

Yazan Doughan

162346 MA Critical Media and Cultural Studies

The Production of an 'Arab' Space

An analysis of Arabic shop signs in London

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA Critical Media and Cultural Studies of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London).

15th September 2005

Word Count: 9,756

Declaration

I have read and understood regulation 17.9 (Regulations for Students of SOAS) concerning plagiarism. I undertake that all material presented for examination is my own works and has not been written for me, in whole or in part, by any other person(s). I also undertake that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged in the work which present for examination.

I give my permission for a copy of my dissertation to be held at the schools discretion, following final examination, to be made available for reference.

Yazan Doughan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'YAZAN DOUGHAN', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

15th September 2005

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
Introduction.....	3
1. Arabs in London.....	6
2. Space-Time and Media: Theoretical framework.....	12
3. We Speak Your Language: Arab space, the Chronotope and Heteroglossia.....	19
4. Home: The impossible object.....	26
5. Concluding Remarks.....	34
List of Figures.....	36
Bibliography.....	37

Abstract

This paper interrogates the notion of space, particularly social space, through a semiotic analysis of Arabic shop signs in London as a means for the production of an Arab space in the city. It looks at the production of an Arab space as part of the process of dwelling of Arab immigrants. It addresses the lack of theorisation of the ubiquitous terms of space and time and attempts an articulation of these and the media and attempts a definition of 'home'.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank all individuals who participated in this research by offering their shop signs for analysis, or their time and intellectual effort in the interviews. A full list of their names would exceed what the space permits, but I would particularly like to mention Mr. Ahmad Asfahani whose comments have been most enlightening and thought provoking. I would also like to thank my teachers Dr. Mark Hobart and Prof. Annabelle Sreberny whose courses and discussions have provided the discursive context in which the ideas expressed in this dissertation developed. I will remain deeply indebted to Dr. Hobart for teaching me that theory should not be divorced from practice and that, if used correctly, it can be a powerful tool for reflecting on the world. Last, but not least, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Khlid Shoman Foundation, particularly Mrs. Suha Shoman, for supporting my MA study at SOAS financially and morally. Without the contributions of all of these, this research would have been hardly possible.

Introduction

An Arabic tourist guidebook and directory for London quotes the famous Arab poet Nizar Qabbani: “London is the most beautiful Arab capital”. Qabbani had spent the last 15 years of his life in London and died there from a heart attack in 1998 at the age of 73. The guidebook is titled *Bye Bye London* after the famous Kuwaiti comedy play from the 1980's. The play tells the story of a rich illiterate Kuwaiti man who fakes a heart illness and goes to London for medical treatment, leaving behind his wife and a daughter. *Juma'a*, or Mr. Friday, as he becomes known in London, goes to the city in search for a better life: an advanced, civilised society, beautiful blond women and social freedom. Soon after, however, he grows disillusioned when he realises that his English friends have been stealing his money. At the last moment, Mr. Friday's wife and daughter come for his rescue and bring him back to Kuwait with only bad memories to keep of his dream land. The Nizar Qabbani quote is certainly intriguing, not to say provocative. How could London be an Arab space, or an Arab city?

This paper interrogates the notion of space, particularly social space, through a semiotic analysis of Arabic shop signs in London as a means for the production of an Arab space in the city. The paper is divided into two parts. In the first two chapters I will give a brief historical account of Arab immigration to the UK and layout the theoretical framework for this study. In the first chapter, I will be giving a glimpse of the problems entangled with the notion of an Arab community. In the second, I will discuss the notions of space and time on which this research has been built, and their application to the realm of the social. My main aim there is to provide a definition for the two amorphous terms and problematise common sense understandings of them. I will explain how the notions of space and time can be

useful for the study of social phenomena and attempt to articulate the relationship between space-time and the media. This relationship, although frequently discussed, suffers from serious under-theorisation in the current literature.

In chapters three and four, I will move on to discuss the fieldwork research using the theoretical tools developed. I will be using a Laclauian reading of Bakhtin, Peirce and Lefebvre for the analysis, or perhaps a creative understanding of the four. In the third chapter, I will explain how Arabic signs in London articulate an Arab space in the city and move on to describe the complexities of this space and multitude of its possibilities of imagination and re-imagination by the various subjects which inhabit such a space. I argue that any act of dwelling in a space entails the transformation of the space and the dwelling subject. I will attempt to provide a critical alternative to essentialist and positivist definitions of space and layout the foundations for the discussions I will be presenting in the following chapter. I will demonstrate how an Arab space in London attempts the articulation of the two spaces of London and the Arab World thus providing a critique for the two spaces and exposing their contingent nature. I argue that this articulation, initially aimed at suturing the two spaces causes further dislocations and allows for more freedom for the subject. Contrary to mainstream assertions that it is the host space of Western societies which provides Arab immigrants with a larger margin of freedom, I will argue that this freedom is primarily a result of immigration itself rather than an inherent quality of any space. In the last chapter, I will attempt a theorisation of the notion of 'home' which is very central to the discourse on diasporas and immigration. I will argue that home is an impossible and constantly paradoxical object that is never finalised, but is rather one that requires constant work for its articulation and re-articulation. I will also talk about another sense of home as the mythical space of the subject's identification.

The field work component of this research has been conducted during the summer of 2005 in the London areas of Bayswater, Paddington and Shepherds Bush. The area of Edgware Road, commonly suggested as the quintessential Arab quarters of London, has been avoided because of its touristic nature, frequented by a transient community during the summer season. Finsbury Park, another area of concentration of Arab immigrants, particularly from Algeria, has also been excluded after the attacks on the transport system in London on the 7th and 21st of July of that year. The area has been under heavy police surveillance following the attacks which made fieldwork research there particularly difficult. The feelings of insecurity and suspicion towards strangers which prevailed after the attacks have made photography and interviews very difficult in the areas covered by this research as well. For this reason, the fieldwork part of this study remains lacking in some respects, a lack I have tried to compensate for through the inclusion of my own experiences in the city and commentary as someone who is, more or less, part of its Arab space.

