

**Inherited Scripts and Contested Narratives: Arab
Identity in 18th and 19th Century America**

by

Ayesha Altaher

A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2026

© Ayesha Altaher 2026

Examining Committee Membership

The following served on the Examining Committee for this thesis. The decision of the Examining Committee is by majority vote.

External Examiner	KAREN SKINAZI Professor and Director, Louchheim School for Judaic Studies Hebrew Union College (Los Angeles campus)
Supervisor(s)	JENNIFER HARRIS Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature University of Waterloo
Internal Member	CHAD WRIGLESWORTH Associate Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature University of Waterloo
Internal-external Member	JASMIN HABIB Professor and Chair, Dept. of Political Science University of Waterloo
Other Member(s)	LAMEES AL ETHARI Associate Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature University of Waterloo

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the construction and negotiation of Arab and Muslim identity in the United States from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, tracing how cultural representation, legal discourse, and immigrant self-articulation shaped the terms of visibility, belonging, and exclusion. Challenging narratives that frame Arabs and Muslims as recent or peripheral to American history, the project demonstrates that their presence in the Atlantic world predates the nation-state itself and that their identities were forged through a long process of representational struggle rather than belated arrival. Drawing on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and Leonard Cassuto's concept of the racial grotesque, the dissertation analyzes how Barbary captivity narratives by Thomas Pellow, John Foss, and Robert Adams produced enduring ideological frameworks that cast Muslims as cruel, despotic, and civilizationally opposed to the West. These narratives, I argue, provided an early cultural architecture through which American identity was defined against a racialized and religiously marked "Arab Other." The project then shifts to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to examine how Arab and Syrian immigrants encountered and contested these inherited representations through print culture, legal advocacy, and public performance. Using an interdisciplinary American Studies methodology that combines literary analysis, visual culture studies, archival research, and translation of Arabic-language sources, the dissertation foregrounds immigrant newspapers such as

Al-Hoda as sites of negotiation over race, gender, language, and citizenship. It further analyzes the 1893 Chicago World's Fair as a pivotal moment in the institutionalization of Orientalist spectacle, where visual regimes reinforced racial hierarchies even as immigrant subjects carved out limited spaces of resistance. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that Arab and Muslim identity in the United States emerged through continuous negotiation between imposed representations and immigrant agency. Neither wholly excluded nor fully accepted, Arabs and Muslims shaped American cultural and political life while contesting the narratives that sought to marginalize them. By situating Arab and Muslim histories at the center of American racial and cultural formation, this project redefines their role in the making of American identity itself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by expressing my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Harris. Your mentorship, dedication, and unwavering support have been the foundation of this work. I am incredibly grateful for your belief in my vision and the countless ways you have guided me, providing insights that shaped this dissertation from its earliest stages to completion. Thank you for challenging me to reach beyond my limits and for the steady encouragement you offered throughout this journey.

I am deeply grateful to my committee members, Dr. Chad Wriglesworth and Dr. Lamees Al Ethari, for their generous guidance, careful reading, and unwavering support throughout this project. Your thoughtful feedback and encouragement pushed my thinking in important ways and helped shape this dissertation at every stage. I am truly thankful for the time, care, and intellectual generosity you brought to this work.

To my partner, Mohammad Hamdaqa; thank you for your steadfast encouragement, patience, and for sharing in both the challenges and triumphs along the way. You reminded me to breathe. It sounds simple, but when the world became too much, I could always turn to you, and you somehow always knew what to say. Our fishing trips, especially when I felt overwhelmed, and those quiet moments sitting by the water brought me calm when I needed it most. And somehow, you always had ice cream. When we got married, we believed the sky was our limit. At times, that sky felt impossibly far away, as life did

not shy away from throwing curveballs our way. But hurdle by hurdle, step by step, we kept moving forward together, and now the sky no longer seems so distant after all. Your presence grounded me in ways words can barely capture.

To my children, Lujain, Adam, and Dina Hamdaqa, I am deeply grateful to have grown alongside you through this experience. Your joy, love, and inspiration sustained me more than you know. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. You have seen me struggle and doubt myself, but what you have never seen is me give up. As a family, we do not give up—not when things are hard, and not ever. We do survive on coffee, multitasking, and asking “wait—who needed me?” at least five times a day, but we always figure it out together.

To my parents, Adel Altaher and Kim Parker, thank you for always believing in me. Your love, guidance, and unwavering faith in my abilities have been foundational throughout my life. I am especially grateful for the time you spent with me helping me prepare for my comprehensive exam, staying with me, encouraging me, and supporting me through one of the most demanding stages of this journey.

To my siblings Adelleen, Bayan, Farrah, Wasilla, and Mohammad, thank you for your constant support. I am forever grateful to Bayan, Wasilla, and Mohammad for taking time out of your own lives to come and stay with me while I prepared for my comprehensive exam. Those long, sleepless nights, popcorn and M&Ms for dinner, shared laughter, and

your company made an overwhelming period feel meaningful and even joyful.

To my friends who were my anchors throughout this journey, Masha Taba and Christin Taylor, thank you for your companionship, care, and support. Your friendship has been a source of joy and resilience, reminding me of the importance of community along the way.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone who offered their time, advice, encouragement, and friendship throughout this process. Each of you played a part in helping me reach this milestone, and I am forever thankful for your presence along the way.

Dedication

To my partner, Mohammad Hamdaqa: My 24/7 help desk, the guardian of my "Save" button, and the only person capable of troubleshooting my frequent mental "system crashes." Thank you for rebooting my confidence every time I hit a 404 error and for proving that behind every successful PhD is a partner with saint-like patience and a mastery of technical support.

And to my children, Lujain, Adam, and Dina: Who provided the background noise, the high-energy interruptions, and the "constructive" chaos that kept my research from ever getting too quiet. Thank you for being the beautiful, loud proof that one can actually finish a dissertation while caffeinated, multitasking, and surrounded by love and Lego bricks.

Table of Contents

Examining Committee Membership	ii
Author's Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	ix
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables	xv
Statement of Positionality	xvi
Introduction	1

1	Unspoken Truths	36
1.1	Introduction	36
1.2	Thomas Pellow <i>The Adventures of Thomas Pellow:</i>	42
1.3	John Foss, <i>A Journal, of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss: Several Years a Prisoner in Algiers: Together with Some Account of the Treatment of Christian Slaves when Sick: and Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Algerines</i>	55
1.4	Robert Adams, <i>The Narrative of Robert Adams</i>	68
1.5	Conclusion	82
2	Arab and Muslim Presence at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the Arabic Press: The Struggle to Belong	84
2.1	Introduction	84
2.2	The Fair	92
2.3	The <i>Kawkab Amirka</i>	117
3	Ink and Identity: <i>Al-Hoda</i> (1898–1972) and Its Contemporaries in the Landscape of Immigrant Print Culture	139
3.1	Introduction	140
3.2	Overview of Syrian Newspapers of late nineteenth and early twentieth century	150

3.3	Overview of <i>Al-Hoda</i>	155
3.4	Advertisements	169
3.5	General Content	175
3.6	Conclusion	190
4	Conclusion: Writing Against the Script of the “Arab Other”	193
	Works Cited	197

List of Figures

2.1	Monument (Hi Jolly Monument, Quartzsite, Arizona)	87
2.2	Map of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair (Rand McNally & Co.)	94
2.3	<i>In the Algerian Theatre</i> (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 301)	102
2.4	<i>Camp of Damascus Colony</i> (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 299)	106
2.5	<i>The Baby Arab- Columbus Chicago</i> (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 327)	108
2.6	<i>Female Types From The East</i> (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 339)	112
2.7	<i>Visitors Form the Holy Land</i> (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 341)	116
3.1	Column from the first issue of <i>Al-Hoda</i> (1898)	139

3.2	Timeline of Syrian and Syrian-American newspapers published in the United States, showing periods of publication and changes in publication frequency.	153
3.3	Bilingual content (Arabic and English) in the first issue of <i>Al-Hoda</i> (Feb. 22, 1898).	156
3.4	Poem in Arabic, published on Jan. 29, 1906	164
3.5	Arabic poem “The Beating of Hearts”	165
3.6	<i>Al-Hoda</i> , July 26, 1911, p. 2	170

List of Tables

3.1	Bibliographic and publication details of major Arabic-language and Arab-American newspapers published in the United States (late 19th–mid-20th century).	153
3.2	Primary thematic focus, intended audiences, and editorial purposes of selected Arabic-language and Arab-American newspapers.	154
3.3	Faris’ poem	166

Statement of Positionality

“Consider this, you who are engaged in investigation: If you choose to seek truth, cast aside: passion, accepted thought, and the inclination toward what you used to esteem, and you shall not be led into error.” Moses Maimonides; 12th Century scholar, philosopher, and physician. “And where the words of women are crying to be heard, we must each of us recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives.” *The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action* Audre Lorde

Reflecting on what is at stake for me in this work has led me to explore my identity, a complex blend of cultural and personal factors. I am a woman and a mother, with roots that span both American and Arab heritage. My mother’s family has deep roots in the United States, and through them, I am connected to a history of settlement and colonization. On my father’s side, I inherit a lineage marked by displacement and refuge, a reality familiar to many Arab families. This dual heritage places me in a space where I am seen differently by each side—viewed as “American” within Arab communities and as “Arab” within American settings. I often feel as though I belong fully to neither, occupying a space that is always defined, at least in part, by the perspectives of others. As I delve into concepts of identity construction, the self and the “other,” I recognize that these theoretical

frameworks resonate deeply with my personal experience. Although I have encountered racism, I recognize that my outward appearance has sometimes shielded me from the extent of prejudice that others—especially those who visibly align with certain cultural identities—may face. My daughter, for example, experienced explicit discrimination during our time living in a foreign country. Judged for her appearance and unable to blend seamlessly into the community, she struggled to find acceptance. I recall her asking to dye her hair to “fit in” with the local children, a moment that revealed to me the powerful, often painful, pull to conform to be accepted. I chose to return to my natural brunette hair color as a way to show her that beauty and acceptance are not tied to conformity, but it underscored the subtle yet impactful ways identity pressures affect our sense of self-worth. My personal stake in this research is not about claiming a firsthand understanding of the deep, systemic impacts of racism on visibly marginalized communities. Instead, it is about recognizing and confronting my own positionality and the ways in which I can bring those insights into my teaching. My goal is to contribute meaningfully to anti-racist work and to the dismantling of systems rooted in white, hetero-patriarchal norms. This journey starts with a commitment to ongoing learning—first for myself, and then, I hope, for the people I will have the privilege to teach. Through this work, I aim to foster an environment that encourages critical reflection on identity, empathy for diverse experiences, and an active commitment to social justice.

Introduction

Against Inherited Scripts: Arab and Muslim Presence in the Americas

The construction and negotiation of Arab and Muslim identity in the Americas unfolds across a centuries-long trajectory marked by deep historical presence, subsequent ideological distortion, and sustained efforts at resistance and self-definition. My dissertation begins from a fundamental disjunction: the documented participation of Arabs and Muslims in the social, economic, and cultural life of the Americas, and the persistent narratives that imagine them as late-arriving outsiders, civilizational threats, or cultural anomalies. I do not treat Arab and Muslim presence as a marginal or exceptional phenomenon; I situate their presence as integral to the formation of American identity itself. I also assert this disjunction is not accidental. It is the product of inherited scripts, narrative, visual, and linguistic frameworks through which Western culture has repeatedly named, classified, and

rendered Arabs and Muslims legible as objects of fear, fascination, or control. My dissertation argues that these scripts did not emerge suddenly in the twentieth century. Instead, they developed unevenly over time, adapting to shifting political, economic, and racial contexts while maintaining a set of assumptions about Islam and the Arab world. Against these inherited scripts, Arab and Muslim subjects in America have continually negotiated visibility, belonging, and self-representation within structures that were never neutral.

The historical roots of Arab and Muslim presence in the Americas are both deep and sustained, extending far earlier than dominant immigration narratives typically acknowledge. One of the earliest recorded figures is Estevanico, a Moroccan explorer who was enslaved and joined the Narváez expedition in 1527, crossing what would later become the American Southwest (Castles 83). Estevanico's presence complicates the mythology of European discovery by foregrounding a Muslim at the center of early colonial exploration. His story, often marginalized or stripped of its religious and cultural specificity, exemplifies a broader pattern in which Arab and Muslim contributions are acknowledged only selectively and often retrospectively. Beyond individual figures, scholars have documented substantial Muslim communities throughout the Atlantic world, particularly among enslaved Africans forcibly transported to the Americas. These communities made persistent efforts to observe Islamic religious practices under conditions of extreme surveillance and violence (Castles 83). Linguistic traces, naming practices, and religious customs within

segments of the African American community likely reflect the influence of these early Muslims (Austin 538). Recognizing this presence exposes a critical gap between historical reality and the later ideological frameworks that would come to define Islam as foreign to the Americas. This early history is crucial because it offers a corrective to exclusionary narratives, and it reveals how thoroughly Arab and Muslim presence has been subjected to processes of erasure. The disappearance of Muslims from dominant historical accounts is not the result of absence but of narrative displacement. Their stories were overwritten by frameworks that rendered Islam incompatible with emerging notions of Western civilization, Christianity, and whiteness.

The mechanisms of this displacement operate most visibly through language itself. One of the most persistent instruments of colonial power is the authority to name, to classify regions, peoples, and cultures according to Western epistemological priorities. Edward Said's formulation of Orientalism remains foundational here. Orientalism, he argues, is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, "Orientalism" 3). Knowledge produced under such conditions actively creates the East, rendering "the Orient, the Oriental, and his world" legible through Western frameworks of power (40). Terms such as "Middle East" exemplify this process. Far from neutral geographical descriptors, they position Arab lands relationally, defined not by internal coherence but by proximity to Europe. Such naming practices naturalize Eurocentrism

while obscuring indigenous systems of knowledge, self-definition, and spatial understanding. Colonialism thus survives as both a historical system of governance and as an epistemological structure embedded in the everyday language through which the world is mapped and understood. The power to rename also operates at the level of individual lives. The case of Hadji Ali, better known as Hi Jolly, offers a revealing example. A Syrian camel handler recruited by the U.S. Army in 1856 to assist with an experimental camel transport program in the American Southwest, Ali later became a folkloric figure celebrated by Western history enthusiasts. His transformation from “Hadji Ali,” a name saturated with religious meaning, to “Hi Jolly,” a whimsical Anglicization, encapsulates the Western impulse to domesticate and distort Arab identity (Nabhan 98). This renaming did not merely simplify pronunciation; it reconfigured cultural difference into harmless eccentricity, stripping the figure of religious and political specificity while retaining the pleasure of exotic spectacle. Ali’s commemoration after his death, marked by a monument, illustrates another recurring pattern: immigrants are often mythologized only after their marginalization in life. Recognition arrives once the threat has been neutralized and difference rendered picturesque. The power to define when and how recognition occurs remains firmly asymmetrical.

One important clarification concerns the categories through which this dissertation approaches identity, religion, race, and empire. Terms such as “Arab,” “Muslim,” “Ottoman,”

“Middle Eastern,” and “North African” are neither interchangeable nor historically stable, even though Western discourse has frequently collapsed them into one another. Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, American and European representations often blurred distinctions between ethnicity, religion, language, and geography, producing a generalized “Oriental” figure that could encompass Arabs, Turks, Persians, North Africans, Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. This dissertation examines how such conflations functioned ideologically while also remaining attentive to the important differences obscured by them.

Arab” in this dissertation refers primarily to Arabic-speaking peoples and communities originating from regions now associated with the Arab world, including Greater Syria, parts of North Africa, and other Arabic-speaking regions. Arab identity is therefore linguistic and cultural rather than strictly religious. Arabs in the period examined here included Muslims, Christians, and Jews, whose experiences often differed significantly despite being grouped together within Western racial discourse. Similarly, “Muslim” refers to a religious identity rather than an ethnic or racial category. Many Muslims discussed in this dissertation are Arab, but not all Muslims are Arab, nor were all Arabs Muslim. The Ottoman Empire itself was multiethnic and multireligious, encompassing Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Jews, and others. Ottoman identity therefore cannot be reduced to Arab identity, even though Western observers frequently collapsed the two.

This distinction becomes particularly important in relation to racialization. While this dissertation focuses substantially on the construction of Islam and Arabness as civilizational threats within American culture, Muslims were not the only populations subjected to Orientalist or racialized frameworks. Jews from the Ottoman Empire were likewise marked as racially and culturally foreign within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American discourse, particularly before the consolidation of post-World War II whiteness. The racialization of Jews, Arabs, and Muslims often operated through overlapping logics of foreignness, religious difference, and presumed incompatibility with Western modernity, even as these groups occupied different positions within American racial hierarchies.

At the same time, this dissertation argues that Western representational systems frequently depended upon precisely this slippage between categories. Captivity narratives, world's fairs, missionary discourse, photography, and immigration debates often collapsed Arab, Muslim, Turkish, North African, and Ottoman identities into a single figure of alterity. Rather than reproducing those confluences uncritically, this dissertation seeks to analyze how they function historically and ideologically.

At the level of political and intellectual elites, early American engagements with Islam were more complex than later popular portrayals might suggest. Contrary to the assumption that Islam was uniformly perceived as oppositional to American identity, several prominent figures articulated a vision of religious pluralism that included Muslims,

at least in principle. Thomas Jefferson supported legislation in Virginia protecting “the Mahometan” alongside Jews, Catholics, and dissenting Protestants, contributing to a legal culture that acknowledged Islam within its pluralistic framework (Manseau par. 19). George Washington expressed openness to welcoming Muslims into the republic (Spellberg 489). Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, imagined a “private universe in which the Quran belongs in the same orbit as the Bible,” recognizing Islam’s ethical contributions (Einboden 4). Jefferson himself treated the Qur’an as both scripture and legal text, using it to interrogate English constitutional law through the lenses of natural law and natural rights (Hayes 248). These engagements complicate any narrative of inevitable hostility. They suggest that Islam functioned, at least temporarily, as a conceptual tool through which early Americans tested the boundaries of religious tolerance and civic inclusion. Yet this intellectual openness coexisted with, and was eventually overshadowed by, popular cultural forms that framed Islam not as a partner in pluralism but as a civilizational antagonist.

Throughout this dissertation, the term “Christian” requires careful qualification. Although the United States was religiously diverse from its earliest formations, political and cultural authority in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was overwhelmingly shaped by Protestant norms, particularly Anglo-American Protestantism. References to “Christian civilization” in captivity narratives, political discourse, and exhibitionary culture therefore often function less as universal religious categories than as markers of white Protestant

national identity. This distinction means that Protestantism frequently operated not only as a theological framework but also as a cultural logic through which citizenship, morality, racial hierarchy, and national belonging were organized.

The ideological force of this framework can be seen in concepts such as Manifest Destiny, which fused territorial expansion with providential mission. American expansionism was often justified through the belief that the United States possessed a divinely sanctioned obligation to extend civilization, governance, and Christianity across the continent and beyond. In this sense, emerging forms of American nationalism were inseparable from Protestant-inflected ideas of moral authority and civilizational superiority. The conflicts represented in Barbary captivity narratives therefore cannot be understood solely through the lens of religion in an abstract sense. Rather, they participate in the construction of a specifically Protestant American national identity that defined itself against racialized and non-Christian others, including Muslims, Jews, and non-Protestant populations more broadly.

At the same time, this dissertation distinguishes between Christianity as a diverse religious tradition and the political uses of Christian identity within imperial and nationalist projects. My argument is not that Christianity inevitably produces Orientalism, but that particular Protestant nationalist frameworks in the United States mobilized religious difference as a means of stabilizing racial, cultural, and national boundaries.

The tension between historical presence and ideological representation did not resolve with the formal decline of European empire. Instead, it adapted into new forms, becoming increasingly entrenched within popular culture. The shift from elite discourse to mass circulation via print culture marked a crucial turning point. It is within this transition that the Barbary captivity narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emerge as formative ideological instruments. These narratives transformed specific diplomatic and commercial conflicts into enduring cultural scripts. They did not simply recount personal suffering; they reimagined the Muslim world as a space of cruelty, religious tyranny, and racial danger. Against moments of early pluralism, captivity narratives crystallized Islam as a crisis, one that threatened bodily integrity, spiritual purity, and national sovereignty. The next section of this dissertation traces how these texts consolidated a representational logic that would echo forward into later literary, visual, and legal regimes.

The ideological tension between early Muslim presence and later cultural hostility finds its most influential early articulation in the Barbary captivity narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (the subject of Chapter [2.3](#)). These narratives both reflected existing anxieties about Islam and the Arab world and actively produced a set of narrative conventions through which the Muslim “Other” became legible as a figure of fear, moral inversion, and civilizational threat. Situated at the intersection of Atlantic commerce, imperial rivalry, and emergent American nationalism, captivity narratives functioned as

cultural technologies that translated geopolitical uncertainty into affective, embodied stories of suffering and endurance. It is crucial to understand that these narratives emerged at a moment when the United States was struggling to define itself as a sovereign nation distinct from Europe while still deeply embedded within transatlantic power structures. Conflicts with the Barbary states were not merely diplomatic disputes over tribute and trade; they became symbolic tests of national honor, religious superiority, and racial hierarchy. Captivity narratives offered a popular form through which these abstract concerns could be dramatized and resolved. By centering the suffering Christian body in Muslim lands, such texts converted distant political conflicts into intimate moral crises.

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism also provides a foundational framework for understanding how captivity narratives functioned ideologically. Orientalism, as Said defines it, is not simply a body of false representations but a system of knowledge production through which the West asserts authority over the East (Said, "[Orientalism](#)" 3). Within this system, Islam is rendered not as a complex religious tradition but as a monolithic force defined by despotism, irrationality, and violence. Captivity narratives participate directly in this project by framing Muslim societies as spaces where cruelty is normalized, law is arbitrary, and Christian identity is perpetually under threat. What distinguishes captivity narratives from earlier theological polemics is their emphasis on lived experience. These texts claim authority not through abstract argument but through embodied testimony.

The captive's suffering becomes evidence, his endurance a moral proof. This rhetorical move is critical: it transforms Orientalism from an intellectual framework into an affective one. Readers are invited to believe that Muslims are cruel, and to feel that cruelty through scenes of torture, humiliation, and forced conversion. Leonard Cassuto's concept of the racial grotesque sharpens this analysis by explaining how such narratives translate cultural anxiety into bodily spectacle. The grotesque, Cassuto argues, operates through the production of anomalous bodies that blur fundamental boundaries, between human and animal, civilized and savage, life and death (Cassuto 48). In Barbary captivity narratives, Muslim bodies are repeatedly rendered grotesque: marked by exaggerated violence, sexual deviance, and moral corruption. These representations dehumanize the Arab while stabilizing Western identity by contrast. The grotesque Muslim body becomes the site upon which fears of contamination, racial degeneration, and religious instability are projected. Together, Orientalism and the racial grotesque illuminate how captivity narratives operate as crisis texts. They do not describe Islam neutrally; they stage Islam as an existential threat to Western order. This staging is not incidental but structural, shaping how later generations would imagine Arabs and Muslims long after the specific historical conditions of Barbary conflict had passed.

Thomas Pellow's *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow* (1739) stands as one of the most influential early captivity narratives, not because of its factual reliability but because of

its narrative architecture. Pellow spent over two decades in Morocco, a fact that might suggest the possibility of cross-cultural understanding. Instead, his narrative relentlessly constructs Moroccan society as morally inverted and fundamentally opposed to Christian civilization. Central to Pellow's account is the theme of coerced religious conversion. Islam appears as an instrument of domination, its power measured by its ability to force Christians into apostasy. Conversion in Pellow's narrative is framed as a violation of the self. Whether coerced, feigned, or resisted, conversion becomes the ultimate marker of Islam's threat to Christian identity. Pellow's language consistently dehumanizes Muslim subjects. His recollection of being called a "kaffir" (Pellow 21) reframes theological difference as animal status, a move reinforced by his claim that the term is one "generally applied to a donkey." Such moments collapse religious disagreement into species hierarchy, aligning Islam with a logic that denies Christian humanity itself. This is Orientalism at its most visceral: not merely difference, but degradation. Racial language further intensifies this hierarchy. Pellow's reference to "brown Barbary" (8) fuses skin color with moral inferiority, reinforcing the association between darkness and degeneracy. His insistence on marrying a woman "of his own color" even after decades in Morocco demonstrates how racial boundaries remain sacrosanct within his worldview. The narrative thus aligns religion, race, and civilization into a single oppositional structure: Christian/white/civilized versus Muslim/brown/savage. Pellow's depiction of Moroccan society as grotesquely in-

verted, where animals receive better treatment than enslaved humans (69), and women are rendered through animalistic imagery (67), completes this architecture of opposition. Islam, in this framework, becomes a world turned upside down, a space where moral order collapses and Western intervention appears not only justified but necessary.

John Foss's *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings (1798)* builds upon the narrative conventions established by Pellow while adapting them to a distinctly American context. Foss's captivity occurs at a moment when the United States is asserting itself as a moral and political entity on the global stage. His narrative transforms individual suffering into national allegory. Foss constructs Christianity as a source of moral strength and unity, repeatedly contrasting the faith of the captive with the cruelty of Muslim captors. Scenes of divine intervention, such as the sudden death of a cruel master (Foss 20-21), function to reassure readers that God remains aligned with Christian suffering. These moments implicitly frame Islam as spiritually empty, its power contingent rather than divinely sanctioned. Graphic descriptions of violence play a central role in Foss's rhetorical strategy. Beheadings, castration, and public punishment (24-25) are not merely sensational; they establish Islam as a religion of spectacle and terror. The repeated invocation of bodily mutilation aligns Muslim punishment practices with barbarism while elevating Christian endurance to martyrdom. Foss's captives become American heroes, their suffering ennobled through faith. Irony further sharpens this moral contrast. Foss recounts instances of

Muslim hypocrisy, such as Mustafa secretly drinking wine and eating pork (47), to undermine Islamic moral authority. Islam appears not only cruel but inconsistent, a system of rules observed only under surveillance. Even Islamic mercy, such as sanctuary within the mosque, is reframed as a loophole rather than a genuine ethical practice (27). Crucially, Foss extends this moral hierarchy to the American nation itself. American intervention to ransom captives is framed as both a diplomatic success and as proof of national virtue (44-45). Christianity, republicanism, and humanity converge, producing a vision of America as the moral opposite of the Muslim world. In this way, captivity narratives help consolidate a national identity defined against Islam.

Robert Adams's *The Narrative of Robert Adams (1816)* introduces a more complicated racial dynamic into the captivity genre. A mixed-race man whose narrative authenticity has long been debated, Adams occupies an ambivalent position within the racial hierarchy he helps reproduce. His survival depends on his ability to align himself rhetorically with European identity while distancing himself from African and Muslim others. Adams claims authority through exploration, particularly his assertion that he was the first Westerner to reach Timbuktu. This claim situates him within imperial fantasies of discovery and mastery. Ethnographic detail becomes a means of legitimizing his narrative, even as it reinforces stereotypes of African and Arab societies as impoverished and backward. Racial differentiation is central to Adams's strategy. By describing the Moors as "straight haired,

but quite black” (Adams 31), Adams positions himself as racially distinct, implicitly closer to whiteness despite his own ambiguous status. His depiction of European sailors blistering under the sun (33) reinforces a colonial trope in which physical vulnerability signifies moral refinement. Like Pellow and Foss, Adams mobilizes imagery of contamination. Lice infestations (5) become symbols of Eastern filth, collapsing environmental hardship into racial judgment. Economic scarcity is similarly racialized, with descriptions of “indigence” and “precarious subsistence” framing non-Western societies as inherently deficient. Adams’s narrative reveals how Orientalist discourse accommodates internal contradictions. Even a racially marginalized subject can reproduce imperial hierarchies when survival depends on alignment with dominant narratives. His text thus exposes the flexibility, and danger, of representational systems that reward conformity to racial scripts.

By the early nineteenth century, captivity narratives had established a durable set of images, tropes, and affective responses through which Arabs and Muslims were imagined. These texts did not remain confined to print; they laid the groundwork for later visual regimes that would translate narrative Orientalism into spectacle. The figure of the Muslim as cruel, exotic, and grotesque would soon migrate from the page to the exhibition hall, the photograph, and the stage. The next section of this dissertation traces that migration, examining how the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair institutionalized Orientalist representations through spatial design, visual culture, and performance. Where captivity narratives relied

on textual testimony, the Fair relied on the gaze. Together, these regimes form a continuous representational field in which Arab and Muslim identity was repeatedly produced as spectacle, threat, and object of consumption.

By the late nineteenth century, the ideological work performed by captivity narratives had migrated into new representational forms. Where earlier texts relied on the authority of personal testimony, the emerging culture of exhibition and visual spectacle claimed the authority of immediacy, visibility, and scientific organization. The 1893 Chicago World's Fair marked a decisive moment in this transition. The Fair did not only display cultures; it arranged them spatially, hierarchically, and narratively, transforming inherited Orientalist scripts into immersive environments that audiences could physically traverse.

The second chapter of this dissertation focuses on the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The Fair functioned as a national self-portrait at a moment when the United States sought to assert itself as a modern imperial power. Officially framed as a celebration of progress, technology, and civilization on the cusp of the twentieth century, the Fair was equally invested in staging difference. Its architecture, layout, and exhibition practices produced a visual map through which American identity was defined against racialized others. Arabs and Muslims occupied a central role in this map, not as political subjects or historical actors, but as spectacles through which Americanness could be affirmed.

The Fair's most consequential ideological work occurred through its physical organiza-

tion. The White City, with its neoclassical architecture, electric lighting, and symmetrical design, symbolized order, rationality, and modernity. It presented a vision of America as the culmination of Western civilization, implicitly white, Protestant, and progressive. Access to this space was regulated not only by cost but by racial and cultural norms; people of colour and non-Protestant religious groups were largely excluded from meaningful participation. In stark contrast, the Midway Plaisance functioned as a curated zone of difference. Here, non-Western cultures were displayed as living exhibits, organized along a developmental timeline that positioned them as relics of humanity's past. As Gail Bederman notes, the Midway presented the “undeveloped barbarism of uncivilized, dark races” (31), a phrase that captures the Fair's racial logic with unsettling clarity. Civilization, in this schema, was more than technological advancement rather it was racial destiny.

Arab and Muslim exhibits were clustered firmly within the Midway. Cairo Street, the Moorish Palace, the Turkish Village, and the Streets of Damascus were framed as spectacles of exotic excess, sensuality, and backwardness. This spatial segregation reinforced the idea that Arab societies belonged outside modern time, positioned as static contrasts to American dynamism. The Fair thus translated Orientalism into architecture: to walk through the grounds was to move through a racialized history of progress that culminated in whiteness. The Midway did not simply display cultural artifacts; it told stories. Each exhibit was curated to align with preexisting Western fantasies of the East. Arab soci-

eties were presented as timeless marketplaces populated by veiled women, armed men, and perpetual performance. These representations erased political complexity, historical change, and internal diversity, replacing them with a flattened image of perpetual otherness. Entertainment was not incidental to this process; it was essential. Arab and Muslim participants were expected to perform differently, to embody what visitors believed they already knew. The role of the “other” was narrowly defined: to entertain as the “savage, uneducated, uncivilized who aims to be what he or she may never become: an American.” Any deviation from this role, such as adopting Western clothing or refusing to perform, threatened the Fair’s ideological coherence.

This logic extended to gendered representation. Arab women, particularly in Cairo Street performances, were eroticized through belly dancing exhibitions that framed female bodies as sites of primitive sensuality. Descriptions likening dancers to animals “moving like a snake” exemplify how gender, race, and sexuality converged to produce a spectacle that was simultaneously alluring and degrading. Arab men, by contrast, were often framed as threats: violent, unpredictable, and morally suspect. The frequent pairing of weapons with domestic objects in photographs reinforced the idea that violence was an inherent feature of Arab life.

Visual culture played a decisive role in stabilizing these representations. Official photography at the Fair was monopolized by Charles Dudley Arnold, whose images were

widely circulated as souvenirs and educational materials. This monopoly ensured that what survived as the visual archive of the Fair reflected a narrow, imperial perspective. Photography, often treated as objective documentation, functioned instead as a powerful tool of narrative control. Arnold's photographs frequently depict white male spectators examining racialized bodies, reinforcing a hierarchy in which whiteness is associated with observation, judgment, and authority. Arab subjects appear as types rather than individuals, labeled, posed, and framed to emphasize difference. The camera thus reproduces the logic of captivity narratives: the Arab is rendered visible only as an object of scrutiny.

Yet even within this tightly controlled regime, moments of resistance emerge. In the photograph commonly known as "The Baby Arab," the woman's direct gaze at the camera interrupts the expected dynamic of passive display. For a brief moment, the subject looks back, challenging the viewer's authority and unsettling the illusion of complete control. Such gestures do not overturn the system, but they reveal its instability.

Arab participants at the Fair were more than passive victims of representation. Many recognized the economic opportunities embedded in Orientalist spectacle and strategically engaged with Western expectations to secure financial survival. Embracing the "exotic Arab" image could be profitable, even as it reinforced stereotypes. This pragmatic negotiation complicates any simple narrative of resistance versus assimilation. At the same time, evidence suggests that some performers actively sought moments of anonymity and

integration. Reports that individuals in the Turkish Village changed into Western-style clothing between performances indicate a desire to move through the fairgrounds as observers rather than perpetual exhibits. These acts of self-fashioning highlight the tension between imposed visibility and chosen invisibility.

Crucially, the Fair did not go unobserved by Arab audiences themselves. Arabic-language newspapers such as *Kawkab Amirka* offered what can be understood as “unauthorized responses” to the exhibitionary logic of the Fair. Writing from within the United States, Arab journalists exposed contradictions in American moral discourse, particularly the gap between missionary rhetoric and domestic exclusion.

Kawkab Amirka pointedly criticized American hypocrisy by juxtaposing Christian outreach with policies like the Chinese Exclusion Act. Other articles drew parallels between the treatment of Native Americans and colonial practices abroad, challenging narratives that framed U.S. expansion as benevolent. These critiques demonstrate that Arab observers were acutely aware of imperial dynamics and capable of reading American racial politics with sophistication.

