9. Defying Language Ideologies
A View from Morocco

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> There aren't many writers, Arab or otherwise, who ask themselves this unsettling question about the language they write in, and none of them wonders if they've chosen the wrong one. A writer knows instinctively what language he'll write in, the same way he knows the language of his audience. The language of reading and writing goes without saying. For Moroccan writers or let us say, Maghrebian writers, it's not so straightforward. Every Maghrebian writers has a story to tell about their language or languages – Arabic, French, Tamazight – a story always on the tip of their tongue, that constitutes the background of what they write, so that nothing they say can be understood without it. (Kilito, *The Tongue* 82)

The complex multilingual literary traditions in Morocco and the wider Maghreb[1] with their print/oral cultures have yet to be studied from the point of view of their co-constitution and their cultural, linguistic, and historical entanglement. As Abdelfattah Kilito states in the above quote, the Maghreb and Morocco's long history of multilingualism is a crucial component of writing and reading practices in the region; therefore, a monolingual reading and framing of the region's postcolonial multilingual literary field is problematic.[2] Even more problematic is the recent polarized understanding of language politics in the region. The increasing ideological divide between diverse members of the Moroccan intelligentsia has become dangerously embodied in the linguistic divide (mainly Arabic Fuṣḥā[3] versus French), and has serious repercussions on the cultural and political sphere. Arabic Fuṣḥā has come to represent regressive/Islamist forces and French, progressive, secular, Westernized and democratic ones: an arbitrary opposition that obscures the complex realities on the ground. Arabic Fuṣḥā is also presented in some circles as '*la langue de bois*' or a 'wooden language' that does not allow cultural

or literary creativity and is allegedly responsible for the crisis in Morocco's educational system, an allegation that betrays both an internalization of orientalist tropes in regard to Arabic and an ignorance of the failure of the postcolonial state's policies at implementing viable multilingual strategies in education. It also shows ignorance of literature written in Arabic in Morocco and the wider Arabic-speaking world, as a single glance at Arabic literature testifies to the avant-garde trends in its politics and aesthetics. Moreover, despite the rich oral cultural heritage of Morocco's vernacular languages Dārija and Tmazight, which in fact jointly comprise the mother tongues of the majority of Moroccans, both languages are relegated to the margins with no symbolic, cultural, or economic prestige linked to them. Morocco's multilingual scene is therefore fragmented along the lines of class, regionalism, ethnicity and, in recent decades, ideology, as languages have come to signify the ideological orientations of their users.

Morocco has a long history of multilingualism that predates French and Spanish colonialism (1912-1956). Vernacular languages such as Dārija and Tmazight cohabited with Fuṣḥā as well as Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish. These languages have all shaped the oral and written cultures of Morocco (Ennaji, "Aspects of Multilingualism"; *Multilinguism*). The arrival of French and Spanish as colonial languages in the early twentieth century further complicated the picture, particularly when the French colonial power imposed their language as the sole language of education and administration (Segalla). The Moroccan State's ambiguous politics of Arabization in the aftermath of independence in 1956 did not succeed in removing French from the public sphere. Today, it remains the language of higher education and administration, and is spoken widely in Morocco's central administrative and economic cities such as Rabat and Casablanca (Elbiad; Ennaji, *Multilinguism*). English, meanwhile, is increasingly recognized as the new lingua franca of business and private education (Sadiqi, "The Spread"). French has retained, to a large degree, its power status since colonial times as an urban language largely used by the educated middle and upper classes.

In fact, the state's Arabization policies were influenced by French colonial policies in the way the state has promoted a linguistic divide in education: Arabic has been assigned to teaching in the Humanities; and French to technology and the sciences, presumed to be the tools of progress and development in the country.[4] This has not only devalued some academic disciplines that were seen as 'useless', but also the Arabic language, which has remained subordinate to French.[5] One can clearly deduce that Arabization did not fully

decolonize the education system, which is still largely geared to the "the class interests of the dominant elites," as Zeleza argues in the case of other African postcolonial nations (23). This unfinished Arabization policy has compounded the existing colonial divide between members of the Moroccan intelligentsia who were educated either in French or in Arabic (and rarely adequately in both languages). This divide often has repercussions: for example, it has instigated the recent campaign by some intellectuals to abolish Arabic Fuṣḥā, the language of education in primary and secondary schools, which is alleged to be part of the current crisis in the Moroccan educational system, and to replace it with the spoken Dārija as the new language of instruction.[6] At the same time, Arabic Fuṣḥā is perceived in most postcolonial Arabic-speaking nations as the emblem of their 'decolonized' Arab national identity, a cosmopolitan, transregional, and symbolic language representing a rich and prestigious cultural heritage. Its coexistence with vernacular spoken forms of Arabic (which are seen as inferior) has always been the subject of fierce debates across the region that reflect anxieties on education, socio-economic changes, and perceptions of national identities.[7]

