

A Journal of the History of Rhetoric

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# RHETORICA

R H E T O R I C A

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- 335 HANY RASHWAN, Arabic Jinās is not Pun, Wortspiel, Calambour, or Paronomasia: A Post-Eurocentric Approach to the Conceptual Untranslatability of Literary Terms in Arabic and Ancient Egyptian Cultures
- 371 MARCO GEMIN, Il discorso falso di Odisseo attribuito ad Alciamante
- 382 HANNAH ČULÍK-BAIRD, Archias the Good Immigrant
- 411 JEAN-FRANÇOIS POISSON-GUEFFIER, « Si res ad synodum traheretur » (I, 416) Les procès imaginaires dans le livre I de l'*Ysengrimus*.
- 432 BOOK REVIEWS  
Francesco Berardi reviewing *Rhetorical Strategies in Late Antique Literature. Images, Metatexts and Interpretation*, edited by A. Quiroga Puertas, 432, Anna Dudney Deeb reviewing *Practicing Citizenship: Women's Rhetoric at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair* by Kristy Maddux, 435, Hilary J. C. Lehmann reviewing *The Theatre of Justice: Aspects of Performance in Greco-Roman Oratory and Rhetoric* edited by Sophia Papaioannou, Andreas Serafim, and Beatrice da Vela, 437, Mauro Serra reviewing *Dalla tribuna al pulpito. Retorica del verosimile* by Fabio Roscalla, 439

HANY RASHWAN

## Arabic Jinās is not Pun, Wortspiel, Calembour, or Paronomasia: A Post-Eurocentric Approach to the Conceptual Untranslatability of Literary Terms in Arabic and Ancient Egyptian Cultures

*Abstract:* This article amplifies the call for a paradigm shift across a range of comparative disciplines relevant to non-European cultures, that decentralizes rhetorical concepts from European traditions in comprehending non-European literary and philosophical practices. Such a post-Eurocentric perspective is necessary to both generate a fair comparative module that centralizes the emic (culture-specific) features of a language and to avoid Eurocentric misrepresentation of the non-European culture under consideration. This paper challenges the common academic position that Eurocentric traditions are foundational to understanding ancient Egyptian and Arabic literary systems. The article also considers the graphic nature of the core hieroglyphic script in comparison with Arabic to refute

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I am indebted to the ISHR research fellowship that I received in 2014. It offered me the much-needed courage to challenge Eurocentrism in both Arabic and ancient Egyptian literary studies. I would like to thank the two ISHR reviewers for their valuable and constructive criticism. I am thankful also to my colleagues who generously provided their insightful criticism on earlier drafts: Fayza Haikal, AUC; Christian Junge, University of Marburg; Richard Bussmann, University of Cologne; Matthew Reynolds, University of Oxford; and Joseph Dane, University of Southern California. All translations of Arabic and ancient Egyptian texts are mine unless indicated otherwise. I dedicate this article to the one who first believed in me and gave me the confidence and the tools to develop my academic self away from the long-established Eurocentric methodologies: Stephen Quirke, UCL. This work has also received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under ERC-2017-STG Grant Agreement No 759346 and is part of the "Global Literary Theory" project at the University of Birmingham.

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the modern obsession that concentrates on the verbal layers of the scripts and neglects their visual literariness.

Keywords: Eurocentrism, Postcolonial Rhetoric, Arabic Poetics, Ancient Egyptian Literature, post-Eurocentric Poetics

#### FROM PURE GRECO-ROMAN TO MODERN COLONIAL POWERS

Two questions haunt scholars of non-European literary criticism. First, why do Greco-Roman literary terms appeal to so many Euro-American scholars as the only “universal” or “scientific” language of literary analysis? Second, do these two classical worlds possess the same conceptual associations of non-European literary terms, meaning that they can be applied by specialists across national and/or continental literary borders? To answer these critical questions, we have to go back and forth between the worlds of the Greco-Roman and modern European cultures. There are several examples of how the current colonial powers of Europe have constructed this continuity with the Classic Greco-Roman worlds, and how they restricted the problematic belief of literary continuousness to their European colonial languages.<sup>1</sup> The conversation in this paper is limited to the negative impact of this Eurocentric approach on the scholarly studies of non-European literary criticism.

In 1960, romance literature scholar Heinrich Lausberg published *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*. Shortly after its publication, it became the standard reference book for Greek, Latin, English, German, and French stylistics. The main argument of the book is to confirm the extensive influence of ancient Greek literary texts on the modern literatures of European colonial cultures, mainly German, French, and English literature. Lausberg directly connects these literary devices from ancient Greek and medieval Latin texts with more modern European models (mostly French seventeenth century and romance literatures, with examples from contemporary writings in French and English). He considers the literary terms of these languages to be synonymous. The book received many positive reviews. Arnold Reichenberger

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<sup>1</sup>See the critique of west European studies of ancient Greece by Ian Morris, “Archaeologies of Greece,” in Ian Morris ed., *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8–47 (p.17).

strongly supported Lausberg's emphasis on continuity, considering it a crucial element to restoring a sense of pride for the European literary tradition:

The systematic approach seems to me sufficiently justified given the purpose of the book, written primarily for the benefit of the student of modern literature, even if this purpose was achieved at the cost of suppressing the differences between the individual voices and the intermingling of ancient and modern ideas. . . . The book, clearly in the tradition of E. R. Curtius, aims to emphasize the continuity of Western literary tradition.<sup>2</sup>

After almost forty years, the classist Andrew Laird reviewed Lausberg's book with a similar intention, namely, to praise the reconstructed continuity between the classical Greco-Roman and Euro-American literary worlds, saying:

Lausberg's study includes coverage of rhetoric in the medieval and modern periods, with a 300 page of index of rhetorical terms in French, as well as of those in Latin and Greek. Surely part of the point of reading ancient literature is to acquire a better understanding of later literatures: the range of testimonia collected by Lausberg (who was a pupil of E. R. Curtius) provides abundant proof of the vital and central role of classical rhetoric for the Western literary tradition as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

The pitfalls of this sweeping approach can be explored through the only review that stood against Lausberg's methodology. In 1962, A.E. Douglas criticized how Lausberg's book had merged many different voices of Greek and Roman rhetoricians into a fossilized rhetorical system that was unbroken in time. This system was not even interrupted by any controversies that reflect the rhetorical differences among individual approaches. Douglas disapproved of the comparative methodology that Lausberg used to (a) synthesize ancient and modern rhetorical thoughts and (b) characterize the modern European literary cultures from different geographies and periods as one line of understanding that persisted for thousands of years:

Ancient and modern ideas are intermingled with the same indifference, in complete disregard of the danger of misleading the innocent public for whom the book is intended. The modern theories about literary and stylistic phenomena with which the book abounds may, for all

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<sup>2</sup>Arnold Reichenberger, "Review of *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*," *Romance Philology* 18 (1964): 113–116 (p.114).

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Liard, "Review of *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*," *The Classical Review* 50 (2000): 313–314.

I know, be somewhere current among students of modern literature; they are sometimes interesting and may sometimes even be true. But what place in an exposition of ancient Rhetoric has, for example, the belief that metaphor is a form of magical utterance? As for the pattern-making, throughout the work resemblances are detected and morals drawn that are either not in the material, as when the different rhetorical status are alleged to have parallels in literary criticism, or, if there, are platitudinous, as in the elaborate parallel drawn, with diagrammatic illustrations—a favourite technique of the author—between the judge in court and the judge of art.<sup>4</sup>

Both Reichenberger and Laird confirmed that Lausberg's book employs the methodology of E.R. Curtis's book *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, first published in 1952. Both books deal with modern European literatures as part of a continuous tradition that started with the ancient Greek writers and continued throughout the Middle Ages to the Modern colonial powers of Europe, without any historical interruptions or geographical divisions related to the diversity of modern European languages and its national identities. By overlooking Greco-Roman diversity and the different languages and cultures under their direct colonization (which also applies to the modern Euro-American cultures), the colonial languages of Europe imitated and reproduced several Greco-Roman literary motives to impose the sense of continuity upon their public during the renaissance.<sup>5</sup>

The ardent reader can see that Lausberg's methodology was already justified by his current academic culture that promoted the superiority of European knowledge-production by reconstructing an artificial sense of long-established unity or continuity. Lausberg's book continues highlighting European superiority in different disciplines by narrating ancient and medieval European history as an unbroken circle to serve the modern reconstruction of the colonial identity of a few European languages.

The Eurocentric designations of "Greek" and "Roman" cultures are in themselves problematic since there was a wide range of other non-Greek and non-Roman cultures that were part of the Greco-Roman empires and under its military control. The Greco-Roman empires, like any colonizers, imposed their own languages as the primary state language of the empire. Gradually, any achievements

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<sup>4</sup>A. Douglas, "Review of *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*," *The Classical Review* 12 (1962): 246–247.