At the same time, these newspapers were not immune to reproducing racial hierarchies. Coverage of African Americans and Chinese immigrants sometimes mirrored dominant American prejudices, revealing the complex ways immigrant communities internalized and navigated racial systems. Discussions of French colonialism in North Africa further

illustrate this ambivalence: some writers adopted narratives of “civilizational uplift,” even referring to themselves as French, reflecting the fractured identities produced under colonial rule.

The representational regime of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair marks a critical pivot in this dissertation. It demonstrates how Orientalist narratives adapt to new media environments, moving from textual testimony to visual spectacle without losing their ideological force. At the same time, the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair exposes the limits of representational control. Arab participants, photographers, and journalists all engaged, unevenly, strategically, and sometimes contradictorily, with the scripts imposed upon them.

The final chapter turns to Syrian immigrant print culture, particularly *Al-Hoda*, to examine how Arab communities in the United States used newspapers as sites of cultural preservation, political negotiation, and identity formation. Where the Fair sought to fix Arab identity in spectacle, immigrant print culture reveals a dynamic arena in which identity was debated, contested, and reimagined. If the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair represents the consolidation of Orientalist spectacle at the level of mass visual culture, Syrian immigrant newspapers mark a decisive shift in the location of representational authority. Print culture offered Arab immigrants a medium through which they could speak, argue, and intervene, yet always within the constraints of American racial and political systems. Newspapers such as *Al-Hoda* and *Kawkab Amirka* actively shaped the terms through which

Syrians understood themselves, negotiated belonging, and confronted the scripts already circulating about Arabs and Muslims in the United States.

The emergence of Syrian immigrant print culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries must be understood as a response to an already saturated representational field. By the time Syrians began arriving in significant numbers, the figure of the “Arab” had been thoroughly produced through captivity narratives, travel writing, missionary discourse, and exhibitionary spectacle. Immigrants did not enter a neutral discursive space. They arrived into a cultural environment where Arabness was already legible as exotic, backward, threatening, or unassimilable. Newspapers became a crucial site for engaging this legacy, by negotiating, revising, and sometimes reproducing its terms. Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of the “contact zone” provides a useful framework for understanding Syrian immigrant newspapers as spaces of encounter shaped by asymmetrical power relations (34). *Al-Hoda* functioned simultaneously as a communal archive, a pedagogical tool, and a political instrument. Its pages brought together poetry, advertisements, legal commentary, moral instruction, and international news, creating a multilingual public sphere in which identity was actively debated rather than passively inherited.

This negotiation bears a strong resemblance to W. E. B. Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness. Syrian immigrants were acutely aware of how they were perceived by white American society and shaped their self-presentation accordingly. They wrote not only for

themselves, but also with an imagined American audience in mind, an audience whose recognition could mean access to citizenship, economic opportunity, and legal protection. At the same time, this outward orientation generated internal tensions about authenticity, cultural loss, and the costs of assimilation.

Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity further illuminates this dynamic. Syrian identity in *Al-Hoda* emerges not as a stable essence but as a strategic formation within what Bhabha calls a "Third Space", a site where cultural meanings are negotiated rather than simply transmitted. Syrians anglicized names, adopted Western dress, pursued education, and mobilized classical histories, all while insisting on the preservation of Arabic language and communal memory. Hybridity here is not celebratory; it is pragmatic, contested, and often fraught.

Nowhere are these tensions more visible than in Syrian engagement with American racial classification. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act, access to naturalization was restricted to "free white persons." Syrians, often labeled "Asiatic" or "Oriental," faced the real possibility of legal exclusion. Newspapers like *Al-Hoda* responded by mounting an explicit campaign to secure whiteness as a legal necessity. The George Dow case becomes emblematic of this struggle. When Dow, a Syrian immigrant, was denied citizenship on racial grounds, Syrian newspapers mobilized the community through editorials, fundraising appeals, and scholarly intervention. *Al-Hoda* commissioned Khalil Bishara to produce

a bilingual treatise arguing that Syrians were Caucasian, tracing their lineage through Phoenician, Greco-Roman, and biblical genealogies. This strategy deliberately aligned Syrians with Western civilization, positioning them as heirs rather than outsiders. The eventual legal victory, reclassifying Syrians as white, was celebrated as an exoneration, a validation of belonging. Yet this success came at a cost. In asserting whiteness, Syrian immigrants often reproduced anti-Black and anti-Chinese racism, distancing themselves from those positioned further down the racial hierarchy. Rather than framing Syrians as uncomplicated victims of racial exclusion, this dissertation situates them as actors navigating a system in which inclusion was predicated on hierarchy. This negotiation extends Du Bois's insight into the workings of racial consciousness. Syrians were not simply subjected to American racial logic; they learned to speak it fluently. They understood that belonging required argument, evidence, and strategic alignment. In doing so, they reveal how racial categories function as sites of political contestation.

Language occupies a central place in Syrian print culture, not merely as cultural inheritance, but as political infrastructure. Naoum Mokarzel, editor of *Al-Hoda*, treated Arabic literacy as essential to communal survival. His campaigns to promote reading and writing in Arabic, including offering free subscriptions to anyone learning the language, reflect a belief that language anchors identity across generations. At the same time, debates over "Americanized Arabic" expose anxieties about dilution and loss. Mokarzel's insistence on

linguistic purity contrasts sharply with his brother Salloum Mokarzel's more assimilationist stance, which prioritized English fluency as a pathway to economic success and national belonging. These disagreements were not trivial; they reflect competing visions of what it meant to be Syrian in America, whether permanence required transformation or continuity. Print culture thus becomes a site where time itself is negotiated. Arabic connects immigrants to a deep historical past; English promises a viable future. Newspapers mediate this temporal tension, offering readers tools to inhabit both worlds simultaneously.

Women's voices play a crucial role in this negotiation, particularly through figures such as Afifa Karam. Writing in *Al-Hoda*, Karam challenged patriarchal norms within the Syrian community while also critiquing selective assimilation. She exposed the hypocrisy of men who embraced American customs when economically beneficial, allowing women to work or adopt Western dress, while denying women intellectual autonomy. Karam framed women's education not as cultural betrayal, but as a pathway to collective progress. She imagined American modernity as a resource that could ultimately benefit Syria itself, linking women's rights to diasporic responsibility. Her prominence in *Al-Hoda* underscores Mokarzel's belief that women were custodians of language and culture, a belief reinforced by his offer of free subscriptions to any Syrian woman who could read. Yet the newspaper also published anonymous warnings against intermarriage with American women, claiming such unions would lead to humiliation and cultural loss. These contradictions reveal the

uneven terrain of gender politics within the diaspora. Progress and anxiety coexist; reform and retrenchment circulate side by side.

Syrian newspapers also functioned as sites of political education and diasporic consciousness. Because Syria remained under Ottoman rule, editors exercised caution when commenting on Ottoman politics, often reminding readers of their status as subjects of the empire. This restraint contrasts with the relative freedom afforded by American political discourse. Articles condemning U.S. imperial actions, such as the blockade of Cuba, allowed immigrants to critique empire indirectly while aligning themselves with principles of justice. Other pieces praised American legal practices, such as meticulous governmental efforts to correct minor accounting errors, which symbolized fairness in contrast to Ottoman corruption. These narratives position the United States as both a site of exclusion and a space of possibility, reflecting the ambivalence of immigrant belonging. By addressing not only Syrians but a broader readership, *Al-Hoda* helped articulate an early sense of “Syrian American” identity. This was not yet nationalism in the modern sense, but a diasporic consciousness grounded in shared struggle, print circulation, and legal engagement.

Taken together, Syrian immigrant newspapers represent a decisive shift from being represented to representing. Unlike captivity narratives or the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair spectacles, print culture allowed Arabs to author their own texts, even as they remained constrained by racial, legal, and linguistic boundaries. This shift does not mark a clean

break from Orientalism; rather, it reveals how Orientalist frameworks persist even within acts of resistance. What emerges is narration contested. Syrian newspapers operate within inherited scripts while seeking to bend them toward survival, dignity, and recognition. They reveal identity as something made under pressure, argued for, defended, and revised.

The arc traced across this dissertation is neither linear nor redemptive. Rather than moving cleanly from misrepresentation to self-authorship, the history of Arab and Muslim presence in the Americas emerges as a long struggle over narration itself: over who gets to speak, who is rendered visible, and under what conditions identity becomes legible. This struggle unfolds across shifting historical moments, media forms, and institutional frameworks, yet it remains bound by a persistent problem: the endurance of inherited scripts that precede and constrain lived experience. One of this dissertation's central interventions is therefore temporal. The story I tell does not begin with the late nineteenth-century arrival of Syrian immigrants, nor with the post-1965 immigration reforms that often anchor Arab American historiography. Instead, it begins earlier, in the early modern Atlantic world, with captivity narratives that transformed specific diplomatic, economic, and military encounters into enduring cultural scripts. These texts stabilized a grammar of fear, religious opposition, and racial hierarchy that would outlive the circumstances that produced them.

By foregrounding the Barbary captivity narratives of Thomas Pellow, John Foss, and

Robert Adams, this dissertation demonstrates that Arab and Muslim difference was not a late arrival to American culture, but a formative presence in its early imaginings of sovereignty, morality, and identity. These narratives provided a vocabulary through which Islam could be understood as both theological threat and civilizational danger, and through which the West could imagine itself as morally unified in opposition. The Muslim “Other” thus emerges not as an accidental figure, but as a necessary one, integral to the West’s self-definition.

This temporal reframing challenges the assumption that Orientalism enters American discourse only through later imperial encounters or mass immigration. Instead, it reveals Orientalism as a foundational logic that predates the nation-state itself, shaping how the United States would come to understand religious difference, racial hierarchy, and foreignness. By the time Arab immigrants began arriving in the late nineteenth century, they entered a representational field already structured by centuries of narrative repetition.

My dissertation also advances a media-historical argument: that Arab and Muslim identity in the Americas has been shaped across multiple, interconnected regimes of representation. Each chapter examines a distinct medium, narrative prose, exhibitionary spectacle, and immigrant print culture, as overlapping technologies of visibility and control. In Chapter One, captivity narratives operate as narrative technologies that convert political anxiety into embodied threat. Through graphic descriptions of punishment, coerced con-

version, and racialized bodies, these texts mobilize what Leonard Cassuto identifies as the racial grotesque, projecting abstract fears onto monstrous forms. These narratives make the Muslim world as cruel, arbitrary, and morally inverted, thereby justifying Western dominance and reinforcing Christian and national superiority.

Chapter Three demonstrates how these narrative habits are translated into visual form at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Here, Orientalism becomes spatialized. The White City and the Midway Plaisance do not only display difference; they organize it hierarchically. Arabs and Muslims are rendered legible as spectacle, exotic, sensual, threatening, or quaint, while American identity is defined through contrast. Photography, exhibition design, and spatial segregation work together to discipline the gaze, ensuring that the "Orient" remains consumable rather than relational.

Chapter Two, positioned between these two regimes, complicates the story by foregrounding immigrant print culture as a site of both resistance and accommodation. Newspapers like *Al-Hoda* do not escape Orientalist frameworks entirely, but they introduce contestation into a previously unilateral process. Through editorials, poetry, advertisements, and political commentary, Syrian immigrants begin to narrate themselves, arguing for whiteness, debating language, reforming gender roles, and imagining diasporic futures. Reading across these media reveals misrepresentation with authenticity, and a shift from imposed narration to contested narration. Arabs and Muslims are not simply spoken

about; they speak back, though always within uneven structures of power.

Another key contribution of this project lies in its re-situating of Orientalism within the specific racial and national formations of the United States. Edward Said's analysis emerges primarily from European imperial contexts. This dissertation asks what happens when Orientalist habits are taken up within a settler-colonial republic struggling to define itself as white, Christian, and modern.

In early America, Barbary conflicts became a testing ground for American sovereignty. Captivity narratives supplement elite diplomatic discourse by translating questions of tribute, honour, and national autonomy into stories of bodily violation and spiritual endurance. The Christian captive in Muslim hands becomes a figure through which national vulnerability is imagined and resolved, often through the promise of a militarized response. By the late nineteenth century, the axis of anxiety shifts inward. The World's Fair reveals a nation preoccupied less with foreign domination than with internal coherence. Who belongs? Who can be assimilated? Who must remain other? Arabs and Muslims, staged on the Midway, become instruments for answering these questions, positioned as foils against which Americanness is stabilized. Syrian immigrants confront this same logic from within. Their struggle for naturalization exposes the contradictions of a racial system that demands whiteness while simultaneously producing Oriental difference. The George Dow case illustrates how law, science, history, and print culture converge in the making of race.

Syrians argue themselves into whiteness not by rejecting American racial logic, but by mastering it. This is not a story of simple inclusion. It is a story of negotiated belonging, one that reveals how racial categories function as both barriers and tools. Syrians' success depended on proximity to whiteness and often required distancing from Black and Asian populations. This uncomfortable reality exposes the moral costs of survival within a white supremacist order.

Across all chapters, the body emerges as a central site of representation. Captivity narratives render Muslim bodies grotesque, sites of punishment, contamination, and moral danger. The 1893 Chicago World's Fair eroticizes and disciplines bodies through spectacle, particularly those of women, whose movements and gazes are tightly regulated. Immigrant newspapers, by contrast, begin to reframe the body as a site of reform, education, and agency. Afifa Karam's writing exposes the limits of selective assimilation, insisting that progress cannot be achieved without women's intellectual autonomy. Her interventions reveal how gender functions as both a fault line and a resource within diasporic identity formation. Women are imagined as custodians of language and culture, yet are often denied authority within the very communities that depend on them. By foregrounding gender alongside race and religion, this dissertation resists treating Arab and Muslim identity as monolithic. It insists instead on multiplicity, contradiction, and internal critique.

At its core, this dissertation is an archive-building and archive-re-reading intervention.

It brings into dialogue materials rarely studied together: English-language captivity narratives, Arabic-language newspapers, bilingual pamphlets, photographs, exhibition layouts, and advertisements. This multi-genre approach reveals how narratives circulate across languages and media, reinforcing and revising one another over time. It also challenges Anglophone bias in American cultural history. Translating and analyzing Arabic-language texts from *Al-Hoda* and *Kawkab Amirka* recovers an immigrant public sphere too often dismissed as marginal. These newspapers were central to debates about race, citizenship, gender, and empire. Similarly, reading photographs against the grain, attending to gaze, posture, and institutional context, exposes the power relations embedded in visual culture. These images do not simply reflect reality; they actively produce it.

This dissertation also intervenes in several overlapping historiographical conversations concerning Orientalism, American empire, visual culture, Arab American studies, and immigrant print history. Existing scholarship on Barbary captivity narratives has productively examined these texts within the contexts of early American nationalism, Atlantic commerce, and Orientalist discourse. Scholars have demonstrated how captivity narratives helped consolidate American understandings of Islam as a site of despotism, religious excess, and civilizational opposition. My dissertation builds on this scholarship by reading these narratives as racializing narrative technologies that transform religious and cultural anxiety into embodied spectacle. Drawing on Leonard Cassuto's concept of the racial

grotesque, I argue that these narratives stabilize American identity through representations of Muslim bodies as grotesque, contaminating, and morally inverted. In doing so, this dissertation traces how racialized representations of Arabs and Muslims emerge earlier and more systematically within American literary culture than is often acknowledged.

Similarly, scholarship on the 1893 Chicago World's Fair has analyzed the Fair as a site of imperial display, racial hierarchy, and nationalist self-fashioning. Historians and cultural critics have demonstrated how the White City and Midway Plaisance spatialized evolutionary theories of civilization and difference. This dissertation builds upon that work by foregrounding Arab and Muslim participants not simply as objects within an imperial archive, but as subjects negotiating visibility, performance, and representation within it. Reading photographs, exhibition spaces, and Arabic-language responses alongside one another, I shift attention from spectacle alone to the unstable relations of looking, circulation, and counter-observation embedded within the Fair's visual regime. In this sense, the project moves beyond treating photographs and exhibitions as transparent documents of imperial power and instead approaches them as contested sites of narration, performance, and partial resistance. This approach resonates with recent scholarship that questions the presumed neutrality of the colonial archive and emphasizes the politics of visibility, spectatorship, and archival absence.

Finally, while Arab American historiography has often focused on legal whiteness, as-

similation, and immigration history, this dissertation situates Syrian immigrant newspapers within a longer genealogy of inherited Orientalist representation. Rather than treating immigrant print culture as separate from earlier captivity narratives and exhibitionary discourse, I argue that Syrian newspapers emerged in direct negotiation with already circulating racial scripts about Arabs and Muslims. By placing Arabic-language newspapers, captivity narratives, and visual culture into the same analytical frame, this dissertation reveals the continuity of representational structures across genres, institutions, and historical periods that are too often studied separately.

The materials examined in this dissertation are not sealed in the past. The associations normalized by captivity narratives and reinforced by spectacle continue to shape contemporary discourse about Islam, migration, and national security. The legal ambiguities surrounding Arab American racial classification remain unresolved, resurfacing in moments of crisis when Arabs and Muslims are treated as presumptively foreign despite formal whiteness. At the same time, the immigrant press and the strategies of resistance traced here offer a counter-archive, a record of Arab and Muslim intellectual labor in the Americas. These communities were never merely objects of discourse. They were critics, translators, editors, reformers, and theorists of their own condition.

Early in this dissertation, *Al-Hoda's* opening poem personifies the newspaper as a traveler crossing the ocean, asking to be hosted and promising critique without malice.

That image captures the ethical stance of this dissertation. The sources gathered here do not ask for uncritical acceptance; they demand careful reading, historical attention, and willingness to confront contradiction. My dissertation offers one intervention into a much larger conversation, one that must continue as long as colonial language remains embedded in how the world is named, mapped, and understood. By refusing inherited scripts and insisting on complexity, this dissertation seeks not to close debate, but to reopen it: to unblock narratives that have long constrained how Arab and Muslim presence in the Americas can be imagined.

Chapter 1

Unspoken Truths

“I told them the truth, as near as I could recollect.”

Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams*

1.1 Introduction

The persistence of dehumanizing rhetoric in contemporary foreign policy illustrates the long afterlife of early modern captivity narratives. When United States diplomat Tom Barrack warned Lebanese journalists in 2025 that regional unrest risked becoming “chaotic like, animalistic,” ([The Associated Press](#)) he invoked a discourse that casts Middle Eastern peoples as uncivilized and instinct-driven. Although such language may appear jarring in a modern diplomatic setting, it reflects the same civilizational binaries that Edward Said identifies in Orientalism. The continuity between Barrack’s remarks and earlier representations invites

a return to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Barbary captivity narratives framed the Muslim world as a site of violence and cultural threat. These texts emerged within diplomatic crises over piracy and amid intellectual debates involving figures such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Ezra Stiles. While statesmen approached Islam through theological and legal inquiry, popular fascination coalesced around sailor-authored narratives that sensationalized the “exotic” and the violent, shaping Western understandings of the Muslim “Other.”

Yet long before these narratives circulated, Muslims had already become part of the cultural fabric of the Americas. Estevanico, the enslaved Moroccan explorer who joined the Narváez expedition of 1527, exemplifies this early presence (Castles 83). His story was not an anomaly. Scholars such as Sylviane A. Diouf and Edward E. Curtis IV document substantial Muslim communities throughout the Atlantic world. As Gomez observes, “their numbers were significant... Muslims made genuine and persistent efforts to observe their religion... [and] cultural phenomena found in segments of the African American community... probably reflect the influence of these early Muslims” (Gomez 672). Recognizing this deep-rooted presence exposes the disjunction between historical reality and the hostile representations later propagated in captivity narratives, which depicted Muslims as alien intruders despite their longstanding cultural influence in the Americas.

This gap between lived history and literary imagination sets the stage for understand-

ing the cultural work performed by Barbary captivity narratives. Between 1784 and 1793, more than one hundred American sailors were seized by Moroccan and Algerine privateers, triggering a burst of cultural production across genres ranging from historiography and travel accounts to letters, poetry, and religious studies ([Battistini](#) 447). As Robert Battistini notes, these writings display a spectrum of reactions, from curiosity to fear to outright bigotry, reflecting the multiplicity of early American engagements with Islam. The stories of captivity and deliverance that circulated most widely did not merely recount suffering; they forged ideological frameworks through which the young republic imagined sovereignty, religious identity, and global hierarchy.

These experiences unfolded against the backdrop of escalating diplomatic tensions over Barbary piracy, which forced Britain and the newly formed United States to confront North African powers on unfamiliar political and religious terms. Paying tribute to secure the release of captives was seen as a humiliating concession, prompting fierce debates about national honor. James Leander Cathcart, a former captive turned diplomat, posed the dilemma starkly: either “do as other Nations do” and sacrifice honor by paying tribute, or “extirpate them from the face of the earth” ([Rojas](#) 185-186). For many, including Thomas Jefferson, the choice was clear. “Honor favors it,” Jefferson insisted, arguing for naval action, since paying tribute implied the superiority of Algiers over the United States, a proposition he found intolerable ([182, 186](#)). His famous declaration, “millions for defense,

not one cent for tribute,” crystallized this stance. The conflict ultimately culminated in the 1815 campaign that curtailed Barbary piracy (Skaggs 124).

These diplomatic tensions intersected with a deeper intellectual engagement with Islam among American political elites. It is important to situate this interest chronologically: Jefferson’s involvement came later than Thomas Pellow’s 1739 narrative and aligns more closely with the period in which Foss and Adams wrote. Jefferson’s ownership and study of the Qur’an provide insight into this intellectual environment. As Hayes notes, Jefferson treated the Qur’an as both scripture and a lawbook, using it to interrogate the foundations of English constitutional law and reevaluate them through natural law and natural rights (Hayes 248). Although this engagement does not directly explain captivity narratives, it illuminates the broader intellectual climate in which they circulated, one in which Islam functioned as a point of legal, theological, and philosophical inquiry rather than solely as a cultural threat.

Jefferson’s political advocacy for religious freedom further highlights an early American willingness to imagine Muslims within the civic community. In Virginia, he supported legislation protecting “the Mahometan” alongside Jews, Catholics, and dissenting Protestants (Manseau par 19), embodying what Dreisbach describes as an effort to secure “freedom of religious expression” while limiting government interference except to safeguard individual conscience (Dreisbach 204). Although his Bill for Establishing Religious

Freedom languished for nearly a decade before passage (Gaustad 683), it contributed to a legal culture that recognized Islam within its pluralistic vision. Other leaders shared similar perspectives. George Washington expressed openness to welcoming Muslims into the republic (Spellberg 489), and Ezra Stiles acknowledged Islam's ethical contributions, imagining, as Einboden puts it, "a private universe in which the Quran belongs in the same orbit as the Bible" (4). Such views complicate the notion that Islam was uniformly regarded as antithetical to American identity.

This intellectual receptivity among elites stands in stark contrast to the representations found in captivity narratives, where Islam emerges not as a source of wisdom but as a locus of fear. This divergence is exemplified by Thomas Pellow's *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow: Three and Twenty Years in Captivity among the Moors*, published in 1739. Captured at age eleven, Pellow recounts his life among the Moors, including his marriage and the birth of his daughter, while reinforcing the prevailing stereotypes of Islamic society as cruel, despotic, and culturally alien. Pellow's narrative circulated in a pre-Revolutionary British context but anticipated the ideological work later taken up in American writings: defining Western identity through opposition to an imagined Muslim "Other."

To understand how such narratives achieved their cultural force, Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and provide essential analytical frameworks. Said demonstrates that

Western representations of Islam constitute an ideological construct that renders the East backward, dangerous, and inferior (Said, “[Orientalism](#)” 40). As he writes, “Orientalism... [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). Captivity narratives, often mingling fact with exaggeration, fit precisely within this discursive tradition, shaping perceptions not only of Arabs and Muslims but also of Western identity itself.

Cassuto’s theorization of the racial grotesque reveals how these texts amplified cultural anxieties by projecting them onto monstrous bodies. The grotesque emerges from a “category system that strives unsuccessfully for clearly defined categories,” producing anomalies that threaten boundaries between “life/death” and “human/nonhuman” ([Cassuto](#) 48). In nineteenth-century American culture, this boundary play became racialized: grotesque figures embodied fears of mixture, disorder, and moral contamination. Barbary captivity narratives deploy this logic by portraying Arabs and Muslims as monstrous, anomalous, or demonic, thereby heightening the sense of civilizational danger and affirming Western racial and cultural superiority.

Taken together, the insights of Said and Cassuto show how captivity narratives evolved from accounts of individual suffering into ideological instruments. These texts constructed the Arab as an embodiment of savagery and deceit, validating Western hegemony by contrasting European “civilization” with an imagined barbaric Other. The grotesque dimen-

sion pushed this contrast further by transforming abstract anxieties into vivid, embodied threats, turning the Arab into a screen for fears of contamination, religious difference, and the fragility of Eurocentric order. Through the narratives of Thomas Pellow, John Foss, and Robert Adams, we can trace the escalation from civilizational opposition to grotesque projection, revealing how Barbary captivity narratives shaped early American identity through the systematic denigration of the Muslim world.

1.2 Thomas Pellow *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow:*

Thomas Pellow was an eighteenth-century English sailor from Cornwall who in 1716, at the age of eleven, was captured by Barbary pirates while sailing off the Bay of Biscay. He spent over two decades in captivity under the rule of Sultan Moulay Ismail in Morocco, during which he was forcibly converted to Islam and compelled to serve in the Sultan's army. Pellow's eventual escape and return to England led to the publication of *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow*, of Penryn, Mariner (1740), a captivity narrative that recounts his experiences of enslavement and conversion to Islam.

Coerced religious conversion is central to Pellow's narrative and functions as a defining marker of the threat Islam made to pose Christian identity. For Pellow, conversion is not

a spiritual transformation but a moment of acute vulnerability in which the body is forced while the soul is imagined to remain intact. The stakes of this moment are made explicit in the 1890 edition of his narrative, where editor Robert Brown reframes Pellow's conversion for a Victorian audience. Brown emphasizes the violence of the event, stating "he endured enough to have killed seven men, before his master could make him turn" (Pellow 36), in order to present Pellow not as a renegade but as a Christian compelled into outward compliance. By foregrounding physical coercion and Pellow's youthful age at the time, Brown constructs a narrative in which the conversion is feigned under duress rather than spiritually genuine. This framing absolves Pellow of any guilt associated with apostasy and reassures readers that his internal Christian identity remained unbroken. In doing so, Brown also authenticates the narrative itself, casting Pellow as a morally trustworthy witness whose integrity survives precisely because the conversion did not penetrate the realm of belief.

Pellow's own account, however, complicates Brown's portrayal by challenging the assumption that Islam operates solely as a spiritual threat to Christianity. Rather than depicting conversion as a moral fall, Pellow reframes it as a matter of circumstance. He undermines the conventional narrative of forced conversion by revealing that in many cases, enslaved Christians were not pressured to adopt Islam, unless it served their captors' ideological purposes. He notes that Christian conversion often reduced a captive's value, and

was thus discouraged:

The captives were, however, not usually importuned to change their religion unless it happened that they fell into the hands of bigots, for as there was an implied contract that they were to be free, every Christian 'turned Moor' meant simply one slave less to his Moslem master. (31)

Here, conversion is portrayed less as a spiritual triumph for Islam than as a pragmatic or symbolic act, either rejected by slave owners for economic reasons or embraced by captives as a path to emancipation. Nonetheless, for Pellow's audience, any suggestion of conversion, even under duress, evoked deep cultural anxieties about the boundaries of religious identity. These fears are heightened by the association of Islam with brutality, as well as its capacity to destabilize Christian moral authority. As Jonathan Burton notes, early modern English writers "invariably turned the subject on its head... [so that] conversion to Islam is generally understood as forced or economic, never as spiritual" (59).

The theme of coerced or threatened conversion following captivity, often accompanied by fears of cultural and spiritual contamination, is not unique to Pellow's narrative but emerges from a longer literary tradition. Writers of Barbary captivity narratives were not working in a vacuum; they drew on established representational models such as Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, a text widely circulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and foundational to the captivity narrative genre. Captured dur-

ing King Philip's War in 1675, Rowlandson recounts the physical and emotional ordeals of her enslavement by Indigenous people, including hunger, exhaustion, and the trauma of witnessing violence and death. Her narrative foregrounds the cultural and religious divide between Native Americans and English colonists, casting her suffering as a spiritual trial rather than a catalyst for transformation. Rowlandson's repeated invocations of divine providence and her revulsion toward Indigenous customs underscore her unwavering Puritan identity; even in moments of despair, her narrative sustains a model of religious endurance without conversion. This insistence on spiritual constancy was later taken up in Barbary captivity narratives, where similar anxieties about cultural assimilation were refracted through Islamic contexts, and where conversion, whether coerced, feigned, or resisted, became a central narrative dilemma. Rowlandson's account thus provides a template in which faith, rather than assimilation, becomes the primary marker of resilience and identity.

If conversion marks the ultimate test of religious identity in Pellow's narrative, the language surrounding unbelief functions as its everyday enforcement. Pellow demonstrates that the association between spiritual deviation and social inferiority is embedded not only in acts of coercion but in the vocabulary his captors use to address him. Language, particularly the use of religious slurs, plays a powerful role in his depiction of Muslim cruelty and Christian suffering. He recalls being called "kaffir," a term that underscores

the religious tension structuring the narrative: “‘Kaffir!’ or ‘Unbeliever,’ was about the mildest word addressed to them, and as an Arab generally applies this term to his donkey in the interval of whacks, the opprobriousness of the epithet may be imagined” (21). Here, Pellow highlights the dehumanizing effect of religious insult. The word “kaffir” originates as a theological label for nonbelievers. Through linguistic degradation, Pellow frames unbelief not as a theological disagreement but as a status of fundamental subhumanity, reinforcing the peril faced by Christians who resisted or only feigned conversion.

Through his sustained depiction of coerced conversion, ritualized insults, physical brutality, and carefully staged moments of spiritual endurance, Pellow constructs a narrative that consistently affirms Christian resilience and moral superiority. His account does not rely on a single episode but accumulates examples, the degrading cry of “kaffir,” arbitrary violence, and the redemptive relief of returning to “Christian Land” (234), to frame captivity as a spiritual ordeal survived through inward steadfastness. By presenting himself as a devout Christian compelled to make outward compromises under duress, Pellow invites empathy from his audience and positions his narrative within a larger tradition of religious testimony. This rhetorical strategy mirrors that of Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, which similarly transforms violence and deprivation into proof of providential endurance. Like Rowlandson, Pellow affirms his religious identity through the very act of narrating his survival, reinforcing the genre’s ideological purpose: to assert the righteousness of Christian

values over the perceived savagery of the cultural “other.”

Pellow’s narrative repeatedly rehearses this binary. He thanks God that England is governed by “wholesome Laws,” in contrast to the “Arbitrary Power” of Morocco (104), and rejoices in his return to “Christian Land” as a restoration of both spiritual and civic belonging (234). As Paul Baepler notes, such moves typify the genre’s transformation of personal trauma into cultural propaganda, framing Muslim captors as cruel and faithless and Christian Europe as civilized and just. Pellow reinforces this ideological work through explicit denunciations of Islam as “Mahometism,” a false faith imposed by “cunning and designing men,” which he regards with “utter Abhorrence and Detestation” (186). Rather than interpret his experience with nuance, he leans into familiar tropes that his audience would readily recognize, using them to stabilize his own identity and reclaim his Englishness after decades of cultural and religious displacement.

Central to Pellow’s efforts to reclaim his Englishness after more than two decades in Morocco is his representation of his captors as fundamentally different, figures he must render culturally and morally Other in order to reassert his own identity. Thomas Pellow’s narrative participates in the Orientalist discourse that Edward Said critiques. As Said argues, Orientalist texts tend to depict the East as “irrational, depraved (fallen), child-like, ‘different’,” in contrast to a rational, enlightened, and morally superior West (Said, “Orientalism” 40). Pellow’s narrative exemplifies this binary by portraying Moroccan Mus-

lims, his captors and court officials, as barbaric and inherently violent. His description of being seized by “a Multitude of those Blood-thirsty Villains” and imprisoned in a “dark Dungeon” (Pellow 156) collapses individual actors into a generalized, demonized Muslim Other. Moreover, his repeated references to Islam as “Mahometism” (55) reflect a colonial vocabulary that reduces a complex religious tradition to the worship of a single figure, a point Said identifies as central to Orientalist misrepresentation.

Modern scholars warn against uncritically reproducing this kind of generalization. Joe Snader notes that Barbary captivity narratives like Pellow’s function as imperial discourse that construct the Islamic world as “debased and despotic,” thereby legitimizing European dominance (Snader 139). Mark Celinscak likewise argues that Pellow’s narrative “emphasizes Christian and European moral superiority over Islam,” reinforcing binaries of cultural and religious identity (Celinscak 1-2). This scholarly caution is important precisely because Pellow’s narrative draws on a historical context that can easily be used to justify broad cultural claims. Historically, the brutal regime of Moulay Ismail, who maintained a vast army of enslaved Christians and was infamous for public executions (Gunther 62), contributed to Western perceptions of Morocco as a site of tyranny. Pellow’s narrative, however, transforms this specific political moment into evidence of a supposedly inherent Islamic barbarity, blurring the distinction between contingent historical circumstances and essentialized cultural traits. Yet even when grounded in lived experience, Pellow’s text ab-

stracts from historical particularity to construct a broader civilizational threat. As such, his narrative reproduces the Orientalist impulse to define Europe through the imagined barbarity of Islam. A critical reading must therefore restore that lost specificity rather than replicate the very homogenization that Said critiques.

Pellow further emphasizes the East's supposed irrationality and violence through visual and spatial descriptions that reinforce Orientalist binaries. He writes:

A sea wall with some not very dangerous looking guns, the minarets of a few mosques, and the great tower of Sma-Hassan behind, form a scene seemingly more suggestive to the artist than to the historian. Yet this is the twin town of Kabat-Sallee, which has a long chronicle of blood and slaughter and has perhaps been the scene of as much misery as any spot between Agadir and Algiers. (Pellow 9)

Though observational in tone, the passage trades on ambiguity and vague insinuation, particularly in Pellow's use of the word "perhaps," which invites readers to imagine a history of cruelty whether or not it is verifiable. For readers already conditioned by captivity narratives to expect brutality, such speculative gestures easily reinforce existing assumptions. This reliance on suggestion rather than witnessed fact reveals a deeper function of Pellow's rhetoric: it enables him to reassert his English identity after a long and transformative captivity. When he returned to England after twenty-three years in Morocco,

guards initially refused him landing because of his Moorish clothing (Pellow 317). In this context, Orientalist speculation becomes a strategy of cultural reintegration: by exaggerating Moroccan cruelty and instability, he distances himself from the very culture that has physically marked him. By privileging insinuation over empirical observation, Pellow aligns his story with the expectations of an English audience primed to view Islam and North Africa as barbaric threats, thereby securing his own place within that audience.

