commencement of civil unrest and in the sustainability of modern capitalist imperialism that was hard to map and resist. The nation-state then became an effective mechanism to regulate imperialism and its market and to penetrate more deeply into post-colonial national economies than was the case under colonial rule ("Politics of Literary Postcoloniality" 11). Regulating hegemonic order in newly "independent" states required rendering them dependent not only economically but also culturally. Therefore, hegemony in post-colonial states was exercised through both marketisation and liberalisation, and with the complicity of national leaders who chased capital at times and propagated cultural differentialism at others, or what Bhabha would name cultural "Hybridity".

1.3.2.1. Postcoloniality and the Shape of Cultural Differentialism

Several postcolonial theorists including Edward Said and Homi Bhabha celebrated cultural hybridity and conceived it as a way of comprehending the complex relations between the formerly colonial and the present post-colonial states. Ahmad, however, finds it incomprehensible for postcolonial hybridity to be celebrated while being squared with an organised erasure of nations and continents (12). For him, "speaking with virtually mindless pleasure of transnational cultural hybridity, and

of politics of contingency, amounts, in effect, to endorsing the cultural claims of transnational capital itself" (13). Namely, to propagate cultural differentialism and to call for the foundation of an undecidable political terrain is to allow capital to infiltrate national cultures and spaces in various postmodern guises.

Although the idea of differentialism, which portrays itself as a critique and an antagonism to essentialism, was a strategy that national leaders promoted to preserve their capitalist economic interests, it was mainly a condition that the postcolonial migrant intellectual focalised and then embraced. Ahmad observes that the intellectual who resides in the metropolis and who identifies with the condition of cultural hybridity turns to be perceived as "Truth-Subject"; what Edward Said would name as "cultural amphibian" and Homi Bhabha as the bearer of the "truest eye" (14). The subject of truth is accordingly the postcolonial intellectual who had the privilege of being exposed to both cultures and as a consequence was able to understand the truth and the core of each culture. Moreover, the logic of cultural differentialism is to prioritise self-representation over all kinds of representations and to perceive it as the only authentic representation, regardless the fact that there could be moments of false consciousness (17). That is, every representation of the other's culture, civilisation, religion should be ostracised no matter how objective; and every self-representation is genuine no matter how subjective. However, it is important to note that most individuals, even the migrants, are not privileged enough to be open to other cultures, nor they are free enough to represent themselves; as they are occupied with providing the least subsistence that would ensure their survival in a capitalist system.

Therefore, cultural hybridity is already determined by capital that regards individuals and cultures as equal only to the extent of their commodification. For Ahmad, celebrating this kind of hybridity and differentialism conceals the unequal relations of cultural power today, where individuals are portrayed to be free to embrace new cultures as the postmodern world granted them the very rights that colonialism had deprived them from (18). He contends that:

> That one is free to invent oneself and one's community, over and over again, as one goes along, is usually an illusion induced by availability of surpluses; of money-capital or cultural capital or both. That frenzied and constant refashioning of the self, through which one merely consumes oneself under the illusion of consuming the world, is a specific mode of postmodern alienation which Bhabha mistakenly

> calls "hybridity", "contingency", "postcoloniality". (19)

That is, that one can travel between cultures and worlds freely without regulations, that one can be a truth-subject who is able to represent himself and his culture more authentically and that one can see the world through clearer lens because of his hybridity, this idea was a product of postmodernity that used postcoloniality to globalise its cultural and economic discourses; shifting the theoretical framework of the formerly colonized countries from nationalism to postmodernism. Namely, introducing postcoloniality to a deconstructive framework where everything can be dismantled, and nothing can be defined or mapped.

1.3.2.2. Hegemony and Deconstruction

In his article "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism", the American Turkish critic Arif Dirlik argues that postcolonialism is a progeny of postmodernism; for the postcolonial critics contribution to it was under the shape of rephrasing old problems of Third-Worldism in a poststructuralist language; avoiding to examine the real problems lying in the relationship between postcolonialism and global capitalism (342). This contention corresponds with Ahmad's observation on how these disciplines have been employed to systematically domesticate different forms of political oppositions and to displace "an activist culture with a textual culture" (*In Theory* 1).

A textual culture is a culture that centralises poststructuralist thought and celebrates deconstructive language. In her book *The Critical Difference*, Barbara Johnson claims that the deconstruction of a text is not exercised through "arbitrary subversion" but through the "careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself", she adds that if anything is destructed through a deconstructive reading, it is not the text but "the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over the other" (qtd in. Cuddon, 209). Namely, deconstruction, as seen by its followers, is an effective tool to identify the latent forces lying within a text and making its production possible. Along with postmodernist critics, many postcolonial critics have affiliate themselves to this tradition. Spivak, as mentioned before, called for a deconstructive philosophical position towards postcoloniality itself, while Bhabha encouraged cultural hybridity and called for politics of contingency where the agent develops his own poststructuralist language of critique.

However, as deconstruction helps dismantling forces underlying discourses, it

also helps widening the domain of structural undecidability which clears the space for a decision-making taken in an undecidable terrain (Norval 141). According to the political theorist and philosopher Ernesto Laclau, undecidability caused by deconstruction is a "mere preparatory moment to hegemonic politics (48). In his article "Hegemony After Deconstruction: The Consequences of Undecidability", Norval epitomises Laclau's work on the relationship between deconstruction and hegemony:

> Hegemony requires deconstruction, because without the radical undecidability that the deconstructive intervention brings about, many strata of social relations would appear as essentially linked by necessary logics and there would be nothing to hegemonize. Conversely, deconstruction requires hegemony since it needs a theory of the decision taken in an undecidable terrain. (143)

So, although deconstruction is textual, it has tangible hegemonic effects and roots. It creates an undecidable contingent space that makes the task of hegemonizing easier, as it is exercised on indeterminate social and cultural conditions that makes this hegemony invisible, or "gentler" as Foucault would put it and therefore possible.

In short, power in the postmodern world made itself present through various forms. These forms were not attributed to postmodernism only which is, as described by Jameson, the cultural logic of capitalism, but also to postcolonialism that was its progeny outside the western metropolis. Capital, then, was regulated under various guises including cultural differentialism and deconstruction that helped in hegemonizing both postmodern and postcolonial discourses. Yet, unlike Ahmad's statement which calls for scrutinising modern capitalism today more than scrutinising colonialism and its cultural legacy, one should also call for analysing current secular formations in the discourses of postmodernity and postcoloniality, which much of it resulted from colonialism itself, for they too, as mentioned before, create a hegemony that serves capital and propagates imperial western civilisation.

1.3.3. Secular Presence Between the Postmodern and the Postcolonial

The secular secures its modern presence through religious absence. As mentioned before, the foregrounding of the secular and the denigration of the religious were achieved through various means including knowledge production. Secular forma-

tions are present in both the postmodern and the postcolonial discourses thanks to the long tradition of equating secularity to freedom and toleration, and religiosity to closure and oppression.

Several intellectuals that depart from postmodernism and postcolonialism as their theoretical framework are confronted with institutions and universities that celebrate secularism and serve western liberal democracy. Intellectuals, as Brown puts it:

> Face something of a choice between complicity with imperial and unreflexive Western civilizational discourses of rationality and secularism on the one hand, and with challenging Western presumptions to monopolize the fact, meaning, and content of secularism, rationalism, freedom, and even democracy on the other. (13)

That is, intellectuals who represent an integral part of institutions like universities have to choose between serving and reproducing western imperial discourses or dismantling them in order to demonstrate their imperial hegemonic essence. Just like Orientalism which was a prerequisite to the colonial territorial expansion, new modes of knowledge production were crucial to propagate the modern secular form of power. Therefore, as some took it a commitment to examine the ideological machinery and deconstruct it, many chose to serve as accomplices to the liberal secularising power through generating the knowledge that normalises and reproduces it. Ironically enough, the intellectuals who made the choice of complicity were not only of western origin, numerous of them were of Muslim African and Asian origins who identify as both postmodern and postcolonial and who were portrayed by the western media as brave dissidents from religious and traditional norms and as nonconformists who embraced the ideals of freedom and reason and challenged the religious authorities.

Unlike some postcolonial critics who celebrate the cultural hybridity of the intellectual migrant, the Iranian critic Hamid Dabashi examines, in his book *Brown Skin, White Masks*, the role that the migrant "comprador intellectuals" play in facilitating the prevalence of American domination. He contends that they are manipulated by modern imperial powers to inform their home countries and to propagate the liberal western values and ipso facto to manufacture consent for upcoming imperial projects. Thus, the presence of comprador intellectuals or the so-called native informers is a conditio sine qua non for the framing and maintenance of hegemony.

Accordingly, "without a socially predicated prejudice and power, no mode of knowledge is possible" (Dabashi 98), and without knowledge no mode of power is feasible. To illustrate, Dabashi presents a "diagnosis" to some writers including Azar Nafisi, Fouad Ajami, Salman Rushdie and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who are of Muslim origin, who criticise the workings of colonialism, yet who are also vociferously known for their antagonism to Islam which they perceive as essentially outdated and barbarous, substituting it for Western modern liberal and secular ideals. They present themselves, though latently, as the modern "prophets" of free speech and democracy, encouraging the new generations of the so-called Third World to leave behind the old suffocating traditions and beliefs and to embrace the modern ethos of freedom. Moreover, they also participate in manufacturing global consent for hegemonic projects through feigning cultural authenticity, as they are the natives of the lands on which these projects take place.

After the fall of traditional colonial conquests, a new imperial globalised conquest was functioning, it was indeed "gentler", as it used an efficient ideological machinery which worked "to make the conquest of the world appear as a human project, a liberation" (Dabashi 36). Human rights and mainly women rights were claimed to be the goal of the new conquest. Since Islam and Muslim leaders stripped people and especially women from their very rights, it was the mission of the modern democratic West to both retrieve and retain freedom. In effect, some secular intellectuals from the Third World started to employ the discourse that criminalises Islam and which attributes the backwardness and the underdevelopment of African and Asian countries to religion and its violent nature.

