Challenges and Channels

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English Language and Literature at a Crossroads of Cultures

Edited by

Ikram Ahmed Ibrahim Elsherif

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INTRODUCTION

In 1925 in the "Preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*"[1], Freud declared his belief in the "*Bon mot* which lays it down that there are three impossible professions—educating, healing and governing." Almost a century after this declaration, educators are still exploring its significance and implications. Freud was concerned with the education of children, which to him entailed the practice of forms of repression. As Michael D. Berry explains, education "serves a social conditioning function which manifests overwhelmingly in the form of behavioural control." Probably the most important key word here is "conditioning", for whatever the personally, institutionally, nationally or globally avowed objectives of educating/teaching (literacy, human development, social and political awareness, cultural preservation/dissemination, cross-cultural communication), the underlying conceptual purpose seems to be the conditioning of the individual to be a functional member of a particular society or culture, or, to use a more recent utopian ideal, a functional global citizen.

Here, then, lies the crux of the matter, but the inevitable question is, can individuals be easily conditioned? Or will there always be a degree of resistance? Berry asserts that "human nature is not easily subdued", and all educators at one point or another must come to admit that "education is an inherently unpredictable exercise. ... One aims to teach, but one can never really know what the student has learned."[2] What the student learns and how much a student learns is determined by many factors: age, temperament, individual tendencies and talents, physical and social environment and background, personal preferences and potentials, personality traits, language, social ideologies, religious beliefs, history and political and national affiliations. A student thus, especially at university level, is not a *tabula rasa* on which teachers can inscribe whatever they desire or see fit.

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[1] See Sigmund Freud, Preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*. In: Strachey, J. (ed.) The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 19. London: Hogarth Press, 1925b/1961, pp. 271-276.

[2] Michael D. Berry, "Key Pedagogic Thinkers: Sigmund Freud," *Journal of Pedagogic Development* 4:1 (March 2014) <http://www.beds.ac.uk/jpd/volume-4-issue-1/key-pedagogic-thinkers-sigmund-freud>

Another element in the equation is the teacher. Just like the student, the teacher does not spring from a social, cultural and political vacuum, but comes into the equation with an individuality formed and informed by his/her specific background and particular character. This, inevitably, also informs and determines his/her teaching philosophy, objectives and methodology. The teaching situation, then, is a human drama of interaction in which it is erroneous to assume that teachers stand at the giving end doling out unchallenged wisdom, while students act the passive recipients of formative instruction. Rather, both act out their parts, mutually affecting each other against the third formidable element of the equation—a backdrop of institutional policies, cultural and social ideologies, censorship, history and national and political objectives which may promote or interfere with the process of teaching and learning.

Looking at these three components of the equation one might be overwhelmed by the intertwining influences that might clash at the intersection of the personal, the public, and the political, creating what might seem unsurmountable challenges and giving credibility to Freud's *bon mot* of the impossibility of teaching/educating. The teaching of the English language and its literature to non-native speakers, particularly in the MENA region, seems to present such challenges in bold outline. Though it is now established as the global language of technology, commerce and communication, the English language and its literature and the culture encoded in it has an infamous colonial and imperialistic history which makes it pragmatically accepted as such, but only grudgingly. Teachers of the language and its literature may have to contend with historical and political suspicion, religious mistrust, social and cultural censorship, mother language interference, among other challenges.

This book attempts to explore the challenges of teaching English language and literature in the MENA region, with a special focus on the Gulf area. It consists of different articles by an international group of educators and scholars who explore, from their own personal experiences, the issues of cultural hegemony, the "crisis in humanities", cross-cultural encounters, pedagogical challenges, textuality, second language acquisition, ethics in translation, among other linguistic and literary concerns. All the contributors have first-hand experience in teaching the English language and its literatures in the Middle East and the Gulf region, but what is also intriguing is their exploration of how their experiences of the challenges opened up whole vistas of personal growth.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I consists of two mainly theoretical chapters which nicely form a backdrop that sheds clarifying light on some of the arguments, or put in perspective the challenges of

teaching English language and literature discussed in subsequent chapters. In Chapter One, Robert Irwin offers a historical overview of "Western Cultural Imperialism in the Middle East and North Africa", surveying how Western colonial powers, including Germany, Italy, France and Britain, deployed their cultures and languages and used education in their contest for territorial expansion to further their imperialistic projects through linguistic and cultural hegemony. Focusing his argument on French and British imperialistic ambitions, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries, he contends that "British imperial self-confidence" though "more than matched that of France" did not initially include "a *mission civilisatrice*", but rather sought only to educate a select native elite in the colonies to further its control over the masses. As a result, until the 1930s, the spread of the English language in the region owed more to American missionaries than to the efforts of formal British authorities. It was not until the Second World War loomed that British authorities "sought to canvass the support of a broader section of the Arab populations" through education and the exportation of culture on a large scale. Concluding that cultural imperialism faded with the Empire, which itself faded into globalization, Irwin suggests that "the spread of English globally probably owes more to James Bond, *Friends*, Harry Potter, *The Game of Thrones* and Facebook than it does to Shakespeare, Wordsworth and the British Council." Though the English language has triumphed over other imperialistic languages, in today's world, it is no longer the language of cultural imperialism, but "like the medieval lingua franca, it is primarily a language of commerce and electronic communication."