This strategy would have resonated especially strongly in Penryn, his Cornish hometown, where the borough's coat of arms featured a golden "Saracen's head" surrounded by eight bezants, a heraldic emblem of the Muslim enemy rooted in Crusader imagery ([Civic Heraldry of England and Wales: South West](#)). Even before his capture at the age of eleven, Pellow had already been shaped by this symbolic framework, one that cast Islam as a hereditary adversary and Christianity as the guarantor of communal identity. For a community steeped in such iconography, Pellow's later assertions of Christian loyalty and his condemnation of Islam would have offered visible reassurance that captivity had not transformed him into the enemy. His use of aesthetic description to encode ideological judgment, where even a word like "perhaps" carries colonial weight, thus reflects not only a genre convention but a deeply personal need to make sense of his dislocation and reassert his cultural belonging. As Said notes, "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes

one of the main connections between them” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xiii). In this light, Pellow’s account becomes less an objective record of experience than a deliberate shaping of a story designed to affirm Western fears and restore his place within them.

The narrative’s construction of civilizational opposition is evident in Pellow’s comparison between Europe and North Africa, where he manufactures religious, cultural, and racial divisions as inherently oppositional. He writes:

It is scarcely possible to point to any other twelve miles of water which divides two lands more the antipodes of each other, so far as manners and faith and future are concerned. For they intervene between the Cross and the Crescent, between Europe with its progressive culture and Africa with its unadvancing barbarism. In an hour, we are back into the Middle Ages, seem to have steamed a thousand miles. And all this holds true of brown Barbary. (Pellow 8)

Here, the dichotomy of “the Cross and the Crescent” aligns religious and racial hierarchies with cultural ones, casting Western modernity as progressive and Eastern society as stagnant. The phrase “brown Barbary” racializes this contrast, linking moral and intellectual inferiority to skin color and reinforcing colonial notions that justified domination through a presumed civilizational hierarchy. Pellow later adopts a more overtly Christian tone to validate this hierarchy, remarking: “Their country is so very rich, spacious, and populous, it is much to be regretted that it should go under any other denomination than that of a

part of christianhood” (148) (148). The implication—that only Christians merit wealth and prosperity—echoes the Puritan ideology in Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, where faith defines moral legitimacy. In both texts, Christian identity serves as a civilizational boundary that sanctifies conquest and cultural domination. Having used spatial and historical description to distance himself from Moroccan society, Pellow extends this strategy into the realm of the body, where dehumanization becomes another means of asserting cultural and moral difference. His portrayal of Arab society frequently highlights perceived moral contradictions to underscore cultural inferiority. He notes: “They never crop their tails or ears, nor geld them, for they like no maimed creatures but eunuchs for other reasons” (69). This comparison, where animals are treated more humanely than enslaved persons, casts Arab society as morally inverted and grotesque. The presence of eunuchs further emphasizes perceived cruelty and sexual deviance, reinforcing Pellow’s depiction of irrational and despotic governance. By shifting from descriptions of place to descriptions of the body, Pellow intensifies his Orientalist project: the cultural Other becomes not only spatially distant but physically and morally distorted. These depictions mirror longstanding Orientalist tropes that associate non-Western societies with arbitrary violence and inhumanity, enabling Pellow to consolidate a sense of English civility in contrast.

Gendered representations in Pellow’s narrative contribute to a broader discourse of cultural degradation by reducing Arab women to grotesque distorted creatures. He de-

scribes them as having “eyebrows [that were] painted black, and continued quite round their temples, like a pair of whiskers” (67). The use of animalistic imagery evokes ridicule and otherness, stripping the women of subjectivity. His fascination with henna, kohl, and facial markings reflects an Orientalist gaze that exoticizes female bodies while reinforcing their cultural inferiority. Leonard Cassuto’s concept of the racial grotesque is particularly relevant here. As Cassuto argues, the grotesque blurs boundaries between human and animal, self and other, to reinforce dominant cultural identities. Pellow’s portrayals of Arab women, as both hyper-visible and dehumanized, serve to uphold Western norms of gender and racial superiority.

Extending his use of gendered representation as a tool of cultural degradation, Pellow turns from everyday women to elite sexual and political structures, using the harem to demonstrate what he presents as the racial and civilizational inferiority of his captors. This exoticization continues in his account of Queen Hellema Hazzezas and the emperor’s concubines, where sexual hierarchy becomes a vehicle for reinforcing dictatorship and cultural backwardness. He notes the presence of “thirty-eight of the Emperor’s concubines, and several eunuchs” (50) living in strict seclusion. In one instance, Pellow is nearly executed for refusing the emperor entry to his own harem without prior notice, while other guards are beheaded (59). This anecdote reinforces the trope of the Eastern dictatorship, arbitrary, volatile, and irrational. The harem, long fetishized in Western literature, becomes

here not a site of sensual luxury but one of authoritarian control and cruelty, underscoring the perceived danger of non-Western power and reinforcing Pellow's broader project of racial and cultural Othering.

Pellow's racial biases emerge explicitly in his resistance to interracial marriage, revealing the depth of internalized European superiority. When offered a bride by the emperor, he states: "[He] would be graciously pleased" (64) if she were of his own color. Though raised in North Africa from childhood, Pellow maintains European standards of racial purity, rejecting the possibility of cultural or bodily integration. This moment exemplifies Stuart Hall's theory of internalized representation, in which individuals adopt and reproduce dominant cultural codes. Pellow's request for a white wife, even in the midst of an Arab society that does not share the same racialized hierarchies, reflects the persistence of European racial ideology as a means of asserting identity and status. His captors honor his request, suggesting an ironic inversion of power wherein colonial values are reinforced even within the colonial subject's captivity.

Ultimately, Pellow's narrative operates as both testimony and ideological instrument, advancing an image of the Arab/Muslim as inferior in religious, cultural, racial, and gendered terms. These depictions, whether in the form of despotic rulers, grotesque women, or irrational religious customs, reinforce a civilizational hierarchy that privileges whiteness, Christianity, and Western modernity. As such, *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow* is a

document deeply embedded in the imperial imagination, shaped by and contributing to the narratives that justified slavery, colonialism, and Western domination.

1.3 John Foss, *A Journal, of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss: Several Years a Prisoner in Algiers: Together with Some Account of the Treatment of Christian Slaves when Sick: and Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Algerines*

In 1793, Algerian privateers exploited a brief pause in Portuguese naval patrols to expand their raiding range. As Jacob Crane explains in “Barbary(an) Invasions: The North African Figure in Republican Print Culture,” “Algerian cruisers took advantage of a temporary treaty ... and capture(d) eleven American ships and imprison(ed) over a hundred sailors. That September, Newburyport native John Foss was captured and enslaved after his ship, the *Polly*, was taken off the coast of North Africa”⁽³³²⁾. Foss’s *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss (1798)* recounts his ordeal and release under

the 1795 Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and Algeria, negotiated by David Humphreys, Joseph Donaldson, and Joel Barlow. His narrative reflects both personal trauma and the ideological climate of the late eighteenth century, when Barbary piracy was portrayed as a barbaric threat to Western civilization. Crane situates Foss's text within the broader print culture of the 1790s, noting that captivity narratives of this period often sensationalized North African captors to reinforce fears of Islamic cruelty and justify European and American intervention. Foss's depictions of "Arabs" and "Muslims," though shaped by his own suffering, also echo these Orientalist conventions, portraying his captors as monolithic, violent, and morally depraved. His work thus functions as both testimony and propaganda, a cultural artifact that reveals how personal experience and inherited prejudice intertwined in the early American imagination of the Muslim "other." Within this ideological climate, Foss's narrative transforms personal experience into a moral drama that reasserts Western, Christian authority through the very language of description and comparison, revealing how diction and rhetorical framing function as instruments of cultural domination.

Foss's *Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings* reinforces a framework of American and Christian superiority through rhetorical strategies that exoticize and dehumanize Arab culture. Foss uses language as a tool of othering, presenting Arab customs and traditions as strange, alien, and morally inferior in contrast to the presumed rationality and virtue of

Christian or Western values. His emphasis on cultural distinctions, particularly in dress, religious practice, and social norms, constructs Arabs as exotic "others" whose difference serves to affirm Western familiarity and cultural dominance. Religion also serves as a basis for cohesion among Christian captives, creating a sense of shared moral identity in contrast to their captors.

Yet Foss's account also exposes the performative quality of this Christian identity: it is something that can be imitated and weaponized. He describes how pirates exploited this trust by using Christian appearance and English speech to lure their victims:

When she came near enough to make us hear, she hailed us in English, asked from whence we came, and were bound; which was immediately answered by Capt. Bayley. The man who hailed us, was dressed in the Christian habit, and he was the only person we could yet see on her deck. (5)

The betrayal is swift and jarring:

By this time the Brig was under our stern, we then saw several men jump upon her poop, to haul aft the main sheet and saw by their dress, and their long beard, that they were Moors or Algerines. Our feelings at this unwelcome sight, are more easily imagined than described: She then hove too under our lee, when we heard a most terrible shouting, clapping of hands, huzzaing. And

saw a great number of men rise up with their beads above the gunnel, draft in the Turk|in habit, like them we saw on the poop. (5-6)

Here, language and dress become tools of deception, revealing that Christianity and European identity function less as inherent truths than as performances of moral and cultural authority scripts that can be copied, inverted, or used against their supposed bearers. If the pirates' mimicry in the earlier scene destabilizes Christian identity, Foss's later authorship reasserts control, transforming imitation into moral proof.

The instability produced by this mimicry makes Foss's later reliance on faith and authorship significant: having witnessed Christian identity weaponized against him, he turns to narrative and religion to stabilize and reclaim it. Religion is central to Foss's captivity narrative, functioning both as a source of personal strength and as a framework for asserting Christian superiority over Islam. His narrative transforms his trauma into testimony and allows him space to reclaim moral and intellectual authority through authorship. Like many Christian captivity narratives of the time, Foss's account emphasizes the redemptive power of Christian faith, which he credits for his endurance and moral clarity amid suffering. His depiction of divine justice and providence reinforces Christianity as a righteous and redemptive force. In one example, he recounts an incident in which a cruel Muslim master meets a sudden death while attempting to punish a Christian slave:

A slave was going upon some plank, which were laid from the first wall to the

second, having his load upon his back. Sherief, thinking he did not proceed as fast as he might, ran, and endeavoring to strike him missed his stroke, his stick gave him such a sudden jerk, that he fell from the planks, between the walls, and was dashed to pieces. Thus ended the days of a Godless wretch, apparently in a moment, swept away by the devout breath of a suffering Christian. (20-21)

This depiction casts the Christian slave as morally protected by divine intervention while the Muslim enslaver suffers immediate retribution. Yet for Foss, a young, working-class sailor with limited education, authorship itself becomes an act of empowerment. By presenting himself as both witness and moral commentator, he transforms his suffering into proof of spiritual resilience and intellectual worth. Thus, the narrative is not merely an expression of American or Christian superiority; it is Foss's way of reclaiming personal dignity and demonstrating that, even after captivity, his Christian virtue and reason affirm his value in a world that had reduced him to enslavement.

Foss's narrative reflects a theology of superiority in which Christian faith is portrayed as a source of moral strength, unity, and compassion, in contrast to the perceived cruelty of his Muslim captors. Beyond personal salvation, Foss constructs a theology of superiority in which Christian compassion itself becomes a sign of moral order. Christians appear as virtuous and empathetic, especially in their care for one another, and Foss turns that care into narrative evidence. He highlights this sense of communal solidarity in his description

of a hospital for enslaved Christians:

The hospital for Christian slaves, stands in the principal street of the town. ...
When a slave is found so sick that he is incapable of doing any kind of work,
they then permit him to go into this hospital, ... while he remains here he is
very well used by the Doctors and Priests. They generally allow three or four
of the former, and eight or ten of the latter to attend it. (51-52)

This passage casts Christian clergy as organized, benevolent, and authoritative, reinforcing Christianity as inherently compassionate and morally superior. At the same time, Foss's description turns that compassion into a kind of performance: charity becomes a visible marker of civility, order, and Western moral governance. The mutual care among captives operates as a moral spectacle, dramatizing an opposition between Christian care and Muslim cruelty. Yet the scene also serves another function. By showing captives tending to one another, Foss frames religion as a shared language of survival that helps the enslaved interpret suffering, endure it, and assert their humanity. In this sense, his account resonates with strategies later seen among enslaved Africans in the Americas, where Christianity similarly operated as both spiritual refuge and collective resistance, allowing the enslaved to claim dignity under conditions designed to strip it away.

Foss's narrative not only asserts religious superiority but transfers the civility, discipline, and moral authority he associates with Christianity onto the American nation itself. By

extending Christian moral order to the political sphere, he reframes faith as the foundation of American civic identity, marking a broader ideological transition from spiritual unity to national cohesion. This shift becomes explicit in his reflection on being ransomed by the United States government, where he frames American intervention not merely as diplomatic success but as proof of the nation's inherent humanity and virtue. He writes:

The generosity of the United States to us their enslaved countrymen was of inestimable value... The Republican government of the United States have set an example of humanity to all the governments of the world... They exclaimed... 'Though we were slaves, we were gentlemen.' (44-46)

Here Foss elevates the United States as a moral exemplar whose behavior fulfills the same ethical expectations he associates with Christianity. By describing the American government as uniquely humane, and by highlighting the captives' claim that "we were gentlemen" (46) despite enslavement, Foss constructs national identity as an extension of Christian virtue. In this formulation, American civility becomes the secular counterpart to religious righteousness, reinforcing a civilizational hierarchy that privileges Western, Christian, and now explicitly American authority over the "merciless barbarians" who held them captive.

As Foss shifts from religious to national forms of superiority, he also turns to irony as a rhetorical tool, using it to expose what he represents as the moral hypocrisy of his captors

and to reaffirm the cultural virtues he attributes to Christian, and now American, identity. Recounting the cruelty of a jailer named Sherief, he writes, “The most Tyrannical guardian, or task-master, we had, during my captivity, was known by the name of Sherief. This cruel villain never appeared to be in his element, except when he was cruelly punishing some Christian captive. In the month of April 1790” (20). By highlighting the contrast between the name Sherief, meaning “honorable” in Arabic, and the man’s actions, Foss reinforces Orientalist tropes of Islamic duplicity. While his account is shaped by extensive exposure to Arab society, it ultimately returns to cultural scripts that associate Muslims with violence, treachery, and moral inversion. Still, Foss allows room for ambiguity. He notes, “It was soothing to find a spark of humanity in my barbarous masters” (6), when an old Turk offers him a shirt and sympathy. These brief moments of compassion complicate the binary Foss otherwise relies upon and suggest that lived experience sometimes unsettled the ideological framework of captivity narratives. The narrative’s tension between demonization and reluctant admiration culminates in a surprising reversal near the end.

Building on this use of irony, Foss extends the same rhetorical strategy to his depictions of everyday religious hypocrisy among his captors, reinforcing the moral distance he constructs between Christian and Muslim behavior. In a passage steeped in irony and accusation, he recounts witnessing an Algerian, Mustafa, secretly violating Islamic law: “Mustafa... would often go into the Bagnio and purchase wine... and sit down and drink

among them. One evening... I saw Mustafa, drinking wine, and eating pork sausages” (47). Here, Foss highlights the gap between Islamic religious ideals and actual behavior. His mocking account of Mustafa’s response, “Hold your tongue you unbeliever, if you do not tell me, I shall not know,” frames Islam as a hollow set of rules enforced only under scrutiny. This depiction reinforces the Orientalist trope of the hypocritical Muslim, a figure who outwardly adheres to religious law while privately violating it, thereby undermining the integrity of Islam itself.

Foss extends his critique of duplicity to religious spaces, casting the mosque as a site where Islamic law appears both protective and morally ambiguous. He writes: “When a slave commits any crime... if he can get into one of their Marabout Mosques, they will not inflict any kind of punishment, except an additional chain upon his leg” (27). Foss’s description acknowledges that Islamic tradition forbids the spilling of blood within a sacred space, yet he treats this protection with skepticism. What appears “doubtful” to Foss is not the rule itself but its moral meaning: rather than reading sanctuary as an expression of mercy or piety, he interprets it as a loophole in an otherwise brutal system, something that captives might exploit and that Muslim authorities might tolerate for pragmatic rather than spiritual reasons. This framing allows Foss to portray the mosque’s sanctuary as an example of legal inconsistency rather than genuine religious compassion.

This impression extends to other Islamic practices. By pairing his account of the mosque

with his description of Ramadan, Foss suggests that even Islam's most visible rituals are marked by alterity and difference rather than moral coherence. He describes the fast as "After their Ramadan, a fast which they keep a whole moon... every slave must carry as a present to the task-master, two fowls" (33). The phrasing "their Ramadan" emphasizes distance and reinforces the dichotomy between Christian and Muslim observance. In linking these examples, Foss constructs a pattern: whether in the mosque's conditional mercy or in the rituals of Ramadan, Islamic faith is depicted as fundamentally other, governed by rules that seem arbitrary, strategic, or culturally alien. Through this rhetoric, he reasserts the moral clarity of Christianity in contrast to what he represents as the inconsistencies of Islamic practice.

Having framed Islamic ritual and sacred practice as inconsistent and culturally alien, Foss reinforces this portrayal by turning to the realm of punishment, where he presents Islamic law as not merely different but violently arbitrary. Foss's graphic descriptions of torture serve as a central rhetorical device to highlight the brutality Christian captives endured, reinforcing their moral superiority while casting their Muslim captors as cruel and inhumane. In a particularly vivid passage, Foss writes:

There is several other punishments, for the christian captives, for capital offences. Sometimes they are burned, or rather roasted alive. At other times they are impaled... For being found with a Mahometan woman he is beheaded, and

the woman, is put into a sack... For suspicion of being with them the slave is castrated... For murder of a Mahometan he is cast off from the walls of the city, upon iron hooks... sometimes they hang in this manner in the most exquisite agonies for several days. (24-25)

These grotesque punishments function on multiple rhetorical levels. They evoke empathy from Christian readers, reinforce the captives' victimhood, and dramatize the cultural and religious contrast between the perceived civility of Christianity and the supposed barbarism of Islam. Foss's detailed catalog of punishments simultaneously exposes the absolute power wielded by Muslim captors and elevates the captives' moral and spiritual resolve. By emphasizing the endurance required to maintain one's faith in such conditions, Foss suggests that Christian perseverance under torture is both admirable and redemptive. I would argue that Foss is also drawing on biblical precedent here, implicitly aligning his captives with figures such as Job and the early Christian martyrs who refused to renounce their faith despite suffering. In doing so, he situates his narrative within a familiar Christian typology of trial and endurance, framing captivity as a test ordained by God. This intertextual echo aligns the Arab captors with the persecuting Romans of biblical history, an empire that, like theirs, ultimately fell, thereby reinforcing the providential logic that Christianity endures while worldly powers decay.

Extending his portrayal of religious and legal practices as culturally alien, Foss turns to

everyday social rituals, such as marriage ceremonies, to reinforce the same Orientalist logic of exoticization and moral distance. In recounting the ritual, he writes, “When a young man would marry... the bride is then set on horseback... amid the shouts and huzzas... [and] never stirs from the tent, for the space of a whole moon... These are the ceremonies... among those savage barbarians” (36-37). Even though Foss acknowledges he never witnessed such a wedding, his retelling relies on secondhand information framed within Orientalist tropes. The language, “shouts,” “savage barbarians,” emphasizes both spectacle and perceived irrationality. His portrayal turns cultural difference into a form of entertainment for the Western reader, reinforcing what Edward Said describes in *Orientalism* as the West’s tendency to construct the East as a site of mystery, sensuality, and irrational tradition. By exaggerating or selectively reporting customs, Foss appeals to a European audience primed to see the East as not merely different, but inferior and fundamentally alien.

This escalating depiction of cultural, legal, and social difference culminates in Foss’s broader construction of Christian identity as the moral counterpoint to the Islamic “other,” aligning his narrative with the rhetoric of victimization and resilience found in Thomas Pellow’s account of captivity in Morocco. His depictions of personal suffering and communal endurance position Christian captives as innocent victims of Muslim cruelty, deserving of sympathy and moral validation. The narrative thus becomes a site of Western courage, where faith, endurance, and unity triumph over perceived barbarism. The assertion that

“the Algerians tried to purchase the Roman Catholic slaves first. They considered them more honest and obedient” (Bennett 77) reflects a twist; even the captors, Foss implies, recognize Christian moral superiority. In doing so, Foss subtly reinforces a hierarchy of virtue that privileges Christianity even within systems of enslavement.

Taken together, Foss’s escalating depictions of religious ritual, legal punishment, and social custom weave religion, language, and cross-cultural interaction into a larger ideological framework that legitimizes Christian endurance and Western moral authority. While his account reflects the evolving complexity of Mediterranean diplomacy and intercultural contact, it remains grounded in a deeply Orientalist discourse, one that portrays Islam and Arab culture as fundamentally inferior, even when it concedes moments of individual humanity. These portrayals, shaped by personal trauma and cultural bias, contributed to the broader legacy of captivity narratives in shaping Western perceptions of the Arab and Muslim world. At the same time, this ideological pattern prepares the ground for Foss’s more explicitly nationalistic gestures, where Christian moral superiority becomes inseparable from American civic identity.

Building on this fusion of religious and cultural hierarchy, Foss’s narrative also operates as an emerging expression of American national identity, positioning the United States as the political inheritor of the Christian virtue he repeatedly asserts. His account functions simultaneously as a record of personal suffering, a Christian testimonial, and a nationalist

document shaped by deeply Orientalist assumptions. Foss's use of language, his emphasis on religious endurance, his depictions of brutality, and his strategic moral distancing all serve to elevate Western, Christian, and specifically American identity. Drawing on stereotypes and descriptions of Arab customs, Foss participates in a broader cultural project of constructing the Muslim "other" as both threat and spectacle. While his narrative includes moments of doubt and isolated kindness, these are overwhelmed by rhetorical strategies that emphasize the moral and civilizational superiority of the West. As such, Foss's captivity narrative exemplifies the ideological function of the genre: to assert dominance, inspire sympathy, and solidify cultural binaries in the service of religious, racial, and national hierarchies.

1.4 Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams*

In *The Narrative of Robert Adams*, first published in 1816, Adams recounts his captivity at the age of twenty-five, claiming to have been captured and enslaved in North Africa and taken to Timbuktu. His account must also be understood in light of his personal circumstances: born in 1790 to a mixed-race mother in New York, where slavery was still legal, Adams occupied an uncertain social position. As a result, his narrative operates at the intersection of economic necessity, racial consciousness, and ideological performance.

Scholars such as Ann Fabian, in *The Unvarnished Truths*, have questioned the authenticity of Adams's story, arguing that he may have not even existed and that the purpose of the narrative was "to sell books to an unsuspecting public hungry for exotic tales of Timbuctoo" (Adams xxii). This skepticism is particularly important because Adams structures his narrative as a coherent sequence of events leading to his eventual liberation, a linear, almost formulaic trajectory that mirrors other captivity narratives of the period and raises questions about how much of the story reflects narrative convention rather than memory. Unlike Pellow and Foss, whose accounts hinge on religious endurance and encounters with Islam, Adams's narrative derives its authority from exploration and ethnographic detail, culminating in his claim to be the first Westerner to reach Timbuktu. If true, this would make him the first European to set foot in the long-mythologized city; if exaggerated, it reveals the extent to which his narrative relies on, and contributes to, the imperial fantasy of discovery.

In the introduction to his narrative, Simon Cock, the editor responsible for shaping the published text, underscores the growing metropolitan interest in Adams's story, attributing it to the financial and exploratory stakes associated with the regions Adams claimed to have visited. Cock notes that "the interest of the story was much heightened at that particular moment, by the circumstance of the recent embarkation of Major Peddie and his companions, to explore those very parts of Africa which this person was said to have

visited” (2). His commentary situates Adams’s account within imperial projects and the broader European fascination with African territories, not because these regions were unknown in any absolute sense, but because they remained unexplored by Europeans and thus held strategic and commercial promise. Cock further remarks that “The Narrative now presented to the public, is the fruit of these interrogatories,” emphasizing the editorial labor invested in producing a coherent and saleable text. By foregrounding the interrogation process and Adams’s apparent sincerity, Cock works to persuade readers of the narrative’s authenticity, a move that would have enhanced public confidence and, by extension, the commercial value of the publication. After detailing the steps taken to verify Adams’s story, Cock ultimately reassures the audience that “enough, it is hoped, has been said to satisfy the Reader that the Narrative is genuine” (xiii-xv), revealing how claims to truthfulness functioned as both editorial strategy and marketing tool.

Within this commercial and ideological framework, Adams’s motives become clearer. As a man of color navigating an economy of belief and prejudice, he appears to have leveraged popular expectations about African “barbarism” and Christian endurance to both validate his identity and secure financial survival. His narrative caters to British curiosity about the African interior while reaffirming European notions of racial and religious hierarchy. Yet, as a mixed-race author acutely aware of racial rhetoric, Adams also manipulates the very discourse that excludes him, using Christian rhetoric to align himself with the

moral authority of the West and to distinguish himself from the Africans he describes.

The Narrative of Robert Adams was published after his alleged liberation and return to Europe. While Adams's account of his exact location may be imprecise, his ordeal and disorientation likely impaired his geographical memory, resulting in a misidentified the exact place, one that may have been near, but not within, Timbuktu. This ambiguity becomes more significant when we consider the circumstances of his "discovery" by the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, which immediately recognized the potential commercial and political value of a narrative claiming entry into a region Europeans had long sought to access. For Adams, already navigating the dual burdens of financial precarity and racial marginalization, the attention of this Company likely heightened the pressure to deliver a narrative that aligned with European expectations. His awareness of the ideological appetite for tales of African exoticism and danger suggests that he was not merely a passive participant in this discourse but also a strategic narrator who shaped his account to secure economic support and social validation from a white audience.

Whether Adams's account is fact or fiction is ultimately irrelevant to my analysis. The purpose here is not to validate the historical accuracy of his experiences, but to examine how Arabs and Muslims are portrayed within the text; portrayals that persist regardless of factual grounding. These depictions reflect and reinforce the lens through which the West has historically viewed the East: as alien, threatening, and inferior. Such representations

emphasize the longstanding stereotypes that played a central role in shaping Western cultural ideologies. Read through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Adams's account functions not merely as a tale of survival but as a cultural artifact that contributes to the ideological construction of the East as a space defined by danger, mystery, and otherness. Simultaneously, the blurred line between fact and fiction aligns with Leonard Cassuto's concept of the racial grotesque, which emerges from the instability of categorical boundaries. Adams's ambiguous identity, as both victim and possible fabricator, embodies the tension between narrative authenticity and ideological function, revealing how such captivity stories operate within unstable yet powerful frameworks that serve colonial authority and epistemological control.

Early in his narrative, Adams offers a deliberately vague description of where he and his crewmates came ashore after the shipwreck, creating an ambiguity that allows readers to imagine a range of possible locations. Because the sailors are on land by this point, disoriented, injured, and uncertain, this lack of geographical clarity subtly prepares the reader to accept imprecision as a natural consequence of crisis. Adams writes, "Newsham and Matthews, who were old sailors, and had been on the coast before, speaking to the mate, stating their opinion that the Captain did not know where he was steering: the ship's course was then south south-west" (30). Although Adams is not asserting his own expertise here, this moment introduces the possibility of navigational error and thus plants reasonable

doubt about the accuracy of their final landing site. This uncertainty strengthens Adams's credibility by framing the later confusion over location as circumstantially understandable rather than deceptive.

Yet the same narrative that embraces imprecision in geography becomes curiously specific when describing the “Moors” who capture him. Adams writes: “The Moors were straight haired, but quite black; their dress consisted of little more than a rug or a skin round their waist, their upper parts and from their knees down wards, being wholly naked” (31). This portrayal does not match typical North African attire and instead recalls the tropes used in colonial literature to describe Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The issue here is not the narrative's questionable authenticity, but the ideological work these representations perform. Adams, himself a mixed-race or racially marginalized man, constructs the captors as racially distinct from himself, emphasizing their “straight hair” and “quite black” skin in ways that distance him from African identity. Whether his description is invented or distorted, this racialized framing functions to position him closer to a European identity and further from the Blackness associated with enslavement. Even if the portrayal derives from imagination rather than observation, its ideological purpose is clear: it marks his captors as a different, more “primitive” racial category, allowing Adams to narrate his own suffering without aligning himself with the very racialized assumptions that Europeans used to justify the enslavement of Africans.

When describing the suffering of the European sailors taken with him, Adams writes, “Moors stripped all of them naked, and hid the clothes under ground, as well as the articles which they had collected from the ship, or which had floated ashore. Being thus exposed to a scorching sun, their skins became dreadfully blistered, and at night they were obliged to dig holes in the sand to sleep in, for the sake of coolness” (33). This passage participates in a broader pattern within Western captivity narratives that emphasizes the physical vulnerability of Europeans in contrast to the presumed hardiness of their African or Arab captors. Yet it is crucial to note that Adams does not describe his own body here; the pronoun “them” refers to the white European sailors on his ship. The racial logic of the scene therefore depends on contrast: the Europeans blister and burn under the sun, while the “Moors” appear unaffected, not because Adams suggests Arabs are biologically suited to labor, but because the narrative frames white suffering as exceptional and therefore rhetorically valuable. This device allows Adams to align himself with a longstanding colonial trope in which European fragility is used to underscore moral refinement, even as he himself, a mixed-race individual, occupies an ambivalent position in relation to that ideal.

Rather than naturalizing Arab or African bodies as inherently suited to hardship, Adams deploys this imagery to dramatize the extremity of European suffering in captivity. The emphasis falls on the violation of the expected racial order: Europeans, imagined as

culturally elevated and physically unaccustomed to harsh labor, are rendered abject. This rhetorical strategy mirrors similar scenes in Thomas Pellow's narrative, where the exposure of European bodies to the elements serves to heighten the shock of their degradation and reinforce the notion that their suffering represents a profound inversion of the natural or civilizational hierarchy. Such passages affirm Edward Said's insight that Orientalism constructs the East as biologically and culturally other, not necessarily to celebrate Eastern strength but to highlight Western vulnerability, a vulnerability that then legitimizes Western intervention, moral superiority, and imperial power.

Adams's portrayal of the "Moors" reflects the racial logic embedded in Western narratives of slavery and colonialism, even as his own racial identity complicates that logic. In describing their living and eating habits, Adams writes, "So extremely indigent were these people, that when unable to catch fish, they were in danger of starving" (32). While this depiction does not align neatly with established European stereotypes of Arabs, it nevertheless draws on a broader racial discourse that associated African and non-European peoples with poverty, inefficiency, and a lack of resourcefulness. By emphasizing their precarious subsistence, Adams participates in a narrative tradition that framed non-Western societies as economically and culturally deficient, a discourse historically used to rationalize enslavement by casting subjugation as a response to "indigence" or "backwardness."

Yet the dynamic at play in Adams's narrative is more complex than a simple reiteration

of racial hierarchy. As a mixed-race former slave, Adams occupies an unstable positionality: his descriptions often create distance between himself and the African communities he encounters, highlighting their “indigence” while emphasizing traits that align him with European cultural norms. This strategy enables him to secure narrative authority and patronage without explicitly endorsing the idea that Africans or Arabs are inherently suited to servitude, an argument the text never explicitly makes. Instead, the contrast he constructs operates rhetorically to elevate European suffering in slavery: the implication is not that non-white peoples are naturally fitted for slavery, but that European enslavement is especially shocking because it violates expectations of status and cultural difference. By positioning European captivity as a profound affront to the social order while portraying Moorish deprivation as ordinary or expected, Adams reinforces a racialized hierarchy without naturalizing his own subjugation or suggesting that non-European peoples are destined for servitude.

Adams also engages with religious and cultural anxieties prevalent in early nineteenth-century Europe, particularly those surrounding Islam. He recounts a disturbing encounter that plays on fears of religious and racial contamination. In one passage, Adams meets a man who physically resembles a Frenchman but wears Moorish attire. As their conversation unfolds, the topic of religion becomes increasingly charged. Adams observes, “Adams was of opinion that he had turned Mohammedan, although he assured Captain Horton

that he had not done so” (33). Here, the ambiguity of the man’s appearance and religious affiliation becomes a source of discomfort. The fact that the man must explicitly deny having converted to Islam underscores how threatening a conversion would have been perceived by Adams and his audience. The mere act of wearing Moorish clothing is portrayed as sufficient to destabilize identity, suggesting a form of cultural and racial contamination. This moment reflects a broader Western anxiety about Islam, which was seen not only as a theological rival but also as a marker of civilizational decline. Religion, in this context, becomes a powerful tool for reinforcing racial hierarchies, where adherence to Christianity affirms European superiority, and association with Islam, voluntary or not, marks a fall into barbarism. These themes resonate with the Orientalist framework outlined by Edward Said, in which the East is depicted as a cultural and moral threat to Western identity.

In examining the depiction of Arabs as impure, it becomes evident that Adams’s narrative reflects broader cultural prejudices and entrenched power imbalances, even as his own background complicates his participation in them. Although Adams was likely influenced by dominant Western ideologies that dehumanized non-Western societies, his position as a formerly enslaved, mixed-race individual, almost certainly the product of sexual exploitation, suggests that he may have harbored a deep skepticism toward the very structures of Western superiority he nonetheless reproduces. This tension underscores how his narrative simultaneously resists and panders to dominant expectations: to secure credibility and

patronage within a white British literary marketplace, Adams must align himself with its racial assumptions. Such dynamics surface early in the text, where Cock writes, “This was not the only evil they had to encounter, for as the Moors swarmed with lice, Adams and his companions soon became covered with them” (5). This framing constructs Eastern bodies as sources of contamination, reinforcing the binary opposition between a “civilized” West and a supposedly degenerate East. By mobilizing the language of impurity and infestation, the narrative participates in a Eurocentric worldview that elevates Western norms while diminishing the humanity of non-Western peoples. These depictions justify imperial domination by portraying Arabs and Muslims as biologically and culturally deficient, reducing them to symbols of filth and disorder. At the same time, Adams’s reliance on such tropes highlights the constraints under which he wrote: to gain acceptance, he must adopt narrative strategies that obscure the complexity and diversity of Arab and Muslim societies and erase alternative accounts of agency, resilience, and cultural richness.

