Shalimar: Language in the Hollow Body

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Abstract
This is a study about the Oriental Other, the cinematographic Other and the scholarly Other. All three are connected through a walk in the desert, thinking about the homes of language, translation and the boundaries of intelligibility. The Other othering him/herself several times is here seen to originate from formations that are commonly referred to as metropolitan, Northern, colonial and hegemonic: the European multilingual bourgeoisie, operating in globalized settings.

Keywords: Rudolph Valentino, Natacha Rambova, Egypt, imperialist language ideology, silence

[A question, posed to various people, in Europe and Africa:]
Do you know who Rudolph Valentino was?

[Replies that were received and taken down in field notebooks:]
No.
An adventurer.
A football player.
He invented Valentine's Day.
He was funny. He was a comedian, but he is dead.
No, I don't know him. But the book you read is too long. Is this about him?
No.
No.
I never heard of him.
No.
No.
A fashion designer –no, wait: a singer.
No.
Who?

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The past li ngers on, despite the incapacity of contemporary audiences to remember a once celebrated name. A name doesn't even matter, because images endure in such a way that they continue to erase everything else. They are pasted onto everything that engulfs us, are fantasized to be memories, something that we claim belongs to us, like nothing else does, images of Otherness that we use in order to keep up with experiences of being lost and different. Like other emblematic constructions that shape the imperial formations in which we now live, the image of the man whose name is not famous any longer continues to offer meaning to those who seek explanations about difference. In its capacity to outwear change in taste and fashion, technology and media, the body of this man is frozen in the imperial gaze. The man and body belong to a place that is equally frozen, and interestingly this place appears to be much more endurable in terms of the words that remain to refer to it. The toponyms of the imperial map, unlike the names of those who are considered to reside in those places, remain: resonances of dreams and desires. Zanzibar, Timbuktu, Macao, Sahara, Samara, Shalimar. This is where he is.

There are many ways to move in and out of the places that bear the names of dreams. One of them begins with a road that resembles a ramp, leading up onto the limestone plateau of Giza. A site of infinite past, and unbearable present. No longer set apart in all their might and removed sacred monstrosity, the monuments are surrounded by the architecture of tourism. A security gate, through which I pass so that I can feel safe from the other people who are with me in this place. Camels and horses decorated with Oriental adornments are offered for a ride, while children who visit with their schoolmates and teachers ask for a picture. Soft voices and open smiles, as if there was nothing that could ever set us apart from one another in this barren land of death. Smartphones which have glass screens that appear uniformly black under the sun are held in front of my face, a hundred requests for a picture together. You and me, a souvenir of this bright sunny day in winter in Cairo. For a moment in time, I am kept as a memory to a hundred schoolchildren. Laughter and chatting, while carriages on which music is played pass by.

كلام ده أنساك
سلام يا أنساك
أبداً ممكن مش اللى ده أهو
أبداً فيه أفكر و لا

To forget you –this is idle talk
To forget you –oh, peace
Is it this what is never possible?
I never think about it[2]

[2] Oum Kulthoum, *Ansak ya salam* (1961).

On the limestone ground to the right of the road, there are drawings that situate the pyramids within the sacred space that consists of temples, roads, ramps, a skiff, holes in the ground and parking lots. North and South do not play a role in them, for the direction in which the different buildings are arranged on these drawings vary considerably. Besides the maps that help to move in space, there are explanatory drawings that provide orientation in time. A small typology of pyramids illustrates the invention of perfect triangularity over millennia. Carved, or rather scratched, into the white stone, drawn with even whiter stone or charcoal, they reduplicate the monuments and the monuments that had been built before them. They translate that what needs to be known and said to newly employed guides and to groups of visitors as they peel out of their buses. A hospitable plane that lies in front of them and me.

Figure 1. *Limestone plateau with pyramids*.