In Chapter Two, Mona Baker discusses the increasing growth in the number of academic programs offering translation and interpreting to cater for an increasing global recognition of these activities as "vital" and "indispensable" in the modern global landscape. She argues that this growth also led in recent years to increased engagement by professional translators and interpreters in issues of ethics and moral judgement as the traditional values of impartiality and neutrality which used to shield them in their mediation in various interactions are now receding, causing them to be held more accountable for the consequences of their decisions and involvement. Baker asserts that this increasing accountability calls for "a different approach to education", one that undertakes "a critical, ethically informed re-examination of what constitutes ethical behavior in the field of translation and interpreting, and hence the type of training that should ideally be offered in higher education." She then gives recommendations and suggestions for pedagogical strategies and techniques that would

prepare students for an increasingly ethically oriented approach to the profession that would foster "social responsibility and human dignity".

Part II focuses on the challenges of teaching English literature and consists of three chapters. In Chapter One, Gerald David Naughton discusses the teaching of Western Anglophone literature in the MENA region in relation to debates about "the universal crisis in education" and the much-debated "crisis in humanities". While he acknowledges that Western educators do encounter "unique challenges" that arise from cultural difference in the teaching environment of the region, he also points out that the difficulties of teaching certain literary texts and themes may be "true … for both 'Western' and 'non-Western' learners" and thus proposes that these challenges be read in comparison with challenges encountered in the Western classroom. Arguing that there is always a fissure between the culture of the text and the culture of the learner, Naughton concludes that "to teach well" in a literature classroom is "to build and sustain" the challenges that animate the discipline, "not to flee from them". Taking up a thread in Gerald Naughton's article, Yulia Pushkarevskaya Naughton in Chapter Two, "Teaching Literature as Textuality", compares her experience of teaching literature in the Gulf to her teaching the same courses at the University College of Dublin. She asserts that her students' responses to the material presented to them were very similar and that "the actual interpersonal dynamics of the classroom was more important than the cultural background of the students." She finally proposes to go beyond the differences and the challenges and read the classroom as a "text" which has its own "sign system", made up collectively of professor, students and material. A professor's task is to read this text "*avec plaisir*", not to control the meanings produced by the interaction of the different signs, but to "simply work with them as they arise." Ikram Ahmed Elsherif in "Heroes and Goddesses with a Thousand Faces" again takes up a thread in Pushkarevskaya Naughton's article, and focuses her investigation on the professor as one of the elements or signs of the classroom as text. She explores her position as a Middle Eastern professor, teaching Western Mythology in the Gulf and examines how her own cultural background, religious affiliation and gender contributed to shaping her teaching experience. After teaching mythology to different groups of female Arab students for three years, Elsherif recognizes that her main challenge was not so much her students' cultural resistance to course material, but her own preconceptions and over concern with cultural difference. Adopting a process-oriented approach to teaching, keeping her choice of material open to revision based on students' suggestions and responses, Elsherif encouraged her students' active involvement in the

process of education, and was surprised by their responsiveness. Elsherif's experience had a "demystificatory" effect which gives credibility to both Gerald Naughton's and Pushkarevskaya Naughton's arguments—meeting and sustaining the challenge and reading the classroom as "text" can animate the discipline, affect personal growth and give pleasure.

In Part III, two chapters of case studies explore the response of Arab students to Shakespeare. Kim C. Sturgess presents his experience of teaching Shakespeare at Qatar University. He critiques Western academics and educators who denounce some of Shakespeare's plays as "problem-plays" and introduce them to students with prejudicial comments, imposing contemporary Western religious, moral and feminist ideologies on the texts, thus distancing them from their original meanings and influencing students' appreciation and response. He argues that unprejudiced by prior knowledge or "indoctrination", his students at Qatar University were "relatively free from many of the problems imposed on the play texts by contemporary western ideology" and were consequently able to receive and appreciate the plays "in a manner far closer to that of the original audience" than their Western counterparts. Piers Michael Smith in the second chapter, "Understanding Shakespeare", offers a somewhat different perspective and argues that the "responses and particular crotchets" of his mostly Arab, Muslim female students at the Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait "are no different from those of students in the West." Organizing their responses into eight categories, he employs a semi-humorous tone in exploring the various pedagogical techniques he has adopted and uses his students' responses and bored, gossipy, curious or dismissive attitudes as a springboard into serious discussions of issues of language, originality, authorship, race, gender, misogyny, and feminism.

Part IV of the book focuses on language and consists of four chapters which are concerned primarily with the receptive and productive skills of reading and writing. In Chapter One, Rosalind Buckton-Tucker examines how her utilization of constructs relating to the psychology of creative writing to develop teaching materials enhanced her students' learning environments at Gulf universities. She argues that the study and analysis of literature helped her students to transcend barriers of language and culture and to exhibit adventurous imagination in writing and setting their stories not only in their own familiar cultures, but also in foreign cultures which they could depict with insight and objectivity. Janet Testerman and Kathleen Marshall Park, in "Language Success in the Global Economy", investigate the efficacy of online differentiated computer-aided instruction

in enhancing the reading and writing proficiency of students in composition courses at Gulf University for Science and Technology. They also identify a number of individual instructional strategies which also developed students' reading and writing skills. In the third chapter, Inan Deniz Erguvan's study investigates the reading habits and attitudes of Kuwaiti university undergraduate students to better understand their strengths and weaknesses and develop the curriculum accordingly. Her study yields a number of interesting findings, including that though the "lack of a reading culture" in Gulf Arab society contributes to the students' reluctance to read their course material, Kuwaiti students read more than they normally do when reading is a compulsory component of the course, the majority prefer reading in English than in Arabic, and that their reading habits and attitudes are similar to those of other undergraduate students around the globe who are reluctant to read printed material and "prefer spending time on online activities". In the final chapter in this section, Marta Tryzna and Ivan Ivanov attempt to account for Arabic speaker's misuse of English articles. Their study concludes that mother language transfer accounts partially for the persistent problems of misusage, but that further study is needed to determine other factors that might be influencing Arabic speakers' use of English articles.