The depiction of the Moors’ apparent lack of resistance in Adams’s narrative contributes to the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes about enslaved people of Arab, African, or Moorish descent. Such portrayals perpetuate the idea of passivity, a historically significant misconception that has been used to justify the enslavement of African peoples by diminishing their agency and obscuring histories of resistance. Adams writes,

During the next four or five days the party remained concealed, when one

evening, as they were all lying on the ground, a large party of Negroes... armed with daggers and bows and arrows, who surrounded and took them all prisoners, without the least resistance being attempted... The next day they were taken before the Governour, or chief person, named Mahamoud, a remarkably ugly Negro, who ordered that they should all be imprisoned. (37)

The emphasis on the lack of resistance and the racialized description of the captors not only reinforces stereotypes of African submission but also draws on moral judgments tied to race, further dehumanizing them.

Representing African, Arab, or Moorish individuals as naturally accustomed to servitude upholds longstanding racial hierarchies and colonial ideologies, a paradox made sharper by the fact that Adams, as a mixed-race individual seeking credibility before a British reading public, participates in reinforcing the very structures that marginalized him. His narrative was filtered through an audience and editorial apparatus that privileged whiteness, Christian identity, and Western “civilization,” and Adams’s portrayals often align with those expectations in ways that secure his authenticity while distancing him from African societies. This dynamic becomes clear in his descriptions of the physical and cultural practices of the people he encounters. He writes: “The houses have only a ground floor; and are without furniture or utensils, except wooden bowls, and mats made of grass. They never make fires in their houses. The lower order of people wear blankets,

which they buy from the Moors” (38). These depictions frame African societies as lacking technological and cultural development, implicitly positioning them as inferior to European norms. In adopting this perspective, Adams reinforces a vision of civilization rooted in Western material standards and socio-economic hierarchies, one that also bolsters his own position as a reliable narrator whose moral and cultural alignment with Europe must be continually asserted.

This racial logic extends even to the treatment of Adams and his fellow European captives. When they arrive in Timbuktu, Adams writes: “Upon their arrival at Tombuctoo, the whole party was immediately taken before the King, who ordered the Moors into prison, but treated Adams and the Portuguese boy as curiosities; taking them to his house, where they remained during their residence at Tombuctoo” (40). Here, the differential treatment reflects not whiteness per se—Adams, as a mixed-race individual, does not embody that category—but rather the perceived prestige and rarity of Europeans. In this context, “European” functions as a cultural and geopolitical identity that elevates Adams above African and Moorish captives, marking him as an exotic figure whose foreignness confers value. This distinction replicates the broader imperial worldview in which associations with Europe signify status, rationality, and cultural authority, while Blackness and Arabness are constructed as markers of disposability and subordination. The episode thus reveals how racial and cultural hierarchies operate even within the spaces of captivity, where Adams

is temporarily insulated by the symbolic capital of Europeanness despite his own racial marginalization.

Adams's narrative is thus steeped in the logic of white supremacy, a framework historically embedded in colonial expansion and the transatlantic slave trade. By portraying Africans, Arabs, and Moors as either complicit in or subjected to entrenched racial hierarchies, Adams participates in a literary tradition that rationalized European dominance through dehumanization and essentialized difference. Furthermore, the narrative appears consciously shaped to appeal to a European audience for the purposes of making money or gaining patronage. Despite discrepancies among the various versions of his account, Adams constructs a narrative that aligns seamlessly with Eurocentric expectations. His distress as a captive, his demonization of Arabs as "evil" or "monstrous," and his emphasis on exaggerated hardships all reflect a text shaped by economic motivations and cultural incentives. The financial support Adams received from the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa suggests institutional interest in commodifying his experience for public and commercial gain, reinforcing how market forces and racial politics together shaped the production and circulation of his narrative.

Ultimately, while the narrative contains elements that may reflect Adams's lived experience, its enduring legacy lies in its ideological function. Whether entirely factual or partially fabricated, the narrative presents a version of the East as threatening and bar-

baric, a portrayal that confirms and perpetuates Western fears and fantasies. In doing so, Adams's narrative not only illustrates personal endurance but also reinforces the cultural production of the Arab as a villain, a figure to be feared and dominated within the broader imperial imagination.

1.5 Conclusion

Thomas Pellow, John Foss, and Robert Adams serve as foundational sources in examining how captivity narratives contributed to the construction of the Arab as the cultural "other." Collectively, these accounts rely on recurring stereotypes that frame Arab and Muslim societies as alien, threatening, and morally inferior. These texts function not merely as personal testimonies of survival, but as ideological tools that shaped and reinforced Western perceptions of the East. By analyzing common motifs, such as food, dress, religious practices, and interpersonal relationships, we uncover a consistent portrayal of Arab cultures as strange, exotic, and often barbaric. These thematic consistencies reveal how the notion of the Arab "other" was not incidental, but deliberately cultivated and deeply embedded in the cultural imagination of the time. As such, these narratives played a crucial role in legitimizing Western superiority and colonial ambition by presenting the East as inherently uncivilized and in need of control. This shared narrative framework

continues to inform Western attitudes toward Arab and Muslim identities, demonstrating the long-lasting impact of these early literary representations.

Chapter 2

Arab and Muslim Presence at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the Arabic Press: The Struggle to Belong

2.1 Introduction

In 1856, the United States Army undertook an unusual experiment: importing camels for cargo transport across the Southwest. Because few soldiers had ever seen or handled camels, the Army secured the services of experienced handlers, including Hadji Ali (1828–1902), a Syrian who later became popularly known as Hi Jolly. As Nabhan notes, “Hi Jolly appears to be the first Moslem from the Middle East to arrive on the North American continent, and he came in the company of camels. By pulling off the first and only dromedary drive to cross the entire desert Southwest, Hadji Ali became one of the most peculiar heroes that Western history buffs have ever celebrated” (98). Despite the animals’ endurance, the

experiment met resistance. Soldiers mocked the beasts and refused to work with them, and as Nabhan observes, “few Americans were initially as impressed by the camels’ performance ... They disparaged their smell, their habit of spitting, their gait, their temperament, and their lack of utility when not shouldering heavy loads. In short, camels weren’t made for cowboys” (109). After the experiment’s collapse, Ali remained in the Southwest, working as a scout, miner, and trader. In death, however, he was transformed into a folk legend. As one story recounts, “Hi Jolly passed from a life on earth into the world of myth... Hi Jolly was in that drift ... having died with his arms around the neck of a long-lost camel” (115-116). His legacy, commemorated with a monument in Quartzsite, Arizona, underscores both the West’s fascination with the “exotic Arab” and the tendency to mythologize immigrants only after their marginalization in life (Arizona Memory Project).

Hadji Ali is a particularly illustrative figure in the history of the exotic Easterner, as his identity was reshaped to conform to Western perceptions. For Western audiences, Hadji Ali embodied both the allure and the ambiguity of the East represented. The camel, an unfamiliar and exotic animal to most Americans, became a symbol of the mysterious and distant Orient, sparking the imagination of a public eager for novelty. This fascination afforded Hadji Ali a unique opportunity to engage with and, to some extent, benefit from Western curiosity (Berman ix). At the same time, Hadji Ali’s engagement with Western society was marked by underlying tensions. For example, the transformation of his name

from "Hadji Ali" to "Hi Jolly" encapsulates the Western tendency to simplify, distort, and reconfigure Eastern identities to fit more comfortably within Western cultural frameworks. This renaming was not merely a matter of phonetic adaptation; rather, it reflected a deeper cultural impulse. The shift from "Hadji Ali," a name imbued with religious and cultural meaning, to "Hi Jolly," a lighthearted and seemingly nonsensical nickname, illustrates how the West often trivializes and appropriates Eastern identities. Such renaming served to diminish the cultural significance of the original identity while asserting Western dominance over it. This pattern of renaming and redefinition reflects a broader dynamic in which the West constructed its own sense of superiority by exoticizing and altering the East. In doing so, it reinforced a narrative that positioned the East as passive and controllable: an object of curiosity rather than a subject of equal cultural agency. The power to rename and redefine, in this context, becomes an exercise of cultural authority, underscoring the asymmetrical relationship between East and West. Hadji Ali's experience thus exemplifies the broader struggles faced by Arabs and Muslims in the West, where identity is frequently subject to distortion and misrepresentation. His story illustrates the tension between assimilation and resistance in a cultural landscape dominated by Western norms and expectations. Ultimately, the case of Hadji Ali reveals how fascination with the "Orient" could serve both as a source of engagement and as a mechanism of control, highlighting the complex power dynamics that continue to shape East-West relations.



Figure 2.1: Monument ([Hi Jolly Monument, Quartzsite, Arizona](#))

Building on the example of Hadji Ali, this chapter examines how similar patterns of representation, exoticism, and identity negotiation played out on a larger scale at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, which attracted 27 million attendees ([Rydell 40](#)), where portrayals of Turks, Arabs, and Muslims reflected and reinforced prevailing Western attitudes toward the "Orient." In the nineteenth century Arabs occupied a unique and ambiguous position in American consciousness. As Berman notes, "in nineteenth-century American discourse, the term Arab is often figurative. Arab could and did indicate an intermediary position between foreigner and citizen, black and white, primitive and civilized" ([1](#)) . This lack of clarity shaped the way Arabs were represented at the fair. Although the event was promoted as a universal exposition, it "presented the world for a particular kind of spectator. The perspective consistently emphasized was that of the affluent, white, American spectators who were assumed to be its chief visitors" ([Rudd par 12](#)).

This chapter explores the various portrayals of Arabs and Muslims at the fair and analyzes how these depictions influenced Arab immigrants and contributed to the complexities of Arab-American identity. Drawing on primary materials from the fair, it highlights how Arabs and Muslims were exhibited in the Midway Plaisance, specifically in Algeria & Tunis, the Moorish Palace, the Damascus Palace, the Bedouin Camp, Cairo Street, and Turkey, which appeared in the Foreign Country Pavilions ([Expo 1893 Chicago – Pavilions List](#)). Through my analysis, I explore how Arab immigrants in the late nineteenth century nego-

tiated their cultural identity in relation to American norms, sometimes aligning with them, sometimes resisting, and often inhabiting an in-between space shaped by both agency and structural constraint. To develop a multi-layered understanding, I draw on translations of popular Arabic newspapers and examine subtle cues in how Arabs posed and presented themselves for paintings and photographs, considering how these choices might reflect strategies of self-assertion as well as responses to the expectations of American audiences.

My argument is grounded in Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, which posits that colonizers constructed distorted, hierarchical views of the colonized, rooted in imperial and colonial ideologies. Said argues that these frameworks rely on ideology and language to justify and legitimize the domination of land, resources, and peoples (Said, "[Orientalism](#)" 21). Such language often characterizes colonized populations as inferior, uncivilized, and in need of Western control. Furthermore, Said emphasizes that recognizing and resisting these structures of power is fundamental to asserting human agency. According to his framework, the only way to challenge these entrenched systems of oppression is through the active resistance of those subjected to them.

In further considering how ideological constructs shape non-Western representations, my argument also draws on the framework established by Lhoussain Simour, who emphasizes how such cultural negotiations reflect broader political and societal processes. In her article, "American Fair Expositions Revisited: Morocco's Acrobatic Performers between

the Industry of Entertainment and the Violence of Racial Displays,” Simour explores how Arabs who attended and participated in the fair “negotiate their collective identities and individual agencies” (295). I emphasize how these negotiations reflect broader cultural and political processes. Given Americans’ limited knowledge of the Orient, their perceptions were heavily shaped by popular tales of conflict and captivity along the North African coast, such as “Barbary Captivity Narratives.” As discussed in Chapter One, these accounts offered a narrow and politicized perspective designed to reinforce the concept of the “other” and assert American superiority. This dynamic mirrors what Simour identifies in a broader European context: that Europeans constructed their own identities through comparison with others. She further explains that

the World’s Fairs developed discourse on ethnological living exhibits to Orientalize otherness and conceive of ‘Bedouin’ performers and performances as the ethnic facade of the nineteenth-century American entertainment industry...American orientalist ideas and practices became visible through the display of living exhibits in international fairs and aided in shaping popular imagination about the cultural geography of the Orient. (297)

I extend Simour’s analysis by examining the nuanced dynamics among Arab participants at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair.

The cultural staging of Arabs at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair shows how perfor-

mance, language, and religion functioned as tools of both representation and resistance. Arab participants navigated the Fair's ideological pressures, continually reshaping their identities in response to American media and institutional control. As Said argues, the West defines itself by constructing the "Orient" as its opposite, while Simour notes that Arab performers "negotiate their collective identities and individual agencies" (295). My analysis examines how Arab immigrants engaged with these imposed narratives, particularly through religion and language, while confronting the effects of American media. Fair organizers, requiring approval for cultural exhibitions, censored displays to fit Western sensibilities. These curated representations shaped by limited American knowledge and influenced by "Barbary Captivity Narratives," reinforced stereotypes and asserted Western dominance. Yet, Arab participants responded in diverse ways: some profited from the exotic image, others pursued assimilation, and still others subtly contested their roles. As Simour observes, such displays "aided in shaping popular imagination about the cultural geography of the Orient" (297).

English and Arabic-language newspapers serve as critical sources for understanding how Arab immigrants positioned themselves in relation to prevailing narratives of race, citizenship, and belonging in the United States. In addition to showing how non-Muslim Arabs contributed to the marginalization of Muslims by either aligning with or distancing themselves from depictions of "Turks" and Ottomans. Ultimately, this chapter reveals

how Arab participants both navigated and resisted the cultural expectations imposed upon them, shedding light on the broader power dynamics and identity negotiations at play in international expositions.

2.2 The Fair

The Chicago World's Fair was meant to celebrate advances on the cusp of the twentieth century. Countries jostled to share their accomplishments in culture and technology. At the same time, the Fair was also meant to entertain. Spectators spilling through the gates might want to see the dazzling electrical lights, but they also wanted to marvel at the foreign and unusual. Arab participants responded to these expectations in different ways: some Arab participants strategically embraced the American fascination with the "exotic Arab" in order to gain financially, while others resisted such portrayals by attempting to bridge cultural divides and assimilate into American society. This tension is particularly evident in the staging of Cairo Street, a carefully curated reproduction of a Middle Eastern marketplace that featured authentic architecture, commercial stalls, and live performances, including the much-publicized belly dancing. Many Arab performers on Cairo Street leaned into Western expectations of exoticism, recognizing the profitability of aligning themselves with such stereotypes. This spectacle was deliberately constructed to maximize appeal

and revenue, highlighting the performers' awareness of and engagement with Orientalist tropes (Max van Berchem Foundation). At the same time, there were growing concerns about misrepresentation, particularly from the Ottoman Empire itself. As Cohen notes, "the Ottoman government condemned different individuals and groups who they claimed were 'causing insult to Islam'" (Cohen 365). Not all Arab participants accepted the roles imposed upon them, whether by the Ottoman authorities or Western spectators. Some took steps to navigate these constraints in more subtle ways, seeking integration into American society. This is illustrated by reports that "many of the performers in the Midway's Turkish Village were caught changing into Western-style suits and dresses between their Oriental acts" (364). No doubt this allowed them to navigate the fair not as exhibits and subjects of scrutiny, but as participants and observers themselves. Such examples underscore the diverse strategies Arab participants employed to negotiate identity and agency within the broader context of American Orientalism.

While showcasing economic and technological achievement, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair also appeared to serve a deeper purpose: shaping a cohesive vision of American identity. This effort depended heavily on defining what was not American. In doing so, the Fair played a pivotal role in shaping cultural boundaries and reinforcing national identity through contrast. Taking place during a period of profound demographic transformation, marked by increased immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe and the internal

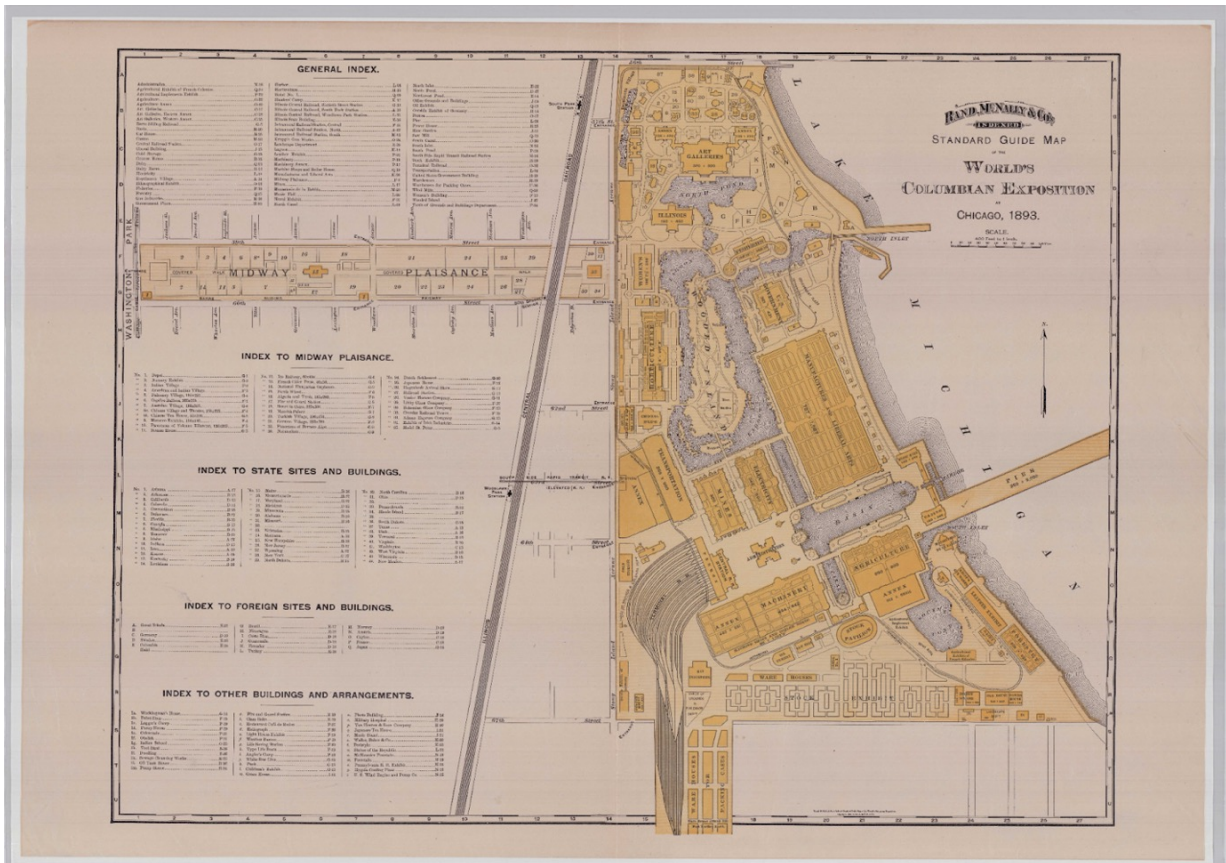


Figure 2.2: Map of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair (Rand McNally & Co.)

migration of African Americans from the rural South to urban centers, the fair became a microcosm of the broader societal tensions surrounding race, religion, and belonging (Smarthistory; Cultural Survival).

The spatial design of the fair itself reflected this cultural hierarchy. Starting at the Grand Court of Honor in Jackson Park, a visitor would first be greeted by the majestic Administration, Agriculture, and Manufactures and Liberal Arts Buildings, their white

façades glowing under the new electric lights. Passing by the ornate Woman's Building and the glass-domed Horticulture Building, and then marvelling at the bold "Golden Door" of the Transportation Building, they would continue westward into the long, lively corridor known as the Midway Plaisance. In contrast to the classical architecture of the main fairgrounds, the Midway's colorful spectacle unfolds as a series of international villages and amusements. Here, the Arab exhibits, including the Morocco Exhibits, Algeria and Tunis display, Street in Cairo, Moorish Palace, and Turkish Village, are clustered together, evoking the architecture, music, and markets of North Africa and the Ottoman world.

The deliberate separation between the White City and the Midway reflects how the Fair's organizers used the framing of the "Other" to address contemporary anxieties about American national identity. The Midway's bustling streets allowed visitors to step into the immersive experiences of Moorish courtyards, lively bazaars, and vibrant street performances that transport them far beyond the formal white edifices of the fair's central court. The displays on the Midway did not just reflect but actively shaped public perceptions, reinforcing the idea that the progress of civilization was synonymous with the dominance of white, Western culture: "Organizers divided the World's Fair into two racially specific areas. The White City depicted the millennial advancement of white civilization, while the Midway Plaisance, in contrast, presented the undeveloped barbarism of uncivilized, dark races" (Bederman 31). For example, the "Street in Cairo" exhibit presented an ex-

oticized version of Egyptian life, which contrasted with the glory of the White City and suggested that non-Western societies were less developed and less civilized (31). Visitors reinforced this perception in their own accounts. One article describing visitor experiences states that, “while venturing into (the) Midway Plaisance, guests faced even greater tensions due to language barriers and differences in cultural norms” (Scott). Another visitor described “the grotesqueness and the queer groupings, under our sky, of Asiatics and other people born far away” as “sights never to be forgotten,” (CRANE), emphasizing how the Midway transformed cultural difference into spectacle. The representation of non-American cultures as inferior served to justify their exclusion from the American ideal. The overall impact of placing the Midway Plaisance in contrast to the “White City,” with its grand Beaux-Arts architecture, symbolizing American order, modernity, and unity which excluded people of colour and non-Protestant religious groups, reinforced a narrow vision of Americanness, while the Midway Plaisance served as a curated display of non-Western cultures, often portrayed as “primitive” and “exotic” (Denver Public Library).

The imagining of Arabs and Africans was not that different from the conceptualization of Native Americans, who were often depicted as relics of a “vanishing race,” thus legitimizing their dispossession and the broader project of American expansionism (Rydell 159). Other ethnic and religious groups included in the fair were also rendered as culturally deficient, reinforcing their marginalization in the national narrative (Cultural Survival). Thus,

the 1893 Chicago World's Fair became a strategic cultural project that defined American-ness by constructing what it considered to be its opposite. This framing reinforced a sense of cultural hierarchy, inviting fairgoers to view Arab, Asian, and African participants through a lens of strangeness and wonder, rather than mutual understanding. The Midway served a purpose in ridiculing and establishing what Arabs are, rather than learning who they are.

Arab writers themselves commented on these continuities. One article, published in *Kawkab Amirka* on March 3, 1893 titled "The Indian Children and the Columbian Celebration," discusses the representation of Native American children at the 1893 World's Fair. Written in Arabic, the unknown author references an English newspaper's claim that "200 Indian children have attended the Columbian World Fair, and this is one of their most important duties to the West, as they should be grateful to Christopher Columbus, for without him, these children would never have had the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a proper education." The *Kawkab Amirka* writer strongly critiques this narrative, highlighting its failure to acknowledge that Columbus's arrival marked the beginning of widespread violence, land theft, and enslavement of Indigenous peoples. By exposing these omissions, the author not only challenges the colonial manipulation of history but also implicitly critiques the Fair's tendency to present other marginalized groups, such as Arabs or Chinese, in ways that reinforced exoticism or exclusion. Whereas the Midway Plaisance

relied on spectacle and the Exclusion Act silenced Chinese voices altogether, this critique underscores how Native Americans were reframed as grateful beneficiaries of colonization, a narrative that erased historical trauma while legitimizing U.S. expansion.

In making this argument, the author of the article reveals a broader Eastern awareness of the mechanisms of colonial representation. In printing it, the editors recognize that Western narratives often assume a right to be served by non-white populations and that such accounts routinely obscure the brutality of colonialism, reframing it as a civilizing mission. The result is that readers are cautioned to approach English-language news with skepticism, given its selective recounting of historical events. However, while the critique of Western treatment of Native Americans is explicit, the author appears more cautious in addressing similarly violent colonial encounters in Africa and the Arab world, perhaps reflecting the complex positionality of Arab intellectuals navigating both critique and strategic alignment with the West.

Mirroring the fair's architecture which separated the idealized America from the "dark other" of the Midway Plaisance, were various ideological projects. In particular Christian ideology, particularly Protestantism, was important to how the 1893 Chicago World's Fair framed identity, positioning Protestant values as the standard against which all faiths and people measured (Brauer 377). Notably, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair sought to define American identity in a changing society, claiming Protestantism as its cornerstone while

marginalizing other faiths. Protestantism, which had long been the predominant religion in the United States, was increasingly challenged by the growing presence of Catholic and Jewish communities, as well as by the emergence of new religious movements (“Catholic and Jewish Immigrants”). The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair offered a platform for Protestant leaders to assert their values as central to the American ethos, often at the expense of other religious traditions. This was particularly evident in the numerous religious congresses held during the event, where Protestantism was portrayed as synonymous with progress, modernity, and moral authority (370).

As those intent on promoting a particular vision of America understood it, to be an American is to not not be an America; it is “the powerful and privileged position of the American depends upon exclusive, unidirectional observation, with the American acting as a sole observer of an exotic environment or scientific object of study” (Boyle 25). The formation of a hierarchy that places Americans as superior can only be complete; if the “other” exists. The “other” therefore, has a very specific role to play—in this instance, the entertainment contained in the Midway Plaisance. The role of the savage, uneducated, uncivilized who aims to be what he/she may never become: an American. Any shift in the position that the “other” plays, such as changing into “American” clothes, will destabilize American identity. As a result, the Orient had a role laid out for her/him and that he/she needed to fulfill to establish the American identity. Those categorized as Orientals who

have already been predefined are left with two options; perform what is expected of them and gain some financial incentive, or present a true version that will be characterized as inauthentic. These immigrants could not push back, or they would be defeated by those who brought them or requested their presence so they could fulfill the role of the inferior spectacle. The reality is that because most of what we are presented with and that remains from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair has been put through a strainer, we are left with a very narrow view of what actually took place.

Those accounts we do have demonstrate the performances of ethnicity were not reliable. While the Chicago World's Fair aimed to improve trade and highlight cultural achievements, Arabs often capitalized on American expectations by conforming to the Western gaze in their performances. Rather than showcasing their authentic talents or cultural expressions, these individuals often acted out roles that were tailored to satisfy the exotic and orientalist expectations of their American audiences (Simour 299). This dynamic is evident in the way Arabs participated in circuses, where they were not performing their own cultural practices but rather acting in a way that aligned with what was expected of them by Westerners. The American audience eagerly consumed these performances, which were described as being given by a "'band of gypsies' which featured musicians, horsemen, and jugglers who performed to the delight of an American audience that was enthralled by Moroccans' novel exercise of dexterity and acrobatic agility" (299). In doing so, they also

filled the role of the exotic, intended to entertain. For example, one contemporary account observed, “Arabian riders dashed across the arena in elaborate costumes, leaping on and off galloping horses, their performances choreographed to thrill and astonish the crowd” (“Ballyhoo on the Midway Plaisance”). These acts were dramatic and highly stylized, designed to impress rather than inform. This highlights the extent to which Arabs were compelled to adapt their performances to meet the preconceived notions of the West, rather than presenting a genuine portrayal of their culture. Despite the rise in Arab performing art in America, they were still viewed as spectacles, possessing skills which marked them as dangerous. However, looking into the history of Arabs and their performance in the United States, we learn that Arabs were not always portrayed as creatures to be feared.

If men performed in circuses, women were most likely to be seen in performances of dance. The painting “In the Algerian Theatre,” near the Algerian exhibit, offers a nuanced portrayal of the Algerian dancer in contrast to depictions of Arab men. While Arab men are often characterized as threatening, the dancer is framed as exotic and sensual, designed to captivate the Western male gaze. Her movements, attire, and performance are described as alluring and hypnotic—she commands attention, even halting the show with a single stomp. Though she is granted a degree of agency, this power is circumscribed by her role as an object of entertainment. Descriptions likening her to animals—“stomping her leg” or “moving like a snake”—betray a simultaneous attraction and dehumanization, revealing



IN THE ALGERIAN THEATRE.—Toward the western end of the Midway Plaisance, beyond the haunts of Turk and Celt, stands the Algerian Village. The theatre here is a square white building severely simple in outline. It is broken into square turrets on either corner. The interior is arranged much after the fashion of any of our houses, but is devoid of boxes, and the stage is narrow and without scenery of any description. Along on a divan are seated musicians and artists. From this stands up slowly a comely girl, with fine features and big black eyes, who comes forward and bows with a far away smile to the audience. She is arrayed in big blue trousers, dark hose and yellow slippers, and has a broad sash at her waist, a gold-embroidered jacket, and loose gauzy sleeves. A cap sits jauntily on her head and huge rings of brass depend from her ears. She has two silken handkerchiefs in her hand, which she waves to the rhythm of the music, and her dancing is a series of movements, half walk, half shuffle. She gives us in pantomime the toilet of an Oriental lady, illustrated with mirror and hand-washing. When her toilet is completed the music grows more rapid and she shuffles, whirls and stamps her foot, and as the stimulating cries of her companions grow louder, she goes through a series of snake-like undulating motions, and then, with a stamp of her foot, retires.

301

Figure 2.3: *In the Algerian Theatre* (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 301)

the layered objectification of women of color in colonial exhibitions. This sexualized representation laid the groundwork for cultural appropriation. As Sunaina Maira notes, belly dancing emerged in early 20th-century America as both a site of fascination and a tool for constructing "whiteness" and "Americanness" in contrast to Arab/Muslim identities. What began as orientalist spectacle evolved into a commodified form of cultural tourism during events like the World's Fair, where figures such as Little Egypt embodied both exoticism and eroticism. Thus, belly dancing becomes a site where issues of immigration, labor, gender, and race intersect, revealing the enduring hierarchies and cultural power dynamics embedded in Western representations of the East.

Images such as the one above have proven crucial to studies of the fair, although they can not be read as reliably impartial. Our understanding of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair is shaped largely by surviving photography, curated by a select elite who determined what was considered worthy of preservation. Charles Dudley Arnold and his partner held a monopoly on official photography at the Fair. In fact, Arnold, as the official photographer, "documented the entire construction process and kept a tight control over access to the images and views of the Fair that were available ... such fine-quality portfolios were available for sale at the Fair in segments that visitors could assemble and have bound together" (University of Southern Mississippi McCain Library and Archives). However, seeing how Arnold held a monopoly, Boyle notes that this presents a narrow and curated

vision in which they “presented an ‘idealized portrait style characterized by Arnold’s Midway photographs, and he often included props that signified the culture or occupation of the subjects’” (Boyle 11). This perspective was further limited by the exclusion of other photographers. While amateur photography did exist, it was largely inaccessible due to “costly equipment and the need to develop substantial technical skill” (Rudd par4). Additionally, as Rudd explains, in order “to maintain the dominance of this official image, the fair’s photography division, led by Charles Dudley Arnold, placed significant limitations on unofficial photographers’ ability to photograph the fair, including a ban on tripods and a daily photographer’s permit fee that was four times higher than the general admission fee to the fair itself.”

This tightly controlled visual record reinforced a one-sided, racialized, and imperial gaze. As noted above, the Fair was designed as a spectacle for white Americans, where both environment and people were staged for their enjoyment. The imbalance of power is further reflected in the photographs that are featured in advertisements of the time. As Rudd notes, Eastman Kodak products were marketed to these privileged visitors, encouraging them to use photography as a means of capturing and controlling the world around them, reinforcing a dynamic in which the “kodakers” visually dominated the non-white workers and cultural performers. As Boyle argues, this visual framing leaves viewers seeing only through “the white photographer’s lens,” (Boyle par 24) creating a version of Americanism

that is exclusionary. “The two major photographers were white, male and sanctioned by—even part of—the forces invested in constructing hegemonic expressions of national identity” (13). The result is a highly curated portrayal in which whiteness, masculinity, and Christianity define Americanness. Most images show white men examining women and racialized others, reinforcing a visual hierarchy and marginalizing alternative narratives. However, the photographs and images of the Midway Plaisance, when examined with attention to resistance, power, and determination, reveal a secondary story—one that challenges the dominant gaze and gestures toward more complex expressions of identity and agency.

