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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS)

**The *Tutkuks* in Maadi:
What is Their Presence Disrupting?**

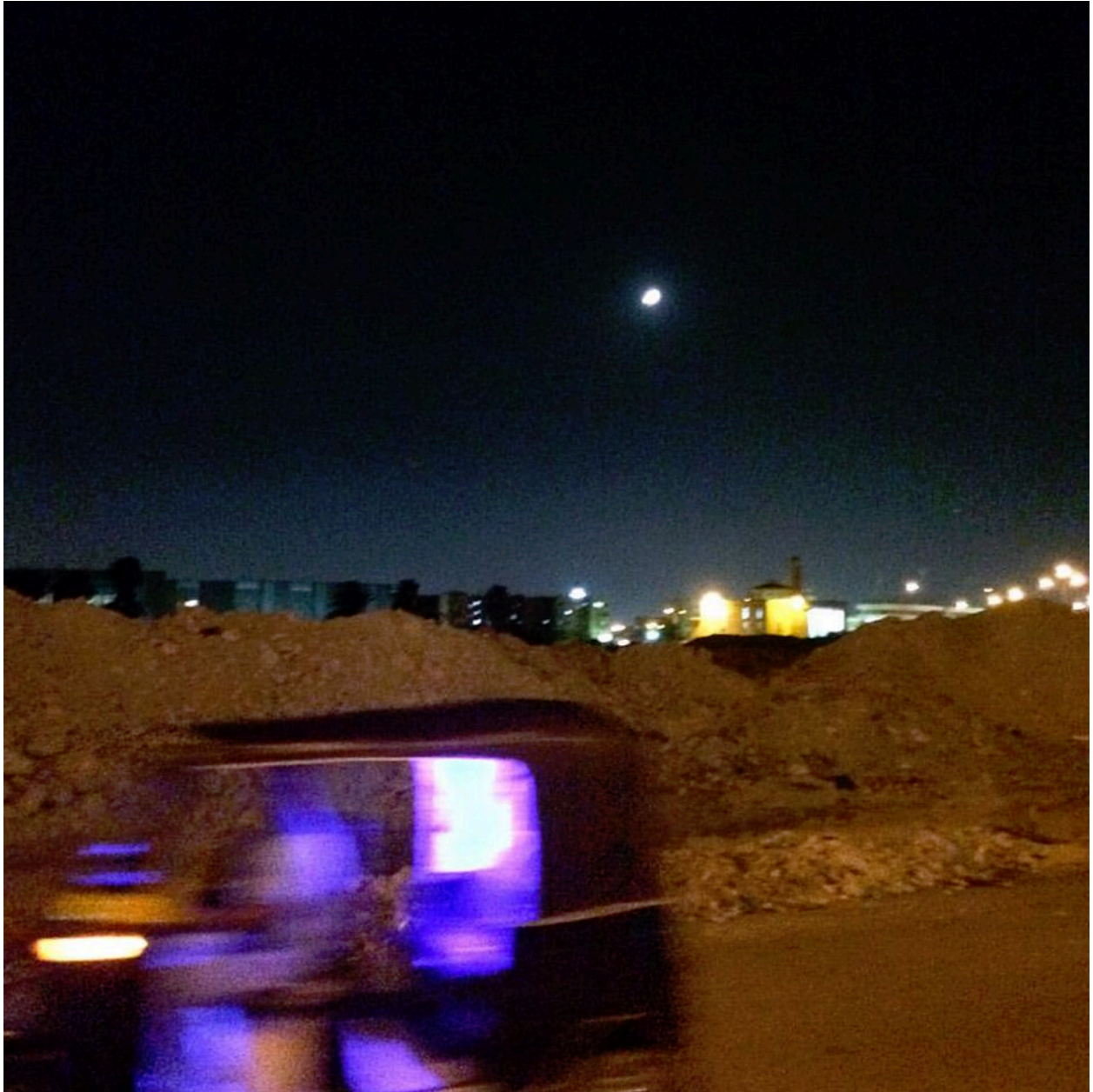
A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, and Egyptology

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology-Anthropology

By Doaa Ayman Kaddah

Under the supervision of Dr. Ramy Aly
January 2016

To the tuktuks of Maadi



“It’s not what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation’ (Benjamin, 1968, p.462)”.

[Photo Credit to Jihad Abaza, 2016]

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Introduction

Situating my Positionality within the “Field”

“What else do you do afterschool other than torturing your driver?”