1. Arabs in London

Immigration from what is now known as the Arab World to Britain started in the second half of the nineteenth century with the settlement of Levantine Ottoman cotton merchants as well as Moroccans, in various urban centres in the UK (Halliday, 1992). By the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Somali and Yemeni seafarers recruited into the British Navy from the British colony of Aden began settling in port cities such as Cardiff, Liverpool, South Shields and London's East End (Al-Rashid, 1996). The 1940's and 50's saw the settlement of Arab students in the UK particularly from Egypt, Sudan and Iraq. Some Palestinians have also started immigrating to the UK after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. During the 1960's Moroccans from the rural areas of northern Morocco were recruited *en masse* for work in the hotel and catering industry in London and the National Health Service. The economic and political instability in the Middle East following the 1973 oil crisis and the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war encouraged the immigration of highly educated Arabs, particularly Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian nationals to Britain. Many nationals of the Gulf States have established businesses in the UK, more particularly in London, during the economic boom of the 1980s, while Iraqis started immigrating there in large numbers after the Second Gulf War of 1991.

There are no statistical figures of the number of Arabs in the UK and estimates of their numbers vary considerably. The annual Labour Force Survey estimates Arabs in the UK in the late eighties to be around 73,000, the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and the Economist estimate the number to be 230,000 and 500,000 respectively for the same period (El-Solh, 1992). El-Solh herself suggests the number to be around 250,000 estimating that 60% of these live in the capital London. These estimates, however, remain pure

speculations as Arabs are not included as an ethnic category in the UK census. The methodological problems common to statistical data collection techniques seem to be exacerbated in the case of Arabs. Arabs fall under the 'Other-Other' category which, as Al-Rashid (Al-Rashid, 1996) notes, constitutes the fourth largest ethnic group enumerated in the census. However, she also notes that many Arab born Britons tend to tick themselves as White despite the fact that they well understand that, in the British context, the category refers to European whites. In terms of culture groups, Arabs are generally lumped into the category 'Muslim' together with South Asians, South East Asians and some Africans, despite the fact that many of them are not. In terms of their place of residence, Arabs are concentrated in big cities such as London , Manchester and Birmingham. In London, they seem to be concentrated in specific areas in west and north London, particularly Edgware Road, Finsbury Park, Paddington, Bayswater, Shepherds Bush and Kilburn.

While the term 'Arab' suggests a homogeneous and definable community or cultural entity, in actuality, it is a very diverse and heterogeneous category. Different parts of this region have been in contact with different cultures through history. The Gulf region had strong trade relations with South Asia through the Arabian Sea up until the mid 20th Century. After the economic boom in the former following the discovery of Oil resources, the Gulf became a major destination for South Asian workers. Iraq maintained contact with South Asia through the port city of Basra, while the cities in the east were closer to Iran and those in the north to Turkey and Syria. The Levant was closer to Turkey under the Ottomans, but along with North Africa also looked towards Europe across the Mediterranean. The Southern parts of North African states, on the other hand, had more contact with the rest of Africa. The influences of various colonial powers in the region is particularly felt between societies which were under British and French rules. Even under the Ottoman Empire, the

Arab regions were not homogeneous in any way, for the Ottoman Empire was not a coercive nation-state.¹ A consciousness of an Arab nation is relatively new and can only be traced back to the early 20th Century. What can be said about the category Arab can also be said about any category of national identity in the so-called Arab world.²

This acute cultural heterogeneity can also be seen among the Arabs in London. To give some anecdotal evidence from my research, a Gulf Arab was passing by a Lebanese *falafel* shop and asked the shopkeeper if they had chapatti. The Lebanese looked at him quizzically explaining that they have falafel, hummus and a good selection of Arabic foods to select from. The Gulf customer continued walking and the Lebanese turned to his colleague to ask him what chapatti was. When the colleague suggested it might be some Indian food, the Lebanese commented condescendingly that the Gulf customer actually looked like an Indian.³ The shopkeeper's comments attempted to cast the customer as a non-Arab because the latter did not fulfil his definition of what an Arab is. Nevertheless, this should not be understood to be a particular case pertaining to Arabs alone since no society can be defined in total and positive terms (Laclau, 1990a). However, the term Arab seems to have been much less consistently inscribed and instituted than that of many other collectives. In the context of UK Arab organisations, the term Arab has been more or less hegemonized by organisations run by Levantine, Iraqi and Gulf Arabs, particularly in relation to the issue of Palestine; while Egyptian and North African run organisations seem to have a more exclusive national tone.

¹ For example, see Batatu (1993) which offers a compelling account of the heterogeneity of the 'Iraqi society' at the time when the Iraqi state was created by Britain. This heterogeneity persists to date albeit in different and new forms in the Iraqi state.

² For a comprehensive historical account of Arabs and the notion of an Arab nation, see Hourani (1991)

³ It is important to note here that there are certain antagonisms between Gulf Arabs and other Arabs since the former are usually blamed for the negative stereotyping of Arabs in the West.

These antagonisms can also be seen in the various hegemonic articulation and re-articulation of the various Arab shops one would find in London. In the language of Ahmad, a Shiite Lebanese immigrant:

There is a place in Shepherds Bush called the Lebanese Foods Centre and this was the first place of this sort to open in the Area. The owners are Syrian, but they called Lebanese because Lebanese food had a priority, it was well known. For example you cannot say Jordanian or Qatari foods centre. There is no such thing. Not even Syrian foods. The fame of Lebanese food, or its touristic fame, made it acceptable even on the European level. The first one to change this trend was Damascus Gate (a supermarket in the area). He deliberately called it Damascus Gate to stress its Syrian identity, even an Islamic Syrian identity. For example, they close the shop on Fridays for prayers. But the other Lebanese shops, even the Muslim ones, do not do that. Later on you started having shops that stress identities. A friend of ours opened the Lebanese Butchery because he has a sense of belonging to Lebanon and wanted to stress his Lebanese identity. Abu Zaad (a Syrian restaurant) for example do not serve alcohol because they want to stress their Islamic identity. Similarly, Al-Abbas (a supermarket) which is owned by Pakistani Shiites do not serve alcohol. These are actually worse than the Arab Shiites when it comes to that. On the other hand, there is an Indian supermarket close to it that sells alcohol. But in the beginning it was only about the fame which Lebanese food had in the European context. Later you had more than one party responding to each other to give, lets call it alternatives, or a different perspective.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the term Arab should be understood in the broadest of ways. Any formulation giving a fixed definition of the term Arab is mere positivism. Equally, any formulation suggesting a relation of identity between immigrants from Arab countries is practically essentialist.