The dangerous turn that projects political problems onto languages has spawned a number of heated discussions around the social, economic, and political 'merits' of each language and tends to gloss over the socio-economic and political realities that have instigated these forms of polarizations and the divisive agendas behind them. It is certain that multilingualism is not a unifying factor, and that there have been fractures between languages and speakers and asymmetries of access to texts and traditions in most multilingual contexts, including that of Morocco. Multilingualism inhabits hierarchical structures and practices in Morocco and the wider Maghreb and elsewhere, but it is important to debunk the rise of exclusivist language ideologies that divide and *polarize* communities. In fact, in their quotidian experience, many Moroccans 'live in languages' (Said) and move between speaking, reading, and writing in Dārija, Tmazight, French, Spanish, and Arabic Fuṣḥā, depending on their geographical location, and their social class and education.

I argue that it is by literary tastes and practices (and not the literary field, which also remains polarized, as I will show later) that language ideologies are defined, as most writers/authors in Arabic, French, Dārija, and Tmazight acknowledge the fluidity of all these languages and the way they influence their writings consciously or unconsciously in what Kilito calls "thinking in one language and writing in another" ("The Tongue" 82). I argue, therefore, that the top-down monocultural policies of the postcolonial Moroccan state

(similar to the Maghrebi states of Tunisia and Algeria), based on the myth of a common identity between nation and language, have been challenged by literary tastes and practices, both written and oral. I seek to show how in multilingual contexts like that of Morocco, literary tastes and practices defy linguistic divides and offer a more nuanced understanding of the co-constitution of languages and cultures in the way, for example, authors draw on multilingual sources and influences. I start by reflecting on the legacies of the formation of the elite in Morocco and show how it has been shaped by colonial legacies. I argue that a generation of Moroccan writers and intellectuals who come of age during the Decolonization era of the 1960s-70s had a vibrant understanding of multilingualism that defied both the state's monoculturalism and colonial hegemony. Despite the rise of linguistic factionalism in recent decades, literature remains a vibrant venue for the practice of multilingualism as postcolonial writers incorporate various literary models/genres, including local oral narrative forms, demonstrating how this incorporation stems from a lived experience of multilingualism and its wider practices of reading and writing that go beyond linguistic and ideological divides.

9.1 Legacies of the Formation of the Elite in Morocco

In his autobiographical text *The Clash of Images*, Abdelfattah Kilito outlines the anxieties of Moroccan parents during the late colonial period (late 1940s) about sending their children to French colonial schools, worrying that the younger generation would lose their identity and culture. Young Kilito overheard his father and grandfather arguing over whether to allow him to attend a French colonial school after Kilito had spent some time studying at the traditional mosque, learning Classical Arabic and how to recite the Quran. His grandfather thinks that "the French school would teach nothing but impiety" (*The Clash* 50) but finally gives in to the trend, as it was common then for middle-class children to be sent to French schools in order to do well in life. Kilito interpreted his grandfather's act of surrender:

> the patriarch [Kilito's grandfather] had arrived at the abrupt realization that the conflicts dividing the world are caused by men, by history, and not by languages as such – that French, like Arabic, is essentially a system of sounds and letters, a game with rules of grammar and syntax, and that in this sense all languages are equal, since each is a gift from God. (*The Clash* 27-28)

In his satirical way, Kilito seems to be downplaying the role of language and suggests that it is separate from culture. Yet is not language always linked to power, as Ronald Barthes asserts in his *Elements of Semiology*? Can language be cleanly separated from culture? The Tunisian Albert Memmi ironically points to the way French language is linked to a construction of knowledge and authority:

> Is the French language only a precise and efficient writing instrument? Or is it that miraculous chest in which are heaped up discoveries and victories, writers and moralists, philosophers and scholars, heroes and adventurers, in which the treasures of the intellect of the French soul are transformed into one single legend? (119)

Although the French colonial intervention in Morocco lasted four and half decades (1912-1956) and took the form of a protectorate, rather than annexation as with neighboring Algeria, it is accredited with changing Moroccan identity, particularly its relationship to the questions of language, culture, ethnicity, and Islam (Ennaji, *Multiligualism*). In fact, it has had a long-lasting legacy on the formation of a Moroccan intelligentsia that is educated either in French or Arabic but rarely in both, which has subsequently created the current ideological divides, embedded in linguistic ones.