In 10th grade, my English teacher, Mr. Oliver, needed a ride to Maadi. My school was located in Nasr City, which was during this time only 30 minutes away from my neighborhood, Maadi. I did not understand why would Mr. Oliver say such a thing? What kind of impression did I give to my teacher that led him to utter this statement in a sarcastic tone? All I remember saying to ‘Am Safwat, the family’s driver, was “let’s go back to Maadi” as Mr. Oliver and I rode back with him in the car. I said what I normally say. My 13-year-old self would habitually (Bourdieu, 1997) only mention the name of the location I wished to go to: Dalia’s house, Joe’s house, *El Kwafuir* (the hairdresser). There was no need to say more: I would hop in the car and utter one of these commands. All I knew at that time was that Heba’s place was somewhere in Nasr City, Dalia’s was in Mohandessin, Joe’s was in Heliopolis, and the *El Kwafuir* was in a relatively “local” area in Maadi which is outside the district of Sarayat El Maadi. ‘Am Safwat for me was part of the car. He came with the car. His job was to get me to where I needed to go, wait for me as long as it took and drive me back. We sometimes would stop at a Koshary place, where I can still recall the fresh smell of the spicy fried onions meshed with the rest of the Koshary ingredients. Sometimes, I would ask ‘Am Safwat to sing to me or to make prank phone calls to one of my friends as a source of entertainment. I would cover my mouth with my hands so that my friends could not hear my laughter through the phone. He would call and sing, “*Blease do not go, I love you so*”. ‘Am Safwat’s subjectivity was not in any way my concern; it was as if it was evacuated the minute he entered my mother’s car. He was what I needed to get the car and me in motion, which would allow me to cross spaces and places that were deemed “dirty” to my upper-

class senses. I do not know why he does not work for us anymore and I never cared enough to ask.

As a child and throughout my teenage years, I did not need *'Am Safwat* if I was planning to venture into the area to the left of my house. This area is known as Sarayat El-Maadi, where its name carries with it literally and metaphorically the mansions and palaces once built to the colonial elites. If I take a right after I leave the building, I will return to my childhood memories, where I would—and occasionally still do—jog, walk my dog, and ride my bicycle. Sarayat El-Maadi is not only the visible remains of my childhood, but also of the British colonial design and vision of what constituted a 'modern' suburban neighborhood (Rafaat, 1994). Maadi's nostalgic past might be fading away in some parts, but in this quarter, its past and present imagery are securely maintained. The greenery that surrounds the cleansed spaces of the entire district; the luxurious residential villas; the high-end cars parked along Sarayat's famous narrow—and to many people disorienting—streets; and the local and foreign residents walking their Chihuahuas, Italian mastiffs, great Danes, golden and chocolate Retrievers are all supposedly the hallmarks of what makes this district unique and distinctively modern.

However, if I were to take a right after leaving the building and walk for less than a minute, I would find myself in a distinctly different social space that is much more socially diverse as an urban fabric. The streets are relatively wider, the cars are louder, and the social backgrounds of people on the streets is substantially more mixed. It was frowned upon by my family to move my body into this other end of the street, especially since I would be approaching the railway line that separates the "old," "original," and nostalgic Maadi from its "new" and to some, "tainted" counterpart.

This is where *'Am Safwat* would come in. This is why he was at my disposal, and this is how I am reflecting on the fact that there is no actual physical segregation of the different districts of Maadi. It nevertheless does not eliminate the invisible yet palpable barriers that indicate the social segregation of the town. The planning of Maadi has colonial roots that resemble the historical development of the city of Rabat in Morocco (Abu-Lughod, 1980); both were developed under the premise of exclusionary politics that facilitates physical and spatial segregation through its infrastructural layout. Both were developed by a relatively similar imagery of what constitutes a “modern” city. However, unlike Rabat’s thick walls that rigidly segregate the mobility of the Moroccans (Abu-Lughod, 1980), Maadi’s contemporary “walls” are invisibly constructed through various technologies of power that situate and control the daily practices of movement throughout the town and its surrounding neighborhoods. An incident that best exemplifies the ‘invisible visibility’ of Maadi’s walls is the official ban of the *tuktuk* in affluent neighborhoods in Cairo (Essawi, 2015).

In only one street, in one space, there are various life worlds, multiple realities, contested socialities, and social divides that are not physically demarcated; Elites like myself use the “working class” as disposable and precarious bodies while simultaneously dictating the desired level of docility that “they” should perform. This expected docile performance entails also the dictation of how the people who maintain the ‘clean’ spaces of Sarayat El-Maadi should commute. International and national domestic workers, security guards, janitors, drivers, cooks, gardeners are among the many bodies that use various modes of transport, including the *tuktuk*.: All together in flux, yet as Abu-Loghud (1987) states, physically close yet socially distant at the same time. I write these words with a prodigious mix of shame, anger and guilt. My 30-year-old self is angry at the violence, classism, and utter ignorance that my 13-year-old self has drawn her