I am not on my own, but walk across the plane with Chris Bongartz, who does not say anything right now, but watches intensely. It is helpful to walk with a person who knows how to watch things and how to speak to one another. Heidegger has located the home of language in conversation: *Die Heimat der Sprache ist das Gespräch* (Heidegger 2010: 103). Not language as on the many signboards that interdict and prescribe, and not language as in speeches and addresses, but as in talk that swings from one person to another, that involves mimesis and moving into one another's existence, for a moment in time. Georges Arthur Goldschmidt, who has thought about the hospitality in the act of translation of language as something that is shared between people in ways that reflect

autobiography more deeply than they do in most linguists' work, observes something in German, or rather in the very particular German language Heidegger worked with, that brings language, conversation across different languages and space into a relation:

> Tout, d'une certaine manière, est ramené à une figuration spatiale, on peut en donner d'innombrables exemples, rien que dans le vocabulaire de Freud, ainsi « rapport » ou « relation » qui en français n'évoquent rien de précis, à moins de passer par le latin, deviennent en allemand un objet de représentation précis *Zusammenhang*, ce qui est accroché ensemble, ou *Beziehung*, ce qui tire vers.
>
> Traduire c'est *übersetzen* « faire passer par-dessus, sur l'autre rive » ou *übertragen*, « porter par-dessus », réfléchir c'est *überlegen*, « mettre dessus ». (Goldschmidt 2016: 28)

Language in this place is, besides German and Arabic and English, anything that could be made useful, from sound to the signs on the ground. And as it is transported across language boundaries, it crosses spaces that have something to do with the meaning of time. Imperialist language ideologies present languages imagined as artefacts that were once made what they are today –mother tongues, national languages, and varieties of the same where they leave nations– in the sense that they are extensions of a past that is not yet over. This past is of course glorious, as we have learned long ago. National languages have great pasts, in which they are supposed to have given birth to the asserted beauty of regular structure, orthography, world literature, operas. Occasionally, the *Aida* is performed in front of the sphinx.

As language moves to and fro and does not seem to care about anybody's orthography, I pass through this liminal space, this passage that opens up between megalithic heaps of limestone. Visions of time and of possibility; horses, camels, buses, and families enjoying a picknick. A funny signboard asks us not to climb. On top, there are more engraved signs, the names of all the people who once climbed the pyramids and had an unobstructed view across fields and desert; names of fine and noble people, mostly. Opposite, there are ruins of a few small mud houses, not very notable, and a small graveyard. Gustave Flaubert described this place, which he had seen during a visit to the then-flooded Giza and the pyramids: there were soldiers and women, everything was covered by bones and the remains of mummies, and one could have a barbecue that was sustained by just those remains. The visitors climbed into and on top of the pyramids, some of them, like Du Camp (the photographer), left an inscription up there, then were able to consider having sex with one of the women or not, ate meat cooked over mummies, and rode on (Flaubert 1925).

This passage turns uneasy, unsettling, as Flaubert's text about Orientalism as ruinous practice becomes relatable to real places and actual ruins, and then the tourism landscape cracks. The road gets steep as it parallels the ramp on which ancient people moved, as builders and as worshippers. The road is badly laid out –pavement too slippery and incline too high– and so the horses slide downhill, pushed by carriages that are all too heavy. Bloody legs, frightened eyes and owners eager to earn so that fodder can be bought. I pass by some plastic horses and plastic pyramids, very cheaply sold, and then I end up in

a shop that sells books and photographs on the past of this all, on how to write hieroglyphs, on Giza at the time of Flaubert, and pictures of where I am that show water extending from the Nile well into the vicinity of the sphinx, and palm trees and happy farmers and fat donkeys. Outside, there still are the beautiful old houses that look so much more beautiful than that what is constructed now. Outside, a large reproduction of a historical photograph that was glued onto a wall as an advertisement for the tourists has been torn, and that what is underneath now becomes visible: *Discovering Egypt*, a cheap slogan that has a colonial history.