[htbp]

The photograph “Camp of Damascus Colony” illustrates the role of photography in shaping both the Arab and the American. The caption references Arabs from Ottoman-controlled Syria and describes the region as having “become prey of Mohammedans.” This phrase implies a loss of agency, framing the people as passive victims and implicitly justifying American intervention under the guise of rescue. This narrative is further complicated by the inclusion of musical instruments, coffee pots, rugs, and weapons, objects that construct a dual image of cultural richness and exoticism, yet also hint at potential danger, as suggested by the presence of arms alongside objects signalling domesticity, suggesting that violence is as normal as having a hot drink. The underlying message warns viewers not

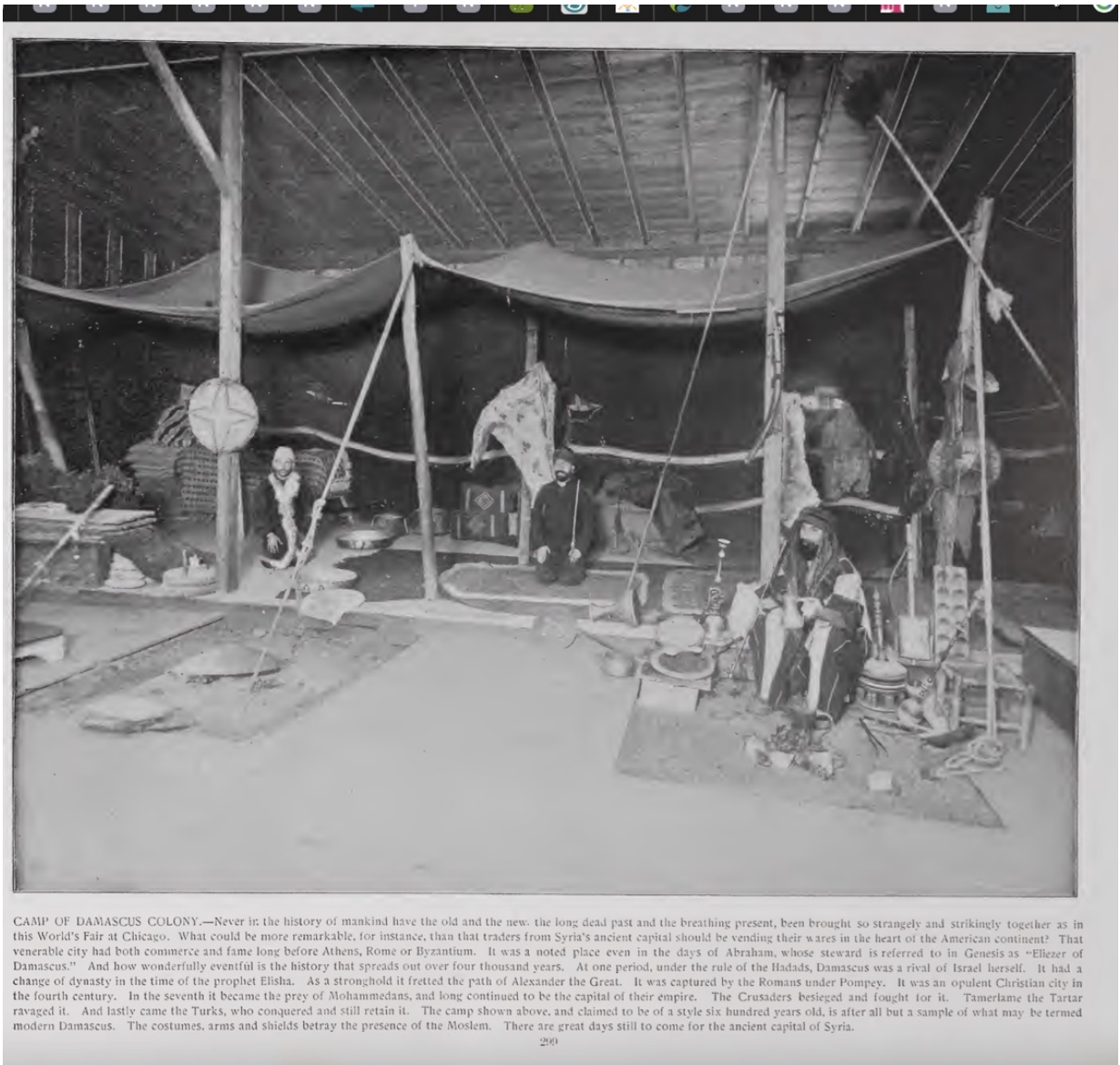


Figure 2.4: *Camp of Damascus Colony* (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 299)

to "fall prey" to these seemingly harmless individuals, reinforcing long-standing Western tropes that depict Arabs and Muslims as both exotic and threatening. Such portrayals contribute to a broader orientalist narrative that pressures Eastern subjects either to conform to Western expectations or remain suspect. As discussed in chapter 3, evidence from Arabic newspapers shows that many Arabs and Muslims responded by silencing or censoring themselves to demonstrate assimilation, actively resisting the roles imposed on them by Western discourse. This dominant narrative casts Arab men as threats to Western society, particularly its families, by framing their religion and identity as inherently dangerous.

[htbp]

The photograph "The Baby Arab" presents a stereotyped depiction of an Arab family, framed by a caption that describes their appearance as "unpleasant," reinforcing Western beauty standards and cultural superiority. It highlights a domestic conflict, attributed to class and religious differences, subtly suggesting the husband's inclination toward violence. The visual composition of the scene plays an important role in how the viewer interprets gender dynamics. The male's positioning in front of his wife can be interpreted as a symbol of patriarchal dominance or protective authority, depending on the viewer's perspective. This ambiguity highlights how visual elements and textual cues work in tandem to shape meaning, and how viewer subjectivity further complicates interpretation. He is also holding a sword and a water pipe (hookah), embodying orientalist notions of



THE BABY ARAB, "COLUMBUS CHICAGO."—Selim, a Bedouin Arab, and one of the tribe of Hassan, was presented with a son and heir in the encampment on the Midway Plaisance. The picture above does not represent Selim as looking pleased. But that is nothing. These people do not express their pleasure by wreathed smiles. "Columbus Chicago" does not appear to have the wide-awake characteristics of his geographical namesake. He is asleep. Chicago never is. The mother's name is Bander. She is not very attractive as to features but for all that she possessed sufficient influence over Selim to induce him to forswear his Christian faith and become a Mohammedan for her sweet sake. As Arabs go this is undoubtedly a happy family. Selim has his hookah stem in his mouth and his scimitar in one hand, and though he is scowling fiercely it is no doubt his habitual expression. He would probably look much worse should he attempt to smile. There is constant rivalry between the tribe of Hassan, who are camel riders, and the tribe of Hagi who are horse riders. Perhaps Selim is meditating vengeance upon one of the Hagi. These rivalries occasioned during the summer some noisy conflicts between the children of the desert, mainly among themselves, though at intervals some outsiders got tangled in the melee and the services of the Columbian Guard had to be called in to restore "dove-eyed" peace.

327

Figure 2.5: *The Baby Arab- Columbus Chicago* (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 327)

Eastern masculinity: the sword signifying aggression, and the hookah, worldliness. While Western interpretations often associate hookah smoking with decadence or exoticism, in Ottoman culture, it had a different connotation. Between the 1600s and 1800s, hookah symbolized intellectualism and social ritual, particularly during the reign of Sultan Murad IV (1623–1640). Its decline after the Ottoman Empire’s fall in World War I and the rise of cigarettes marked a cultural shift in tobacco consumption (“The Transformation of the Hookah”). The woman’s representation further reinforces gender norms. Seated in the background, fully covered and cradling a child, she is often read—particularly through a Western lens—as embodying domesticity and maternal duty. Yet, the care evident in her appearance, from the meticulous styling of her hair to the deliberate way she has swaddled the infant, may suggest a quiet assertion of agency or dignity. While she appears visually recessed in the composition, she is no more silent than he is; both figures convey presence through posture and gesture rather than explicit expression. Some Westerners may read her veiling as indicative of ownership, she exists primarily for her husband’s gaze. However, her direct gaze at the camera complicates this narrative. By returning the photographer’s gaze, she asserts a subtle form of agency, challenging the image of passive femininity. In this moment, the power dynamic is momentarily reversed: the Western viewer becomes the subject of her scrutiny. This mutual gaze underscores the complexities of cultural encounter, revealing not only the objectification of the “Other” but also the subjectivity

of those being photographed.

Dressed in loose-fitting, modest attire, the woman's appearance conveys a sense of ease and self-possession, her clothing serving not just comfort but as a reflection of cultural values or personal choice. Interestingly, the mobility her clothing enabled resonated with some of the Fair's attendees:

The admiration of the West was sometimes tempered by the ridicule of Western morality, behaviour and materialism, and by ridiculing the Westernized woman. In 1885 under the caption "The New Fashion" an illustration of a woman with her belongings placed on top of her bustle appeared as a mockery of Western women's fashions. The press praised Eastern dress by reporting that at the 1893 Chicago World Fair arose a discussion about the need to modify women's dress, especially the corset, since it was detrimental to the female body and health. The writer informs his readers that the conclusion of the debate was a return to traditional loose-fitting dress, similar to that worn by Eastern women. This, he believed, indicated that America, despite all its progress, now understood what Eastern people had known long before. Writers, proud of their culture, called on readers to unite through their religion and/or culture, to conduct reforms, and to preserve their heritage. (Zachs 134-135)

This context invites a more layered reading of the woman's attire in the photograph,

not merely as a reflection of modesty or tradition, but as part of a broader cultural assertion that resists Western norms and reclaims the value of Eastern knowledge and aesthetics in a way that may have—however unintentionally—shaped Western thinking.

Accordingly, the representation of Arab attire in popular discourse extended beyond Arabic-language publications, becoming a subject of commentary in English-language newspapers as well, an indication of its broader visibility and symbolic significance across cultural contexts. Arab writers were quick to comment on such matters. For example, in *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 5, the author references an article from the English newspaper *The Sun*, which praises the Fez for its practicality—stating that it “does not touch the top of the head,” allowing for airflow while offering sun protection. The Arabic commentary notes that Fez wearers had long understood these benefits. By translating and circulating this endorsement, *Kawkab Amirka* offers Eastern readers a choice: to embrace the Fez with renewed cultural pride or to abandon it in favor of assimilation. However, the irony lies in the fact that this sense of pride is largely prompted by Western approval rather than intrinsic cultural appreciation. This underscores how Western validation often shapes how Easterners perceive and relate to their own traditions, revealing the subtle but enduring influence of cultural hegemony.

[htbp]

This dynamic of Western validation shaping Eastern self-perception is further evident



Figure 2.6: *Female Types From The East* (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 339)

in the photograph titled "Female Types From the East," where two women are positioned for the Western gaze, objectified as subjects of observation, classification, and comparison. Their portrayal reflects a broader orientalist framework in which non-Western women were evaluated in relation to Western ideals of femininity. Historically, a woman's societal value was closely tied to her modesty and adherence to prescribed gender norms. In the context of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, American women were positioned as the normative standard of beauty and morality. Other women, particularly those from colonized or "exotic" regions, were judged based on how closely they conformed to this ideal. As Rachel Boyle argues in "Types and Beauties: Evaluating and Exoticizing Women on the Midway Plaisance at the 1893 Columbian Exposition," beauty became a tool of both cultural hierarchy and imperial ideology. Women on display were not merely exotic curiosities but symbolic representations used to reinforce Western superiority and justify colonial attitudes. Their visual presentation served as a form of ethnographic spectacle, reducing them to aesthetic and cultural artifacts within the framework of Western dominance. Boyle describes,

theater patronized by 'old men and wicked youth' who 'watched, in bleary-eyed ecstasy, the Oriental athletes of the stage as they danced, toyed with a cigarette, and by their smiles gave a Persian charm to the anomalous entertainment. Colorful descriptions of the Midway Plaisance heavily populated souvenir books commemorating the Chicago World Fair... representations of female bodies on

the Midway Plaisance illuminate intersecting discourse of race and gender.

(Boyle 10)

If male viewers were consuming women's bodies for their lack of conformity to Western ideals or propriety, female viewers might be doing the same. At the same time, they might be interested in the fashion itself, through the fair's fashion displays, where women's attire became a focal point of fascination for both its domestic significance and global diversity. For example, "At the Midway Plaisance, near the entrance was an entire building dedicated to global attire called the International Dress and Costume Exhibit, which contained 40 different examples of women's dress from 40 different countries" (Croft).

The photograph, "Female Types From The East" features only two women, exemplifying this gendered consumption. At the same time, the accompanying text embodies the contradictions inherent in the Fair's exhibition and consumption of these women, critiquing Eastern men's control over women's bodies while simultaneously subjecting these women to the Western gaze. The author invokes the ease of divorce in Eastern societies to underscore male dominance, yet paradoxically notes the increasing education and agency of Eastern women, who are beginning to reject objectification and assert their rights amidst the decline of polygamy. However, in this very act of critique, the women are once again rendered objects—this time for Western consumption. Their image is presented for global evaluation, particularly by Western men who position themselves as liberators, as opposed

to consumers of the Midway Plaisance. This narrative casts the Western male as a benevolent savior, rescuing Eastern women from the supposed oppression of their own culture, while ignoring the objectifying gaze through which he views them.

[htbp]

In describing the people of Palestine, the commentary in *Photographs of the World's Fair* appears to reflect the official perspective of the Exposition, likely authored or commissioned by the organizers or the Werner Company, in keeping with its function as a promotional publication. It asserts they are the most aesthetically pleasing among those in the Orient, justifying this claim by emphasizing their ethnic diversity. This "beauty" is implicitly linked to their proximity, both geographically and spiritually, to the West, particularly through Palestine's association with Jesus. The author highlights Palestine as a land of religious plurality, home to Muslims, Christians, and Jews, drawing a parallel to Americans through shared monotheistic beliefs. Unlike other depictions of Arabs and Muslims, which often emphasize barbarism or primitiveness, this portrayal adopts a more favorable tone, likely due to Palestine's religious significance within the Abrahamic traditions. This narrative softens orientalist stereotypes, offering Palestinians the opportunity either to align with or contest dominant Western framings. A striking element of the photograph is the woman's direct gaze into the camera. This act subtly subverts the conventions of gendered power, as direct eye contact was typically reserved for male subjects.



Figure 2.7: *Visitors Form the Holy Land* (World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 341)

Her gaze implies agency, challenging the stereotype of passive Eastern femininity. As Boyle notes, “the souvenir book instructs the viewer to disapprove of a society that values physically powerful women... therefore, the more masculine the women of a culture appeared to American eyes, the lower the rung they inhabited on the racial hierarchy” (Boyle 20). Within this framework, “civilized” women are associated with domesticity and purity, while those perceived as assertive or physically commanding are labeled as “uncivilized.” Yet, in this image, the woman’s gaze resists this binary. It may reflect not only personal agency but also the photographer’s more sympathetic framing of Palestinian identity, shaped by religious affinity with the West. Her gaze can thus be read as both an act of resistance and an invitation to engage—a nuanced moment that complicates the viewer’s assumptions.

2.3 The *Kawkab Amirka*

If the photos are an authorized depiction of the Fair’s Arab participants, Arabic-language newspapers offered an unauthorized response. While the photographs offer a subtle, visual form of resistance to Western modes of representation and cultural hegemony, Arabic-language newspapers such as *Kawkab Amirka* spoke more explicitly and forcefully about the preservation of cultural identity and the critique of Western influence. Published in New York City between 1892 and 1908, *Kawkab Amirka* began as a weekly and transi-

tioned into a daily newspaper by 1898. It claimed a transnational readership spanning North and South America, the Ottoman Empire, and the broader Arabic-speaking world (Booshada, *Arab-American Faces and Voices*). Writing in Arabic afforded these contributors the freedom to articulate political and cultural perspectives without the constraints or judgments of English-speaking audiences. Within the pages of the newspaper, writers situated themselves firmly within their own communities, addressing a readership that shared linguistic and cultural frameworks. This deliberate choice to engage an Arabic-speaking audience—free from the pressure to conform to Western expectations—constitutes a subtle yet powerful act of resistance. It allowed for the reshaping and rewriting of the dominant narratives surrounding Arab presence in the United States, asserting agency over how Arab identity was constructed and conveyed.

As noted above, Arabs were frequently objectified and depicted as dangerous, a pattern that appeared not only in photographs, paintings, and staged displays at the World's Fair but also in contemporary newspaper coverage. In *Kawkab Amirka* (Volume 1, Number 14), the article "Algerian World's Fair Commissioner Arrives," published in both English and Arabic, introduces commissioners D. Sifico and J. Zermat with the vivid description: "wide shoulders, jet-black hair and beard, and piercing black eyes." The phrase "piercing black eyes" does more than record physical appearance; it suggests a gaze powerful enough to unsettle the viewer, reversing the usual Orientalist dynamic in which the Arab subject

is fixed under the Western gaze. As Edward Said observes, “in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or representation” (Said, “[Orientalism](#)” 29). Read through this lens, the commissioners’ eyes resist representational containment: rather than appearing as static objects of Western vision, they assert agency and disruptive potency within the visual economy of the World’s Fair.

If some portrayals in *Kawkab Amirka* highlight the unsettling potential of Arab presence within the Fair’s visual economy, others directly counter Western stereotypes by presenting the East in terms of strength and dignity. In *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 50, the article “Turkey at the World’s Fair” depicts the Ottoman Empire as one of the world’s leading nations, noting that “the fact that there are at least 100,000 Ottomans in the United States may account for the interest which continues to grow and attract hundreds of our countrymen to the ‘Giant City of the plains’... Thanks to the faithful and patriotic efforts of the Turkish commissioners, Hakky and Fahri Bey, and to the perseverance and wide-awake zeal of talented representatives of Saadullah Suhamy and Bistani.” Rather than reinforcing familiar tropes, the article anticipates that visitors will see Turkey “in a different light,” encountering an orderly and attractive village that embodies “all items oriental and charming.” The phrase “different light” signals a deliberate attempt to resist reductive portrayals by offering a modern, dignified vision of Ottoman culture. This demonstrates

not only an awareness of how Western audiences viewed the East but also a conscious effort to reshape that perception, asserting a cultural identity on Ottoman terms.

In *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 44 (February 10, 1893), the article “Syrians and the Fair” offers another attempt to counter reductive portrayals of the East by emphasizing authenticity. Framed in the English section and thus likely aimed at Western readers, the piece describes theatrical performances as presenting the Orient in an “accurate and genuine manner,” featuring a bazaar filled with oriental goods and a detailed representation of a mosque. These elements are described as “treasures” meant to convey credibility rather than fantasy, reinforcing the potential of such displays to reshape Western opinion. The article concludes: “Americans will no doubt form better ideas of the Syrians and their enterprise after they witness the many good surprises they have for them at Chicago’s Fair.” By framing Syrian culture in terms of authenticity and trustworthiness, the article sought to foster respect for Syrians as independent people with distinct traditions and beliefs. In this way, theatrical performance was positioned not as a spectacle of difference but as a means of asserting credibility and reshaping Western perceptions.

While articles like “Syrians and the Fair” emphasized authenticity as a way to reshape Western perceptions, other issues of *Kawkab Amirka* took a broader approach by directly engaging prevailing stereotypes and hierarchies. In the months leading up to the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, *Kawkab Amirka* presented Arabs and Muslims as simultaneously

civilized, exotic, and racially superior to other groups. Issue, Vol. 1, No. 51, positions them strategically: civilized through religious discourse, exotic through cultural representation, and superior when contrasted with Africans and Chinese. Taken together, the articles reveal the newspaper's layered negotiation with empire, racialization, and self-positioning. Although the structure of the newspaper reflects hierarchical thinking drawn from both Arab and Western contexts, its critique of exclusion and colonial hypocrisy points to an emerging diasporic consciousness. The writers of *Kawkab Amirka* thus wrestled with the challenge of asserting Arab and Muslim identity while confronting the racial and imperial logics that defined their reception in America.

Building on *Kawkab Amirka*'s broader negotiation with racial hierarchies, the ways in which some Arabs positioned themselves as superior within the context of the Fair are evident in *Kawkab Amirka* (كوكب أمريكا), Vol. 1, No. 51. This issue highlights the complex interplay between Western influence and Eastern self-perception, revealing how colonial ideologies shaped certain Easterners' ideas about modernity and identity. Significantly, "The Algerian Section at the World's Fair" is presented not as an independent Arab exhibit but as part of the French section—an implicit acknowledgment of colonial authority. The unknown author writes:

The love of the beautiful seems to be second nature to every Frenchman; whenever he undertakes any task, he ensures that it is beautifully and skillfully

executed. The spectacular Algerian part of the World's Fair is the best illustration of this. Having elevated Algiers from its former position as a worthless African province to that of a territorial dependency worthy of the great French Republic, they take great pride in making extensive preparations to display the country's social, commercial, and industrial advancements at the World's Fair.

(*Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, no. 51)

This framing underscores the internalization of colonial narratives by some Arab writers, who viewed association with Western powers, such as France, as a marker of cultural advancement or legitimacy. It also highlights how colonization extended beyond political domination to shape cultural self-perception and representation in transnational venues like the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Although Algeria is geographically located in North Africa rather than the Middle East, its historical connection to the Muslim world, having been under Ottoman rule from 1516 until the French conquest in 1830, aligns it with broader Islamic and Arab narratives. The French justified their colonization under the guise of enlightenment and civilizational uplift, yet this process led to the deaths of approximately one million Algerians ([Sessions 77](#)). This legacy of violence and subjugation contributes to enduring racial hierarchies and internalized racism across formerly colonized regions.

If *Kawkab Amirka's* coverage of the Algerian section reveals the internalization of colonial narratives, perhaps the most troubling aspect is the way Algerians at times referred to

themselves as French. The unknown author of the article writes, “the love of the beautiful seems to be second nature to every Frenchman, if he undertakes anything, he takes care to have it artistically and well done. Nothing illustrates this better than their magnificent Algerian section at the World’s Fair” (Kawkab Amirka, Vol. 1, no. 51, page 4), reflecting a fractured identity in which the colonizer is positioned as superior. This adoption of a French identity suggests a perception of being Algerian as inherently deficient or “unfit.” In such a context, aligning with the colonizer becomes a strategy for reclaiming dignity, legitimacy, or power. This behavior can be read as a form of survival, a response to a brutal colonial history in which resistance was often met with death. Faced with the devastation of their country and culture, Algerians were left with a stark choice: to resist and risk annihilation, or to accept subjugation and attempt to find peace within a new, imposed national identity. That identification aligns with who controlled the exhibit’s narrative, since it was curated under French authority and therefore reflected imperial ideologies rather than Algerian autonomy.

In addition, the author’s reference to Mr. Ganon, a Frenchman tasked with organizing the Algerian section, highlights a critical issue: when the colonizer curates the image of the colonized, the resulting portrayal inevitably aligns with imperial ideologies. As Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*, such representations do not reflect the realities of Eastern societies but rather construct them as exotic, passive, and inferior in contrast to

a rational, progressive West. This one-sided narrative reinforces colonial power structures and underscores the importance of critically interrogating what is presented to uncover subtle forms of resistance. For instance, the author states, “the young man has traveled extensively throughout the Orient to familiarize himself with its culture, customs, and architecture,” a line that reflects the Western authority to define and interpret the Orient through its own lens. While the article promotes cultural appreciation, a closer reading reveals an internalized inferiority complex and a conflicted relationship with the colonized homeland, shaped by the need to appeal to colonial expectations.

The representation of Algerians in *Kawkab Amirka* Vol. 1, no. 51 demonstrates how the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair turned colonial subjects into consumable spectacles under the guise of authenticity. The inclusion of Moorish and Algerian performers—actors, dancers, singers, and musicians, appears to celebrate culture but ultimately reduces individuals to objects of display. The Café Concert, which features “some of Tunisia’s most beautiful female dancers,” makes clear how lived practices were transformed into staged entertainment for Western audiences, while the author’s note that Mr. Ganon would lecture on “the customs and home life of Algeria and Morocco in such a fascinating and beautiful manner that each lecture, illustrated by real natives in costume, will be equivalent to a visit to those countries,” further reveals how culture itself was packaged through a colonial lens. Such performances illustrate what Homi Bhabha terms mimicry, a strategy that invites

the colonized to imitate the colonizer, but in a way that is always “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” 126). If mimicry promises recognition, it simultaneously reinforces difference, humanizing and othering at once. The claim that Algerians “deserve good things” because they resemble the French exemplifies the internalization of this logic, showing how colonial discourse demanded assimilation while denying equality. As Bhabha’s theory of hybridity suggests, such adoption of the colonizer’s identity is never complete; it is marked by contradiction and ambivalence. Thus, the Algerian section of the Fair reveals how colonial exhibitions served as mechanisms of control, making colonized bodies legible, consumable, and governable, while also exposing the psychological complexities of negotiating identity, power, and belonging in the shadow of empire.

Stepping back from the Algerian case, contemporary Arabic-language papers also made race itself a central analytic lens. Arabic-language newspapers from the 1890s reveal that Eastern writers did not simply absorb Western narratives about the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition but actively responded with their own commentary, critique, and cultural assertions. While the Fair functioned as a showcase of technological and artistic achievement, it also served as a global stage where racial ideologies were displayed, reinforced, and contested. To understand this dynamic, it is essential to examine how Arab writers addressed questions of race, since these texts provide insight into the broader social

hierarchies of the era and the ways the exposition both reflected and shaped them. In the United States of 1893, whiteness structured the dominant racial order and operated as the normative standard of superiority. By contrast, many Arab societies historically centered religious affiliation, particularly within Islam, as the primary axis of social distinction. Yet when Arabs visited, wrote about, or migrated in connection with the Fair, they encountered an American racial system that was markedly different from the frameworks they had known. Crossing geographic and cultural borders—whether by physically attending the exposition or engaging with its representations in the press—prompted shifts in Arab consciousness, compelling individuals to reconsider identity and renegotiate their position within an American racial hierarchy. This process required reconciling inherited notions of religious and cultural superiority with the realities of being racialized in the West—realities vividly staged in the exhibits, performances, and representations of the 1893 World’s Fair.

In *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 5, the editors constructed not only a record of the Fair but also a visual and thematic map of racial hierarchies in the United States, reflecting the entanglement of colonial and racial discourses. The issue’s four-column structure, arranged from right to left in accordance with Arabic script, subtly echoes racial gradations: Arabs on the right, followed by Black Americans, and Chinese individuals occupying the left-most column. This layout suggests more than linguistic convention; it reflects internalized perceptions of race shaped simultaneously by American systems of exclusion and broader

colonial ideologies. The first column, for instance, focuses on the Chinese, including two articles that critique the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. As Chen notes, this Act “was the first in US history to differentiate by national origin... [and] impose restrictions on the basis of skill, a legacy that persists in current policy” (Chen 299). By codifying the Chinese at the bottom of the social order, the Act exemplified the racialized logic underpinning U.S. immigration policy, and the newspaper’s layout visually reinforced this same hierarchy.

Just as the physical separation of the White City and the Midway reinforced hierarchies of race and culture, contemporary commentary on the Chinese Exclusion Act revealed how these spatial logics of inclusion and exclusion extended beyond the fairgrounds into U.S. policy. One article in *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 5, titled “The New Chinese Act,” forcefully critiques the hypocrisy of U.S. policy. The author writes, “It strikes us as the American Government and the law-makers of the country lost sight of all treaty obligations towards China, and that there are many American citizens and American interest that may be made before long subjects for retaliation by exasperated China, to whom we send missionaries to teach her people the ‘Golden rule’ of Christianity, which we most inconsistently break without any regard whatever to our moral or international obligations. Well, may the millions of poor China exclaim, ‘Consistency thou art a Jewel!’” The allusion to Shakespeare weaponizes Western cultural capital against American moral duplicity, exposing the contradiction between missionary outreach and domestic exclusion.

As Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*, the United States, like European empires, projected an image of moral and civilizational superiority while simultaneously dehumanizing and excluding those it deemed racially inferior. This critique is extended in “The Act Affects the World’s Fair,” which contends that excluding Chinese participants undermined the exposition’s claim to global representation. Without Chinese voices, the Columbian Exposition became a curated fantasy, a simulation of diversity that erased inconvenient or politically undesirable presences. Here Homi Bhabha’s concept of mimicry proves relevant: the United States performed the “values” it claimed to uphold by excluding the Chinese from the Fair, revealing that they were not seen as worthy participants because of their marginalized social status. What emerged was not true global inclusivity but a sanitized, imperial vision of the world, one in which whiteness remained central and unchallenged.

The second column shifts focus to Africa with “A Fresh Expedition to Africa,” reflecting another layer of orientalist logic. Africa is described as the “dark continent,” a phrase that reveals how Western epistemologies positioned the continent as mysterious, undeveloped, and dangerous. The article details an expedition involving 200 armed and well-equipped Zanzibaris—Muslim Africans enlisted to aid American exploration. As discussed in Chapter One, Westerners often preferred collaborating with African Muslims, viewing them as more legible within orientalist frameworks that associated Islam with a “civilized” hierarchy of belief. This dynamic reflects what Homi Bhabha identifies as colonial discourse,

wherein the colonized subject is simultaneously desired and feared, humanized and objectified. Although American explorers are presented as noble seekers of knowledge, the narrative is tempered by the author's conclusion: "In wishing the young explorer success, we hope his laurels in African explorations shall not be like those of many others, 'dipped in the innocent blood of the poor and helpless natives.'" This moment disrupts the dominant colonial script, echoing Frantz Fanon's critique of imperial violence and its psychological toll on both colonizer and colonized. By invoking the human cost of conquest, the author gestures toward the ethical bankruptcy of imperialism, where scientific discovery and national prestige were achieved at the expense of indigenous suffering.

The final two columns of *Kawkab Amirka*, Vol. 1, No. 5, extend this mapping of racial and cultural hierarchies while also working to complicate them. The article titled "A Visit to a Bedouin Tribe" highlights the compassion of Arabs through their affection for horses. Read alongside pieces about American exploration in Africa, this portrayal functions as an implicit critique of colonial violence, suggesting that Arabs treat their animals with more care than Americans show to African peoples during expeditions. Arabs are depicted as hospitable, kind, and animal-loving, and the introduction of Mohammed Ben Said, the head of the Bedouin tribe, underscores a Muslim and Arab identity. Yet even while the portrayal is favourable, it exoticizes Arab life by focusing on tents, horses, and spear dances. This romanticized depiction may have served to promote Islamic, Bedouin, and

Arab exhibits at the World's Fair, reinforcing both admiration and otherness in the eyes of the Western public.

The third column then shifts focus to Europe with "Polish Anti-Semitic Riot," in which the author draws a parallel between the experiences of Syrians and Polish Jews. The article notes, "The Anti-Semitic riot at Lodz near Warsaw reminds us of the recent uprising in one of our own Syrian cities, the causes that lead to them being identically the same." Here the critique of Russian antisemitism, particularly the lack of "Hebrew knowledge", positions Russians as uneducated and easily misled. The author condemns the false belief that "Hebrews are murdering Christian infants for religious purposes," describing such claims as irrational and harmful. The irony is sharpened with the remark: "It is hard to believe that such misconceptions could exist in the minds of individuals living in this era of enlightenment and intellectual advancement." By exposing the ignorance underlying Russian prejudice, the article implicitly critiques the discrimination Syrians faced, drawing connections between different forms of oppression. At the same time, by contrasting Russia with the United States, it calls attention, indirectly but unmistakably, to the persistence of racial bias in America.

The far-right column concludes with "Cultural Progress in Islam," an article whose title itself is significant for centring Islam, and, by extension, Muslims, rather than individual nations. It opens with the statement: "Space forbids me to dwell longer on the change

noticeable in Turkey, and I will only say that grumblers will much alter their views if they take the trouble to get a deeper insight into layers than casual visitors usually gain.” The author then praises Persian cultural development, writing: “the Persians are highly gifted, and whoever reads the Diary, published quite recently in Persian, by Naasredhin Shah, will be convinced that a country whose ruler has the courage to freely admit the superiority of our institutions will not, and cannot, remain any longer behind its Western neighbor, and that Persia, too, will join the rest of Islam in social, literary, and political reforms.” Given the historical tensions between Arabs and Iranians, this celebration of Iranian progress and its contribution to Islamic reform is striking. The article further claims, “While this branch of the Mohammedans have always excelled over their coreligionists, it is rapidly developing.” Two elements of this statement stand out. First, the term “Mohammedans” is used in place of “Muslims”, a term widely rejected by Muslims because it implies the worship of Muhammad rather than adherence to a monotheistic religion. Second, this misnomer reflects a Western colonial legacy, particularly the history of enslaved Muslims in the United States, where such terminology was common. Despite these issues, the article portrays Muslims from various backgrounds in a positive light, emphasizing their intellectual and cultural capacity. It concludes by urging the West to revise its perceptions of Muslims, arguing that they possess significant knowledge and are individuals from whom much can be learned.

Beyond the Fair, anxieties about Islam surfaced more directly in U.S. discourse, especially around the figure of Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb. This issue of *Kawkab Amirka* offers valuable insight into Western perceptions of the East, particularly of Muslims. The inclusion of these articles in the English section suggests an awareness of, and perhaps a desire to educate, English-speaking readers interested in Arabs and Islam. The issue critiques American ignorance of the Chinese and highlights U.S. hypocrisy in moral and religious discourse, while also emphasizing exotic elements likely to appeal to Western fascination and showcasing Muslim achievements in the East. Collectively, these pieces seem to encourage Western readers to unlearn prevailing stereotypes about the East. However, the Arabic section presents a troubling contrast. It includes an article about an African American man allegedly stealing a woman's inheritance, promoting a sense of Arab superiority over African Americans. This reflects an internalization of American racial hierarchies, suggesting that Arabs, too, were navigating their position within a racially stratified system by locating themselves above others on the perceived social ladder. Taken together, the issue demonstrates the ambivalent position of Arab writers at the World's Fair: they resisted dominant stereotypes by affirming Muslim and Arab dignity, yet simultaneously reinforced other racial hierarchies, revealing the complexity of diasporic identity formation within a global context of empire and exclusion.

The growing visibility of Islam in the United States during the late nineteenth century

unsettled dominant notions of American identity, which were often equated with Christianity and whiteness, and the figure of Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb embodied this disruption. As one of the most prominent American converts, Webb challenged cultural boundaries and suggested that Islam could take root in the West. The article titled “SHEIKH WEBB’S FIRST MOHAMMEDAN LECTURE,” published in *Kawkab Amirka* on March 3, 1893, reflects these anxieties. It describes Webb as “one of the earliest European ancestry converts to Islam in the U.S. He also started one of the first Islamic Reading Rooms, three Islamic newspapers, and had a small bookstore and lecture series. One of my first introductions to the history of Islam in America was through the entry in Islam Our Choice on his life” (Abdullah Al-Ahari and Catovic). For many Americans, Webb’s conversion and public presence represented a threat to the rigid boundaries of who could be considered authentically American. The rhetoric used in the article underscores these fears, portraying Webb as someone who “raised last night the green standard of Islam, drew the sword of the Prophet of Mecca and shouted the battle cry of Moslems everywhere,” a description steeped in violent imagery that frames Islam not as a religion but as a militant, expansionist force. Such portrayals reinforced Islamophobic sentiment and cast Muslims as inherently threatening to the social and moral order of the West. For Muslim Arabs living in the United States, this climate of suspicion placed immense pressure on them to conceal their faith or conform to Western expectations to avoid further marginalization. Webb’s

own dual identity, retaining a Western name while adopting Islam, fueled these anxieties further, suggesting that Islam could not only infiltrate but also transform the West from within. At the same time, Webb actively sought to counter these misconceptions. His lectures addressed stereotypes directly, and in discussing polygamy, he highlighted Western hypocrisy, pointing out that “the British government’s provision of prostitutes for its army in India” stood in stark contrast to Islam’s emphasis on caring for women through marriage. In Webb’s framing, polygamy was not a symbol of excess or exploitation, as Orientalist fantasies suggested, but a practice grounded in responsibility and care. Yet despite such efforts at clarification, these arguments were often overshadowed by persistent Orientalist imaginings, particularly those surrounding harems and gender, which continued to shape how Islam and Muslims were perceived.