Some of the most important contemporary intellectuals in Morocco were educated in French colonial schools and/or in France. The group of nationalists who started the anti-colonial protest movement in the 1930s was mostly educated at French colonial schools; they were predominantly from upper-class backgrounds in larger cities. The political program they put forward at the end of the 1930s was inspired by French ideas and values as well as notions of a reformist Islam, which show their perception of French education as a modernizing force (Campbell 12). Moreover, novelists who wrote in Arabic and French in the 1950s, '60s and '70s were also shaped by French education as well as by their access to a wide range of books from Europe and the Middle East (Campbell 15). A generation of Moroccan intellectuals who attended French colonial schools or bilingual nationalist schools under colonialism came of age in the 1960-70s, at the height of the decolonization period; they contributed to the enrichment of Arabic critical thoughts, and were avid believers in multilingualism. Hisham Sharabi argues that they were influenced by the encounter with new epistemological trends coming from France and the West (171); however, they were not just translators of these trends but equal interlocutors in the ways they appropriated these new methodologies

and created a language of radical Arab critique with the aim of decolonizing Arab thoughts and critiquing the hegemony of the West. In other words, there was a certain productive tension in these intellectuals' relationship to Europe as they adopted a 'double critique' (Khatibi): of European thoughts and of the new nationalism of the postcolonial states. Therefore, despite the belief in Arabization, French was viewed as valuable in terms of allowing access to other intellectual movements. The late Mehdi Ben Barka, a staunch leftist intellectual, politician, and icon of the decolonization movement in the Global South, affirms in the immediate aftermath of independence in Morocco in 1956 that although Arabizing the education system was crucial, French was a valuable language that would allow Morocco to open up to the West and maintain a bridge or dialogue with its intellectual and social movements, he states:

> We intend to conserve the use of French not so much through love of France but by the necessity of having an opening into the West … we are firmly decided to go ahead with Arabization … and to affirm our Islamic culture but we also propose to open windows onto Western culture by using French as a complementary language … so as not to remain in asphyxiating isolation. (Ben Barka cited in Zartmann 328)

Ben Barka represents a generation of 'modernizing' Moroccan intellectuals who were proud of their Arabo-Berber Islamic culture but equally valued the French language as a tool to combat political and intellectual isolation given the growing tyranny of the postcolonial state in the 1960s and '70s, particularly under the regime of Hassan II. French, like other European languages, was also transformed during and after the colonial encounter in the ways it was appropriated, domesticated, and subsequently enriched with new local paradigms and intellectual trends (Zeleza 22).

However, some of the writers who could only write in French, such as Abdellatif Laabi, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Driss Charaibi, and others – although some of these who were literate in Arabic Fuṣḥā agonized about writing in French during the decolonization era as French was perceived an alien language or 'the language of the former conqueror' as Assia Djebar refers to it in her historical novel *Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade* (1993, 181). This perception has changed radically from the 1970s onwards (Abdalaoui). This is because there has been a more assertive understanding that the French language extends beyond the borders of France and therefore, "writing in French constitutes a double strategy of subversion directed against both the former colonial

power and the patriarchal and authoritarian regimes that have governed since independence" (Dobie 35). Arabic, a cosmopolitan, transregional, and symbolic language, was viewed, on the other hand, as an important component for the construction of national identity and for "the re-birth of traditional Islamic culture and national identity" (Sadiqi, *Women, Gender, and Language* 47). It was the language of Arab patriotism that facilitated the inclusion of Morocco in a pan-Arabic 'imagined community' representing a rich and prestigious cultural heritage. Therefore, unlike the vernacular languages of Dārija and Tmazight, Arabic "was viewed as a viable 'literary' alternative to French and served to define Morocco as an Arab country against France" (Elinson 716).

It is important to stress, therefore, that the generation of Moroccan writers/intellectuals who matured during the decolonization period in late 1960s-70s, figures such as Mohamed Berrada, Abdallah Laroui, Abdellatif Laabi, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Mohamed Zafzaf, and others, were against both state's monoculturalism and the hegemony of the Francophonie. They also celebrated multilingualism and were active in translating critical and literary works from Arabic to French and vice versa as they carved out different spaces or affiliations from those imposed on them either by the legacies of colonialism or by nationalist demands. This multilingual spirit has predominantly been lost to subsequent generations of writers who fell back to the old tropes of French being the language of the enemy if they happen to write only in Arabic, and Arabic being *la langue de bois* (a 'wooden language') as those writing only in French claim, arguing that the language does not allow creativity or taboo-breaking because of its association with the Quran and Islam.[8] This can be largely attributed to the failure of the Arabization policies and the education system that has maintained the power of French as the language of the elite and has in turn disempowered Arabic Fuṣḥā as well as the vernaculars Dārija and Tmazight. If French colonial authority was not interested in creating a meritocratic educational system for all sections of society, as they were keen to maintain the division between elites and the masses, the postcolonial Moroccan state did not succeed in breaking this division. Morocco's elites are still largely educated in French.

