

## Discovering the Self and the Other: Narrative in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*

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### Abstract

This study deals with Ahdaf Soueif's novel *The Map of Love* (2000) as a narrative with the aim of concentrating on the way the narration is carried out in this novel in addition to highlighting the narrative techniques employed in it. Besides, this research studies narrative in the novel with the aim of showing how narration and the act of narration turn out into a means to discover the other as well as the self. It starts by giving a very brief introductory note on the novel. Then, it gives a narratological reading of the novel. Finally, it underlines the method of narration employed in the novel and sums up the narrative techniques used in it and their function. In this way, this paper falls into three sections: An Introductory Note, A Narratological Reading of *The Map of Love*, and Concluding Notes. Narratology, as most critics point out, is the theory and study of narrative and narrative structure. Paul Cobley remarks that narratology is a "discipline which draws attention to the building blocks of narrative, exploring the various combinations that can appear in narrative texts and the devices that readers come to learn and accept, such as narrative levels" (2001: 237). Similarly, Jeremy Hawthorn points out that narratology "seeks to investigate common elements in all forms of 'telling'" (2001: 137). In other words, narratology is about the way stories are told, whether it is in real life and art in general or in a work of literature in particular. In this way, the study of narrative is particularly important since it enables us to order time and space in a certain narrative and consequently become able to construct meaning in this narrative. In his *Narrative* (2001), Paul Cobley observes that a narrative is "a movement from a start point to an end point, with digressions, which involves the showing or the telling of story events. Narrative is a *re*-presentation of events and, chiefly, *re*-presents space and time" (236-237). In a novel, which is a narrative, the story, which is a group of events and actions, is narrated by someone, who is the narrator. Narratology, as a field of study, looks at the internal mechanisms of narrative, the form taken by a narrated story.

**Keywords:** discovering, self, other, narrative, map, love, narration, narrator, narrated story, narrative techniques, narratological reading, narratology narrative structure, *re*-presentation.

### An Introductory Note

The first thing that came to my mind when I started reading Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (for a brief note on Soueif's life and her career as a writer, see El-Enany 2006: 200-1) is the

similarity between the method of narration used in this novel and that method of narration employed in Bahā° Tāhir's *Khālatī Şafīyya wa-l-Dayr* [*Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery*] (1991) and Saul Bellow's *The Bellarosa connection* (1989) in that each is narrated by a narrator who is not the main character and in that there is an outside invented reason for beginning the act of narration. In *Khālatī Şafīyya wa-l-Dayr*, it is a letter from one of the cousins that leads the narrator to recall the story of Şafīyya and Ḥarbī. As for *The Bellarosa connection*, it is a phone call that leads the narrator to start recounting the story of Harry Fonstein and his wife Sorella. Here, in *The Map of Love*, it is a "trunk" – "For Amal al-Ghamrawi, this story started with a trunk" (6) – full of memoirs written in both English and Arabic, documents in Arabic and newspaper cuttings in addition to other personal properties, which leads Amal al-Ghamrawi, the first-person narrator, to recount the love story of Anna Winterbourne, a British, and Sharif al-Baroudi, her Egyptian husband (6-7), a "cross-cultural romance" as Lindsey Moore dubs it (2008: 146). It is Isabel Parkman, Anna's great-granddaughter, who, on the advice of Amal's brother, °Omar, brings this trunk from America to Egypt with the hope that Amal would help her in translating those memoirs and documents written in Arabic into English. Later on, the process of translating the journals and the other documents in addition to recounting Anna's story turns into a process of discovering the other as well as the self.

### A Narratological Reading of *The Map of Love*

The aim of this section of the research is to give a reading that illustrates how the narrative devices are employed in the novel to deliver its main themes and portray its main characters. This reading highlights how the narrative devices and themes are fused together in order to give a compact picture of what happened in the past and how this past is reflected in the present through its impact on the time being, the moment of recounting this past and reviving it in the present.

*The Map of Love* opens with the novelist Ahdaf Soueif using the third-person method of narration, which means that there is an omniscient narrator who knows everything from the beginning to the end of the novel (4).

This omniscient narrator, who knows everything in this narrative, makes the reader aware from the beginning that everything in this tale is fragmented, and that is why this omniscient narrator admits, at the outset of the novel, that it consists of "fragments of a life lived a long, long time ago" (4). This means that the past is extremely important to the events of the novel in general and to the events of the present, the time being, in particular.

Moreover, the omniscient narrator highlights that the events, those of the past, took place "a hundred years" ago, and that these events concern a woman whose "voice" is now speaking to someone, a "her," namely the first-person narrator – this is done through the diaries and memoirs of the woman from the past. The voice of this woman is so persistent and so demanding that the first-person narrator cannot do anything but respond to it; the result is that the story of this woman from the past, Anna, is recounted through the eyes and contemplation of another woman, Amal, the first-person narrator, in the present. Later on, we, the readers, find out that there is some kind of relationship between the two women, partly relatives, partly emotional and partly psychological. Step by step, we come to realize that Amal is reading Anna's diaries and memoirs, but this act of reading is an active one since Anna's memoirs are partly fragmented and Amal's solemn job is to regroup them and then put them in their correct order to be presented to the reader, who is also supposed to be an active reader who can put the past side by side the present to form a unified picture of all the events. In this way, as the third-person narrator points out, Amal "reads and lets Anna's words flow into her, probing gently at dreams and hopes and sorrows she had sorted out, labelled and put away" (4).

What I think of is that the omniscient narrator controls everything in the novel, from A to Z, as the various parts entitled "A Beginning," "An End of a Beginning," "A Beginning of an End" and "An End" indicate; these parts are inserted in the text of the novel in various places

including the beginning, the middle and the end. Besides, this omniscient narrator, who opens the novel, brings it to an end with the last part entitled “An End.” This happens though the events in the other twenty-nine chapters of the novel are narrated in the first-person. In this way, the omniscient narrator acts as the “intrusive narrator” (for a definition, see Hawthorn 2001: 155) who interferes at certain points in the novel to highlight certain facts and to comment on certain events; this is done for the benefit of the reader with the aim of removing any mystery or enigma concerning the events of the past as well as the present.

In the part entitled “A Beginning,” the omniscient narrator seems to be paving the way for the first-person narrator, Amal, to recount Anna’s story by revealing to the reader the milieu in which Amal narrates the events, whether personal or public: “The key Amal found later in the corner of a purse made of green felt – a purse with an unwilling feel to it, as though it had been made in a schoolroom project – and with it were two wedding rings, one smaller than the other” (5). It is worth mentioning here that this event occurs later on in chapter 10 (104-105) though the omniscient narrator refers to it here, which reveals his knowledge of whatever happens in the novel.

Besides, the omniscient narrator indicates that the events of the past start in 1896 (5), which means that a whole century elapses before Amal sets eyes on Anna’s diaries, which were written mostly in English and French (4), and some of them were in Arabic: “sixty-four pages of neat Arabic ruq‘a script”; these were written by Layla, Sharif’s sister and Amal’s grandmother (5). Moreover, from the very beginning, the omniscient narrator makes the reader realize that the first-person narrator, Amal al-Ghamrawi, and the great-granddaughter of Anna Winterbourne, Isabel Parkman, are to go through a journey of discovery by which they will come to find out their “own history” (7) and to be more acquainted with their true selves.

After this exposition of the milieu in the introductory part “A Beginning,” given by the omniscient narrator, the reader is taken to the present, Cairo, April 1997, where the first-person narrator lives. Starting from this point in place and time, Amal undertakes the act of narration. Yet, she does not start from the past; she confronts the reader with what happens in the present moment and present place. Moreover, she begins by giving a comment about one of her own habits – making herself “sick with terror” by “thinking about death” and “dear life” (10). After that she delineates a dream she had last night: in this dream, she sees herself walking in the house of her “father’s childhood” – this house is now a museum – and sees a shadow of a woman in addition to her great-uncle, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi, though she has never seen him in real life (10-11). It is obvious that this dream occurs due to her obsession with what she has read in Anna’s diaries. However, since it is not the narrator’s aim to convey her own story to the reader, she, after these two misleading paragraphs about herself, points out that this story is not hers, which is significantly similar to what the narrator does at the beginning of *Khālatī Ṣafīyya wa-l-Dayr*:

But this is not my story. This is a story conjured out of a box; a leather trunk that travelled from London to Cairo and back. That lived in the boxroom of a Manhattan apartment for many years, then found its way back again and came to rest on my living-room floor here in Cairo one day in the spring of 1997. It is the story of two women: Isabel Parkman, the American who brought it [i.e. the trunk] to me, and Anna Winterbourne, her great-grandmother, the Englishwoman to whom it had originally belonged. And if I come into it at all, it is only as my own grandmother did a hundred years ago, when she told the story of her brother’s love. (11, underline mine)

It is very symbolic that this act of decoding Anna’s diaries takes place in spring, “the spring of 1997,” this season of regeneration and rebirth, as if Ahdaf Soueif wants to give Anna another life by means of regrouping the various pieces of her diaries and then reinterpreting them through the eyes of Amal. What Amal does throughout the novel, is a revival of the memory of Anna and her love and her marriage to Sharif al-Baroudi, which is a choice to revive the past and give it another life. What the first-person narrator does here is very much similar to what the narrators do in *Khālatī Ṣafīyya wa-l-Dayr* and *The Bellarosa connection*; all of them opt for reviving the past and act on the same principle, which is that “memory is life and forgetting death” (Bellow 1989: 72).

According to Anna's journals, her story starts in England in the autumn of 1897, and it seems that her diaries begin at a troubled point in her life; before Amal, who can now hear Anna's "voice and see her in the miniature in the locket" her great-granddaughter wears, "Anna's troubled heart lies open" (11). The first lines of her journal reveal that Anna had an unhappy marriage that did not last for long. She was "a faithful and loving wife," but her husband was not happy for a reason she never discovered though she tried hard to make him happy and to find out the reason for his unhappiness (11). Essentially, her husband, Edward, has not "changed," but he was sad, which worried Anna and disappointed her. Her disappointment in her marriage made her feel "the lack of [her] mother," who was dead by this time (12). After her mother's death, her father was sad, but he never talked about her. Instead, he and his friend Sir Charles, Edward's father, used to meet and talk of public and political issues concerning India, Ireland, the Queen, the Egyptian Canal, "the Rebellion, the Bombardment and the Trial. They never spoke of [her] mother" (13). Later, "a few months ago," after her father's death, she tries to find out if her father and her mother did have a happy marriage, but she never gets a conclusive answer from Sir Charles: "I expect so, my dear. She was a fine woman. And he was a true gentleman" (13), an answer that implies that they were happy together. As for her own marriage, it was not a happy one though her husband, Edward, was "tender and affectionate" (13). Still, though Edward does not show any sign of unhappiness, Anna "cannot believe that he is happy" (14).

To create a parallelism between what Anna felt in 1897, i.e. in the past, and what Isabel feels in 1997, i.e. in the present, Soueif devotes the second chapter to Isabel: as, in the past, Anna's heart was troubled, which makes her unhappy, now, Isabel's heart is also troubled due to her interest in a man, "Omar al-Ghamrawi, Amal's brother, who is fifty-five and is old enough to be her father, as a friend of Isabel points out (17-18). By doing this, Soueif creates a connection between the past and the present, a link, "a parallelism" as Rasheed El-Enany calls it (2010: 9), that highlights the fact that when it comes to hearts and human feelings there is no difference between the past and the present; "What difference do a hundred years – or a continent – make?" (12). One observes that empires collapse and that individuals pass away, but what remains is a history of these empires and a record of the histories of these individuals and the emotions they experienced in their short lives.

