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Research Paper

Radwa Ashour 's *Granada* : Concealed Pasts , Foreclosed Futures in the Arab/Muslim World

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Abstract

This article reads Radwa Ashour's Granada (1995) as a novel that examines the cumulativeness of trauma in Arab/Muslim cultures. It is representative of postcolonial trauma novels' rethinking of the Eurocentric event-based model that lays the postcolonial question by the wayside. A barbed critique that links the colonial past to its postcolonial aftermath is thus leveled at the lasting aftereffects of a violent Western coloniality/modernity. By deploying the family trope, it recasts the undeterrable advance of Western globalism as the instigator of post-generational trauma. Ashour's angst-ridden narrative especially laments the foreclosure inflicted on potentialities by the Western discourse of salvation in that the latter submits the Arab/Muslim Other's attempt at conserving one's legacy to processes of incrimination and obliteration. In view of her full awareness of the looming death that triggers her existential dilemma as an intellectual, Ashour insists on excavating the archive as an act of survival against external forces that threaten to annihilate her cultural heritage . By mourning the loss of al-Andalus , she therefore exhibits unwavering determination to lay bare the dark underside of a long and single history of Western modernity.

Introduction

In exploring the daunting task facing the Arab intellectuals when grappling with the loss of al-Andalus, Nouri Gana locates the act of remembering between two impulses "one seeking to recover it and the other seeking to recover from it" (2008 231). The significance of the paradise lost lies in its being constitutive of a historical moment that needs to be elegized, yet it also warrants our reference to it as an exemplar of a past that promises to restore dignity to those who have been lost to the structures of a corrosive colonial modernity. As they continually endeavor to come to grips with the post-1492 aftermath, Arab thinkers are implicated in retrieving a historical conjuncture that still persists in our cultural memory . They are in search for proper ways of mourning the dead given that the ensuing wounds of such a loss have not yet been healed.

Moorish Spain thus holds promises that can bring repair to the inadequacies of our violence -laden world overly engrossed in foreclosing the potentialities of the dehumanized , Arab Other . Indeed , remembrance preserves the paradoxical task of both hope and despair, recovery and trauma, mourning and melancholia , in the throes of a history that is quintessentially catastrophic for the Arab /Muslim cultures today. As it seeks to examine the ways in which memorialization may connect the individual to the collective , this article reads Radwa Ashour 's novel *Granada* (1995) through the notion of the cumulativeness of trauma across distances of space and time for the Arab/Muslim collectivity . The work surveys such cumulativeness by bringing to the foreground the Western-centric hegemony that constitutes a holdover of the discourse of Christendo, an ideology that guaranteed its world sovereignty by submitting the epistemologies of the Arab/Muslim Other to processes of demonization and incrimination.

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The centrality of Western knowledge is then guaranteed through building some sort of preemptive defense that casts alterity's production of thought as evil. As such, the seriality of painful occurrences will be illustrated through the exploration of trauma's post-generational transmissibility.

Ashour's barbed critique showcases the way in which the filial privacy of home and family may turn into an affiliative domain that attacks head on the dark underside of Western coloniality /modernity 's globalism . The novel especially diagnoses the transmissibility of pain to attest to the successiveness of disastrous events in the Arab world , ones that lie at the backdrop of Ashour 's sudden urge to make recourse to the archive of her cultural heritage. Sensing a looming danger, she expresses an urgent sense of survival that governs her attempt at articulating anxiety as an Arab intellectual . Preservability is thus construed as an act of resistance . It is a notion that questions the very foundations of the ideologies of Christendom that have culminated in the state of emergency that forecloses potentialities.

Al-Andalus, Trauma Studies and the Postcolonial Frame

As they came to prominence in the early 1990s and drawing on the philosophical principles of what is generally termed "the ethical turn", Cultural Trauma Studies have changed gears from the investigation of individual trauma to that affecting the collective wellbeing of cultures. Attention has shifted to the violent pasts whose examination has come to bear on cultural and literary studies. Theorists of the Holocaust and studies of post-9/11, for instance, have examined the hermeneutics of pain in the field of literary exegesis as they engage readers responsibly in the aftermath of the events (cf. Caruth 1996). The moral weight of such a critical direction solicits everyone , especially readers of literature , to be implicated directly or indirectly in the violent events' belated aftereffects . Justice-seeking and epistemological questions have thus brought forth the narratives of collective memory that seek to promote new ways of reading and listening given that we are implicated in each other's traumas in the ever-growing globalized world today (Caruth 1996). However , in Craps and Buelens' view, such studies that have focused on the metropolis have not accomplished their ethical promise to bear witness responsibly. Their Eurocentrism falls short of affording readings that grant postcolonial and post-slavery legacies their "traumatic due" (2008).