<sup>5</sup>See Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1949), 1–2.

of non-Greek or non-Roman nations (whether of a scientific, philosophical, or literary nature) were automatically considered part of the accomplishments of the two empires, mainly because they were produced in ancient Greek or Latin languages: the *lingua franca* of the two empires.<sup>6</sup>

These accomplishments were not articulated as part of the modern history of these colonized non-European nations. This Greco-centric chauvinism also existed in the Roman period; the Christian theologian Tatian the Assyrian (d. 185 AD) abhorred the Greek philosophers who claimed superiority over other foreign nations or, rather, those they termed “barbarians.” He wrote a speech to address the Greeks, and in his introduction, he reminded them of some historical facts to address their erroneous claims of inventions:

Do not maintain a totally hostile attitude to foreigners, men of Greece, nor resent their beliefs. For which of your own practices did not have a foreign origin? The most famous of Telmessians invented divination through dreams, Carians foreknowledge through stars; Phrygians and the most ancient of the Isaurians the lore of bird-flights, Cyprians a cult of sacrifices; To the Babylonians you owe astronomy; to the Persian, magic; to the Egyptians, geometry; to the Phoenicians education through the letters of the alphabet. *Therefore, stop calling imitations inventions.*<sup>7</sup>

Such links of literary continuity between ancient Greek, Medieval Roman, and premodern European cultures aim to reconstruct a Eurocentric cultural-racial identity, based on a false historical narrative that supports the superiority of modern European literary productions alongside their scientific achievements. This superior identity endorsed the vision of “Western civilization” as being white and derived from a pure European heritage, regardless of the racial and cultural questions of ancient and modern empires and their problematic ethnic questions. The idea that the Greco-Roman cultures are exclusively white is one of the sources of European superiority, and it keeps feeding the radical movement of white supremacy. This Eurocentric vision

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<sup>6</sup>The same situation applies to the non-Arab scholars who produced significant contributions using the Arabic language as a *lingua franca*; their non-Arabic identity was ignored for political reasons, especially scholars of Persian origin. Many of them never stepped out of the Persian territories, like Abū Hilāl Al- Askarī (d. 1005). On the Ottoman-Persian premodern literary interactions, see Murat Umut Inan, “Ottomans Reading Persian Classics: Readers and Reading in the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1700” in Mary Hammond ed., *The Edinburgh History of Reading: Early Readers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 160–181.

<sup>7</sup>Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments*, trans. by Molly Whittaker, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 2–3, emphasis added.



is closely associated with the far-right political ideologies and fascist movements of the early and mid-twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> The ardent reader can see the reasons behind such racial continuation between Greco-Roman and modern European colonial languages:

Eurocentric discourse projects a linear historical trajectory leading from classical Greece (constructed as “pure,” “Western,” and “democratic”) to imperial Rome and then to the metropolitan capitals of Europe and the US. It renders history as a sequence of empires: Pax Romana, Pax Hispanica, Pax Britannica. Pax Americana. In all cases, Europe, alone and unaided, is seen as the “motor” for progressive historical change.<sup>9</sup>

Ironically, the claims of literary continuity (between the ancient and modern cultures of the non-European countries) are denied by Eurocentric theories for non-European languages. Some of these cultures continued for more than three thousand years, for instance, in the case of the ancient Egyptian language, or the Arabic language (with its 1400 years of literary productions), and the ancient Chinese, Persian, and Sanskrit languages. Euro-American theoretical schools of comparative literature did not pay attention to developing internal literary or rhetorical comparisons for such languages, for instance, comparing philosophical strategies or literary texts produced in different times from the same country. The reason behind the inattentiveness of the Euro-American schools of comparative literature and rhetoric can be partly explained by a fear of challenging their theoretical links of continuity from ancient Greece to modern colonial powers. Euro-American scholars enjoyed the privilege of further defeating the countries they colonized by misrepresenting that culture in relation to their (the colonizer’s) own culture while excluding themselves from applying the same theories on their own “European” literary heritage.

In her review of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s book, entitled *Provincializing Europe*, Alice Bullard shows how Chakrabarty evidenced that the social history of India was written by European scholars to authorize the power structure between the colonizer and colonized in order to deepen the “sense of failure and inferiority to Europe”:

Chakrabarty emphasizes instead his claim that historical and other social science theories arose in Europe; indeed, that Europe has been the sole place from which *theoria* has been achievable. As the home to

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<sup>8</sup>Helen Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou, eds., *Brill’s Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*. Brill’s Companions to Classical Reception 12. (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

<sup>9</sup>Ella Shohat, Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

historical theories, Europe has not been as heavily pervasively swayed by these theories as have colonized lands. Imperial powers could impose “modernity” on their colonies in a much more decisive manner than allowed within their proper metropolises, where powerful, entranced segments of society might oppose modernizing projects. Nonetheless, a powerful image of Europe as the centre of historical discourse and historical progress seized the Indian imaginary. Living under the shadow of European historical theories and under the power of European rulers, colonized India developed a sense of failure and inferiority in relation to Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The non-European approach of utilizing persuasion strategies was usually considered inferior to the Aristotelian approach of employing argumentation by scholars trained in Greco-Roman rhetorical studies: “There is no evidence of an interest in rhetoric in the ancient civilization of Babylon or Egypt, for instance, neither Africa nor Asia to this day produced a rhetoric.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Michael Fox claims that “Non-Western rhetoric does not teach how to formulate arguments because it is not argumentation but rather the ethical stance of the speakers that will maintain harmony in the social order, and that is the ultimate goal of Egyptian rhetoric.”<sup>12</sup> George Kennedy supported Fox’s claim saying that he did not find in the whole ancient Egyptian literature “any good examples of argument from probability. Neither in Egypt nor elsewhere outside classical Greece are full syllogisms stated, but enthymemes . . . are ubiquitous.”<sup>13</sup> Such claims confirm Xing Lu’s argument that “non-Western rhetorical traditions are treated as either incorrigible or inferior.”<sup>14</sup>

Eurocentric scholars believe that Aristotle did not merely lecture or write his books for a selected few (members of his school in Athens) who accepted his system and learned his works by heart. Instead, they were deliberately written to analyze and later judge non-Greek rhetorical techniques at different times and geographies as a universal theory that can be applied to all humankind. Eurocentrism piggybacks on the theoretical simulation of being universal. Eurocentrism

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<sup>10</sup>Alice Bullard, “Review of *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* by Dipesh Chakrabarty,” *Theory and Society* 31 (2002): 777–784 (p. 778).

<sup>11</sup>James Murphy, ed., *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley-London: University of California Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Fox, “Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric,” *Rhetorica* 1 (1983): 9–22 (p. 21).

<sup>13</sup>George Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 183.

<sup>14</sup>Xing Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China, Fifth to Third Century B.C.E.: A Comparison with Classical Greek Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 17.

claims that its literary, rhetorical, and philosophical concepts are global and can be comprehensive in analyzing non-European concepts:

By the erasure of the localisation of the subject in the power and epistemic relationship, Western philosophy and science managed to produce a universalist myth which covers, or rather hides the epistemic localisation in power relationships from which the subject speaks.<sup>15</sup>

Universalism is most often mentioned as a tool of Eurocentric oppression in the postcolonial approaches to socio-political dimensions of many colonized countries. In their influential volume, *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin explore how the notion of universality is “a hegemonic European critical tool.”<sup>16</sup> Universality is a critical tool of Eurocentrism to expand its tutelage of knowledge production. This Euro-American hegemonic discourse with its old academic schools will not be able to continue in the near future since they have already led various aspects of the comparative scholarship of non-European cultures towards a dead-end:

Today, comparative literature in one sense is dead. The narrowness of the binary distinction, the unhelpfulness of the ahistorical approach, the complacent shortsightedness of the literature-as-universal-civilizing-force approach have all contributed to its demise. But it lives on under other guises: in the radical reassessment of Western cultural models at present being undertaken in many parts of the world, in the transcendence of disciplinary boundaries through new methodological insights supplied by gender studies or cultural studies, in the examination of the process of intercultural transfer that are taking place within translation studies.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE ARTIFICIAL UNIVERSALITY OF EUROPEAN LITERARY TERMS

To better understand the thorny dilemma of writing about Arabic or ancient Egyptian (henceforth AE) wordplay in Euro-American studies, we have to understand the ancient Greek and modern Eurocentric

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<sup>15</sup>R. Grosfoguel, “Les implications des altérités épistémiques dans la redéfinition du capitalisme global. Transmodernité, pensée frontalière et colonialité” [trans. A. Devillé and A. Vereecken] *Multitudes* 26, (2006): 51–74 (p. 53).

<sup>16</sup>Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), 149.

<sup>17</sup>Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 73.

comprehension of the shared literary terms. The concept of *paronomasia* or *pun* can further illustrate the negative impact of using Eurocentric terms, without being fully aware of their conceptual backgrounds. The history of the literary term *pun* can perfectly show the contradictions in what at first seems a fairly clear-cut history for modern Western studies. The inconsistent understanding of the early root of the term *pun* emphasizes the difficulty that covers its initial meaning and thus provokes speculations on its early reception and function as a literary, rhetorical device.<sup>18</sup>

The familiarity that English readers feel towards what is called *pun* is partly influenced by Shakespeare's writings, England's national poet, who lived from 1564 to 1616. However, the earliest record use of the word *pun* dates back to 1660, in the work of English literary critic and poet John Dryden. This means that all known definitions of the term *pun* that exist in English dictionaries are based on the modern reader's knowledge of what constitutes a pun. Dictionaries seem to authenticate what readers already know. It also means that most of the European languages, with their historical ancestors (and even Shakespeare himself), were not familiar with the word *pun* and its modern concepts at all.