Fig.1. The cedar tree, the symbol of Lebanon used on the sign of a Lebanese owned carpet shop in Shepherds Bush



Fig.2. A sign on the window of Cedar Carpets reads: Cedar Carpets and Flooring welcomes its Arab customers



Fig.3. Iraqi owned pharmacy uses the walking lion of Babylon as its logo



Fig.4. Palestinian owned falafel stall stresses that falafel is Palestinian food

2. Space-Time and Media

Theoretical framework

Space is a term which has continually eluded definition despite its ubiquity in daily discourse and academic writings. In his introduction to *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre protests to the excessive use of the term space by many authors who never attempt to explain what they mean by it:

“Conspicuous by its absence from supposedly epistemological studies is not only the idea of 'man' but also that of space – the fact that 'space' is mentioned on every page notwithstanding” (Lefebvre, 1991:3)

The terms 'space' and 'time' have certainly come into vogue in the age of postmodernity and the so-called 'global village'. Consider, for example what McLuhan writes in his introduction to *Understanding Media*: “Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned” (1964:3). David Harvey (1989) adopts a similar tone and argues that we now live in the age of “space-time compression”. Neither of the two authors, however, or any of the others preoccupied with space – for example, Castells, Soja, Sassen and Massey – offers a definition for the ubiquitous terms. It would therefore be necessary to address this lack of definition and under-theorisation before moving on to the research itself. It would also be necessary to explain how the idea of space, commonly used to mean the physical, can also be used to study the social and the cultural.

There are at least two different ways to conceptualise space. One is space as a container in which things exist. In this respect, space is an infinite, homogeneous, all expansive

vacuum. This is the space of Descartes and Kant to whom space and time were the transcendental a priori conditions which make the experience of phenomena possible. Thus, space constitutes a basic structure of the mind which transcends all historical variations. From within this conceptualisation stems the common sense understanding of the term. The universal absolute space is seen as a container of other partial spaces. The planets Earth and Mars, for example, are spaces, and each of them is in space. Within the space of Earth we can talk about the space of Europe and the Space of UK in Europe and then the space of London, a specific neighbourhood there, a building, a room and a closet in that room; one space inside another. The total ultimate space, however, is infinite and inside nothing; it is everything. The partial space in this respect is an object among other objects. It is an object which can be owned and exchanged, a property. In fact, this is the underlying presupposition of the discourses of the nation state, imperialism, capitalism and the whole discourse of and on globalisation. In this sense, space is bounded, quantifiable and exclusive. This is the basic premise on which the idea of the shrinking world rests.⁴

Another conceptualisation of space – which is the one I am concerned with in this study – is one in which space is neither a transcendental, nor an object, but is rather a relation or a set of relations. Within this framework, there are two broad categories depending on how the nature of these relations is conceived. On the one hand, there is the approach devised by the Structuralists, Marxists and Foucault – particularly his earlier work – who assert that these relations are total and objective. Within this approach any possibility of change in the relations is determined by the internal logic of the relations themselves and thus is only a change in form rather than a change in content. Some Marxists, for example, assert that the progression from the relations of feudalism to capitalism, socialism and finally

⁴ I am presenting this view as simply one valid possibility, but it is actually deeply problematic, particularly its theorisation of the subject. However, a critique of Cartesian/Kantian space is beyond the scope of this research.

communism is part of the internal logic of history.

A different understanding of the nature of the relations is asserted by the broad category of scholars labelled as Post-Structuralists and Post-Marxists. To these scholars, the space constituted by the relations of a structure are only relatively stable. The approach I am following in this research is of this second type; more specifically, the one devised by Laclau (1990b).⁵ For Laclau, a structure is never stable or total because its possibility of existence is conditioned by what he calls a 'constitutive outside', which also causes the de-structuring of the relations within that structure. In Laclau's terms, space is a relation, or a set of determinate relations, while time is an indeterminate relation. In that sense, space is the exact opposite of time. This conceptualisation can be applied to physical space as well as other spaces.

Let me explain this by means of an example inspired by architecture.⁶ Architects are taught that if a wall (W_1) was erected independently of any other object, it does not create a space. However, if another wall (W_2) existed next to it, a space is created between the two. This space is created because a relation between the two walls is established; in this case, it is a relation of distance. One can say that walls W_1 and W_2 define a space because they are located at a certain distance (D) from each other. It is important here to note that distance D needs to be fixed for one to be able to say that a space exists between the two walls. If, for

⁵ For a critique of Laclau, see Massey (1992) where she challenges Laclau's argument that space is purely social, while the political is temporal. On my reading of both texts, however, it seems that Massey had made a serious misreading of Laclau and confused 'politics' with the notion of 'the political'. A more serious mistake is that she uses Lefebvre to counter argue Laclau while the two make compatible arguments. Massey's misreading of Lefebvre, I think, is the result of reading his book *The Production of Space* in isolation from his other work, particularly on the *Quotidien* and *Rhythmanalysis*. For a general overview of Lefebvre, see Elden (2004). Furthermore, she reduces Laclau's complex dialectic (or, following Bakhtin, shall we say 'dialogue') between space and time to a mere dichotomy and interprets it as a regress to Newtonian physics, something which lacks any resemblance to Laclau's text.

⁶ Architects, in fact, share the first conceptualisation of space I have discussed earlier. This example is usually given to illustrate how a partial sub-space is created within a larger space container.

some reason, W_2 started behaving in a way where the distance D is no longer determinate, the space between the two walls is lost. The loss of the space is the result of the introduction of the element of time – i.e. that the position of W_2 in reference to W_1 is continually changing and is reduced to a temporality. However, if one manages to establish a rule by which the change in D can be understood, the space between the two walls is re-established. For example, one might say that W_2 moves away from W_1 at a fixed rate (S) in a certain direction (X). In that case the relation between W_1 and W_2 is a relation of speed, which allows for an accurate prediction of the position of W_2 in relation to W_1 at any given moment. This re-institution of a rule that relates the two walls is a spatialisation of time. In this case, there are a number of different possibilities for the position of W_2 in reference to W_1 , but these are not absolute temporalities because the position of W_2 is always predictable.⁷ If, however, the behaviour of W_2 was totally unpredictable, no space between the two walls can be established because their relation becomes totally indeterminate, in which case we have no space, but absolute time.