Chapter three starts with a comment that underlines the fact that Amal has become "obsessed with Anna Winterbourne's" (26) story. By means of this obsession and via Anna's journals, Amal has become able to visualize her, "to fill in the gaps, to know who the people are of whom she speaks, to paint in the backdrop against which she is living her life here, on the page in front of me" (26). Finally, through Anna's diaries and through other means – "browsing" books at the British Council Library, Dar al-Kutub and second-hand bookstalls in addition to getting "cuttings from old issues of *The Times*" –, Amal becomes able to "piece" together Anna's story (26) as it is presented in the novel:

I got to know Anna as though she were my best friend – or better; for I heard the worst and the best of her thoughts, and I had her life whole in front of me, here in the box Isabel has brought me. ... I read what others wrote of her and she became so present to me that I could almost swear she sits quietly by as I try to write down her story. (43-44, ellipsis mine)

In this way, the first-person narrator, Amal, takes the reader back in place and time, London, October 1898 to March 1899 (26), to recount what Anna underwent at the time due to the weird condition in which her husband was after his return from Sudan. What she observes, at the time, is that her husband, Edward, "is not himself"; something that she is not aware of occurred to her husband while he was "in the Soudan" for seven months (27). However, it was obvious, for her, that her husband suffered spiritually, which accounts for the change that happened to him and for her earlier comment that she "cannot believe that he is happy" (14). Her husband's spiritual suffering affected her, which had its influence on her "soul," something that Mr Winthrop, a doctor, tried to treat by advising her to "go out for a walk in the air each day" (27). Mr Winthrop also attempted to cure Edward's infected soul, his "sickness of the spirit," as Anna describes it in her diary (28), due to his experience in Sudan, which leads him to impose isolation on himself and to suffer alienation after his return to England, as his behaviour and his talks with Anna show (27-29). However, Edward's spirit

never heals; he dies on 20 March 1899 after suffering spiritually for the atrocities he and other British soldiers and officers committed in Sudan. It is apparent that what the British did in Egypt in 1882 disillusioned Edward's father, Sir Charles, which leads him to warn his son against going to Sudan believing that he was going there to fulfil an honourable mission, but the son himself becomes disillusioned after seeing the massacre they committed there in 1898. What made Edward suffer spiritually is that he is a man of principles who is forced to commit things that are not compatible with his beliefs. Besides, his father has already warned him against such a mission, but his principles deceive him into participating in it; after his coming back from Sudan suffering mortification, his father tells Anna, "I told him, though. I told him this was not an honest war. This was a war dreamed up by politicians, a war to please that widow so taken with her cockney Empire – Ah, what's the use?" (30) Sir Charles is so correct in his question for Edward never overcomes the sickness of the spirit that he suffered from due to the loss of his principles and due to his disillusionment about the British Empire and what it did in Egypt and Sudan. Yet, there is something else that is worthy of mentioning here, which is that Edward's death seems to be a comment on the failure of the British culture in that it cannot protect the citizens of principles against the things that ail their spirits. Besides, it is a comment on this culture that allows some of its citizens to commit atrocities without punishing them; on the contrary, those who believe in principles and in honourable missions pay a certain price – in the form of spiritual suffering, as in Edward's case – once they are disillusioned in these tasks and once they suffer the loss of their beliefs, while others profit from such inhuman deeds and rise in social hierarchy. Anna points out in her journal:

*Oh, I do so completely fear for my husband now, for if it is true and if he took part in those terrible deeds, he who puts honour above all else and truly thought that in embarking on this expedition he embarked on a brave and honourable task, I cannot now see how he can put it behind him. (35)*

Edward never puts the "terrible deeds" he was forced to commit in Sudan "behind him" and he dies in 1899 after suffering spiritually for them.

Edward's death had a bad impact on Anna for some time for she spent days, weeks and months thinking that she was partially responsible for his death since she was not able to communicate with him, something that could have relieved him of his spiritual pain, as she came to think:

A fear that she would fail him in death as she had in life. For she had failed – there is no doubt in her mind about that. A happy man would not leave his home and go seeking death in the desert. A well-loved man would not die with horrors eating silently, secretly at his mind. If she had loved him better, perhaps he would not have needed to go to the Sudan. (41)

However, Anna cannot be blamed for his death for she did everything she could to ease his pain, but he did not respond to her honest attempts; Amal correctly comments on this overwhelming situation: "What's done is done, I want to tell her. How can you reach someone who does not want to be reached?" (44) Being unwilling "to be reached" led to their physical and spiritual separation, and consequently to the failure of their marriage and to her failure to communicate with him as well as to her failure to understand the cause of his pain and his inability to regain himself. In this way, Anna comes to spend "ten months" (44) in grief over her husband's death. Later, in Rome with her friend Caroline and after being ill for some time, she comes to realize a way out of her grief and to see "*the door by which [she] might return*" (44) to the world and to life anew. She comes to have this feeling – that she can start life anew – after she sees a collection of flowers:

*I found, nestled in a dark corner under the spreading branches, one last cluster of blossom like a small pink chandelier and I was overcome with gratitude as though it had stayed to say to me, Look! It is not too late. (45)*

This realization that "*it is not too late*" enables her to start again enjoying the simple pleasures that life offers her, i.e. to regain her own self and to regenerate:

*I was able, once more to take pleasure in the wondrous colours, the tranquillity, the contentment with which they are infused. And I wondered, as I had wondered before, is that a world which truly exists? (46)*

In short, after a period of suffering, Anna was able to recollect her shredded self, to enjoy the pleasures of life and to feel anew how wonderful life is though we sometimes suffer in it and because of it.

In chapter five, Soueif shifts the setting back to the present, New York City, March 1997, where Isabel meets Amal's brother, 'Omar, and when Isabel realizes that she, unexpectedly, is in love with him: "How can it [love] strike so suddenly? Without warning, without preparation?" (48) As for 'Omar, he also feels attracted to her in a way that he cannot explain: "'I feel as if I know you from somewhere – before I mean.' ... 'A previous life?'" (49, ellipsis mine) By the end of this chapter, Isabel's mother, Jasmine, refers to an enigmatic love affair that takes place between her and a young revolutionary man due to the similarity between him and her dead son, Valentine (53-54). This short while affair is enigmatic since not all the facts regarding it are explained. Later on, it is revealed that this young man was 'Omar himself, which will create some kind of turbulence in the relationship between him and Isabel. However, what her mother brings up here accounts for 'Omar's feeling that he knows Isabel "from somewhere – before" and for his remark that she reminds him of someone from "A previous life" (49). Similar to Anna's case, Isabel, now, undergoes a period of turmoil: her mother is sick and may die soon; she feels that she is in love with a man, 'Omar, who is older than she is, though she is not sure that he cares for her or even thinks about her when she is not there (53). This time-shift seems to be a preparation for the unexpected and enigmatic love relationship between Anna and Sharif al-Baroudi that is going to take place when Anna travels to Egypt; the indirect link between the two affairs is that the two men are Egyptians – and later we find out that they are relatives –, though they exist in two different worlds and two different cultures, and that Isabel is the great-granddaughter of Anna.

Strangely enough Anna's way out of her grief and "*the door by which [she] might return*" (44) to the world and start life anew comes in the form of a journey to Egypt, which occurs by the end of September 1900. In chapter six, Anna gives a picture of her arrival in Alexandria (56-58) and gives certain details of the first days of her experience in Egypt. What one observes is that Anna conveys her experience of Egypt to her friend Caroline (56-58) and to Sir Charles (60-62), and to the reader as well, in the form of letters. To fill in the gaps in Anna's portrayal of Alexandria at the time, i.e. in 1900, Amal, the first-person narrator, goes to *al-Ahram*, a renowned Egyptian newspaper, and goes through the archives of that period, which enables her "to reimagine" and "to re-create" (59) the Egypt to which Anna came at the beginning of the twentieth century with the aim of enabling Isabel to see it, as Anna came to see it and experience it.

Chapter 7 starts with a comment that reveals to the reader how Amal comes to visualize Anna sitting "at the window of her bedroom in the Greek widow's pension, her letters neatly folded, her new journal open on the table." In this way, Amal draws a picture of Anna in her bedroom writing her letters and jotting down her memoirs in her new journal while looking out of her window at the sea, a mental picture that infatuates Isabel to the extent of wishing to make "a film of Anna's life" (64). After that, the reader is given a picture of how Amal imagines how Anna looked like and how she wore her clothes at the time and how Amal re-creates the scene as a whole (65-66). Next, similar to the previous chapter, chapter 7 makes use of letters to convey to the reader Anna's perception and experience of Cairo; this is done through Anna's letters to Sir Charles (66-68) and to her friend Caroline (68-71). Anna's letters reveal to the reader her emotions and her reactions regarding Lord Cromer, especially after "his bereavement" (66), what is written in *al-Liwa*, an Egyptian newspaper published in Arabic, against the British occupation of Egypt and what she sees in the old and the new Cairo in addition to her wish "to learn a little more of life here" (71), i.e. to know more about life in Egypt, a wish that will lead her to have various, and dangerous as well, adventures in Egypt later.

In chapter 8, Soueif shifts the setting back to the present, Cairo, May 1997, to find Amal, the first-person narrator, sitting in her bedroom, where she reads Anna's journals and letters and looks at pictures that belong to the beginnings of the twentieth century, and then contemplates on them with the aim of re-creating Anna's story:

I'd been in my bedroom, working, as is usual with me now, on my Anna project, reading on the period, looking at pictures, trying to imagine. ... I think of the table by the window as 'Anna's table' and it is covered with her papers. I've arranged them chronologically as much as I could; the undated sheets I've compared to dated ones and matched the paper. They stand in twelve piles, one for each year – ... The journals stand alone. I have tried not to read through them, to read only one year at a time. But then I know how the story ends. I don't think it matters. We always know how the story ends. What we don't know is what happens along the way. (74, ellipsis mine)

Thus, here, in Amal's bedroom, is her mental kitchen where she prepares and handles the ingredients of Anna's story – journals, letters, books on the period and pictures of that period in addition to cuttings from old issues of newspapers of that period – with the aim of re-creating Anna's story as she comes to imagine it. Yet, though Amal knows how Anna's "story ends," she, still, has to discover the details of this story, i.e. "what happens along the way" from the beginning to the end of the story, and this is what Amal does throughout the novel by working on her "Anna project." In this way, *The Map of Love* becomes a novel of discovering the other in addition to discovering the self.

That is why, in this chapter, as in various chapters of the novel, Soueif, in addition to revealing the details of Anna's life and experience to the reader, sheds light on Amal's personal life and that of Isabel. The details that reveal the personal life of both Amal and Isabel show certain similarities between them though they belong to two different worlds of two different cultures and though they are of different ages: "She [Isabel] is at her beginning and I [Amal] am close to my end" (81). What one observes is that both fear, and suffer as well, isolation and alienation, two things that torture man in the modern age. Thus, their suffering is what makes them similar:

A dead father and a mother as good – or as bad – as dead. We are both orphans, she and I. A dead brother and an absent brother – I touch the underside of the wooden table quickly, secretly: my brother is absent but alive. A broken marriage – we share that too. ...

'You're divorced?'

'No. But we've been separated for a long time.'

But I have sons and she hasn't. (81, ellipsis mine)

Thus, both suffer from a broken relationship, that of marriage; Isabel is divorced while Amal is separated from her husband and, in a way, from her children, which eventually leads them to suffer from isolation and alienation. Still, each clings to something that links them to future; Isabel is still young and, in a way, "at her beginning" and may have a child in future, while Amal, though "close to [her] end" (81), she has children who connect her to future. Besides, there is Anna who creates a link between both women, whether with regard to the past or to the present; they end up by discussing the progress in Anna's life story after she comes to Egypt and settles in Cairo (83).

In chapter 9, the setting is shifted back to the past, Cairo, 25 January 1901, to follow up Anna's story. The chapter opens with Anna's letter to Sir Charles in which she refers to Queen Victoria's death and "*the preparations for the Coronation and the Funeral*" that are taking place in England (86). At the time, Anna senses that "*a change*" is about to occur in England, especially after the long years of Queen Victoria's reign. As for what happens in Egypt at the time, away from the British Agency, everything is as normal: "*The rest of the country continues, so far as I can see, as usual – the people celebrating the Festival of the end of the Fast of Ramadan*" (86). Similar to what happens in Egypt, Anna's life in Cairo and her "*days go on as usual*" (87), which enables her to discover Egypt bit by bit and to regain herself. In her letter to Sir Charles, Anna refers to the suspended church, "the Mu'allaqah," and recounts her experience of this church, especially regarding the history of the church, the paintings and images of the Virgin and her eyes of which it is said that they "*move to follow you wherever you go*" (87), which leads Amal to comment on this experience and to add her own experience of this same place when she was young "on a school trip" (88). This fusion of experiences enables Soueif to strike a balance between Anna's experiences and those of Amal, her first-person narrator, which enriches the text of the novel. Moreover, Amal's

comment on Anna's letters and journals shows how Amal reacts and interacts while reading them, which leads Amal to be involved in what happens to Anna and even to identify with her: "I see Anna put down her pen. She reads her letter through and folds it. It is eleven o'clock. Emily has gone to bed and Anna is restless" (89). In another place in this chapter, Amal points out,

And I, in my room, home after half my life has gone by, I read what Anna wrote to her father-in-law a hundred years ago, and I see the English party, lunching by the pyramids, their Egyptian servants keeping their Egyptian petitioners at bay. I record what she has written, and I prepare my explanatory notes for Isabel, and I am torn. (100)

What Amal mentions here and in other places in the novel reflects her involvement in Anna's story and her identification with her.