The unfinished and ambiguous state's nationalist project has pushed for Arabic as the language of national identity while maintaining French as the language of science and administration. This has, on the one hand, largely demoted Arabic, and, on the other hand, reinforced the idea that "languages encode national value. To speak or write in French is therefore to perpetuate French values" (Kaye and Zoubir Page No). This Arabization has also resulted

in the marginalization of Morocco's Amazigh population, their culture and language, as they were subsumed under the presumed Arabo-Islamic identity of the newly independent nation. However, in the 1980s, a significant Amazigh cultural movement erupted in Morocco, calling for the linguistic and cultural rights of Amazigh people. The movement has benefited from the recent pro-democracy movements around the Arab world, and made some gains that were unthinkable years ago, including state recognition of Amazigh cultural identity and of the Tmazight language as the second official language of the country in the amended Moroccan constitution of 2011 (Errihani; Maddy-Weitzman). This official recognition of Moroccan linguistic and cultural diversity will transform the Moroccan cultural scene in the coming decades. Tmazight is now taught in primary schools in Imazighen areas, a change likely to engender a written Amazigh culture over the coming years. While Tmazight has so far been predominantly oral, it has deeply influenced and shaped Moroccan culture and literature.

9.2 Language 'Choice' and the Creation of a Polarized Literary Field

In this section, I argue for the historical contextualization of the concept of language 'choice' in multilingual postcolonial contexts such as that of Morocco. If the politics of language choice in the immediate aftermath of independence in the 1950s and 1960s centered around the question of decolonizing national cultures by promoting indigenous languages at the expense of the forcibly imposed foreign colonial languages such as English or French, today, the latter languages are no longer perceived as foreign and have been largely domesticated and appropriated. This is particularly the case in the Maghreb, where French has become an integral part of the multilingual scene in the region. However, I argue that critics' and novelists' 'choice' of the language in which to write is still largely linked to colonial legacies, the centrality of European literary traditions, markets, and their "technologies of recognition" (Shih 17). In the aftermath of independence in the Maghreb, those who wrote in Arabic were never asked about their choice, unlike those who wrote in French, because of the presumption that writing in Arabic was part of the project of Arab national identity building. French, on the other hand, was considered problematic and had to be defended as a choice (Kilito, *ʾAtakallam* 16). Most Francophone writers did not really have a choice, as they could only

write in French, and Arabic was not accessible to them because of their French educations. French was also perceived at the time as the language that allowed the liberation of individuals from social and religious taboos (Kilito, *ʾAtakallam* 16), which, to my mind, is an orientalist legacy that considers Arabic a fixed and 'conservative' language, a perception which has been deconstructed by many writers in Morocco and in the Middle East who have used Arabic to break social and political taboos. Kilito also claims that writing in French has allowed writers to access a much larger readership than that available in Morocco and the Arab world and, therefore, facilitated translation into other European languages (*ʾAtakallam* 16). In her recent work on contemporary Francophone literature in Morocco, Valerie Orlando argues in her book *Francophone Voices of the 'New Morocco' in Film and Print* that Francophone novelists today are writing for themselves and their own circles of readership in Morocco rather than targeting French and wider Francophone readerships; but they are still translated into other languages more frequently.

The postcolonial critic Robert Young argues that postcolonial "language anxiety" is particularly intense in the Maghreb today even though "[t]he availability of Arabic as a literary language, and its proliferating power as the language of the world's great literatures, might have been expected to produce a situation in which language anxiety would not be an issue for recent North African writers, but in fact, the very opposite is the case" (35). Young's analysis of the Maghreb's multilingual literary scene refers more to the historical moment of decolonization in the 1960s-70s, when Maghrebi writers who could only write in French and were the products of a French colonial educational system agonized about writing in French, which was then seen as an alien language. But as I have argued above, Francophone writers of later generations have been more confident about writing in French and have emphasized its close relationship with Arabic. Young also claims that some Maghrebi writers prefer to write in French or English because Arabic is not considered their mother tongue and different from their spoken dialect (Arabic Fuṣḥā is not the mother tongue of anyone in the Arabic-speaking world, and neither is French) and that it is distant "from certain areas of human experience, such as intimacy, which, writers argue, it finds impossible to express" particularly for women writers and hence, Young claims, there are many Arab Anglophone woman writers in the diaspora (38). This analysis glosses over the fact that modern and contemporary Arabic literature written in Arabic has been extensively engaged with various social and political issues, particularly women's rights; it is also problematic in linking Arab diasporic writ-