The reader will be surprised to learn that there is no conceptual continuation between other European literary concepts of wordplay and pun. Joseph Dane demonstrates such facts in his critical treatment of pun and its equivalents (e.g., *paronomasia* and *quibble*) during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; he also shows how their historical concepts are elusive and vague in the three imperial languages of Europe: English, German, and French. Usually, these European colonial languages are the only languages considered in such discourse:

For the English word "pun" there are neither cognates nor conceptual equivalents in other European languages. In German the best one can do is *Wortspiel*, but this clearly a much broader term than ours. Does this mean that puns do not exist in German literature? Or does it simply mean that there is no way to point to them or to conceptualize them? In French the closest one can come is *calembour*, and this word attracts some of the same critical disparagement as the English word "pun" . . . The 1835 Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francaise includes several words for what we might call a pun. The negative aspects of such wordplay are associated with *calembour*. "bad wordplay based on a similarity of sound without regarding to spelling." A more neutral definition is given for the Greek-based *paronomase*, defined exactly as

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<sup>18</sup>Jonathan Culler, *On Puns: The Foundation of Letters* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 1-2.

Addison defines pun: “figure of diction that consists of using in the same phrase, words that are close in sound but differ in sense.”<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, modern Western scholarship tends to generalize and not circumscribe puns from other sorts of wordplay. It does not determine which term should be used as the general one that could combine further subdivisions under it. Walter Redfern confirms the differences between the English and French understanding of many terms, highlighting the fact that every European language can possess its own terms and unique concepts. These concepts can be contradictory according to the linguistic nature of each individual European language and its aesthetic reception and general literary taste.

Redfern explains that “the French think of the pun as a wordplay par excellence, and it has the same essential gratuitousness while the best English study of puns, by Hughes and Hammond, hovers between Surrealist preferences (for them, puns are ‘irrational, capricious, arbitrary’, whereas plays on words are ‘rational, erudite’).” He argues that some related terms have different concepts in English and French literary cultures: for example, the word *doublet* in French means one of two words from the same root but with different meanings (e.g. in French *humeur/humour*), while in English it means a word printed twice by mistake. Redfern claims that French scholars dedicated themselves to better classifying the different kinds of puns than their British counterparts. “When it comes to distinguishing between puns and plays on words, it appears that the French are keener on distinctions and classification than the messy British.”<sup>20</sup> These different stylistic views may be one of the reasons why the results of the final classification and definition of Western wordplay “have never met with much success.”<sup>21</sup>

There are many ancient Greek and Latin terms that complicate the process of understanding precise subdivisions of wordplay or pun and confirm the arbitrary nature of classification that group those similar terms:

*A(n)tananclasis, traductio, adnominatio, paronomasia, adfectio, skesis, polyptoton*: these are some of the reparative terms bandied about by traditional rhetoric. Many commentators have remarked on the state of extreme confusion between each of them. Perhaps the key notion of rhetoric is that of decorum—the right thing in the right place—and the pun is obviously

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<sup>19</sup>Joseph Dane, “puns” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, Vol. 1, David Scott Kastan ed., Oxford University Press, (2006): 294–298 (297).

<sup>20</sup>Walter Redfern, *Puns* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1984), 17.

<sup>21</sup>Culler, 4.

anti-decorum, though it often adjusts its dress, for secrecy and for the greater final effect.<sup>22</sup>

Eurocentric studies of wordplay suffer from a transgressive overlap because of the many associated terms from ancient Greek, Latin and modern European languages. For instance: *polysemy* (one word used in different senses, which is also similar to the term *doublet*) and *homophony* (several words distinct in meaning but sounding alike); *homonyms* (two or more words having the same written form but with different meanings) and *synonyms* (different words with the same meaning); *heteronyms* (words identical in spelling, but different in both sound and meaning (e.g., in English *tear* meaning ‘weeping’ and *tear* meaning ‘rip’), which are used either hymnal or comical off-rhymes, and *homographs* (words identical in spelling and pronunciation, but having different origins and meanings (e.g., in English *race* meaning ‘rush’ and *race* meaning ‘nation’); and *paronomasia* (which literally means naming alongside, providing a near-relative to, and rhetorically means a play upon words which sound similar) and *paragram* (a term for a play on words involving the alteration of one or more letters to create a witticism).<sup>23</sup>

Joseph Dane mentions that the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (d.100 AD) grouped a few examples under the term *adnominatio*, offering examples that can hardly be accepted as pun in modern English literary scholarship—such as “quando homo hostis, homo” which means “although a man is an enemy, he is still human?” or “when a man is an enemy, he is a real man?” By engaging with the ancient Greek and Latin treatments, Dane confirmed that such uncertainties found in Greek and Latin rhetorical languages could also be found in the early literary criticism of English literature during the Elizabethan and seventeenth-century era.<sup>24</sup> The lack of clear literary analysis of the ancient cited examples of paronomasia or its Latin equivalent *adnominatio* confuse modern Western scholars; such scholars are left wondering about the precise range of wordplay types that are involved in the ancient terms and their different reception in subsequent literary treatments.

Few Euro-American scholars declared abhorrence of bridging their own terms with the ancient non-European materials, highlighting the unclear nature of their modern concepts:

The study of word play in ancient Near Eastern literatures in general has historically been plagued by a loose and inconsistent vocabulary.

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<sup>22</sup>Redfern, 18.

<sup>23</sup>Redfern, 17.

<sup>24</sup>Joseph Dane, “puns,” 295.

The commonest terms usually applied to the phenomena have been “word-play,” “Paronomasia” and punning and each of these masks a wide array of devices and possesses connotations that do not adequately convey the purposes of the phenomenon in antiquity. This is especially the case with the term “word play.” Since its use in the classical Greece, the term “paronomasia” has had a long and equally inconsistent history of usage. However, it is used today as an umbrella term to describe a number of different sound devices (including alliteration and assonance). “Punning” is the most general of the three terms and can be used to cover word play and paronomasia, as well as visual devices.<sup>25</sup>

The conceptual worlds of each literary or philosophical term vary from that language to another, based on various factors. One factor is the linguistic nature of the studied language and how its linguistic features directly develop different aspects of literary production. In some European traditions, paronomasia-pun is often handled under the rubric of redundancy, which means that it is not useful in serving the textual context of the message. In one of the oldest surviving Latin books on rhetoric (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* c. 90 BC), which remained one of the popular textbooks during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the author offers to his readers some rhetorical, stylistic advice to help speakers to maintain their oral discourse correctly:

Artistic composition consists in an arrangement of words which gives uniform finish to the discourse in every part. To ensure this virtue we shall avoid (fugiemus) the cramped compaction of vowels [hiatus], which makes the style harsh and gaping. We shall also avoid the excessive recurrence of the same letters [alliteration], a blemish that the following verse [of Ennius] will illustrate: O Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta, tyranne, tulisti, and reject this verse of the same poet: quoiquam quiquam quemquam, quemque quisque conueniat. And again we shall avoid the excessive repetition of the same word, as follows: Nam cuius rationis ratio non extet, ei/ rationi ratio non est fidem habere admodum. Again, we shall not use a continuous series of words with like case endings [homoeoptoton], as follow: Flentes, plorantes, lacrimantes, obstantes.<sup>26</sup>

This anti-repetition criticism prompted puns in the modern English rhetoric to be seen as a semi-negative rhetorical device. Pun became a literary device that stands against the clarity of speech and is a type of sophisticated humor used to deceive the receivers. Puns can also be

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<sup>25</sup>Kasia Szpakowska and Scott Noegel “Word play in the Ramesside Dream Book.” *Studien zur Altägyptische Kultur* 35 (2006): 193–212 (p. 194).

<sup>26</sup>Daniel Selden, “Apuleius and Afro Asiatic poetics” in Benjamin Todd Lee, Ellen Finkelppearl, Luca Graverini, eds., *Apuleius and Africa*, (London, Routledge, 2014), 205–270 (p. 240).

treated as being part of a complicated joke or non-serious discourse, which has, in turn, encouraged some anti-pun treatments to indulge in “sneering at puns as the lowest form of wit” or, even worse, as being irrational or an instance of anti-social behavior because it involves a loss of self-control and breaking social rules.<sup>27</sup> In light of these Latin rhetorical views, we can better understand the later negative responses of some literary treatments that reject the poetic function of puns generally, calling it a fruitful mistake. The anthropologist and linguist Peter Farb confirmed this suspicion towards the poetic functions of puns and how the English receiver might mentally suffer from an “obscene pun” because of its deliberate ambiguity:

English-speaking communities nowadays regard the pun as a very low form of humor and they are particularly fearful of the obscene pun, which is a major variety of the form. The obscene pun is dangerous because it cleverly attacks the sacredness of taboo words, and it manages to do so with an innocent appearance. A dirty story usually leads up to the punchline by the use of taboo words, but a well-fashioned obscene pun never overtly uses obscene words. Rather, the pun allows two different words, which are pronounced in the same way, to be substituted for each other. Usually one of the two ambiguous words is taboo, but the teller of the pun claims innocence by leaving it up to the listener to connect the innocent and the taboo meanings.<sup>28</sup>

This implied rhetorical background has negatively affected the modern reception of non-Western wordplay as a passive phenomenon in Euro-American literary criticism. It can be clearly shown in this 1887 comment from a French linguist, Paul Regnaud, about a play on words in Sanskrit Vedic hymns: “In every case, punning is artificial, it is a chosen and personal product, with no direct links with the laws governing the general development of language, and therefore remaining isolated and unproductive. It entertains for a moment by the jolt it gives the mind, but that is all.”<sup>29</sup> Such Eurocentric complexity has negatively affected non-European scholars as well as Western scholars.