The different sections and chapters of the book explore and investigate almost all aspects of the teaching of English in the MENA region, historical, cultural, literary, creative, linguistic, and pedagogical. The collective work gives an almost comprehensive view of the challenges that educators might have to contend with and most importantly shows that though the perspectives of the contributors vary, their conclusions are not dramatically different. Most of the contributors come from Western, Anglophone countries, and those who do not are either Europeans educated in the US and UK, or Middle Easterners with an Anglophone, Western education. They thus present a varied mosaic of educational and cultural affiliations and backgrounds. Their experiences are also as varied, with corresponding various challenges. Yet, those challenges seem for many of them to have a positive and rewarding outcome. It is the challenges that sometimes motivated them to self-reevaluate, review approaches and preconceptions, learn resilience and flexibility, maybe even fight battles against rigidity, crippling policies and fixed dogmatic theories and practices. What is most important, however, is that the challenges urged them, when the obstacles seemed unsurmountable, to search for and explore new ways to sidestep, circumvent or dig through them, creating new channels of communication.

PART I:

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE

WESTERN CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

ROBERT IRWIN

> The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretense but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to . . . (Conrad 8).

Though the phrase "cultural imperialism" has been much bandied about since the 1960s, there is only a little in the way of concentrated study of the phenomenon. The passage quoted above is from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, first published in 1899, and it served as the epigraph for Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (Said, 1994, vii). But Said's book is not actually about cultural imperialism in the sense in which it will be used here. It is a book about the centrality of the imperial experience to British and French literary culture (and it mostly consists of a series of close and rather strained readings of novelists in the Western canon in order to bring out the imperialist assumptions and subtexts in their fictions), whereas this paper deals with the deliberate or unconscious deployment of culture in order to further imperialist projects abroad, and with its past development. Hitherto it has had no real history. Like Topsy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it "just growed".

Arguably the first cultural imperialists in the Middle East were missionaries in the seventeenth century, notably the Carmelites, Capuchins and Jesuits in Iran. But I will concentrate here on cultural imperialism in the heyday of territorial and economic imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Britain and France controlled most of the Middle East and North Africa. Though cultural imperialism had by then a

more secular aspect, religious projects continued to be important. (Consider for instance the origins of Robert College in Istanbul, and in Beirut the University of St Joseph (founded 1875) and the American University, as well as such scholarly foundations as the Dominican Institute in Cairo). Cultural imperialism is a vast subject and taken as a whole comprises schoolroom education, films, diplomacy, philately, Darwinism, propaganda for democracy, communism and fascism, archaeological explorations, amateur dramatics, dress codes, subsidised newspapers, feminism, reading groups, cricket, language coaching, etc., etc. Moreover, countries that had no territorial possessions in the Middle East or North Africa, notably Germany, Russia and the United States also promoted their versions of cultural imperialism in the region. As Fernand Braudel wrote in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*: "The mark of a living civilization is that it is capable of exporting itself, of spreading its culture to distant places. It is impossible to imagine a true civilization which does not export its people, its ways of thinking and living" (Braudel vol. 2, 763).

To take just the German case and that briskly, Kaiser Wilhelm II had favoured the strategy of using Islam to advance German interests and undermine the British Empire. He made two trips to the Middle East in 1889 and 1898 and close links were forged between Germany and Turkey, which led to the Ottoman Empire entering the First World War on Germany's side (Rubin and Schwanitz 11-59; Schwanitz 5-10). Though that alliance ended with the destruction of both empires, German politicians, academics and intellectuals continued to promote German culture in Turkey, Iran and the Arab lands. German unification under Prussia was presented as a model for the Arabs. Arab nationalism between the Wars certainly owed something to German romanticism. The educationist and Arab nationalist writer, Sati' al-Husri (1880-1968), whose writings were to have a great influence on Nasserism and Ba'thism, had made a special study of Herder and Fichte. Nazi concepts of nationhood shaped the thinking of the Syrian nationalist writer Antun Sa'ada (1904-49) who worked as a teacher of German at the American University of Beirut and who went on to found the Syrian National Party. The famous poet Adonis was one of his followers (Tibi). Between the wars the German government funded a string of magazines and newspapers including *Ayadi al-Sharq*, *Liwa al-Islam*, *Echo de l'Orient* and *The Crescent*. The Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach travelled out to the Middle East to set up *Futuwwa*, a youth movement in Iraq that was intended as a counterweight to the Boy Scouts. *Futuwwa* youths were brought on sponsored trips to Germany from Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey and

Iran (Rubin and Schwanitz 109-191). During the Second World War the Germans, via their "Whispering Gallery" of propagandists, even had some success in spreading the rumour that Hitler was a Muslim. Towards the end of the War Reader Bullard, British Ambassador in Teheran reported that most Iranians had favoured Germany, but, now that Germany was clearly losing the war, Iranians were very keen to learn English and the British should seize this opportunity (Donaldson 99).