It is necessary here to clear up some common misunderstandings of the notion of time which might cause some objections to be raised about the previous example. In daily life, people refer to time in terms of time units, such as hours, minutes and seconds. However, these units are, in fact, not time as such, but rather representations of time that are only achievable through a mechanical device, which is the clock. That is to say that the clock is a tool for the representation – i.e. spatialisation – of time. Similarly, the daily sunrise and sunset can be used to establish a pattern by which time is spatialised through the rule of cyclical repetition of day and night. If I am sitting in my room and there is absolutely nothing that I perceive to be changing in the world around me, in me or about me, then I

⁷ One can continue in this fashion to say that if the speed is not constant, a new relation can be introduced to re-institute space; for example a relation of acceleration or deceleration.

will have no sense of time whatsoever. This is because my world is totally static and repetitive,⁸ in which case I would be a machine. The only way I would have a sense of time is through an event that breaks the monotony of my space by introducing something new, or an event; for example a noise from the street.

It is also necessary, in this respect, to make a distinction between the two concepts of time and history. Within the framework I am proposing, history is the antithesis of time. To talk about the history of something is to create a representation of its time through a narrative that normalises, rationalises and provides some fixity to the events told. Therefore, history is the spatialisation of time without which the latter would be totally unintelligible. The purpose of history, as a science, is the spatialisation of time and all history is spatial.⁹ Nevertheless, to say that space is the opposite of time does not mean that the two are separate. In fact, they are inseparable because they are constitutive of each other. To take the example of history, it would be impossible to think of a history (space) without any events (time). Equally, for something to be considered an event (time), it has to take place against a background of a fixed narrative (space). This perhaps explains why history, as a science, is always concerned with the unusual – e.g. wars, famines, disasters, market booms, winning the lottery, etc. If the world was totally repetitive – i.e. absolute space – there would be no need for history because there is no story to be told. Space, in this respect is equivalent to a structure. This concept can be applied to domains other than the physical and one can speak of social space (the space of social relations) or the space of

⁸ I am using the term 'repetitive' here in the mechanical sense. In practice, however, repetition as such does not exist. This has been argued by many scholars – e.g. Lefebvre (Elden, 2004) and Bakhtin, particularly his work on the utterance (Morson, 1990) where he asserts that sentences are repeatable while utterances are not. It also follows Heidegger's postulation that the relation $A=A$ is not a repetition because the second A is different from the first for the mere fact that it is a second; cf. Elden (2001).

⁹ In her critique of Laclau, Massey suggests two notions of history: one with a capital H and the other with a small one. Her argument is that 'History' is spatial, while 'history', on the other hand, is temporal because it is not firmly fixed. However, the difference between the two is a difference in degree which is a useful distinction in some cases, but can bear little scrutiny for the purposes of theoretical analysis.

knowledge (relations between various ideas, and thus we can talk about a field of knowledge). Time, on the other hand, is equivalent to the constitutive outside, which is a pure contingency that causes a dislocation in the structure of space. To put it in a different way, time is the necessary condition of space, but equally it is the antithesis of space which perpetually causes its dislocation. Therefore, no space is absolutely fixed space. Having said that, it is important to note that the degree of fixity can vary from one space to another. The social space between me and a shopkeeper is temporary and ceases to exist once the transaction is completed – provided that I do not deal with or remember that shopkeeper again. On the other hand, the social space of my family, for example, is more permanent, but certainly is not static or eternal.

From within this theoretical framework, I would like to explain the relationship between space and the media. According to Peirce (1931), relations are either dyadic, triadic or polyadic. Polyadic relations are always reducible to triadic ones. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis one could reduce relation to two types: dyadic and triadic. If space is a relation, what kind of a relation is space? I argue that *spacial relations are always triadic*, while *time is a dyadic relation*. To explain this, let us go back to the example of the two walls. The relationship between W_1 and W_2 is mediated by a rule or a concept – which in the first instance is that they are D apart from each other, or in the second, that W_2 is moving away from W_1 at rate S in the direction X . No space would be imaginable without the mediation of a rule. Time, on the other hand, is a dyadic relation because it is not mediated by a rule; in fact, it is the exception to the rule, or in other words, a pure contingency. Therefore, time is always *immediate*.¹⁰ Let me illustrate this with an example, suppose I was crossing the street when I suddenly hear a noise and find myself violently

¹⁰ To quote Peirce, “pure dyadism is an act of arbitrary will or of blind force; for if there is any reason, or law, governing it, that mediates between the two subjects and brings about their connection, it would be triadic.”

pushed away by something. I feel a pain, can see a car stopped next me and realise that I must have been run over by that car. The relationship between me and the car at the moment of the accident is dyadic relation. Only after the accident takes place that I think about it and establish that it was a car accident. The idea of the accident, here, mediates between the car and myself. Later on, I might reflect on what had happened and establish other triadic relations through the production of a narrative of the accident; for example, that I was not paying attention or that the car was speeding, and so on. When I recount the story of the accident to myself and to others the triadic relations which I have established with the event start gaining more and more fixity through repetition. This process of structuration in the narrative produces the space of the accident.

Now that we have established that the purpose of the media is the production of relations of mediation (articulation), one can move on to say that *the raison d'être of the media is the production of space*.¹¹ From this, two conclusions would follow. First, that any space is initially a mythical space, or a space of representation. Second, that any space involves the transformation of its constitutive objects since the relation of mediation is not resolvable to the sum of these elements (Peirce, 1931) – or as Goodman puts it, any representation of something is essentially a representation of the latter as something else (Goodman, 1976:3-10). It is within this framework that I will move on to discuss Arabic signs in London as a medium whose purpose is the articulation of an Arab space in the city.

¹¹ In Peircian terms, one would say that the production of space is the 'operative desire' of media. See Hervey (1982)

3. We Speak Your Language

Arab space, the Chronotope and Heteroglossia



Fig.5. British Airways sign on the shop window of a travel agency in Paddington

On a shop window of a travel agent in Paddington, a British Airways sign reads: “We speak your language” in Arabic, French and English. The peculiarity of this sign is that it states in the most direct of ways the basic function of any sign, addressing someone as a speaker of a certain language. If the sign was written in a language which the by-passer does not speak, it would not catch her attention because that person would not be addressed by the sign. I once showed a friend an advertisements page in the magazine *What's on in London*. The page was full of adverts for escort agencies almost half of which were in Arabic, the rest in English. I showed it to my friend out of surprise of the number of Arabic adverts in a strictly English language magazine. My friend, a non Arabic speaker and not

knowing what I had in mind, started scrutinising the English advertisements. When I pointed out that it was the Arabic ones that I thought were peculiar, she said that she had not noticed them earlier. On another occasion, I was explaining my research to another non-Arabic-speaking friend. As we were talking, he remembered seeing a shop sign in Arabic in Oxford Street, but said he was never concerned by it and he never contemplated visiting that shop. He added that, however, if he had known the shop owner and had that owner invited him to visit his shop, he would have done so. Every act of speech addresses someone and people look for utterances which address them.