Those medieval and modern views of anti-repetitions fused the way that these literary devices of paronomasia, pun, and alliteration are/were used/employed/understood in both (a) poetry and literary prose and (b) political rhetorical speeches. The first is of a written

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<sup>27</sup>John Morreall, *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 4–15.

<sup>28</sup>Peter Farb, *Word Play: What Happens When People Talk* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 88.

<sup>29</sup>Redfern, 35.



nature, and the second is of an oral nature. This complicated relationship between oral and written practices permeates both the literary and public oral spheres in Western rhetoric. The negative responses to those rhetorical devices in the more oral uses, whether of political or religious functions, should not steer our understanding of its role in literary prose and poetry. Both disciplines should be separated, as Heinrich Plett argues:

Rhetoric has suffered from being no longer an art and practice of veritable importance to the commonwealth. Instead of being a method for educating future politicians, lawyers, preachers and other public figures, as it had been in former cultural periods, such as the Roman *libera respublica* or Renaissance humanism, it has dwindled to a stylistic theory concentrating on adding embellishments in otherwise bare texts for the sake of engendering delight with the telos of a *l'art pour l'art* or taking refuge to sophistic methods of making the worse appear the better reason, as it had been taught and practiced by Protagoras in the first age in the history of rhetoric.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE EURO-AMERICAN STUDIES OF AE WORDPLAY

The absence of meta-analytical terms and theoretical self-reflection in the ancient Near Eastern cultures encouraged Euro-American scholars to impose their own Eurocentric terms and concepts, under the claim of being universal, without any critical examination of the different linguistic nature of the languages in question. Few Egyptologists declared their aversion to entirely depending on these outdated Eurocentric terms that “terribly mislead” the scholarship of AE language and its literature:

The pioneers were first trained as Classicists, which is hardly surprising for the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. So they were tempted to take over the terminology used in the grammatical tradition of Latin and Greek. We still retain a lot of terminological names that go back to this epoch. As we know, names are never neutral, especially in linguistics. With them comes a halo of meanings, of implications that can reveal themselves as terribly misleading.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Heinrich Plett, *Literary Rhetoric: Concepts - Structures - Analyses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 8.

<sup>31</sup>Jean Winand, “Teaching Ancient Egyptian. Between Linguistics and Philology.” A. Verbovsek, B. Backes, C. Jones ed., *Methodik und Didaktik in der Ägyptologie in Ägyptologie und Kulturwissenschaft IV*, (2011): 173–182, (p. 177).

This dependency also prevented any fruitful comparison with other non-Western languages and even with their own Eurocentric literary practices. Such methodology not only highlights a conceptual confusion regarding one implied Eurocentric understanding with many unrelated non-European examples but also limited the space for discovering the real nature of the non-European features studied. This Eurocentric approach stands for the automatic application of the Eurocentric literary criticism as universal, which excludes the idea of adopting any kindred non-European terms, in order to produce a better understanding of the studied non-European concepts. From this Eurocentric perspective, the non-European literary terms of kindred languages are considered “childish” or even “primitive” and “unscientific.”

The linguist Carlton Hodge stressed that such Eurocentric disapproval of literary wordplay should not influence our modern analytic approach towards the entire ancient Near Eastern writings. He also highlighted the blurry relationship between the two related terms, *pun*, and *paronomasia*, in Euro-American literary analysis. Hodge even suggested creating a new term for such literary devices to avoid any negative connotations of the Eurocentric terms:

It should be mentioned that such devices played a vastly different role in the ancient Near East than they do in Western culture. We have had for several centuries a deprecation of the pun or “quibble” as it was earlier known. Whitney, in the Century dictionary, distinguishes between a pun and paronomasia, saying: “modern taste excludes puns from serious writing and speaking” while paronomasia “heightens the effect of what is said without suggesting the ludicrous.” This effort to salvage approved literary puns by calling them something else is abandoned in most later dictionaries. To Wyld, for example, paronomasia is punning, and a pun is “a humorous use of words having the same or nearly the same sound with different meanings.” It was probably Adison, in his influential Spectator articles, who contributed most to the orthodox literary disapproval of puns. In Shakespeare, the pun is nearly always humorous.<sup>32</sup>

This proposed study entails a conscious rejection of imposing Eurocentric concepts and terms—according to which Euro-American researchers did not support their literary assumptions by comparing AE literary devices with those of its kindred languages—in order to extend the main principle of the comparative linguistic system: “languages should never be compared in isolation if closer relatives are

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<sup>32</sup>Carlton Hodge, “Ritual and Writing: An Inquiry into the Origin of Egyptian Script,” in M Dake Kinkade, Kenneth Hale and Oswald Werner, eds., *Linguistic & Anthropology*, (1975): 331–350 (p. 337).

at hand.”<sup>33</sup> This statement is particularly relevant when dealing with a “dead” language. Studying the AE language is the archaeology of a dead language, in which cross-linguistic comparisons provide the only support available for closer hypotheses on literary textual practices, to avoid Eurocentric rhetorical misperceptions.

This paper argues that ancient Egyptian literary devices are studied most productively on a comparative basis and that Arabic, a cognate language that belongs to the same Afro-Asiatic phylum, offers a new and closer platform for exploring and studying these literary devices. The few studies that are concerned with this aspect of AE literature are mostly built on the definitions of Eurocentric concepts:

Despite centuries of scholarly awareness of word play as a literary phenomenon in ancient Near Eastern literature, the topic remains under-researched. While for the most part, scholars have been content to note examples of word play or punning in various Near Eastern texts, typically in footnotes, few full-scale studies on word play exist. In fact, we currently lack a comprehensive and consistent taxonomy for the various devices, usually categorized as word play and their proposed functions. This is especially the case with regard to the Hebrew Bible, for which no exhaustive examinations of any one word play device exist. Indeed, not a single biblical book has ever been mined for all of its various types of word play.<sup>34</sup>

This post-Eurocentric methodology can pave the way for fruitful comparisons by focusing on comparing the literary devices of kindred languages, especially in the ancient Near Eastern cultures. Stephen Quirke considers the use of Arabic linguistic affinities with their AE counterparts. He explains how their interaction with the Arabic literary tradition could be useful for both AE literary analysis and for challenging Eurocentrism in the field of Egyptology as a whole. He argues that such Eurocentric impositions will not fully resolve the problematic questions raised by AE literature. Therefore, Quirke encourages Euro-American scholars to give the Arabic literary culture a chance equal to the one that has been offered to their Eurocentric theories. He argues that active engagement with Arabic literary traditions promises fresh perspectives that may challenge the self-contained approaches of Eurocentric theoretical readings of ancient texts:

Classical Arabic poetry offers, for certain motifs and “genres,” a resonance entirely lacking in English and other European literary traditions.

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<sup>33</sup>Joseph Greenberg, *Language, Culture and Communication: Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971), 22–23.

<sup>34</sup>Scott Noegel, “Word play in Qoheleth,” *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7, (2007): 1–28 (pp. 1–2).

The eulogy genre *madiḥ* allows appreciation of compositions at or outside our literary borders, and the *fakhr* “boast” mercifully loses in Arabic the unfailingly negative reception assigned to much rhetorical content in English language studies of both literary manuscripts and “autobiographical” inscriptions from ancient Egypt. A more systematic encounter with Arabic literary tradition would above all serve to remind the European researcher that the questions of definitions, production, and reception of ancient Egyptian literature can also be asked from within Egypt.<sup>35</sup>

### THE CONCEPTUAL RESONANCE OF ARABIC LITERARY TERMS

Two rhetorical systems exist in the medieval Arabic tradition. The first system is related to the science of *khiṭābah*, which means “public oral speech” and argumentation methodologies. This Arabic discipline has been heavily influenced by ancient Greek concepts through Aristotle; however, it was also swiftly developed by Muslim philosophers and speech practitioners under what has been called the “science of speech or dialectics” (*ilm al-kalām*) in which various “rational explanation[s] of theological doctrines” were discussed and challenged.<sup>36</sup> The second system is the science of *balāghah*, which focuses on studying the various forms of each literary device and its function of persuasion in different contexts and genres. Many scholars of Arabic *balāghah* were aware of the distinction between the requirements of literary prose or poetry and public oral speech. The literary critic Al-Sijlimāsi (d. 1304) defends the employment of *jinās* in poetry:

وإن كان لقائل أن يقول: أن هذا الإبدال قد منعه أرسطو كما ذكرتم لكن إنما منعه في الخطابة وأما في الشعر فلم يمنعه بل جوزه فيه.

One may think that he has the right to say that this alternation [between the letters of two words] was forbidden by Aristotle, as you mentioned before. Still, Aristotle only forbid it in the oral public speech (*khiṭābah*) while he did not forbid it in poetry, he instead licensed it in poetry.<sup>37</sup>

The term *balāghah* is often mistranslated into English as “rhetoric.” Still, as Philip Halldén explains, the term, *khiṭābah* has also been used to represent the ancient Greek concept of rhetoric in medieval Arabic commentaries on Aristotle by many Muslim philosophers such as

<sup>35</sup>Stephen Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings* (London: Golden House, 2004), 28.

<sup>36</sup>Mustafa Shah, “Trajectories in the Development of Islamic Theological Thought: The Synthesis of Kalam,” *Religion Compass* 4 (2007): 430–454 (p. 430).

