




## Disjuncture and Global Cultural Flows in Mekkawi Said's *Cairo Swan Song*

**Dr. Azzah Ibrahim Khalil**

Lecturer of English Literature

Faculty of Al-Alsun, Suez Canal University

[azzah.esp@gmail.com](mailto:azzah.esp@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

The contemporary interconnectedness among various nations and countries by means of trade, mass media, and technological devices responsible for transmitting commodities, information, and cultural concepts can be regarded as the actual process of globalization. Globalization, therefore, is a cause and result of modernization. Rapid industrialization, smooth exchange of goods and currency across borders and feasibility of instant communication among different parts of the universe facilitate the process of globalization. However, to Appadurai, this process which is the output of correspondence among nations provokes disjuncture within each community. Appadurai introduces five essential scapes whose interactions engender fragmentation and incoherence. These scapes are ethnoscape, ideoscape, finanscape, mediascape and technoscape. On one hand, global flow gives rise to several economic opportunities, access to information, and cultural exchange. On the other hand, it similarly generates disruptions, disparity, and suspicion, for example, of the fading of local identities and diminishing of healthy environment. The present paper aims to discuss the various aspects of globalization, especially in Cairo through the novel of Mekkawwy Said *Cairo Swan Song*, emphasizing the elements of disjuncture and confusion within the Egyptian community during the span of the novel.

**Key words:** Globalization, global cultural flow, disjuncture, Mekkawwy Said, *Cairo Sawn Song*.

## الانشقاق والتدفق الثقافي العالمي في رواية مكاوي سعيد تغريدة البجعة

### مستخلص

تعد العولمة ظاهرة حديثة تتعلق بعملية التواصل المتبادل بين كافة الشعوب من خلال التجارة الدولية ووسائل الإعلام الحديثة والتقنيات التكنولوجية المسؤولة عن نقل السلع، وتداول المعلومات والمفاهيم الثقافية عبر القارات. لذلك تعتبر العولمة سببا ونتيجة للمعاصرة في نفس الوقت. إن التطور السريع في الصناعة وعملية تبادل البضائع والعملات عبر الحدود ناهيك عن الاتصال الفوري بين مختلف البلدان أدى إلى انتشار العولمة بسرعة كبيرة. على الناحية الأخرى يرى أبادوراي أن العولمة رغم إنها نتاج التقارب بين الشعوب إلا إنها تؤدي إلى شكل من الانشقاق في المجتمع نفسه، ويقدم أبادوراي خمسة أنماط من العولمة تؤدي تداخل مساراتها إلى التفكك والصراع رغم كونها مسارات تقاربية؛ تلك المسارات هي المسار العرقي، والأيديولوجي، والمالي، والإعلامي والتقني. يتيح التدفق العالمي للشعوب الكثير من الفرص الاقتصادية، واستخلاص المعلومات وكذلك التبادل الثقافي، ولكنه من الناحية الأخرى، يولد الانشقاق والاختلاف والريبة من بعض الأمور مثل فقدان الهوية المحلية أو اندثار البيئة الصحية. يهدف البحث إلى تناول الأشكال المختلفة للعولمة في مدينة القاهرة من خلال رواية مكاوي سعيد تغريدة البجعة، وذلك للتأكيد على حالة التفكك والارتباك الوليدة في المجتمع المصري خلال أحداث الرواية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العولمة، الانشقاق، التدفق الثقافي العالمي، مكاوي سعيد، تغريدة البجعة.

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Globalization can be defined as an intricate process encompassing the integration of various nations by means of commercial transactions, communication, and technology, maintaining the exchange of goods, information, and cultural notions. In other words, it is the condensation of the world in space and time. At best, the process is developed by international marketing bloom and the predominance of mass media. Moreover, globalization has led to the extensive dissemination of universal cultural aspects and updating technological products, propagating indescribable and unmanageable effects. Despite the various positive gains of globalization, some critics argue that it may propel the destruction of local markets and the supremacy of Western, particularly American, culture. It is widely claimed that globalization has close connection with modernization which is the basic stimulus to global cultural flows, including the rapid exchange of currency, services, information, commodities, and labour. This sometimes causes unpredictable illegal practices, such as smuggling drugs or human trafficking. There are unfortunately some undesirable issues emanating from globalization such as the rise of acculturation and the damage of native identity.

Since globalization is a universal phenomenon, it is principally relevant to political and economic spheres where their interactions lead to uncontrollable international impacts. For example, the worldwide financial crisis entails investigating all possible means for finding solutions for such a universal problem, whether these solutions are concerned with global environment or local markets. Consequently, globalization can be defined as “a very broad concept not only with respect to the diversity of regions, cultures, and actors, but also with respect to the diversity of analytical approaches that can be employed to study it” (Sheffield xix-xx). On the other hand, globalization is habitually associated with the eruption of modernity which emerged as a result of some historical and political conditions such as the thriving of slave trade

during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the coercive western imperialism of Eastern countries and its exploitation of natural resources, the rise of capitalism and the following blossoming years of industrialization (Powell, "Globalization" 3).

Appadurai suggests that the world in which we live today is "postlocal" as a result of the unprecedented growing internationalization apparent in recent era. This post-local domain, especially found in impoverished communities, sometimes called post-communal, can be characterized by indispensable closeness, unquestionable haste and unremitting recurrent contact. However, anthropologists may be disturbed by the phenomenon of globalization because of its involvement in the abolition of "intimacy" in modern cities. Indeed, ethnography studies intimacy not only within a specific community through marriage, sexuality, friendship, various family relationships and the inexplicable familiarity within members of the same society, but also through cross-boundaries relations. The lack of intimacy in modern life can be attributed to the irrepressible aftermaths of colonialism and the unlimited period of work hours required in return for sufficient wages in modernized communities. To Appadurai, intimacy is inevitable for the continuity of human life: it is indispensable for "the work of sexuality and reproduction, the webs of nurture and of friendship, the heat of anger and violence, the nuance of gesture and tone" ("Fieldwork in the Era" 115-16).