The 'we speak your language' sign interpellates Arabic speakers as Arabs (Althusser, 1971) and therefore, according to Althusser, an Arabic speaking individual would be instituted as an Arab subject and an Arab space would thus be created. This, in fact, is the basic rationale of Anderson's (1991) *Imagined Community*, where he argues that the standardisation of languages, the advent of print media, the novel as a literary form and their integration into daily life through the newspaper has brought about the social space of the nation. In its clearest form, interpellation takes place by means of what Peirce calls an index, a sign that makes direct reference to an object in the world.¹² Without indexes discourse would remain totally divorced from reality. Interpellation works through a special kind of indexical signs, one in which the referent is the addressee of the utterance. The word 'you' in the shop sign above is an index that refers to anyone who happens to read the sign and one would only be able to read the sign if s/he could read Arabic. If we look at the sign we can discern three elements: we, you and language.¹³ The relationship between the three elements is that 'you' and 'us' speak the same language; or put in another way, that

¹² For a more detailed account on the importance of indexical signs to thought and language, please see Short (2004).

¹³ Of course, I am omitting a fourth element here which is British Airways for the sake of simplicity and because that element is not central to my argument.

a common language mediates between 'you' and 'us'. Through this utterance, a relation is created between the addresser and the addressee, that they both speak the same language. It is thus easy to imagine how a space can be created through language.

However, Althusser and Anderson presuppose the transparency of language and overlook interpellation as an event thus reducing the utterance into a sentence. As Bakhtin argues, “each element of speech is perceived on two planes: on the plane of the repeatability of the language and on the plane of the unrepeatability of the utterance. Through the utterance, language joins the historical unrepeatability and unfinalised totality of the logosphere” (Bakhtin, 1986:134). The main difference between an utterance and a sentence is that “someone must *say* it to someone, must respond to something and anticipate a response, must be accomplishing something by the saying of it. One can *respond* to an utterance, but one cannot respond to a sentence” (Morson, 1990:126, emphasis in original). The sign is interpreted within the context of the event and its interpretation is dependent on that context, particularly how the addresser is imagined by the addressee. Moreover, this imagination is not fixed and the addressee is re-imagined with every interpellation. A Lebanese living in London explains:

For me, seeing an Arabic shop sign can be intriguing in the beginning. But then you start asking questions; who is the owner of this place? How does he relate to me? Do I know him from somewhere, or does he know someone I know? Does the place have good stuff? You try it, and if you are not satisfied, that's it you never go there again. For example, a Lebanese restaurant opened in Croydon called Nora. We always thought there were no Arabic restaurants in the area and wanted to try it out. My wife and her friend went and tried it and it was a total disaster. The owner turned out to be Iraqi and he was just using Lebanese food as a label. We never went there again.

A half Egyptian half Swiss middle class cosmopolitan woman explained how she felt relieved when she realised that the taxi driver which was taking her home at a late hour was

also an Egyptian:

“I was talking with my friend in Arabic and then all of sudden the driver looked at me and asked if I was an Arab. It was late at night and I was a bit scared, so it was very comforting to know that he was Egyptian. I was imagining a noble Arab man (*Shahm*). I expected him to take care of me. In the end he turned out to be an idiot... well that's a long story.”

This imagining of the Arab space is only one possibility of many and can be contrasted to another expressed by that of a middle class Lebanese immigrant who had left Lebanon with his family during the Lebanese civil war:

“I usually avoid shops which address Arab customers. I always feel that the people there will cheat me; they would usually be looking for rich tourists to suck their blood dry. Sometimes I would walk in and buy stuff, but I would speak to them in English and they usually cannot tell that I am an Arab.”

The Arabic signs, however, attempt to evoke the chronotope of an Arab space and invite the addressee into that space. A barber shop in Paddington has a sign that reads *Hallaq Arabi* (Arab barber in Arabic). The shop cannot be mistaken for any other shop with or without this sign, and it would be hard to imagine the sign being there for those who cannot read but Arabic. The significance of this sign is that it signifies something other than the mere translation of an English phrase into Arabic. As Bakhtin (1937-73) argues, “every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope” (258). While Bakhtin offers no concrete definition of the chronotope, he explains that it is about the visualisation, or the spatialisation of time, which is the defining feature of the genre. The term itself, the chronotope, which literally means time-space, is borrowed from Einsteinian physics not only to signify the inseparability of time and space, but also the contingency of any spatialisation of time. The chronotope of the *hallaq* is different from that of a barber shop in London. A *hallaq* is a men barber shop and a visit there would usually last for almost an hour between a haircut, a cup of coffee or a soft



Fig.6. *Hallaq Arabi, or 'Arab barber' on the shop window of a hair salon in Paddington*

drink and a chat with the barber and the other customers about the latest news and neighbourhood gossip. If you are a regular to a certain *hallaq*, the barber would ask you if you'd like to have your hair cut the usual way and would listen attentively to your requests and comments. With time, you develop a personal relationship with the barber to the extent that you might share the details of your personal lives with each other. The *hallaq* is a nodal point in any neighbourhood where many ends meet. A barber shop in London has a very different chronotope. I, myself, have changed my barber six times during the course of one year before realising that I will not be getting the experience I would expect from a *hallaq* in any of them.

What can be said about the *hallaq* can also be said about other Arab shops in London, which have their own chronotope which is different from other shops. The chronotope of

Arab shops, however, are not exclusive to Arab customers. As one customer in Shepherds

Bush notes:

The most important thing is the personal relationship you can have with the shop owner. You would practice the kind of relationship like ythe one you would have in Amman or Beirut. You would see the grapes or the peaches and taste them before you buy. The personal touch is very important. The English would also have a similar experience. For example, they would go into Abu Muhammad's shop and he would offer them some nuts to try. First they would be shocked; what is this guy giving us? What is he doing? But later they would get used to this sort of relationship and would start acting like we do. For example they would try an olive and throw the seed on the floor, and would feel the fruits before they buy. This experience becomes part of the deal.