ing by women (most of whom can only write in English, since Arabic is inaccessible to them for various reasons to do with education and geographical location) with the perception that Arabic language is not adequate to address feminist issues.[9] Young misses the most important point here: about the language question in the Maghreb which is to do with the centrality of colonial legacies in the Maghreb/Mashriq relations, which are still mediated through the West's "technologies of recognition" (Shih 17). Today, while some Moroccan authors write solely in French or in Arabic, there are others like Abdallah Laroui and Kilito who write their philosophical and critical texts in French and their fiction in Arabic. Laroui, for his part, recognizes that his critical and philosophical texts are likely to be ignored in the Arab-speaking Mashreq, or Middle East, but will be appreciated by Europeans. It is the European interest in his critical texts, he notes, that always triggers interest from the Mashriq in his ideas – as was the case of his 1967 book *L'Idéologie arabe contemporaine* (Kilito, *ʾAtakallam* 42). Here, the question of the power of European academic and literary markets, as well as colonial legacies in the Arab-speaking Maghreb and Mashreq, is crucial. Arabic critical and literary productions have been mediated by the West in the last century or so, in the sense that Arabic critical and literary production becomes only known to Arabic-speaking audiences through its reception in Europe. For example, if an Arabic critical book is translated into French and English, only then does it become important in the Arab-speaking region, but not before that European recognition. Laroui claims that: "any contact between us – Maghrebis, Arabs or Muslims – passes through the West" (cited in Kilito, *ʾAtakallam* 42). There is a kind of a tacit request for recognition that passes through the West. This is what Shu-mei Shih refers to as "technologies of recognition" which "have largely operated alongside and within national, political, cultural, economic, and linguistic hierarchies," and which she defines as "the mechanisms in the discursive (un)conscious – with bearings on social and cultural (mis)understandings that produce 'the West' as the agent of recognition and 'the rest' as the object of recognition, in representation" (17). In this sense, Mashriqi-Maghrebi relations have yet to overcome colonial legacies and the way the West still mediates their 'recognition' of each other's cultural and critical production. This may partly explain the marginal position assigned to Moroccan and Maghrebi literature within the larger category of Arabic literature.

There are two literary systems in Morocco now, one produced in French and one in Arabic, directed at two different audiences. Research on Moroccan literature is focused either on the literature written in French or on the

literature written in Arabic. This is the case not only in Arabic studies departments and Francophone studies departments in Europe and North America, but even in Morocco, where researchers do not interrelate these two fields of production. This is a symptom of the unproductive ideological dichotomy set up between languages that are perceived as national and those perceived as foreign, and which contributes to the creation of a disconnected and polarized multilingual literary field. This polarized multilingual literary field and how it is studied in monolingual literary systems is what Kilito calls "split tongue" (*lisān maflūq*) and "split literature" (*ʿadab maflūq*) (*ʾAtakallam* 16). For Kilito, it is not the question of a 'doubleness' of language expression that is the problem in Morocco in the field of literature, but rather the problem lies in the division between the two literary worlds, which does not allow for mutual recognition and analysis (*ʾAtakallam* 16). The Moroccan literary field is therefore marked not by 'linguistic doubleness' as such, but by two types of monolingual literary systems, which coexist but remain separate and pose huge obstacles for those who attempt to create a multilingual literary history of Moroccan literature. This is another symptom of the continuous re-inscription of the nation and national literature with the problem of assuming an identity between language and nation and hence the production of single-language, national, or quasi-national modern literary histories in multilingual nations.

9.3 Towards a Connected Multilingual Literary Field

Dominant reading practices of multilingual literary traditions in world literature and postcolonial studies are predominantly based on binary oppositions between texts written in different languages in the same context; they place these texts in independent literary traditions with the premise that they have no impact on each, thereby reifying each tradition. These monolingual practices tend to produce selective single-language literary histories (e.g. Arabophone or Francophone in the case of Morocco and the Maghreb), which in turn foreground communal, ideological and regional divisions that are more reflective of modern and contemporary issues. I argue for the adoption of a comparative multilingual 'reading together' – an entangled reading of both Moroccan and Maghrebi literary traditions in Arabic, French, Spanish, Tmazight and Dārija among other languages – to challenge the continuous re-inscription of the nation and national literature with the problem of assuming an identity between the language and nation. This approach (a)

draws on multilingual sources, (b) privileges the specificity of the literary traditions rather than language categorization, and (c) considers these texts' mutual historical, cultural, geographical, political, and aesthetic interwovenness and implications as well as their co-constitution in their multilingual context. 'Reading together' may offer the various facets of the same social, historical, and cultural contexts; it can demonstrate points of convergence but also draw attention to exclusions and silences.