At the time, in the entry of 10 February in her journal, Anna speaks of her wish to learn Arabic and of Dean Butcher's attempt to help her by referring to the root of some Arabic words such as "*allaqa*" (90), which means to hang, and the words that stem from it, i.e. the inflections of this word, a technique similar to the one that Amal follows in the present to teach Isabel some Arabic words and their inflections in addition to their meaning. Besides, in this chapter, 9, in a letter to Caroline Bourke, dated March 10, Anna refers to various important issues: first, the attempt of a young man, named Temple Gairdner, to convert some Moslems to Christianity, something that even the British living in Egypt did not approve of (91-92); second, the Khedive's Ball which Anna attends and of which she gives a detailed description to her friend Caroline (92-94); third, the cultural differences between the parties held in Egypt and those held in her own country, England, especially with regard to the presence of women in those parties and to their behaviour and the activities they practice in them; and finally, the beginning of her healing from what ailed her soul: "*But it was the beginning of my healing and I trust you [Caroline] will see from all this that I have made great progress since those sad days which I shall always remember for the angelic kindness you demonstrated towards your devoted*" (94).

Furthermore, in chapter 9, in a letter to Sir Charles, Anna meticulously records a conversation, which took place at the foot of the Great Pyramid among some of the British living and working in Egypt. This conversation reflects how those British think of the British occupation of Egypt and how they regard the Egyptians, whether they are fellaheen or effendis (95-100). Also, this conversation highlights the beginning of Anna's wondering about "*whether it is possible for a conquering ruler to truly see into the character of the people whom he rules*" (99), a question that will, later on, lead Anna to discover the character of Egypt and that of its people: "*And yet – I sit here in my room at Shepherd's Hotel possessed by the strangest feeling that still I am not in Egypt*" (102). This is the feeling that will drive Anna into a journey to discover Egypt, the other, and eventually discover her true self. Moreover, it underscores the fact that some British – here it is George Young who voices this awareness – were aware, even in 1901, that "*we [the British] would have to go one day and that if we did not do so of our own accord, Egypt would do it for us*" (100), something that really happens in July 1952 at the hands of some of Egypt's revolutionists.

Thus, though, by that time, Anna has been in Egypt for about six months, she still has the feeling that she is not in Egypt yet, a feeling that will lead her to make a mysterious journey with the aim of grasping the image she has formed of Egypt in her heart: "*but there is something at the heart of it all which eludes me – something – an intimation of which I felt in the paintings, the conversations in England, and which, now that I am here [in Egypt], seems far, far from my grasp*" (102). This journey is the core, the crux, of the novel since after which Anna emerges a regenerated individual cured of what has ailed her soul. That is why this journey is introduced as a mystery, an enigma that needs to be uncovered and resolved, whether to the first-person narrator or to the reader. For this reason, chapter 10 opens with an interior monologue that shows how Amal is worried because there is a gap in Anna's journal, a period of "seventy-four days" during which Anna disappears. What worries Amal is that she still wants "the story" (104). In other words, she still wishes to complete Anna's story and provide it with all necessary details, which drives her to search the trunk again, a search that leads her to find out Anna's account of her abduction and her journey to Sinai in addition to



the narrative written by Amal's grandmother, Layla, of the same event, "the sixty-four pages covered in close ruq'a script in black ink" (110), which Amal translates into English for Isabel. Here, in chapter 10, Soueif starts fusing Anna's journals and the account written by Amal's grandmother, Layla, in addition to Amal's comments on what she reads and translates with the aim of complementing Anna's story. Starting from here, one also observes that Anna's journal intersects with Layla's narrative, and maybe that is why Amal keeps commenting on both versions and later on, in chapter 13, she sums up what both women register in their diaries with the aim of giving one comprehensive account of what happened at the time when Anna was abducted by two young Egyptian men in an attempt to help Husni, Layla's husband, to be released after he was arrested by the riot police in a demonstration against the Egyptian government. The situation is a peculiar one: when they abducted Anna she was wearing the uniform of an Englishman, and they kidnapped her on this basis. Thus, once they find out that she is a woman, not a "*British Gentleman*," the aim of their operation, an action "*prompted by political motives*" (106), is defeated, and it becomes a problem for them since it is against their own principles to abduct a woman to achieve their objective. Regarding this peculiar situation of Anna's abduction by two young Egyptian "*effendis*," who can talk to her "*in perfect French*" (107), what puzzles Amal is that Anna does not give any "note of panic here." On the contrary, "she is so calm" though she is not an "intrepid" woman; She even "sits down and opens a book" and after a while starts "writing" and later on falls "asleep" as if nothing had really happened (109). From the outset of the situation, though she was ignorant of the identity of the abductors, she did not want to be advertised in the London newspapers as "*that Lady Anna Winterbourne who was abducted by the Arabs*" (105). Besides, instead of worrying about her own safety, what she was afraid of was that Lord Cromer would put the blame on Mr Barrington, a secretary at the Agency, and Sabir, the Arab servant, for encouraging her to make such a foolish expedition and for not giving her enough care.

Contrary to Anna, who was able to sleep "very peacefully" (112) in this troubling situation, Amal suffers a lot to sleep: "Sleep did not come easily to me last night" (116). Amal's insomnia leads her to think about her grandmother, Layla, and to follow "a chain of thoughts set off by the thought of [her] grandmother" (117). Amal's chain of thoughts drives her to survey the history of her family starting from "that March night in 1901" (117) when Anna was brought to the big house of the Baroudis, and her grandmother was summoned to find a solution for the confusing situation in which the two young men found themselves, especially after discovering that they have kidnapped a British woman, not an Englishman. On this night, she saw Anna for the first time. At the time, her grandmother was married to Husni al-Ghamrawi, "a radical French-educated young lawyer and a fully paid-up member of Lord Cromer's 'talking classes'." As for Amal's father at the time, he was just one year old; later in life he became an officer in "the Cavalry Division." As for Amal's mother, Maryam al-Khalidi, her father met her while visiting their cousins in Palestine; he got married to her in Jerusalem in 1935. As for 'Omar, Amal's brother, he was born in West Jerusalem in 1942, which means that he is now fifty-five years old. After the disaster of 1948, when Israel defeated the Arab armies and usurped the lands of the Arabs, her father brought her mother and her brother to Egypt, and later he retired from the army and settled in Tawasi in Upper Egypt. As for Amal herself, she was born in Tawasi "in the house on the farm, in the year of Nasser's revolution" (117), i.e. in 1952, which means that she is ten years younger than 'Omar. In 1956, after the tripartite aggression, Amal's parents sent 'Omar to America, where he studied music and later had a successful musical career there, which led him to stay in America and come to Egypt now and then to visit the family. In 1965, when Amal was thirteen years old, her father died. Regarding her mother, she was never able to go back to Palestine, especially after the defeat of 1967, which made her feel "homesick" (118), and later died in 1974, when Amal was twenty-two years old, and just "finished university" (119). Soon after, Amal travelled abroad and came to experience this feeling of homesickness, as her mother did, but, contrary to her mother, she was able to come back to Egypt "to piece together what [she] could of the Cairo where [she] had grown up" (119).

Amal's thoughts about her grandmother and her family lead her back to the present, to the Cairo of 1997, where it is not always easy to locate the pieces and bits of the Cairo one grew up in because of modernization. Yet, Amal still clings to what was in the past, which makes her look for anything, any bit, that stands for this past and even invite Isabel to see them: "Come on then, let's see if we can find bits of my Cairo for you" (120). Having this quest in mind, they go to the Mu<sup>ç</sup>allaqah [the suspended church], Shari<sup>ç</sup> al-Mui<sup>ç</sup>zz, the Mosque of Sultan Qalawun, Shari<sup>ç</sup> al-Azhar, the Ghuriyya, the Khiyamiyya and Shari<sup>ç</sup> Muhammad <sup>ç</sup>Ali in addition to other places that relate to Amal's childhood and adulthood; all of them are important places that stand for the old Cairo that Amal still clings to and always longs for. This longing occurs because the present is so hard and comforts are very few, especially after she was separated from her husband and her children stayed with their father. As for Egyptian society at the time being, it is plagued by various problems, starting with over-population and illiteracy and ending up with terrorism and closing schools, as Amal's talk with <sup>ç</sup>Am Abu el-Ma<sup>ç</sup>ati, the man who takes care of their land in the village, shows (121-127). Regarding Amal herself at the moment, she suffers loneliness and alienation due to living alone and due to her being away from her children, as her thoughts during her conversation with Tahiyya, the doorman's wife, reflect (128).

After Abu el-Ma<sup>ç</sup>ati's visit and his complaint that the government has closed the school in their village due to suspecting that teachers, who volunteer to work in it, cherish terrorist ideas and convey them to students, Amal, accompanied by Isabel, heads for her village, Tawasi, in Upper Egypt. While on their way to Tawasi, Amal starts telling Isabel of what happened on the twelfth of March 1901 when Layla and Anna, their grandmothers, slept on two divans, "facing each other on opposite sides of the haramlek drawing room of the big house of the Baroudis" (132). In this way, Amal comes to reveal to Isabel that they are cousins and that Layla is her grandmother, who, after the abduction event, becomes an intimate friend of Anna. Here, in chapter 12, the first-person narrator, Amal, fuses Layla's narrative of this part of Anna's story and Anna's journals, which results in giving one version of what happened starting from that day in 1901: "When I read the journals I feel as if I'm there, a hundred years ago. I'm putting together the whole picture and I know everything that happened and wasn't written down" (133). As her brother, <sup>ç</sup>Omar, points out, it is Amal's "imagination" that enables her to make this fusion and to be able to feel that she is there living with them, which eventually enables her to envision what they did not even mention in their journals.

When Anna wakes up she becomes aware of the existence of another woman in the room, who was not there the night before. Yet, contrary to what one may expect, the appearance of the other woman gives her a feeling of serenity, and she does not panic: "*I decided that ... the feeling that I had the night before that I was somehow in safe hands in this house entered my heart again, and this time it did not seem so unreasonable*" (135, ellipsis mine). The feeling that Anna had when she woke up transpires to Layla when she awakens, and soon they start conversing with one another in French, which enables them "to pull at the edges of conversation and to weave the beginnings of [their] friendship" (135). Once Layla explains to Anna the whole situation and apologizes to her, and once Anna finds out the circumstances that led the two young men to abduct her, they embark on a true friendship that drives them to reveal the secrets and details of their lives to one another (136-7). Besides, on this situation, Layla lets Anna know that she is against what the two young men did; "*she did not like their methods, and she was sure both her husband [Husni al-Ghamrawi] and her brother [Sharif al-Baroudi] would take her view*" (138). It turns out to be true; once Sharif is informed of what they did, he gets "angry" since they "acted outside" the law (138). For Sharif, "abducting – or in any way harming – ordinary people is never an act of heroism. It is wrong" (140), and for this reason, once he sees Anna, he apologizes to her, an apology that Anna did not need since she rejoiced in the whole situation, especially their "kindness" to her throughout (141). After that, Sharif suggests reporting the matter of her abduction to the authorities if she would like, but Anna sees that there is no need for doing that, which surprises both Sharif and Layla. Also, in order to ensure her safety, Sharif proposes to accompany her to her hotel, but she did not approve of this proposal either since she wanted to continue her journey to Sinai.

Resulting from her refusal and her insistence, Sharif proposes to escort Anna “into the Sinai and back” (143), a proposal that Anna refuses and then approves of when Sharif insists on carrying it out.

Next day, 14 March 1901, as Sharif had promised, Husni “was released on his own assurance first thing this morning” (148), and in the middle of the day, Layla, bringing her son Ahmad, with her, came to see Anna, as promised. Similar to Layla and Sharif, Husni was also against the “rash action” of abduction and promised Layla “to speak harshly” to the two young men (149); like Sharif, he opts for acting within the law. As for Anna, she enjoyed her stay at al-Baroudis’ house, and immediately became a close friend of Layla and her baby Ahmad, whom she rejoiced in playing with. Regarding Sharif, it turns out that, similar to Anna, whose husband was dead, who could communicate with him neither before his death nor even throughout the whole duration of their marriage, he was divorced from his wife because he could not communicate with her. Sometime after his divorce, in a talk with his mother, Sharif divulges to her:

“Ya Ummi, I cannot live my life with a woman who has no key to my mind and who does not share my concerns. She cannot – will not – read anything. She shrugs off the grave problems of the day and asks if I think her new tablecloth is pretty.... I need my partner to be someone to whom I can turn, confident of her sympathy, believing her when she tells me I’m in the wrong, strengthened when she tells me I’m in the right. I want to love, and be loved back – but what I see is not love or companionship but a sort of transaction of convenience sanctioned by religion and society and I do not want it.” (151, ellipsis mine)

I think that this kind of philosophy is what will, later on, unite Anna and Sharif since each of them is looking for his own soul mate in his own way. It is their quest for a partner who can simultaneously give and take ideas, feelings, confidence, sympathy and love that makes them so similar and makes their eventual union possible, even though they come to communicate with each other in French, not in his language, Arabic, nor in hers, English. Here, as Lindsey Moore correctly remarks, “French is presented...as a third language that short-circuits the political power imbalance between English and Egyptian characters” (2008, 151, ellipsis mine).