What follows is that different chronotopes can co-exist and the subject can move from one to another thus exposing their contingency. Another Bakhtinian concept which can be linked to the chronotope is heteroglossia which can be seen as a dislocation from the structure of each language that exposes its contingency. Another barber shop sign illustrates the point (Fig.7). The sign, for another hair salon, addresses two super-addressees. While the English part of the sign reads “for men and women”, the Arabic part reads “special section for veiled women”. The English part of the sign addresses a Western customer who is accustomed to unisex salons and would expect the kind of services offered at a Western shop of this sort. The other, which is diametrically opposed to it, is for conservative veiled Arab women who would require that their hair is not seen or touched by a male stranger and would particularly avoid mixed-sex spaces. However, the monoglot super-addressee is always an imagined ideal that is necessary for any act of speech, but one which does not exist as such in reality. The actual addressee is essentially heteroglot and is capable of moving between the two chronotopes articulated by the sign. The dislocation from the structure of each language spoken by the heteroglot subject allows for social freedom. The subject, not only can move between different subject positions, but also look at each position from the vantage point of the other, thus creating a dialogic space. In fact,

the subject exists because of this dislocation, otherwise it would be reduced to an object.

While there is always a possibility of freedom created by the dislocations inherent in heteroglossia, this possibility increases the bigger the dislocations. Because of the double dislocation inherent in immigration – one pertaining to the structure of the 'original' structure and the other to the 'new' one – the field of possibility for the immigrant is essentially larger than that of the 'native' who is less dislocated. Ahmad explains:

Ahmad: This living between two worlds gives you more freedom, or the ability to look at both worlds from a distance and to use critical tools in a different way. So you look at the English society and apply values and standards that you carry from your own country; for example, respect for women, respect for family, respect for the older, close scrutiny of your kids upbringing, their social sense. These are values that we got from our country. They don't have much of it here. At the same time, you apply to your society the values of the Western society, like commitment, order, vulgarity, if you like, or being blunt about things. It gives you that sense of distance. You distance yourself from both worlds and evaluate each in terms of the other. Whether you succeed or not, that's a different story, but at least you will have that ability to apply critical analysis to both worlds from a distance.

Self: Do you think your children are capable of doing the same thing?

Ahmad: Not necessarily. The kids sometimes use some of our values in dealing with people, guests, the family; they know, for example, that if Yazan is visiting they need to sit with him and he is older so he deserves a kind of respect, not like their friends at school. But at the same time, they tend to apply more Western values to our culture. They cannot see the flawed aspects of the British society as we do because they are part of it. For example, they are used to answer back their teachers at school. We never did that. Whatever the teacher says was correct, but here they haggle with the teacher; if he was wrong they would point that out. The teacher to them is a minder, not a master. So if we tell them that they need to respect the older and not point out their mistakes, for example the aunt, they would say why not? If she is wrong then she is wrong and we will tell her. They tend to apply the British values on our lives and values than the other way around.

It is perhaps this distance between the different structures constituting the subject that account for the freedom achieved through the act of immigration. Contrary to mainstream arguments about Arabs immigrating to the UK in search for the social freedom provided by

the British society, many informants have commented that they find the British society restrictive in many ways. Their sense of freedom stemmed from their dislocation rather than any inherent feature of the UK itself.



Fig.7. Unisex salon advertises a special section for veiled women in Arabic

4. Home

The impossible object



Fig.7. Beity restaurant, or "My Home"

Queensway is a busy shopping and residential street with a predominant Mid-Eastern presence in the Bayswater area of London. It lies to the West of Oxford Street and the West End, and to the north of Kensington Gardens and Kensington Palace. The name comes from it having been a favourite ride for Queen Victoria. On 92 Queensway, there is a Lebanese restaurant called *Beity* (Arabic for 'my home'). When I asked a Lebanese employee there why they have chosen that name for it, he answered: "Because this is basically the home of our customers. We want them to feel at home here. It is also my home. I work here and feel part of the family." The discourse on diasporas and immigration

is closely entangled with the idea of 'home', since all immigration is about the search for a (new) home. As is the case with space, place and time, the idea of 'home' is severely under-theorised within this discourse.

Morely (Morley, 2000) makes an interesting survey of different ideas of home, but does not provide any workable definition for the term. On the one hand, home is the a ritualistic space structured around the adherence to conspicuous, fixed points in the day, the week and the year, requiring common presence and activities. Family meals, for example, are had at specific times on specific days and at specific places. The importance of birthday celebrations and the exchange of gifts on these occasions are central to the concept of a family and a home. He quotes Descombes saying that home is a space in which one “is at ease in the rhetoric of the people with whom he shares life... [and in which one is able] to make oneself understood without too much difficulty, and to follow the reasoning of others without any need for long explanations.” (17). He notes that home requires the disciplining of children, to institute the very rules that make certain place a home. The disciplining and the enforcement of rules on children require the power of the parents, whose role is “to bring them in, to erase the signs of the Other, to raise them from the animal, to teach them to speak, to teach them the rules” (Wood, 1994:61 cited in Morley, 2000). He also suggests that home is a discourse in which “the most banal domestic objects and structures are not only simply physical entities, but are also routinely laden down with values and symbolic meanings.” (20). However, the rigidity and fixity of home is always disturbed. The challenge to home does not necessarily come from outside its physical territory, but from outside its logic. The rigidity of home is constantly challenged by the children, for example, who find it restrictive, and attempt to reconfigure its rules and internal dynamics.

From within the theoretical framework I have developed in Chapter 2, a definition of what 'home' is becomes attainable. To begin with, home is the space in which the subject dwells, and the concept extends from the idea of the physical home, or the house, to the total space which includes all the material, social and discursive relations. It is easy to demonstrate that people refer to home to mean not only their place of residence, but also their work and social environment, their social role, a homeland or a nation, etc. To this I would add that home is the space in which the relationship between the subject and that space is a relationship of full identity. It is the space in which the structures and the subject achieve full objectivity – i.e. home is the ultimate space of the subject; it is a space without time in which the subject is reduced to a subject position or an object. But, as Laclau argues, this space is an impossible space since it is conditioned by a constitutive outside which constantly destabilises the former.

When I asked Um Abdullah, an Iraqi woman in her fifties I have met in a Mid-Eastern grocery shop in Shepherd's Bush why she prefers to come to this shop rather than going to a supermarket, she explained her traumatising experience whenever she went to Sainsbury's:

“When I go there I do not find what I am looking for, or what I expect to find. They don't have the kind of stuff we need to make our kind of food. I go there to buy bread for example, but I spend half an hour gaping at the stacks of bread of all sorts that they have there and I cannot find the bread I want, our bread. They have pita bread, but it is not the same. Even when you find things that you are familiar with like hummus, it would be hummus with tomatoes, hummus with feta cheese, what on earth is hummus with feta cheese? I just want plain hummus. Here it is easier. You come here knowing what to expect and you find what you expect. You can ask the shopkeeper questions and he would give you useful answers. You refer to things by their proper name and people know what you are talking about. Here I find more variety, I have more choice. With all the stacks of goods at Sainsbury's or Tesco, for me, they are empty.”