Stef Craps especially levels criticism at the event -based model which does not fit the agenda of Postcolonial Trauma Studies in that "cultural trauma theory remains centered around the Freudian model [...]according to which trauma results from a single, extraordinary , catastrophic event" (2013 31). Such critical direction especially calls into question the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust as a universal paradigm. It is also reflective of postcolonial trauma theory's preference for Walter Benjamin 's conception of past events whose effects duly reverberate with the present. On that account, "the state of emergency" and " constellation" are resorted to as two notions that reflect the way in which the cumulative aftereffects of a painful past are brought to bear on the state of exception that marks contemporary events (Durrant 2014 93; Benjamin 1970). The notions refer to "a sort of montage in which diverse elements are brought together through the act of writing [...] to emphasize the importance of representation in the interpretation of history" (Rothberg 2000 10). Central to the foresaid framework is "the ethical stance" to hold towards the past instead of depicting it in its literality (Rothberg 2000 24). In critical terms that lay bare the persistence of colonial modernity's legacies , historical responsibility has made it paramount to attest to the existence of the same ideological frameworks that have contributed to the perpetuation of its violence across distances of time and space.

Therefore , construing the loss of al-Andalus as a traumatic event for the Arab /Muslim subjects emblematizes the cultures that "share a common fate and not necessarily a common experience " as " trauma refers to an event or an experience , a primal scene that defines one's identity because it has left scars and thus must be dealt with by later generations " (Eyerman 2004 74-75). Sharing cultural and religious affiliation overdetermines the fate of Arab consciousness and attests to ongoing meaning - making processes . As carrier groups , Arabs constantly grapple with questions of identity and shared history. By collectively referring to the loss of a glorious past, and as a primal event preceding the

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catastrophes that have blighted Arab cultures, it has become paramount to come to grips with the cultural trauma which "refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning" (Eyerman 2004 61).

Ashour's work may then be referred to as a postcolonial novel infused with the theoretical relevance of trauma. Its critical direction fits well within the framework of Postcolonial Trauma Studies that lament the insistence of the Eurocentric frame on the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Remembering Adorno's oft-cited aphoristic dictum that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric ", the fact which "has become impossible to write poetry today" not only blocks the Arab world's inflicted catastrophes from view, but also insists on the impossibility of narrativizing its traumatic events (Gana 2009 33). The fact that a host of writers still insist on memorializing Arab history does not only raise the moral question of claiming the past , but also insists on the right to a viable future as the primary claim is on the right to a future possibility that has constantly resisted imposed foreclosure by the powers that be. The past/future nexus may therefore be possible through an ideal past whose loss is memorialized as the epitome of potentialities . Due association has made the Arab cultural imagination seamlessly choose al-Andalus whose representation in literature veers somewhere between idealization and lamentation . Its narrativization is triggered by the unleashing of disproportionate violence and war that unabashedly continue to hinder progress . Of utmost significance is the critical practice that may may install a break with the conditions that nurtured the primal violence of colonialism.

Foreclosing Post-Andalusian Arab Epistemologies

Given the topsy -turvy state that has marred Arab cultures , it is vital to tread a new path that links seemingly disparate moments in history. The object is to spatiotemporally reconnect seemingly divergent events against the forces of amnesia that cast al-Andalus as a remote past (Anidjar 2006). The moral prerogative to remember therefore feeds the need to compensate for Andalusian loss by granting Moorish Spain its due historical significance . One such imperative has to do with unveiling the mainstream discourse that has contributed to besieging Arab /Muslim ways of knowing , a violence that has largely caused their identities cultural trauma ever since the loss of al-Andalus . By having their knowledge concealed from the annals of modernity, Arabs constantly face the perils of a looming danger that blights their existence as subjects able to produce thought. Such a demise is produced by the violent globalism of a fledgling modernity that divides the fields of knowledge based on the logic that casts some epistemologies as well-meaning and others as potential inflictors of harm (Mignolo 2006; al-Kassimi 2023). The abyssal character of the single and long history of modernity is that it can only guarantee its progress through the twofold process of concealing and jeopardizing alterity's epistemologies that are considered to be out of kilter with the ethos of progress (Dussel 1990). It bears mentioning therefore that Arab cultures have borne the brunt of a long - standing salvational discourse of Christendom that bifurcated the globe in religious terms in the 14th century . The ideology then morphed into racism as it turned scientific racism into an academic exercise (Goesfonguel 2013), thereby resulting in yielding enduring aftereffects,