At this juncture in the novel, Soueif lets the third-person narrator interfere in the act of narration, which serves as an interval before the first-person narrator resumes the narration to unravel the details of Anna’s journey to Sinai. Here, the third-person narrator highlights that the events of the past and those of the present coincide: in fact, they intersect and converge in the sense that in the past Anna, in the company of Sharif al-Baroudi, embarks on her journey to Sinai, and in the present Amal and Isabel on their journey to Tawasi in Upper Egypt; each is a journey of discovery in its own way. Soueif opens this part, given the title “An End of a Beginning,” with this compact and revealing sentence, “And so it is that our three heroines – as is only fitting in a story born of travel, unfolded and shaken out of a trunk – set off upon their different journeys” (164). On the surface, the two journeys seem to be different, but in reality they are the same, though each has a different destination, since each is a journey of quest to discover the self as well as the other.

Technically and thematically, this part “An End of a Beginning” serves various purposes. First, it serves, as I mentioned above, as an interlude before the first-person narrator continues the act of narration. Second, it enables the third-person narrator to comment on the progress of narration and what happened up to this point in the story, as the first sentence of this part reveals (164). Third, it underlines the similarity between Amal and her brother ‘Omar, as Isabel’s meditation on Amal’s responses shows:

They are so alike, Isabel thinks. Not just the black hair and black eyes. Everybody here has those. It’s more the manner: the smile that’s both friendly and amused. Their way of throwing you complements that you couldn’t be sure were quite serious. The sudden questions that cut through to the heart. But Amal did not quite have her brother’s spark, his vitality. Or rather she seemed to be holding her vitality – her aura – in check. (165)

Besides, it highlights certain features that characterize the persona of the common people in Egypt, as the situation of the woman who offers Amal a sugar cane stick and refuses to be paid in return (165-6), and the situation of the man who helps Amal when her car breaks

down and refuses to take any money after towing the car to a mechanic to fix the radiator (167-8) illustrate. One observes that such situations directly acquaint Isabel with some of the features of Egyptian culture and indirectly lead her to discover the other, in this case the Egyptians. Fourth, here is an allusion at a role that will be indirectly played by Isabel later on when she becomes pregnant with a child by ‘Omar. Women-villagers pronounce Isabel’s name as “Sett Eesa,” a pronunciation that leads Isabel to have this thought, “Returned to its origin, without the Latin ‘bella’ – just the name of the goddess of this land” (171) [i.e. the goddess Isis]. Fifth, it establishes a link between the past and the present as well as between the private and the public, as the scene of the paintings and the photographs of the private and public characters in addition to the flag that dates back to the revolution of 1919 and which was used by Layla, Amal’s grandmother, at the time in the demonstrations against the British occupation of Egypt (172-4) indicates, which enriches the text of the novel. Sixth, it highlights the problems that people are faced with in Egypt in the present from the point of view of women-villagers. The women who meet Amal in Tawasi point out these problems that call for urgent solutions: illiteracy (175), overpopulation and “family planning” (175), terrorism, America and the World Bank whose policies badly affect Egyptians (176) and unemployment (177). Seventh, it brings to light Isabel’s realization that she is in love with ‘Omar and that she will do everything she can to win his love though he is “old enough to be [her] father,” as he tells her and as Amal warns her (180, 184); this is done through a flashback in which she goes through the times they met and the discussions they had together (178-84) – the flashback occurs after she observes the similarity between ‘Omar and Sharif Basha al-Baroudi, a similarity that makes her long for ‘Omar (178, 183). Eighth, it underlines Amal’s involvement in the problems of the village and her awareness of what people there suffer from in addition to the beginning of her attempts to find solutions for their problems and their suffering (185-8, which indicates a positive change in her character. Finally, it highlights Amal’s concern to continue the story of Anna: “She is impatient to get back to Anna, to go with her into the Sinai.” Besides, it points out Isabel’s plans for the future: “Isabel is planning her return to New York, her meeting with ‘Omar. She is telling him in her head about her plan to make a film of Anna’s story” (188). In this way, both Amal and Isabel end up by concerning themselves about the story of Anna, a private story that leads them to be involved in public issues.

Chapter 14 opens with the first-person narrator taking over the narration. It starts with a brief description of the scene in which Sharif, Anna, Sabir and other men are camping in the “Sahara,” “the desert of Sinai,” with a sky full of stars at night. Through a brief dialogue between Anna and Sabir, we come to know that Anna is disguised as a man, a Frenchman, and that Anna is “very happy” (190) that they have started the journey to Sinai and that she enjoys the beauty of the desert. The summery that is given at the beginning of this chapter serves as an introduction to Anna’s entry of 15 March 1901 in the journal in which she registers the details of her journey to Sinai. In this way, the reader comes to find out how they planned for the journey and how Layla trained her to disguise first as an Egyptian woman, then as an Arab man and later as a Frenchman (191-2); the details of this training are exposed through a dialogue between Anna and Layla, presented as the first-person narrator imagines it (192-3). After that the reader is given a detailed description of the beginning of the journey and how the plan for this expedition was carried out till Anna reaches Sinai through Anna’s account in her diary (194-7). Anna’s first impressions in the desert make her hopeful that she is about to find the peace she has lost due to her bitter experience with her late husband, a hope that makes her convinced that her wish for regeneration is about to happen: “*I too offered up a prayer – and the prayer that sprang to my silent lips was for peace of mind and peace of heart, for it seemed that more than ever now they were within my reach*” (197).

However, since the first-person narrator, Amal, cannot free her mind from the problems of the people in her village and because she has promised to find a solution for them, she, before going on with the details of Anna’s journey to Sinai, starts looking for this solution; this is what she does at the beginning of chapter 15. This search leads her to make “telephone calls” and to reactivate “old friendships” (200), which eventually leads to a meeting between her and Tareq ‘Atiyya, a businessman and the son of her father’s friend and an old friend of Amal

since childhood. Tareq speaks to the governor of Minya on the phone and the problem of the school and that of the health unit are solved but on certain terms; he tells her: “‘The unit will be reopened next week. The school can open if the teachers are approved. You’ll need a list of their names, and once they’re vetted, the school will open’” (203). In this meeting, an important issue is raised, that of normalization between Egyptians and Israelis. He is for doing business with the Israelis by making use of their technology and experience, a view that Amal is against due to the “‘ideologies’” she believes in (202).

Having done with the problems of the school and the health unit, another affair postpones Amal’s resumption of the story of Anna Winterbourne and Sharif al-Baroudi, that of Isabel’s wish to “‘see Sharif Basha’s house’” (203), the house that Anna mentions and describes in her journals. Amal tells her that the house is turned into a museum, and they decide to visit it, which they do. The narrator makes use of this opportunity to give a description of how this house looks like in the present and to acquaint the reader with the changes that occurred to it after turning it into a museum (203-4). Once they finish the visit of this house-museum, Isabel tells Amal that she intends to go back to the States in August since she needs to see ‘Omar and her mother and talk to them and ask them about the things that occupy her. Here, Isabel reveals that her mother used to say that “‘Anna had set a pattern for the women of our family; they would all marry foreign men and live far from home’” (205), something that happened to Anna who married an Egyptian, to her daughter Nur who married a Frenchman and to Nur’s daughter, Isabel’s mother, who married an American. This history of the women of Anna’s family actually sets a pattern, which explains why Isabel’s mother was not surprised when Isabel left her husband (205-6) and which anticipates the development of the relationship between Isabel and ‘Omar since she is in love with him.

Once such concerns are settled, Amal finds herself free to resume the narrative of Anna, which she does in what remains of chapter 15, which is dedicated to what happens during their journey to Sinai as recorded in the entries of 16 March 1901, 19 March and 21 March of Anna’s journals. Here, one observes the first signs of attraction between Anna and Sharif, as if to pave the way for their marriage later on. Here also, Anna comes to terms with herself regarding her late husband’s death; he died for “‘an unjust war’” that his empire, England, waged against Sudan. Still, he discovers this fact too late, which leads to his disappointment and his loss of spiritual peace and later on to his death: “‘I think – I believe he knew. But he knew too late. And it killed him’” (215). The issue of Anna’s husband’s death after his discovery of the unjust and atrocious deeds committed by the British in Sudan leads Sharif to ask a vital question: “‘Which is better? To take action and perhaps make a fatal mistake – or to take no action and die slowly anyway?’” This question is not an easy one to answer since a valid answer to it necessitates one’s knowledge of himself as well as the other, which cannot be obtained without experience and knowledge. Anna’s husband, Edward, acted on the first premise, “‘to take action and perhaps make a fatal mistake,’” and suffered death for it, but in the end he died for “‘what he believed in,’” as Sharif correctly comments on his death. Being aware that the question asked by Sharif is an intriguing one, Anna comes to conclude that one has to know himself before knowing others: “‘I believe you have to know yourself first – above all’” (215). In other words, what Anna says connotes that in order to discover the other one has to know the self, oneself, first.

Chapter 16 takes the reader back to the present, Cairo, 13 July 1997, with the narrator who, similar to Anna who could not sleep well after Sharif gives her hand a tender kiss, “‘did not sleep well’” (218). The beginnings of the love story between Anna and Sharif in the past oblige the narrator to remember the beginnings of her own love story with the man from whom she is separated at the time being. Anna’s new born love leads Amal, the narrator, to meditate on the nature of love and how it changes people, men and women, and makes them pay no attention to the dangers that could happen because of such love affairs. Amal’s meditation leads her to approve of Isabel’s viewpoint regarding her love for ‘Omar and her wish to share his world: “‘I think of Isabel and her confident cry: ‘If he cared for me as I care for him, I should not be hurt.’ And Isabel is determined to share my brother’s world’” (219). Love, in short, makes us heed not the suffering entailed in our love stories. The meditation with which this chapter begins enables Soueif first to fuse the three love stories of Anna,

Amal and Isabel and second to establish a parallelism between the beginnings of the love story of Anna in the past and that of her great-granddaughter Isabel in the present. In an attempt to help Isabel achieve her wish, that of sharing ‘Omar’s world, Amal takes her to the Atelier, a place in which exhibitions of paintings are held and friends meet to spend their free time. Amal takes her to this place with the aim of acquainting her with Egypt and what happens in Egypt and in this way enable her to have a “grasp of things Egyptian” (219). There, they meet a group of Amal’s friends, “a bunch of intellectuals” (224), as one of the friends describes them. At the Atelier, once Amal tells them that Isabel “is doing a project” on how Egyptians “see the next millennium” (220), they start arguing on the modern history of Egypt. Soon, they become divided between two opinions: the first is that the next millennium “will be the same” and nothing will change, and the second is that changes are going to take place due to what is happening whether in Egypt or outside Egypt (221-31). They keep arguing till Dr Ramzi Yusuf, a philosophy professor of seventy years old and a friend of Amal, wraps up the discussion when he concludes: “History ... This is all – ... nothing. Egypt has been here so long. It has seen many things. In the next millennium – it will still be Egypt” (231, ellipsis mine). One observes that Soueif makes use of this discussion to shed light on the modern history of Egypt and on how people feel regarding the prevailing circumstances in Egypt at the moment and to highlight the fact that Egypt is a country of a great and long history contrary to countries of short-lived history like America.