The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair served as a key stage for the performance of Orientalist fantasies. While Webb participated in the Parliament of Religions to foster a more accurate understanding of Islam, the Streets of Cairo exhibit presented a starkly contrasting image. It exoticized Arab and Muslim cultures through belly dancing, bazaars, and stylized architecture, reinforcing Western stereotypes of the East as sensual, regressive, and fundamentally “Other.” This juxtaposition—between Webb’s intellectual and religious outreach and the fair’s commercialized, spectacle-driven portrayal—illustrates the tension between sincere efforts at cultural representation and the dominant racialized imagination of the

American public. These conflicting narratives shaped not only how Americans perceived Islam but also how Muslim Arabs navigated their identities. As *Kawkab Amirka* demonstrates, Muslim writers and intellectuals engaged in a complex balancing act: defending their faith, educating a skeptical public, and resisting reductive stereotypes, all while contending with entrenched systems of racism, Orientalism, and religious exclusion. Islam's presence in the American public sphere during this period was not merely a marker of religious diversity—it was a contested space where race, empire, national identity, and cultural authority collided.

Some Arab writers pointed out that the United States actively forwarded such collisions. In the April 28, 1983 issue of *Kawkab Amirka*, , Vol. 2, No. 55, there is an article titled “Oriental Things.” The unknown author writes,

Morocco as it is' had the leader of his caravan, a man named Salem, who styled himself the khalifa, or second in command. This man had a small English vocabulary, and one day he surprised the travelers with an unexpected display of patriotism.... The khalifa suddenly proposed a toast of ' 'The Star Spangled Banner?... hunters and beaters ... sprang to their feet and shouted: "Hip, hip, hooray!" The Moorish accent made the occurrence all the more abusive. When the traveler expressed his surprise at hearing that familiar roast in a foreign land, the khalifa laughed and said: 'Why shouldn't they shout for the stars and

stripes. They are good Americans, as their fathers were before them. Let's hold a political meeting!' He then explained that, sixty years before, the village had been taken under American protection by the consul and that it had remained loyal ever since.

This article appears to serve a dual purpose. First, it reflects the West's significant role in shaping the modern East, implicitly suggesting that the West should not devalue what it has helped influence. From this perspective, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair became a platform to showcase the West's civilizing mission and its perceived success in inspiring change in the East. The second purpose, aimed at Eastern readers, conveys a more introspective message: a call for Arabs to be mindful of how they represent themselves. It urges recognition of how occupation and colonization have shaped Eastern identities, while emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural heritage. The article encourages Eastern audiences to resist adopting behaviors or narratives that might validate Western domination or contribute to the objectification of their cultures.

As revealed by Arabic newspapers, photography and exhibits, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was curated through a lens shaped by Western expectations. Conformity to these expectations yielded portrayals deemed "authentic" by American audiences, while any deviation was dismissed as inaccurate or uncivilized. Photography, in particular, operated as a powerful visual tool of Orientalism—depicting Arabs and Muslims in ways that rein-

forced exoticism, cultural hierarchy, and perceived inferiority. Often staged, these images stripped their subjects of agency and reified Western narratives of dominance. Arabic newspapers frequently responded to such representations, demonstrating a sharp awareness of how photography contributed to the construction of the racialized and cultural “other.” This dynamic is exemplified in the Algerian exhibit, where participants were expected to endorse the supposed progress brought by French colonial rule in order to be granted legitimacy. Arab immigrants in the United States encountered similar constraints: their social agency was circumscribed by rigid stereotypes, and many came to view assimilation as the only viable path to social mobility. This desire for Western acceptance often manifested in strategic self-presentation. Bilingual publications such as *Kawkab Amirka*, which published content in both Arabic and English, reflect this tension. English-language articles that emphasized shared values or praised Western institutions can be read as calculated efforts to align with dominant norms. Nonetheless, many Arab and Muslim immigrants remained skeptical of full inclusion in American society. Some recognized that they were persistently cast in the role of the “other”—a necessary foil through which American identity defined itself. At times, Arabs and Muslims played into these expectations, whether for financial survival or unconsciously, thereby reinforcing orientalist stereotypes. Photography and exhibitions thus became performative spaces where identity was both shaped and constrained. Yet, despite their marginalization, Arabs and Muslims were deeply em-

bedded in the American national narrative, which often defined itself not by what it was, but by what it was not—namely, Arab or Muslim.

Chapter 3

Ink and Identity: *Al-Hoda* (1898–1972) and Its Contemporaries in the Landscape of Immigrant Print Culture

We present to you Al-Huda and its lines, praying for you with perfect grace. It (Al-Hoda) seeks your compassion after the landmarks and separating seas were lost. With the guide of every guidance, and before every temptation, it meets you in harmony. It realized the people of wisdom and their clarity, and so it came to offer them fair conditions. She said: “If you wish for my constant acceptance, then it is a joy for me to be the recipient. Do not seek my favor for the novelty of my appearance, And when I age, you render me idle. Rather, carry out your issues, whatever they contain— Sequences full of beneficial content. And if I criticize you, then you are absolved From any consequence that may be exchanged. Do not assume, for the purposes of your groups, That some truths are only useful in debate. So host me, if you like, under your care, Or I hope, after thanks, to depart. Indeed, I have known my desires with clarity, And virtue refuses betrayal with loyalty. And I see newspapers benefit from praise and from critique, Where pleasure turns into exchange.”

—Translated from the first issue of *Al-Hoda*, published Feb 22, 1898.¹



Figure 3.1: Column from the first issue of *Al-Hoda* (1898)

¹Because the digital database containing this newspaper has recently been reorganized, several issues are mislabeled in the metadata. My in-text citations therefore follow the original issue numbers and publication dates printed in the newspaper itself rather than the current database labels. Future updates to the database are expected to correct these errors.

3.1 Introduction

The civil war that started in Syria in 2011 ignited a national conversation in the United States regarding the large number of people seeking refuge (Doumit 680). Some voiced questions about how easily these immigrants might assimilate into American culture. However, what such questions failed to account for is that the Syrian presence in the United States extends back more than a century, reflecting a long-standing and complex history of immigration (Naff 45). In fact, beginning in the late nineteenth and continuing into the early twentieth century, the United States inadvertently encouraged Lebanese and Syrian immigration through church-sponsored missionary activity in the Levant. During this period, many Arabs, including both Muslims and Christians, migrated to America. While popular media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflects American responses to Lebanese and Syrian immigration, far fewer sources illuminate how the immigrants themselves understood and narrated their own experiences. A selection of short stories, known as *Hikayat al-Mahjar*, or Mahjar literature, “capture a Syrian immigrant community engaged in a transitional moment in America” (Smith 1). However, it is the newspapers like *Al-Hoda*, founded in Philadelphia in 1898 by Naoum Anthony Mokarzel, that offer a more in-depth and sustained view of the community, revealing their concerns, aspirations, and strategies for navigating life in a new land. In particular, these newspapers addressed a wide range of topics and catered to diverse audiences, reflecting the

community's efforts to maintain their cultural identity in a foreign land, and serving as vital platforms for cultural expression and political discourse (Suleiman, *Arab-American: Building a New Future* 88).

Sitting alongside *Al-Hoda* is *The Syrian World*, published from 1926 to 1932 in New York City. This publication exemplifies the pride that Syrian immigrants took in their heritage and their concerted efforts to preserve it. Aimed primarily at the second-generation children of immigrants, *The Syrian World* featured a broad range of topics relevant to the immigrant experience, including international and domestic travel, both historical and contemporary expressions of Arabic and Arab-American art and literature, concerns surrounding mental and physical health and hygiene, evolving ideologies of race, the shifting roles of women, the formation of Syrian and Lebanese-American communal societies, and the complex political and psychological ties between immigrants and their countries of origin. It also sought to document and celebrate the culture and history of Syria, important for a generation of Syrian Americans who may have never visited the country (Kempa par1). Through its pages, the newspaper provided a platform for the transmission of cultural knowledge and the reinforcement of a shared identity among the Syrian-American community (Shakir 30). A third newspaper, *Kawkab Amirka*, published in New York between 1892 and 1908, also appeared to address multiple generations, including select articles and/or titles of articles in English, reflecting the bilingual nature of the Syrian

immigrant community and their efforts to navigate both their native and adopted cultures. Reviewing these print materials offers valuable insights into the processes by which Syrian immigrants shaped, and were shaped by, their new environment as they endeavored to establish a cohesive Syrian-American community. A critical examination of these newspapers reveals the strategies Syrian immigrants employed to negotiate their identity, resist prevalent stereotypes, and assert their place within the broader American society. Notably, by producing and engaging with print culture, these immigrants were challenging and reconfiguring the existing narratives surrounding Arab identity. This chapter demonstrates how print culture was crucial in this process, playing a pivotal role in the formation of Syrian-American identity. It does so within the broader context of belonging, Americanism, assimilation, and cultural homogeneity. Importantly, it contends that these publications not only functioned to preserve cultural heritage but also provided a means for engaging with American societal norms, thereby highlighting the dual process of cultural adaptation and integration.

The reasons Syrians immigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were varied: economic hardship, persecution under the Ottoman Empire, and the search for better opportunities were key drivers. That said, the majority were Christians fleeing persecution and economic hardship under the Ottoman Empire (Tawil par4). Within the United States—and despite the Christian faith of some—these immigrants

often faced hostile stereotypes associated with Islam, as many Americans at the time conflated Arab identity with Islam (Naff 221). Through print culture, Syrian immigrants addressed these prevailing misconceptions, cultivating and articulating a distinct identity that might embrace (or exploit) and at times transcend them (and at points countering them, as presented in chapter three). In his study of the literature of Coptic Christians who immigrated to the United States in the era Reyhan Durmaz affirms this usage, noting that, for immigrants, newspapers were a “site where the identity itself was changed, reformed, and transmuted, that is, as a platform on which identity is not only expressed but shaped” (Durmaz 859). Thus, these cultural productions can be understood as occurring within what Mary Louise Pratt describes as the contact zone; this middle ground is described as the “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today” (34). The newspapers produced by Syrian immigrants vividly reflect these cultural encounters.

Following Durmaz, print culture offered marginalized Syrian Americans a powerful means to assert identity while navigating this contact zone. This was particularly relevant in relation to racism and their awareness of the ways they were perceived by the dominant society. In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, Michael Suleiman points out that historically, “Arabs were often considered ‘colored’—and their country of origin was less

important than skin tone and appearance” (Suleiman, *Arab-American: Building a New Future* 313). African American scholar W.E.B. Du Bois explores the psychic consequences of such treatment in *The Souls of Black Folk*, describing the state of “double consciousness,” constantly aware of how one is perceived by a society that devalues one’s existence on the basis of race. Du Bois writes, “this is the dwarfing, warping, distorting influence which operates upon each and every colored man in the United States. He is forced to take his outlook on all things, not from the viewpoint of a citizen or a man, or even a human being, but from the viewpoint of a colored man” (Du Bois 18). Arabs who immigrated to the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s faced a similar dilemma. Like Black Americans, Arabs were forced to present themselves differently in response to the perceptions imposed upon them by white society. Double consciousness, according to Du Bois, meant that Arab Americans, like Black Americans, shaped their identities not only in relation to their own cultural heritage, but also in relation to how they were categorized and viewed by others. This was part of the challenge of being both Arab and American in a society that often saw them as outsiders. Arab immigrants recognized that in order to not just be accepted, but to thrive, they would need to assimilate, which often meant downplaying or concealing aspects of their culture and identity. Yet the perception of these immigrants was often inconsistent, meaning that one could never assume how one might be perceived. Pulcini writes of this contradiction:

It was in the late 1890s and early 1900s that the first descriptions of Arab immigrants appeared in periodicals. A particularly sensitive and sympathetic account of life in the "Syrian colony" of New York City was printed in 1903 in Harper's Monthly. Its author took as his point of departure the popular image of the Arab as someone mysterious, shifty, and swarthy and used it to draw his readers into the description of his excursion into the Syrian neighbourhood... Once drawn into the exotic world of the "Easterners," however, the reader was led to modify his or her preconceived notions. (Pulcini 27-28)

Baycar highlights how Syrian immigrants were frequently portrayed in the press as self-reliant individuals who prioritized mutual support and independence, particularly in times of hardship. For example, during the 1893 famine, that was a result of the Panic of 1893, which impacted immigrants, they did not seek outside aid, relying instead on mutual support. While their image when they appeared white and could assimilate remained favorable until 1909, growing concerns over their racial identity, accusations of spreading harmful propaganda, and the negative perception of Ottoman peddlers led both American and Ottoman authorities to question their integration into American society (Baycar 18). This no doubt escalated the desires of some to assimilate, exacerbating the tension with their simultaneous struggle for self-definition; a struggle that was crucial to the formation and nurturing of the community which supported them.

To better understand how Syrian immigrants navigated the pressures of American racial and cultural hierarchies, it is useful to frame their experience through W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness and Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. This hybrid identity emerges in a "Third Space," where the colonized navigate the expectations imposed by the colonizer. Through this interaction, a new, blended identity is formed. Bhabha explains that "Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" ("Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" 159). In the case of Syrian immigrants during this era, hybridity was not a seamless blending of cultures but a negotiation of identity. They adopted aspects of American life—such as anglicizing their names and pursuing formal education—while retaining key elements of their own culture, including language and tradition. This dynamic was evident in how they presented themselves in semi-public spaces such as newspapers and advertisements, where they tailored their self-representation to both signal assimilation and assert cultural distinctiveness.

This negotiation of dominant narratives began upon arrival. In particular, Syrian immigrants encountered unique challenges, especially in navigating the complex racial classification system and confronting the negative stereotypes associated with Arabs. They were encouraged to assimilate, while simultaneously being reminded of their perceived difference.

At the same time, the desire to assimilate was not a given. For many Arabs, immigration to the United States sparked the formation of what can be described as diasporic transnationalism or nationalism, a way of maintaining cultural and political ties to the homeland while navigating life in America. Sahoo et al. authors of *Indian Diaspora and Transnationalism*, explain that transnationalism is “often used both narrowly—to refer to migrants’ durable ties across countries—and more widely to capture not only communities but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups, and organizations” (9). While the term traditionally refers to people who are forcibly displaced from their homeland, diasporic nationalism applies to anyone who is part of an “internationally dispersed ethnic group” (Guibernau and Rex 7). Syrians in the United States developed a sense of diasporic nationalism by using their shared ethnicity to form cohesive groups, despite lacking a unified identity due to their historical circumstances. Upon arriving in America, these large Arab populations divided into smaller groups based on commonalities such as language, religion, or political views. These connections were evident in the newspapers they established, which served as platforms for communal expression. While political opinions varied among them, they still identified as Arabs.

Studying these newspapers serves an additional function, attesting to the presence of Syrians and Arabs in the United States at a time when formal government records (such as census data and immigration documents) did accurately document their numbers. This

official omission obscured the demographic and cultural history of early Arab immigration, posing a significant challenge for scholars. In particular, many in the United States did not sufficiently distinguish between Arabs and Asians, classifying both as “Orientals.” The debate over their classification had severe consequences, as Gary David notes: “Following the Chinese Exclusion Act, which stated that only persons who were ‘free white persons’ could become citizens, Syrian immigrants from the Arab world could potentially be denied this status” (85). The error in classification stemmed not just from policy, but from flawed interpretation, which Salloum A. Mokarzel addressed in *The New York Times* in 1909: “This attitude not only tends to show a certain feeling of wanton prejudice, but a regrettable predominance of ignorance on the part of those who hold such a view of the matter” (S. A. Mokarzel 8).

However, while these classification issues were highly visible, the actual effect was not uniformly detrimental. Samhan notes a counter-perspective, arguing that “the effect of racial classification on the lives of Arab Americans has been relatively minor” (216). She further discusses how Alixa Naff’s interpretation of the “yellow race crisis” shaped the immigrants’ experience, contributing to their complicated position within America’s racial hierarchy, arguing that: “It [the reference to Arabs as the yellow race] reinforced the Arab immigrants’ conviction that their heritage was not the true target of these policies – they were simply being confused with others (Turks, Asians). The external classification issues

imposed in America did not alienate or even deter their civic loyalty to their new homeland. The outcome of the yellow race crisis no doubt strengthened the immigrants' resolve to value and cherish their exonerated racial status as white" (217-218). Regardless of the ultimate impact, Syrian immigrants actively grouped together to challenge the American government's classification of them as Asiatic, a category that often resulted in a refusal of citizenship. To argue for their inclusion, Baycar notes that "Syrians disputed this idea by tracing their ethnic history and the etymology of their names through Phoenician, ancient Egyptian, and Greco-Roman history, challenging their definition as 'Asiatics'" (11).

Beyond historical arguments, a crucial strategy focused on engaging the Arabic-speaking community through newspaper reporting to secure legal victories. The stakes of this classification struggle were high, as the ability of Syrian immigrants to apply for citizenship was at the time highly variable and dependent on the presiding judge's understanding of the term "White" (Stephan par3). This strategic use of print culture helped shape the outcome of the 1915 case of George Dow, a Lebanese immigrant whose application had been rejected on racial grounds. *Al-Hoda* both informed its readers of Dow's case and attempted to mobilize them. Najib al-Sarghani, for example, kept readers of the popular Arabic-language paper, *Al-Hoda*, (*The Guidance*) up to date on the case and he made repeated appeals for money to support the legal defense (Gualtieri 44). These efforts fostered a shared sense of responsibility and resistance among Arab immigrants, who were

called upon to stand together and support one another. The use of print culture in Dow's case extended beyond newspaper calls: *Al-Hoda* editor Naoum Mokarzel commissioned the publication of a book in both English and Arabic, authored by Khalil A. Bishara, which explicitly argued that Syrians were Caucasian and therefore eligible for United States citizenship. By circulating legal and racial justifications for inclusion in two languages, the book aimed to influence both American legal authorities and Arab immigrant readers. Readers of the newspaper no doubt celebrated when Dow was later granted eligibility after the court successfully reclassified Syrians as white, a legal victory widely attributed to these organized efforts (29). In this way, we see how crucial print culture proved to navigating American culture, politics, and citizenship, and how expertly Syrian American editors and journalists wielded it.

3.2 Overview of Syrian Newspapers of late nineteenth and early twentieth century

The rising number of Syrian immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century embodied diverse perspectives on politics, religion, and identity. Despite such differences, many new arrivals received assistance from earlier immigrants, easing their transition and fostering a sense of solidarity. As they worked to establish their lives in an unfamiliar country,

they sought common ground to build a cohesive and supportive community, with print culture emerging as a crucial tool for shaping community cohesion, expressing ideological debates, and navigating the challenges of a new world. In this way, print culture provides an ideal site for developing a deeper understanding of the assimilation process, as well as the internal divisions and loyalties among the immigrants. Such divisions and loyalties were exemplified by the different positions of the newspaper editors themselves. For example, the founder of *Mira'at al-Gharb* 1899 - 1961 (*Mirror of the West*), Najeeb Moussa Diab ², held starkly different political views from *Al-Hoda's* 1898 -1972 founder, Naoum Mokarzel ³, both based in New York City. While Mokarzel was a staunch Lebanese nationalist, Diab advocated for a broader pan-Arab identity. As Aaron Berman observes, in "the first three decades of the twentieth century, important and influential Americans, including members of the small but growing Arab-American community, intellectually, politically, and financially participated in the construction of Arab nationalism" (Berman 1). Their newspapers became battlegrounds for these ideological conflicts, offering valuable insight into the political struggles and integration challenges faced by the Syrian immigrant community. While this chapter focuses on specific Arabic articles from *Al-Hoda*, a

²In his book Bishara, who attended Columbia University, introduced the "Jesus Thesis," arguing that since Jesus was considered white by United States Christians, anyone from the same region should also be recognized as white.

³Americans were not unaware of the help Syrian immigrants offered newcomers: American newspapers from the late 1880s, which reported rumors about wealthy Syrians planning to create a self-sufficient community in New York or Pennsylvania, with the goal of providing employment for newcomers (Baycar 3).

brief overview of Arabic-language newspapers available in the United States during this period provides insight into the diverse ways immigrant communities formed and represented themselves, and helps illuminate the context in which *Al-Hoda* was produced.

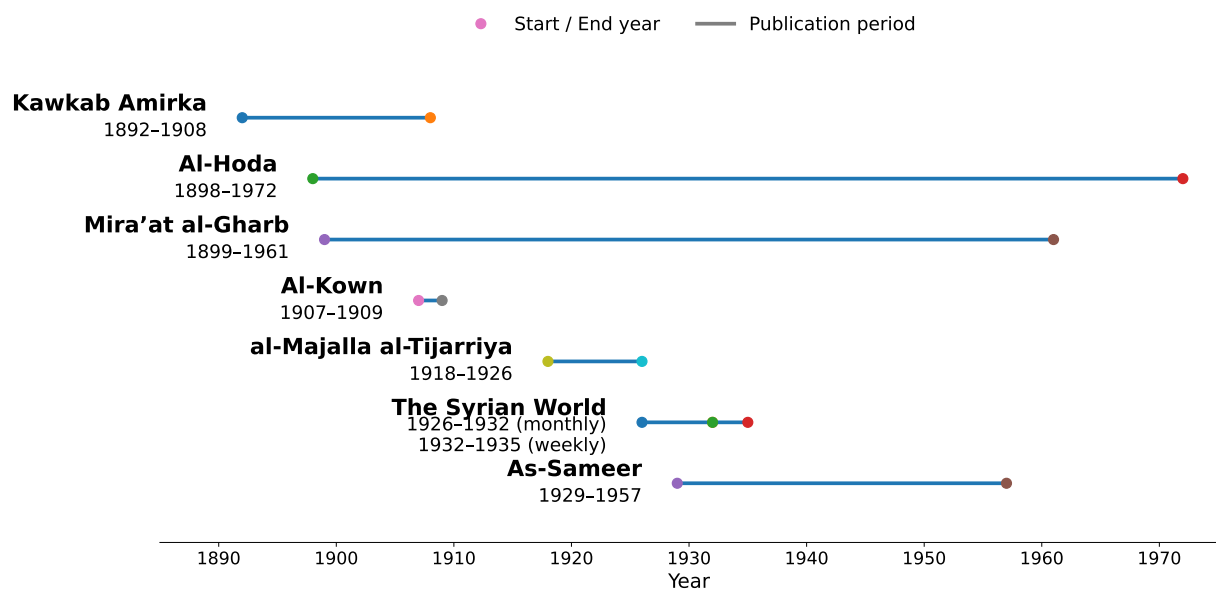


Figure 3.2: Timeline of Syrian and Syrian-American newspapers published in the United States, showing periods of publication and changes in publication frequency.

Table 3.1: Bibliographic and publication details of major Arabic-language and Arab-American newspapers published in the United States (late 19th–mid-20th century).

Newspaper	English Name	Years Published	Language	Cities Published	Founder(s)
As-Sameer (السمير)	The Companion / The Entertainer	1929–1957	Arabic	New York City (Brooklyn)	Elia Abu Madi
The Syrian World	The Syrian World	1926–1932 (monthly journal); 1932–1935 (weekly newspaper)	English	New York City	Salloum A. Mokarzel
al-Majalla al-Tijarriya (المجلة التجارية)	The Syrian- American Commercial Magazine	1918–1926	Arabic	New York City	Salloum A. Mokarzel
Al-Kown (الكون)	The Universe	1907–1909	Arabic	New York City	Najib Sawaya
Mira'at al-Gharb (مرآة الغرب)	Mirror of the West	1899–1961	Arabic	New York City	Najeeb Diab
Al-Hoda (الهدى)	The Guidance	1898–1972	Arabic	Philadelphia; New York City	Naoum A. Mokarzel
Kawkab Amirka (كوكب أمريكا)	Star of America	1892–1908	Arabic (initially bilingual)	New York City	Najeeb Arbeely and Ibrahim Arbeely

Table 3.2: Primary thematic focus, intended audiences, and editorial purposes of selected Arabic-language and Arab-American newspapers.

Newspaper	Main Topics Covered	Target Audience	Purpose
As-Sameer (السمير)	Mahjar literature, poetry, cultural criticism, diaspora affairs	Arabic-speaking Syrian and Lebanese diaspora, especially literary circles	Preserve Arabic literary culture in the diaspora and maintain cultural ties with the Arab world
The Syrian World	Syrian history and heritage; Arab and Arab-American art and literature; health and hygiene; race; gender roles; travel; immigrant psychology	Second-generation Syrian/Lebanese Americans and educated U.S. readers	Document and celebrate Syrian culture while facilitating cultural integration into American society
al-Majalla al-Tijariya (المجلة التجارية)	Commerce and trade; business profiles; economic and technological developments; post-World War I reconstruction; advertising	Syrian and Lebanese immigrant merchants and entrepreneurs	Promote commercial exchange between the United States and the Arab world and strengthen immigrant business networks
Al-Kown (الكون)	Ottoman constitutional politics; reformist discourse; diaspora correspondence	Politically engaged Syrian immigrants in the United States	Advocate constitutional reform and foster political unity among the Syrian diaspora
Mira'at al-Gharb (مرآة الغرب)	Mahjar literature; political debate; Syrian nationalism; international affairs	Syrian and Lebanese immigrant communities	Represent immigrant political interests, promote Arabic literature, and advocate Syrian independence
Al-Hoda (الهدى)	Political philosophy; history; religion; science; Levantine affairs; community reporting; editorials; advertising	Arabic-speaking diaspora in the Americas and beyond	Guide and unify Arab immigrants, shape political consciousness, and support Lebanese nationalism
Kawkab Amirka (كوكب أمريكا)	Community news; Ottoman politics; reform advocacy; immigrant guidance	Syrian immigrants across the Americas and the Arab world	Bridge Eastern and Western societies and assist immigrants in navigating American life

3.3 Overview of *Al-Hoda*

Among these newspapers, *Al-Hoda* stands out for its longevity, wide circulation, and central role in shaping Syrian American discourse. Through its diverse range of topics, including political, social, and religious issues, the newspaper provided an avenue for Syrian writers and leaders to influence and guide the immigrant community. By examining editorial choices and select articles it becomes possible to trace how the content contributed to shaping Syrian immigrants' cultural and intellectual development in the diaspora. The newspaper's coverage allowed for the representation of Syrian voices but also fostered discussions of identity formation, communal values, and the challenges of integration into American society. In this way, *Al-Hoda* played a pivotal role in the construction of a collective Syrian identity, offering a space where ideas and debates about the community's future could unfold and Syrian immigrants could negotiate their evolving identity, values, and aspirations. Through its engagement with these themes, *Al-Hoda* illustrates how print culture acted as a tool for both cultural preservation and adaptation, reflecting the dynamic nature of the Syrian immigrant experience in America. This chapter focuses on *Al-Hoda* because it offers a particularly rich site for analyzing how immigrants navigated questions of identity, belonging, and cultural negotiation.

From its very front page, *Al-Hoda* signals its dual orientation. Notably, the title appears in both Arabic and English. This bilingual presentation is more than stylistic; it sets the



Figure 3.3: Bilingual content (Arabic and English) in the first issue of *Al-Hoda* (Feb. 22, 1898).

tone for how *Al-Hoda* positioned itself as both a voice for the Syrian diaspora and a participant in American public life, likewise visually reflecting the balancing act between cultural preservation and integration. In English, the paper presents the Arabic word *Al-Hoda* transliterated in Arabic script, accompanied by its translation, The Guidance, a choice that not only makes the paper legible to non-Arabic speakers, but also asserts the paper's cultural and moral authority in navigating life between two worlds. This is a literal translation; the “al” in *Al-Hoda* translates to “the.” Yet, this translation is problematic, since it conveys a different meaning. By adding the article “the” before the noun “guidance,” the writer is indicating that there is more than one path to guidance and that the path that this newspaper calls for is superior to others. This could either be an

error in translation, or an assertion of the agency and influence that the Syrian community was hoping to achieve through the newspaper. In addition to the English title, the Arabic title is followed by a list of qualities the newspaper aspires to disseminate, as illustrated in the title “*The Guidance*” and not Guidance. It provides descriptors that position *Al-Hoda* not simply as a source of news, but as a moral, intellectual, and cultural guide for the Syrian immigrant community. It reads, “*Al-Hoda*, critical, purifying, and informative.” The order of the words is important, as it indicates significance; the newspaper aims to “purify” first, and then inform. Following the title, the reader is presented with the cost of an annual subscription: 4 dollars in the United States and 25 fr for foreign countries (see Volume 1, Issue 2, 1898). *Al-Hoda* strategically rendered its pricing in both Arabic and English, emphasizing its reach to various geographical areas, including Canada, Mexico, and other countries, to project the image of a global Arabic-speaking readership. By doing so, the editors forwarded the illusion of a larger subscription base among the Syrian diaspora, reinforcing a perception of collective presence, power, and agency within the Syrian-American community, and fostering the sense of diasporic nationalism discussed above ⁴.

The use of both Arabic and English functions not merely as an attempt to assert American belonging, but also as a means of utilizing print culture to forward the retention of

⁴ Despite its aspirations to a global reach, *Al-Hoda* faced operational changes, reducing its publication frequency over time before finally ceasing operations in 1971(Charlton).

the Arabic language, promoting linguistic and cultural identity among Syrian immigrants. Anticipating Arabic language loss in an Anglophone country, figures such as Naoum took significant steps to encourage the retention and learning of Arabic, particularly among Syrian immigrants. In the case of Naoum, it is not merely a matter of producing the newspaper; it is also exemplified in his initiative to provide free copies of *Al-Hoda* to anyone aged 15 and older who was learning to read and write in Arabic. The only requirement was that the individual submit a letter from their priest ⁵. Naoum's dedication to the retention of Arabic is especially evident in his use of *Al-Hoda* to promote women's literacy, a move that reflects his belief in women's central role in sustaining and transmitting Arabic language and culture, particularly through their influence on the next generation. Through his efforts, Naoum sought to forestall the very shifts in language that often accompany cultural assimilation. Language, as a dynamic marker of identity, reflects broader social, cultural, and historical transformations, particularly as immigrant communities adapt, integrate, or push back against external pressures. Changes in language, therefore, often reflect broader shifts in identity and the processes of transformation within a society. The evolution of dialects and shifts in pronunciation serve as clear indicators of these changes, marking the

⁵ Naoum anticipates contemporary concerns about the preservation of the Arabic language. Currently, we see a loss of the Arabic language, for example, the use of Arabizi, a system where Arabic is written using Latin script and Arabic numerals, has become a widely used alternative in digital contexts. The phenomenon arose because the Arabic script was initially unsupported by technological tools and Internet resources, forcing Arabic speakers to find a means to communicate using the Latin alphabet (Allehaiby 52-53).

adaptation of individuals or groups to new social, political, or geographic environments. As linguistic features transform, they often mirror the assimilation or resistance to dominant cultures, the maintenance of heritage, or the blending of multiple influences. For example, sociolinguistic research has shown that the development of regional dialects can reflect the historical migration patterns and social stratifications of a community. Similarly, shifts in pronunciation or the adoption of new linguistic structures often emerge in response to social integration, immigration, or globalization. As these changes accumulate, they reshape the collective identity of the speakers, signaling their evolving place in the world and their interactions with other cultures. Thus, language acts as both a medium for expressing identity and a tool for negotiating change within and across communities.

Yet, despite Naoum's efforts to preserve the Arabic language, we see signs of the linguistic change cited above reflected in *Al-Hoda* newspaper. Such shifts illustrate the broader difficulties immigrant communities faced navigating cultural preservation and the realities of life in a new linguistic and social environment. For example, in one advertisement for cigarettes, the word cigarette (سجائر) is misspelled, and the word sweets (سكرات) is spelled instead (issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906). The word "cigarette" (pronounced segaar) is written with the letter "jeem" but pronounced as "ga." The word instead was spelled "sakayer" with the Arabic letter "kaf" that is pronounced, "ka". This subtle change shows how the language was transforming. It is much more difficult to pronounce "ja" than

"ca" in Arabic; this change represents a foreign accent. Generally, people who learn Arabic as a second language or those not as exposed to the language would make this common error. This spelling error is the kind one would expect with the beginning of the loss of the Arabic language or one of the steps in the process of the pidginization of the Arabic language. Whether the change is intentional, perhaps to sound more soft-spoken and appealing, or the result of gradual language loss, the transformation offers insight into the slow shifts overtaking this diasporic community. It reflects the subtle ways in which cultural and linguistic adaptation unfold over time, even in spaces dedicated to preservation ⁶.

Naoum's stance on the retention of the Arabic language and the strategic use of translation was not universal; even within his own family, views diverged. The Mokarzel brothers held very different opinions regarding language and the importance of maintaining Arabic in the diaspora. Naoum argued that fluency in the Arabic language was essential for maintaining cultural identity, viewing the loss of language as indicative of Syrians losing pride in their heritage. He emphasized the preservation of Arabic through literature, including short stories, periodicals, and poetry in *Al-Hoda*, underscoring both their linguistic significance and their function as exemplars and carriers of culture. In contrast, Salloum

⁶ Naoum anticipates contemporary concerns about the preservation of the Arabic language. Currently, we see a loss of the Arabic language, for example, the use of Arabizi, a system where Arabic is written using Latin script and Arabic numerals, has become a widely used alternative in digital contexts. The phenomenon arose because the Arabic script was initially unsupported by technological tools and Internet resources, forcing Arabic speakers to find a means to communicate using the Latin alphabet (Allehaiby 52-53).

believed that in order for Syrians to progress and fully embrace the United States as their permanent home, they should prioritize learning English over retaining Arabic (Suleiman, *Arab-American: Building a New Future* 9). Suleiman acknowledges that these discussions could become quite passionate:

Naoum attacked his own people for abandoning Arabic and berated them for being ‘ashamed of their origin and racial descent.’ ...Naoum was at times a purist, chastising members of his community for using what he referred to as Americanized Arabic. Salloum, on the other hand, claimed that there was no future for Arabic in the United States, and that trying to hold onto Arabic was based on the wrong assumption, namely that Syrians were sojourners, i.e. that they came to America for a short period of time only - and hence needed to retain the language of their former and future homeland. While this was true of early arrivals, Salloum wrote, it was certainly not true for later generations. This notion of “temporary immigration” also was most harmful in material terms, Salloum argued, because it delayed for a long time the establishment of strong businesses which required long-term growth. (“The Mokarzels’ contributions” Para. 21)

Salloum’s perspective reflects a stronger assimilationist approach informed by economic considerations, while Naoum’s concerns about cultural preservation, and language depict

pride and the prioritization of cultural connections to his Arab heritage over material matters.