The secular democratic discourse of postcolonial and postmodern intellectuals was an introduction to modern aggressions that the East and other regions have been witnessing the last decades. In the previously mentioned essay, Asad asks the question "why is it that aggression in the name of God shocks secular liberal sensibilities, whereas the act of killing in the name of the secular nation, or of democracy, does not?" (16). In this vein, the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan were continuously portrayed by the media as the "war on terror", and then normalised, even latently, through several intellectual and literary texts as they make the criminalisation of Islam as a central point and as they represent their texts as an attempt to debunk all sorts of totalisations and powers which religion is allegedly just one of. Many modern novelists including Salman Rushdie and Kamel Daoud who are perceived as an integral part of postmodern and postcolonial literature, use secular formations to ridicule Islam, its "zealous" followers, and the beliefs or the tradition it left. Con-

sequently, these formations resulted a prejudice against Islam in the West and an admiration both in the West which is already secular and in the Third World in which many are influenced by the liberal democratic rhetoric.

In short, challenging religion and employing secular formations to ridicule it is not a gate towards liberty as much as it is a gate towards a new form of modern power. In an article entitled "The Resurrection of 'New Atheism'" on Aljazeera, Dabashi examines how the new secular and atheist discourse is closely related to capitalist imperialism and concludes that "new atheism" has very little to do with the objective study of religion or the serious examination of the idea of God. It has, however, a lot to do with "hatred and power". Namely, modern secular criticism and therefore secularism are more connected to imperialism than they are connected to liberty.

1.4. Secular Hegemonic Structures in Literature and the Ongoing Pursuit of Imperialism

Among the various cultural forms, literature has constantly played a crucial role in the ongoing pursuit of power. Power manifested itself or rather, was structured to be manifested and present in and through literature. Accordingly, the presence of a given power through similar cultural figurations suggests the absence of another power or the making of its very absence. Since the French Revolution, writers affiliated with the romantic school have been occupied by the prime duty of creating a literature of function and more precisely of a "conscious function" (Trilling 434). Literature, therefore, was getting grips with its time not only by describing its issues but also by trying to generate plausible explanations for them. Matthew Arnold called this element of coping in literature "adequacy"; that is, the ability of keeping up with an age despite of all its discrepancies, and he went further to perceive literature not only as a symptom of civilisation but mainly as a civilising agent (435).

With his rigorous observation, Arnold declares the role of literature as a crucial factor in the making of human history and knowledge where narrations are not merely a product of an age but they also participate in the production of that very age, and they consequently share in the management of the world and in constructing an image about and to it. For instance, in 1605, the world witnessed the birth of the first part of a genuine classic in Spain that would later be considered by Foucault as the first modern work of literature. Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*

was a brilliantly speculative representation of its own time which was defined by the stark changes that affected the way people both lived and understood their world. However, Cervantes' classic did not only depict a frame of that age yet it most importantly incorporated in the shaping of that frame. Similarly, Honoré de Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* projected the post-Napoleonic French society and became one of the most influential Realist works that would have a profound impact on great philosophers like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It was even claimed that the Communist Manifesto was an ideological reduction of Balzac's magnum opus (Rexroth 94).

1.4.1. Power/Knowledge and Literature as a Discourse

These intertwined trajectories of literature and the world make one consider Oscar Wilde's anti-mimetic position through which he claims that "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life." Yet the scholar that one inevitably invites when putting this overlapping under scrutiny is Michel Foucault. In his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault presents a historical account to discourse, that is the system of thought and knowledge; and to the conditions that make knowledge possible. He argues that discourses (epistemes or discursive formations, in Foucault's terminology) are "governed by rules, beyond those of grammar and logic, that operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period" (Gutting and Oksala, "Michel Foucault"). Thanks to Foucault's dismantling of discourse, the knowledge/power relationship became inseparable; knowledge, as Edward Said puts it, "gives power, more power requires more knowledge" (36). Like many structured formations, literature can also be regarded as a discourse which is, as defined in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "a large group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (Foucault 107). Foucault argues that power lies in language, and it is commonly known that language is at the core of literary studies (Bertens 131). It is therefore plausible to regard literature as one of the most powerful discursive formations. However, unlike other overt systems of power, discourse, including that of literature, implicates a latent power that functions on the level of the unconscious; resulting individuals who profoundly believe in what it tells them:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply

> the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. (Foucault 119)

Namely, this form of power penetrates the lives of its agents under different guises that they could barely recognise as forms of domination; it accompanies them, it regulates their actions and frames their horizons without their resistance, for one cannot resist what he does not see as a power and a threat, or what he does not see at all.

Foucault's approach to power has much in common with Gramsci's notion of hegemony and also, although to a less extent, with Althusser's concept of ideology. Ideology is not merely the constellation of beliefs and thoughts which we choose and are aware of, and that in effect consciously constitute our Weltanschauung (The world view of an individual or a group); rather, it is in its heart the faculty that generates those beliefs and thoughts, knowingly or mostly unknowingly, and guides the glass through which we see the world. According to the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, ideology acts like a bridge that links the individual with his life experiences and conditions, operating through the "ideological State apparatuses" that enforce its implantation (Bertens 72). It is powerful because it deludes its subjects to believe that they own a sense of free will which leads them to give in to profoundly tempting images of themselves; images which persuades them that they are whole, free and most importantly real (74). Hegemony, in the other hand, is a notion introduced by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. For Gramsci, hegemony is the prevalence of particular values and truths, not through "coercive power" yet through "consent" (75). Namely, it rules individuals and groups under various euphemisms rather than the labels of power and domination, resulting what Marx calls a "false consciousness". But unlike Althusser's deterministic view to ideology, Gramsci contends that as hegemonic practices and actions exist, counter-hegemonic reactions can also rise once hegemony is identified. Accordingly, literature can indeed be a potent instrument for ideology and hegemony as it internalises discourses that are in favour of a particular power without starkly proclaiming its affiliations to them, yet it can also be a firm stance against these powers representing a counter-discourse.

1.4.2. From Orientalist Filiations to Secular Affiliations

Foucault's power/knowledge and Gramsci's hegemony occupied a central position in Edward Said's study in *Orientalism*. In his book, Said contends that without locating Orientalism in the realm of discourses, one would not comprehend the rigorously "systematic discipline" by which the Western culture was able to animate and even construct the Orient in all its aspects (3). He also argues that without their "configurations of power" being examined, cultures and narrations cannot in consequence be scrutinised or understood (5). In being so, Said invites the notion of hegemony to show how power over the Orient was exercised through knowledge and with consent which established solid tenets and firm grounds for colonisation, and to analyse the way some cultural formations appear then predominate over others in order to shape that consent or produce that knowledge. Following Foucault's and Gramsci's footsteps, he points out that "hegemonic systems like culture" are best approached and understood when one realises that "their internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were productive, not unilaterally inhibiting" (14). Culture thus was taking and then keeping its grips on its subjects not through repressing and not through preventing them from thinking, writing or speaking, but through opening the gates of expression; yet an expression that culture itself shaped, propagated and preserved so that it serves its dominating essence.

This claim of the reciprocal relationship between culture and power was further extended in his book *Culture and Imperialism* in which he examines and even dismantles the discourses and the narratives of many writers whose works were for long deemed as "the best that has been known and said" as Matthew Arnold puts it. He had chosen such works firstly because of their aesthetic genius, and secondly and mainly because of their strong connection with the imperial process of which they represented a crucial part (xvii). Power is deeply ingrained in the social and cultural attitudes to the extent that one finds a writer both "criticizing and reproducing the imperial ideology of his time" (xxv). His consciousness or maybe "false consciousness" is authoritative, resulting in the case of literature a definite function; a canon, be it overt and conscious (as mentioned by Trilling previously) or latent and unconscious. Thus, Edward Said shows how histories are manipulated through stories, how nations are dominated through narrations and how the past informs the present.

For several years, knowledge established, and is still establishing, solid grounds for power. It was not a knowledge that aimed at understanding the "other" for purposes of enlarging the humanistic realm of experience and acceptance, rather, for

the mere purposes of control and domination. To know and to define is to rule and to confine. And like Orientalism which paved the way to colonialism and then imperialism, new forms of institutions and discourses started to emerge, both shaping and maintaining their power through cultural figurations including literature.

While Orientalists were in a filiative relationship with their culture, home and class, novel institutions of power created intellectuals who broke ties with their native traditional beliefs and became affiliated to a new culture, a new world-vision or a new system. For Edward Said, although relations of filiation can be sometimes authoritative, the detachment from their institutions and the adoption of new ones, what Said calls *affiliation*, can also generate a system no less dominant than the overt filiative system (*The World, the Text and the Critic* 19). He observes that affiliative systems of thought reproduce the very authority that is supposedly left behind when native family or culture were left behind (22). This reproduction according to Said, may be in affiliating with great texts, great teachers and great theories that have an authority upon the intellectual because of their antiquity or their power which academic institutions have reinforced. That is, when an intellectual cuts ties with the systems of authority he was born surrounded by like religion, local culture or native language, he might get involved with new systems of authority in the culture or ideology he became affiliated to.

Although Edward Said presented a sharp diagnosis to both filiative and affiliative authoritative relations, he failed at identifying the very authority he was affiliated to. In his article "Said and the Religious Other", Furani examines Said's *affiliation* to the secular and his celebration of it through analysing some of his notions including the notion of "secular criticism". He states that it may be peculiar to speak of hegemonic order (modern secularity in this case) in the works of an intellectual who dedicated his life to opposing all forms of hegemony (5). However, using Said's contribution in this context itself, makes the critic realise that the secular that he affiliates himself to also operates as a system. For Furani, Said's very insights on authority ended with "blindness to how the secular unfolded in the modern era as a hegemonic authority" (7). It did so because its apparition made just one reality, one mode of being and one sense of time possible. That is, as mentioned earlier, it affirmed itself by negating its other: the religious. Thus, Said was not above the conditions of power and affiliation he examined, as he never made a clear distinction between a "critical and putatively complacent secularism" (9). He described criticism as secular, and the secular as worldly while describing the religious as unworldly and the unworldly as an "agent of closure" and a "canon of order" (*The World, the Text and the Critic*

290). In regarding criticism and worldliness as mere secular characteristics, Said becomes a part of the hegemonic secular enterprise that excludes the religious other. Thus, just like the occidental orientalist who misrepresented the Orient to serve the western imperialist agenda and canon, Said and many other secular intellectuals who deemed religion as merely supernatural, metaphysic and sometimes dogmatic served the modern secular system of order despite their seemingly counter-hegemonic discourses. In short, the secular discourse substituted the orientalist discourse, and secularism, like orientalism, became an "authority necessary for producing western truths" (Furani 21).