Chapter 17 starts with a comment on the discussion they, Amal and her friends, had in the previous chapter. Amal, the first-person narrator, comes to conclude that “it can’t be that bad”; they “can’t see” this fact since they are not able to disentangle – to make “a space for” (234) – themselves from what is happening around them, which is why they cannot perceive the changes that are going on in Egypt. The daunting changeability of the present gives a beauty to the stability of the past, which Amal comes to perceive:

That is the beauty of the past; there it lies on the table: journals, pictures, a candle-glass, a few books of history. You leave it and come back to it and it waits for you – unchanged. You can turn back the pages, look again at the beginning. You can leaf forward and know the end. And you tell the story that they, the people who lived it, could only tell in part. (234)

This perception drives Amal to continue leafing through Anna’s journals and letters, which leads her to continue the narrative of Anna after she comes back from her journey to Sinai. In this way, via leafing through the entries of 3, 4, 10, 20, 30 April 1901 and of 2, 5 May of Anna’s diaries and her letters of the same period to Sir Charles and Lady Caroline in addition to part of Layla’s account of Anna’s story and a letter Sharif sends Anna on 5 May, the reader comes to find out how she felt after this trip and how things went on in Cairo at the time. Here, we find the beginnings of Anna’s involvement in the social and cultural life of women in Cairo and their movement to liberate women, as her letter to Sir Charles reveals – the letter describes her visit with Layla to Nur al-Huda Hanim (236-7). Besides, this letter indicates a change in Anna’s character and a vitality that shows the start of her regeneration (237). Moreover, Anna’s diaries reveal how she is worried that she did not hear from Sharif for some time, which drives her to think of travelling back to England. Once, he hears of her intention he sends her a letter in which he admits that he is “in love with” her, which makes her rethink of her decision to go back to England and decide to stay in Egypt (249, 250). The chapter ends, as it has started, with a comment on the development of Anna’s affair with Sharif whose confession of being in love with her comes as a revelation, whether for himself or for her: “He loves her. Circumstances and considerations – what are those? The whole world recedes and there is room for only one thought: he loves her” (251). One observes that Soueif makes use of Anna’s journals, her letters, Layla’s account and Sharif’s letter to Anna in order to produce a compact picture and an intimate description of how Anna’s story developed after her return to Cairo – how she felt, how she came to perceive the life of women in Cairo, how love led to a change in her character and in that of Sharif as well and how love transformed them into two “individuals” who care about one another forgetting about the differences that could separate them, especially those of “culture” and “race” (244). Continuing Amal’s contemplation on Sharif’s declaration of his love of Anna, chapter 18 opens with the narrator meditating on this announcement while holding Sharif’s letter in her

hand. She comes to wonder about what survives and remains after man's death – in this case the great man dies and the letter that records his admission of love survives (254). Sharif dies, but the pieces of paper – whether they were cuttings from old newspapers, Anna's journals and letters and Layla's account – that recount the details of his life story survive; all such documents introduce to Amal a "dark, enigmatic hero of Romance" (254-5), the man she comes to feel responsible for presenting him to the reader as she imagines him. In this way, the narrator comes to recount the story of Sharif and to reveal how the love story of Sharif and Anna developed. Back in the past, in Tawasi, 7 April 1901, though Sharif was worried about Anna's reaction regarding the letter he sent her, he wanted to carry out his project of setting up a school to teach the fellaheen children, boys and girls. Besides, he traced the problems of the fellaheen in Tawasi and dealt with them with the aim of finding solutions for them (256-8). One observes that Soueif, in this chapter, as an interlude before presenting the happy end of their love story, their marriage and their soul union, inserts a historical as well as a cultural dimension, which enables the novelist to shed light on the main problems and issues that prevailed at the time. In this way, through various conversations Sharif has with other characters in the novel, Soueif comes to acquaint the reader with what the Zionists did in Palestine (259-60) – a point that she later develops in chapter 20 (314-17) –, education in Egypt and the hope to set up an art school and a university (261-2), the British occupation of Egypt and its impact on cultural and political life in Egypt (262-3), and the Islamists' stance with regard to establishing a School of Fine Art (263-6) – they see it as "kufr [disbelief]" (263) – and the patriotic movement led by Mustafa Kamel (266-7). Soueif wraps this chapter up with the poetic union of Sharif and Anna, delivered to the reader through a poetic dialogue between them. Having ignored all the differences of race, language and culture and having disregarded the fact of Britain's being the occupier of Egypt, their union and their marriage become possible; the details of their marriage are recorded in chapter 19 and chapter 20. Still both of them came to believe that it was destined, "was meant" (286), for them to meet and fall in love and that it was the work of "fate" (287) that brought them together.

At this juncture in the novel, the third-person narrator intercepts in the narrative with a part entitled "A Beginning of an End." This part opens with the omniscient narrator meditating on "fate" (292), whether in the past or in the present. In the past, as shown in the previous chapter, fate brought Anna and Sharif together, and in the present, it seems to be paving the way in Isabel's life toward an expected union with 'Omar since she is in love with him, which makes her do everything she can in order to discover his world and be part of it, just as Anna did in "the past" (292). In this way, Isabel comes to pay a second visit to the old house, which is now a museum, where Anna and Sharif met for the first time "a hundred years ago" (292). Moreover, at the old house, Isabel comes to imagine what happened in it in the past. With the aim of registering the present as well as impressing 'Omar, she comes to take photos of the different parts of the house: "Time and time again she framed a scene in her viewer, adjusted her focus on the empty halls and clicked. She would surprise him with these photographs. She would surprise him with how much she knew" (293). Later while wandering in the house, she meets a woman in "loose blue and white garments" who welcomes her, sees "a tall wooden loom" (293) and the tomb of Sidi Haroun, and meets another woman "in the usual loose black smock of the working-class woman" (294) in addition to an old man whom this woman calls Sheikh 'Isa. Isabel has a conversation with Sheikh 'Isa and this woman, Ummu Aya, who offers her a drink, cold and hot. The Sheikh, who indirectly advises her to give more care to her mother, asks her if she loves her mother, and Isabel answers positively that she loves her (295). Later, Ummu Aya tells her that she "will come back" to Egypt; Isabel is to leave next day since she has "to go home and see [her] mother" who is "not well" (299). Besides, they speak about the man Isabel loves and her intention "to speak to him" (299), something that the woman encourages her to do, but she also urges her to be more practical in order to be able to win his love: "'You adorn yourself and scent yourself and sit with him in a comfortable way – and you are a woman and you know the rest –'" (300). When it was time for her to go, Sheikh 'Isa prays for her – "'go. May God light your path, and give you that which you hold in your heart and compensate your patience with all good'" – and Ummu Aya puts something in the holdall of her camera (300),

which later turns out to be the third panel of Anna's tapestry (see pp. 495, 500), and asks her to follow her heart – “Don't forget your things, ... and let your heart guide you” (300, ellipsis mine). This scene between Isabel and the Sheikh in addition to the two women seems to be like part of a fantasy or a dream vision. Later on, in chapter 19, Amal accompanies Isabel to the old house where this meeting took place, but the surprise is that they do not find any of the people Isabel claims to have seen there. The caretaker of the shrine, the tomb and the mosque assures Amal that there is neither Sheikh 'Isa nor Ummu Aya nor the other woman. The old Sheikh died “about a year ago” and the waqf [a trust] has not appointed another one to replace him yet (307). Thus, what Isabel has seen and experienced in this place seems to be a vision, a day dream, but “she was certain that she had pushed open a door and entered the shrine. She had sat there drinking Seven-Up and by her account, conversing with a strange sheikh, a cheery serving-woman and a woman dressed like Madonna in a painting” (307). For this reason, what the caretaker says enrages Isabel:

Isabel is upset. She wants to argue with the man but I pull at her arm. In the car she says ‘I do not understand this. They *were* there. I saw them. I *talked* to them.’

‘Isabel,’ I say, ‘sometimes I think of people, or places, and the image is so strong that I'm quite shocked when I realise it was only in my head.’

‘They were there,’ she says, just as you and I are here.’ (308)

Taking into account the fact that the sheikh and the other two women do not exist, one may conclude that what Isabel saw and did in the old house was just a vision and that she may have been daydreaming. However, later on when she accidentally finds the third panel of Anna's tapestry in her camera's holdall, it becomes clear that she was not actually daydreaming and that she may have seen them after all, though one's mind does not approve of such matters, a point to be further commented on later in this research.

Furthermore, in this part, the third-person narrator points out what happens in Egypt in the present and how disappointing the prevailing circumstances since they lead to the extinction of hope and fanaticism among the youth (297-9). Still, Amal holds on to hope, which makes her hopeful about what she can do in the future:

When Anna's story is finished she will close down her flat and move to Tawasi. Not for ever, but for a while. If she has any responsibility now, it is to her land and to the people on it. There is so much there that she can do, so much she can give, so much she can learn. (297)

Implicit in Amal's intention is her wish to bring about a change in the present, a “renaissance” (297), which reminds her of what the youth did after the war of 1967. Besides, her intention implies a revival of the past, the history of the individuals and that of the country, with the aim of awakening as well as enhancing the consciousness of people and communicating with the present:

She can sit with him [her son] on the veranda and listen to his stories. And if he stays long enough, she can show him Anna's story. And as they sit together in the dusk they will feel the presence of Anna and Sharif al-Baroudi and Layla and Zeinab Hanim and all their ancestors and perhaps sense – however dimly – the pattern of the weave that places them at this moment of history on this spot of land. (298-9)

What the third-person narrator points out here indicates how much Amal is occupied with both the past and the present. Still, it is the present that instigates her interest in the past; unravelling the past enables us to revive our history, which enables us to discover ourselves and in this way better understand what happens to us in the present, time and place.

In chapter 19 which opens with an entry of Anna's journals, that of 6 May 1901, the first-person narrator resumes the narrative. Here and in the next chapter, 20, Amal follows the details of the marriage of Anna and Sharif on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1901. In chapter 19, Amal, by means of her primary source, Anna's entries of the journal of 6, 17 and 18 May, and her meditations on them, records how Anna felt happy and excited about her marriage which is to occur soon (302, 304), Anna's meeting with Sharif's mother (302-6), the “arrangements [they] have to make ... for the marriage” (303, ellipsis mine) – Sharif explains to Anna that they “should contract an Egyptian marriage first, and then have it ratified at the Agency [the British Agency in Egypt]” (305), and later Layla tells her, “The contract on one day. The ratification at the Agency the next day – for the contract being in place, Lord Cromer can do



nothing to stop the marriage” (311) –, Anna’s removing of “Edward’s ring from [her] finger” and putting it “together with the ring [she] gave him” (309) into a “felt purse Emily made for [her] many years ago” (309-10) in an attempt to prepare herself for “the great change” that is about to take place in her life and “to bid farewell to the past, in as much as that can be done, and lay it to rest” (310), Sharif’s family preparing for the marriage ceremony, and Anna’s request to live in the old house with Sharif’s mother after their marriage (311).

In chapter 20, the details of the marriage contract performed by Sheikh Muhammad ‘Abdu are presented. Anna points out that “The contracts were in both Arabic and French” (318). Besides, this chapter presents the details of registering the marriage contract at the Agency “so that it may be recognised in Britain” (320) in addition to the confrontation between Lord Cromer and Anna and Sharif Basha (320-23). Here, Lord Cromer’s objection to the marriage of Anna, a British, and Sharif, an Egyptian, is highlighted; he even warns her against this marriage and describes it as “a mistake” made by her (321), something that irritates Anna and leads her to announce to him, “‘Milord,’ ... ‘we are already married. If the marriage cannot be registered, we shall have to do without’” (322, ellipsis mine). The chapter ends with a description of the “Henna Day [a day celebrated before the wedding day]” (323-4) and with both Anna and Sharif proclaiming their happiness at their being joined together first by love and then by marriage. Anna writes down in her journal, “*I am happy. With a big, soaring happiness that needs to burst into a great song and fill the whole world around me*” (324). The same feeling of happiness is shared by Sharif, especially after their meeting with Cromer and what Anna did and said throughout it, which revealed how much she is in love with him: “Sharif Basha grins. And she had been magnificent – not one word of English, not one concession. At every turn she had delighted him” (324). And one concludes love makes miracles; patiently it draws its own map in our lives, as the title of the novel, *The Map of Love*, signifies.

In chapter 21, Soueif oscillates the narrative between the present and the past, whether it is of place or time. At the outset of the chapter, time is shifted to the present, 5 August 1997, and the reader listens to the first-person narrator, Amal, talking on the phone to her brother ‘Omar about Isabel’s infatuation with him and her determination that he “should make love to her” (328). Since ‘Omar is now fifty-five, which means that he is “too old” to “take her on” (328), he comes to think that it is impossible for them to be together in love though he is “attracted to her” (328). After that, their talk leads them to speak about Anna’s story, which, by that time, has reached the point of her imminent marriage to Sharif. In this way, Amal comes to present to the reader the details of the wedding party of Anna and Sharif, and for this reason Soueif keeps fluctuating time between the past and the present. The details of the wedding are presented through Layla’s account in which she records the love story of Anna and Sharif. The details of this marriage leads Amal to remember her brother’s marriage from an American in 1966 and its failure and their divorce in 1967 because of the war, as ‘Omar tells his mother (333-4). After presenting the details of Anna’s marriage, Soueif starts following the various details of Isabel’s life, especially those regarding her ill mother and those concerning her obsessive love to ‘Omar, and in this way develops the story of Isabel, which by this time has become a parallel story to that of Anna, her great-grandmother. Moreover, this chapter partly develops the sub-story of Amal; her concern to solve the problems of the fellaheen and her friendship with Tareq ‘Atiyya are seen from a new perspective, especially that he offers to help with opening the school in Tawasi by sending two of his men to work in it and his belief in “justice” (339, 340). What is more, here, we find a brief reference to ‘Omar’s history in the national resistance of Palestine against the Israeli occupation, which strikes a parallelism between him and Sharif Basha who, in the past, participated in the national resistance against the British occupation of Egypt. The chapter comes to an end after Isabel’s mother dies – she tells Isabel of certain events from the past, as if she wished to reveal certain things to her, but she was not quite clear in what she told her (341-3). After Isabel’s mother dies, she calls ‘Omar, and they meet in his apartment where he consoles her and later makes love to her (343). This act of love to Isabel is a consummation of Isabel’s love of ‘Omar, which is a parallel to Anna’s consummation of love that occurs after her marriage to Sharif, and in this way the parallelism between the two stories is completely

established since both consummations take place in the same chapter, one at its beginning and one at its end.