The experience Um Abdullah describes is common to many immigrants who have to deal

with the absence of the structures they are familiar with when they move to a new place. The traumatic prospect of facing the the unpredictable, or time, is repressed through the institution of space, or the choice of the tested and proven, the known and the familiar. What Um Abdullah attempts to do by going to an Arab grocery shop is to avoid events, or time, which would require more work to rationalise and deal with – i.e. to spatialise and to feel at home with. The 'Arab' space in London provides Um Abdullah with the set of familiar practices associated with home. The production of an Arab space can be seen as an act of dwelling, or home making, by Arab immigrants.

As a matter of fact, Um Abdullah's experience is part and parcel of the dislocation inherent in the act of immigration. Immigration itself should also be understood as a response to another dislocation, but one which pertains to the structure of the 'original' home. As an Iraqi immigrant who had to flee her country under the harsh conditions of economic sanctions and the autocratic regime in her country, she sought asylum along with her family in the UK. She attempted to overcome the dislocations in her original social structure which resulted in a failed identity by articulating herself into the UK, but then she is faced with new dislocations. This process of articulation-dislocation-rearticulation is the basic dynamic of the idea of dwelling or home-making. Similar to Bakhtin's idea of the self, it is an ever unfinalisable life-time project. The idea of the absolute space of home, a space of stasis and repetition, is not achievable because of the ever existing constitutive outside which is time. Perhaps the only moment of absolute homeness for humans is death. This is probably why most Arabic words for home can also mean the grave; or as Ibn Manzour explains why the word *Qasr* – which means a mansion or a large house in Arabic – could also mean the grave, prison or a man's ultimate goal, it is because “when one reaches his ultimate goal he is dead” (1955-56).

There is, however, another sense of home. Brah (1996) calls for a distinction between feeling at home and calling a place a home (197). As Ahmad, a middle class immigrant in his fifties from Lebanon explains:

Ahmad: The availability of the foods you are familiar with makes your daily life easier, but it does not make you say that this is home. Let me say it does not constitute a part of the emotions of feeling that this is home. It quells certain needs you have, a temporary desire, but other than that it does not play a psychological role, and I remember living in the 80's without having these facilities. We used to go to Greek and Turkish shops. Or I used to get some stuff whenever I went back to Beirut during the summer. But it does facilitate some traditions and practices that you like to keep, for example having some *Fool* (broad bean dip) and inviting 7 or 8 of your friends. But it does not give you the feeling of home from home.

Self: Would you say that London is your home?

Ahmad: This is a difficult question. We were just talking about this the other day. You cannot really say that London is my home, because I have lived half of my life, the more beautiful half, in Beirut. So here, I am, lets say fifty fifty. The kids of course are probably eighty twenty or maybe ninety ten. But it does not give you the feeling of home in the psychological national sense, to state it in a clear way. In the sense of easy living, or earning a living, having a family, yes, I am at home. But on the national level, our generation, deep down will never be. You always feel that you have roots somewhere else. On the higher level, the meaning of home, you cannot consider London an alternative. I do not feel at home in Beirut either. We are like a crow, who failed to imitate the walk of a quail and forgot how it used to walk before. When you are in Lebanon, the life style has changed a lot from what it was before you left. But the difference is that there you keep 30 or 40 people in which you have your own environment, but here you would only know 20 or 30 and these you were forced to know them, you had no choice. Like X or not, you are forced to have him as a friend, your choices are limited. In our generation, no friendships grew between us and the English. I don't know why, but I have been here for 15 years and the only friendships I could have with the British was through mixed marriages. For example, we have a Scottish friend who is married to a Lebanese that we knew from Beirut. Here I didn't. But the kids on the other hand, all their friends are British. For us, we have many acquaintances, people that you meet, and exchange visits with, but friendship means that you need to interact or correlate¹⁴ with someone, but the English don't interact with us, or maybe we do not interact with them, I don't know. It is not an open society for friendship and therefore the the friends that our kids have here are from school or work, but we did not have this. We came and were re-planted in a well established society, there was no room for us.

¹⁴ The term he used was *ta'ayush*, literally to co-live which connotes a sense of sharing, interaction and co-dependency

Self: But I remember talking to Tony and he seems to have had a different experience.

Ahmad: Anton is different. I am friend of his brother and know him since he was a kid. First, he came here when he was young. And he came from a country destroyed by war, he had no sense of commitment to it because it was in a state of war. He also had no wife and family. He came to London without much roots in the Lebanese society, so he mixed with the English and developed friendships. He grew up here.

This symbolic, or rather mythical notion of home, which is more closely related to the idea of a nation or a homeland than the idea of home as the habitual and familiar space, is what is Ahmad finds to be missing in his London home. This is the home one declares as his or her home, or the home one identifies with. In Laclau's terms this home is a social imaginary whose condition of possibility is the surface of inscription provided by the subject's forms of identification. The form of identification is practically a mythical space that assumes the appearance of fullness, or a utopia, to offset – or in Derrida's terms to defer – all the dislocations which the social space suffers from. When Tony Left Lebanon, the country was torn in a civil war that lasted for 15 years. The antagonisms which existed in the Lebanese society before the war between the Maronite Christians, the Shiaa and the Druz, and the existence of outside forces, such as the Palestinian refugees, the Syrians and the Israelis provided the necessary conditions for the war. The dislocations existing in the Lebanese society were further multiplied by the war, and the social imaginary of a Lebanese nation, or homeland, ceased to be effective because it became less and less capable of absorbing social demands that address the existing dislocations. With the coexistence of so many dislocations, the literal content of the myth of a Lebanese nation became clearer and the ability of the myth to sweep under the carpet all the dislocations and achieve an image of fullness was lost. Thus, Tony cannot identify with the social imaginary of a Lebanese nation. He explains in a conversation I had with him:

This country (the UK) gave me what Lebanon could not. It gave me a home. I left Lebanon to Australia when there was no state in Lebanon. It was absolute chaos, each faction against the other and each one killing another, absolute anarchy. I came to London to study and ended up staying here. I love this place. To me, this is home. I do not get this feeling in Lebanon or anywhere in the Middle East. There, I am a stranger although they speak my language and we have a lot in common in terms of culture. I love it there too. I like to go there, but I am always excited to go back here. The moment the plane starts landing at Heathrow, my heart starts pounding.