Naoum also played an active role in shaping the cultural and linguistic values of his readership by carefully selecting contributions that reinforced his vision and leveraged the emotional ties of his readers. In the process, he shaped Arabic Diasporic literature through his elevation of writers like Ameen Rihani (1876-1940), who used literature to explore the challenges of exile and assimilation, while emphasizing the importance of preserving Arabic heritage. Rihani is widely regarded as an essential figure in the founding of Arab Diasporic literature ([Ameen Rihani](#)), known as Mahjar literature, which emerged among early Arab immigrants in the Americas and focused on themes of exile, displacement, and identity. It explored the intellectual and psychological challenges faced by Arab immigrants, many of whom struggled with a lack of understanding regarding the socio-political realities that had compelled their migration. According to Bushrui, Naoum and *Al-Hoda* provided Rihani with an important platform to disseminate his ideas, as he “began writing in an Arabic local paper called *Al-Hoda*...With these writings he began establishing himself as an implacable critic of Arab social traditions, and of the stagnant state of religion, politics and philosophy in the Arab world” ([Bushrui](#) par 9). Through his contributions, Rihani ⁷

⁷Ameen Rihani published dozens of articles in the early 1900s in *Al-Hoda*, many under the series *Kashkoul al-Khawater*, where he articulated his secular, reformist views and strong opposition to sectarianism. Researcher Jean Dayeh’s discovery of fifty previously overlooked articles affirms Rihani’s enduring influence on Arab-American thought and highlights how his political and religious ideals remained consistent throughout his life, culminating in a universal spiritual vision. (translated from Mohammad Bikri)

emphasized the importance of retaining Arabic language and identity amidst the pressures of assimilation, thereby aligning closely with Naoum's mission to preserve the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Arab diaspora.

While Rihani spent significant time in New York and would have been known to Naoum, the inclusion of Habeeb Faris's poem, "The Beating Hearts" in *Al-Hoda* issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906, highlights the transnational exchange of literary and cultural ideas within the Syrian diaspora. Habeeb Faris's biography raises questions about how the poem reached the newspaper's readership. Faris, born in Lebanon in 1853 and passing away in Egypt in 1932, appears to never have traveled to the United States. His wide travels across the Arab world and Europe, his doctoral degree in law from France, and his various roles as a teacher and editor suggest a transnational intellectual life(Arabic encyclopedia). Given that Faris established a magazine in Alexandria in 1899, it seems plausible that his work circulated widely within Arab literary and journalistic circles, reaching other parts of the diaspora, including North America. If Faris never physically reached America, but his work did, it suggests that *Al-Hoda* acted as a medium for a broader Arab diaspora network, either reprinting materials from other sources or soliciting contributions from Faris' contemporaries. Such transmissions support Baycar's research showing how Syrian immigrants maintained strong connections to their homeland (3). Faris' poetry illustrates how *Al-Hoda* functioned as a cultural bridge between distant Arab intellectuals and the

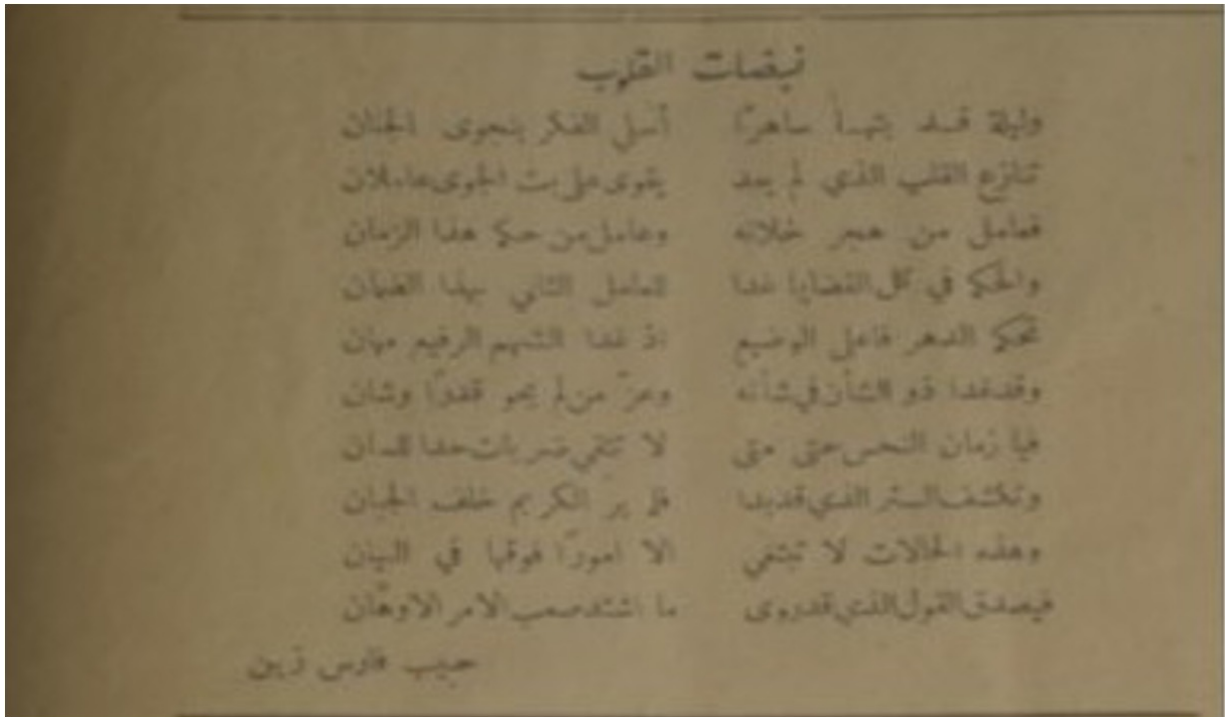


Figure 3.4: Poem in Arabic, published on Jan. 29, 1906

Syrian community in America that provided its readers with content that articulated their shared linguistic and emotional bonds.

Faris' poem reflects themes of homesickness and the difficulty of living far from loved ones, emotions that would have deeply resonated with Syrian immigrants in America. Naoum no doubt selected it with this in mind, anticipating that its emotional content would speak directly to the lived experiences of his readers, many of whom struggled with feelings of alienation and displacement. In doing so, he used literature not only to validate these emotions, but to cultivate a shared sense of community and cultural continuity in exile.

نبضات القلب

و ليلة قد بثها ساهرا املى الفكر بنجو الجنان
تنازع القلب الذي لم يعد يقوى على بث الجوى عاملان
فاعمل من هجر خلانه و عامل من حكم هذا الزمان
و الحكم في كل القضايا غدا العامل الثاني بهذا الضمان
تحكم الدهر فاعلى الوضيعة اذا غدا الشهر الرفيع مهان
و قد غدا ذو الشأن بشانه و عز من لم يجوى قدرا و شان
فيا زمان النحس حتى متى لا تتقي ضربات هذا اللسان
و تكشف الستر اللذي قد بدى فلم يرى الكريم خلف الجبان
و هذه الحالات ل تبتغي الا امورا فوقها في البيان
فيصدق القول اللذي قد روى ما اشتد صعب الامر الا و هان

حبيب فارس زين

Figure 3.5: Arabic poem “The Beating of Hearts”

Faris' own experiences of immigration during his time in Europe and his legal studies in France likely shaped these reflections, suggesting that the poem either mirrors his personal sense of exile or sympathetically captures the sentiments he anticipated displaced Syrians might feel.

Table 3.3: Faris' poem

Arabic (Two Lines)	Word-by-Word Translation
وليلة قد بثها ساهراً أملّي الفكر بنجوى الجنان	And a night I spent it sleepless I fill the thought with hope of heavens
تنازع القلب الذي لم يعد يقوى على بثّ الجوى عاملان	Struggled the heart that no longer Can endure sharing sorrow two factors
فاعمل من هجر خلانه وعامل من حكم هذا الزمان	One factor from abandoning his friends And one from rule of this time
والحكم في كلّ القضايا غدا العامل الثاني بهذا الضمان	And judgment in all matters became The second factor with this guarantee
تحكم الدهر فأعلى الوضيعة إذا غدا الشهم الرفيع مهان	Time ruled so it raised the lowly When became the noble high insulted
وقد غدا ذو الشأن في شأنه وعزّ من لم يجو قدراً وشان	And became the one of status in his status And honored who lacked value and esteem
فيا زمان النحس حتى متى لا تتقي ضربات هذا اللسان؟	Oh time of misfortune until when Do not you fear strikes of this tongue?
وتتكشف الستر الذي قد بدا فلم ير الكريم خلف الجبان	And is uncovered the veil that appeared And did not see the noble behind the coward
وهذه الحالات لا تبغي إلا أموراً فوقها في البيان	And these states do not seek Except matters beyond it in explanation
فيصدق القول الذي قد روى ما اشتدّ صعب الأمر إلا وهان	So becomes true the saying that was narrated No matter got harder unless it softened

The poem conveys the poet's late-night contemplations of the trials and tribulations

of life, where sleeplessness is attributed to a preoccupation with thoughts of Heaven. The language employed in the poem appears to echo the stylistic features of the Quran, suggesting that Faris may have drawn upon Islamic themes in his reflections. This reference becomes more plausible considering Faris' return to the Ottoman Empire, a context where the Quranic framework would have been integral to intellectual and cultural discourse. Faris' meditations shift toward the existential challenges individuals face, describing an overwhelming sense of being burdened by life's hardships to the point where his heart can no longer endure the suffering. He identifies two sources of his heartache: first, the anguish of being separated from loved ones due to forced migration, which he perceives as deeply unjust; and second, a more ambiguous cause, which may pertain either to an impending lawsuit or a reference to the Day of Judgment. Given the religious undertones present in the poem's opening, it seems more likely that Faris is alluding to the Day of Judgment, where ultimate justice would be rendered. The poet suggests that only after death will individuals be judged fairly, revealing a belief in divine justice as the ultimate resolution to worldly inequities.

In addition to evoking the emotional weight of homesickness and displacement, Faris's poem also critiques the transformative pressures of immigrant life, particularly the loss of status and the racial prejudices faced by Syrian immigrants, while ultimately advocating for resilience, justice, and the rejection of fear. He highlights how life imposes unwanted

changes, portraying the inversion of social statuses, where the poor become rich, the rich become poor, and the respectable become degraded while the degraded gain status. This reversal implicitly speaks to the plight of Syrians who, upon emigrating to Europe or America, experience a decline in social standing despite their affluence and respectability in their homeland. The racial prejudices they encounter in the diaspora, particularly in America, are subtly referenced as Faris contrasts their esteemed position in their native lands with the discrimination and economic struggles they face abroad due to their non-white status. Faris expresses frustration over the persistence of such injustices, lamenting the fear that prevents individuals from speaking out. He writes, “what a shame this time is where the tongue is unable to speak, to reveal what it truly feels.” He suggests that this fear perpetuates oppression, and his poem serves as a call to action, urging Syrians to reject silence and confront inequity. He further asserts that time itself serves as the ultimate judge, and through its passage, the truth will eventually be revealed. Despite the hardships of the present, the poem’s conclusion carries a sense of optimism, insisting that hope remains and that light will emerge from the darkness. This final note of hope may also reflect the risks associated with print culture. Publishing in a foreign language, particularly in contexts where the dominant population may not understand the text, opens the possibility for misunderstanding, unrest, or even rebellion. However, Faris affirms that the first step toward achieving respect and justice lies in overcoming fear and

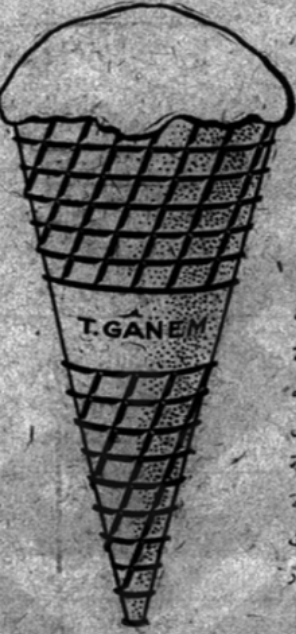
speaking out, reinforcing the poem's broader message of resistance against oppression and the pursuit of fairness. The inclusion of international contributions, such as a poem by Habeeb Faris about loneliness in immigration, and sent from Europe, further highlights its broader distribution (issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906, in New York).

3.4 Advertisements

There was one area of *Al-Hoda* over which Naoum had less control: the advertisements. Nonetheless, advertisers shared Naoum's desire to exploit readers' emotional connections to Syria, though in this case as a means of generating profit. They accomplished this in part by using sensory engagement to maintain cultural connections and recreate the feeling of home in a foreign land. Food and spice ads evoked taste and smell, music-related promotions engaged sound, and the Arabic script and accompanying images reinforced visual familiarity. With approximately sixty advertisements per issue, *Al-Hoda* provided a rich sensory experience that helped the Syrian immigrant community fortify their connections to home while navigating their new American surroundings.

Advertisements for imported Syrian foods in *Al-Hoda* highlight the community's deep longing for familiar tastes, reinforcing cultural continuity, economic growth, and the broader political discourse surrounding Syrian identity and nationalism. These ads both

* وجان لقوالب الايسكريم *



فرصة نادرة لراغبين في الحصول على وجبات او ستوفات لعمل قوالب الايسكريم او الايسكريم كوز فانتا نصلطع هذه الستوفات انواعاً كثيرة باسعار مختلفة هي على غاية الجودة اذ انك تقدر ان تشتري الستوف من سعر ٣٠ الى ١٠٠ ريال بحسب قلة او كثرة الايدي او القوالب التي فيه وهذه الستوفات تجوز اما على الغز او الفازلين وسرعتها في خبز الكعك او القوالب غريبة اذ تقدر ان تصنع من ٣٠٠ الى ٥٠٠ كعكة في الساعة فمثلاً عن انما مكفولة من شركات منهاان الحريق وجبهة المنظر تستفيد انظار الجميع

نكتبك انك على الستوف الذي تشتريه ونكفل لك وصوله اليك كما اننا نرسل اليك الكاتالوج لكي تختار الجنس الذي تريد لان الستوفات التي لدينا مختلفة الاشكال فبعضها منها حديد وبعضها اسفلها مع دوائر من نحاس جميل وما بقي من حديد وبين صفائحها اوراق اسبستوس لمنع زوال الحرارة دواليها متينة للغاية وتقدر ان تفككها بسهولة اي وقت اودت نعلن لك هذا انما المواطن العزيز الذي تتعامل في هذه المحفة لكي تشتري بطليبة فلا ترى ربحاً الا ما يسر خاطرك ان من جودة الستوف الذي هو آخر طرز او مهاودة السعر واكتب اليك باقرب وقت نرسل اليك الكاتالوج

* انطون غانم *

T. GANEM

Box 41 Palisades, N. J. 17 Morris St. New York



السبائة السورية الاصلية

وعند كل ذلك قد انشأنا مودعراً ضمن لنا فرحاً خصوصياً لاجل استقلاب السبائة السورية على اختلاف اجناسها من بلادنا أما والكتب العربية المتعددة والمشروبات اننا عدا من جودة هذه الاصناف وحداثة اختيار مثل ادارة هذا الفرع فمكن من بيع السبائة باسعار متهاودة للغاية لا يزيد من اسعار سوريا بسوى اضافة اكلاف شحن والجرك ولهذا اصبح بإمكان ايها الوطن الذين حرموا هذه المأكولات نظراً غلاء اسعارها لانها كانت تستجلب من نيويورك ان يعودوا الى مأكولات وطنهم لفاخرة باسعارها المتهاودة الخاضعة

(*) جبريل معلوف (*)

GABRIEL M. MALUF
Egido No 5 Y 7.
Havana, Cuba

نجيب نجا

وشركاه

نغفرك ونشحن من عموم الامبرودري برنس وشريت وصيت والبيوشام الثابت ونحو تنافي هذا الفن تكفل رضى الزبائن الكرام

NAJEEB NAJA
80 West St. New York



لا كريب ان صوت العود هو احسن وألذ صوت بين آلات الغرب لنفي همومك في بيتك وفي أي مكان خذ وينيك عن كل شيء سواد

(مرابياني اخوان)

MARAYATI BROS.
6111 5th Ave.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

توكل على الله ولا تكن خائفاً

تعال مع علي رشيد حبوش فبدلاً من ذلك مسروراً ورائياً لان وعيدته كافة ما يلزمك من البضاعة الجيدة والجميلة والمرغوبة واسعاره متهاودة ومعاملته حسنة وهذا عنوانه

رشيد حبوش

R. HABBOUSH

Figure 3.6: *Al-Hoda*, July 26, 1911, p. 2

promote essential ingredients for Middle Eastern cuisine like bulgur and ghee, and assure readers that these ingredients are essential for physical well-being. One advertisement states, “If you want to take care of your health and the health of your family free from cheating, buy your food necessities from us” (*Al-Hoda*), further underscoring the value of trust within the Syrian community. Another highlights the shared Syrian identity, emphasizing that products are sold by “a Syrian like you, selling you what you need” (*Al-Hoda*, vol. 02, no. 05). These advertisements reinforce cultural pride and reflect the broader political discourse around Syrian nationalism, insisting that Syrians know what’s best for each other.

While many advertisements focus on practical goods such as home furnishings, clothing, cigarettes, and real estate, others promote cultural preservation through the arts, including books and musical instruments. One notable example is the advertisement for the Oud, a traditional stringed instrument with deep cultural significance, anchoring memory, identity, and a shared sense of belonging rooted in heritage (*Al-Hoda*, vol. 02, no. 05). Its purchase allowed Syrian immigrants to maintain a connection to their heritage through music, a powerful sensory link to home, which could also be easily shared with the next generation. As a universal language, music offered both comfort and continuity, and the sale of the Oud symbolized a deliberate effort to preserve and express Syrian identity in diaspora.

The reliance on Arabic for community communication, coupled with the need for

English-language translation, highlights the struggle between preserving their heritage and assimilating into American society. For instance, issue no. 276 (January 29, 1906) reveals that nearly all advertisements target the Syrian community, emphasizing its internal economic and cultural networks. However, the issue also indicates limited engagement between Syrian and American communities; only one advertisement originates from an American, a lawyer named Ira Jay Dutton (Al-Hoda, vol. 02, no. 05)⁸. His ad is published in Arabic, immediately followed by the assurance of translation services provided by Ameen Idyab. While the lawyer's name appears in English, the translator's name is in Arabic, underscoring the necessity of bilingual mediation. This detail raises critical questions: How did bilingual individuals shape the Syrian community?⁹ Did they bridge gaps between Syrians and Americans, or did they serve primarily to preserve Syrian insularity? The presence of translation services suggests that while some Syrian immigrants were learning English, many still depended on Arabic-language newspapers for navigating their new environment. Furthermore, the lack of advertisements for Arab lawyers—despite their existence—indicates that Syrians might have felt that at times it was more strategic to have White Anglo-Saxon Protestant representation.

Beyond the appeal to shared emotion and cultural identity, advertisements in *Al-Hoda*

⁸ Ira Jay Dutton (1869-1929) was a Connecticut-born lawyer, who arrived in New York in 1897. He had no obvious familial or social ties to Syria ("Ira Jay Dutton").

⁹The question of how bilingual Syrian immigrants served as bridges within the United States is beyond the scope of this chapter.

reveal the political divisions within the Syrian immigrant community, reflecting broader tensions between nationalism, Ottoman allegiance, and the evolving identity of Syrians in America as they navigated their place within the diaspora. The Syrian immigrant community in the United States was deeply divided, comprising Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese nationalists, and this division is reflected in the way advertisements were crafted. Some ads specifically target the Syrian reader, while others address a broader audience. Many advertisements begin with the phrase "dear Syrian," which suggests one of two possibilities. First, it may reflect the assumption that only Syrians can read or would be interested in the products being advertised. Second, it reveals a cultural divide, where addressing readers as "Syrian" may exclude the broader Arab community, indicating a Syrian nationalist perspective. This exclusive address could also be rooted in the political context of the time. As Suleiman notes, "Mount Lebanon and all of Greater Syria were under Ottoman control. Furthermore, the Arabic-speaking immigrants in North America were, and remained for many years, Ottoman citizens. All Arabic newspapers in the United States had to operate from that starting point" (Suleiman, *Arab-American: Building a New Future* 72). While some newspapers, such as *Al-Ayam*, took a hostile stance towards the Sultan and Ottoman authorities, *Al-Hoda* adopted a more cautious tone, reminding its American readers that "You remain settlers in a foreign land. Remember that you are Ottoman" ("The Mokarzels' Contributions to the Arabic-Speaking Community in the United States" 72-73). Thus,

the choice to address all readers as "Syrian" may have been a form of compliance with Ottoman authority, reinforcing a sense of belonging to the empire. On the other hand, some advertisements address a more inclusive audience, using phrases like "peace be upon anyone reading this" or "dear reader." These phrases signal a broader sense of inclusion and reflect a desire to engage with a wider, more diverse readership. This divide in how readers are addressed highlights the instability and fragmentation within the Syrian community, with one group seeking inclusion in a broader community while the other remains more isolated and nationalistic in orientation. *Al-Hoda* also reflects the beginnings of a break from Ottoman control. By addressing all readers, rather than limiting the audience to Syrians, the newspaper begins to construct a new shared identity that shifts the focus towards "Syrian Americans," rather than displaced Syrians still under Ottoman rule. This subtle change in language marks the early stages of a broader movement towards independence and the redefinition of identity within the diaspora.

The advertisements in *Al-Hoda* function as more than commercial messages; they serve as reflections of identity, cultural preservation, and political discourse, illustrating how Syrian immigrants navigated assimilation while maintaining a connection to their heritage. They reflect the complexities of assimilation, the evolving nature of Syrian nationalism, and the economic and social structures within the diaspora. These advertisements provide insight into the complexities of cultural adaptation, the evolving nature of Syrian national-

ism, and the economic and social structures within the diaspora. They reveal how Syrians balanced their cultural roots with the demands of life in America, negotiating a bicultural identity in a transnational context.

3.5 General Content

Al-Hoda was deeply invested in shaping an informed, culturally grounded, and politically aware immigrant readership. In addition to covering newsworthy events, and advocating for cultural preservation through language and literature, following the literal meaning of *Al-Hoda*, Naoum set out to offer guidance on a variety of topics, including economics, parenting, women's rights, politics, and general knowledge. Economics was of particular importance, reflecting the Syrian immigrant community's embrace of economic stability as a pathway to independence and success, aligning with American values and reinforcing the pursuit of financial empowerment as a means of assimilation and social mobility. In the article "Journaled Thoughts," which appeared in the Jan 29, 1906 issue (276), the unknown author suggests that anyone can achieve economic stability. This article starts by referencing a previous article that highlights the importance of economic stability, showing that this was an important and ongoing discussion. The writer states that

As mentioned in the previous issue, economic stability does not solely mean

future independence. It means benefiting from the present day. We hope that these words are reaching mature hearts because those who look at the universe around us find that people with money generally, except for gamblers, politicians, and greedy people, were unable to gain this stability if not for having the trait of being economical. (issue number 276, page 3)

The article effectively serves as a guide for Syrian immigrants, emphasizing the pursuit of economic freedom as a key path to stability and success. It reflects not only a practical interest in financial growth but also a deep cultural admiration for American success stories. The mention of the wealthy self-made businessman John D. Rockefeller is particularly telling. The author's invocation of Rockefeller highlights the immigrants' reverence for prominent American figures, positioning him as a model of success. By urging readers to imitate Rockefeller's financial strategies, the article underscores the importance of calculated risk-taking and frugality. As Andrew Beattie notes, Rockefeller's success stemmed from his careful decision to avoid risky oil speculation, focusing instead on the more stable business of refining (Beattie). The Syrian author's promotion of Rockefeller as a role model demonstrates not only an admiration for financial success but also an idealization of financial American values, particularly among white business figures who epitomize the ideal of the self-made man. Ultimately, the article encourages Syrian immigrants to build towards financial independence, viewing economic success as a crucial step towards broader

empowerment in their new country¹⁰.

Economic security was seen, in part, as a way to facilitate the success of the next generation. *Al-Hoda* was also concerned with that generation's well-being, and as part of that included articles about parenting. Articles about child-rearing were seen not only as practical guidance, but as a way to prepare the next generation for life in a new society. The influence of the Settlement Movement (1886–1986), which aimed to address urban poverty and promote social welfare and cultural integration, particularly for immigrants, is evident in articles promoting child-rearing, women's rights, and cultural assimilation. Central to the movement were women reformers, advocating for community development, civic engagement, and social equity, which later informed public programs and policies (Social Welfare History Project). This influence is evident in an article which appears in Vol. 01 no. 10 of the 1899 edition of *Al-Hoda* newspaper, offering guidance on raising Syrian children to resemble American children. The anonymously authored article critiques the upbringing of Syrian immigrant children, claiming that Syrian parents' harsh treatment of children, such as physical punishment for minor infractions and neglect of serious issues, undermines their children's respect for authority and sets them up for failure. The author further alleges that Syrian parents misuse medication to sedate children, neglect hygiene, provide

¹⁰The importance of financial stability is a topic often discussed in Mahjar literature as well. As Smith notes "Haddad's (a Mahjar author) collection demonstrates an unwavering focus on characters; financial decisions and how they integrate into America's economic structure" (36).

poor nutrition, and expose children to harmful environments like cigarette smoke. Arguing that these practices lead to weakened, fearful children, the author advocates for adopting American child-rearing philosophies to ensure Syrian children's success in American society. The article's call for Syrian families to improve their practices to ensure the betterment of future generations aligns with Naoum and Salloum Mokarzel's advocacy for reform within the Syrian immigrant community.

This reform was not limited to childrearing: the Mokarzels also emphasized the rights of women. Building on Naoum's belief that women had important roles to serve in the preservation of culture, he also dedicated space in *Al-Hoda* to articles by female authors, who argued that more opportunities for them would benefit the community as a whole. This included figures like Afifa Karam, who used the platform to challenge traditional gender norms and advocate for women's intellectual and social empowerment. Karam was part of the contemporary women's movement and a pioneering voice advocating for women's rights and intellectual empowerment in the early 20th century. Suleiman notes that Karam's writings were central to discussions on women's rights in her time, contributing to a growing discourse that included transnational dimensions of feminism and women's liberation. In his article, "The Mokarzels' contributions to the Arabic-speaking community in the United States" Suleiman writes:

In the midst of such an atmosphere which valued ignorance and the absence

of education for women, Naoum was delighted to find a Syrian woman who was both educated and courageous, i.e. willing to attack and flout a harmful tradition. That woman was Afifa Karam who was then actively and regularly promoted by Naoum and *Al-Hoda* as an ideal for all women of her "race,"... In fact, Naoum offered a free *Al-Hoda* subscription to any Syrian woman who could read. All these efforts by Naoum contributed a major chapter in the struggle for the education and advancement of women among Arabic-speaking groups in the United States. (["The Mokarzels' Contributions to the Arabic-Speaking Community in the United States"](#) par 16).

Karam used her writing to address issues related to gender equality and the status of women within Arab and immigrant communities. For her, assimilation and cultural change were not simply threats to heritage, but could be harnessed as opportunities for progress, particularly in expanding women's roles and intellectual freedoms within both the diaspora and the broader Arab world. In vol. 07 no. 038 in April of 1904, Afifa Karam writes about women's rights; she questions

Why do we refer to the Syrian women as Americanized: and consider this a negative thing? While we accept that she goes to the market and works for financial gain, we consider her "Americanized" when she asks for her freedoms. We consider it positive when she dresses in beautiful dresses like Americans

and wears beautiful hats like Americans, but we consider her "Americanized" when she beatifies her mind with freedom. While many came to America for financial gain, there is more to learn here. At heart, we are Syrian, and we should take the positive from here (America) and try to implement it there (Syria). From it (Syria) we came, and to it, we return. (page 4)

Afifa highlights that Syrian immigrants, whether permanent or temporary, should try to learn from the American people, specifically when it comes to women's rights. Karam highlights the hypocrisy of the Syrian man who is willing to conform to American norms if it will allow him financial gain, but not if it will reflect positively on educational gain. Her articles question Syrian men's insecurities, claiming they manifest in a need to control Syrian women. She argues Syrian men seem to want their women to be more 'American' in the way they dress and work but not in the way they learn and read. Karam emphasizes that education for women will help them situate their identity, not erase it. She further reassures the reader that, at heart, they are Syrian and should have pride in where they came from as they embrace, learn, and in return help their own country develop. Karam creates a direct tie between the liberation of women and the flourishing of Syria. Her engagement with women's issues in publications like *Al-Hoda* and *The Syrian World* served as an opportunity to develop the ideas she more fully explored in her own magazine, *The New World: A Ladies Monthly Arabic Magazine* founded in New York in 1913, a publi-

cation that offered Arab-American women a space for intellectual and cultural discourse. This publication helped in promoting feminist ideas, offering a unique intersection of Arab identity and women's rights, marking her as an important figure in both Arab-American literature and feminist thought.

While Karam was clear that Syrian women should be free to adopt certain American ideals, she remained firmly rooted in her Syrian identity. For this reason, Naoum held her up as the ideal Syrian-American woman, someone who could selectively embrace American modernity without relinquishing Syrian cultural values, and therefore portrayed her as superior to the American woman. This distinction is crucial given his consistent emphasis on the importance of preserving culture. As Baycar notes, Syrian immigrants were religiously diverse, and a significant number were Catholic (5), a factor that likely facilitated their integration into American society. Yet anxieties about intermarriage persisted. One article, for example, warns that American women will always see Syrian men as inferior, stating that:

they (American women) will force them (Syrian men) into the Catholic faith and turn the men into their maids. American women were brought up to see the Syrian man as inferior. So, it is no surprise that they do. Only one in every hundred Syrian men will marry a middle-class American woman and only one of each hundred who has married an American woman will be happy.

The majority fake their happiness as they discover the reality of these women and the baggage they carry only after marriage. An American woman very rarely willingly marries a Syrian man. Most of the Syrian men have made false allegations about their situation back home to get the women interested in them. Unfortunately, despite the Syrian man being happily married to a Syrian woman, he will mistreat her and disregard her value. (*Al-Hoda* vol. 07 no. 040)

The unknown author uses this rhetoric to highlight the paradoxical behavior of Syrian men, questioning why they endure alleged mistreatment from American women while simultaneously devaluing Syrian women in marriage. This critique reflects a broader concern about Syrians glorifying American culture while degrading their own. Ultimately, the author seeks to motivate Syrian men to recognize the worth of their cultural traditions rather than blindly conforming to American expectations.

Naoum was highly attuned to the possibilities of change facilitated by life in the United States. The American context provided Syrian immigrants with a unique opportunity to reshape their political awareness, to question existing loyalties, explore new ideologies, and engage in open debate that had often been restricted under Ottoman rule. *Al-Hoda* played a central role in this process: in addition to advocating for social reform, the newspaper helped shape the political consciousness of its readers by offering a platform for discourse

and highlighting the complexities of maintaining cultural and political ties to the homeland within their new American environment. This engagement with Syrian political issues, as evidenced through the newspaper's articles, reveals that Syrian immigrants held clear and often critical political views about the situation in Syria. However, while *Al-Hoda* sought to provide a platform for the exchange of political ideas, the newspaper's content reveals the limitations imposed by the political environment of the time.

Al-Hoda navigated the complex political identities of Syrian immigrants by cautiously addressing issues related to Ottoman rule while providing a more open forum for discussions on American politics, reflecting the community's dual engagement with both their homeland and their new country. The Ottoman Empire, under whose control Syria remained during much of *Al-Hoda*'s publication, exercised a significant influence on Syrians both abroad and at home. The empire's extended reach meant that it was risky for Syrian immigrants to express critical views about Ottoman rule openly, and as a result, *Al-Hoda* did not serve as a fully "safe" space for political discussions regarding the empire. Despite these limitations, the newspaper did offer a safer outlet for the community to engage with American political issues. Syrian immigrants, having settled in the United States, became increasingly involved and interested in American political life, and *Al-Hoda* provided a forum where they could freely express their opinions on American politics without fear of repercussions from the Ottoman authorities. This dual role of *Al-Hoda*—as a platform

for cautious discussions on Syrian politics and a more open space for American political engagement—demonstrates the complex political identities of Syrian immigrants. While they remained deeply connected to the political situation in their homeland, they also sought to participate in and contribute to the political landscape of their new country. In doing so, *Al-Hoda* facilitated the negotiation of these dual political identities, reflecting the broader experience of Syrian immigrants as they balanced their ties to Syria with their integration into American society.

The “Reflections” section in the April 26, 1898 issue of *Al-Hoda* illustrates Syrian immigrants’ deep political engagement, demonstrating both their support for American causes and their willingness to critique United States foreign policy, often as a means of indirectly expressing frustrations with imperial power and displacement. One reflection reads, “Whether we are naturalized or not, let us be allies to the United States and ease a difficult fight. There is virtue in being careful to protect Cubans no matter what the cost” (Al-Hoda, vol. 02 no. 06). This demonstrates that Syrian immigrants already considered themselves part of the American community and believed that citizenship was not a prerequisite for active political engagement. Their support for the United States’ intervention in Cuba reflects a deep sense of political participation, even without formal citizenship. Another reflection criticizes United States foreign policy, stating, “If God does not help the American people within a month and the Cubans die of hunger (and thousands

will die), who will be responsible? America wrongfully blocked off Cuba” (Al-Hoda, vol. 02 no. 06). This critique suggests a willingness to hold the American government accountable for its actions, implying a broader frustration with imperialism. The writer’s frustration with the United States’ blockade of Cuba might parallel their feelings toward the Ottoman Empire, which was responsible for displacing many Syrians. However, given the constraints of criticizing the Ottoman regime openly, even from America, the author may have used the situation in Cuba as a safer outlet for expressing such frustrations. A third reflection reads, “Defeated regardless of victory. Regardless of whether the Americans’ victory is great, they are defeated because they gave up their strong, correct principles; therefore, they are defeated regardless of whether they take over Cuba or drown the Spanish fleets” (Al-Hoda, vol. 02 no. 06). Here, the author expresses profound disappointment with America’s moral compromises, implying that abandoning fundamental principles is tantamount to defeat. This sentiment may also reflect the writer’s fears that America, like the Ottoman Empire, could fail to uphold the values that had drawn immigrants to its shores. The reflection conveys a deep sense of disillusionment, as the author implies that if America, a place of refuge, forsakes its principles, there may be no other place to turn for those fleeing injustice. These reflections not only capture Syrian immigrants’ deep political engagement but also their concerns about moral integrity, both in the United States and abroad. They reflect broader anxieties about imperial power and the vulnerability of displaced communities

seeking refuge and justice.