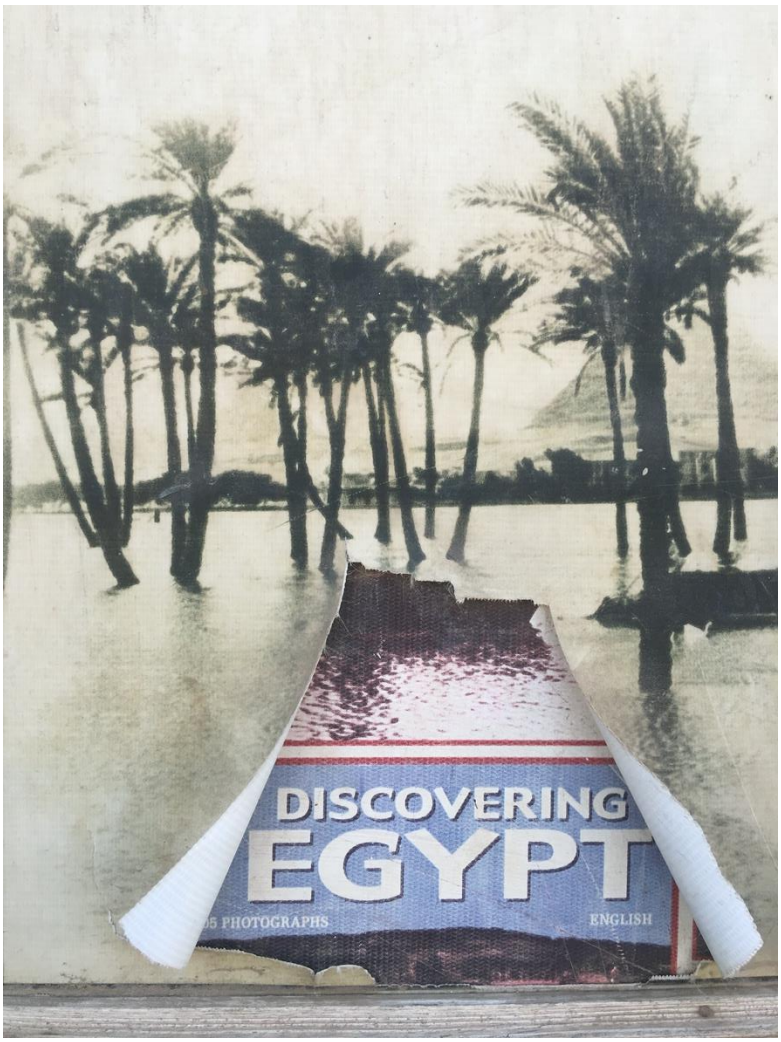

Figure 2. *Egypt discovered*.

The image of the present was, for some time, hidden under an image of a past that appears more authentic, pure, real and bearable. The horses and camels that live in this part of Cairo do not exist there because they are part of a specific lifestyle led by its "autochthonous" inhabitants, but because of the tourists and the tourism industry. The *khurateyya*, 'tourist workers', mock the tourists' stereotypical imaginations that those animals serve as bride price currency among their Egyptian interlocutors, Wynn (2018) observes about the ubiquitous camel jokes. As the *khurateyya* themselves –a large community residing in Nazlet el-Semman near the tourism sites– animals and

environment, like in many other tourist areas in Cairo, have an immediate relation with colonial tourism. As other parts of the city, especially "medieval Cairo" around the Khan el-Khalili, which has been constructed as confined, stagnant and heritageable in the nineteenth century and to a considerable extent was formed through colonial conservation work (Sanders 2008), this patch of desert is what it is in colonial ways. This past is what made the destructive, violent reality of those who live near or in this passage the way it is. A colonial past that resulted in imperial formations that continue to produce debris and rubble (Stoler 2013), which we cannot bear to look at, while we continue to be disciplined into believing that ancient ruins offer the opposite: not shame and horror, but revelation and beauty.

And then I move out of the desert and take a seat on the roadside, sip tea at a little stall that offers rest. In front of the tea stall, traffic circulates around a roundabout in endless iteration. Minibus after minibus, lorry after lorry. A relieving sight, this circle of things and people.