Next to the concept of globalization and the loss of intimacy incurred by the condensing interconnection of all countries is the concept of Americanization which is more related to the political and economic hegemony. Peter J. Taylor proposes that the hegemonic culture is an output of a hegemonic cycle including political, economic and cultural aspects. By the end of the nineteenth century the USA has flourished as the major economic and military power governing the world. World War I shifted the attention to the role of the USA as a leading powerful domain, replacing the United Kingdom. In addition, it is assumed that Americanism has thrived since 1945 because after World War II the policy of isolationism has

been dismissed and the USA has begun to shape the world ideology as a result of German military defeat and Britain financial collapse (53). Gramsci attributes the widespread of American hegemony to its resourceful capitalism. Factories as the main location for industrial revolution and the universal trademarks contribute much to the promotion of Americanism. However, Gramsci accentuates the necessity for the incorporation of all classes in society, especially lower class and the intellectuals for maintaining a coherent identity (Davidson 26).

The American culture with its capitalist policy imposes consumerism as an emerging form of colonialism on the entire world. During the process of globalization borders are vanished and the world contracts into small connective villages where global brands are an inescapable outcome and the universal market is predominant. Therefore, globalization can be seen as the process of generating and maintaining knowledge in certain locations within specific times. This process occurs when political, social and cultural elements of different nations interact. The difficulty arises when the global flow is incompatible with the local flow which may result in various contradictions and conflict (Bida 34). Appadurai insists on the role of the capital in the widespread of globalization, relating it to the fundamentals of power, commerce and political authority in shaping the world. However, his main concern is not with the capital but with the threatening of globalization to the nation-state (“Grassroots Globalization” 3-4).

Some critics assume that globalization has led the world into cultural homogenization which, despite its privileges, means the deterioration of cultural variations and the absorption of universal cultural practices. Therefore, cultural homogenization is the process through which the indigenous culture is obliterated by the hegemonic one. The drawback of this process is its association with forcible Western imperialism. Even worse is the tendency of certain authorities to eliminate cultural disparity between various nations leading them into apparently coherent, submissive communities, which may be brought about by genocide or ethnic cleansing. Apart

from the negative aspects of cultural homogenization are the homogenizing traces in literary traditions aroused by hegemonic western capitalism. "A poignant example of cultural homogenization can be observed in the global dominance of American pop culture. Hollywood films, fast-food chains, and popular music have spread to nearly every corner of the globe" (Aruna Kumari 6).

While some critics entertain the view that cultural homogenization eliminate cultural differences among nations, some other critics oppose this hypothesis, maintaining that the homogenizing effect of globalization occur simultaneously with global flows which create multiple communities in such a compatible world. In other words, global flow despite its undeniable effect of generating a unified world in which there are common beliefs and prevalent practices, it also reinforces uniqueness within such consistency. Appadurai intensifies the role of imagination played in the domain of global flow. He believes that contemporary theory which places the United States at the centre of the world around which all other countries revolve does not actually represent the growing suspicion of cultural homogenization since there are other adjacent countries which reject the homogenizing effect of their neighbours, such as Sri Lanka or Pakistan which are scared of the supremacy of Indian media on their cultures. "Similarly, nation states can use similar fears of cultural homogenization through media in relation to minorities within the nation states. Hence, theories about media homogenization or cultural imperialism that situate the United States at the centre of all media globalization debates are hardly sufficient" (Rai).

Jason Powell and Rebecca Steel advocates that imagination is a central concept to Appadurai theory, which discusses world flow in detail. They relate Appadurai's concept of imagination to the French concept of imaginary, Anderson's fictional society and the Frankfurt-school images. Moreover, Appadurai emphasizes the overwhelming role of capitalism in creating an atmosphere of dissention in politics, economy and culture. This dissention is described in Appadurai's terms as "disjuncture." In order to explain

the meaning of “disjuncture,” he introduces five different “scapes” for illustrating his theory. These scapes are “ethnoscapes,” “mediascapes,” “technoscapes,” “finanscapes,” and “ideoscapes.” By ethnoscapes, Appadurai refers to the crossing borders by different people whether by means of migration, exiles, tourism, refugee, etc. Mediascape, on the other hand, can transfer or distort reality by the remarkable role of media such as newspaper, magazines, TV and movies. Similarly, technoscapes refer to the processing of information through technological devices which become essential nowadays. Finanscape can be described as the movement of currency through universal commerce. Above all, ideoscapes usually compromise the transferring of ideas through nations, such as human rights, freedom and democracy (75).

One of Appadurai contributions to culture theory is the concept of ‘disjuncture’ in which he describes the result of the process of interaction among the five decisive domains of cultural flow as characterized by disconnection and rupture. According to Appadurai, the flow of people, capital, idea and images is irregular and overlapping to the degree that it becomes inevitably disjunctive and indispensable to globalization. Therefore, disjuncture can be regarded as the opposition and continuation of cultural homogenization. It occurs within the spread of globalization to refer to the strain, deviation and inconsistency in the procedure of global flows. More pertinent to the study of disjuncture is the idea of deterritorialization which refers to the removal of almost all original features of society and their replacement with new globalized items. Some critics assume that disjuncture is the leading force which generates deterritorialization. Consequently, Appadurai thinks that the recent most important aspect in cultural flow “is the endless interplay of sameness and difference, which includes both positive outcomes and (with more emphasis) the destructive struggles of homogenizing states and particularizing ethnic movements” (Heyman & Campbell 134).