But in what follows the focus will be on two different issues: first, the contest between Britain and France for linguistic hegemony and, secondly, the tension between those who unhesitatingly promoted the westernisation of the region and its inhabitants and those, on the other hand, who, for various reasons, wished to preserve and even enhance the traditional cultures of the Arab, Iranian or Turkish worlds.

During the medieval and early modern centuries the lingua franca (the 'speech of the Franks', or Europeans), the trading and diplomatic language in the Levant was a pidgin construct composed mostly of Italian and this reflected the long standing predominance of the Italians in the commerce of the region (Kahane and Tietze). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the French had been known to employ Italians as their consuls. But such a lingua franca was a commercial language only and it does not seem to have inspired any Arab to read Dante or replicate the experiments of Galileo. Things began to change in the late eighteenth century, as French commerce with Egypt and Palestine increased (particularly the cotton trade) and travelers in the region such as Baron de Tott, Volney and Chateaubriand reported on oriental despotism and economic backwardness. When he was in Palestine in 1806, François René Chateaubriand was intensely conscious of treading on the ground that was sacred not just because Jesus and the Apostles had walked there, but also Godfrey of Bouillon, Philippe II and Louis IX. After visiting Jerusalem, Chateaubriand claimed that all Asia awaited the arrival of the French. Of course, the French had already arrived in Africa, albeit briefly, with the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. Though Bonaparte established a cultural and scientific institute in Cairo, its duration and that of the French army's occupation of Egypt was brief.

Yet that debacle did foster the spread of French ways of thinking and acting in Egypt and Greater Syria. Shaikh Hasan al-'Attar (d. 1834-5), a religious author and an eyewitness of the French invasion, wrote as follows: "Our country must change, and we must take from Europe all the sciences which do not exist here" (Tibi 45). In the decades that followed that was precisely what was attempted, as Muhammad 'Ali established a conscript army on the French model and sent the most able of his subjects

to Paris to study military science, engineering, agronomy and similarly utilitarian subjects. But those who went to France did not confine themselves to utilitarian matters. Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-71) had been a disciple of al-'Attar. In Paris in the years 1826-31 al-Tahtawi read Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Racine and Condillac and at the end of his studies concluded that the French were actually closer to the Arabs than the Turks were (Tahtawi). In the centuries that followed many famous Arab intellectuals received a French cultural formation, among them Yaqub Artin Pasha (1842-1919), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), Ahmad Shawqi (1892-1964), Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1888-1956), Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898-1967) and Taha Husayn (1889-1973).

Taha Husayn's enthusiastic embrace of French culture doubtless lay behind the argument presented in his *Al-Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi Misr* (1938) that Egypt's culture had always been essentially Mediterranean rather than Arab or Islamic (Tibi 161; Tahar). André Gide, a great fan of Taha Husayn, made a similar case in his sun-drenched, homo-erotic novels and a parallel thesis was to be advanced by Albert Camus who saw "Algeria as an idealized pan-Mediterranean civilization" (Hussey 61). Camus's unfinished last novel, *Le Premier Homme* put the case for the essential brotherhood of French and Arabs, as well as for the continuing destiny of the *pieds noirs* in Algeria. French promotion of "Mediterraneaness" is also implicit in Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, and Braudel had spent the years 1923-32 in Algeria. And, in another key, the archaeological agenda of the French in North Africa was to underline the *Romanitas* of North Africa.

To return to the main theme, many Iranian intellectuals and writers had also made the educational pilgrimage to France, prominent among them Isa Sadiq, Sadeq Hedayat, Mohammed Mossadeq, Shapour Bakhtiyar and 'Ali Shariati. Moreover, many Turks studied in France. In the late nineteenth century the Ottoman Sultan was sending his officers to complete their military education at St Cyr.

Of course, it was not just a matter of select individuals getting a higher education in France. Other factors played a role in the spread of Francophonia and the imitation of French cultural norms. Catholic missions and their schools (which almost always taught in French) proliferated in Egypt, Syria and North Africa. By 1900 there were more than 500 French schools in the Levant, most of them subsidised by the Quai d'Orsay (The policy of supporting schools that taught in French began around 1840). Jesuit and Lazarist teachers punished pupils who spoke Arabic on school grounds. The French had faith that the teaching of their language would inevitably conduce to the embrace of their version of

philosophy, history, science and so forth (Hamouda and Clement 7, 9; Burrows). I am reminded of the, perhaps mythical, French general who declared that "It seems to me that French is the most perfect of languages, because its grammar exactly reflects the way I think." (This was to confuse the grammar of a language with the grammar of existence).

Also the utopian St Simonian movement had a massive impact on Egypt and the Maghreb, both because of the charismatic wing who from the 1830s on went into exile throughout the region and sought a messiah there and because of the more rational wing who founded the Suez Canal Company (Pignol; Tibi 60). Again, though Napoleon's invasion of Egypt turned out to be of little consequence for the development of Arabic or Islamic studies, it marked the real beginning of Egyptology, something which was confirmed by Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphics. As Captain Verinac de Saint-Maur wrote in 1835 "France, snatching an obelisk from the mud of the Nile, or the savage ignorance of the Turks . . . earns a right to the thanks of the learned of Europe, to whom belong all the monuments of antiquity, because they alone know how to appreciate them" (Reid 1). The French came to run the Department of Antiquities in Egypt, thereby effectively annexing that country's past. Then, of course there were the bankers, financial advisers and leeches who took over the management of Egypt's growing debt. From the 1870s onwards French became the language of the Mixed Courts. We must also bear in mind the vast gravitational pull exerted by the sheer brilliance of French culture, as represented by Racine, Voltaire, Baudelaire, De Tocqueville, Pasteur, the Curies, Auguste Comte, André Breton, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. It is hard to assess accurately the respective weight that should be given to this and to rival factors in shaping Egypt and Syria's orientation towards French culture.