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And as I walk out of the desert, a woman rides into it. Representing the type of the New Woman, who is single, independent and unimpressed, she nevertheless hails from a noble English background in a colonial world, in which she operates along boundaries constructed upon race and class.

Jodhpurs and pith helmet conceal continuities. She rides in black and white, across Californian sand, in a silent movie that nobody seems to watch any longer and that yet continues to remain part of collective memory, as a source of images and fantasies, perhaps also of fears. For just as she reaches the first dunes, a Sheik comes by and kidnaps her. Once in his tented camp, the woman seems to complain, cry and yell. We cannot hear her, but there is written text to translate the expressions on her face into English literacy. After some reels she has fallen in love with the Sheik, who by then loves her, too. In that desert, a hundred years ago, there is written text on the ground to be found, just as in the desert we had been in a moment ago. But unlike on the Giza plateau, where we found inscriptions of hospitality, here in the soft sands we see inscriptions of interiority. The Sheik is played by Rudolph Valentino and his name is Ahmed, and as she realizes her very deep feelings towards him, the woman draws a message on the sand, *AHMED I LOVE YOU*.

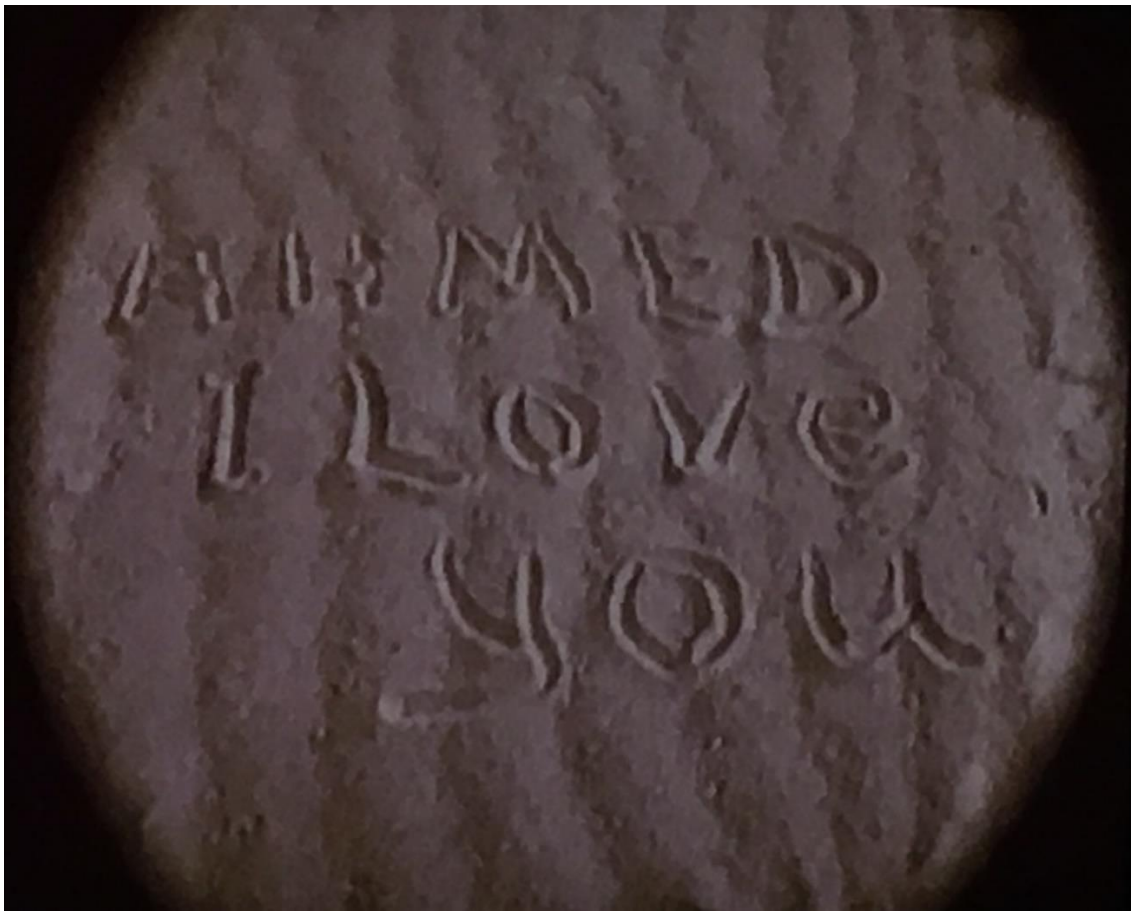

Figure 3. *Love in the sand.*

The desert we just had been in was a strikingly polyphonic place. Many of the *khurateyya* were able to communicate with tourists in a variety of languages. In the Sheikh's desert, things are different. Nobody there speaks any Arabic or even a language of the Amazighen. Communication takes place in English, or not at all. When Omair, the bandit who has abducted the English woman from the Sheik, commands a Nubian servant to bring her to his room, he reads "Bring forth the white gazelle and guard closely the jealous one". The latter refers to a co-wife or concubine, women who often are referred to as *jealous ones* in texts about African languages. But Omair does not speak such a language, he uses English.

English text is provided whenever there is something we need to know about the feelings and interests of the different participants. By literally filling space with translated language, which has to be *written* language as there is no sound, the film presents a reflection of the desert we can experience today, and illustrates that translation in such imperial contexts –*The Sheik* was made in 1921 and tells the story of a colonial encounter– means placing language in space. In other words, language here is nothing that remains personal and meaningful for interpersonal relations, but is attached to planes and walls, as it assumes size. Goldschmidt remarks that Heidegger's philosophical language is always spatial: "La figuration spatiale est partout présente dans le langage philosophique qui a toujours une consonance sensorielle: *Tragweite* (portée), *Rückgang* (retour), *fortschreitende Ausarbeitung* (elaboration progressive) […]" (2016: 31) When