## **Americanization & Westernization**



At the beginning of the novel, one is acquainted that Mustafa, the protagonist, is a poet and a journalist engaged in teaching Arabic for the foreigners who occasionally dwell in Cairo. He has an affair with an American journalist and scholar whose name is Marsha who lives in an enormous building downtown in which all residents are students of the American or international universities in Egypt. His relationships with Marsha and her neighbours are widely fluctuating and unintelligible since he seems very close to them and simultaneously very sceptical. In chapter three, the protagonist describes a party at Marsha's apartment which exists in the fourteenth floor in a separate building downtown. It is a boisterous party as usual. In opposition to the peaceful district in which the building exists, there arise the deafening sounds of European music. Despite the western style of life in which Mustafa indulges with his acquaintances, he regards Cairo nights as spectacular, thus he is not attracted to the western way of life. In addition, he rejects the unendurable behaviour of the foreigners as they intimately touch each other in the balcony while drinking alcohol, Bango or Cannabis. One of the observations which greatly disturbs him in such an equivocal construction is the alarm which gives an appalling sound when entering the place because of the strict security procedures (Said 24).

The protagonist's relation with Marsha is set in contrast with his relationship with Zainab, an inferior Egyptian journalist, who excitedly adores him and he mutually loves her, but they are unable to marry each other because she experienced a sexual abuse when she was child. In fact, when Mustafa thinks of marrying her, he wants to escape Marsha's dominating presence in his life. It seems that Mustafa's relation with Marsha is constantly irritating, while his relation with Zainab is more affable and gratifying. From the very beginning he tries to escape his involvement with Marsha, preferring his vehement affair with Zainab, but in vain. He comes to the conclusion that his contact with Marsha is inevitable because she has the ability to give him several occupational opportunities. Despite Marsha's several declarations of love to him, he sees her merely as an outsider who will dispense with him whenever she decides. In

addition, she has a different genetic system, entailing unpredictable behaviour. In fact, Marsha and her circle represent Americanization in Cairo life. Some critic assume that Americanization is part and parcel of modernity. What is new in nowadays Americanization is its emphasis on the hegemonic effect on the mentality of middle class, not on the upper class as usual. That is, almost all youth should be fascinated by the American style of life: “the attraction of America should be manifest most in the behaviour of ordinary people and not the local elites with vested interests in ‘the old way’” (Taylor 54).

### **Capitalism & Finanscape**

One of Mustafa’s favourite connections is Yousef Helmi who works as a movie director and who impressively appeals to Mustafa since he is a conspicuous womanizer, who enjoys charismatic style of life despite his old age. Similarly, he is a dweller in Cairo downtown; therefore, Mustafa is accustomed to visiting him for confirming that his health is stable and his psyche does not deteriorate. He is an old man imprisoned in his apartment with an accompanying nurse because of his fragility. Indeed, Helmi considers Mustafa his son since he suffers from his two sons’ ingratitude. When he wants to inherit the most precious thing to a close person, he chooses Mustafa to give him his costly gun. Motionless, he orders Mustafa to open his safe when the nurse departs. When Mustafa opens the safe for acquiring the gun, he comes across several western finances. A few moments before, Helmi gave the nurse a huge banknote for merchandising some exported cheese, French bakery and a certain kind of precious chocolate (Said 63-64). Powell suggests that the western culture is accomplice in all economic crisis all over the world. The third world has to maintain the western economic and social systems for achieving progress. Powell associates this ideology with capitalism which is associated with commodification and which is responsible for the exploitation of labour. “The dark side of this is that in order for production of consumer goods to materialise, many immigrants from third world countries have been financially exploited for their labour” (4).

## Ethnoscape and Disruption

The idea of exploitation of third world labour is illustrated in the paradigm of Julia, Marsha's servant. She comes as a refugee from South Sudan to evade the atrocities of the civil war. The UN Refugee Agency directs her to Egypt. Marsha trusts the Coptic pharmacist Bolis whose pharmacy exists in the ground floor of the building where she meets Sabot Luka, another South Sudanese citizen who flees war. When Marsha needs a servant, Sabot Luka fetches Julia, his cousin. Both of them are Christian delegated by the Angelian Church to the district where Marsha lives to work and train till the time of their migration to the United States or Canada. The concepts of migration, refugeehood, tourism and exile are very related to Appadurai's ethnoscape. To Appadurai, there is no stable community all over the world since national capital transfers from one place to another, technological products entail contemporary requirements, and nation-state policies on migration usually oscillate. Appadurai's concept of disjuncture devalues the concept of cultural homogenization favouring the concept of deterritorialization which obliterate cultural and geographical boundaries between countries. It is by virtue of ethnoscape that deterritorialization and disjuncture arise. "An important reason for this emphasis seems to be challenge the nation-state as a cultural unit, both in terms of transnational and subnational cultural phenomenon" (Heyman & Campbell 137).

## Opposing Cultures

It is not only the USA culture which is increasingly prevalent as a result of globalization but also other rising economies like East-Asian countries. Essam, the protagonist's close friend, falls in love with Singaporean girl called Samantha. It seems that in such economic systems, vocational preoccupations are different from American ones and other native-states discipline (Powell 8). Appadurai proposes that The United States becomes no longer the overriding linking of the world system. In this context, the notions such as traditions and identity are unstable and their developments are unpredictable, and the global life of today is intermingled with uncertainties. Some countries constitute danger for other adjacent

countries like Japan for Korean people, India for Sri Lankans, Vietnam for Cambodians, Russia for Soviet citizens, and Indonesia for Irian and Jaya (Powell & Steel 74).