Abdellatif Laabi, the co-founder of the *Souffles/Anfās* bilingual French/Arabic review in the 1960s, is one of the Moroccan writers in post-independent Morocco to emphasize the importance of 'reading together' Moroccan literature in Arabic and French. The journal resisted both state-imposed monoculturalism, on one side, and French colonial and cultural hegemony, on the other. Madeleine Dobie claims that *Souffles/Anfās* is an early example of breaking down a normative understanding of Moroccan multilingual literature:

> An early model of literary bilingualism in the arena of publishing was furnished by the Moroccan journal *Souffles*, which between 1966 and 1971 under the direction of Abdellatif Laabi and Abraham Serfaty, published essays and poetry by Maghrebian writers, and served as an outlet for avant-garde literature that broke with the themes and forms espoused by the first post-independence generation of writers. Rejecting the monoculturalism of the post-independence regimes, *Souffles* espoused a multiculturalist ideal of the Maghreb and strove to enact this ideal by publishing, from1968, texts in Arabic alongside texts in French. (37)

Souffles/Anfās's project to heal the divide between intellectuals and writers in French and Arabic and create a debate between them came to an end in 1972, when the magazine was shut down by the regime. Khatibi's book *Le Roman maghrébin* (1968) is an early example of a literary history that goes beyond language determinism and includes Moroccan novels in both Arabic and French. Mohammed Berrada's translation of the book to Arabic in 1971 is a testimony to the belief that Moroccan novels should be read and analyzed beyond linguistic divisions. As I argued above, Moroccan writers and critics in the post-independence era were more attuned to the danger of linguistic determinism and segregation; they were young at the time of independence and emerged in the late 1960s as a powerful cultural and political force whose aspirations had been thrashed by the postcolonial regime and its increasing tyranny. It is possible, in addition to my preceding argument about the failure of Arabization and the education system in nurturing the multilingual field in Morocco,

that monoculturalism and linguistic determinism disappeared from Moroccan literary scene in the 1980s because of the state's tyranny during the so-called Lead Years and the repressive regime of the 1970s-90s with its policies of dividing and ruling Morocco's Francophone and Arabophone intelligentsias.

A 'reading together' or 'reading side-by-side' and comparatively postcolonial multilingual Moroccan literature is a reading that has the potential to create a connected multilingual literary field in Morocco beyond the ideological language dichotomy or the 'national'/'foreign' language paradigm, existing hierarchies, divisions, and exclusions. It is a way of reading that challenges not only the nationalist and regional language-based analysis of Moroccan postcolonial literature but also the divide between Arabophone and Francophone cultural and literary producers, critics and intellectuals. This approach moves away from the common reading of postcolonial Moroccan novels in French either as alienated from the national culture and hence excluded from the Moroccan literary canon or as transnational and cosmopolitan, which not only disconnect them from their vernacular context, but also from the novels written in Arabic. 'Reading together' overcomes the limitations of hegemonic regional literary systems such as those of Arabic or French, which are both exclusive and do not pay attention to the particularities of local contexts, particularly those with a complex and rich multilingual history and quotidian life like the Maghreb and Morocco.

This way of reading also sheds light on the ways languages transcend polarization in literary writing and proves that languages construct themselves through contact with other languages in the way most authors draw on other local languages in their writing; for example, the way writers in Arabic use French, Dārija, and Tmazight words and imaginaries, and those who write in French draw heavily on Arabic and Dārija references. This multilingual approach stresses the interconnection of literary texts and their relationship to the same local context from which they have emerged. Laabi expresses this idea when he claims that:

> When I write, I use all my languages – my language of origin and the one I acquired, in French of course but also in my native languages, the Moroccan dialect and Classical Arabic, and why not Spanish, which I have learned and loved. Each of these languages opens up in my writing. The text produced becomes polyglot, even if it is written in one language. (cited in El Younssi 236)[10]