Heidegger writes about language, he argues that language provides a home, a place a person's memory hails from:

> Die Sprache ist die einzig erste Behausung des Menschen. Erde wird urbar, Welt wird zeugbar […]. Die Sprache behaust den Menschen, indem sie dem Gedächtnis das Wohnen in der weilenden Weite des Ereignisses gewährt. (Heidegger 2010: 43)

Do some things get more lost than others? In this colonized desert, language provides no home and does not come out of any home. It is homeless and extensive. Like the name of Rudolph Valentino, the words that would have been necessary to name the Other, here are lost from memory. All that remains is the silent cry of a wounded French servant "Monsieur! Madame–Omair!" before he passes out in Rudolph Valentino's arms.

The actor's image as a Sheik has been etched into the communal memory of Western audiences in the twentieth century. As an immigrant from southern Italy, Valentino, after first establishing himself as a professional ballroom dancer of (fictitious) noble ancestry, gained access to the already booming film industry at about 1916. After playing various bit parts, he was considered sufficiently exotic as a leading man in the early 1920s to play Indians, French noblemen, gauchos, matadors and other figures of the colonial storybook. His image as the ultimate romantic lover however was created through presenting him as Sheik. In the film, he is referred to as "savage", and critics pointed out his dark skin and eyes. But unlike the "real" Arabs in the film, for example Omair, he is constructed as being worthy of the love of the English woman and able to love her back. The translation of the colonial Other into the romantic Other happens via two different albeit related strategies. Firstly, the script (and the novel on which it is based[3]) solves the mystery of Ahmed's difference by revealing, through his close friend from France, Maurice Chevalier, that he was not genuinely Arab, but the son of an Englishman and a Spanish lady who both died in the desert. The little boy was found and raised by the old Sheik, whose successor he now was. His actual ancestry is easy to guess, as Ahmed does not have a beard, unlike the other Arabs, and sports a boyish smile. He wears a wristwatch (which still was unusual for a man in the early twenties, when wristwatches were rather worn by women) and smokes Turkish cigarettes; his tent resembles a salon. As a lost European, Ahmed can engage in a romantic relationship with an English woman, which would not have been legal for a man of Arab descent. Translated –in the sense of moved across–, this Otherness is an Otherness that simply results out of getting lost, or of being forgotten. In the moment when the lost one is repatriated, extensive romance ensues. In her biography of Valentino, Emily W. Leider (2003: 170f.) writes about the social connotations of this conflation of image and desire:

[3] Hull (1919).