The convergence between the recapture of Granada and the departure to the New World was not incidental [...]. Columbus 's departure to the Americas would not have occurred were it not for the booty plundered from Moorish Granada . Not only were the ideological methods deployed by crusading Christendom to deal with the Moors , Jews, and Muslims of Al-Andalus seamlessly transferred across the Atlantic and redeployed by the conquistadors in their treatment of the natives of the Americas , but they had also come to lay the foundations of much of the modern and contemporary world in which settler and imperial imaginaries still exert a strong appeal in Palestine and Iraq respectively (Gana 2008 229).

Similar to Christendom that guaranteed sovereignty over the globe through the discourse of salvation, an ensuing parlance related to the civilizing mission was in the making (Goesfiguel 2013). Gana indicates the benefit of spatiotemporally examining the colonial ideologies that have been detrimental for the Arab consciousness to this day. It also sets the Andalusian and Arab cultures along post-generational continuities that attest to the seriality of calamitous events.

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The emergence of al-Andalus as a "vector of investigation into the nature of culture and heritage" offers insights into the "disconnection and violence" blighting state-building processes in the post-colonies given the challenges of the war on terror and the turbulent relationship of the West to the Muslim world (Talbayev 84-85). A closer survey of recent history calls attention to the linkages that have set Christendom and today's Western-centric alliances along lines of durability. The historical reverberations of a seemingly obsolete discourse of Christendom have come to resurface after World War II which constitutes a conjuncture that inaugurated a new religious and racist idiom aligning Judaism with the "white" West. By following in the footsteps of the Euro-American narrative of progress, Israel subscribes to a discourse that discards its historical connection to Moorish Spain. The narrative of "a single Judeo-Christian tradition" thus came into existence and gave birth to "a post-Holocaust idea with weak historical depth. It is post-Holocaust America's antidote to anti-Semitism" (Mamdani 2003 253). To quell the possibility of dissent against Israeli violations, anti-Semitism has thus been at the service of allegedly preventive measures against any potential threat. Recasting Muslims as producers of ill-intentioned epistemologies has therefore led to the legitimization of violence against the "anti-modern" and "fundamentalist" Other posing a danger to the march of progress (Mamdani 2003 29). In Khalid Al-Kassimi's words,

What is revealing about the [...] advocates of pre-emptive war is their obsession with the idea that dissimilar cultural personalities to secular philosophical theology are not only imagined as threatening jus gentium but are adopted and transformed into a legal argument by policy-makers and jurists to justify extra-judicial violence to protect Enlightened dogmas informing a Judeo-Christian [...] morality of civilization. (Al-Kassimi 118 2023)

As international law has become dominated by Judeo-Christian alliance, a stigmatizing legal system of globalism turns out to be all the more antagonistic towards Arab/Muslim cultures. On account of their instigation of the dogmas of the clash of civilizations, Huntington and Lewis have managed to unleash their anxiety-laden ideologies (Moses 2011) to protect the so-called "civilized world". As such, unequal distribution of legal rights to mournability transpires when the privilege of overprotectiveness is unfairly afforded to specific groups. Where it sets out to benefit the purportedly "unique" and "universal" Holocaust in cultural trauma studies, a globalized narrative of progress has contributed to blocking from view the political claims delineating the postcolonial question in the Arab world (Moses 2011). Ensuing Eurocentrism has led to licensing violence against Arabs by denying the history of Convivencia that was the hallmark of the cross-confessional culture of al-Andalus. It testifies to the fact that "Jewish culture in Spain is better thought of as "Arab Jewish"—rather than Judeo-Christian—and that the separation of "Jews from Arabs" did not occur until 1492" (qtd in Mamdani 2003, 31).