In the nineteenth century French replaced Italian as the language of Levantine diplomacy and it also became the language of postage stamps. Until 1892 Egyptian stamps bore the lettering *Postes Egyptiennes* and Turkey's stamps *Postes Ottomanes* until 1914, while until 1939 Iranian stamps were labelled *Postes Persanes* or *Postes Iraniennes*.

In Paris the politicians developed a self-confidence in their *mission civilisatrice*. Jules Ferry, a late and reluctant convert to the merits of French colonies, addressed the French Parliament in 1882 in the following terms: "We must believe that if providence deigned to confer upon us a mission by making us masters of the earth, this mission consists not of attempting the impossible fusion of races but of simply spreading or awakening among the other races the superior notions of which we are the guardians" (Hussey 112). Cardinal Lavigerie announced that "Algeria is

nothing but a door opened by providence to a barbarous continent of two million souls" (Fleming 141). And the prominent French thinker, Ernest Renan had declared that "A Musulman who knows French will never be a dangerous Musulman" (Todorov 142).

But, taking the broad view, while French culture was continuing to spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, France's population and commerce was declining and its politico-military prestige took a series of knocks, including the ultimate failure of France's support for Muhammad 'Ali in Syria in 1840, its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and its inability to intervene when the British occupied Egypt in 1882. And then in the wake of the First World War, Britain took the lion's share of the spoils in the area (far more than had been allocated to that country in the Sykes-Picot agreement).

For reasons which are unclear, Edward Said's *Orientalism* ignored the French presence in North Africa and the close collusion between academics and intellectuals with the military in that region. Unlike the British, the French established universities in the Arab lands they controlled, notably in Damascus, Algiers and Oran. This is not the place to present a full account of the French professoriate in Algeria and its collusion with the colonial authorities. Instead, the policies and style of Marshal Hubert Louis Lyautey (1854-1934) will be briefly discussed. He was the first proconsul ('Resident General') of colonial Morocco from 1912 until 1925. He "rode about in a gold and purple burnous, wore pistols holstered in tiger skin and occupied a tent complete with oriental carpets, scarlet ceiling and a door guarded by two of the most imposing spahis in his command . . ." (Fleming 146-7). Plainly the man had composed himself to be the subject of an Orientalist painting and in fact he was intensely familiar with the paintings and writings of Delacroix and Fromentin, and, when he arrived in North Africa, he saw it through their eyes. He became the region's aesthetic dictator. He was both a man of action and a romantic intellectual and, as such, he was to be eulogised by the novelist Colette. His career and his contacts demonstrate the entanglement of academic Orientalism and artistic Orientalism with colonialism in French North Africa (Maurois; Scham).

French colonial policies in North Africa served Lyautey as a model of what not to do. Instead he took his exemplars from the British regimes in India and Nigeria (Hussey 280-1). Like the British (on whom more shortly), he wished to indoctrinate the tribal elites, in his case through Ecoles de fils de notables. At the secondary level there were Collèges Musulmanes, although numbers at this level were severely restricted as Lyautey did not want to create a class of declassés—potential recruits for a

nationalist young Morocco movement. Non-notable Arabs and Berbers were more likely to get a schooling in craft and building techniques. As for the Sultan ʻAbd al-Aziz, he was won over to French ways by the gift of tennis rackets, bicycles and cameras (Singer and Landon 196).

Lyautey learnt Arabic and he aimed to work mostly through traditional Arab and Berber social structures to promote French colonisation of the fertile northern Morocco and to create French townships side by side with the old Arab *medina*s. He respected the virtual independence of the Berber tribes in the south and sought to enhance their sense of a non-Arab identity. He also wanted to preserve and promote traditional arts and crafts. For all these things he needed academic and intellectual advisers. To this end he acquired an astonishingly wide circle of friends and clients, as well as an eye for practical ability and intellectual distinction.

Lyautey sponsored researches by Arabists such as Louis Massignon, Henri Basset, William Marçais, Alfred Bel, Louis Brunot, Georges-Séraphin Colin, as well as by various Berber specialists, notably Émile Laoust. The sociologists Robert Montagne and Alfred le Chatelier reported to Lyautey, as did the geographer Joseph Augustin Bernard and the explorer René Marquis de Sezognac. Lyautey recruited the architects Henri Petit, Henri Prost, Trenchant de Lunel and Albert Laprade for his programme of parallel development of French and Arab townships. The archaeologists Louis Chatelain and Jane Dieulafoy were encouraged by him. Prosper Ricard, the expert on Moroccan crafts, was one of those who assisted in Lyautey's programme of promoting traditional artisanship. He backed the anti-British journalists, the Tharaud brothers, and the radical campaigning journalist Victor Barrucan. Paul Geuthner, who went on to establish an important Orientalist publishing house in Paris, was first employed by Lyautey as a librarian in Rabat. Lyautey was also a patron of the painters Jacques Majorelle, Jean Bouchaud and Azouaou Mammeri, as well as the novelist Claude Farrère and he struck up an unlikely friendship with the cross-dressing adventuress Isabelle Eberhardt (Pouillon index, s.v. "Lyautey"). Now all that is cultural imperialism!