> For better or worse, Valentino the man became permanently melded to his desert Sheik persona. […] Those, mainly women, who thought that Ahmed Ben Hassan as portrayed by Valentino was a dream of a lover tended to credit Valentino the man with similarly awesome bedroom prowess. They thought of him as someone who could whisk them away from humdrum lives to a romance-drenched fantasyland where no one has to pay bills, tend children, chop onions, or do the laundry. Rudolph Valentino would be stamped forevermore as a handsome, exotic Romeo who pursues and escapes with one particular woman, the object of his desire –not just any skirt who happens by.

The lost and returned northern man is –like Tarzan and other such figures– able to let us fantasize of ourselves getting lost as well, immersing into more exciting worlds where we would be special, with wristwatch and education from Paris. The Othered Self elevates and carries away those who would otherwise remain insignificant. Yet, this Othered Self always bears features of distance, in the sense of social class. Valentino played the game of elite language practices, speaking at least five languages that represent imperial and colonial power: Italian, French (his mother was French), English, German and Spanish. His linguistic repertoire resembled the repertoires of the European bourgeoisie, and the roles he played referred to the heroes they read about in novels and journals. Yet he wasn't a member of these elites, but an adventurer and an artist. The game was to mimic but not belong, a game that was extensively played by the protagonists of early popular media such as silent cinema.

It is no coincidence that such particular Otherness does have music and sound (rather than being truly silent; technical innovation for a long time has been introduced to the carnival and cinema first). The only surviving recording of the voice of Rudolph Valentino is the voice of the Sheik, as he sings about the pale hands of the woman he loves. The words that he utters are deep. This is because the song, known as *Kashmiri Love Song*, when sung by Valentino is composed of a language that is mysterious, like the language of love and lust, which is also mysterious. A transcription of the material, in ignorance of occasional repetitions in the performance[4], is presented as follows:

> Era hɛns ahera
> Itathaita libaa
> Wɛra yuna wɛra sihiip yurspɛl
> Opeduryarii
> Tharya wɛ cha tha wɛr paar haar
> Bifo yu aagow layth er thi fɛwɛhɛ
> Era hɛns dick steep
> Lak lowans pa thar goohoo
> Air thow thwa waha sya wityu sawaa
> Ahi wa yatra waapa tyo ra matyohoo
> Machika tlaip pana wevini faira wɛhɛ

[4] Available both on audio repositories and in video archives, e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch ?v=3ywjxmvbSnk (22 June 2020).

The deep language of love resists translation, as we softly swing to the melody. We are carried away, on a horse into the desert or right into the oasis of the Nile. Valentino, we know, was a great horseman who not only knew how to sing but also how to ride (Leider 2003: 33, 155). While listening, we wonder whether there is any remedy.

Figure 4. *Broken English.*

This is not enough yet. The translation of the colonial Other into the romantic Other happens via two different albeit related strategies, we had claimed above. Besides the play with the familiar made strange and familiar again, the lost being found and made lost again, enabling those who believe in this play to escape in similar ways, on the horse of that romantically Othered man, there is something at work here that is much more visible and materially banal. The film's credits include the name of a designer who was responsible for Valentino's costumes, Natacha Rambova. Originally from Utah, Rambova had created an image of herself as continental, mysterious and intellectual at a time when there was much space in the entertainment industry for experimental performances of identity, in terms of gender, heritage and design. Her collaboration with the actress Alla Nazimova by the time she worked with Valentino resulted in avantgarde productions such as *Camille* (Smallwood 1921) and *Salome* (Bryant 1923), which remain utterly impressive examples of cinematic art. The costumes she designed for Rudolph Valentino are equally remarkable: not just clad in an Oriental way, but made mysterious and transparent at the same time. Like the film's play with loss and return, the designer's wardrobe for its male lead does both, make him foreign and unveil him as being

masqueraded. If there is a secret about this Oriental lover, then it is his not being Oriental. Leider (2003: 157–158) precisely describes the effect of these costumes as reaching beyond mere exoticism by putting gender at stake:

> Behind the veil, beneath the scantily covered midriff and the scarves she sheds as she twirls, the harem dancer's skin takes on a high-voltage erotic charge because it is at once undulating and concealed, unknown. The Sheik, too, is covered head to toe and therefore is covert, he, too, is exotic in draped capes, tasseled turbans, ornately decorated sashes, and embroidered vests – his character and clothing combine the womanly quality of mysterious fascination with masculine strength, authority, and fierceness. […] His desert home has shaped him, endowing him with both power and cunning. 'The desert is a great hiding place,' an intertitle reminds us.

The work done by Natacha Rambova in the early 1920s tends to be overshadowed by accounts on her personal life in many of the sources of the period as well as of later times. Rambova had been, for a couple of years, the mistress of Valentino who, by that time, had still been married to someone else. After complicated divorce proceedings, he and Rambova married, but were subsequently forced to split due to accusations of bigamy. The marriage did not last, and Valentino tragically passed away only a few months after their divorce.

A contemporary source, Ben-Allah's *Rudolph Valentino, His Romantic Life and Death* (1926), portrays Rambova as a woman too career-minded to be an adequate wife, like many of the articles that had appeared in fan magazines before Valentino's death:

> It was more than an open rumor now that Mrs. Valentino had assumed the reins of management of her stellar husband. There was no end of friction with leading ladies engaged to play opposite Valentino and dismissed, with this or that unsatisfactory to the artistic soul of Natacha Rambova. […] Mrs. Valentino was responsible for a picture in her own right that has been described by others as 'exotic and artistic but too much so'. Nita Naldi was in it as did others a bit beyond the understanding of ordinary folk. […] Mrs. Valentino decided to go to New York to continue her own career. Rudy went to the station with her, a public embrace, a gentle kiss and a friendly and loving squeeze of her arm, and bid her Godspeed. (Ben-Allah 1926: 41–43)

The account of the actor's life and death continues with the tale of another romance, and of course his massively publicized funeral. Unimaginable to audiences then, the name and the face have fallen out of collective memory. The image of the Sheik, which the actor seemed to have disdained in the years when he was largely identified with it, persisted –resonating in the name of his biographer, in his portrait on packs of condoms, images of Arabs on other commodities, as well as in numerous copycats of the film and the role itself.

It is intriguing though that not only Valentino has fallen out of memory; the name of the deserted desert-child who later became the Sheik is forgotten as well. Already in the film, there is no name left but Ahmed for this returned son of an Anglophone father. The

Other's Other in this Shalimar space is a man who has been lost or given away, a man who has been removed to the extent that no memory of a name prevails.[5]

Figure 5. *About height*.

For Rambova, a different story is to be told. She was not carried away to the Shalimar, but went to New York. A few years later, she would marry a Spanish aristocrat and live in Mallorca. They traveled widely, especially to Egypt, where she met Howard Carter and

[5] Woody Allen has a different man step down from the silver screen in order to meet his fan, Mia Farrow, in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985). To me, it would have been more plausible if Mia Farrow stepped up into the screen. However, a screen is just a screen, and so we are left with a fan's desire for a man who in the end turns out a figure made of light, fantasy making us fantasize. In Clarence Brown's *Possessed* (1931), stepping out/up/into yields much more concrete results. Joan Crawford, smalltown girl, watches a train slowly passing by, and its bright windows are like screens showing Hollywood dreams. In the end, she enters the train, leaves town and goes to the city where Clark Gable waits, desire come true, never to step out.

other Egyptologists. Even though she never studied the discipline academically, she became a much respected scholar in the field and published several academic texts, always with Alexandre Piankoff, who taught in Paris and Cairo. He passed away in Brussels in 1966, the same year in which Rambova died in Utah (Morris 1991).