1.4.3. Literary Canons and Counter-Canons

In his books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said shows how Orientalist discourses in literary works like Flaubert's, and textual representational discourses like those found in the works of Joseph Conrad, Jane Austen and Albert Camus contributed in consolidating colonial and imperial interests and thus served as literary canons, even if unknowingly. With the rise of the postcolonial theory, many of these pieces were subject to criticism and sometimes to literary reproduction or response from writers who are in a relationship of filiation with the nations or the cultures being represented. Drawing on Gramsci's contention, as hegemonic discourses show how powerful and ingrained the modern systems of order can be, they also show that they can be subverted through counter-hegemonic discourses that give voice to the represented to represent himself and to the oppressed to confront his oppressor. Accordingly, literature was rich of these counter-discourses that were regarded as counter-canons to the long history of canonical representation and understanding of the other who has a "different complexion"[8], a different culture, a different religion and a different language. For instance, renowned writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Tayeb Salih and Toni Morrison contributed in shaping new perspectives on the formerly colonized people different from the perspectives presented by European writers.

However, as mentioned before, the postcolonial category is not uncontested. Many writers who are considered as postcolonial and whose discourses are often seen as counter-hegemonic were sometimes criticised for contributing in reproducing the very imperial narrative they claim to oppose. The relation of filiation they

[8]In his novella *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad famously penned this quote "The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much."

have with the Third World was not as authoritative and *present* as the one of affiliation they have with the dominant European or American culture. Thus, instead of debunking colonial and imperialist narratives (what postcolonial criticism claims to be occupied with), these writers became involved in a postmodern subversion of everything; where imperialism and its capitalist machinery are not the central issues, rather, nationalism, religion and traditions of Third World are the main issues as they prevent their subjects from being modern. For example, both Salman Rushdie and Kamel Daoud are perceived as postcolonial writers while their authorial motives as demonstrated by their literary texts and structures can be situated in a larger political and hegemonic context.

In his book *In Theory*, Ahmad contends that canonizing the counter-canon was through the foreclosing of some questions and issues and the foregrounding of others that serve modern power (124). He observes that the counter-canon has undergone two phases: the first was dominated by a sense of nationalism, and the second was marked by "a poststructuralist debunking of all nations and nationalisms as mere myths of origin and as essentialist, coercive totalizations" (12). Namely, it started with being concerned with narratives of nation, its imperialized past and the colonial legacy left after the termination of colonialism (the case with Achebe and wa Thiong'o) and then it developed to be entangled with a postmodern denial and mythicizing of everything, and mainly local religions and traditions (the case with Rushdie and Daoud). Thus, religion, once again, became subject to criticism and (mis)representation in literary texts that were deemed as counter-canons while contributing in fostering another form of canon: the secular hegemonic one.

1.5. Conclusion

Since its dawn, secularity has witnessed many phases until it formed the political doctrine secularism. It began its journey with the prospect of enfranchising the modern individual from all kinds of censorship: that on the mind, the soul and life in general. Criticism, which was the core of secularity, turned to be understood as merely secular, i.e. the secular started to be conceived as the only way to challenge all forms of authority, including religion, and then to substitute them with the authority of reason. However, many historical events show that as secular criticism was once occupied with freedom and the subverting of unjust authority, some of it is now occupied with power and the normalisation of a modern liberal authority.

In fact, the act of normalising took different shapes and guises which literature is one of. As Asad suggests, imperial power "has made itself felt in and through many kinds of writing, not the least the kind we call fiction" (*Genealogies of Religion* 270). There has always been, then, a strong connection between literature and power as already discussed previously, in which the former propagates and reframes the latter. Accordingly, secular structures were profoundly present in postmodern and postcolonial literatures which claim to be rejecting all forms of power and embracing an "incredulity towards metanarratives" when they incorporate in the making and the remaking of the new power and its capitalist liberal machinery. It is therefore important to examine secular formations in literature as they are mostly latent or under different guises of freedom and art, and as they operate unconsciously. Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* are among the literary works that are rich with secular structures and that can be regarded among the works that, as Said once observed, serve the very power that they seek to oppose. Thus, through the theoretical lens established in this chapter, both Rushdie's and Daoud's novels will be analysed and scrutinised to demonstrate the secular hegemonic structures lying beneath their texts.

CHAPTER TWO

HEGEMONIC SECULAR FORMATIONS IN THE POSTMODERN DISCOURSE OF RUSHDIE'S *QUICHOTTE*

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to highlight the hegemonic secular criticism lying in postmodern affiliative and deconstructive structures as manifested in Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte*. Rushdie, the renowned Indian British (and lately American) novelist, is known for his affiliation to the secular ideology that venerates freedom of speech and action and fights against all kinds of religious censorship. In numerous articles and interviews, he declares that freedom of expression should be above all restrictions and restraints, even the sacred and transcendent regulations. Moreover, the secular affiliation is not only an ideological stance that Rushdie lives by; rather, it is a position translated into almost all his works of fiction. Along his artistic journey, this translation took various forms; sometimes overt and other times covert. For instance, in his novel *The Satanic Verses*, both the plot and the characters that Rushdie created projected his secular position and the lens through which he conceptualises religion. In *Quichotte*, however, the secular presence is not manifested in the way the plot is knitted, nor in the way characters are shaped; rather, it is manifested in distinct textual structures that can together form an idea about the nature of Rushdie's secularity once analysed and situated in a religious, political and social context.

At the first glance, it seems that *Quichotte* does not revolve around religion nor does it include religious themes. However, just like the postmodern secular world and condition that generated the novel, it did not escape offering representations about religion, its signs and its followers. Thus, with a close reading to Rushdie's text, and with taking into account his "strategic location" and "strategic formation", the reader or the critic observes the central presence of secular criticism in *Quichotte*; as it encompasses several allusions and textual structures that mock, denigrate and subvert religion. Furthermore, in analysing the factual and the fictional locations that Rushdie inhabits, and in analysing his postmodern formation, one can trace his secular affiliations and can conclude that his deconstruction and undermining of religious narratives in *Quichotte* locates him in a larger political and ideological scene that he claims to be escaping.

2.2. Novel Synopsis

Quichotte is a story of Ismail Smile, an old travelling salesman of Indian origin who works for his cousin's large Pharmaceutical company and who constantly moves from one address to another across the United States of America. He spends much

of his life in motel rooms watching excessively different TV shows, movies and series which resulted in him a form of brain damage. As a big fan of shows who lives mostly in virtual worlds of screens, he falls in love with the famous television personality Miss Salma. R who is also from India. So, he decides to start his quixotic quest of reaching her and winning her heart. He perceives his quest towards her as a divine one and wishes on a shooting star that he was accompanied by a son. His wish is granted and his son, Sancho, who is bound to him by a metaphysical power accompanies him in his journey.

To introduce himself and catch her attention, Ismail Smile starts sending Salma. R letters under the label "Quichotte". However, as the novel unfolds, the narrator reveals that Quichotte is not real; rather, he is a fictional character in a novel written by an Indian American spy novels' writer who is called Sam DuChamp and referred to in the novel as Brother. Therefore, the narrative starts to oscillate between the story of Quichotte and his creator Sam DuChamp. Like Quichotte who has a son and a sister, DuChamp, the writer of Quichotte's story, also has a sister (referred to in the novel as Sister) and a son (referred to as Son) that he is estranged from and seeks to reconnect with as his character, Quichotte, decides to reconnect with his sister too before starting his noble quest of love.

On the one hand, the novel explores the lives of Quichotte and the people who make his story. Firstly, his cousin Dr. R.K. Smile who owns the famous Pharmaceutical company that Quichotte works in (and that employs illegal practices to sell large amounts of addictive opioid medications). Then, his son Sancho who is only real to his father as he is the product of his own consciousness and who wishes later to detach from him, become real and to develop his own personality and consciousness. Also, Salma. R; the famous host of a popular talk show who is originally from India and who is secretly dealing with mental health issues. Finally, the novel explores the story of Quichotte's sister; the Human Trampoline, whom he reconnects with before reaching Salma. R. On the other hand, Rushdie also explores the lives of Sam DuChamp's son who is a cyber hacker and his sister who is a lawyer residing in England.

The narratives of Quichotte and his creator DuChamp progress together until they reach one end where the character and the writer experience the intertwined reality of the end of the world. At the end, Quichotte decides to meet Salma, and Sancho disappears as a result of his determination to seek an independent path from his father. When Quichotte finally meets Salma, the world starts to crumple and

collapse due to a rapid climate change. Quichotte and Salma succeed to travel to a parallel earth, yet they fail to live in its different atmosphere and thus they die.

2.3. Rushdie's Secular Affiliations as Manifested in *Quichotte*

Rushdie's literary works can be regarded as amorphous as the question of what category they fall under is still contested. His early novels (mainly *Grimus*, *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*) were portrayed as an essential material of the so-called Third World Literature then as an important part of the postcolonial counter-canonical literary tradition. Later, his recent novels started to get detached from this category and were no longer defined merely by it, rather, they identified with the larger category of postmodernism. This category itself, as demonstrated in Chapter One by Ahmad and other critics, produced the condition of postcoloniality and introduced it to a poststructuralist language that gave the old Third World problems a new shape: a shape that served modern capitalist and secular system.

Quichotte is Rushdie's latest novel, published in 2019. As the title suggests, it is based on Miguel De Cervantes' magnum opus *Don Quixote* which is deemed by many critics as the first modern novel. Just like Don Quixote, the noble man whose mind is corrupted by reading excessive numbers of the then-famous chivalric romances, Quichotte also loses his mind for consuming so much of nowadays junk culture. The novel is therefore a postmodern parody of the modern world that is becoming more stuffed with cultural and technological kitsch than any other time before. It is postmodern in the sense that it uses devices that were first attributed to postmodernism; including intertextuality (that entails pastiche, parody and allusion), magical realism and deconstruction. Moreover, it sheds the light on current themes like the prevalence of reality TV shows and of virtual cyber culture, the absence of reality and truth, immigration and racism, and also the end of the world.