The most remarkable example of some opposing cultures found in Mustafa's community is the relation between Essam and Samantha. The protagonist finds this relation as inimitable and menacing. What disturbs him most is his friend's fondness of such a foreign, disagreeable girl to the degree that he is willing to desert all his Egyptian acquaintances for her sake. Mustafa grows jealous and suspicious of such a girl. He sees her as a rival replacing him as American culture replaces Egyptian one. Mustafa regards Samantha as a usurper who may make use of his friend by seizing him and changing his cognitive map to migrate with her to Singapore. He thinks of her as an invading force aiming at deteriorating his friend's native principles. She offers Essam an established job in Singapore as an aesthetic evaluator, but originally, he rejects the idea. However, when she takes him with her and leaves to Singapore, he is captivated by the exquisiteness of the country, the peacefulness and decency of its citizens and its ostensible cleanness. To Mustafa, the comparison between Egypt and Singapore is invasive and uneven. He thinks that Essam's association with Samantha leads him astray, and he describes himself as ill-at-ease. When he predicts Essam's migration, he gets restless as he describes:

I did not appreciate my dinner. I had a moody state to the degree that I decide to marry Marsha as an irrational thought. This decision might lead me to have a life which Marsha draws for me whether in Egypt, the States or even in Israel. During that night, Essam has comforted me with his talk about his unease at his frequent travels as he believes that Egypt is his sheltering place. He loves Egypt since there are kind inhabitants, the river Nile and very pious citizens. Although he accentuates his fascination with Singapore with all its financial allurements, he feels that it is a lifeless city without any soul, as if a cold area covered with ice during its maturity (Said 92).

## Deterritorialization & Disjuncture

John Tomlinson's idea of deterritorialization is integrated with the notion of "complex connectivity" which has produced by the advancement in technology. Tomlinson concentration on technoscape as the main factor propelling globalization leads him to the notion of "complex connectivity". He regards globalization as instigating unity and disunity simultaneously. To illustrate the idea of "complex connectivity," three elements of communication should be considered. These elements are "control, speed/ease and the idea of global village." (Bida 34). It seems that Singapore "complex connectivity" results from the dominance of global market and international companies all over the world, which are described in Bida's context as control. "Direct connectivity" is inseparably connected with terms like speed and ease because human communication is converted into quicker ways such as cell phones and other internet applications. However, the global village is linked with the idea of "indirect connectivity" which is associated with radio and television (Bida 34).

Mustafa thinks that he is not the only schizophrenic character among his acquaintances, but it seems that the whole society suffers from such a duality. He attributes this conflicting attitude to Wahhabi drifts invading Egypt by the return of Egyptian teachers, engineers and physicians from the Gulf countries. This attitude can be illustrated through the preference of Saudi Quraan reciters to Egyptian ones, the choice of galabias not trousers, the inclination for Gulf dishes to the local ones. The most disturbing incident occurring to Mustafa underscoring this disruptive attitude is his relation with Heba. He gets accidentally acquainted with Heba by a phone call he receives when he modifies the newspaper articles about to issue at the journal location. Heba mistakenly calls him when she wants to talk with another Coptic journalist whose name is William. Shortly, she has a date with Mustafa at home when he discovers that she wears Niqab—a sign of Islam extremists. She tells him that she is a divorced woman with three children, who works as a journalistic source. She asserts that she can freely make love with Mustafa

because he is Muslim, while she can never do so with William as he is Coptic. What openly astonishes him is that she insists on washing and praying immediately after they sleep together (Said 101-106). For Mustafa, this girl is ideologically disturbed because of the opposing factors influencing Egyptian society. Bida thinks that mass media is the prominent factor creating contradictory “milieux”. By means of mass media, such diverse “milieux” generate deterritorialization since people combine detached and adjacent principles in their daily lives which results in inverted reality (36).

### **Disjuncture & Mediascape**

Bida intensifies that deterritorialization typically bring about a kind of reality which can be reversed and miscellaneous environments which seem inconsistent. “Reality inversion transforms the real thing into something which seems less concrete because of previous encounters with it through mediation” (36). Marsha is fond of media and movies as she is the output of a cultural background fostering this mediascape, which is thus the most prominent factor determining reality and ideoscape. When Marsha meets Kareem, a homeless street teenager, she decides to produce a film on the kind of life he leads and the other similar youngsters who suffer from destitution. She resorts to Mustafa to gather information for her project, assuring that they have a fund from an international agency. Although Mustafa suspects her motivations, he decides to assist her since this gives his imagination an outlet; in addition, the film will help Kareem and his connections improve their impoverished lives. Globalization’s association with imagination stems from its ability to form cultural and social spheres. It is related to the cognitive process of thinking and the integration of this mental process with the other mode of thought. Some critics attribute imagination to dynamism while the others relate it to Aristotle’s fantasy. “Many common activities—reading novels, playing games, watching movies, telling stories, daydreaming, planning a vacation, etc.—involve this ability [imagination]. As it is understood here, imagination is a concept indicating a dynamic psychological process” (Salazar 769).

Kareem's wife, Warda, imprisons him for violently beating her, causing her many injuries. Marsha's imagination drives her to seize the girl as she thinks Warda may be a good topic for her coming project, discussing feminism and human rights in the third world. In fact, she is plainly concerned with studying such paradigms. When Marsha and Mustafa come to catch Warda while she cleans the street cars, she dreadfully suspects them, thinking that they want to force her to release Kareem; therefore, she insists that she will never allow Kareem to get out of prison. Marsha speaks with her softly and implores her to come with them without fear. For seducing Warda, Marsha bestows her and other street children some takeaways snacks, and she hugs and kisses Warda affectionately till she accepts to accompany them. The security of the building meets Marsha, Mustafa and Warda with a cold smile, then they begin to scrutinize Warda till Marsha incongruously offends them. They abruptly get afraid, and apologize. It seems that Marsha as an American citizen gets full control of all situations. She delegates Mustafa to her French neighbour, Sofi, to teach her Arabic lessons. What bothers Mustafa greatly is the way Marsha's acquaintances treat him as if he is one of her possessions. Even Julia, the servant, does not obey his orders till Marsha scolds her (Said 75-80).