<sup>37</sup>Abū Mohamed al-Qāsim al-Sijlimāsi, *al-manẓar al-badī‘ fī tajnīs asālīb al-badī‘*, edited by ‘Alāl al-ghāzy (al-Ribat: Maktabah al-Ma‘ārif, 1980), 484.

al-Farābi (d. 950), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198).<sup>38</sup> In his *kitāb al-majmou‘*, Ibn Sīnā gives the transcription “*rīṭūrīqā* - ريطوريقا” in Arabic. These philosophers adopted the Greek term because they were aware of the conceptual differences between the two disciplines of *balāghah* and *khiṭābah*. Following the tradition of Aristotle, they considered *rhetoric* and *khiṭābah* to be the counterpart of dialectic as an art of argumentation. Wolfhart Heinrichs points out that framing *balāghah* as a simple mistranslation of the term *rhetoric* overlooks the unique concept of this discipline in the context of Arabic-Islamic traditions; he argues that such framing must be taken with a pinch of salt and, therefore, he opts for using “eloquence” or “poetics.”<sup>39</sup>

Arabic *jinās* itself suffers from the same misunderstanding through the use of *paronomasia* or *pun* as misleading equivalent terms in Euro-American Arabic studies. The gap is more evident in the literary analysis provided by Bridget Connelly of the poetic mechanism of *Sīrat Banī Hilāl*, a rich biography of legendary heroes that memorializes events of almost 1,000 years ago. Under the title “Punning as Understanding,” Connelly discusses the creative employment of wordplay in enriching the music of her studied text. She did not mention any type of Arabic *jinās*. Connelly goes further still and suggests that Banī Hilāl’s puns can be achieved by “meaningless rhyme syllabus.”<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, Terri DeYoung convincingly declares her refusal to use these Eurocentric terms of wordplay in her literary analysis of the Arabic poet Samīḥ al-Qāsim because “this kind of easy equation can be misleading.” DeYoung realized the complicated relationship between the two terms *pun* and *paronomasia* and how this may negatively affect the English reader’s comprehension of the Arabic literary features, saying:

Each term in fact, embraces elements not found in the others while omitting elements found in one or both of its companion terms. Thus casual substitution of “paronomasia” for “pun,” or either for *jinās*, can create misunderstandings.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Philip Halldén, “What is Arab Islamic Rhetoric? Rethinking the History of Muslim Oratory Art and Homiletics.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 19–38 (p. 21).

<sup>39</sup>Heinrichs, Wolfhart. “Rhetoric and Poetics,” in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. Julie Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 561.

<sup>40</sup>Bridget Connelly, *Arab Folk Epic and Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 107.

<sup>41</sup>Terri Deyoung, “Language in Looking-Glass Land: Samīḥ Al-Qāsim and the Modernization of *Jinās*.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992): 183–97 (p. 184).

Similarly, Lara Harb raises her concerns about the automatic translation of Arabic *kināyah* into English *metonymy*. She argues that one should use the Arabic term or literal English translation of the Arabic term to avoid the misunderstanding invited by the automatic application of metonymy and its Eurocentric concepts:

*Kināya* is often translated in English as “metonymy.” While some examples of *kināya* might correctly be considered metonymy, the definitions of the two terms are different. Metonymy in English stands for a word or phrase that refers to an object because it represents one of its characteristics or is closely related to it. A typical example includes saying “Downing Street” to mean the British Government. This definition, however, does not incorporate the very specific idea of *kināya*, which requires the relationship between the sign and the referent to be one of consequence. I therefore opt to translate the term as “implication” . . . . . or “allusion.”<sup>42</sup>

In one of her book reviews, Rebecca Gould argues that imposing the English equivalents of Arabic literary terms can also betray the nature of the studied questions and misinform the Euro-American reader’s comprehension of the Arabic literary concepts:

Although the footnotes and introductions to each text are generally superb, it would have been desirable, given the specificity and complexity of the Arabic technical vocabulary and the impossibility of rendering the dense web of *balāghah* terminology adequately into any other language, to have left key Arabic terms untranslated or listed parenthetically. Terms such as *tashbīh*, *ta’ajjub*, *wajh*, and *kadhib*, lose their conceptual resonances and intertextual associations when imported into English as “comparison,” “amazement,” “face,” and “untruthful” . . . without any indication given of their multivalent implications in Arabic. Such losses may be endemic to any act of translation, but a greater inclusion of Arabic terms would have been one way to forestall, or at least to ameliorate, these consequences.<sup>43</sup>

## ARABIC JINĀS THROUGH THE LENS OF BALĀGHAH

*Jinās* is one of many literary devices used by AE and Arabic writers to deliver their intended message creatively. Etymologically, *jinās* is a

<sup>42</sup>Lara Harb, “Form, Content, and the Inimitability of the Qur’ān in ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s Works.” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 18 (2015): 301–21 (p. 316).

<sup>43</sup>Rebecca Gould, “Review of *Takhyil: The Imaginary in Classical Arabic Poetics*,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 41 (2010): 327–330 (pp. 327–328).

loanword derived from the Greek/Latin root γένος-genus-genos, which means race, type, gender, or descent. It has been transferred to the Arabic language via the Syriac word *gensā*.<sup>44</sup> The word *jins* (جنس) does not occur in the Qur'ān, and the root *j-n-s* is not found there either. Neither of these is used in pre-Islamic or early Arabic poetry, nor in the major canonical *Ḥadīth* compilations of the Prophet. However, the concept of *jinās* in Arabic *balāghah* is fully Arabic and is more related to the literary nature of the Arabic language.

The Arabic *balāghah* adopted this word as a term to linguistically follow the salient feature of the literary device in which two different words are constructed from the same letters. However, it is not obligatory for every letter of the two words to fully match each other. *Jinās* can be achieved if both words assimilate to each other phonetically, according to the categories defined by Arabic *balāghah* scholars. *Jinās*, as a literary device, depends on the similarity of form and sound and on the disparity of meaning. However, in some *jinās* types, these similarities correlate with those of a semantic nature. It forges unexpected connections as an amusing form of cleverness.

The majority of *balāghah* studies, both medieval and premodern, devote a separate section to *jinās*. It is considered one of the most critical parts of the *badī'* discipline (literary innovations). Moreover, many premodern scholars have devoted entire books to studying different aspects of *jinās*. One of the earliest lexicographical treatises of the Arabic language as a whole is *The book of al-ajnās from the Language of the Arabs* (kitāb al-ajnās min kalām al-'Arab) of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim al-Baghdādī (d. 838 AD). This dictionary contains more than 140 full *jinās* words with their different meanings. Several studies of *jinās* have survived: (1) The types of *tajnīs* (*Ajnās al-tajnīs*) and *The pale in exploring the white blazes of tajnīs* (al-'Anīs fī ghurrar al-tajnīs) of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha'ālibī (d.1038); (2) *The Gardens of jinās* (*jinān al-jinās*) of Khalīl ibn Ayybak al-Ṣafadī (d.1362); (3) *The precious pearl of whatever can be added to Jinān al-jinās and Ajnās al-tajnīs* (al-Durr al-nafīs fīmā zād 'alā jinān al-jinās) of Muḥammad al-Nawājī (d. 1455); (4) *The Harvest of jinās* (*janī al-jinās*) of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ṣuyūtī (d.1505); and (5) *Reaching the highest goal in the science of literature: the science of jinās* (bulūgh al-'arab fī 'ilm al-adab: 'ilm al-jinās) of Jibra'īl Farḥāt Jarmānūs (d. 1732).

The literary critic and poet Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908 AD) defines *jinās* as two similar words in which the two words resemble each other:

هو أن تجيء الكلمة ثنائس أخرى في بيت شعر أو كلام، ومجانستها لها أن تشبهها في تاليف حروفها

<sup>44</sup>Lutz Edzard, *Polygenesis, Convergence, and Entropy: An Alternative Model of Linguistic Evolution Applied to Semitic Linguistics* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 36.

[Jinās happens] when you bring a word that matches another [word] inside a verse of poetry or speech. This matching is achieved when the two words imitate each other in composing their letters.<sup>45</sup>

Ibn al-Athīr (d.1233) describes jinās as two words that have identical articulation while their meanings are different. Al-Ṣafadī (d.1362 AD) offers critical reviews of the previous definitions of *jinās*, mainly because most of them exclude the other types of *jinās*. He provided an all-inclusive description of *jinās* according to the kinds of *jinās* that he studied. He subsequently defined *jinās* as two words that have at least some shared letters; two words with identical letters where one word has an additional letter; two words with reversed order letters; two identical words with different vocal applications; two words in which one of their letters is orthographically similar; or two different words that are semantically synonyms of one other.<sup>46</sup> For the sake of brevity, I will discuss only a few examples of jinās in both Arabic and AE languages.

### PARTIAL JINĀS (الناقص)

This term refers to two similar words that missed one of the four conditions of full *jinās*—vocal movement, number, kind, and order. The difference between the two words must be one letter, achieved by adding a different letter between similar words that already have a different meaning.<sup>47</sup> This additional letter can be found in the beginning, middle, or end of both *jinās* words, i.e., the first or the second *jinās* word. Below are examples of different forms of partial *jinās* in Arabic and AE literary cultures:

#### (1) Vocal Movements as an Indication of Different Meanings

الثَّيْرُدُ يَمْنَعُ البَرْدَ

*The heavy garment protects from the coldness.*<sup>48</sup>

Partial jinās is represented in this example by the vocal movement placed over the consonant between the two *jinās* words (الثَّيْرُدُ), meaning

<sup>45</sup> Abdallah ibn al-Mu'tazz, *kitāb al-badī'*, edited by 'Irfān Maṭarjī (Beirut: Mū'asīṣah al-kutb al-thaqāfiyah, 2012), 36.