What is at stake, therefore, is how the long and single history of modernity has assumed the mantle of globality by foreclosing potentialities. In a context where international law is devoted to protecting the "civilized", Ashour senses looming specters as catalysts of the cumulativeness of trauma in the Arab world. Her angst is indeed justified by the state of turmoil that came to befall Iraq in 2003 as prophecies of the sort called attention to how the hegemony of "Americanized structures of knowledge" typifies the way in which Western epistemologies are planted in Iraq and elsewhere in such countries as Syria and Palestine, thereby delineating "potential continuities with the long-standing pattern" that is inherited from the epistemicide-infected post-Medieval era (Kabel 2014 70). Post-1492 history thus constitutes a key moment in history that was to attest to the emergence of a globalism giving rise to "epistemicide", the Western-centric globalizing practices and discourses exerting control over non-Western societies by submitting Other cultural systems of knowledge production to forces of annihilation. As a result,

the epistemic privilege of Western Man [...] is the result of four genocides/epistemicides in the long 16th century (against Jewish and Muslim origin population in the conquest of Al-Andalus, against indigenous people in the conquest of the Americas, against Africans kidnapped and enslaved in the Americas and against women burned alive, accused of being witches in Europe). (Grosfoguel 2013, 73).

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A corrosive sort of modernity that was cumulative in nature therefore materialized especially when international law started to license violence (cf. Mignolo 2016). Such willed "eradication of the Other" was particularly predicated on "the rhetoric of modernity (and globalization) of salvation" that, to this day, "continues to be implemented on the assumption of the inferiority or devilish intentions of the Other" (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006 206). Bifurcations of the sort thus call forth narratives that open up new avenues into the cumulative nature of trauma. They bear witness to the way in which stymied potentialities induce collective trauma for the generations to come.

Indicting De-Canonized Knowledge

Ashour's narrative testifies to the fact that postcolonial trauma is not limited to a unique event. Its aim is rather to chronicle a series of occurrences that continue to afflict victim cultures based on the indictment of de-canonized knowledge. She is driven by the moral prerogative to commemorate the past as far back as Andalusian times. The critical import of her work is that it holds the promise of rerouting Postcolonial Trauma Studies as the latter needs to be set beyond the 19th century colonial era. Ashour thus stands as one of the literary figures who have been influenced by Amin Maalouf's and Mahmoud Darwish's writing on the paradise lost, claiming as such the reproduction in narrative form of al-Andalus based on her awareness of an Arab history constantly bracing against constant threat (Granada 1995 509). In her fashion of rendering history in ways that blend realism with literary experimentation, Ashour affirms that history "has entered a phase in which the same disasters keep recurring" since the past's "dispositions toward its futures [...] continue to permeate the present" (Spanos 2018 391-392).

As it is part and parcel of its cultural imagination, Arab literary tradition has placed al-Andalus at the forefront of its responsible remembrance despite the different tendencies that characterize such an undertaking in distinct phases (Granara 2005). Unlike its nationalist predecessors' writings that are nostalgic in tone, Ashour's Granada presents a dystopic perspective of cultural loss through the story of a family on the cusp of history. It deploys the trope of family to elucidate the trans-generational transmission of a traumatic past whose examination delineates the ways in which the intricate strands of memory bring the past to resonate well into the crises of the present. It especially bears witness to the traumatic events that befell the Muslims of the entrenched kingdom of Granada, the last remnant of Muslim reign, under Castilian rule. The work starts in 1491 in Albaicín, the Muslim quarter in Granada. By choosing to experiment with a non-linear narrative, she steers free from the direction of the historical novel and its illusionary utopianism as her fragmentary text reflects the traumatizing events that lie at the backdrop of its production.

The trilogy centers around the history of new ways of governmentality whose success in the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas are at the service of a fledgling global colonial modernity. The events are viewed from the vantage point of an Arab-Muslim family. They recount the painful story of the extended family of Abu Jaafar, the bookbinder, a *warraq*, who acts as the symbolic custodian of Andalusian heritage and cultural archive. Jaafar's natural disposition to host his homeless apprentices Naeem and Saad emblematizes his embrace of hospitality regardless of filial relations, an act that holds the political significance of affiliative bonds that defend a community's collective Self.