In chapter 22, Soueif follows the various developments that occur in Anna's life after her marriage. This is carried out through the various entries of her journal and part of Layla's account of the same period in addition to Amal's interspersed meditations on them. Anna's diaries show that she is leading a happy married life though Emily, her British maid, decides to leave her and go back to England (348) and though she observes that many of the British ladies living in Egypt ignored her, which hurts her feelings a lot (361). Also, Anna's journals recount how "a most gentle friendship" grew between her and Zeinab Hanim, Sharif's mother. Moreover, through these journals certain political issues such as 'Urabi Pasha's return to Egypt from his exile and the views, against and for it, are introduced (349). Still, due to the difference in culture, certain misunderstandings sometimes occur between Anna and Sharif, as when she goes to the bank and draws money without telling him, something that maddens him, which leads Anna to doubt the correctness of her choice of him as a husband and a lover (350-1). However, after Layla explains to her the cause of Sharif's anger, Anna is relieved and comes to blame herself for doubting him and does her best to make it up for him – she donates the money to one of Mrs Butcher's charities for orphaned children (353). Such situations strengthen their love and make it "grow infinitely" (354). Another matter that Anna refers to in her diaries is her learning of Arabic: she is taught by Sharif's father whenever she goes to visit him in his secluded room (354). In addition to following such details in Anna's life, this chapter, 22, presents new details in the love relationship of 'Omar and Isabel. During his visit to his sister, Amal, and to Egypt, 'Omar reveals to her that he had "been in love with" Isabel's mother in 1962 (358), the year Isabel was born at its end. He comes to deduce this piece of information, which complicates the affair between him and Isabel, while she was telling him about her dead mother and what she told her before her death (359). What terrifies 'Omar is that he could be her father, especially after what happened between them on the night of her mother's death, but Layla assures him that he cannot be her father since "there's nothing about her that's like" 'Omar (360), and after rethinking the matter over reassures him, "you are not her father" (361). This point is developed later on in the novel.

Chapter 23 opens with an excerpt from a letter sent by Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu to Sharif Basha to endorse the setting up of a School of Fine Art since there were some Islamists who were against having such a school in Egypt (364). This stance of the Islamists angers Sharif Basha, which shows itself in his talk with Isma'il Basha Sabri. Throughout their conversation, the reader finds out that Ahmad 'Urabi has returned to Egypt and has been tricked into giving a pronouncement to *al-Muqattam*, a newspaper, that "he is happy to see the British in Egypt" (365). This statement infuriates and saddens Sharif since he sees in it a betrayal of the Revolution that 'Urabi himself was its leader and exiled because of it (366). The rest of the chapter follows the minute details of Sharif's life, whether public or private, and that of his wife Anna: this is done through the entries of Anna's journal and parts of Layla's account in addition to two letters Anna sends to Sir Charles and James Barrington. One also observes that the first-person narrator, Amal, now and then interferes by summarizing and meditating on what is already recounted by Anna and Layla, which gives the narrative compactness and conciseness.

Chapter 24 opens with Amal briefing the reader on some of the current events that take place in Palestine and Algeria and other places of the world; all of them reflect the violence, terrorism and death prevailing in many parts of the world (390). As for 'Omar, he is still in Egypt and is still unwilling with regard to his affair with Isabel due to his old age (391). Here, Amal shows 'Omar a tapestry that she found in the trunk and which matches the one he has in America – the panel of this tapestry shows "Osiris, seated," on which is written just one "single Arabic word 'al-mayyit' [the dead]" (392). After that, the narrative is shifted back to the past, 10 May 1905, to resume the story of Anna and Sharif. The entries of Anna's journal and parts of Layla's account reveal to the reader that Anna is pregnant and that they are expecting the baby in early June (392-3). In time, Anna gives birth to a baby-girl, whom they name Nur al-Hayah [light of life] (400), and who actually becomes a source of light in her parents' lives and a further source of happiness and love in their life. By the end of this

chapter, in a letter to James Barrington, Anna refers to herself as being now “proficient with the loom” (403), which Sharif has brought her some time ago. She has started working on it and is now making “a tapestry six foot wide by eight foot long, made up of three panels, for my loom can only accommodate a width of two feet.” She adds that she intends her tapestry as her “contribution to the Egyptian renaissance, for it shall depict the Goddess Isis, with her brother consort the God Osiris and between them the Infant Horus, and above them a Quranic verse – my husband will choose an appropriate one for me in time” (403). What Anna refers to here is compatible with what Amal refers to at the beginning of this chapter – the two panels of the tapestry, the one she found in the trunk and the one ‘Omar has in America (391) – which indicates that there is another panel of the tapestry missing, the one that completes the work of Anna, her “contribution to the Egyptian renaissance.”

Similar to the previous chapter, chapter 25 starts with a time-shift to the present and afterwards the time is shifted back to the past to follow the story of Anna and Sharif as well as that of the country, Egypt. Also, similar to the former chapter that ends with Anna dreaming of her husband and her daughter Nur al-Hayah (404), this chapter begins with Amal dreaming of her being in the old Baroudi house and of Nur and of her own children in addition to dreaming of a house she has “never seen while awake” (406). In this house, which makes her feel relieved and become emotional about it, she is certain that her mother is somewhere inside it, sees Nur swimming in its pool, and is sure that her sons will love it and feels that her brother will be pleased to see it. These dreams reveal the “confusion” that is taking place within Amal, especially since her “brother is gone and Isabel is not coming back for a while” (406, 407). Besides, since all friends “are still out of Cairo for the summer,” Amal comes to decide to travel to Tawasi taking with her her computer, her “manuscript, Anna’s remaining papers and my grandmother’s” in addition to Anna’s woven tapestry of Osiris (407). Searching for any trace of the third panel that Anna mentions “in her letter to James,” Amal decides to give the museum a visit. However, when she goes there, she finds out that “the museum is closed” due to bombing a bus there, which kills some of the tourists (407). This event highlights the fact that terrorism was one of the dangers that threatened tourism in Egypt in 1997, which in turn threatened the stability of society in Egypt at the time. In this way, Amal’s travel to Tawasi can be seen as a relief and an opportunity for Amal to see the school working again there and to follow the other affairs of the fellaheen and to concentrate on Anna’s story and what remained of it (408).

Thus, the narrative is shifted back to the past with a letter Anna sends to Sir Charles on 30 April 1906 in which she follows certain public issues like that of Taba (409) and Cromer’s deeds in Egypt. After that, she concentrates on her private life, especially on her daughter Nur, her husband and the garden, the magic grove, he plants for Nur. Later, in a letter that James sends to Anna, he sends a copy of a translated letter into English from Arabic; the letter “describes a plan for an uprising in August” (414), which terrifies Anna, but Sharif assures her that there cannot be such an uprising by nationalists since the time is not fitting for such an action (415). Still, Anna is suspicious that it could be done without his knowledge since the Islamists and the radical nationalists dislike his position and his opinions on some of the public issues of Egypt like those on independence and on education (416). After Sharif and his friends translate and study the letter, they reach the conclusion that it was written by an Englishman, “an ignorant Englishman who imagines he knows how Arabs think” (419). Moreover, they deduce that it was written by the Oriental Secretary, Mr Boyle, to enable Cromer to get “reinforcements of the Army of Occupation” (419). Thus, they conclude that the letter is a forged one and that there is no uprising. Later on, in chapter 29, Isabel tells Amal that she bought her a book from “a second-hand bookshop.” The book turns out to be a book by Clara Boyle, Harry Boyle’s wife, who published the book in 1965 as a “memoir of her husband” (489). Leafing through Clara Boyle’s memoir, Amal comes to find out that Harry Boyle was the one who forged the letter to help Cromer carry out his plans in Egypt (for details see pp. 494-5), which proves that the deductions of Sharif and his friends were accurate.

After that, the chapter highlights the events that took place in Denshway on 13 June 1906; in the entry of 18 June 1906 of her journal, Anna gives a detailed account of what happened in

Denshwai (424-6). The rest of the chapter presents the aftermath of what happened in Denshwai and the feigned trial that announced the death sentences for four men and jail sentences with varied years for the rest of the men who were arrested (for details see pp. 426-7). What happened in Denshwai and the feigned trial in addition to the way in which the sentences are carried out in front of the villagers without letting them to bury the dead or even allow them to open their houses for condolences is a disgrace for the civilization that the occupying British represent, which reveals the barbarity of the British occupation in Egypt (for details see pp. 427-8). Still, what happened in Denshwai has a positive aspect since it instigates nationalists to be more active and makes them work together with the aim of getting rid of Cromer (428), which could be one step on the way to revive the hope to get rid of the British occupation – this hope is highlighted by the epigraph with which Soueif introduces the next chapter (see Mustafa Kamel's words on p. 431).

In chapter 26, Soueif keeps fluctuating the time between the present and the past. The chapter begins with a piece of news that can be seen as a happy event or as a disaster: Isabel tells Amal that she "is pregnant," three months pregnant, and is "madly happy." As for 'Omar, "he's quite upset" due to his old age and due to the suspicion that Isabel could be his daughter, taking into consideration that he had an "affair with Jasmine," her mother (432). Still, Amal is convinced that "he is not her father" (433). To heighten the tension in the narrative, Soueif, instead of following this matter of parenthood, shifts the time back to the past to find out that "Cromer has resigned and Eldon Gorst has taken over" (433). Then the reader is given a briefing about the four political parties that were formed at the time, in 1907 (for details see pp. 433-4). The important thing is that Sharif, owing to the difference in his opinions with the four parties, does not join any of them. Besides, this period witnesses the setting up of the School of Fine Art and the National University and the death of Mustafa Kamel in addition to other important events (see details on pp. 434-6).

After that, the time is shifted back to the present where things are in chaos and commotion: 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati and another seventeen men from the village are arrested and taken to the central police station. The women of the village, who have come to Amal to ask her to help them, tell her that about fifty or a hundred tourists are killed at the temple in Luxor and for this reason the police arrested the men (437). Amal goes to the police station to help the men get released. She fails to get the men out of the police station since they are to "be interrogated" the next day, and after that if they have nothing to do with the shooting of the tourists in Luxor they will be released (440). Back at home, in an attempt to find a solution, she calls Tareq 'Atiyya, who promises to call the governor in the morning to help get the men out. Later on, in a talk on the phone with her brother 'Omar, he tells her that he has told Isabel about his affair with her dead mother, and "she was stunned." However, Isabel is still convinced that fate has meant them to be together; 'Omar sums up her response to Amal, "'she's decided that it's a further proof that she and I were meant to happen'" (441, 442). The next day Tareq comes to Amal's house, and she accompanies him to the police station. They, with the help of the governor, succeed in their mission, and the men are released and sent to their homes (443).

Having solved the problem of the men of Tawasi, Amal goes back to her work on Anna's journal, and in this way the time is smoothly shifted back to the past, 15 October 1909, when Anna was writing Sir Charles a letter. In this letter, Anna talks about the first day of the Eid and the newly constructed bridge of Abu el-'Ela at Bulaq. Besides, she briefs him on other political issues going on in Egypt in addition to other personal matters (see the details of the letter on pp. 447-9). The chapter comes to an end with another shift in time, to the present, 20 November 1997, the day after the men were released from the police station, when Amal goes to visit 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati in the village. Later, she has a phone call from Madani who tells her that his wife gave birth to a baby-girl (451), which indicates that life always goes on and always regenerates, as opposed to the incident of shooting the tourists in Luxor, which reflects the fatal impact of terrorism on life – it ends the life of innocent people and leads to the humiliation of other innocent people, as happens to the men of the village.

Similar to the violence that occurs in the present, in the past, 1910, violence also prevails; it ends the life of the Prime Minister Boutros Ghali Basha, who is shot by Ibrahim al-Wardani.

Chapter 27 opens with an entry of Anna's journal that introduces to the reader this sad event, "What sad, sad events we have here! Poor Boutros Ghali Basha is dead and Ibrahim al-Wardani is sure to hang for it" (454). The assassination occurs due to differences in political opinions that lead al-Wardani to deem Boutros Ghali "a traitor," not because of religious reasons as Gorst wants the world to view the whole issue (for details see pp. 454-6). Contrary to al-Wardani's view, Sharif Basha is sure that Ghali was not a traitor; "my husband knew him well and is of the certain opinion that he was no traitor" (454). Later, Muhammad Sa'id Basha, who becomes the Prime Minister, invites Sharif Basha "to join the Cabinet, offering him the Ministry of Justice," an offer that Sharif turns down (455). At the time, what was of great importance for Sharif was to issue a resolution "against extending the lease of the Suez Canal" (455), something that they successfully achieve at the Assembly. Besides, Sharif and other notables, whether "Coptic or Muslim," worked together with the aim of strengthening the "national unity" of Egypt, especially after "the assassination of Boutros Basha" (456).