2.3.1. Hegemonic Categories in *Quichotte*: The American, the Postmodern and the Secular

The transition in Rushdie's works from the postcolonial discourse to merely the postmodern one was synchronous with the significant changes that the modern world was witnessing. From his literary debut in 1975 until now, the world became more

governed by technology, more accustomed to junk culture or Kitsch, and more regulated by capital. Moreover, the transition was also synchronous with the changes that occurred in Rushdie's life itself. After the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, he was forced underground for almost ten years due to the death threats he received and to the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini. Another major event was his settlement in the United States which he chose to live in mainly because of, as he states in *The Washington Post*, his admiration for "the ideas of freedom embodied in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution." Consequently, the themes of Rushdie's more recent narratives were a projection of these different changes that occurred in his life and in the world in its entirety.

Quichotte portrays in a satirical manner present-day America with all its ramifications: the cultural, the technological, the political and the religious. When Asked to categorise *Quichotte*, Rushdie, in almost all his interviews on the novel, describes it as an "everything book". He argues that there is often only two ways to write a good novel; the first is to write about nothing, and the second is to write about everything, and it is in the second that he often situates himself or seeks to be situated. Moreover, when asked which literature his recent work belongs to, he states that since he is an American citizen now, the work is consequently a part of American Literature. Seemingly, and as mentioned before, the shift in his life had a noticeable impact on his works. In his three recent works, the setting shifted from India, Pakistan or any other part of the Third World to mainly the United States.

Quichotte is accordingly set in different parts of the United States with characters that have American citizenship yet they are, just like Rushdie, of Indian origin. Furthermore, two of the central characters, that is Quichotte and his creator Sam Duchamp, share the same exact location of birth with Rushdie. In one of the instances of the novel, the narrator describes Sam DuChamp as Rushdie would describe his condition and the condition of migrancy as he sees it. He says: "He was a man of the West now, he was Sam DuChamp, and that was fine. This is what he said when he was questioned: that he was not rootless, not uprooted but transplanted" (Rushdie 22). The state of being "transplanted" is the ontological condition that Rushdie affiliates himself to as manifested in his writings, both fiction and non-fiction. These writings show his celebration of being transplanted, and of having no definite root, rather, many roots or an "excess of belongings"; namely, as Ahmad puts it, "not that he belongs nowhere, but that he belongs to too many places" (*In Theory* 127).

This discussion of Rushdie's roots and belongings is important as it brings to light his cultural and sometimes political affiliations that help one identify the secular presence in his texts and life. In *Quichotte*, and since it is an "everything book", he discusses some of the issues that the modern world imposes, one of which is the issue of immigration. The narrative, in so many parts, shows how Quichotte, his imaginary son Sancho, and other brown and black people that they encounter are mistreated and discriminated against merely because of their different complexion. He also gives account to the aftermath of 9/11, and how it contributed in escalating the tension between white people and every person who was assumed to be a Muslim:

> Then came September 11, 2001, and young Indian men started wearing T-shirts reading DON'T BLAME ME, I'M HINDU, and Sikh men were attacked because their turbans made them look Islamic, and cab drivers put flag decals on their windshields and stickers on the glass partitions between themselves and their passengers reading GOD BLESS AMERICA. (21)

Moreover, he sheds the light on the condition of millions of immigrants not only in the United States but also in England where Sam DuChamp's sister lives:

> A kind of nuclear fission has taken place in human lives and relations, families have been divided, millions upon millions of us have travelled to the four corners of the (admittedly spherical, and therefore cornerless) globe, whether by necessity or choice. Such broken families may be our best available lenses through which to view this broken world. And inside the broken families are broken people, broken by loss, poverty, maltreatment, failure, age, sickness, pain, and hatred. (37)

Rushdie, thus, is well aware of the arduous situations these immigrants are enduring; from poverty, discrimination and exile, to incomprehension and misrepresentation. However, despite his awareness, he still chooses to celebrate the state of being "transplanted" which, as he states in his interview with CBC news, makes him feel both like an insider and an outsider and which allows him to describe society through the lens of the inside and the lens of the outside. Those immigrant "broken families", however, do not enjoy this privilege. In their experiences as immigrants, they were often not privileged enough to voice their thoughts and beliefs against the long tradition of misrepresentation that aggravated their already tough condition.

Ironically enough, Rushdie, who displayed this condition in *Quichotte*, has largely contributed in fostering it through the secular discourse exhibited in his fictional and non-fictional writings; mainly, his famous *The Satanic Verses*.

After its publication, Rushdie was renowned in the Western world as a champion of free speech and as an outspoken "critic" of religious fundamentalism. However, what he criticised in *The Satanic Verses* and other works was not mainly fundamentalism, rather, he presented a satirical criticism of the icons, the signs, and the rituals that ordinary religious people believe in and practice in their daily lives. These images and practices, which he chooses to mock under the label of free speech and criticism, give people their sense of life and shapes their mode of being or world view. Hence, even before the events of 9/11 that put the lives of thousands of Muslims and brown people under constant threat, there were the events of the Rushdie Affair that portrayed Islam and Muslims as merely fundamentalist. Furthermore, in his PBS interview with Moyer in 2006, Rushdie discusses the mutual incomprehension between the west and the rest of the world and poses the question of how to reduce the large gap of misunderstanding between the two. This incomprehension and misrepresentation, however, that started long ago with the institution of Orientalism, continued to the present day because of the modern institution of Secularism which Rushdie contributes to through his portrayal of religion.

Therefore, there is always room for religion in the constellation of the things that Rushdie chooses to criticise or debunk. In *Quichotte*, religion is often portrayed as merely unworldly and marginal, and when it attempts to be worldly and central, it is portrayed as fundamentalist and dogmatic. This is best manifested when Sancho, Quichotte's imaginary son, starts to have questions and conclusions about God and religion. He thinks: "maybe he and I, God and I, could understand each other, maybe we could have a good discussion, because, you know, both imaginary" (53). He then goes on thinking that he should strive to be "real" and leave the imaginary God behind, because the idea of God is merely an illusion and what is beyond it is "only madness, a.k.a. religion" (54).

As discussed in Chapter One, in choosing to see and present religion as metaphysic, unworldly and dogmatic, one becomes affiliated to the hegemonic secular order that secures its presence by claiming the religious absence. Accordingly, when Rushdie criticises religion and portrays the religious in *Quichotte* as an illusion and equates it to madness, he becomes complicit with secular hegemonic authority. Its hegemonic nature, as argued by Furani, lies in the attempt to create one reality

and one mode of being that has to be secular, then denounce all the religious and accuse it of being "unreal" and unfitting of the modern world. In the aforementioned interview in PBS, Rushdie says that Islam, unlike the other Abrahamic religions, is still in need of modernisation. To modernise religion, for Rushdie as for many secularists, is to situate it in private rather than public life, because, as he argues in the same interview, that is where he thinks it belongs.

2.3.2. Note on the Authorial Intention and the Textual Power in *Quichotte*

Despite the hegemonic secular presence in Rushdie's *Quichotte*, it may be argued that art is separated from the artist, and that texts should be understood and interpreted in isolation of their authors.[1] This argument, however, has been criticised by many critics that regard both the author's intention and personal history as integral parts in understanding texts and art in general. In *Quichotte*, Rushdie dedicates some lines to contemplate this question. For instance, Sam DuChamp, the writer of Quichotte's story, tells his sister that the story he is writing is, among other themes, about the death of the author. Later in the novel, he states that "now Quichotte and I are no longer two different beings, the one created and the one creating, he thought. Now I am a part of him, just as he is a part of me" (272). This idea of the intertwined trajectories between the writer and his narrative is an idea that Rushdie himself confirms. In a conversation in the Chicago Humanities Festival on his novel *Quichotte*, Rushdie proclaims that the artist's personal experience and concerns are often translated and transformed into a work of art. Moreover, he expresses the authorial intentions that proceeded his latest work. As mentioned earlier, he wanted to write an "everything book" that highlights so many topics including present day America, junk culture, immigration, and the death of the author. Along with the latter intention, he states that he aimed at creating a "funny" work of art through incorporating different elements of the parodic and of satire.

In claiming that he intends to produce merely a "funny" book, Rushdie disregards the ideological and the political dimension that his work encompasses. As thoroughly accounted for in Chapter One, literature has for long been involved in power even when it aims at confronting it. Also, several writers have been subject to what Althusser calls "ideology" and what Gramsci calls "hegemony" even when they claim to escape them. In a 2001 interview between him and Kumkum Sangari, Rushdie says that he is not a political novelist nor an ideological writer (qtd. in

[1] The death of the author by Roland Barthes.

Genealogies of Religion 265). This statement, however, contradicts with what he states in the aforementioned PBS interview and collides with what he displays in *Quichotte* and other works. In the PBS interview, he declares that just like politicians who are offering visions and frontiers of the future, writers of fiction can also make their own visions. For him, books become a lens through which one can see, that is, the books' way of seeing may become the readers' way of seeing. This idea is best expressed in Asad's *Genealogies of Religion* when he alludes to Rushdie's texts:

> In reading imaginative texts, we inevitably reproduce aspects of ourselves, although this is not simply a matter of arbitrary preference or prejudice. We are all already-constituted subjects, placed in networks of power, and in reproducing ourselves it is also the latter we reproduce. To do otherwise is to risk confronting the powers that give us the sense of who we are, and to embark on the dangerous task of reconstructing ourselves along unfamiliar lines. It is, understandably, easier to use our readings to confirm those powers. (270)

Namely, imaginative texts do have a textual power that enables them to align with the dominating politics. In *Quichotte*, there are many sections when religion or religious signs are criticised. For instance, another idea that Sancho concludes about religion, along with the idea that it represents madness and breeds violence, is that people choose to believe in it for the sheer sake of comfort. He states that people get religion because it is unchanging and eternal; since, for humans, "change is not as good as rest" (125). Analogising religion to rest can be traced to the age of the Enlightenment when religion started to be conceived as an obstacle that keeps the Western society from developing since it encourages stagnation and immobility. This idea influenced todays understanding of criticism; for many writers and thinkers believe that to be fruitful and objective, criticism should not be religious, rather, fully secular.