Ashour retells the history of Granadan rule at the end of the fifteenth century by chronicling the vicissitudes of the family which, under economic and cultural pressures, is increasingly experiencing the daily sense of unbelonging. Facing setbacks reinforced every now and then by the Castilian rulers, the Muslims' lives seem to take on an aura of a looming danger that threatens Islamic Spain's history. Throughout the country, people have faced the confiscation of books and burning of collected volumes, forced conversions, imprisonment, public executions and expulsions. As the guardian of the archival history, Abu Jaafar decides to save his library by retreating to a life of peace out of town. His early death that takes place right after the burning of books in a public square foreshadows an imminent loss that looms across various cultural and social arenas. Saleema, the granddaughter of Jaafar, exhibits keen interest in

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medicine and a stubborn pursuit of Arab learning. Her brother, Hasan, however, prefers to tread a safe path in order to protect his family from the ruthlessness of Spanish laws. Ashour's use of the family trope attests to the way in which the instigation of the vulnerability of life is expressed through the family trope with the aim to bring on board the equal vulnerability of the Arab culture as a whole.

As an instance of shocking historical events, the privacy of Ashour's home was invaded by the CNN images of the 1991 attack on Iraq by the coalition forces. She resituates a new encounter with the posttraumatic aftereffects of the loss of al-Andalus amidst a series of violent events in the Arab world, It is likely the scene opened a door of the memory [bāban li-l-dhākira], for it was connected to other similar scenes:

The bombardment by Israeli planes of Sinai in 1956 and 1967, the bombardment of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982, and the ongoing bombardment of Palestinian encampments, cities, and villages in southern Lebanon. That evening, while I was watching the news of the bombing of Iraq, I saw the naked woman coming closer and it was as if I was Abu Ja'far the bookbinder in the novel seeing his death in her nakedness. Fear overcame me and I asked: is this imminent death [hal huwa al-mawt al-washīk]? And if it is then what relationship should I take up now with my death? With this question Granada overtook me [dāhamatnī], and I started to read. (1995 508)

The compoundedness of the calamities that have buffeted the Arab world therefore attest to the persistence of the traumatic history of Granada as the major event whose loss has left inedible scars in the Arab consciousness. As al-Andalus reflects the cultural feats that hold promises for another Arab modernity, its invocation as a mournable "lost object" delineates the dangers that threaten the Arab intellectuals who may act as the custodians of the cultural mores and feats contributing to high optimism for liberation. Ashour's fear of death is quite prophetic in its reflection of her fretting over a perilous future given that its central concern has to do with the loss of one's archive. Such primary angst attests to her frantic inclination to read her cultural repository first, a reading that acts as a subversive undertaking in that it explores the underlying designs of the forces of forgetting that assault both the guardians of alternative epistemologies and the latter's critical possibility to question the founding principles of such forces. Accordingly, Ashour's reading practice constitutes a political act that reflects her sense of ominous survival and that of her academic fellows.

Interestingly enough, her prophetic apprehensions about the future constitute a powerful critique of a single history of Western modernity since she is well aware of the fact that the political climate of war augurs ill for academicians. Based on her awareness that Iraq represents one of the key cultural hubs in the Arab/Islamic world, Ahsour's anxieties in times of uncertainty hold pertinence when linked to the loss of Granada as the last repository of the Andalusian memorial archive that has been violently concealed from the history of modernity (cf. Dussel1990; Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006). Constant attempts to disempower alterity's cultures have as their underlying purpose the annihilation of academic possibilities. Iraq stands as a salient example in that respect. In 2003, besides the destruction visited on the its cultural heritage, killing, torturing and exiling academics have become an industry ever since the regime of Saddam Hossain was overthrown by the coalition forces (cf. Kabel 2014)

Ashour is thus driven by the moral prerogative to convert into narrative form her crisis as an Arab intellectual who represents the overall demise of her culture. She chooses Abu Jaafar whose responsibility grows from being the custodian of family mores of hospitality to someone who senses the urge to preserve the archive of a whole culture. In spatiotemporal terms, the novel represents the "postmemorial work [which] strives to reactivate and reembody more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression" (Hirsch 2008, 11; emphasis original). The narrative opens with Abu Jaafar seeing a naked woman at the crack of dawn. Besides the uncanny aura produced by such a sight that blends the real with the unreal, the reverie -like state induces a strong sense of the auguries of annihilation. His fretting predictions have in fact materialized since the news have spread of Alhambra meeting wherein the "ill-fated" young king Abu Abdallah Muhammad hands over the last