### **Finanscape & Imagination**

According to Appadurai, finanscape is obviously associated with capitalism which transfer from one place to another, causing several significant cultural impacts. "Dimensionless finance capital" constantly moves irregularly since it manipulates other movable factors, such as working class and natural resources. However, capitalism is not the only essential factor governing human ideology. It seems that ideological movement within a capitalistic sphere supported by nation-state can never be fully predicted or explained. The socio-political domain is mostly affected by imagination which can be regarded as an outflow of reality and an opposition to it as well. "Appadurai points to the dimension of imagination as standing out in a distinct fashion among cultural flows" (Heyman and Campbell 135). To Sarter, imagination is closely associated with

personal freedom since it gives voice to those who want to desert reality. It is also connected with psychoanalysis where imagination can be considered as a fantastical world which should be avoided to be truly engaged in real world. Some critics assumes that imagination may oppose reality, but lately they modify their attitude by asserting that imagination can intensely contribute to determining one's identity and building motivations for future orientation. The socio-cultural perspective considers people and places as a blend of reality and imagination at the same time. Accordingly, identity cannot be entirely realized mainly by cultural aspects, ethnicity, location, or nationality. On the other hand, imagination plays a vital role in forming one's identity. "Imagination can thus be conceived as a mental process, both individual and social, that produces the reality that simultaneously produces it" (Salazar 770).

Very pertinent to the idea of imagination and the projected images it provokes is Appadurai's concept of ideoscape, which creates a remarkable type of disjuncture. He illustrates the term ideoscape as a condensation of notions which are mainly political, whether with or against the state. Ideoscape is usually associated with Enlightenment with its prominent slogans, such as prosperity, human rights, freedom and democracy. To Appadurai, the most unintelligible element is democracy. However, he argues that the dissemination of these slogans across the world caused much confusion and inconsistency. Such confusion can be measured by individual disjunctive behaviour with his/her community (*Modernity* 40). Ahmad El-Helwa, one of Mustafa's close friends, feels perplexed by the contradictory ideology in Egyptian society. He began his career as one of the Marxist activists, calling for liberty, equality and social justice. Sooner he was imprisoned by the authority owing to his anti-state communist affiliation. Actually, he was a student at the faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, who fell in love with one of his colleagues, called Shahinaz, later his wife. The most disjunctive event occurring to them was that they were converted from the leftist wing, Communism, to the opposite trajectory, Islam extremism, by the end of the novel. They are totally blurred by the global inconsistent ideology to the degree that Ahmad



El-Helwa and his wife, Shahinaz, rejected their prestigious vocational career, as two established engineers. They think that to work within a governmental institution is religiously forbidden; therefore, they turned into merely vendors selling home-made desserts at the streets (Said 124-128).

While imagination can be considered as a main inducement for generating globalization and a consequence of it as well, disjuncture is usually regarded as the outcome of such a process. It is claimed that disjuncture and globalization are unescapably associated. Appadurai contends that the eruption of globalization provokes several disquiets, incongruities and deviations since the flow of globalization is undisciplined and chaotic. He condensed the problems resulting from disjuncture to “livelihood, equality, suffering, justice, and governance” (“Grassroots Globalization” 5). While El-Helwa’s troubles and his wife are mainly concerned with social justice and liberty, Essam’s main problem is related to the clash between cultures. He adores a Buddhist girl who resides in a far-fetched country in the world; however, she is entirely alien to Egyptian community, and he is completely estranged in Singapore. When Mustafa accuses him of marrying an atheist, he is radically disturbed since Essam is not a strictly religious one, nor Mustafa. The disjuncture occurs when he decides to marry her in her native country Singapore. Consequently, Mustafa gets disappointed for losing another close friend. In addition, when Essam comes back after only six-month marriage, he seems entirely transformed. Shattered and fragmented, he tells Mustafa that he will never depart again. Realizing the rupture experience he comes through, Samantha finally accepts to let him return home, promising that she will visit him each three months due to the business she administers (Said 96).

Mustafa himself leads an inconsistent life, disjunctive, as he is obviously torn between many opposing poles. For examples, he has a full sexual affair with Marsha, the American resident, despite his reluctant attitude towards her, and he admires another innocent Egyptian girl called Yasmeen who reminds him of his demised beloved, Hend, but he can never touch her. He sympathizes with

Julia, the Sudanese servant, yet largely suspects her. He despises Kareem and Warda, because of their unpleasant lives, but discards the idea that Marsha plans to manipulate them. He adores Zainab but does not prohibit her from marrying a Mexican man whom she admires. The most upsetting experience he comes through is his relation with Yassmin, the young poet who resorts to him to evaluate her compositions. Beside her innocence, she is so gifted that she can realize that Mustafa does not like her but he is merely attracted to her modest beauty because of her similarity with his deceased fiancée, Hend. His relation with Yasmeen will lead him to mental disorder, then suicide. Such a disjunctive state in which the protagonist lives and almost all other characters can mainly be attributed to the hegemonic capitalism which turns to be globally manipulative because of its fluid and uneven nature. In other words, globalization creates alienation by means of capitalism and its intricate conditions (Appadurai, “Grassroots Globalization” 3).

### **Disjuncture & Nation-State Relation**

Appadurai suggests that because of the global capital flow the relationship between state and nation recently grows unstable and upsetting. That is, each one of them attempts to exploit the other. Nationhood tries to widen its scope to include several ethnicities from different countries. On the other hand, statehood frequently endeavours to subvert all citizens into its domain. The disjuncture between state and nation symbolized in the hyphen (state-nation) can be explained by the roughness of the random capital. For example, technoscape, mediascape and ethnoscape oblige the state to pave the way for the menacing consumerism engendered by capitalism. Commodification accelerates all over the world as a result of the finanscape. These overlapping cultural spheres result in countless conflicts between state and nation—each one of them tries to overcome. “States throughout the world are under siege, especially where contests over ideoscapes of democracy are fierce and fundamental, and where there are radical disjunctures between ideoscapes and technoscapes [...]” (*Modernity* 40).