Subsequently, and drawing on Asad's, Furani's and Ahmad's contributions, Rushdie's affiliation to the secular ideology was hegemonic in the sense that it made him align with and contribute to the very secular system that oppressed and discriminated against thousands of immigrants for the sole reason of being Muslim. So, even when he recognises their sufferings, he still chooses to misrepresent the culture they belong to and mock the religion they affiliate themselves with, and eventually this deepens the ground of incomprehension. Rushdie, however, purports that it is not only reli-

gion that he aims to deconstruct, rather, every system that intimidates people and restricts freedom of expression.

2.4. "Deconstructing" *Quichotte*'s Deconstruction of Religious Systems

From its dawn, deconstruction has been a defining feature of postmodern discourse. It aims at offering close analysis and criticism to stable forms and institutions in order to reveal their tacit contradictions and to undermine every attempt towards systemization. Rushdie's *Quichotte* is a typical example of the lucid and intensive presence of deconstruction in postmodern literary texts. Characters like Quichotte and his son Sancho are portrayed as individuals who are constantly disenchanted and disillusioned with the systems and the institutions that the world is built upon. In Chapter Seven in the novel, for instance, Quichotte informs his son that freedom resides in renouncing systems of thought that govern the way we see the world. He describes them as "merely codifications of what we think we know", and then he suggests that "when we begin by abandoning them, we open ourselves to the immensity of the universe, and therefore also to immense possibilities, including the possibility of the impossible" (66). Moreover, he believes that in detaching oneself from every system that shapes the way we think, see and act, one is consequently "casting aside all dogma".

This idea of debunking "grand narratives" and subverting universal truths came to reign the social, cultural and intellectual scene since the rise of postmodernism. The instrument that many postmodernist thinkers and novelists employed to undermine particular narratives and systems was a poststructuralist language that allowed them to discern the latent forces lying within a text or an authority. However, as manifested in Chapter One, deconstructive language was in itself a tool used by panoptical postmodern systems to domesticate political resistance and to render it to a sheer textual opposition that calls for a floating constant subversion of all systems instead of defining the shape of the system to be opposed and the shape of the opposition practiced. In his book *In Theory*, and while discussing Rushdie's discourse, Ahmad states:

> Politics appears to me to be a matter not so much of opposition as of solidarity; it is always much less problematic to denounce dictators and to affirm, instead, a generality of values, but always much harder

> to affiliate oneself with specific kinds of praxis. (152)

In *Quichotte*, although some characters were pictured as dissidents from all "systems of thoughts", and although Rushdie dedicated some lines to mock or undermine "everything" including liberal and western ideologies that he is affiliated to, the systems that were often deconstructed were the religious. Just like Said who described religion as an "agent of closure", Rushdie has portrayed religious systems in his text as signs of "madness", "dogma" and "rest". For instance, Quichotte on the one hand thought that in order to reach the last valley of love he has to cease believing in anything. His son, on the other hand, questioned for long the idea of God just to conclude at last that it only breeds "religious nuts" and blinded people seeking comfort. Sam DuChamp's sister, also, believed in the fact that religious practices or signs are offensive and that they are merely the result of "false consciousness":

> I'm not fighting to defend women's right to wear the veil, the hijab, the niqab, whatever," she declaimed. "All these young women these days who describe the veil as a signifier of their identity. I tell them they are suffering from what that presently unfashionable philosopher Karl Marx would have called false consciousness. In most of the world the veil is not a free choice. Women are forced into invisibility by men. These girls in the West making their quote-unquote free choices are legitimizing the oppression of their sisters in the parts of the world where the choice is not free. That's what I tell them, and they are very shocked. They tell me they find my remarks offensive. I tell them I feel the same way about the veil. It's exhausting. I've become embittered. I just needed to stop. (255-256)

Ironically enough, Sister, who thinks that women who count the hijab as a part of their identity are suffering from "false consciousness" and that hijab itself is offensive, believes that her husband's choice to cross-dress is just a fashionable preference and a question of freedom. In this vein, deconstruction of religious practices is hegemonic because it conforms to the visions of the dominating secular power that regards all signs of the religious as oppressive and that aims at privatising religious practices and situating them in the margins of people's lives. As Asad contends, "nothing that is published in the West about Muslim beliefs and practices can be without political significance, not even a work of fiction" (273). Therefore, even when Rushdie claims to criticise all systems including the liberal and the western, he is conforming to the latter by reproducing their regulating discourse that centralises all what is secular

and criminalises all what is religious and by failing at affiliating himself to "specific kinds of praxis".

Furthermore, in regarding deconstruction as a form of resistance, and in claiming that all systems of power are subjected to it, the writer denies the fact that it contributes in constructing an "undecidable terrain" which is, as mentioned before, a "preparatory moment" to hegemonic politics. In *Quichotte*, Rushdie could highlight the reality of undecidability but failed at highlighting the hegemony it produces. To illustrate, Quichotte describes his age as "the Age of Anything-Can-Happen", and admits that "there were no rules anymore" (10). Later in the novel, his son Sancho realises that "the universe doesn't have positions or theories or rebuttals or any of that" (66), and also concludes that "there's no true that anyone can agree on" (121). These conclusions are often displayed in a tone of disenchantment and despair, and with the thought that "something is going wrong" with the world, as Sancho states. However, while Quichotte complained that there are no rules, another character in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* once complained about the multitude of rules in the Islamic religion: "Rules, rules, rules... It was as if no aspect of human existence was to be left unregulated, free" (363). Seemingly, even when Rushdie acknowledges the chaos that results from a lawless unregulated world and criticises it, he still conceives the rules established by religion, mainly Islam, as suffocating.

So, what rules would fit a world where everything is deconstructed and debunked? As accounted for in Chapter One, when deconstruction reigns the cultural and political scenes, it results huge undecidability which in return gives rise to hegemonic politics. Accordingly, the hegemonic politics that govern the current modern world are highly secular and animate in discreet forms, for mere capitalist ends. In this vein, Rushdie's *Quichotte* serves these ends as it offers a floating deconstruction to the very religious systems that Secularism aims at undermining.

2.5. Conclusion

Aware of the power of literature, Rushdie employs it to offer his version of reality and truth; he thinks that when people in power fail at telling the truth, it is the artist's task to voice it out. Therefore, his works of fiction that include the elements of fantasy and magic are often founded on the grounds of the real world and the major events that shape it. However, even when he liberated himself from the shackles of filiative beliefs and belongings and became "transplanted", his new affiliations to the

modern secular institutions and secularism hold a profoundly hegemonic essence. Their latent power lies in discreetly imposing one sense of reality and one form of truth while displaying tolerance and acceptance of the other whose beliefs and practices collide with its own system.

In *Quichotte*, the novel discussed in this chapter, secular formations are not as explicit as in his previous novels. However, by analysing Rushdie's use of the postmodern discourse and his affiliations to the secular system, one could offer a deeper reading to the textual structures that shape the work and situate it in a larger cultural and political context. Therefore, this chapter attempted to shed the light on Rushdie's secular affiliations and demonstrated, drawing on the discussion in Chapter One, how hegemonic they can get; especially when secular criticism is employed and regarded as an objective instrument as opposed to the "dogmatic" religious criticism. For Rushdie, we are in a battle of visions: "The secular versus the religious, the light versus the dark" (qtd. in *Genealogies of Religion* 285). In being so, he chooses to engage with the secular that epitomises "the light" instead of the religious that symbolises "the dark", and hence to fight against the manifestations of religious darkness that restrain his freedom of speech and the freedom of millions of individuals across the globe. Moreover, the chapter highlighted the partial uses of deconstruction in *Quichotte*. Although Rushdie claims to deconstruct all forms of power, the text revealed that his focus was mainly on deconstructing religious systems. In doing so, he paves the way to a system of hegemony that regulates people's lives with their consent. In short, although *Quichotte* is a satirical criticism of our modern age, it failed in acknowledging the hegemony behind its systemisation; a hegemony that Rushdie himself conformed to.

CHAPTER THREE

REVISITING SECULAR STRUCTURES IN DAOUD'S POSTCOLONIAL COUNTER-CANON *THE MEURSAULT INVESTIGATION*

3.1. Introduction

Secular formations that are complicit with hegemony are not only current in anglophone cultural realms, but in the Francophone ones too. Like Salman Rushdie's secular criticism that was celebrated among anglophones, the Francophone literary scene was also laden of secular structures that were portrayed as a critique to fundamentalism while serving modern power. Several Francophone intellectuals, who are originally from the Third World and mainly Africa, adopted the secular discourse to dismantle the religious regulations and authorities in their post-colonial countries. While the Rushdie Affair was being folded by time and history in the English-speaking world, a new affair was being unfolded in the French-speaking world. This affair was induced by the Algerian writer Kamel Daoud; mainly through his novel *The Meursault Investigation* that epitomises literary secular criticism.

This chapter highlights the hegemonic essence of Kamel Daoud's secular criticism in his 2013 novel which resulted in conflicting responses. The different responses that the novel incited were due to various passages in which Daoud either criticises, mocks or scorns religious practices and signs. Therefore, this chapter will present an analysis of these passages and demonstrate, in light of Mahmoud's and Asad's contributions, the moral injury they result in. In a modern secular age, however, subjecting religion and its icons to disdain and misrepresentation is barely acknowledged as injury; rather, it is often regarded as a sign of liberty and attributed to freedom of expression. Moreover, in analysing the moral injury exercised by Daoud in the novel, and in situating it in a larger cultural and political context, one can conclude much about his affiliations and how, like Said contends, hegemonic they can get. Thus, the chapter will next explore Daoud's affiliation and how it contributed in feeding Western prejudice against the Muslim Arab world; a prejudice that had started with the Orientalist institutions and continued to exist thanks to the secular machineries.