<sup>46</sup> Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Ayybak al-Ṣafadī, *jinān al-jinās fī 'ilm al-badī'* (Qusṭanṭīniyah: Maṭba'ah al-Goua'b, 1881), 19.

<sup>47</sup> Ahmad al-Hāshimī, *jawāhir al-balāghah fī al-ma'ānī wa al-ba'ān wa al-badī'* (Cairo: al-Maktabh al-Tujārīyah, 1960), 398.

<sup>48</sup> Aḥmad ibn Khalīl Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *sharḥ al-faūā'id al-ghīāthīah min 'ilmī al-ba'ān wa al-badī'* (Beirut, Dār el-ṭibā'ah al-'āmirah, 1896), 278.



'heavy garment') and (البرد, meaning 'coldness'). The only difference between the two words is the vocal movement's mark on their first letters, which indicates to the listeners that they are different words semantically.



sxpr.n.f r wTs xaw.f xprr xprw mj xprr xat xaw mj Axtj swHt wabt prt Axtj

*The one whom he (the God Amun) created in order to wear his crown, and the one who has a created form like the God Khepry, and the one who appears in shining appearances like the God Akhty, the purified ovum who came out splendid.*<sup>49</sup>

The hieroglyphic sentence is extracted from a praise hymn of Queen Hatshepsut (d. 1458 BC) that was carved on her obelisk. Partial *jinās* is attested to in this example by the play between the two *jinās* words - a collective plural noun meaning 'crown,' attached to a third person singular suffix representing the god Amun. Grammatically, the word is a direct object to the transitive verb which means to 'wear, raise, or lift up' a crown in the coronation and is transliterated into *xaw* and - a collective plural noun which means 'appearance in glory' and is transliterated into *xaw*.

It is noticeable that the AE writer uses an identical visual form of the two *jinās* words as the complete version of the crown word . Here the crown is an ending soundless determinative, while the full writing for the word "glory appearance" ends with a closed papyrus roll that is used to represent abstract concepts. The semantic context plays a significant role for AE readers to identify both of them, as both words do not even have their determinatives in the studied verse. The writer here relies on the reader's linguistic memory to differentiate the meaning of both *jinās* words. The different vocal movements play the same role for the AE listeners.

Partial *jinās* also is represented between the two *jinās* words - a god's name derived from the word Axt, meaning 'horizon' and is transliterated into Akhty and (a stative from the verb Ax which means to 'be a spirit,' 'become a spirit,' 'be glorious,' 'be splendid,' 'be beneficial,' and is transliterated into Axtj). The different

<sup>49</sup>Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18 Dynastie*. Abteilung IV, Heft 13–16 (Leipzig: Akademie-Verlag, 1906), 361.

visual writing forms and determinatives play a significant role for readers, while the vocal movements play the same role for listeners.

First word	Second word
𐤀𐤋𐤍 - xaw	𐤀𐤋𐤍 - xaw
𐤀𐤋𐤍𐤏 - Axy	𐤀𐤋𐤍𐤏 - Axy

(2) Additional Middle Letter

جدى جهدي

*My good fortune is [coming from] my hard working.*

In this famous Arabic proverb, partial *jinās* is represented by the two similar words (جدى, a noun that means ‘good fortune’ is connected to the first person singular suffix for expressing possession) and (جهدي, a noun meaning ‘hard-working’ is connected to the first person singular suffix for expressing possession). There is only one difference, an additional letter, between the two words (جهدي - جدى), which occurs in the middle of the second word (هـ).

𐤀𐤋𐤍𐤏 𐤀𐤋𐤍

di.s st n.j snt m dy

*She [the Goddess of love] gave her [the beloved girl] to me as a gift.<sup>50</sup>*

The sentence is extracted from the love songs of Chester-Beatty. Partial *jinās* occurs between the two lexical items 𐤀𐤋 (a dependent pronoun which refers to a beloved girl, transliterated into st) and 𐤀𐤋𐤍 (a noun literally meaning ‘sister,’ used metaphorically to refer to a beloved girl, transliterated into snt). The two lexical items share the two initial letters (s-t), but with one additional letter in the middle of the second *jinās* word (n).

First word	Second word	The additional letter
𐤀𐤋 - st	𐤀𐤋𐤍 - snt	N

(3) Additional Letters at the End of the Second Jinās Word

<sup>50</sup>Michael Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 9.

فلان حام حامل لأعباء الأمور كاف كافل بمصالح الجمهور

*This person is the protector and the carrier of the burdens of affairs; he is the convenient and liable person for achieving the people's interests.*<sup>51</sup>

Partial *jinās* is represented in these literary prose sentences by the play between two pairs of *jinās* words: the first pair is حام (an active participle derived from the verb يحمي, which means 'the protector') and حامل (an active participle derived from the verb يحمل, which means 'the holder' or 'carrier'), and the second pair is كاف (an active participle derived from the verb يكفي, which means 'convenient person') and كافل (an active participle derived from the verb يكفل, which means 'being responsible' or 'liable'). In both cases, the second *jinās* word has an additional letter (ج).



n spr n sp Xsy r dmi Xry sA r sAH tA

*The sinful person can never come close to the harbor, but the hindermost will reach the land.*<sup>52</sup>

Partial *jinās* is represented by the play between two similar words, سبر (a verb meaning 'to reach' and is transliterated into spr) and سب (a noun meaning 'occasion,' 'case,' or 'times' (as in two times a day) and is transliterated into sp). There is a one letter difference between the two words. The additional letter 'r' occurs at the end of the first *jinās* word. Partial *jinās* also is represented in the two words سا (the last part of the used expression سأ, which means 'hindermost' and is transliterated into sA) and سأه (a verb meaning 'to reach,' 'arrive at,' and is transliterated into sAH). The additional letter 'H' occurs at the end of the second *jinās* word.

First word	Second word	The additional letter
<u>سبر</u> - spr	<u>سب</u> - sp	R
<u>سا</u> - sA	<u>سأه</u> - sAH	H

<sup>51</sup>Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, *ḥusn al-taūsul ilā šinā'ah al-trasul* (Cairo: al-maṭba'ah al-wahbiyah, 1880), 42.

<sup>52</sup>Richard Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1991), 45–46.

### VISUAL JINĀS (الخط - المرسوم)

This term in Arabic refers to two words that have the same number and kind of letters, except for one different letter in each word. These two different letters are graphically similar (al-Gundy, 1954, 140) such as:

(ف - ق) - (ر - ز) - (ص - ض) - (ط - ظ) - (ع - غ) - (ج - ح) - (خ - ب) - (ت - ث) - (ن - ي) - (د - ذ) - (س - ش)

لا تضيع يومك في نومك

*Do not waste your day in your sleeping.*<sup>53</sup>

Visual *jinās* is represented in this Arabic proverb by the *writing* play between the two similar words نومك – يومك, where there is one letter different (ن and ي). Both letters are graphically identical but are different in the position and number of their points.

### Ancient Egyptian

The main difference between the AE language and any other pure alphabetical system will be related to the visual nature of AE writing and how the AE writers took advantage of such visual inimitability. The examples provided in this section shows how an AE writer can give the reader several visual tools to understand the points he raises about the presentation and structure of information, to aid and clarify the literary reading process. The central visual feature of the AE writing is what can be called ‘soundless sense signs,’ often referred to as “determinatives” by Egyptologists: signs that appear at the end of a word, clarifying the meaning of the string of sounds that have been represented.<sup>54</sup>

#### (1) Related Determinatives

The AE writers can employ related ‘determinatives’ or ‘sense-signs’ to reinforce the sequence of images or ideas in the immediate context. This technique adds a visual confirmation layer for their readers in addition to the verbal ones.













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






<sup>53</sup>al-Şafadī, *jinān al-jinās*, 19.










<sup>54</sup>Hany Rashwan, “Ancient Egyptian Image-Writing: Between the Unspoken and Visual Poetics,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 55 (2019): 139–162 (p. 149).

*A scoop of water quenches thirst.*<sup>55</sup>

Visual *jinās* is represented here by the use of four related successive determinatives that visually depict the semantic message of the sentence:  (ikn - a noun meaning 'cup' or 'jar,' with a cup determinative);  (a noun meaning 'water');  (a sDm.f verb meaning 'to quench thirst,' with two contrasted determinatives: the fire and the water); and  (an infinitive of the verb  ibi meaning 'being thirsty' but here meaning 'thirst itself,' with a calf or goat as a main determinative, which is conventionally associated with thirst). Perhaps the first AE etymologist noticed that these animals eat so much dry grass that they must often get thirsty, and thus they have been used as a symbol of being thirsty.

The verb  (axm) offers a compelling case of combining two contrasted ending determinatives ( and ). To explain the fire determinative, we should consider two other similar words. In the case of the verb  (axm), which means 'to destroy,' or 'extinguish,' the AE writing uses the fire determinative to denote the act of destroying and devastation. We also have the noun  (ax), which means 'brazier.' Both words have a strong metaphorical and literal connection with the fire. If we consider the meaning of the verb axm, adding water as an extra determinative and the word thirst as an object, we discover the implied visual metaphorical message of this AE word.