In a letter to Sir Charles, Anna describes to him how the Egyptians, whether politicians or common people, are disappointed by what Roosevelt, the former President of the United States of America, said in Egypt and later in England; he is of the opinion "that it would take 'generations' [of Egyptians] before they learned to govern themselves" (456, for the details of this letter see pp. 456-8). Disappointment prevails because what Roosevelt said ruins people's belief in the principles that come from the West, especially those concerning democracy, equality and freedom and drive them to uphold ideas that directly lead to "fanaticism" and violence. Such atmosphere makes Sharif worried about the future, which drives him to ask Anna to give him a promise that if anything happens to him "before Nur is grown up" and is able to choose for herself, Anna "should return to England and take" Nur with her. At the time, Anna did not understand his fear and also did not want to argue with him, and for this reason she considered their talk "a theoretical discussion" and hoped that the summer vacation and the sea would do him good and rid him of "this dark mood" (459). The summer vacation at Abu Qir does the job, and they return "very brown and healthy and quite renewed" (464).

Back in the present, Isabel tells Amal that she "got the last of my mother's paper, the ones that were in the bank." Among these papers are the letters, seven of them, that 'Omar sent to her mother when "he was in love with her." These letters that Isabel reads them "were written thirty-five years ago" and her mother "kept them" (460). However, though Isabel knows of this past affair with her mother and though she has read the letters he sent her, she is still in love with 'Omar and is happy that she is pregnant with his child. She feels as if the letters "were written to" her (468). Besides, she is certain that 'Omar is not her father; in an e-mail to Amal, she writes, "After all, she was my mother. He is not my father, though. I am totally definite about that. I know Jonathan was my father" (468). Isabel's certainty, her love of 'Omar and the child she is pregnant with are her own means of salvation in this world which is full of disappointment and violence. On the other hand, someone like Arwa Salih, Amal's friend, who is bereft of love and has no children, commits suicide due to her loss of hope in everything (460): pessimism kills our dreams and leads us to end our lives, as Arwa does, while optimism revives our hopes and dreams and leads us to cling to our days, our lives and the people we love, as Isabel does.

Back in the past again, 20 October 1911, chapter 28 opens with a discussion between Sharif Basha and his two friends Ya'qub Artin and Shukri al-'Asali about what the European countries, France, Italy, Germany, Russia and Britain, do in the Middle East, especially after the Entente – they are distributing the countries of the Middle East among them. Sharif agrees with Artin that "It is all arranged – since the Entente," and Artin points out how these countries are distributed among them, "France takes Morocco and the Italians' price is Libya, ... Germany and Russia will divide up Persia. Britain has the biggest prize in Egypt" (470, ellipsis mine). After that they talk about what the Zionists do in Palestine and Shukri al-'Asali's fear that Palestine "will go to the Zionists" (470, for details of the discussion see pp. 470-1). What is happening in the world disappoints Sharif and makes him uncertain of what is to happen in the future. This leads Anna to always remind him of the achievements he and other nationalists have fulfilled in Egypt,

'But, my love,' he hears Anna say, 'you misrepresent yourself again. Look at all that has been achieved: the university is there. Education of women is moving fast. The School of Fine Art already has one brilliant graduate: Rodin himself has agreed to take young Mukhtar into his studio. Look at the articles you have written, the people you have defended. Look at your people in Tawasi –' (472)

Still, the British occupation is the plague that hampers any real progress in Egypt, as Layla correctly points out in her account (for details see pp. 472-3). This occupation "sowed distrust amid our people and pushed the best among them either to fanatical actions or to despair" (472), and this is what worried and tortured Sharif Basha and made him even forget his own achievements and devalue them. What is more, it leads him to think "*of turning his back on politics and public affairs and leading a private life with me [Anna] and the children*" (478). By this time, Anna has "finished the tapestry" (475). Her next project is to paint Sharif, her husband, while he is sitting "in Nur's garden" and watching "her play" (475).

Back in the present, Amal follows all the recent news that concern Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Algeria and Egypt on the internet (476-7). Also, on the internet, she reads Isabel's e-mail and that of her brother °Omar. From the two e-mails, the reader comes to find out that Isabel has given birth to a baby-boy and she and °Omar named him after the great grandfather's name, Sharif. She is coming to Cairo soon, carrying with her the second panel of Anna's tapestry that °Omar has had with him in America. As for °Omar, he is relieved since his "kids are delighted with the baby" (477). He is coming to Cairo, but he does not know when yet and whenever he decides he will let Amal know of the time of his "coming over" to Cairo (477). Isabel arrives in Cairo on the day °Am Abu el-Ma°ati dies, and for this reason, she, with her baby, heads for Tawasi to meet Amal there (479). About a week later, Amal, Isabel and the baby Sharif head back for Cairo (480-1). Now, Isabel understands the nature of °Omar's work, whether that of his "music" or his "writing," and for this reason she has "created a home page for him and linked it with several information sites, and now his articles went across the world and into the cyberspace the moment they appeared in the paper" (481).

In chapter 29, the last chapter in the novel and penultimate as well since there is still a last part in which the third-person narrator takes over the narration and wraps it up as well, Soueif goes on in her use of the time-shift narrative technique, and in this way continues the fluctuation of time between the present and the past and vice versa. The chapter opens with a piece of news about Amal's brother, °Omar, who "is conducting in Sarajevo, in the ruins of the National Library" (488). The time is 8 August 1998 and °Omar is supposed to be in Cairo "in a couple of weeks." The second panel of Anna's tapestry that °Omar sent with Isabel shows "Isis, mother of every king, queenly in poise, on her head the cow-horn crown and the sun-disc of Ra. Her arm is stretched out, but her hand is missing" (488), which underlines the fact that there is still another panel missing, a panel that may complete the picture and complement the meaning and the value of the tapestry that Anna wove in the past. As for Isabel, she "is delighted" for having carried the panel in which Isis, "her namesake" (488) is portrayed. What makes her happy is that she thinks of the panel as another proof, "a sign," that she and °Omar were "meant" (489) to be together.

Back in the past, 31 October 1911, we find Anna writing a letter to Sir Charles, who is sick. In this letter, she tells Sir Charles about the article that her husband published in *al-Ahram*, and is to be published "*in English and French soon.*" The article is about "*the state of relations between the West and the East as he sees them today*" (490).

Back in the present, in a talk between Amal and Tahiyya's daughter about the two panels of Anna's tapestry, it is underscored again that the middle part of the tapestry, the third panel, is "missing" and that this part "would be their child" [Isis and Osiris's child, Horus]. Also, this part will complete "the aya," "the verse that Sharif Basha chose for Anna to weave," which reads, as Amal recites, "It is He who brings forth the living from the dead" (491). In this way, Anna's tapestry, when complete, highlights the fact of regeneration and resurrection and its possibility. Moreover, in another talk on the phone between Amal and Tareq °Atiyya, Amal states that °Omar is to come to Cairo the next week. At the time being, he is in Sarajevo, and after that he is to go to the West Bank and °Amman (491). A few days later, while looking for the camera to take a photo of the baby who is fast asleep while Amal is holding him against

her chest, Isabel finds the third panel of Anna's tapestry in the camera holdall (495). The panel shows "the infant Horus, small and naked and still with his human head – on which rests the hand of Isis, his mother. Above him, two words: 'al-hayy min –'. The living from –" (495). In this way, the picture that Anna wove on the tapestry becomes complete. In other words, the picture that Anna has drawn to express the possibility of resurrection, which was her contribution to the Egyptian Renaissance, is now complete, which in turn might mean that Amal's search into the past is about to be complete as well.

Back in the past again, 5 November 1911, we find Sharif leafing through photos of the pharaohs (496), and is quite interested in them; they actually lead him to think of spending some time in Tawasi and "to see the temples for" himself and "to take [his] family to Luxor, to the Valley of the Kings" (497). Again here, in the discussion between Sharif and Isma'il Basha Sabri, Sharif's desire to "retreat from public life" is emphasized, a decision that Isma'il Sabri urges him to take (496). Besides, here, we find Sharif, Isma'il and Ya'qub Artin discussing the possibility of an expected world war due to what is happening in the Balkans and what the Turks do there (496-7), a world war that actually takes place three years later, in 1914, and leads to the suffering of all the nations that get involved in it. On his way back home, Sharif Basha is shot (for details see pp.500-4), something that Anna has a premonition of, which accounts for her "cry" and her repeated scream "no" even before she receives the news of his being shot (500-1). As for who shot Sharif Basha or the reason why for shooting him, these facts are never revealed or told; what was there is just some kind of guessing and nothing more:

They have not yet found out who did it. They say it could be Coptic fanatics in retaliation for Boutros Basha's assassination. They say it could be Muslim fanatics for my brother's position on women's rights and because he married Anna and was known to wear her image on a chain round his neck – and so that the Copts would be blamed. They say it could be British agents to get the Copts blamed and increase the divisions in the country and rid themselves of a national leader. They say it could be the Khedive out of spite – and not fearful of consequences, since Lord Kitchener would be glad to see my brother dead. They say it could be bigger people than all these. They say – they say. (505-6)

Thus, what was there was just words said by people to guess the cause of the assassination; no one was certain of the truth, which has led to the loss of the real reason behind his murder.

Before his death, Sharif asks Anna to keep the "promise" she has made for him earlier that if anything happens to him she should leave Egypt and take Nur with her. His last words to her are "bring her [Nur] up – like you" (504). Sharif dies, but he never loses his concern about the future of his daughter, which accounts for his last words to Anna. Later, Anna fulfils Sharif's will and travels back to England taking with her Nur. In her letters to Layla, she always provides her with "news of Nur," but never of herself (505). As for Anna's tapestry, Layla tells us in her account,

On the day after my brother's murder she [Mabrouka] rolled up Anna's tapestry in three bags of muslin. One [that of Isis] she gave to me 'for Ahmad', she said, 'and his children after him'. The other [that of Osiris] she gave to Anna for Nur. I do not know what she did with the third [that of Horus]. The loom itself we carried into the shrine for my father would not allow us to remove it. Sometimes he sits at it, threading a ball of silk as he used to watch Anna do. But he has made nothing. (505)

What I think is that what Layla wrote in her account explains and justifies Isabel's earlier vision, the one she had at the mosque in the museum set up in the old house of al-Baroudis. Possibly, the old woman that Isabel saw there is Mabrouka and the Sheikh is Sharif's father. Besides, the panel that Umm Aya put in Isabel's holdall (300) is the third panel that Mabrouka kept with her, and Layla never knew "what she did with." Anyway, this supernatural element has two functions: first, it complements the narrative of Anna; and second, it underlines the idea that Isabel could be seen as a resurrected Isis since she is the one who finds the panel portraying Horus, the symbol of regeneration, and since she is the one who gives birth to 'Omar's baby, Sharif or a resurrected Sharif Basha, who stands for the future and for the "regeneration" within the family (Wynne 2006, 64), as Horus stands for the future in the myth of Isis and Osiris.

In the last part of the novel, which is given the title “An End” and which wraps up the narrative, the third-person narrator resumes the narration. Still, this is done from the point of view of Amal, who has been involved in Anna’s narrative to the extent of thinking, as she states in several places of the novel, that whatever Anna wrote in her journals, she wrote down to her across space and time. Anyway, Anna’s journals come to an end (510), and maybe that is why the omniscient narrator takes over the act of narration. Here, we find Amal giving all the care she can to her brother’s baby, Sharif (510-3), as if she is giving all the care she can to the future that is to come while holding ‘Omar’s baby in her hands. Once the baby Sharif is asleep next to his mother, Isabel, Amal starts leafing through a newspaper, and in this way the reader is given a briefing on the most recent events taking place in the world (for details see pp. 512-3). One observes that the prevailing feature among all the pieces of news is violence, terror and “brutality,” whether the events are taking place in Sudan, America, Iraq or Palestine (513). As for ‘Omar, there is no news about him; “They have not heard from ‘Omar since he left Sarajevo” (513), which means that he may be in the West Bank or in ‘Amman, but nobody knows, as nobody knows an answer for any of the questions raised by Amal with regard to what happened after Anna left Egypt and took Nur with her (513). The novel comes to an end while Amal, whose heart is seized by a “sudden fear” for the safety of her brother ‘Omar who is not back yet, is holding the baby Sharif, ‘Omar’s son, and comforting him (516), quite an open end that underlines the fact that future, like this baby, needs to be taken care of.