Such concerns were evident in other areas of the newspaper as well, including the “General Knowledge” section. The inclusion of a General Knowledge section reflected a broader mission, not only to aid integration, but to affirm Syrian immigrants’ place within American civic life, often by drawing implicit contrasts with their former status under Ottoman authority. This section presents contextual details that help the reader better understand the environment and circumstances surrounding the events or perspectives being discussed. It was a way for the authors to educate Syrian immigrants in topics that would help them integrate into society. In issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906, the section on general knowledge includes information about the size of Hawai’i, the fastest automobile, the amount of money that Cuba has sent aside for the wedding of Alice Roosevelt, daughter of the United States’ President, and other interesting facts. The information shared focuses on American heritage and represents what might be useful in a casual conversation with Americans. This information also appears to be a good way for the displaced Syrian to learn about his/her new home and become more acquainted with the country that he/she is now living in. One section in issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906, particular stands out. It reads, “It took the American government a whole year to pay one cent.” At first glance, the reader wonders why a country would refuse to pay one cent. However, the article continues, stating that “after an employee

was fired he received the amount of one cent after an accountant was going through a financial statement and noticed the discrepancy.” The author of this particular piece aims to demonstrate the fairness of the American government and the value of belonging to a nation that upholds such high standards of honesty. This message holds particular significance in light of Syrian history. Most Syrian immigrants would have left the region to escape the injustices and instability of Ottoman rule, including oppressive taxation, corruption, and a lack of political representation. Syrians may have felt cheated out of their land or denied full rights under the imperial system. In this context, the author’s praise of American governance can be seen as a reassurance to readers that investing in America, economically and emotionally, was worthwhile, and that it offered a more just and permanent home.

The articles in *Al-Hoda* demonstrate the overt concerns of the editors and the readership, especially in relation to assimilation, education, politics, and social reform. However, the process of assimilation can be identified in the newspaper and via its editors in more subtle ways, through the rendering of names, and changes over time. The adaptation and Americanization of Syrian names reflect the complex process of assimilation and racial identity negotiation faced by Syrian immigrants, as they sought to conform to societal expectations and navigate social and economic opportunities while maintaining aspects of their cultural heritage. The experience of being a foreigner and the need to belong is a

complex and often difficult journey that most immigrants must navigate. For Syrians who immigrated to the United States, this process was particularly challenging, as many were Lebanese nationalists who did not identify as Arab, yet were classified as such upon arrival. This categorization had significant consequences, as Syrian immigrants were denied naturalization on the basis of race and their exclusion from being considered “white.” As the Dow case showed, “Syrians were given the choice between proving they were white in the immigration courts or being declared ‘non-free non-white Asiatics’ and losing their right to citizenship” (Gualtieri 102). This forced Syrian immigrants to confront the racial definitions of belonging in the United States, realizing that in order to be accepted and secure their place in society, they had to be recognized as “white.” Naming, in this context, especially the Americanization of Arabic names when written in English, a strategy aimed at aligning with the racial and social constructs of whiteness that governed United States immigration policy at the time, functioned as a strategic form of assimilation, a way to gain acceptance without necessarily altering one’s internal identity.

As public figures engaged in shaping immigrant discourse, many newspaper contributors were likely acutely aware of the differential treatment associated with carrying an Arab name, often leading to judgments or bias. As Du Bois describes with his concept of double consciousness, this reality meant that immigrants were hyper-aware of the way they were viewed by those white Americans around them. In their efforts to navigate

cultural integration, some immigrants no doubt altered their names or naming practices to fit into American society. For example, the founder of *Mira'at al-Gharb*, Diab, named his eldest daughter Dorothy (Moise A. Khayrallah Center Mira'at) one of the most popular names in the early 1900s ("Top Baby Names 1900"). *Al-Hoda's* founder, Salloum Mokarzel, named his five children Mary, Rose, Alice, Yemna, and Lila (Moise A. Khayrallah Center Mokarzel). Among these names, only Yemna and Lila are distinctly Arab, while Mary could be interpreted as either Arab or American. In contrast, Rose and Alice are unmistakably American. This deliberate naming choice reflects a conscious effort to "Americanize" his children's identities, mirroring broader assimilation trends within the Arab immigrant community. While there is an attempt to preserve Arabic names, the progression in naming aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of "hybridity." Salloum initially chooses all-American names, possibly reflecting a desire for assimilation. He then selects a neutral name, symbolizing a hybrid identity, before ultimately embracing his Arab heritage with two distinctly Arabic names, suggesting his comfort in his new world as well. This shift illustrates the evolving negotiation of identity among Arab immigrants as they balanced cultural integration, the preservation of their heritage, and their right of belonging in the United States. The trend towards using Americanized names is also evident in *Al-Hoda*. As an example, in issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906; the name Tanoos appears as Thomas; Hinna appears as John. In some instances, an Arabic name

is completely replaced by initials; such as in Abraheem Naseef Jabale written as A. N. Jabale. (Al-Hoda issue number 276, published on Jan 29, 1906). *Al-Hoda*, therefore, serves as a representative case of how Arab names were modified to align with American norms, symbolizing the complex process of assimilation and hybridity that Syrian immigrants underwent as they attempted to belong.

3.6 Conclusion

Print material produced by the Syrian immigrant community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly publications like *Al-Hoda*, offers valuable insight into their efforts to navigate the complexities of belonging in a new land. The articles, announcements, and advertisements published in *Al-Hoda* reveal a concerted effort by its founders to enlighten and unify the Syrian immigrant community while maintaining a deep connection to their cultural roots. The decision to publish in Arabic, for instance, served as an act of cultural preservation and resistance, as it reinforced the community's ties to their homeland and allowed them to resist full assimilation into American society. The use of the Arabic language also gave the newspaper agency in influencing its readership, particularly the older generation, by shaping the changes the editors wanted to see in the community, such as the encouragement of education and the empowerment of women writers.

This chapter explores the translated sections from *Al-Hoda*, highlighting the complex relationship between language, politics, and identity. The act of translation extends beyond a mere linguistic exercise; it requires a deep engagement with the newspaper's content and an understanding of the political and cultural forces that shaped both its writing and reception. Through this process, the translation serves as a bridge to examining the historical and ideological currents that influenced these texts, offering insights into the ways language functions as a tool for political expression and identity formation. In accessing this material, readers actively engage with the complex process of assimilation experienced by Syrian immigrants, including the cultural shifts and challenges they negotiated. The renewed interest in immigrant struggles, fueled by recent waves of migration, provides an opportunity to integrate these historical documents into contemporary discussions, emphasizing their ongoing relevance. The narratives within *Al-Hoda* continue to resonate, illustrating how immigrant communities strategically navigate the tension between cultural preservation and adaptation in their pursuit of belonging. *Al-Hoda* stands as a testament to the Syrian community's resilience and agency, providing a platform for both individual and collective expression while offering a nuanced portrayal of the transformation from Syrian to Syrian-American.

The newspapers serve as a cultural and intellectual platform as well as a tool for the social and political engagement of the Syrian diaspora. By addressing both Syrian and

American political issues, *Al-Hoda* helped shape the emerging identity of Syrian Americans, encouraging them to participate in American civic life while remaining connected to their Syrian heritage. Initiatives such as distributing the newspaper to those seeking to learn how to read, promoting female authorship, and addressing political concerns in both the United States and Syria were critical in shaping the future of Syrian Americans. In this sense, *Al-Hoda* became a space for negotiation—between resistance and acceptance, between the old world and the new—illustrating the community’s path toward establishing its place in American society.

Chapter 4

Conclusion: Writing Against the Script of the “Arab Other”

This dissertation has traced how Western narratives about Arabs, shaped through captivity literature, reinforced through American media, and spectacularized at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, reflect cultural misunderstanding while actively producing a long-lasting framework of representation. My work sheds light on how the nineteenth century shaped the image of the Arab; it also highlights what remains unresolved in the present. The language, assumptions, and narrative structures that framed Arab identity then continue to circulate today, often in subtler but no less powerful forms. As such, this dissertation does not conclude an inquiry so much as it insists on the necessity of continued interrogation. One of the most critical areas for future work lies in the persistence of colonizing language itself. Terms that appear neutral or descriptive, such as “Middle East,” are in fact products of imperial geography, defining entire regions in relation to Western

centers of power. The endurance of this terminology reveals how deeply colonial frameworks remain embedded in contemporary discourse. To speak of the “Middle East” is to reproduce a spatial hierarchy that privileges Europe and the West as points of origin and orientation, while rendering Arab regions perpetually derivative and peripheral. Future scholarship must continue to question not only representations of Arab identity, but the vocabulary through which those representations are made possible. Similarly, the narratives were first produced through captivity literature, and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair exhibitions continue to shape modern political and cultural discourse. The mold of the Arab as inherently foreign, threatening, exotic, or perpetually in need of explanation has proven remarkably adaptable. Even when overt Orientalism is disavowed, its logics persist through coded language, selective visibility, and moral framing. The example discussed earlier, Barack, demonstrates how contemporary figures are still interpreted through inherited narratives that conflate religion, culture, and political legitimacy. These moments reveal that Orientalism has not disappeared; it has evolved, finding new expression in media commentary, policy language, and public debate.

Future work must therefore move beyond identifying Orientalism as a historical phenomenon and instead address its ongoing operation in contemporary cultural, political and institutional context, where identity itself remains a primary site of regulation and contestation. This requires sustained attention to the ways present-day representational regimes

reproduce inherited Orientalist tropes while presenting themselves as neutral, objective, or post-racial, shaping how Arab and Muslim identities are made legible within Western public discourse. It also demands asking how contemporary ideals of “moderation”, “integration” and “assimilation” function as disciplinary frameworks that regulate Arab and Muslim belonging, defining the conditions under which Arab and Muslim subjects are recognized as acceptable citizens, or persistent outsiders. The work ahead exposes misrepresentation and analyzes how power structures determine which identities are authorized to speak, which forms of self-definition are constrained or delegitimized and which narratives of Arab and Muslim life are amplified, marginalized or rendered unintelligible within dominant regimes of power.

In the future, I plan to continue to examine these negotiations as responses to enduring structural constraints. Finally, my dissertation points toward the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration in confronting colonial afterlives. History, religious studies, media studies, and cultural analysis must work together to trace how narratives migrate across time and form. The work ahead is both corrective and transformative: to dismantle inherited frameworks rather than simply revise them, and to imagine modes of knowledge production that do not rely on the West as the primary determiner of meaning. In moving forward, the goal is to remain attentive to how narratives are formed, circulated, and contested. The shaping of Arab identity has never been static, and neither should the

scholarship that engages it. My dissertation offers one intervention in a much broader conversation, one that necessarily remains unfinished as long as colonial language continues to structure how the world is named, mapped, and rendered intelligible.

Works Cited

- “25 Impressions of the 1893 World’s Fair,” 10 Apr. 2024, worldsfairchicago1893.com/2024/04/10/25-impressions-of-the-1893-worlds-fair/. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
- Adams, Robert. *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Barbary Captive: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Charles Adams, Cambridge UP, U of Arkansas, 2005.
- Al-Ahari, Muhammed Abdullah, and Saffet Catovic. “Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb: The American Islamic Propagation Movement.” *Islamic Horizons*, Sept. 2023. islamichorizons.net/muhammad-alexander-russell-webb/.
- Ajrouch, Kristine J., and Amaney Jamal. “Assimilating to a White Identity: The Case of Arab Americans.” *International Migration Review*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2007, pp. 860–79. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27645705. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 2, no. 5, 28 Mar. 1899, Library of Congress, arabicsearch.org/hoda_18990328_2_5_2.pdf.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 1, no. 02, accessed 6 Mar. 2021.

- Al-Hoda*, vol. 1, no. 10, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14806. Accessed 6 Mar. 2021.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 2, no. 6, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14826. Accessed 18 Mar. 2021.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 2, no. 8, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14825. Accessed 18 Mar. 2021.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 7, no. 40, accessed 6 Apr. 2021.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 7, no. 43, accessed 6 Apr. 2021.
- Al-Hoda*, vol. 7, no. 44, accessed 6 Apr. 2021.
- Albirini, Abdulkafi. "The Sociolinguistic Functions of Codeswitching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic." *Language in Society*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2011, pp. 537–62.
- Allehaiby, Wid H. "Arabizi: An Analysis of the Romanization of the Arabic Script from a Sociolinguistic Perspective." *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2013, pp. 52–62.
- "Ameen Rihani," lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu/explore/publications/projects/ameen-rihani/. Accessed 5 Mar. 2025.
- "An Arabic online encyclopedia," www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/08/jd-rockefeller.asp.
- "Arab Conquests and Sasanian Iran," www.historytoday.com. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.

- Austin, Allan D. *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook*. Vol. 5, Garland Publishing, 1984, p. 759. Critical Studies on Black Life and Culture.
- Baepler, Paul. "White Slaves, African Masters." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 588, 2003, pp. 90–111. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1049856. Accessed 11 Jan. 2026.
- "Ballyhoo on the Midway Plaisance," 18 May 2021, worldsfairchicago1893.com/2021/05/18/ballyhoo-on-the-midway-plaisance/.
- Battistini, Robert. "Glimpses of the Other before Orientalism: The Muslim World in Early American Periodicals, 1785–1800." *Early American Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2010, pp. 446–74. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23546653. Accessed 2 Mar. 2024.
- Baycar, Kazim. "Between the Sublime Porte and Uncle Sam: The Ottoman-Syrian Immigration to the United States, 1880–1914." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2015, pp. 3–23.
- Beattie, Andrew. "J.D. Rockefeller: From Oil Baron to Billionaire." *Investopedia*, 26 Feb. 2018. www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/08/jd-rockefeller.asp. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness & Civilization a Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*. U of Chicago P, 1995.

Bennett, Norman Robert. "Christian and Negro Slavery in Eighteenth-Century North Africa." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1960, pp. 65–82. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/179707. Accessed 23 Oct. 2024.

Berman, Aaron. *America's Arab Nationalists: From the Ottoman Revolution to the Rise of Hitler*. Routledge, 2012.

Berry, Margaret E. "The Settlement Movement 1886–1986: One Hundred Years on Urban Frontiers." *Social Welfare History Project*, 1986. socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/settlement-movement-1886-1986.

Bhabha, Homi K. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." *October*, vol. 28, 1984, pp. 125–33. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/778467. Accessed 28 Nov. 2010.

———. *The Location of Culture*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2012.

„كشكول الخواطر — أمين الريحاني — لبنان — مقالات", [.langue-arabe.ac-versailles.fr](http://langue-arabe.ac-versailles.fr), Mohammad. Bikri,

Billington, James H. "Libraries, the Library of Congress, and the Information Age." *Daedalus*, vol. 125, no. 4, 1996, pp. 35–54. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20027385. Accessed 15 Mar. 2024.

Bishara, George F. *The Origin of Modern Syria*. Princeton UP, 1924, archive.org/details/originmodernsyria00bishrich/page/n5/mode/2up. Accessed 27 Nov. 2025.

- Bonney, Charles C. "The World's Parliament of Religions." *The Monist*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1895, pp. 321–44. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27897244. Accessed 21 Aug. 2024.
- Booshada, Elizabeth. *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community*. U of Texas P, 2003.
- Boyle, Rachel. "Types and Beauties: Evaluating and Exoticizing Women on the Midway Plaisance at the 1893 Columbian Exposition." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, vol. 108, no. 1, 2015, pp. 10–31. doi.org/10.5406/jillistathistsoc.108.1.0010. Accessed 5 Aug. 2024.
- Brauer, Jerald C. "Regionalism and Religion in America." *Church History*, vol. 54, no. 3, 1985, pp. 366–78. doi.org/10.2307/3165661. Accessed 21 Aug. 2024.
- Burton, Jonathan. "English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on Turning Turk in Early Modern Texts." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2002, pp. 35–67. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27793744. Accessed 11 Jan. 2026.
- Bushrui, Suheil B. "The Thought and Works of Ameen Rihani: With Special Reference to His Writings in English," 15 Mar. 1998, alhewar.com/Bushrui_Rihani.html.
- Cainkar, Louise. "Persons with Arabic-sounding Names, Whether Christian or Muslim, Report Experiencing Job Discrimination and Anti-Arab Comments, and Persons with

- the Arab/Middle Eastern Phenotype Have Been Physically Attacked Regardless of Religion.” *Arab-American Experiences*, vol. 244, 2024.
- Cassuto, Leonard. *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture*. Columbia UP, 1997.
- Castles, Jean I. “The West: Crucible of the Negro.” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1969, pp. 83–84. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4517345. Accessed 11 Jan. 2026.
- Celinscak, Mark. “Captivity and Encounter: Thomas Pellow, the Moroccan Renegade.” *Early Modern Encounters*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2011, pp. 41–59.
- Charlton, Linda. “End Comes to Al-Hoda, Arab Paper.” *The New York Times*, 21 Sept. 1971. www.nytimes.com/1971/09/21/archives/end-comes-to-alhoda-arab-paper.html. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Chen, Joyce J. “The Impact of Skill-Based Immigration Restrictions: The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.” *Journal of Human Capital*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2015, pp. 298–328. doi.org/10.1086/683186. Accessed 5 Aug. 2024.
- “Civic Heraldry of England and Wales: South West,” www.civicheraldry.co.uk/south_west.html. Accessed 9 Jan. 2026.

- Cohen, Julia Phillips. "Oriental by Design: Ottoman Jews, Imperial Style, and the Performance of Heritage." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 119, no. 2, 2014, pp. 364–98. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23785003. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.
- "Colorado, Racism, and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair," history.denverlibrary.org/colorado-racism-and-1893-chicago-worlds-fair. Accessed 17 Aug. 2024.
- CRANE, JACOB. "Barbary(an) Invasions: The North African Figure in Republican Print Culture." *Early American Literature*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2015, pp. 331–58. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24476792. Accessed 1 Feb. 2026.
- Croft, Marissa. "What Shall I Wear at the World's Fair in Chicago?" 12 Sept. 2023, www.chicagohistory.org/what-shall-i-wear-at-the-worlds-fair/.
- David, Gary C. "Arab Americans." *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, edited by Richard T. Schaefer, 2008, pp. 84–88.
- Dermenjian, Geneviève. "Jews, Moors, Arabs and Kabyles of the Regency of Algiers Under European Gaze (16th Century–1830)." *Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2017, pp. 231–44. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26346551. Accessed 10 Mar. 2024.
- Doumit, Gabriella. "The Right to Live: Exploring Refugee Statelessness in International Law." *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2021, pp. 201–32. www.law.georgetown.edu/immigration-law-journal/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/07/09-Doumit-GT-GILJ210030.pdf. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.

- Dreisbach, Daniel L. "A New Perspective on Jefferson's Views on Church-State Relations: The Virginia Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom in Its Legislative Context." *The American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1991, pp. 172–204. doi.org/10.2307/845715. Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Edited by Brent Hayes Edwards, Oxford UP, 2007.
- Durmaz, Reyhan. "Religion, Race, and Letterpress: Orthodox Christians in Nineteenth-Century New York City through the Lens of Kawkab America." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 91, no. 4, 2023, pp. 854–74.
- Einboden, Jeffrey. *The Islamic Lineage of American Literary Culture: Muslim Sources from the Revolution to Reconstruction*. Oxford UP, 2016.
- Eraqi, Monica Mona. "Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans Then and Now: From Immigration and Assimilation to Political Activism and Education." 2014. U of Michigan–Dearborn, Master's thesis.
- Esposito, John. "Islam and Political Violence." *Religions*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2015, pp. 1067–81.
- "Estevanico." *Negro History Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 6, 1938, p. 4. www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/estevanico/docview/1296752511/se-2.
- "Expo 1893 Chicago – Pavilions List," en.worldfairs.info/expolistepavillons.php?expo_id=7. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.

- Faris, Habeeb. "The Beating Hearts." *Al-Hoda*, no. 276, 29 Jan. 1906.
- Foss, John. *A Journal, of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss; Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers: Together with Some Account of the Treatment of Christian Slaves when Sick:—and Observations of the Manners and Customs of the Algerines.:[Eight Lines of Verse]*. Newburyport [Mass.]:: Printed by Angier March, Middle-Street., 1798.
- Gaustad, Edwin S. "Thomas Jefferson, Religious Freedom, and the Supreme Court." *Church History*, vol. 67, no. 4, 1998, pp. 682–94. doi.org/10.2307/3169848. Accessed 11 Jan. 2026.
- Gomez, Michael A. "Muslims in Early America." *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 60, no. 4, 1994, pp. 671–710. doi.org/10.2307/2211064. Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.
- Gualtieri, Sarah. "Becoming "White": Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2001, pp. 29–58.
- Guibernau, Montserrat, and John Rex, editors. *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Migration*. Polity P, 1997.
- Gunther, John. "Arabian Nights and Days: Morocco." *The Reader's Digest*, vol. 64, 1954, Digitized by Digital Library of India. www.new.dli.ernet.in/handle/2015/203962.
- Haarmann, Ulrich W. "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Stud-*

- ies, vol. 20, no. 2, 1988, pp. 175–96. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/162959. Accessed 11 Jan. 2024.
- Hassoun, Rosina. “Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora.” *Immigrants & Minorities*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2013, pp. 101–04.
- Hayes, Kevin J. “How Thomas Jefferson Read the Qur’ān.” *Early American Literature*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2004, pp. 247–61. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25057350. Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.
- “Hi Jolly Monument, Quartzsite, Arizona,” www.roadsideamerica.com/story/11284. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.
- Humphrey, Michael. “Lebanese Identities: Between Cities, Nations and Trans-nations.” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2004, pp. 31–50. search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/docview/220604729. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Hunt, Nigel C. *Memory, War and Trauma*. Cambridge UP, 2010.
- Hutson, James H. “The Founding Fathers and Islam: Library Papers Show Early Tolerance for Muslim Faith,” 2002, www.loc.gov. Accessed 25 Feb. 2024.
- Ibn Said, Omar. “Introduction. Arabic Works.” *Islam and America: The Life of Omar Ibn Said*, edited by unknown, U of Wisconsin P, 2011, pp. 3–46.
- “Ira Jay Dutton.” *The Chautauqua County Society Register*, 1911. sites.rootsweb.com/~nychauta/HISTORY/Ccsreg.htm.

Karam, Afifa, *Al-Hoda vol. 07 no. 038*, accessed 12 Sept. 2021.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 14, 15 July 1892, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18920715_1_14_1.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 27, 14 Oct. 1892, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18921014_1_27_4.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 5, 13 May 1892, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18920513_1_5_1.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 44, 10 Feb. 1893, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18930210_1_44_4.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 47, 3 Mar. 1893, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18930303_1_47_1.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 50, 24 Mar. 1893, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18930324_1_50_1.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 1, no. 51, 31 Mar. 1893, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18930331_1_51_4.pdf.

Kawkab Amirka, vol. 2, no. 55, 28 Apr. 1893, arabicocr-app.s3.amazonaws.com/ka_18930428_2_55_4.pdf.

Kempa, Claire. "New Resource in Our Archive: The Syrian World," 25 Nov. 2015, lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu/news/2015/11/25/new-resource-in-our-archive-the-syrian-world/.

- Khabeer, Su'ad Abdul. "Africa as Tradition in U.S. African American Muslim Identity." *Journal of Africana Religions*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2017, pp. 26–49. doi.org/10.5325/jafireli.5.1.0026. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.
- Lovejoy, Paul E. *Slavery on the Frontier of Islam*. Princeton UP, 2004.
- Malcolm, Noel. "The 1649 English Translation of the Koran: Its Origins and Significance." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 75, 2012, pp. 261–95. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24395993. Accessed 20 Dec. 2023.
- Manseau, Peter A. "Why Thomas Jefferson Owned a Qur'an." *Smithsonian Magazine*, 3 Jan. 2018. www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-thomas-jefferson-owned-qur-1-180967997/.
- McKinnon, Victoria. "The Transformation of the Hookah," victoriamckinnon.wordpress.com/the-transformation-of-the-hookah/. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.
- "Mira'at al-Gharb Newspapers, ", 2018, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/collections/show/71. Accessed 8 Oct. 2024.
- Mokarzel, Naoum A., and Al-Hoda Press. *Al-Hoda vol. 01 no. 10*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14806. Accessed 6 Mar. 2021.

- . *Al-Hoda vol. 02 no. 05*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14827. Accessed 19 Mar. 2021.
- . *Al-Hoda vol. 02 no. 06*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14826. Accessed 18 Mar. 2021.
- . *Al-Hoda vol. 02 no. 08*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/14825. Accessed 18 Mar. 2021.
- . *Al-Hoda vol. 07 no. 038*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/15478. Accessed 12 Sept. 2021.
- . *Al-Hoda vol. 07 no. 040*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/15476. Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.
- . *Al-Hoda vol. 07 no. 043*. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive, lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/15473. Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.

- . *Al-Hoda* vol. 07 no. 044. Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Archive. Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.
- Mokarzel, Salloum. Letter to Helen Samhan. 15 Mar. 1925. www.lib.ncsu.edu/findingaids/kc0041.
- Mokarzel, Salloum A. “Turkish Subjects Declare that Prejudice Exists Against Their Becoming American Citizens.” *The New York Times*, 1 Oct. 1909, p. 8.
- Nabhan, Gary Paul. “Camel Whisperers: Desert Nomads Crossing Paths.” *The Journal of Arizona History*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2008, pp. 95–118. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41697131. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
- Naff, Alixa. *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience*. Southern Illinois UP, 1985.
- “Naoum Mokarzel,” kalimahpress.com/blog/naoum-mokarzel-2/. Accessed 8 Oct. 2024.
- “Naoum Mokarzel,” kalimahpress.com/blog/naoum-mokarzel-2/. Accessed 8 Oct. 2024.
- Nassour, Hoda Z., and Herbert R. Nassour. “Photocopy of the First Printing of Al-Hoda,” lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/items/show/93882. Accessed 27 July 2025.
- O’Farrell, Holly. “A New and Curious Route to Cairo.” *World’s Fairs and the Stereotyping of the Middle East*, 2020, *IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1.
- Ormos, István. “Cairo Street at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 at Chicago,” 2012, maxvanberchem.org/en/scientific-activities/projects/architecture/14-architectu

- [re/128-cairo-street-at-the-world-s-columbian-exposition-in-1893-at-chicago](#). Accessed 14 Jan. 2026.
- Parry, Kyle, and Jacob W. Lewis. *Ubiquity: Photography's Multitudes*. Leuven UP, 2021, <https://doi.org/s>.
- Pellow, Thomas. *The Adventures of Thomas Pellow, of Penryn, Mariner: Three and Twenty Years in Captivity Among the Moors*. Creative Media Partners, LLC, 2018.
- Peskin, Lawrence A. "The Lessons of Independence: How the Algerian Crisis Shaped Early American Identity." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2004, pp. 297–319. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24914801. Accessed 3 Apr. 2024.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession*, 1991, pp. 33–40.
- Pryor, Elizabeth Stordeur. *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship before the Civil War*. U of North Carolina P, 2016.
- Pulcini, Theodore. "Trends in Research on Arab Americans." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1993, pp. 27–60.
- Rand McNally & Co. Rand McNally & Co.'s New Indexed Standard Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago. 1893. archive.org/details/Newberry_Map2FoG4104_C6.

- Rojas, Martha Elena. "Insults Unpunished: Barbary Captives, American Slaves, and the Negotiation of Liberty." *Early American Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2003, pp. 159–86. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23546474. Accessed 3 Apr. 2024.
- Rudd, Annie. *Ubiquity: Photography's Multitudes*. Edited by Jacob W. Lewis and Kyle Parry, 2021, pp. 47–70. doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv24cnspz.5. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
- Rydell, Robert W. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916*. U of Chicago P, 2013.
- Sahoo, Ajaya Kumar, et al. *Indian Diaspora and Transnationalism*. Rawat Publications, 2012.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- . "Orientalism." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1977, pp. 162–206. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41397448. Accessed 23 Oct. 2024.
- Samhan, Helen Hatab. "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, edited by Michael W. Suleiman, Temple UP, 1999, pp. 209–26. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bswm3.17. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
- Sanders, Emily. "The 1893 Chicago World's Fair and American Indian Agency." *Cultural Survival*, 1 Feb. 2015. www.culturalsurvival.org/news/1893-chicago-worlds-fair-and-a-american-indian-agency. Accessed 17 Aug. 2024.

Schaefer, Richard T., editor. "Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society." 2008.

Scott. "Bounced from the Beer Garden on the Midway Plaisance," 14 Mar. 2025, worldsfairchicago1893.com/2025/03/14/bounced-from-the-beer-garden-on-the-midway-plaisance/. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.

Sessions, Jennifer E. "Colonizing Revolutionary Politics: Algeria and the French Revolution of 1848." *French Politics, Culture & Society*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2015, pp. 75–100. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26378218. Accessed 22 Aug. 2024.

Shakir, Evelyn. *Bint Arab Arab and Arab American Women in the United States*. Praeger, 1997.

Al-Shawaf, Rayyan. "The Yankee Mohammedan: Alexander Russell Webb and the Quest for an American Islam." *CrossCurrents*, vol. 56, no. 4, 2007, pp. 130–32. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24461306. Accessed 21 Aug. 2024.

Al-Shehab, Manal. "Arabizi: An Analysis of the Romanization of the Arabic Script from a Sociolinguistic Perspective." *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2013, pp. 52–62.

Simour, Lhoussain. "American Fair Expositions Revisited: Morocco's Acrobatic Performers between the Industry of Entertainment and the Violence of Racial Display." *Journal for Cultural Research*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2013, pp. 295–322. doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2012.752163.

- Skaggs, David Curtis. "The Journal of Military History." *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 70, no. 4, 2006, pp. 1124–25. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4138212. Accessed 3 Apr. 2024.
- Smith, Benjamin. "Transitional Portraits: Syrian Immigrants of the North American Mahjar in 'Abd Al-Masih Haddad's Prose." *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East & North African Migration Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2020, pp. 27–53. lebanesestudies.ojs.unc.edu/index.php/mashriq/article/view/247/404. Accessed 14 Feb. 2020.
- Snader, Joe. *Cultural Politics of the Captivity Narrative: Empire, Slavery, and Reform*. Ohio State UP, 2000.
- Spellberg, Denise A. "Could a Muslim Be President? An Eighteenth-Century Constitutional Debate." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2006, pp. 485–506. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/30053706. Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.
- Stephan, Rita. "The Story of Arab Americans' Beginning in America – And the Quest for Fair Representation," 30 Apr. 2021, 2021-2025.state.gov/dipnote-u-s-department-of-state-official-blog/the-story-of-arab-americans-beginning-in-america-and-the-quest-for-fair-representation/. Accessed 11 Jan. 2026.
- Suleiman, Michael W. *Arab-American: Building a New Future*. Temple UP, 1999.

- . “The Mokarzels’ Contributions to the Arabic-Speaking Community in the United States.” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1999, pp. 71–88. [search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/docview/220611553](https://search.proquest.com/proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/docview/220611553). Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Tabahi, Suhad. “The Social Construction of Arab Identity in the U.S.: The Historical Complicity and the Modern Responsibility of Social Work.” *Western Michigan*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2022, pp. 106–33.
- Tawil, Randa. “A Waking Dream: Syrian Migrants’ Journey to the Americas,” 25 June 2019, lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu/news/2019/06/25/a-waking-dream-syrian-migrants-journey-to-the-americas/.
- The Associated Press. “U.S. Diplomat Apologizes for Using the Word ‘Animalistic’ in Reference to Lebanese Reporters.” *CTV News*, 28 Aug. 2025. www.ctvnews.ca/world/article/us-diplomat-apologizes-for-using-the-word-animalistic-in-reference-to-lebanese-reporters/.
- “The Cairo to Chicago Exhibition,” isac.uchicago.edu/museum-exhibits/special-exhibits/cairo-chicago. Accessed 20 Aug. 2024.
- “The Magic City Portfolio,” Item of the Month, Aug. 2011. Peggy Price, author, lib.usm.edu/spcol/exhibitions/item_of_the_month/iotm_aug_11.
- “The World’s Columbian Exposition: Introduction,” smarthistory.org/chicago-world-fair-introduction/. Accessed 17 Aug. 2024.

- “Top Baby Names 1900,” www.babycenter.com/baby-names/most-popular/top-baby-names-1900. Accessed 8 Oct. 2024.
- Turner, Richard Brent. *Islam in the African-American Experience*. 2nd ed., Indiana UP, 2003.
- “Voices from the Arab Press: The Problem with the Arabic Language.” *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 Aug. 2021. www.jpost.com/middle-east/voices-from-the-arab-press-the-problem-with-the-arabic-language-677788. Accessed 4 Mar. 2025.
- “Why Did They Leave? Reasons for Early Lebanese Migration,” 2021, lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- “Why Did They Leave? Reasons for Early Lebanese Migration,” 2021, lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.
- Williams, Heather Andrea. *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*. U of North Carolina P, 2005.
- World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. 1894, World’s Fairs Collection. doi.org/10.5479/sil.817405.39088013421441.
- Zachs, Fruma. “Under Eastern Eyes: East on West in the Arabic Press of the Nahḍa Period.” *Studia Islamica*, vol. 106, no. 1, 2011, pp. 124–43. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23884949. Accessed 18 Aug. 2024.