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remnant kingdom of Granada to the Castilians (3). He regrets the divisions within the community that led to dethroning Abu Abdallah's father, the fact which alludes to the conditions that culminated in the emergence of the statelets that weakened the Andalusian rule (17). The community is constantly on the lookout for any possible violation from the Inquisition's government, while the latter insists on gradually depriving the Arabs of their cultural heritage.

On account of its determination to assault head on emerging global designs, the novel offers a child's insider perspective that lays bare the dark underside of Western modernity. Seen through the optic of the younger generation represented by Naeem, Hasan, Saleema and Saad, the Castilian soldiers' parade celebrates the arrival of Columbus whose expedition has brought the gold, the exotic plants and animals of the region. In Saleema`s view, "It's not a new world [...] it's just a different world, and that's all there is to it" (28). Her insightful remark calls attention to the annihilation visited on the native American culture when violence took on the mantle of globalism. Marwan Hassan refers to the Reconquista as an overly global project given that

1492 is not only the chronological date for the onset of the demographic apocalypse in the Americas, it also marks a date of a demographic collapse in the Mediterranean. It is the final year of consolidation of that project in European history termed the Reconquista, which concluded with the capitulation of the last independent Moorish state. (2002 13)

By dint of its globality, the project constituted an expansion which contributed to the demographic decimation that especially afflicted the populations in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula. Similar to the Crusades, such expansion wreaked havoc in demographic terms while the Reconquista was hailed in Europe for its durability as an exemplar of success through "military strategies, economics, and technology" (Hassan 2002 14). To secure its advance, the march of civilization grounded its durability on epistemicidal frameworks in that the Moors' skills and knowledge were especially appropriated while their elimination was just a matter of time (cf. Hassan 2002).

Of significance is Abu Jaafar's unconditional hospitality to receive the young Saad as both apprentice and family member against all odds. Teaching bookbinding constitutes the hope to preserve the cultural archive of al-Andalus passed on to the younger generation, not to mention that the craft is a sort of compensation for Saad's loss of family and home. The excruciating events following Malaga's besiege are hard to recount by Saad if not for Saleema's persistence. The Spanish forces attacked the city with cannons "that could kill you with their screeching sounds before their shells even hit the ground"; they also changed mosques for churches, and people had to pay taxes to the Castilian treasury in order to finance the war (81). Through Saad's lens as a refugee who escapes to Granada, it becomes possible to peer into the state of dispossession and the dynamics of colonial governmentality that continue to blight both Malaga and Granda as weakened statelets. After his imprisonment as a freedom fighter, his consciousness is tormented by inquiry about a history that keeps repeating itself (178-179). Through a heart-rending narrative, and with the aim to lay bare the dehumanizing practices that trigger existential dilemma, Saad recounts the body's being "inflicted with wounds" and torture, as punishment is exacted by the inquisitors whose eyes are able to "pierce your innermost being" (179). As he has undergone a series of shocking events including the shellshock at the times of war and the invasion of one's very privacy, Saad senses the predominance of undeterrable colonial designs.

Another instance of the predominance of unstoppable violence that thwarts potentialities is Naeem's change of status from an apprentice bookbinder to a servant of Father Miguel. Naeem's exile has started since he had to embark with Father Miguel on a voyage to the Americas. Given the disconcertingly emerging edicts and the loss of the bookbinding business, he has had to give up his skills to serve the global ambitions of the Castilian government. In fact, the advance of the colonial enterprise attests to "the convergence between the recapture of Granada and the departure to the new world" by Columbus as the exploration was not a simple incident; its aim was to take advantage of the booty plundered from Granada and the Arabs' skills in sailing (Gana 2008 229).