In Arabic, there is similar metaphorical employment of the relationship between fire, water, and being thirsty, reflected in this Arabic proverb: كل ماء البحر لا يطفى ظمأ العطشان (which means 'all the sea's water cannot extinguish [the fire of] a thirsty person'). The notion of fire is represented here within the verb يطفى, which means 'extinguish a fire' or 'stop burning.' The metaphorical employment of these two contrasted natural notions of fire  and water  together in this literary context imply the similarities between them, and imply their ability of devastation and giving life at the same time. However, superiority was given to water over fire visually in this sentence; the context places greater emphasis on the water by employing the water's cup and the thirsty animal and by repeating the water determinative twice ( -  -  -  - .

First <i>jinās</i> word	Second <i>jinās</i> word	Third <i>jinās</i> word	Fourth <i>jinās</i> word	The visual <i>jinās</i>
				 -  -  -  - 

<sup>55</sup>Alan Gardiner, "The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32 (1946): 71-74, Plat XIV, line 5.

(2) *Contrasted Meanings with the Same Determinative*

The AE writers can employ two contrasting words that use the same determinative to stimulate the reader’s mind about the sharp differences between the used words.



**Swyt** m ir m **Sw**

*Sun-shade, do not act like sun-light.*<sup>56</sup>

Visual *jinās* is represented in this example by the play between the two contrasted semi-morphological *jinās* words (a noun meaning ‘shadow’ or ‘shade,’ and is transliterated into Swyt, which can also be written without the y) and (a noun meaning ‘sun’ or ‘sun-light’ and is transliterated into Sw). Both *jinās* words share two initial letters in their stem (S and w), in addition to using the same determinative (the sun disc ☉) to express two contrasting meanings since they are both related to a contradictory action of the sun.

First <i>jinās</i> word	Second <i>jinās</i> word	The visual play
		☉

(3) *Contrasted Meanings with Contrasting Determinatives*



ptpt **wrtw**.s nbw xt int.sn **Hdbw** Hr snfw.sn m wa Hr wa




*All its chiefs are trampled throughout their wadis, overthrown in their own blood, one on top of another.*<sup>57</sup>

Visual *jinās* is represented in this example by the play between two contrasting determinatives, which reflect the different statuses of the people described. The AE poet chose the more common determinative of the word (wr meaning ‘great people’ ending with an old man leans on his stick, the symbol of power), while using an opposite determinative for the word (Hdbw meaning ‘to overthrow’ or ‘be prostrate’ which ends with a man lays on his face), to visually reinforce in the mind’s eye of the reader what they were

<sup>56</sup>Parkinson, 33, line 254.

<sup>57</sup>Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Abteilung IV, Band II, Heft 20: Historische Inschriften Amenophis III, (Berlin: C. Hinrichs, 1957), 1666.



Original <i>jinās</i> word	Used <i>jinās</i> word	Un/usual ending determinative
		

## CONCLUSION

Cultures do not think alike in terms of literary concepts and analysis. Each language produces its own literary terms. Each culture develops its literary concepts to fit the nature of its own language and the tastes of its readers. These conceptual differences are carried by the linguistic and literary character of each language. Such differences are what generate the uniqueness of each piece of literature, and these differences are not usually reflected in poor translations that overlook these conceptual differences. When specialists employ Eurocentric literary terms and ignore the indigenous terms and their unique concepts, they automatically betray the non-European culture and give full weight to mistranslation and misreading. This methodology exiles the literary non-European texts from their native soil of literary criticism and forces the texts into Euro-American interpretive traditions that only dialogue with Euro-American readers, instead of letting the text speak of its own culture of writers and readership, as Sarah Bin Tyeer argues:

When premodern Arabic literary products are treated as atoms in a void, they become divorced from their (a) Arabic literary history, (b) literary milieu, and (c) linguistic history and significance in favour of ready-made straitjacket interpretations facilitated by restrictive literary theories and techniques. Accordingly, this attitude does not build on the poetics of the field or offer a sensitive language for literary criticism from inside the discipline, which leaves the field methodologically impoverished.<sup>60</sup>

Few trends of modern comparative linguistics deconstruct the well-established practice of employing Eurocentric terms to describe, label, and define other languages, especially in cross-linguistic syntax. Each language has the grammatical categories of adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. To understand the similarities and differences between each language, we must study the traditions in which the properties of these categories vary across languages. To discover the conceptual differences between languages, Martin Haspelmath urges linguists

<sup>60</sup>Sarah Bin Tyeer, *The Qur'an and the Aesthetics of Premodern Arabic Prose* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 8.



and typologists to cut this long-established Gordian knot by arguing that languages should be analyzed on their own terms; doing so enables scholars to rediscover the unique concept of each studied language and understand how such concepts are defined by their own cultures. This methodology is a useful tool to test many hypotheses of generalizations that are based on using “a set of preestablished categories that are assumed to be universal, although in fact they are merely taken from an influential grammatical tradition (e.g., Latin grammar, or English grammar, or generative grammar, or basic literary theory.”<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, the untranslatability of philosophical terms that are derived from different cultures was recently tackled by a dictionary that focuses on “European” philosophical terms. The dictionary was first published in 2004 as *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies, Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*, and was translated into English in 2014. It discusses a series of philosophical terms that prove difficult to translate, given the historical and linguistic complexities of each European culture in question. It aims to thematize the “European differences” in understanding philosophical terms, and it lets each culture speak for itself by using its own terms and concepts. However, any reader of this dictionary will notice that English, German, and French philosophical terms occupied the attention of the editor and that other European languages were marginalized:

Whereas entries on Latin, Greek, French, German and English terms are abundant, rich and highly specialised at the same time, other entries, such as those in Russian or Portuguese are more limited and might disappoint those who are proficient in them. In spite of its claim to “map out European differences,” the Dictionary is centred on the axes that have made the European philosophical tradition such a dense and complex (but also dominant) field of references. Under the rubric “Other Languages” the Basque, Dutch, Danish, Romanian, Portuguese, Catalan terms provide articles which are not so much structured by the history of philosophy as by their difference to other terms of the “mainstream” tradition.<sup>62</sup>

Since the foundation of the International Comparative Literature Association in 1955, the problem of imposing terms to unrelated literary or philosophical concepts was at the center of the debate between the American and French schools of comparative literature. The need

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<sup>61</sup>Martin Haspelmath, “Comparative Concepts and Descriptive Categories in Crosslinguistic Studies,” *Language*, 86 (2010): 663–687 (p. 664).

<sup>62</sup>Lucie Kim-Chi Mercier, “Review of *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, edited by Barbara Cassin” (*Princeton: Princeton University Press*, 2014), *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33 (2016): 355–360 (p. 357).

to survey the critical literary terms in each culture was the main force behind establishing *Le Dictionnaire International des Termes Littéraires*, as Jean-Marie Grassin explains:

In those early times of the internationalism of criticism, they became aware that discrepancies existed in the acceptations of the cognate terms used to discuss literature in different countries. It was not so much a matter of languages as of different academic and cultural traditions in the periodization, theorizing and instrumentation of literature. Various examples of misunderstandings were considered, sometimes so subtle that they remained unnoticed until they end up sometimes in vain disputes.<sup>63</sup>

However, few scholars have examined the conceptual differences between Eurocentric literary terms that are used as a universal language of literary criticism and the indigenous terms produced by non-European cultures, even though such comparisons touch heavily on the ethics of comparative literature studies and on rhetorical and philosophical analysis. Various non-European literary systems are still expressed in identical Eurocentric terms to mislead English, German, and French readers. In 2018, Oxford University Press published *A Dictionary of Arabic Literary Terms and Devices*, in which Marlé Hammond offers more than 300 entries of Arabic literary terms. The dictionary, which conceptually remains a desideratum in the field, continues the Eurocentric knowledge production of non-European literary cultures. Let us take *jinās* as an example to explore the pitfalls of this methodology. The dictionary defines *jinās* as:

A form of paronomasia or wordplay subsuming homonymy and alliteration. It can be either “complete” or “partial.” In complete *jinās*, the same word, or the same vocal formation, is used to indicate two different meanings. Sources give the example of *dhā hiba* (‘bearing a gift’), which may form a *jinās* with *dhāhiba* (‘leaving’).<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the misperception caused by imposing the confusing Eurocentric terms *paronomasia*, *wordplay*, *homonymy*, and *alliteration*, Hammond did not employ any Arabic definitions of *jinās* extracted from the Arabic sources or even consulted the several modern dictionaries of *balāghī* terms that are written in Arabic. The dictionary mentions that *jinās* has only two types, while Arabic scholars of *balāghah*

<sup>63</sup>Jean-Marie Grassin, “Fifty Years of ICLA (Venice, 1955 / 2005),” *À partir de Venise: héritages, passages, horizons: Cinquante ans de l’AILC*, Paola Mildonian, Alessandro Scartella, eds., University Ca’ Foscari, (2007): 465–480 (p. 465).