Rambova's work remains meaningful to scholars of Egyptology who work on mythological papyri.[6] Hers was yet another work of translation, but she does not carry her own words across boundaries. In her work, her Other, this Othered Other –the Other's Other, who has fallen silent, is spoken for in more ancient words than those Heidegger and Goldschmidt have used. She never names him, and rightly so, as his name has been forgotten. Who was Ahmed before he was lost in the desert? And the man who lent him his face and body, the dancer? A man who might have known that everything in this world is filled with life and has the capacity to speak, even stone. In a conversation we share, my colleague Nick Faraclas has sent me a message experiencing a month-long series of earthquakes where he lives, and wrote: "The quaking ground reminds me every day about how important it is to keep dancing and wandering. It is helping me to remember that when we dance and we wander, we are in dialogue with a living earth." The Other whose face is still present through his impersonation of the Other has danced and wandered, yet for a very short time.

Is 'Other' a name? In Ancient Egypt, to forget a name was tantamount to erasure. Names of former kings were scratched off of their cartouches, leaving the stone that bore them scarred. The erased name speaks very clearly, of *damnatio personae*, of deliberate oblivion.[7] But this is not all. The Other took many names, changed them frequently.

Rambova, who herself hid underneath the cloak of an adopted name, found her own ways to bring the Other Other across the boundaries. In 1957, volume 3 of the Bollingen Series XL was published on the texts of the mythological papyri translated by Alexandre Piankoff. Is contains a chapter on the symbolism of the papyri by N. Rambova. The papyri, Piankoff writes in his introduction, are "almost all of the Twenty-first Dynasty of the priest-kings of Upper Egypt and pertain to the Clergy of Amon-Re, king of the gods of Thebes" (Piankoff 1957: 3). The language and style employed by Piankoff is precise and solemn, a code shared by old elites. The language of the papyri themselves might have been of a similar kind: those texts were "[c]reated for the use of priests and priestesses in the afterlife, [and] they contain symbolic representations of condensed mythological conceptions and magical formulae, many of which are otherwise unknown" (ibid.). They have something in common, in terms of the spiritual landscape they are situated in and the cosmological order they speak of and for. Rambova writes:

[6] I remain deeply grateful to Françoise Labrique for her replies to my many questions about Rambova and for providing me with a glimpse at Egyptology and its various perspectives of the past and the present.

[7] I am grateful to Anja Kootz for being so kind and generous to share her insights into this knowledge with me.

> The root pattern illustrated in the scenes of these papyri is that of the eternally repeating cycle of the sun god: his emergence from the Watery Abyss at the dawn of each new creation, his descent in the West into the Necropolis of the Western Mountain, his passage through the night regions of Osiris, his rebirth from the horizon of the Eastern Mountain and reascent back into the heights of heaven. (Rambova 1957: 29)

She looks at revivification through eternal iteration, always the same over and over again, as the mechanism of everything. Bound in repetition, the Sheik will sing his silent song, my dog run after its ball, conversation oscillate between interlocutors. Translating, bringing (a word), being brought (a word), moving close and then away: one of Rambova's many illustrations shows a sunrise with two gods facing each other (Fig. 48 of Rambova 1957). She explains:

> Represented in many variant forms on these papyri (Tent-diu-Mut, Pa-di-Amon, and Khonsu-Renep) is another significant group of scenes pertaining to the renewal and resurrection. Perhaps more than any others they illustrate the basic Egyptian belief in the mysterious interplay of the forces of Life and Death personified by the two complementary figures of Re and Osiris. (Rambova 1957: 61)

What are they saying to each other, Life and Death? "Words spoken by Osiris, Lord of Eternity […] Words spoken by Thoth, Lord of Divine Words" (Piankoff 1957: 117), and then all these pleas for entry into the Netherworld. I wonder what the silent actors really said to one another. If we knew, we could write another book on varieties, work on time. But these are just Shalimar songs, if you ask me.

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