Upon its publication, *The Meursault Investigation* was portrayed by the press as a postcolonial response to Camus' *The Stranger*; where Daoud gives a name to The Arab that Meursault has deprived him of. Later, the novel began to unfold not as critique of colonial Algeria, rather, a critique of post-colonial Algeria itself. Daoud does not denounce the atrocities of colonialism nor the neo-colonial legacy that it left behind. However, he chooses to denounce the social and religious status of post-independence Algeria. Moreover, just like Rushdie's *Quichotte*, these denunciations appear not so much in the making of the plot as much as in the textual

structures displayed in a long monologue by the novel's narrator: Harun. Hence, this chapter will finally offer a close reading of these structures, revisit the novel's categorisation as a counter-canon, and show, in light of Ahmad's criticism, that even counter-canons can be reproduced as new canons when they conform to and align with certain agendas.

The author, Daoud, is an Algerian journalist and writer known for his defence of individual liberty and criticism of religious fundamentalism. The publication of his Camus-inspired literary debut earned him, on the one hand, a wide French and Western celebration and admiration that was crowned with the most prestigious French literary prize: Prix Goncourt. On the other hand, it earned him a large scale of animosity and criticism among Muslim Algerian community, and later, among foreign analysts and critics who regard him as an agitator of Islamophobia.

3.2. Novel Synopsis

The Meursault Investigation is a story set in Colonial Algeria in the period between the 1940s and the 1960s. It is narrated in a form of a monologue by Harun, an Algerian man whose brother, Musa, was murdered by a Frenchman in 1942. The murderer is Meursault; the protagonist of Albert Camus' classic novel *The Stranger* that was published in 1942. In *The Stranger*, Meursault kills a man whom he refers to as "the Arab" and whose death is mentioned abruptly and briefly without victimisation. So, Kamel Daoud gives the Arab a name and a story told after his death from the perspective of his brother Harun.

Harun recounts his story to an unknown interlocutor that he constantly meets at his favourite bar. Harun and his older brother Musa lived with their mother in a poor neighbourhood in Algiers. Musa was working at the port to support his mother after their father had left the family without return. One day, Musa doesn't come back home. The family is later informed that he was murdered by a Frenchman at the beach and that his body is lost. After Musa's death, little was known about the incident. His mother is enraged by the careless reaction of the French authorities towards her son's death, so she starts her own investigation. However, she has no proofs and all she has are some newspaper clippings written in French; which she doesn't understand. After a long time of uselessly calling for Musa's revenge, Harun and his mother leave Algiers and move to the town of Hadjout where they work in a farm for a living. The mother keeps searching for an occupation until she gets

the chance to work as a housekeeper to a settler French family called the Larqauis family. Harun, on the other hand, is admitted in a local school where he is one of only two Arab students. He proves himself to be a good student and learns French even more; thinking that he would know something about the case of his brother.

When Harun is in his Twenties, the Algerian Revolution erupts against the French rule. When the Revolution ends and the Algerians gain independence, The Larqauis family escapes the country, leaving the house for Harun and his mother to become the new owners of the house. The days after the independence were full of tension and killing between Algerians and the French who still did not leave. One day, a friend of the Larqauis family called Joseph flees a conflict and takes resort in the Larqauis' old courtyard at night. Disturbed by the noise, Harun and his mother wake up. He takes a gun that he once found in the house, and, encouraged by his mother, kills Joseph. Together, they bury his body and obscure every trace of the crime. With this murder, Harun's mother feels that her son's murder is finally avenged. So, she becomes more affectionate with her living son.

The Algerian army, which is in control of the town, finds out that Harun killed Joseph. They arrest him, yet not merely for killing a Frenchman, rather, for killing him after the truce and not during the fight for independence. Harun spends some days in the jail where the interrogator asks him not about his crime but about not joining the army of liberation during the Revolution. Later, he is released and he feels bad about it because he wanted to be sentenced for his crime that, as he says, changed him forever.

Throughout this monologue, the reader knows much about Harun's life and personal beliefs. He lives alone in an apartment in Oran, next to a mosque. He criticises the religious practices that Algerians adhered to and mocks his neighbours' attachment to religion. This results in a sense of grudge that his neighbours grew against him. Harun, however, is not affected by this grudge; as he thinks that he can see the truth that they do not see because of their religious pertinence.

3.3. Hegemonic Order and Moral Injury in Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*

Although moral injury is so recurrent in modern media, art, literature and Academia, the attempt to subject it to modern law or at least to criticism is improbable; since it

would be regarded as an attempt to regulate freedom of speech and action. Religious criticism of this sort is thus conceived as an "agent of closure", and as an obstacle that keeps the individual from maintaining healthy scepticism towards the sacred. However, as accounted for in Chapter One, questioning religion and subjecting it to scepticism were current practices in religious criticism itself. Unlike secular criticism, religious criticism in Islamic Tradition did not display its epistemes and its critiques through ridiculing or denigrating religious signs, rather, through putting religious formations under scrutiny and analyse them. Moreover, the aim of its practitioners was not to affirm their scholarship by negating religiosity in its entirety, yet to present a critique that is thought to enhance the state of the people exercising religion, or the state of religion itself. Nowadays, with the infinity of religious depictions in media and literature, it is not only religion that is criticised and ridiculed; its signs, icons and adherers are also subject to disdain.

The Meursault Investigation is laden of religious depictions. In the first half of the novel, Daoud establishes the grounds on which he builds his counter-narrative. In the second half, he dedicates much of his narrator's monologue to scorn post-independence Algeria and the religious fervor it incubated. Harun, the narrator, is portrayed as an indifferent irreligious man who spends most of his free time in bars; contemplating the death of his brother and his life. His indifference is in the sense that he hates everyone, and his irreligiosity is in the sense that he hates religion. As Harun puts it: "religion is a public transportation I never use. This God, I like traveling in his direction on foot if necessary, but I don't want to take an organized trip" (56). For him, the organized trip would regulate him and strip him from his very freedom, that is why, he says," I detest religions and submission" (57). Later in the novel, he gives another reason for despising religion: "I abhor religions. All of them! Because they falsify the weight of the world" (58). Seemingly, Daoud thinks that the issues encountering post-independence Algeria result not from the legacy of colonialism itself, yet from the religion that people hung on to even after gaining their "freedom." His neighbours, he says, do not like his "independence"; for even though they envy it, they would be glad to "make [him] pay for it" (59). Freedom and independence in *The Meursault Investigation* is portrayed as an antagonism to religion, not to imperialism or colonial rule.

Thus, as contended by Asad in Chapter One, when secularism claimed to free people from the "transcendence", it transcended in fact the individual's right to know and be aware of the atrocities of power. Accordingly, Daoud's secular formations in his novel put religious regulations under trial and disregard the long history of

colonial regulations and elimination. Moreover, in claiming that religions "falsify the weight of the world", Daoud aligns with the secular agenda that redefines religion and claims to ensure truth as opposed to religious fallacies, and consciousness as opposed to religious "false consciousness." In doing so, as Furani demonstrated, it imposes its version of reality, truth and system by denigrating religion and depicting it, as Said did, as a "canon of order" and as a sign of retreat and obsolescence. This is best manifested in Harun's outcry while listening to his neighbour's recitation of the Quran:

> I feel like busting through the wall that separates me from my neighbour, grabbing him by the throat, and yelling at him to quit reciting his snivelling prayers, *accept the world, open his eyes* to his own strength, his own dignity, and stop running after a father who has absconded to heaven and is never coming back. (58; emphasis added)

In this vein, Harun shows that religion prevents people from seeing the world and accepting it as it is. Also, that it is an element of obstruction that blinds them from seeing their own strength in the course of venerating God's strength, and acknowledging their own dignity in the course of humiliating themselves for God's sake. Furthermore, this passage reveals that the hatred that Harun displays in the novel is not pointed against religion alone, rather, it is constantly accompanied by disdain to religious people, practices and signs; resulting a deep sense of moral injury as manifested in the text. In choosing to describe his neighbour's prayers as "snivelling", and his worship as "running after a father who has absconded to heaven", he ridicules religious people's beliefs and practices, assaults their sacred signs and situates himself in a superior position. Along with his neighbour's prayers, the other religious practices that Harun detests the most are those exercised on Fridays. Throughout the novel, he keeps telling the reader about how much he despises Friday and all the rituals that it entails. "I've *loathed* Fridays ever since independence", he says (55; emphasis added). From his balcony, he observes people on Friday because, on this day, all the bars are closed and he has nothing to do. For Harun, Friday is:

> The day closest to death in my calendar. People dress ridiculously, they stroll through the streets at noon still wearing pyjamas, practically, shuffling around in slippers as though Friday *exempts them from the demands of civility.* In our country, religious faith encourages laziness in private matters and authorizes spectacular negli-

> gence every Friday. You'd think men observed God's day by being completely *scruffy and slovenly.* (57; emphasis added)

At first glance, this passage seems to be written by an 19th century Orientalist. Evoking narratives of uncivility, negligence and scruffiness of Arab and religious people is the card that Orientalists played to pave the way to imperial projects in the Orient. As discussed in Chapter One, secular discourse is now pursuing the task that Orientalism had once started through reproducing the very narratives of uncivility and inability to self-rule. The only way to emancipate, for Harun and other secularists, is to leave God behind and embrace the truth and freedom that result from such step.

Moreover, just like Orientalist discourse, the secular discourse displayed in the novel is highly hegemonic. It exhibits representations that result moral injury and that constitute a transformative effect. For Daoud, it is religious people who need to transform their beliefs and practices to build a civilised and an independent country. Therefore, in subjecting religious practices like prayers to mockery and in assaulting religious signs like God, Daoud is mocking the individuals themselves and reproducing old Orientalist judgements. Also, he is exercising an injury that the modern law does not acknowledge. As explained by Mahmoud in Chapter One, injury, although moral, is exorbitant because the practices that Daoud mocks and the signs that he criticises are the grounds on which some individuals and groups shape their lives. In understanding Aristotle's notion of *schesis*, one would understand that the relationship of proximity between many religious people and religious icons or signs is not only emotional or naïve, rather, it is deeply psychophysiological. Namely, the attachment they develop is not mainly zealous and that manifests only in occasions, however, it is an attachment that is present in their daily lives in it smallest details; from buying, selling and travelling, to speaking, working and treating other people. Hence, to state that "religious faith encourages laziness in private matters and authorises spectacular negligence" is to prey on religion and its adherers, and to offer a false representation that, again, the modern secular law does chastise.