## Concluding Notes

The aim of this section is to underline the method of narration employed in *The Map of Love* and to sum up the narrative techniques used in it, and to see how each narrative device has fulfilled the objective of using it in the novel.

In this novel, the novelist Ahdaf Soueif successfully makes use of two methods of narration: the third-person method of narration and the first-person method of narration. It seems that Soueif has wanted to convey her vision in this novel through various and multiple levels of narration, and in this way enable the reader to perceive the events, the characters and the themes of the novel through different perspectives, something that the novelist succeeds in achieving to a great extent. Soueif opens the novel with the third-person narrator presenting to the reader the milieu in which Amal, the first-person narrator, is going to recount the events of the novel. Also, this omniscient narrator accounts for the reason why Amal is to narrate in such a way. Moreover, this omniscient narrator interferes at certain points in the novel to comment and to unravel certain things that the first-person narrator is not aware of. Finally, this omniscient narrator wraps up the events of the novel, after the assassination of Sharif Basha, after which Anna’s journals and Layla’s account of the love story of Sharif and Anna come to an end. In this way the omniscient narrator can be seen as an objective eye on the story of Anna and Sharif and also as the intrusive narrator who interferes whenever it is required to highlight certain facts and to comment on certain events or characters, which is done for the benefit of the reader with the aim of removing any enigma concerning the events of the past or those of the present. As for the use of the first-person narrator, who narrates twenty nine chapters of the novel, it is used with the aim of giving the novel a personal and human touch – in various places in the novel, we see Amal sympathizing with the main characters of the novel and even identifying with them. It is quite known that the use of the first-person method of narration shortens the distance between the main characters and the reader, which in turn creates an atmosphere of immediacy. Since the first-person narrator becomes involved in the main events of the novel, the reader consequently becomes involved in the novel, which finally establishes an atmosphere of spontaneity and trust between the narrator and the reader. In this way, Soueif comes to combine in her narration of the novel the advantages of the third-person and the first-person methods of narration, which finally enables her to convey to the reader her vision of both the past and the present.



In addition to making use of these two methods of narration mentioned above, Soueif employs other narrative techniques as well as other techniques, as will be shown. The first narrative device that the novelist makes use of is epigraph, which is “a quotation set at the beginning of a literary work or a division of it to suggest its theme,” as defined in *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (418). Lindsey Moore correctly points out, “The narrative is ... structured by epigraphs in various European languages and in translation from Arabic” (2008, 148, ellipsis mine). Soueif employs this device at the beginning of the novel, at the beginning of the four parts that are inserted in the novel and at the beginning of each chapter of the twenty nine chapters of the novel. Soueif opens the novel with this quotation from *The Covenant*:

It is strange that this period [1900-1914] when the Colonialists and their collaborators thought everything was quiet – was one of the most fertile in Egypt’s history. A great examination of the self took place, and a great recharging of energy in preparation for a new Renaissance.

Gamal °Abd el-Nasser, *The Covenant* 1962 (unpagged)

This quotation highlights the period during which the events of the novel take place in the past. Besides, it underlines the aim of recounting these events of the past in addition to those of the present – an “examination of the self” which ultimately leads to discovering the self and the other, as happens in the novel. After that, the novelist introduces the first part of the novel with this quotation from Agathon (477-401 BC), “Even God cannot change the past” (3), which underscores the fact that what is done is done and cannot be undone, as most of the important events in the novel, whether private or public, indicate. In this way, Soueif comes to introduce each of the parts and each of the chapters of the novel with epigraphs that denote its main themes and hint at how events are to develop – an examination of all the epigraphs proves this.

The second narrative device that Soueif makes use of is direct address to the reader / addressing the reader as “you” – this device enables the novelist to involve the reader in whatever happens in the novel, which inevitably leads to the reader’s identification with the main characters and their experiences once he / she sympathizes with them. This device is used by both narrators, whether the first or the third, in various places in the novel. For example, the third-person narrator addresses the reader in the first part as follows, “There were also a shawl, ... You can buy one today in the Ghuriyya for twenty Egyptian pounds. ... so often worn that in patches you can almost see through the weave” (6, ellipsis mine). Here, the narrator wants the reader to take part in this experience of examining the two shawls of Anna and thus involve him in his experience. This narrative technique is employed in many places in the novel, but another example may suffice. In chapter 11, Amal, the first-person narrator, comes to meditate on her mother and her feeling of homesickness since she was not able to go back to Palestine or even visit the place where she was born, especially after the defeat of 1967, and then goes on to contemplate on her own feeling of homesickness when she was in England, but she, contrary to her mother, was able to come back to Egypt and end this feeling. Thus, while she was meditating she comes to address the reader as follows, When I yearned for Cairo, ... when I yearned even for the khamaseen winds that make you cover your face against dust and with bowed head hurry quickly home – it was only then that I understood how longing for a place can take you over so that you can do nothing except return, as I did, return and pick at the city, scraping together bits of the place you once knew. But what do you do if you can never return? (119, ellipsis mine)

Here, Amal gives concrete examples of the feelings that can be shared by all readers who can be in the same situation. The last question, a rhetorical one that she asks without waiting for an answer for it, is directed at the reader with the aim of involving him in her personal experience and in that of her mother.

The third narrative device that Soueif employs is relying on other characters to recount certain events, especially in the case of the first-person narrator. From the very beginning of the novel, we are told by the omniscient narrator that Amal reads Anna’s journals and Layla’s account, and through them she comes to narrate. Thus, with regard to the events of the past, the first-person narrator depends mainly on Anna and Layla. As for the present, she comes to rely on various characters, especially Isabel, °Omar, Cairene and villagers as situations

require, especially when she is not there to see for herself. For example, it is through ‘Omar and Isabel that Amal comes to know how they met, how he sent Isabel to her, how their relation developed and how they finally consummated their complicated love affair. Also, it is through Cairene and villagers that she becomes able to present the incident of bombing the tourists’ bus in front of the Egyptian museum and the incident of bombing tourists in the temple in Luxor. This narrative device is quite important and effective since, after all, Amal is a fictional character that has its own limits in what she can relate to the reader.

The fourth narrative device that Soueif makes use of is comment. This device reflects how Amal reacts and interacts with the events of the past that are related by Anna and Layla in addition to those of the present. An example of this type of comment occurs when Amal responds to Anna’s feeling of grief and disappointment because of her inability to relieve her husband of his suffering after his return from Sudan. Anna’s failure occurred because her husband did not respond to her attempts and never talked about what ailed him and his soul. Anna’s feeling of disappointment leads to Amal’s involvement in her feeling, which brings about this comment, “What’s done is done, I want to tell her. How can you reach someone who does not want to be reached?” (44) Another type of comment used in this novel is the one that Soueif gives at the outset of a chapter or a scene and then goes on to reveal this scene or that event. Chapter 5 opens with a comment on how love happens and then goes on to reveal to the reader how Isabel comes to perceive that she loves ‘Omar: “How can it strike so suddenly? Without warning, without preparations? Should it not grow on you, taking its time, so that when the moment comes when you think ‘I love’, you know – or at least you imagine you know – what it is you love?” (48) Such comments, as I mentioned above, reflect how the narrator reacts regarding the events she is recounting, and in this way shows how much she is involved in the experiences of the characters.

The fifth narrative technique that Soueif employs is detailed description or in other words description that includes minute details, whether it is of character, place or event. This is done everywhere in the novel from the outset to the end in scenes such as Anna’s arrival in Alexandria, her visit to the suspended church, her kidnapping, her journey to Sinai, the development of her affair with Sharif Basha, her wedding party, the shooting of Sharif Basha and the scene in which Amal takes care of Sharif, ‘Omar’s son, in the last part of the novel. Such detailed descriptions make the events, places and characters come alive.

The sixth narrative technique that the novelist makes use of is interior monologue, which reveals the conflict that goes on inside the narrator or the character and also sheds light on the questions that arise within them and embarrass them. At the beginning of chapter 10, when Anna disappears and there is a gap in her journal, the first-person narrator comes to have an interior monologue that reflects her bewilderment at Anna’s disappearance – at the time she was kidnapped: “With mounting anxiety I search through the papers, through the letters; she cannot vanish like this, disappear from my view for seventy-four days. I go back to the trunk. Is there something I have missed? And yet, why should I expect the story to be complete?” (104) The journals of Anna are in themselves a very long interior monologue in which she keeps talking to herself and wonders about what happens to her or what others say to her. During the period in which she was kidnapped, she actually comes to talk to herself as in these two examples: “Brave words. Why then, even as I uttered them, did a cold finger touch my heart and the journey ahead seem so arduous an undertaking” (142), “‘Anna!’ I heard Layla’s whisper and felt her touch on my arm but I sat still and unyielding: how dare he [Sharif] dictate to me?” (143) Such examples of interior monologue reveal the conflict that goes on inside the character and expose the embarrassment that the character comes to suffer in a certain situation, which is expressed through this silent dialogue.

The seventh narrative device used effectively by Soueif is dialogue, which occurs between the narrator and other characters in the present, or between Anna and other characters in the past, or even, as Lindsey Moore points out, in the form of “Correspondence between these women [Anna and other women characters in the novel in addition to her father-in-law], in the form of dialogue and exchanged diaries, letters, and email” (2008, 151), as well as the various dialogues between Sharif and his friends that bring to light many of the public issues that prevailed in Egypt at the outset of the twentieth century.

Another narrative device, the eighth, which is used now and then in the novel, is free indirect discourse; it enables the narrator to report what other characters said. Also sometimes Anna and Layla use it. An example of reporting is presented in Layla's account of the story of Anna and Sharif, when we listen with her to Sabir's account of what Anna did before she was kidnapped:

'But first she wanted to sit in the coffee shops and listen to the storytellers. I said to him – to my Ingelisi – what will she get out of this? Stories and songs in Arabic and she only knows – you'll excuse me – two words. He said ... I said ... he said no ... what shall we do now, ya sett Hanim?' (112, ellipsis mine)

This device enables the novelist to sum up what happened in a certain event, as Sabir does here, or to sum up what others said and report it to other characters in the novel, and to the reader as well.

Finally, the ninth narrative technique that Soueif employs in various places in the novel – from the outset to the end, whether in parts or in chapters – is the time-shift, which enables the novelist to shift the scenes and events between the present and the past and vice versa. This oscillation of time between the present and the past enables Soueif to make use of other important techniques such as juxtaposition and stream-of-consciousness, which is carried out through flashbacks and association of thoughts, especially when events of the past lead Amal to meditate on her own experiences and in this way comes to have such associations. This narrative device and these techniques make it possible for the novelist to establish a parallelism between the story of Anna and Sharif in the past and that of Omar and Isabel in the present. The juxtaposition between the two stories reaches its climax in chapter 21, in which the consummation of both love stories occurs. Besides, the parallelism between the two stories is deepened when Isabel gives birth to Omar's son, Sharif, as Anna, the great-grandmother of Isabel did in the past and gave birth to Nur al-Hayah, Sharif's daughter. The novel ends on a more serious parallelism, which is between that of Sharif Basha who was assassinated because of his political opinions in the past and that of Omar, whose sister Amal is seized by terror for his safety and for fear that he might be killed because of his political views regarding recent issues of the world.

In this way, a close study of Ahdaf Soueif's novel, *The Map of Love*, shows that she has succeeded, to a great extent, in presenting her vision through multiple perspectives. Her use of both the third-person and the first-person methods of narration and her use of other narrative techniques have enabled her to give us a compact picture of Egyptian society at the beginning of the twenties century and at its end as well as a comprehensive view of the story of Anna and Sharif and that of Isabel and Omar in addition to that of Amal herself through multiple levels of narration. Consequently, the reader comes to perceive the novel's characters, events and themes through various perspectives. Moreover, one observes that throughout the novel the act of narration, whether done by the third-person or by the first-person, becomes an act of quest to discover the self and the other. Also, throughout the novel one observes that the main characters end up by discovering themselves though they start their search with one aim which is discovering the other. Anna in the past and Isabel in the present come to Egypt with the aim of discovering the other, Egypt and Egyptians, but they end up by discovering themselves. As for the first-person narrator, Amal, she starts her quest with the aim of discovering the other, Anna, but she ends up by discovering herself as well as the other in addition to reviving the past. As I mentioned earlier in the research, the choice that Amal, the first-person narrator, comes to take is a choice to revive the past and give it a new life – she does this throughout the novel. What is done in the novel is actually an enactment of the principle that states that memory is life and forgetting is death. This act of narration, which is an enactment of the revival of the past, takes the first-person narrator and the other main characters as well, into a journey of discovery, by the end of which and the novel as well, they come to discover themselves as well as the other.

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