Behind each language, there are other languages, both oral and written, as languages in multilingual contexts are inhabited by others; Khatibi's notion of bi-langue expresses the idea that languages are always inhabited by other languages and there is always a process of intercultural and linguistic translation occurring in the act of using them. Kilito expresses this idea when he claims: "I have two hands. I think that I write Arabic with my right hand and French with my left – what we call, I think, ambidexterity. If I had to find words to qualify these two, I would say that Arabic is historical and French geographical" (cited in El Younssi 236-7). Kilito, who usually writes his critical essays in French (though sometimes in Arabic) and his novels in Arabic, argues that Moroccans move between various languages in their daily lives and that this is also inscribed in their writing. He claims that those who write in Arabic are heavily influenced in their writing by the expressions and style of the French language as well as French literary genres to which they have been exposed; as for those who write in French, they have always maintained that Arabic language is strongly present in their writing and that "behind French letters, there are Arabic ones" (*ʾAtakallam* 16). Younger generations of Moroccan writers in all languages such as Yacine Adnan, Abdallah Taia, Driss Ksikes, and others emphasize the multilingual reading and writing practices in Morocco and the need to nurture them instead of pitting them against each other.[11] Multilingualism is celebrated within literary texts themselves in terms of the use of other languages in the narratives and also manifests itself in the idea of languages being embedded within each other in the sense that one reads or writes in one language while hearing other local languages that shape one's expression and understanding.

9.4 Conclusion

A monolingual reading and framing of Morocco's postcolonial multilingual literary field is problematic in the way it promotes a polarized understanding of language politics in Morocco and the way these various languages have been cohabiting and have co-constituted a rich literary field. These monolingual practices tend to produce selective single language literary histories (e.g. Arabophone or Francophone), which in turn foreground communal, ideological, and regional divisions that are more reflective of modern and contemporary issues. It also imprisons languages in divisive ideologies that are reflective of socio-economic and political problems rather than the lived real-

ities of the interconnection of languages and cultures. A multilingual 'reading together' approach can provide the tools to rewrite a non-fixed multilingual postcolonial Moroccan and Maghrebi literary history that is not determined by linguistic paradigms, but rather inspired by shared narrative traditions, contexts, histories, intertwined textualities, aesthetics, and politics.

Decades after national independence in 1956 and Arabization, language politics in Morocco are more complex than ever. This is not only because of persistent colonial legacies, class divisions, the crisis of the education system, and regional diversity, but also because of the integration of Morocco into the neo-liberal market economy and globalization, which has made the mastery of not only French but most importantly English obligatory for entry into the neoliberal market economy and has largely marginalized Arabic Fuṣḥā, Dārija, and Tmazight. It is through literary/cultural tastes and practices that linguistic divides are defied as most writers testify to the fluidity of languages in multilingual contexts such as that of Morocco and affirm that these languages influence their writings directly or indirectly. Cultural productions then offer a more nuanced understanding of the co-constitution of languages and cultures in the way, for example, authors draw on multilingual sources and influences. Moreover, Morocco's multilingual literature is complex in its groundedness in local and vernacular cultures, and is influenced by cosmopolitan, transnational, Arabic, and European literary traditions and genres. Therefore, the unproductive debate on the merits of Dārija and Fuṣḥā and the pitting of Fuṣḥā against Morocco's vernacular languages is problematic in how it considers Dārija and Tmazight as secondary and vulgar to Arabic Fuṣḥā or treats Fuṣḥā as an outdated language. Both Dārija and Tmazight have a rich cultural heritage behind them produced in poetry, proverbs, legends, stories, and music as well as rich aesthetics and wider circulation around the country. There have been various initiatives to give Dārija its due place in society in the form of the publication of newspapers in Dārija, and novels written in Dārija. Moreover, Dārija is also the dominant language of performances, TV shows, dramas, films and popular music and poetry; it should be given its due place in society as a rich and artistic language that has a wide appeal and circulation across Morocco. As I argued earlier, the recognition of Tmazight as a national language coupled with its transformation as a written language will revolutionize cultural production in Morocco in the near future. French has become an integral part of the multilingual literary scene in Morocco and the Maghreb; therefore, one needs to move beyond the postcolonial "language anxiety" paradigm and consider its productive role in

reshaping the literary field in the region. The multilingual scene in the country ought to be nurtured instead of languages being pitted against one another or ideologically instrumentalized, as is currently the case.