The disjuncture between ideoscape and finanscape can be reflected in the fragmented relationship among the three close friends: Mustafa, Essam, and Ahmad El-Helwa. Each one of them has a distinct ideology which is connected with their source of income and his political affiliations. Ahmad El-Helwa's father, Hamed El-Helwa, has turned into an eminent bourgeoisie since he possesses a huge green grocery downtown owing to the disconcerting economic circumstances occurring in Egypt during that time. One of the important factors engendering these fluctuating economic changes is the discovery of oil in the Gulf countries and the Egyptian citizens' travelling there for better economic standards. The outcome of this finanscape is incompatible attitudes to the ideoscapes. Ahmad El-Helwa travels to Saudi Arabia as a petrol engineer immediately after he gets promotion in his Egyptian oil company. Unfortunately, during his inhabitancy, he goes into a tough debate with a foreigner expert, concerning the Middle East political crises, the American hegemony, the collapse of Soviet Union, and the CIA's unacceptable activities in turning Islam into a terrorist icon. This discussion results in dismissing Ahmad and bringing him back to Egypt. Afterwards he decides to leave the work in all governmental institutions for his radical ideological principles. Even when the administration of the Egyptian company tries to restore him, reminding him that he can be retrieved if he retreats within 60 days, Ahmad insists on his disagreement. Hamed El-Helwa resorts to Mustafa to help him regain Ahmad to his company, but Mustafa emphasizes that he can never reshape Ahmad's mind as Ahmad is usually the leader, not an obedient one (Said 107-111).

### **Disjuncture & Selfhood**

Mustafa has grown agitated because of his inability to discover another true love after Hend's death. Their passion seemed the epitome of innocence and purity—unlike the experiences he went through afterwards. He is acquainted with Hend when he was a first-year university student. For him, she seems very simple, lovely and energetic. His nostalgic feeling towards her drives him to go to a café in El-Sarayyat region near Cairo University, where they used to

meet when they were students. Because of global cultural flow, the place is radically changed as it has recently got a second floor where liberated girls can smoke Shisha freely. The protagonist's feeling of disjuncture is recurrent and overwhelming. He is detached and disoriented in such a thornily corrupt life. To appease himself, he summons their true innocent love, their dream of marriage, their unpretentious outlooks and how she finally dies. Hend was fascinated with Mustafa's political struggle and he was moved by her enthusiastic participation in the student's aesthetic committee. The reminiscence of the day when she dies is very distressing and torturing. In Winter, it was a heavily rainy day where there were dreadful lightning and thunder. Hend was absorbed in organizing the activities of the mid-year holiday on the second floor at the scout building. Mustafa had his misgivings that the day was gloomy and foreboding. All students endeavoured to escape the hail which appeared like a raid by resorting to the university buildings for protection. Unfortunately, on the second floor where Hend stood, there occurred a real shell explosion when she immediately died (Said 129-44).

### **Disjuncture & Cosmopolitanism**

Mustafa's relation with Marsha can be regarded as an outlet for his spiritual love to Hend and his physical love to Zainab. He can never get rid of his memories with Hend since they are engraved in his subconsciousness; however, his attempts to evade Zainab are habitually failure. She is finally stick to him, and he to her. What strikes him intensively is that he finds Marsha gets accustomed to the Egyptian culture to the degree that she seems one of its inhabitants. When she has a slight clash with Mustafa concerning a date which he neglects, she tends to El-Fayoum—one of Egyptian notable provinces which is famous for beautiful scenery and village crafts. Marsha has a Swiss friend, Eveline, who stays in El-Fayoum for ages as she gets married to an Egyptian poet who turn to be a literary critic. The place in which she resides seems like a cosmopolitanism since it combines multicultural persons coming as visitors to Eveline and remain there for the beauty scenery. The

common factor between her and Marsha is their agreeable involvement in the Egyptian culture and their interest in its investigation. While Marsha is concerned with conducting academic studies and producing documentary films reflecting Egyptian culture, Eveline is more concerned with the crafts of making pottery, home-made galabias and carpets known in Egyptian villages (Said 155-56). Some critics describes this process as acculturation as the procedures taken by an individual to approve, obtain or belong to a new cultural milieu. "The acculturation process causes change not only in the immigrant but also in the receiving culture, leading to the process of interculturalization" (Rothe et al. 686).

### **Acculturation & Disjuncture**

The acculturation and interculturalization processes do not only mean the engagement with the new culture by the immigrant, but also it means the interchangeable interaction between the two cultures. This denotes that each culture influences the other and the immigrant and the indigenous get mixed ideals, values and thoughts by the end of such processes (Schwartz et al. 2). In spite of the love affair between Zainab and Mustafa and their similar social background, she falls in love with a Mexican musician who escapes from his touristic group to live and find his mistress in Egypt. Zainab finds in Julio her unattainable dream of marriage and migration to a foreign country, and he finds in her the dream of an Egyptian beloved. When she describes him for Mustafa, he gets infuriated as he will lose another close friend by marrying to a foreigner and departing Egypt (Said 171-173). Another mixed marriage occurs between the German citizen Evald who changed his name to Awad and converted to Islam for marrying an Egyptian girl called Ayshaa whom he met when she worked at The German-Egyptian Society for Friendship. In spite of the western culture of Awad, his manners seem like the eastern ones, maybe because he belongs to the Eastern Germany or because of his leftist political affiliation. He is assigned by the international Car Company Mercedes to teach engineering sciences to Egyptian students at German University. Mustafa admits that Awad is the only western citizen whom he assists in teaching

Arabic for free because he thinks that they are typically similar in their tastes of food, drinks and political views. This behaviour does not appeal to Marsha who absorb the American pragmatic view which entails that everything should be paid, even when a man teaches his brother (Said 182-183).