Of course, in the long run all that proselytization on behalf of the French language and culture came to almost nothing, as, in the 1950s and 60s France withdrew from North Africa and Syria—but not absolutely nothing, since in the post-colonial era large numbers of Arabs and Berbers have chosen to write novels and short stories in French, among them Tahar bin Jalloun, Driss Chraibi, Amin Malouf, Malek Aloula, Jean Amrouche, Leila Barakat, Jamal Eddin Bencheikh, Mohammed Dib, Assia Djebar, Mouloud Feraoun, Nacer Khemir, Mouloud Mammeri, Rachid Mimouni, Rachid Boujedra (at first) and Katib Yasin (who also wrote in French at

first, but later argued that Algerian literature written in French was "independent of the language it uses, and has no emotional or racial relationship").

In the long run, the English language triumphed in the Arab world and Shakespeare rather than Racine was performed in Arab theatres, though very little of this was due to direct British government initiatives. For a long time the Foreign and Colonial Offices, unlike the Quai d'Orsay, saw no point in sponsoring language teaching in schools or in spending money in promoting knowledge about the arts and sciences in Britain. Most of what English-language teaching that did go on was carried out by missionaries and many of those missionaries were American. From the 1840s onwards Ibrahim Pasha's tolerant policies had opened Syria to missionaries and thereafter the competition between the Protestant Americans and British on the one hand and the French on the other for converts from Arab Christians was fierce. Unlike the French, the Americans sponsored teaching in *fusha* Arabic and they were also active in printing books in Arabic (at a time when such books were a rare commodity indeed). A Syrian Protestant College was established in Beirut 1866. Science was often a major part of the curriculum and while many of the Anglophone missionaries may have abominated Darwinism, nevertheless it was mostly via Anglophone missionary teachers that the Arab world first learnt about this controversial matter. Missionary teaching was a major factor behind the formation of the Syrian Scientific Society and then more broadly part of the impetus behind what has been called the *Nahda*, a fact acknowledged by George Antonius in his influential book *The Arab Awakening* (Antonius 35-7, 41-5, 51).

British imperial self-confidence more than matched that of the French. The proconsul George Nathaniel Curzon described the British Empire as "under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has ever seen . . . there has never been anything so great in world history" (Morris, 1978, 108). But this imperial ethos did not include a *mission civilisatrice* in the full French sense. Within a decade or so after the British occupation of Egypt, English language teaching had mostly replaced French in state-run primary schools. Nevertheless, private schools almost all continued with French and higher education was largely a Francophone province until the outbreak of the Second World War. *Al-Ahram* was founded with French money. At least as late as the 1970s the *Gazette d'Alexandrie* was the major source of gossip for the social elite. The French continued to run the Comité pour la Conservation des Monuments Arabes. And so on.

Britain's limited educational aims in Egypt and Sudan were twofold. In the first instance they sought to train up local men who might staff the lower echelons of the tax and other administrative offices. Thus, for example, Cromer and Kitchener had set up Gordon College in Khartoum (later Khartoum University) in order to train natives who would be capable of serving as clerks or tax gatherers.

Secondly, as in India, the British sought to educate the native elite in British values—in India the maharajas, in Egypt the pashas. But they were slow to do so. Cromer, the proconsul in Egypt from 1882 to 1907, believed that a little education was "an evil thing". The Italians had established a school in Cairo in the early eighteenth century and the French set up schools for boys and girls in Alexandria in 1844. The British were way behind the French, Italians and Greeks in setting up a school and Victoria College, which opened in 1902, was not the product of a government initiative, but was sponsored by local businessmen. The Cairo branch of Victoria College (1940-) was a product of the Second World War, but survived into peace time (Hamouda and Clement). St George's School in Jerusalem and Aden College, which catered for the Yemeni tribal elite, were similar institutions. Egypt's first scout troop was set up under the aegis of Victoria College.

Victoria College, whose chief aim was to educate the leaders of tomorrow, had a wide catchment area, as, besides Egyptians, it also took in Sudanese, Iraqi, Jordanian, Libyan and Palestinian pupils. Edward Said, who went to Victoria College, Cairo, described it as "a school designed to be the Eton of the Middle East" (Said, 1999, 180). "I was a member of Kitchener House; the other houses were Cromer, Frobisher and Drake." Rule 1 of *The School Handbook* was "English is the language of the school. Anyone caught speaking other languages will be severely punished. . . . The students were seen as paying members of some putative colonial elite that was being schooled in the ways of a British imperialism that had already expired, though we did not fully know it. We learned about English life and letters, the monarchy and Parliament, India and Africa, habits and idioms that we could never use in Egypt or anywhere else" (Said, 1999, 181). As Said was aware, Britain was already by then "a wounded colonial power". For a contrasting view of Victoria College, Michel Shalhoub, a prefect who once caned Said, loved the school, especially the sports and amateur dramatics and Shalhoub went on to make his stage name as Omar Sharif. By the way, one should not think of the export of British culture just in terms of Shakespeare and Milton. At school Said devoured Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, Billy Bunter, Captain Marvel and Wodehouse (Said, 1999, 200). I believe that his childhood

reading of the Tarzan books had a long-term role in shaping his adult self-image.