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It is then through Naeem's experience of exile that we are enabled to peer into the dynamics that bolstered the transatlantic expansion of the Spanish rule. By traveling to the "New World", he bears witness to the atrocities, rape and killings committed against native Americans. They are employed to pave the roads, cut down trees and lift rocks under the surveillance of the Castilian army. By virtue of the "muldirectionality of memory", Naeem's act of witnessing underlies the ethical and political imperative to identify with the American Indians in that it closely relates the fate of the victims to that of Granadans (2009 164-165) It is then through Naeem's experience of exile that we are enabled to peer into the dynamics that bolstered the transatlantic expansion of the Spanish rule. By traveling to the It is then through Naeem's experience of exile that we are enabled to peer into the dynamics that bolstered the transatlantic expansion of the Spanish rule. Such an identification indicates that "the coexistence between the expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Spain and the 'discovery' of America was at the same time a landmark for both modern colonialism and colonial modernities" (Mingolo 2000, 49). In terms that set Spain at the heart of the European narrative of progress, it could be said that the country "was the beginning of modernity in Europe and the beginning of coloniality outside of Europe", a conclusion that both cements the conviction that the Americas constitute an extension of Europe and that modernity and coloniality are sides of the same coin (Mingolo 2000 51).

So far, and based on post-generational witnessing, the seriality of catastrophes has affected the younger generation of Granada through foreclosing potentialities, especially that Ashour delineates the ban on bookbinding in the novel as an act of jeopardizing cultural and epistemological preservability. In writing from the debris of colonial modernity, it has become paramount to grasp the way in which "the relation to damage as loss is counterpointed always by the persistence of damage as a mode of memory" (Lloyd 2003 216; emphasis original). As a work that grapples with traumatic memory, Granada is less about offering uplifting narratives of recovery than it is about Ashour's critical stance that straddles its way between trauma and recovery, denoting as such the sense of survival that governs her unstinting determination to question the foundations of the long-standing discourse of Christendom.

Ashour therefore revitalizes the history of violence that especially submitted women's ways of knowing to oblivion. Female subjects underwent processes of demonization by conspiring factors that guaranteed the march of civilization, a practice that took its toll on women in the 16th and 17th centuries given the upsurge of the colonial, modern, capitalist, patriarchal and Christian-centric power relations. It was a time when "millions of women were burned alive, accused of being witches in the Early Modern period [...] to destroy autonomous communal forms of land ownership" and to get rid of "outcast", "inferior" and de-canonized knowledge (Grosfoguel 2013 73-75).

Unlike Ramón Grosfoguel who states that the burning of women accused of witchcraft only happened to Indo-Europeans, Ashour delineates such a crime against Muslim women under the Castilian rule. Christendom as an ideology whose angst-driven discourse over an approaching apocalypse in fact thrived in the Middle ages and attests to the fact that Europe became overwhelmed by a frenzy of haste to inflict pain. As it sought to guarantee the global sovereignty of the Christian faith, it laid the foundations of the logic of biopower that tortured or exterminated the "non-faithful" colonial Other deserving of death (Smith 2014 108).

Adamant enough to preserve her cultural heritage, Saleema, whose story is based on real events, hides her grandfather's remaining books, a stubborn resistance which is translated into her practice of traditional ways of healing. The novel then bares Christendom's violence-laden parlance through Saleema's unfair trial recasting her keen interest in science as "witchcraft" that threatens the security of the state. If such accusations link other ways of knowing to potential perils, then the stifling process that is anxiety-ridden brings sovereignty into alliance with epistemicide. Saleema is therefore caught in the detritus of a globalized violence that has spread far and wide, a globalism whose infectious ideas have grown out of the cross-influence between the contagious knowledge gained from the colonial enterprise in al-Andalus, the Americas and Africa. As such uncanny convergences become rationalized through the discourse of deliverance, they give rein to the court's excesses that yield soul-wrenching accusations that go as far as demonizing non-western cognition. For the judge,

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In spite of all these charges, we have tried and continue to try to bring you back to the truth, to urge you to repent for your infidelity and your loyalty to the devil who is the very essence of nonbelief. We had hoped to return you to the embrace of Holy Mother Church and the Catholic faith, so that you may escape from the punishment of both this world and the next. We have tried our utmost in all of this, and we postponed pronouncing a sentence for as long as we could in the fervent hope that you declare your regret and sorrow. But your arrogance and stubbornness, and your predilection for sin keep you in a state of denial. We therefore report with great sadness and pain our failure in bringing you to repentance. (228)