In fact, acculturation occurs not only within the immigrant society, but it also sometimes occurs within indigenous society as a result of social interaction of the overwhelming powers. “Nonimmigrant ethnic groups are faced with acculturation challenges not because they have chosen to enter a new society, but rather because they have been involuntarily subjected to the dominance of a majority group [...]” (Schwartz et al.2). It seems that Mustafa is disintegrated owing to the American culture dominance despite his belonging to the nonimmigrant groups who willingly exists in their native land. In the beginning of chapter 20, he states that he becomes detached of all the world for the sake of Marsha because they prepare for their new film. Because of his reservations concerning Marsha and her project, he proposes a plan in which he will become an acute observant for the street teens, scrutinizing them for recording their unpredictable behaviour. Realizing the hegemonic attitude of the American culture, he wants to control her. He convinces her that the atmosphere in Egypt will not suit her because of the unbearable heat in summer and the chilly coldness in winter. She is fairly anxious about the range of time required to achieve her project and offers to employ either a western teamwork or an eastern one to assist in its accomplishment. Mustafa resists this idea entirely as those teens will have several suspicions if they feel that someone pursue them—not to mention the strict security procedures imperative later. The protagonist thinks that Marsha becomes compatible with his thoughts until she fetches him an advanced digital camera which seems American despite its German origin. Moreover, she organizes for him a fixed timetable in which he has to finish the project within the scope she determines (Said 196). Mustafa who belongs to the majority turns submissive to the minority because of their dominance in his native land. Despite the

process of acculturation he has gone through, he seems disconnected and fragmented.

In case of Mustafa and his relation with Marsha, he goes through the 3 processes of acculturation which Rothe defines as “acceptance,” “adaptation” and “reaction” (681). It seems that Marsha herself experiences the same contradictory procedures. To satisfy Marsha, Mustafa has signed a contract with her that he has to undertake writing the script of the film, in which he imposes a provision that no scene can be added or omitted without his written consent. Actually, he feels implicated with her in her suspicious project since the topic of her film may diminish the dignity of his native country. When Mustafa gets alone, he feels worried and alienated. He has no explanation for his behaviour towards the American culture and people. He tries to evade the United States hegemonic power previously, but now he is radically compliant with its projects. His doubts against Marsha develop gradually as she is fluctuating concerning her reasons for remaining in Egypt for good. First, she claims that she has remained for preparing her Ph.D. thesis on some cultural issues, then she changes from one topic to another abruptly. Next, she turns to be a producer and a director of an equivocal film (Said 197).

Similarly, Marsha experiences the 3 stages of acculturation. At first, Marsha seems satisfied with her relation with Mustafa and tries to absorb his culture. In addition, he usually obeys her and does not resist her obligations. When Zainab departs, he feels alienated and distorted thus he decides to remain with the street teens to record their behaviour for completing his project with Marsha. However, she gets annoyed when she realizes that he apologizes for two female learners of her acquaintances to fulfil the teaching requirements because of his intolerable preoccupations. She reminds him that they are foreigners whose contracts are binding—not like the native. The protagonist feels humiliated because Marsha reminds him of the funds and opportunities bestowed on him by the foreign agencies. She seems menacing, yet for appeasing her, he displays some photos he has taken to prove his invaluable contribution to

their project (Said 210-211). Marsha gets uneasy and upsetting when Mustafa arrives at her apartment during her hosting some foreign acquaintances. She gets troubled because they watch a western channel broadcasting opposing viewpoints of the Eastern perspectives. Her anxiety is observed by Mustafa whose reaction is altered radically. Confused, he has a resolute decision of immediate departure. When he goes to Kareem, he warns him of participating in the demonstration next day downtown as the street teens are employed by the police to assault the participants. It was against the torture exercised at Abu-Ghareeb prison, and Mustafa was eager to have another demonstration against Israel's brutalities in Ghaza. When he warns Marsha against the demonstration, she contemplates for a moment and decides to take part alone. The accumulation of her inexplicable behavior as well as Mustafa's irritation result in his anger explosion—a blatant disjunctive reaction. He screams at her face that he has to take part in such a demonstration, irrespective of her viewpoint, to show his antagonism against the American discrimination and the Israelis' violation, describing them as "sons of the bitch." As a result, Marsha tries to appease him, attributing the atrocities of war to cannibalism which is very far and detached from humanity (Said 228-32).

Neizen argues that violence is a natural reaction against modernity and globalization. He gives the example of al-Qaida network which employed western terms such as "the company" and "the general management." This can be seen as inconsistent behavior because when the terrorist fight industrial societies, they employ the western language for the sake of eliminating all sources of globalization and retreating to a primitive form of life. Neizen attributes the phenomenon of violence to migration and the maltreatment of migrants which makes those migrants feels alienated and despised. Therefore, those individuals' resort to extreme religious doctrine, not to mention unwarrantable aggression, as they grow negative attitude towards democracy. It seems that "the more they [western communities] give up on the universal rights and freedoms they have sworn to defend, the more they nurture the wounded pride of marginalized communities" (43). Appadurai, on



the other hand, believes that different ethnicities in the globalized world would naturally result in “nationalism” and “violence” as well. Above all, ethnicity is not equal to “group identity.” On the other hand, ethnicity does not necessarily entail people inhabiting in the same place or sharing the same nationality. Instead, it means people having the same roots, religions, beliefs and norms. Those people are usually seen as accomplice in violent acts against other ethnicities and national representation (*Modernity* 139). Some other critics relate violence to the domain of postcolonial studies maintaining that “postcolonial studies question the violence that has often accompanied cultural interaction and attempts to frame explanations of it as well as to provide alternate models of accommodation or getting along” (Schwarz, “Mission Impossible” 5).

It seems that violence and nationalism erupt simultaneously in the novel, especially in Israel’s transgression against South Lebanon. Mustafa receives the news while he makes his preparation for departing El-Talibia House. He realizes the terrible acts of Israel’s armies that launch several brutal attacks on South Lebanon—a blatant violence against undefended civilians. Meanwhile, he is astonished at Marsha’s planning for a party at jazz club to support Diana’s boyfriend singer. She gets embarrassed when Mustafa reminds her of the raid and decides to remain at home for sympathizing with the victims. However, Mustafa refuses to spend the night with her as a deliberate sign of accusation of American involvement. On Friday, Mustafa is invited to a demonstration against the violation after *Salaht El-Gomma*, and Marsha is enthusiastic to take part but he again dismisses her. He gets ashamed by Marsha recurrent presences with him since he may be described as her boyfriend—maybe her teacher, her spy, a clerk at the embassy, etc. Marsha gets troubled by Mustafa’s negligence and informs him that she insists on attending another feminist demonstration at El-Tahrir Square for proving her genuine solidarity with Lebanese citizens. Marsha is engaged in recording such an elegant demonstration as the security forces turn off all the lights; therefore, the demonstrated women turn on their candles and remain

singing some of Fairouz songs as a sign of alliance with Lebanon (Said 247-255).