<sup>64</sup>Marlé Hammond, “*jinās*,” *A Dictionary of Arabic Literary Terms and Devices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

categorized more than eighty types of *jinās*.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Hammond misinterprets the only two types of *jinās* by confusing the *jinās* relationship between *dhā hiba* and *dhāhiba* as part of complete *jinās*. This *jinās* example is extracted from the famous verse of Abu'l-Faṭḥ al-Buṣṭī (d. 1010) that reads:

إِذَا مَلِكٌ لَمْ يَكُنْ دَا هَيْبَةً فَدَعُوْهُ فِدْوَلْتُهُ دَا هَيْبَةً

*If a king was not [generous in sharing his] endowments; leave him alone as his [political] state is soon departing [to a quick collapse]*

Scholars of *balāghah* consider the relationship between the highlighted words as combined *jinās* (*murakkab*). This type of *jinās* refers to the phonological similarity between one word and another similar expression, which is not a word. This expression consists of two lexical items. They phonologically agree with each other but differently than the common *jinās*, where the comparison is only based on two words. In our example, the first expression *dhā hiba* consists of a masculine, singular demonstrative pronoun, which is attached to a feminine noun to convey possessive meaning 'the owner of a generous endowment.' In contrast, the second word *dhāhiba* is a feminine, active participle (*īsm fā'il*) derived from the verb *dhaḥaba*, meaning 'to go away or depart.'<sup>66</sup>

By overlooking the indigenous literary terms and concepts, a new mode of subjectivity has been automatically generated in which European readers do not fully engage with the different "other" and do not celebrate its multiplicity, but instead see the "other" as an ugly replica of European theoretical perfectionism. Such misleading practice of uprooting the text from its own literary criticism and reception, to address the European readers, can be criticized by postcolonial principles:

Eurocentrism appropriates the cultural and material production of non-Europeans while denying both their achievements and its own appropriation, thus consolidating its sense of self and glorifying its own cultural anthropophagy. The West, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett puts it, "separates forms from their performers, converts those forms into influences, brings those influences into the center, leaves the living

<sup>65</sup> in 'ām 'Akkāūī, *al-mu'jam al-mufaṣṣal fī 'ulūm al-balāghah: al-badī' wa al-ba'tān wa al-ma'ānī* (Beirut, Dār el-kutb al-'ilmīah, 1996), 466–526.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Ya'qūb al-Maghrabī, *maūāhib al-fatāḥ fī sharḥ talkhīṣ al-muḥṭāḥ*, edited by Khalil Ibrahim, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutib al-'ilmyah, 2003), 602. See also Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamalkāny, *al-tibīān fī 'ilm al-ba'tān al-muṭālī* 'alā ṭ'jāz al-qur'ān, edited by Ahmed Maṭlob and Khadijah al-Hudithy, (Baghdad: Maṭba'ah al-'āny, 1964), 167.

sources on the margin, and pats itself on the back for being so cosmopolitan."<sup>67</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that it is even more disturbing to discover the vast complications that arise for non-European scholars when any new conceptual definition of a previously unencountered literary or philosophical term is presented by Euro-American scholars. This Eurocentric perspective-based approach is confusing to scholars trained in non-European traditions, as Revathi Krishnaswamy argues:

With the goal of challenging and reversing the "epistemic dependency" of the rest on the West, scholars in different parts of the world are today engaged in the difficult task of recuperating and reactivating diverse indigenous knowledges appropriated by coloniality/modernity.<sup>68</sup>

Non-European scholars face many difficulties in challenging these long-established Eurocentric schools of literary criticism because they first have to learn the conceptual worlds of modern Eurocentric practice with its complicated Greco-Roman background and how these terms and concepts are imposed on the unrelated non-European examples. They then have to discover how to generate a better methodology to reform any invited misunderstandings, while expecting that this reformation could quickly be rejected from the hegemonic academic institutions that always prefer their well-established Eurocentric tools of hegemony to not be challenged. The treatment of non-European texts as no more than producers of data to be collected, theorized, and understood provides a one-sided broken mirror, as Mohamed-Salah Omri argues:

Exclusive basis in Western poetics, particularly practical criticism, has severed this literature from its intellectual situation, ignoring local interpretive models and shying away from global theory. Expertise in a national literature, which I understand to mean more than knowing the national language, should bring knowledge of the national tradition to bear on the illumination of the text.<sup>69</sup>

In his forward to Hamid Dabashi's book *Can Non-Europeans think?*, Walter Dignolo explores the correlation between racism and approved intelligence in Eurocentric perspectives. He confirms that the modern

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<sup>67</sup>Shohat and Stam, 2–3.

<sup>68</sup>Revathi Krishnaswamy, "Toward World Literary Knowledges: Theory in the Age of Globalization," *Comparative Literature* 62 (2010): 399–419 (p. 408).

<sup>69</sup>Mohamed-Salah Omri, *Nationalism, Islam and World Literature: Sites of confluence in the writings of Mahmud al-Mas'adi* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 17.

racial classification of accepted intelligence is grounded in the old military colonialism that enjoys the epistemic privilege of classifying without being classified:

It is not trivial because epistemic racism crosses the lines of social and institutional spheres. Both questions indeed unveil epistemic racism hidden beneath the naturalization of certain ways of thinking and producing knowledge that are given the name Eurocentrism. Racism is not a question of one's blood type (the Christian criterion used in sixteenth-century Spain to distinguish Christians from Moors and Jews in Europe) or the colour of one's skin (Africans and the New World civilizations). Racism consists in devaluing the humanity of certain people by dismissing it or playing it down (even when not intentional) at the same time as highlighting and playing up European philosophy, assuming it to be universal. It may be global, because it piggybacks on imperial expansion, but it certainly cannot be universal. Racism is a classification, and classification is an epistemic manoeuvre rather than an ontological entity that carries with it the essence of the classification. It is a system of classification enacted by actors, institutions and categories of thought that enjoy the privilege of being hegemonic or dominant, and which imposes itself as ontological truth reinforced by "scientific" research.<sup>70</sup>

The Eurocentric frame of comparative literature, in which the methodologies of non-European literary criticism are misrepresented by imposing Euro-American terms and concepts, demolish any fair chance of fruitful comparisons. This Eurocentric setting is like covering an African or Asian human in white paint so that they can be re-evaluated as a thinking human and thus being respected as an equal by their Eurocentric peers.<sup>71</sup> This white paint covers the original features that make the non-European language speaks for itself and paves the way towards unfair comparisons that would likely turn the non-European features into an ugly replica of their assumed Eurocentric perfection. Sheldon Pollock encourages comparatists to avoid such Eurocentric methodologies in his epistemological reflections on the fundamental characters of unbiased comparison:

If comparison is necessary, the will to domination that sometimes seems built into the comparative method is certainly not. It is possible to produce comparison without hegemony across the human sciences. We begin to do this by making our inevitable but implicit comparisons explicit, explain what role they are playing in the interpretation of our

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<sup>70</sup>Walter Dignolo, forward to Hamid Dabashi: *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 8–42 (pp. 10–11).

<sup>71</sup>Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove, 1967), 9.

primary object, and exercise sufficient reflexivity to avoid demanding symmetry when there is only synchronicity, turning difference into deficiency, or expanding particularity into paradigm.<sup>72</sup>

Literary and philosophical terms are not mere terms. They are mirrors that reflect the unique nature of each culture and its people's literary tastes. Literary and philosophical terms cannot be considered universal because they are not similar to the terms used in applied sciences, such as chemistry or mathematics, where each term means the same in every country and context. Each language creates its own literary terms that conceptually and culturally express its own literary culture. Non-European literary terms should be foreignized rather than domesticated.

The ardent readers should be aware of the conceptual differences between his/her own practice and the studied non-European literary criticism. Ayman El-Desouky argues that the mastery of non-European languages is insufficient for recognizing its literary nature without establishing a genuine dialogue with its indigenous tradition of textual analysis. El-Desouky cautions Euro-American readers that when "critical traditions of non-European languages are approached ethnographically for knowledge gathered, and then dropped when it comes to the actual knowledge production, . . . only European conceptual languages are seen to offer the requisite analytic tools and concepts."<sup>73</sup>

By acknowledging the non-European terms and concepts, within its indigenous frame of literary culture, scholars can reinvigorate the discipline of comparative literature in a manner that is ethically unbiased to the linguistic and cultural differences. Discovering such conceptual differences between the literary terms of each language should not be a barrier for specialists who believe in the benefits of multiculturalism; as Emily Apter convincingly argues, "The focus on the untranslatable might serve to wean comparative literature from a soft international diplomacy model and from its tendency to search for similarity and identity, screen out disagreement, and avoid direct encounters with insecurable knowledge."<sup>74</sup> Once non-European

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<sup>72</sup>Sheldon Pollock, "Comparison without Hegemony," in Hans Joas and Barbro Klein, eds., *The Benefit of Broad Horizons: Intellectual and Institutional Preconditions for a Global Social Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 185–204 (p. 202).

<sup>73</sup>Ayman El-Desouky, "Beyond Spatiality: Theorising the Local and Untranslatability as Comparative Critical Method." in Joachim Küpper, ed., *Approaches to World Literature, Vol. 1*, World Literatures Series. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 59–86 (p. 86).

<sup>74</sup>Emily Apter, "Philosophical Translation and Untranslatability: Translation as Critical Pedagogy," *Profession* (2010): 50–63 (p. 61).

literary criticism breaks away from this hegemonic system and converts itself into a respected dominant system with its own independent terms and concepts, only then will these non-European cultures be able to speak for themselves in response to the counter-restrictions, redefinitions, and exclusions that were imposed on them by employing Eurocentric terms, concepts, and theories.