What transpires in accordance with such discourse marking the salvational mission of Christendom is that it is based on morally substantiated arguments that justify a seemingly ineluctable state of exception. Just as the discourse grounds the justifications of inflicted pain in the notion of an approaching apocalypse, it grants the privilege of universal "responsibility" to a Western-centric sovereign who enjoys credibility through allegedly well-meaning deeds to save the world. (cf. Voegelin 2000). In his reference to the far-reaching influence of Gnosticism, a first-century doctrine that confounds religion with epistemology, Eric Voegelin disentangles the complexities of such a doctrine in that it acts as "a form of legitimization for the rule of people over people"; as such, hierarchical configurations locate the hegemon in a higher position between those of a lower rank and God:

It is now clear that the authority for temporal world-government must come directly, without intermediary, from the universal fount of authority, which, though it flows pure from a single spring, spills over into many channels out of the abundance of goodness . And the emperor "in the light of paternal grace" [...] will better enlighten our globe, over which the government rules through *Him alone who is the ruler of all things spiritual and temporal*. (2000, 42; emphasis added)

Western sovereignty over the universe —under the guardianship of the emperor—is thus achieved by virtue of the godly position assumed by the "good" ruler who is in possession of the true knowledge that reinforces his historical and moral authority. The foresaid convictions had a lasting influence on the Spanish Inquisition that assumed the mantle of globality, especially that in the fifteenth century international law divided the global community in terms of those who were deserving of life and those who deserved to die (cf. Smith 2014; Mignolo 2016). In that sense, it has become imperative to save the Other from guilt as Saleema typifies the sort of people who are thought to have desperately been unable to exorcise the evil powers inside them given their obstinate state of "unbelief" (cf. Smith 2014). The unexpected turn of the events of the trial are indicative of the good/evil binarism that governs such essentialism. The charges thus surprise Saleema as shocking when she hears the judge and the investigators' dreary and dramatic debate that has relegated her to an object of theological and scientific examination. Ashour's reference to the trial is reminiscent of the Sixteenth century long-standing intellectual investigation that turned religious discrimination into racism through dehumanizing frameworks (Grosfoguel 2013). Sensing the underlying epistemic violence in their way of addressing her with indicting questions, and as she notices that they take pride in their cognitive powers, Saleema describes their unfounded arguments in the most derisive terms when "they sat taking turns, acting as though they were men of learning, schooled in the textbooks of the Ancients, steeped in the knowledge of the facts and details of theological sciences" (219-220).

Saleema has therefore become overwhelmed by the curiosity to know if her grandfather was able to overcome the shock induced by "the blaze of fire as it ravaged one book after another [...] as if the fire were warding itself against them and continuing its path of destruction" (226). In the throes of a global history that is devastation-ridden, she becomes oversensitive to the persistent forces of forgetting that can only guarantee their undeterrable forward march through the annihilation of the Other's potentialities.

For her, then, it is no stretch to think of her body as the book that is constantly under the risk of obliteration. Given that women are generally thought of as the subjects who pass on knowledge to the next generations (Grosfoguel 2013 86), Saleema could as well be recast in similar terms.

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She then endeavors to restore the humanity lost to her during the trial by referring to herself as one of the "human beings" who should be thought of as "inscribed sheets, strings of words having meaning that when put together, connote the whole that a person signifies" (223). In persisting to deliberately disregard the injustices that have dehumanized her community, she maintains Other ways of knowing that are emblematic of unstinting determination to bring the aftereffects of globally corrosive ideologies to the attention of contemporary readers.

Ashour's anxiety over the genocidal nature of hegemonized epistemologies has therefore been justified by the never-ending violence inflicted in Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria and Lebanon. With the disconcertingly unrelenting march of a civilization that has wreaked havoc in the Arab/Muslim world, it has become paramount to brace for more atrocities given the existence of the same ideologies that have laid the foundations of the primal violence of colonialism. Preemptive measures that purport to protect the "civilized", well-meaning world against its demonized counterpart are reflections of rationalized violence that divides the globe in terms of those who should have a future and those who should not. Invoking al-Andalus, therefore, is a must. More studies on the concealment of its tremendous contribution to the history of modernity should be granted due consideration if we want to debunk the ideologies that continue to foreclose potentialities.

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