The epitome of violence occurs at the end of the novel as a remarkable reference to the impact of globalization on diverse ethnicities existing together. Marsha accuses Julia of stealing a sum of money reaching approximately 10,000 dollars for migrating to Canda with her fiancée. She thinks that they decide to do so as a reaction to the United Nation's rejection of assisting them after the peace treaty between North and South Sudan. When Mustafa arrives, He finds Julia's shackled in the chair and her face is enflamed owing to the merciless beatings she receives from Marsha. Julia is terrified by Mustafa's presence and she insists that she is not the real thief. Whenever he asks her about the money, she insists on denial. It seems that she goes through various cultural evolutions as a result of her departure from her country and her resultant hopelessness. "At times, a person who is regarded by the majority culture as a member of a particular group or who regards himself or herself as of a particular ethnicity may find his or her identity changed by the immigration process" (Rothe 684). Marsha points to Julia's bag, declaring that she packed all her luggage in it for eloping with her cousin. Marsha and Mustafa collaborate in humiliating the girl in order to elicit a confession of the stealth from her, while Marsha has several reservations against reporting the police. Julia bitterly accuses them of injustice and discrimination. Moreover, she reminds Marsha of Diana who stays up with her last night and who may be the real criminal. When Julia mentions Diana as a suspect, both are enraged and pursue her to the balcony where she commits suicide (Said 290-292).

## Conclusion

It is by virtue of globalization that the accelerating of global flow arises. By global flow Appadurai refers to the rapid interconnection of different people all over the world. On the other hand, Appadurai emphasizes the importance of the current global flow as generating disconnectedness and separation among people. Crossing borders by multiple citizens for tourism, education, work, or merely as a refuge entails not only an endeavour to adopt the other culture, but also several obstacles to be part of that culture. For example, Marsha is a foreigner to the Egyptian community who exists in Egypt as a condition for her journalistic occupation as well as her love of Mustafa. Whenever she tries to be engaged in the Egyptian community, she encounters an internal and external resistance. She spends most of her time with western contacts who live with her in the same building. She tries to capture Mustafa's attention but fail to persuade him to marry her. She lives in Egypt as a detective trying to study every cultural phenomenon for sending back information to her native country. Despite her recurrent claims of human rights and democracy, she turns into a savage, brutal person when she suspects Julia for theft. The cannibalistic feature of the western society obtrudes when she menaces Julia until she commits suicide.

Marsha's interest in social media and journalism propels her to direct a documentary film on streets teens—vagabonds. Those citizens can be seen as marginalized and neglected by the government. They are mostly criminals, and they are exploited in riot incidents. Marsha's concern with them make Mustafa think of her motivations as despising Egyptian culture which disregards some of its impoverished youth. He attributes her eagerness to report all Kareem and his partners' behaviour to animosity between western culture and Egyptian one—to show the disagreeable face of the eastern community. Her demeanour is inharmonious with her declarations. Therefore, it can be assumed that mediascape causes disjuncture within tourists and indigenous people. Mustafa follows Marsha's strategy despite his suspicions because of financial

reasons—finanscape. She usually affords him good opportunities for teaching foreign citizens Arabic lessons. Moreover, she has supplies from international agencies to fuel the film. Mustafa thinks that Marsha's capital can provide Kareem and his partners with their essential needs. However, he does not comply totally with her exploitative plan. He keeps his thoughts and emotions aloof from her despite his pretension that he is in line with her.

Essam, Mustafa close friend, is captivated by a Singapore girl who comes to Egypt for commercial reasons. She is the head of a Singapore company and she offers Essam marriage and migration. Actually, Essam takes a long time to accept the offer, but the first time he travels there he gets disappointed by encountering a radically dissimilar culture. Therefore, he returns back to Egypt, insisting on sticking to his homegrown community. Fortunately, she accepts that Essam will not stay with her in her native country but will occasionally visit her. Despite the technological and financial advance of Singapore and Mustafa love to Samantha, he is not able to depart his culture, he remains reluctant and disengaged. Even when she dies and inherit him her company and all her wealth, he refuses to travel there to receive his legacy, preferring to remain in Egypt and converting to Sufism –as an outlet.

Despite the close connection between multiple cultures in the novel, there emanates frequent conflicts among contrasting ideologies. When Mustafa and Essam work in the Gulf cities for gaining money, they run across abundant expatriates whose mentalities have been radically altered by their changing residences. Those expatriate's main concern lies in attaining fortune and they abhor their own countries for deficiency. Yehia, for example, is one of Mustafa's colleagues in Saudi Arabia who works as a math teacher. In spite of his pretension of being a very spiritual man, he is mainly famous for his greed and usuary transactions. Another example of opposing culture is related to Indian citizens. When Mustafa and Essam lodge in Saudi Arabia, they discover some deprived Indians who throw themselves in front of speedy cars for inheriting their family's indemnity. Mustafa is another example of contradictions. Despite his

sexual behaviour with all women he comes across, he behaves in a very spiritual manner with Yasmeen, the young poet. Her tenderness and similarity with Hend make him glorify her, rather than making love with her. However, when he experiences mental disorder as a result of abandoning all his acquaintances and cultural background, he goes to visit her at home and attempt to touch her, thinking she carries Hend soul within her body. It seems that Mustafa's disjunctive attitude erupting from his internal and external contacts generates nervous breakdown, recurrent nostalgia, loss of all his contacts, alienation within his home country, numerous clashes through communication and finally committing suicide.

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