Victoria College and related institutions apart, a significant part of the Arab elite went to Britain to receive a military education at Sandhurst or at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich (where Farouk and Nasser were instructed, as well as Amanullah of Afghanistan, Hussein of Jordan and various Saudi princes). Qadaffi also received military training in Britain, though not at Sandhurst.

British educational policy in the Middle East followed Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous *Minute on Education* which was drafted in 1835 with India in mind and argued that it was impossible for Britain, with its limited resources, to attempt to educate the body of the people. Therefore, Britain's policy should be "to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect" (Morris, 1978, 140). But, of course, cultural imperialism could only operate within severely constrained limits in regions where most of the population was illiterate and there was no attempt to take Shakespeare to the fellaheen. But, while on the subject of Shakespeare (and here a digression might be permissible), the transmission and importation of foreign cultures is more complex than one might think. The plays of Shakespeare have been widely performed throughout the Arab world from at least the opening of the twentieth century, but whose Shakespeare was it? Many of the Arab intelligentsia were only familiar with Shakespeare in French translations by Dumas, Hugo or less distinguished figures and when the plays were staged they might owe rather a lot to the conventions of French classical drama. Or, then again, later productions might echo Russian readings of the plays and, for example, Koznitsev's filmed version of *Hamlet* influenced several Arab directors. Moreover, setting aside the question of foreign filters, performances of *Hamlet* in Egypt in the 1950s and 60s were likely to tell one more about Nasser than about Elizabethan England. The influential poet, journalist and critic Abbas Mahmoud al-'Aqqad explicitly denied that Shakespeare belonged to the British (Litvin).

But to return to my main theme, things began to change in the 1930s. There was a more active promotion of British culture and values as a future war with Germany and Italy came to be seen as inevitable and the British authorities in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and elsewhere then sought to canvass the support of a broader section of the Arab populations. The BBC Arabic Service was set up in 1938. At first, its primary target was the educated Egyptian elite. But it faced stiff competition from the Italian

broadcasts in Arabic from Bari and later the very popular German-sponsored broadcasts in Arabic from Zeesen. (Though the Germans found it easy to denounce British imperialism in the Middle East, they could not go too far with this as they had to bear in mind the susceptibilities of the Vichy French in Syria and the Italians in Libya). The BBC's broadcasters also had the difficult job of making palatable to Arab audience what the British were doing in Palestine. (Palestine was described by one of the Arabic Service's staff as "a ruinous incubus"). And apart from transmitting bare facts of what was mostly discouraging wartime news, what were the broadcasters supposed to be doing? Should they be selling the British way of life, or promoting an Arab one? (Partner 18-56.) Famous Arabs such as Taha Husayn and Tawfiq al-Hakim did broadcast for the British as well as publish in British magazines, but it seems that they continued to owe their primary cultural allegiance to France.

1938 was also the year that the British Council set up offices in Cairo and Jaffa. The British Council had its beginning in the Middle East and it was initially an instrument of wartime propaganda. As Duff Cooper wrote in a letter to Churchill: "The supposition is that the British Council exists only for cultural, and not for political propaganda, but this at the best of times was mere camouflage, since no country could be justified in spending public money on cultural propaganda unless it had also a political or commercial significance" (Donaldson 63). Even so, the idea of spending money promoting British culture was not popular at home and the Beaverbrook press ran a relentless campaign against the British Council that lasted long after the war was over (Donaldson 59-92).

British cultural activities in Egypt in this period have been colourfully chronicled in such novels as Olivia Manning's *Levant Trilogy*, Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, J. D. Enright's *Academic Year* and Waguih Ghali's *Beer in the Snooker Club*. (In this last novel the narrator's school is described as a place "run for rich Arabs and Egyptians who, it was hoped, would rule in their parents' place" and "the school was there to see that they ruled in Britain's favour."). And in Olivia Manning's somewhat autobiographical sequence of novels, she describes the work of her husband Reggie Smith, thinly disguised as Guy Pringle, as follows: "Lecturing on English Literature, teaching the English language, he had been peddling the idea of empire to a country that only wanted one thing: to be rid of the British for good and all. And, to add to the absurdity of the situation, he himself had no belief in Empire" (Saad el-Din and Cromer 94). Freya Stark's retrospective verdict on the wartime years was that British propaganda and teaching had been too narrowly directed at the

elites in Egypt and Iraq and that therefore in the long run it had all been in vain.

Perhaps Manning's husband, Reggie Smith, apostles of British culture in the British Council, the Arabic Service and the various higher education institutions did have some effect. But obviously what really led to the triumph of English and (the dishing of the French) throughout the region was the fact that it was flooded first by British troops and their auxiliaries and then by Americans. Mastery of English became a ticket to a job and Hollywood films became a feature of Cairo's cinemas. As the *Times Educational Supplement* put it in an article published in September, 1947: "For seven years the whole area has been thronged by British troops; English perhaps for the first time, in history, has effectively replaced French as the second language of the average Arab; everywhere the demand for British education is immense" (Hamouda and Clement 151).