As Asad contends, while the modern law punishes those who reproduce distorted copies of works of art and literature, and while it preserves the "rights" of the author or the artist, it fails at punishing those who distort religious books and signs. Situated in this context, in *The Meursault Investigation*, Harun, after describing the recitation as a "snivel", he states: "Sometimes I page through their book, the Book, and what I find there are strange redundancies, repetitions, lamentations, threats,

and daydreams. I get the impression that I'm listening to a soliloquy spoken by some old night watchmen, some *assas*" (59). Harun does not only subject the sacred book to scorn, rather, God himself. For many people, it is still not the modern secular state that rules their lives; for they believe that they are only ruled by God. So, unlike Harun who abhors religion because of submission, they choose to embrace this submission, because in it they seek freedom.

This idea of submitting to God and enfranchising oneself from the rule of the worldly secular state is threatening to a system where capital is both the goal and the instrument. Thus, to chastise religious misrepresentations and to acknowledge them as moral injury is improbable. First, because, as manifested in Chapter One, the injury cannot be measured in monetary terms; and second, because the infringement on religious texts and signs serve the secular system, as these texts invoke people to pursue a path that diverges with the capitalist roadmap.

Upon its publication in France in 2014[1], *The Meursault Investigation* sparked an enormous controversy among Algerian activists in the cultural and religious scenes. Hamadache, an Islamist imam in Algeria, issued what is sardonically known as the "Facebook Fatwa" against Kamel Daoud after the latter's dialectical appearance in French media. In the Fatwa, Hamadache describes Daoud as an "apostate", and calls for his trail and execution as a penalty for insulting Islam in his novel. However, as the state is neither openly Islamist nor openly secular, Daoud was never put on trial as a result of the moral injury he evoked, and Hamadache was consequently detained then shortly released. Thus, moral injury is not chastised even in non-Western Muslim countries like Algeria. After the Fatwa, Daoud, just like Rushdie, was celebrated among both Algerian and Western liberals as a champion of freedom of speech and individual liberty. Alluding to The Rushdie Affair, this controversy was soon called The Daoud Affair by the editor Adam Shatz in an article written for The New York Review of Books.

3.4. Daoud's Secular Affiliation as Manifested in *The Meursault Investigation*

The moral injury that some literary texts result might give a glimpse on the writer's intention and affiliation. As mentioned in Chapter Two in Rushdie's regard, there

[1]It was first published in Algeria by Barzakh editions in 2013, then reissued in France by Acte Sud in 2014.

is a deep relationship between the text and its author. Accordingly, *The Meursault Investigation*'s narrator Harun, can be conceived as a literary personification to Daoud; for they converge in various respects. For instance, in distancing himself from religious people, their beliefs and practices, Harun also distances himself from those who despise French people merely for their "Frenchness." While questioning the reason that led Meursault to head to the beach on the day of the murder, and the reason that led him to exist in the land as a whole, Harun apologetically states: "No, believe me, I'm not one of those" (53).

This kind of distancing oneself from certain traits, origins or people, is common in Daoud's articles or interviews. In the aforementioned article by Adam Shatz; a long biographical article in homage of Daoud, Shatz states that Daoud considers himself an Algerian, not an Arab. For him, however, to be an Algerian is to be "schizophrenic"; torn between "religious piety and liberal individualism". Daoud also describes his own language as "Algerian" not "Arabic"; given the profound differences that the local dialect has from the Arabic language. In continuation of Daoud's divergence with and opposition of Muslims and Arabs, he published a column entitled, "Why I am no Longer in Solidarity with Palestine" after the war on Gaza in 2014. As Shatz states, he was not in solidarity with Israel either; he opposed the idea that one has to be in solidarity with Palestine merely because of being a Muslim instead of humanitarian reasons per se. Thus, the constellation of oppositions that Daoud voices along with the affirmation of large liberal values reminds the reader of the aforementioned Ahmad's statement in which he contends, again, that politics is not a question of "opposition as of solidarity" (*In Theory* 152).

Other textual structures in *The Meursault Investigation* that manifest Daoud's secular affiliations and their relation to hegemony are those that reproduce the colonial discourse and the discourse of religious retreat; and they are numerous. As mentioned before, Harun spends much of his time in bars. In his long monologue, he constantly fantasizes about wine and contemplates the question of regarding the large rich vineyards across Algeria as a colonial legacy and thus eliminating them for this reason. He recounts the difficulties that have been encountering wine producers after Independence, complains about the religion's "complicated relation" with wine, and then questions, answerlessly, the reason behind forbidding it on Earth and allowing it on Paradise (44). Later in the novel, Harun laments about Oran being the "last region in Algeria" where you would find any vineyards or wine.

Furthermore, on Fridays; the day when "all bars are closed" and Harun has noth-

ing to do, he spends his day watching people from the balcony in contempt. In one of the Fridays, he says in protest: "Notice the little girl with the veil on her head, even though she's not old enough to know what a body is, or what desire is. What can you do with such people? Eh?" (58). Passages like these in the novel correspond to a large extent with Daoud's views presented in his articles or interviews. In "L'Algérie de Kamel Daoud"; a recent documentary on Daoud by *France.tv*, he visits fields that were formerly cultivated as vineyards under French colonial rule. He complains about not investing in them and about transforming them to wheat fields instead. In another interview with *Europe 1*, when asked about the question of the veil, Daoud contends that there is no "emancipation in submission"; a statement that reminds one of Harun's when he declares how much he despises submission. Moreover, Daoud claims that the discourse that portrays the veil as an individual choice is misleading; for him, the veil was never a choice and thus it does not guarantee emancipation.

The criticism that Daoud offers in both his novel and his interviews and articles resembles that of the colonial discourse and reveals his affiliation to the secular ideology that not only criticises religion for liberating ends but for regulating ends. The regulation lies in the will to transform and sometimes eliminate certain religious signs in favour of secular ones. In his previously mentioned essay "Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism", Asad argues that "secular critique seeks to create spaces for new truth... It does so by destroying spaces that were occupied by other signs" (33). That is, for secular criticism to attain its hegemonic goal of creating one version of truth, it redefines or destroys (if necessary) other versions of truth. In this vein, Daoud encourages particular secular realities (vineyards and wine), and subverts other realities (the veil) under the claim of criticism.

One of the articles that put Daoud in controversy again was his famous article "Cologne, City of Fantasies" that was published in *Le Monde*. In this piece, he addresses the incident of the mass assault on women by immigrants in Cologne, Germany. The controversy sparked mainly because of Daoud's representation of immigrants in general, and Muslim immigrants in particular. This time, the acute critique was not delivered by Muslim writers alone, it was also delivered by many western academics that regarded the article as a misrepresentation, and as an instrument of agitating an already furious Islamophobia in the West. In the greater part of the article, Daoud blames the "naïve" political left for accepting to welcome immigrants and refugees without taking into account the culture they come from. He states that in order for the immigrants to be eligible to live in the West, they

must be taught the values and the culture of the land they are seeking to reside in. He proclaims that "it is not just the body that needs asylum. It is also the soul that needs to be persuaded to change", mainly because the immigrant "comes from a vast, appalling, painful universe; an Arab Muslim world full of sexual misery, with its sick relationship towards woman... Merely taking him is not a cure." As his Orientalist-like passage in *The Meursault Investigation*, this article reproduces old Orientalist discourse; as it calls for a "re-education" and "civilisation" for immigrants. Notably, the Orientalist institution, with its production of misrepresentations on a large scale, paved the way to the powerful colonial project. Thus, as Asad contends in *The Genealogies of Religion*, "Derogatory representations have been an integral part of the imperial propaganda" (293). And the derogation of Islam and Muslims is an integral part of Daoud's writings; especially his novel.

Therefore, Daoud's secular affiliations are highly present in *The Meursault Investigation*. However, they proved to be no less dominant than the filiations he opposed and detached himself from. As accounted for in Chapter One, affiliating oneself to a new world-vision or a new system as an emancipation from an old filiative system, might blind the intellectual from seeing or acknowledging the hegemony that this very new system entails. Accordingly, Daoud's secular criticism in his first novel and the system that generated it unfolds as a modern form of authority that supersedes Orientalism. It establishes the grounds of its secular truth and reality through the subversion of the grounds on which other truths and realities are built. Thus, secularity, as Furani previously put it, becomes an authority "necessary for producing western truths" (21).

3.5. Differentialism and *The Meursault Investigation* as a Counter-Canon

After the Daoud-Cologne controversy, Daoud was subject to wide criticism that accused him of the Islamophobia displayed in his article[2]. Although his novel *The Meursault Investigation* displays similar representations, it is still celebrated among many liberals and rarely put under the scrutiny of criticism. In several universities in the West, Daoud's novel is studied as a part of the postcolonial literature and regarded as a counter-canon. However, the textual structures on which the novel is constructed along with the writer's intention, prevent it from being a counter-canon

[2]See Schofield, Hugh. "Algerian Novelist Kamel Daoud Sparks Islamophobia Row." BBC News, BBC, 7 Mar. 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35653496.

to the canonical work of Camus: *The Stranger*. As accounted for in Chapter One, postcolonialism is regarded by some as the need to achieve an "uncontaminated" identity by the ideals or the culture of the former colonial nations. Others, think the contamination as inevitable since the cultural legacy left by colonialism is profound, and that it can be a privilege that allows the formerly colonized people to see the world in a hybrid eye. Namely, to be open to the world in all its ramifications and to see it from different angles rather than just the Oriental, African, Asian, Arab or Muslim angle. To see it with a modern transnational eye.

As Ahmad contends, this idea of universality, hybridity or differentialism that the postcolonial critique propagates, was a means of hegemonizing former colonies in economic and cultural arenas. Thus, hegemony was attained through both marketisation and liberalisation of the post-colonial world. Accordingly, while promoting differentialism and while embracing western values of democracy, liberalism and capitalism, it is the local and the national culture that is erased. It is so because even when the western civilisation claims the acceptance of the Other, it requires the Other in the end to assimilate in the shape of the identity it molded.