Lebanon during the civil war was simply a series of juxtaposed dislocations. On the other hand, for Ahmad, Lebanon still has that mythical meaning with which he can identify and achieve this feeling of completeness, something he cannot achieve by identifying with the idea of Britishness, because it does not allow for an adequate inscription of his own dislocations, or at least, that there is another myth which better allows for that. For there are two conditions for the act of identification; one is the commonality between the discourses constituting the subject and the structures with which it articulates itself, and the distance between the space of the structure and the mythical space of representation which allows for the inscription to take place. If there were no commonalities, no articulation is possible, and if there was no distance between the two spaces, the literal content of the myth is exposed, and again, no articulation is possible. Nonetheless, and most importantly, identification is an act of choice that is not determined by its conditions of possibility. It is impossible to explain that choice in terms of the structures themselves because choice is only possible by the failure of the structure.

5. Concluding Remarks

This research does not claim to be comprehensive or conclusive. I have attempted to address the lack of theorisation of the notions of space, time and home and to provide a critical alternative to the positivist and realist notions of space. I have discussed the relationship between media and space and argued that the production of space is the operative desire of the media. Then I moved on to discuss the role of Arabic shop signs in the production of an Arab space in London. I have represented this space, as is the case with any space, as an imagined one, but also one whose imagining is not predetermined by its content, but rather by the event of imagining itself. I have argued that the production of the Arab space is carried out through complex agency and is constantly hegemonised and counter-hegemonised by different subjects. I have also argued that the production of the Arab space in London can be understood as part of the process of dwelling or home making by which Arab immigrants attempt to master the contingencies and dislocations associated with the act of immigration. Nonetheless, these very same dislocations whose articulation is the operative desire of dwelling are also the conditions necessary for the being of the subject which allow for a range of possibilities and freedom. I have also discussed the mythical space of home and how it allows for the deference of the dislocations of immigration by representing an impossible fullness.

While this research has assumed a more positive tone, more research needs to be done to study not what makes the production of the Arab space possible, or how it is produced and why, but rather what prevents it from being total and positive. Further research needs to be done on the Arab space's constitutive outside(s). I have alluded to the sense of insecurity which ensued after the London bombings among the Arab community in the city, but the

tight space of time in which this research was conducted has not allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the event. I have also alluded to the various antagonisms existing between different Arab national communities, but a more elaborate study into this part is still needed. Nonetheless, I think this paper has filled a serious gap in studies on social space which tend to succumb to essentialist or determinist notions of space failing to realise that space is a production, not only a product.

List of Figures

Fig.1. The cedar tree, the symbol of Lebanon used on the sign of a Lebanese owned carpet shop in Shepherds Bush.....	13
Fig.2. A sign on the window of Cedar Carpets reads: Cedar Carpets and Flooring welcomes its Arab customers.....	13
Fig.3. Iraqi owned pharmacy uses the walking lion of Babylon as its logo.....	14
Fig.4. Palestinian owned falafel stall stresses that falafel is Palestinian food.....	14
Fig.5. British Airways sign on the shop window of a travel agency in Paddington.....	22
Fig.6. Hallaq Arabi, or 'Arab barber' on the shop window of a hair salon in Paddington....	26
Fig.7. Beity restaurant, or "My Home".....	30

Bibliography

- AL-RASHID, M. (1996) 'The Other-Others: hidden Arabs?' IN PEACH, C. (Ed.) *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census Vol. 2: The ethnic minority populations of Great Britain*. London, HMSO.
- ALTHUSSER, L. (1971) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' IN *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London, New Left Books.
- ANDERSON, B. (1991) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London; New York, Verso.
- BAKHTIN, M. (1937-73) 'Forms of Time and and of the Chronotope in the Novel' IN HOLQUIST, M. (Ed.) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Austin, Texas.
- BAKHTIN, M. (1986) 'From Notes Made in 1970-71' IN EMERSON, C. & HOLQUIST, M. (Eds.) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.
- BATATU, H. (1993) 'Of the Diversity of Iraqis, the Incohesiveness of their Society, and their Progress in the Monarchic Period toward a Consolidated Political Structure'. IN HOURANI, A., KHOURY, P. & WILSON, M. C. (Eds.) *The Modern Middle East: A reader*. London; New York, I.B.Tauris.
- BRAH, A. (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting identities*, London, Routledge.
- ELDEN, S. (2001) *Mapping the Present*, London; New York, Continuum.
- ELDEN, S. (2004) *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the possible*, London; New York, Continuum.
- EL-SOLH, C. F. (1992) 'Arab Communities in Britain: cleavages and commonalities'. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 3, 236-258.
- GOODMAN, N. (1976) *Languages of art: an approach to a theory of symbols*, Indianapolis, Hackett.
- HALLIDAY, F. (1992) 'The Millet of Manchester: Arab merchants and the cotton trade' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 19, 159-76.
- HARVEY, D. (1989) *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*, Oxford, England; New York, NY, Blackwell.
- HERVEY, S. G. J. (1982) *Semiotic perspectives*, London; Boston, Allen & Unwin.
- HOURANI, A. (1991) *History of the Arab Peoples*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- IBN MANZUR, M. (1955-56) *Lisan al-`arab*, Beirut, Dar Sadir.

- LACLAU, E. (1990a) 'The Impossibility of Society' IN LACLAU, E. (Ed.) *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. London; New York, Verso.
- LACLAU, E. (1990b) 'New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time' IN LACLAU, E. (Ed.) *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. London; New York, Verso.
- LEFEBVRE, H. (1991) *The production of space*, Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., Blackwell.
- MASSEY, D. (1992) 'Politics and Space/Time'. *New Left Review*, 196, 65-84.
- MCLUHAN, M. (1964) *Understanding Media: The extensions of man*, New York, Signet.
- MORLEY, D. (2000) *Home Territories: Media mobility and identity*, London, Routledge.
- MORSON, G. S. & EMERSON, C. (1990) *Mikhail Bakhtin: creation of a prosaics*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford Univ. Press.
- PEIRCE, C. S. (1931) *The Collected Papers Vol. I.: Principles of Philosophy*.
- SHORT, T. L. (2004) The Development of Peirce's Theory of Signs. IN MISAK, C. (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- WOOD, D. & BECK, R. (1994) *Home Rules*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.