The British legacy in Egypt and elsewhere can be seen as quite pervasive, though not much of it was the result of top-level engineering through educational and cultural institutes—or, for that matter, performances of Shakespeare and Purcell or readings of J. S. Mill. Here is the philosopher Michael Oakeshott writing in 1961 on what the British had left behind them in Corfu: "For exactly fifty years (1814-1864) the British ruled in Corfu. What did they leave behind? Traces of habits (picnics), fashions (side-whiskers & top-boots), rock cakes, chutney, dignity, bookkeeping, virtue, Church bazaars, hunting, eccentricity. Some legends attached to persons whose names have become corrupted. Some traces of duty & of the military man's character. A saying or two. A modification of the landscape. Cricket (the chalked stumps against the walls of the alleys of Corfu). Was it things like these that the Romans left in Britain?" (Oakeshott 430). But I think the British legacy has been somewhat less in the Arab world than in Corfu. More reductively, Sir Richard Turnbull, the penultimate Governor of Aden, once told Labour Politician Dennis Healey that "when the British Empire finally sank beneath the waves of history, it would leave behind only two monuments: one was the game of Association Football, the other was the expression 'Fuck off'" (Ferguson 358).

To a certain extent British propaganda had done its job during the war, but such good will as there may have been in the Arab world was fatally diminished in the late forties and fifties by Britain's failure to prevent Zionist immigration into Palestine, by the hostility of British politicians towards Nasser and his policies, by the determination to hang on to an unreasonable proportion of Iran's oil revenues, by the reluctance to allow Aden independence, by America's hostility towards the continuance of the

British Empire and similar weighty non-cultural issues. Members of local elites on whom the British had lavished such careful education were now mostly side-lined, deposed or murdered.

Yet English had become the second language of the Middle East, even though the British were slow to realise how much money there was to be made in teaching their language and the Americans, French and Germans were quicker off the mark in that field. French remains the second language in much of North Africa and, though the FLN regime waged a culture war against the teaching of French in schools and universities, the Berbers strongly resisted the replacement of French by Arabic and the populace at large has chosen to cling to French as the language that gives them a chance of finding employment in Europe.

I want to turn to a quite different aspect of cultural imperialism—the struggle between conservationists and modernisers within the British and French empires. This struggle had its prelude in India in the early nineteenth century where what were known as the 'orientalists' had sought to govern India through traditional Indian institutions. The orientalists had placed a high value on Hindu and Urdu literature and Indian culture more generally. William Macnaghten (1793-1841), head of the Secret and Political department in India (and otherwise noted for overseeing the important Calcutta II edition of *The Arabian Nights*) was one of those who opposed imposition of an English pattern of education on India: "those who assert that the Oriental languages are incapable of conveying new ideas must have but a superficial knowledge of these tongues" (Mahdi vol. 3, 110). But within a few decades the opposition, a coalition of Utilitarians and Evangelists had triumphed. Macaulay's *Minute on Education* has already been quoted. It was an influential document. Macaulay despised Indian culture: "medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in the girls at an English boarding school, history abounding in kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter" (Macaulay 350-1). An English education should be offered to the best sort of native as this would result in the creation "of a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, morals and intellect". But note that, according to Macaulay, the students are a "class". A small elite rather than the whole nation should receive this education. And Cromer also quoted Macaulay to the effect that 'it is impossible to impart knowledge without stimulating ambition' —not a good thing.

The way the British ruled India served as a model for British control of Egypt, as Lord Cromer, Consul-General in Egypt and the country's real

ruler, noted. The way the Raj was run was widely admired. Lyautey in Morocco took lessons from the British in India and Nigeria, and Hitler thought that British rule over India might serve as the model for Germany's future empire in Eastern Europe. Probably because of this, *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (1935) was one of Hitler's favourite films. Yet Cromer and others perceived problems in educating the natives, for this British-led progress was destined in the long run to prove its own undoing, for not only did education produce obedient clerks; it also produced street-corner demagogues, while history lessons about how the British nation achieved its liberties led Egyptians, so educated, to wonder how they could win the same liberties for themselves. Cromer argued that one only had to look at India to see that this was so. "It is neither wise nor just that the people should be left intellectually defenceless in the presence of hare-brained and empirical projects which the political charlatan, himself but half-educated, will not fail to pour into their credulous ears" (Cromer 880). Moreover, he believed that educated colonial peoples "retained all the customs and prejudices of their own people 'under a top dressing' of western learning" (Owen, 394). And, as that early anti-colonialist demagogue Caliban put it: "You taught me language; and my profit on't/ Is, I know how to curse; the red plague rid you,/For learning me your language!"

In Morocco Lyautey believed that France's best hope of controlling that country lay in reinforcing the most traditional elements in Arab and Berber society and therefore supporting the tribal sheikhs and *'ulama* as well as promoting the traditional crafts and ways of doing things. Like the British, he worried about educating young men who might graduate as unemployable declassés and who would then turn to Arab nationalism. Beyond the intensely European education offered to the local elite, Lyautey wanted to educate young Moroccans in traditional crafts and in building, but it became apparent that the student demand was for something more ambitious than a schooling in artisanship.

There was, perhaps, a more positive side to the desire to preserve native peoples from the infection of westernisation. Rider Haggard's mouthpiece, Sir Henry Curtis, had this to say about the white man's responsibility towards the Zulus: "I am convinced of the sacred duty that rests upon me of preserving to this, on the whole, upright and generous-hearted people the blessings of comparative barbarism . . . I have no fancy for handing over this beautiful country to be torn and fought for by speculators, tourists, politicians and teachers . . . nor will I endow it with the greed, drunkenness, new diseases, gunpowder and general demoralization