In *The Meursault Investigation*, there are several manifestations of hegemonic differentialism. Throughout the novel, Harun deplores Post-Independence Algeria, its new religious fervor, and its closure on modern liberal aspects that were present under the French colonial rule. For instance, as mentioned before, he constantly protests about the unavailability of wine and the obstacles one encounters if he "chooses" to own a bar or implant a vineyard. Moreover, along with complaining about the condition of women themselves, he complains about their "unavailability." Harun states that after independence, "accessible women were rare... you couldn't come across a woman with her face uncovered, much less talk to one" (56). So, as he puts it, he had to take into account the modesty that was "obligatory" in post-colonial Algeria and he had to consider that he is not "in Paris anymore" (57). For Daoud, even after independence, Algeria was still under regulations. However, it is not the regulation of the capitalist former colonial system that he addresses in his novel; rather, the regulations of religion that govern most aspects of Algerian society. In a country that has Muslim majority (and where the "availability" of wine and women were only normalised under colonial rule), to portray the colonial legacy as a choice or as a sign of liberty and modernity is to conform to the modern imperialism that establishes its secular tenets through destroying religious ones.

Thus, as contended in Chapter One, the kind of differentialism that portrays

itself as a critique to essentialism, contributes in fostering hegemony. It does so because, in claiming universality and in embracing the western values of freedom, democracy and liberalism, the logic of differentialism makes one assimilate with the culture of the powerful while negating his own culture. The culturally "hybrid" subject, like Daoud, will not see the world through hybrid lens; rather, through the lens constructed by the powerful: The Western liberal system in this case. In the aforementioned article, Daoud was asked by Shatz if there is any aspect in Islam that he still admires despite the secular criticism he subjects it to, he said: "I like the absence of intermediaries between the individual and God... Insofar as Islam is about the direct relationship between God and the believer, it's a very *liberal faith*." Seemingly, the aspects that Daoud still admires in Islam are those that liberalism propagates, like individualism. Yet in calling Islam "a very liberal faith", Daoud exempts it from its societal associative essence and chooses to see it through modern liberal lens. In short, to celebrate differentialism, while criticising local culture and conforming to western culture, is to conceal the unequal relations of cultural power today.

So, is *The Meursault Investigation* a counter-canon? Throughout the novel, although Daoud gives a name to Camus' nameless Arab, he does not address the question of colonialism that resulted thousands of nameless Arabs. On the contrary, he confesses, through his novel, his admiration of Meursault's narrative and the language with which it was written. Moreover, he reproduces and affirms the same discourse of absurdism that Camus inaugurated in his novel. In one of the instances when Harun claims the absurd, he says that "the absurd is what my brother and I carry on our backs or in the bowels of our land, not what the other was or did" (11). Later, he confirms: "That's the best proof of our absurd existence, my dear friend: Nobody's granted a final day, just accidental interruption is his life" (24).

Thus, Daoud's textual structures reveal his authorial intention; which is to identify with Camus' absurdism more than to offer a counter-canonical narrative. In Shatz's article, Daoud states that "*The Stranger* is a philosophical novel, but we are incapable of reading it as anything other than a colonial novel." For him, the central question in Camus' novel is religious, and the most powerful scene is that of the confrontation between the priest and Meursault. The same scene, with similar words to those of Camus, is found in *The Meursault Investigation*. It is when an imam insists on Harun to accept God before it is too late, while Harun violently rejects him. For Harun, religious people "respond to fear of the absurd with zeal" (58). Therefore, according to Daoud, Harun is a "hero in a conservative society",

merely because he is revolting against God. In this vein, Daoud's novel cannot be regarded as a counter-canon; because for him, Camus' novel is not a canon in the first place. It can, however, be regarded as a new canon; since it reproduces the same canonical structures.

In his aforementioned *Europe 1* interview, Daoud argues that it is not colonialism that is the central topic of nowadays; rather, religion. For him, colonialism is not a "single story"; but a long complex story. In Shatz's article, Daoud states that when the school taught him the black and white tale of "infallible mujahedeen battling evil French settlers", his grandparents told him about "the impoverished French they knew; about the Catholic priest who fed the family in times of shortage; about French soldiers who deserted their posts, rather than torture and kill." Decriminalising colonialism and overlooking its destructive effects is a recurrent aspect in canons, and seemingly, even in counter-canons. As contended in Chapter One, canonizing the counter-canon was with the foreclosing of particular issues and the foregrounding of others. This gesture was in favour of modern secular power that produced literary canons and continued to produce some counter-canons that overlooked the real Third-World problems. Instead, they used a poststructuralist language to subvert its local systems; mainly religion. Hence, even when Daoud calls his novel a "counter-investigation[3]", its aspect of hegemonic differentialism prevents it from being both a counter-narrative and a counter-canon.

3.6. Conclusion

Upon its publication, *The Meursault Investigation* evoked various reactions and responses. When liberals celebrated its critique of Islam and society, Muslims regarded its formations as offensive to their practices and their religion. Consequently, it resulted in a deep sense of moral injury because the secular criticism that Daoud offers in the novel does not criticise religion alone, rather, the practices and signs that many individuals and groups have relations of proximity with, and build their world-view upon. Hence, to attack and scorn them is to attack and scorn the lens through which they see the world, and in effect, attempt to impose one perspective and one version of reality or truth on them. In this vein, Daoud's secular criticism, that negated and denigrated religious signs and resulted in a moral injury, is profoundly hegemonic. Moreover, the textual structures in the novel reveal so much about Daoud's secular affiliations and his authorial intention. Throughout

[3]The original French title of the novel is "Meursault, contre enquête".

the novel, religion is portrayed as the obstacle that stands in the way of civility. For him, society would only change and embrace modernity if it releases itself from the fetters of Islamic piety and fundamentalism. Thus, in claiming that the only way for a society to improve is to take the path constructed by Western liberal powers, Daoud affiliates himself to a system that is no less dominant and hegemonic than the religious filiative system he retreated from. Finally, the manifestations of differentialism that celebrates the former colonizer's culture while belittling the local one, show how an internationally renowned counter-canon can be canonized; as it reproduces the same discourse of liberalisation and civilization.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

There is a profound relationship between power and secular criticism. As it developed to be hegemonic, secular criticism manifested itself in various forms and under several guises; one of which is literature. Many linguistic and narrative literary structures were constructed upon secular conceptions and for secular ends. Although these structures were portrayed as a liberating step, and as an enfranchisement from all kinds of censorship, they contributed in establishing a new form of hegemony. As Asad contends in *Genealogies of Religion*, "power made itself felt in and through many kinds of writing not the least the kind we call fiction" (270). In this vein, to foster the grip of secular hegemony, some literary works implemented postmodern and postcolonial discourses that debunk all shapes of overt authoritative systems. In doing so, they fail at recognising and therefore subverting the modern systems as it is both amorphous and invisible. Thus, secular formations in postmodern and postcolonial literature are often presented under various labels of freedom and art, while they vigorously serve the very power they claim to be opposing.

Many postmodern and postcolonial works of fiction that reveal an antagonism to religion and comprise of secular structures are written by authors who are originally from Muslim Third World countries. This study demonstrated how the secular criticism that these works entail has a long history of complicity with power. It retrieves its power from redefining and rearticulating religious concepts, and it affirms its secular presence through ensuring the religious absence. Accordingly, in being secular, the criticism of religious manifestations in literary texts align with modern hegemonic system that operate in disguise. The invisibility of the hegemony in secular formations is consolidated by the integration of postmodern and postcolonial discourses. In *Quichotte*, Salman Rushdie employs postmodern techniques and dis-

course to criticise the modern age and present-day America. However, in criticising them, he did not escape revealing his secular affiliations through the latent subversion of religion and its signs. The affiliation proved to be hegemonic because it conforms with the ideals of the modern system that Rushdie purports to be opposing in *Quichotte*. Therefore, hegemony in Rushdie's latest novel operate latently in linguistic structures that manifest Rushdie's hegemonic affiliations and his partial systematic use of deconstruction.

In Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, Secular formations appear not only in linguistic but also in narrative constructions of the novel. While Rushdie's secular criticism was latent and covert in *Quichotte*, Daoud's secular criticism was manifest and overt in *The Meursault Investigation*. He employed the postcolonial narrative to criticise the social strata of post-colonial Algeria. However, criticism was not directed against the colonial power that ruled Algeria for more than a century; rather, it was directed against religion. In his novel, Daoud subjected several religious beliefs and signs to mockery and denigration, resulting in a profound sense of injury. Like Rushdie's affiliation and deconstruction that affirmed one version of truth, Daoud's affiliation and the moral injury he implemented propagate one sense of reality. For them, in order for the world to be more peaceful and humane, religion has to be stripped from its public power and has to be secluded to the margins of society. Moreover, when *The Meursault Investigation* is often portrayed as a counter-canon to Camus's *The Stranger*, the former fails at opposing or rearticulating the colonial narrative. Throughout the novel, Daoud does not condemn the atrocities of colonial rule; rather, he reveres cultural differentialism that celebrates the colonial civilisation and culture at the expense of the local ones. In doing so, differentialism becomes hegemonic as it allows the culture of the powerful to reign and rule. Therefore, both the Anglophone and the Francophone literary scenes can be hegemonic when governed by secular formations and structures. Accordingly, as secular criticism manifests itself in many shapes and forms and under many languages and labels, it can still be highly hegemonic when associated with postmodern and postcolonial literary discourses.

As this study of the relationship between hegemony and literary secular criticism was being written, a new book on the relationship between hegemony and secular liberal Academia was released. In his book *Bland Fanatics: Liberals, Race and Empire*, the Indian critic Pankaj Mishra puts several secular writers and novelists under scrutiny; one of whom is Salman Rushdie. Through analysing their discourses, he highlights the ways in which their works are highly connected to modern secular

power. In this vein, further study like that of Mishra that studies empire in light of liberal ideals can be suggested. For instance, the areas of research that study the contribution of Feminism, Human Rights or Gender Studies in affirming modern capitalist hegemony still lack exploration and discussion. These areas of research can be a crucial gate to the understanding of how modern power operates and where it is heading. Moreover, tracing a genealogy of Secularism that joins the discussion raised in Asad's works is still required. Therefore, this research attempted to offer one of these gates that would allow the reader to better conceptualise the complex structure of modern power, and to better understand the role that literature plays in consolidating it. Also, it attempted to contribute in the vigorous debate on the hegemonic nature of secularity.

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