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Notes

1 This paper focuses mainly on Morocco; however, the discussion on Moroccan multilingualism and language ideologies are very pertinent to other Maghrebi countries, particularly Algeria and Tunisia. The three countries have a complex multilingual scene that predated the arrival of French colonialism in the way Arabic Fuṣḥā cohabited with vernacular languages such as Dārija (spoken Moroccan Arabic) and Tmazight (the language of the indigenous population) and a variety of Judeo-Arabic. They also share common colonial legacies to do with the perception of Arabic, French and vernacular languages after independence. This had instigated an ambiguous politics of Arabization that has cemented exclusivist language ideologies instead of nurturing multilingualism in the region.

2 Moroccan multilingual literature is still predominantly read monolingually in different literary systems; for example, literature produced in Arabic is assigned a very marginal position in the modern Arabic literary tradition. Most anthologies and literary histories of Arabic literature are Mashriqi (Middle East) centric, and most of them consider Moroccan (and Maghrebi) modern and pre-modern literary traditions to be insignificant. Most of the books consulted on modern Arabic mention the odd Moroccan novelist like Mohamed Choukri or Mohammed Zafzaf (perhaps because both authors are perceived as rebellious) without really engaging with their works, see for example, Allen (1987); Badawi (1993); Hafez (1993); Moosa (1997). Moreover, Moroccan literature in French remain marginal to both the Francophone literary system and to the Arabic one; in fact, they have been analysed in a way to suggest their 'alienation' from the national culture despite the fact that Moroccan literature in French maintain a strong relation with what Mezgueldi calls "maternal culture" (1) or Morocco's oral literary tradition. This multilingual literature is rarely read together and connectively beyond exclusivist nationalist or regional frameworks.

3 Standard Arabic used in print culture, media, and religious affairs, and modernised form of classical or Quranic Arabic.

4 For a discussion of the failure of the educational system in Morocco and the Francophone/Arabophone divide and its ideological implications, see Zniber (2014).

5 According to Mamdani the education of African intellectuals in languages that are not the mother tongues of the masses creates a "linguistic curtain" which not only perpetuates the separation of academics from the masses but also diminishes the importance of academic work (249).

6 A leading campaigner to replace Arabic Fuṣḥā with Dārija in primary schools is the civil society campaigner and businessman, Noureddine Ayouche, whereas, Abdallah Laroui, the influential intellectual and novelist, is the one presenting the counter camp. A televised debate between the two on the talk show *Mubāsharatan maʿakum* (Directly With You) broadcasted on state media channel *2M* on 27 November 2013 highlighted the complex problem of language politics, and decolonization, and how language is still perceived as a key component of 'national identity'; see Nordine Ayouch and Abdel Aaroui'. *Mubāsharatan maʿakum*, 28 Nov. 2013. ht tp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ad6bq5BbDs/.

7 For a nuanced discussion of this issue, see Haer (2000). Edward Said's view on the raging debate on language reforms in the Arab world is very critical of those who promote the idea that it is time to get rid of classical Arabic and use only demotic Arabic in education and communication; in "Living in Arabic" he accuses them of a genuine lack of knowledge and experience of how people in the Arab-speaking region 'live in Arabic' in their daily smooth movement between the spoken and written forms of Arabic.

8 Some writers still express divisive views about the use of languages in literature; for example, the writer Leila Abouzeid who writes in Arabic and who was born at the end of the colonial era and grew up in independent Morocco expresses her dismay at "postcolonial Maghrebi writers producing a national literature in a foreign language" (Abouzeid, Leila. *The Last Chapter: A Novel.* Trans. Leila Abouzeid, and John Liechety. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000, 153-54.) Similarly, the well-known writer and critic Ahmed al-Madini refuses altogether to accept Francophone literature as Moroccan: "Maghrebi Literature is one; it is written in Arabic" (Mehanna 29). Leila Lalami, who belongs to a younger generation of writers, also expresses the same viewpoint when she claims that she writes in English because she thinks French is the language of the coloniser (Lalami, Laila. "So as to Speak." *World Literature Today*, Sep. 2009. https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/so-speak-laila-lalami). Equally of the same generation as Abouzeid is the Francophone

writer Abdelhak Serhane who states a similar point made by the older Tahar Ben Jelloun, that authors choose to write in French because Arabic language does not allow them freedom of expression, which is a reiteration of an old orientalist stereotype that ignores or shows ignorance of the vibrancy of literature written in Arabic and its avant-garde aesthetics and politics, see Spear (34).

9 On Feminist literature written in Arabic, see among many others, for example, Badran and Cooke (1990); Zeidan (1995); Valassopoulos (2007); and Laachir and Talajooy (2013).

10 Originally cited in Mehanna 29.

11 See their contribution on this issue in a recent volume edited by Kenza Sefroui: *Maroc: La guerre des Langues*. Casablanca : En toutes lettres, 2018.