common sense from. I am ashamed of how I made fun of 'Am Safwat's English and his overweight body. I am shameful for every time I hung up on him, or yelled at him for "forgetting his place." I am ashamed of thinking that I am in fact one of the "*nodaf*",¹ the "clean," the elite, the bourgeois that takes for granted its privileges and assumes them as entitlements. 'Am Safwat is a name to a face and a body, but there are many faces and bodies that I held to the same perception. They might not have been important enough for me to remember, but, nevertheless, they embody everything and everyone that is deemed unfit to the narrow and rigid pool of Maadi's elites. I never explicitly used words to express my embodied contestation to those who do not share the same privileged upbringing. My family did not sit me down and explain the demarcation of the social geographies of power of my hometown. Nothing needed to be said, as the structural and symbolic forms of violence that formed and shaped me are forces beyond the structure of language. My body acquired the knowledge needed to judge from a distance who belongs to which category of people, who I should be afraid of and who can I approach with ease.

My intention of sharing this story from my teen age years is not only to situate the reader to my longing to alleviate the guilt and shame that I carry with me until this very day. After all, it is difficult for me to state with certainty that is only a mere coincidence that my interlocutors are also drivers--like 'Am Safwat--who many believe that they should be "contained" in their contested spaces of '*ashwa'iyat* or slums. My intention is also to shed light on why my ethnographic research on the tuktuks in Maadi as well as the peoples steering them is productive

¹ *Nodaf* is an Arabic word that literally translates to the English word 'clean'. It used to describe upper middle class and/or upper class Egyptians. For example, one of my interlocutors used the term to explain how the police in the streets do not frequently check her because of her *needefa* car. Another example is when the term is used in reference to an affluent neighborhood (*hay nedeeef*), or a luxurious restaurant (*mat'am nedeeef*), or to people (*nas nodaf*). The terminology is associated with a 'pure' form that is worthy of respect. According to my interlocutors' narratives, the '*nodaf*' of Egypt are wealthy, educated, modern, and civilized. In Chapter 3, I will further delve in the relevance of such terminologies to the tuktuk.

in affectively encountering Maadi's social geographies of power. The 'controversial mobility of the tuktuk drivers in Maadi might be productive in comprehending how social divides that are not physically constructed as walls, yet as I previously mentioned, are invisible palpable barriers that signify the social segregation of Maadi.

Furthermore another intention of why I shared my teen age experiences is to situate my positionality along with my interest in the topic. The ethnographic journey for this thesis is, as Das (2007) explains, a result of my own lingering questions, not an attempt for a "scientific discovery" that "unveils" the subtle workings of power. How can one street, whether it is the one where I live or Street 9 where I did my fieldwork, encompass a wide range of lives and worlds that do not "touch?" How can the political construction of visibility become strong enough that we fail to see what is right in front of our eyes? Why is it ok for the tuktuk to be seen in Hadayek El-Maadi, usually conceived as a lower-class neighborhood adjacent to Sarayat El-Maadi, but when it moves in Sarayat, it becomes a disruption to the senses? Why is the *tuktuk* in motion contested in some areas, and what happens when it stays still in others? How do the elites of Maadi justify the exclusion of the *tuktuk* from their elite spaces? How deep does the pool of their common sense, that I myself have once unquestionably swam in goes? Is there a history to this pool? If so, how much are the dead still alive and in what ways are they summoned back?

In this thesis, I wish to answer these questions, among others. In Chapter 1, I will situate myself as well as the readers within the theoretical framework that has predominantly guided me in this journey along with a brief historical overview of Maadi. In Chapter 2, I will narrate how I negotiated my presence in the field as well as the impact it had on my self-reflexivity as a supposedly 'native' anthropologist. In Chapter 3, I will enact my encounter with one elite Maadi

resident, while he explicates why banning the *tuktuk* from the elite spaces of his neighborhood is necessary. In Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7 I will introduce my main interlocutors as our ride in the tuktuk unfolds the weaving process between my ethnographic experiences and the disciplined academic knowledge used to make ‘meaning of them’. Each chapter serves as an introduction to both my interlocutors as well as the theories I found myself inclined to draw from.

In this thesis, I return to what I have chewed, digested in order to find a way to pass it through my system. Granted, I might never emancipate myself from the “structuring structures” (Bourdieu, 1997, p.34) that formed and shaped who I became, but I nevertheless long to return to my past through a present that is fluidly constitutive of it (Valentine, 1996)—a present I encounter with a critical eye through my enactment of a sense of “agency” through my storytelling (Jackson, 2002) in the face of a hegemony that I once have unquestionably made my own. In this sense, ethnography is way of self-criticism and self-awareness; a mirror in which personal past with all its complexity erupts.

Chapter 1 Ghostly Horror of the Past

“Memory is not an instrument for surveying the past but its theater. It is the medium of past experience, just as the earth is the medium in which dead cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging”
(Benjamin, 2006, p. xii).

“The highest form of morality is not to feel at home in one’s own home”
(Adorno & Jephcott, 1978, p.39).

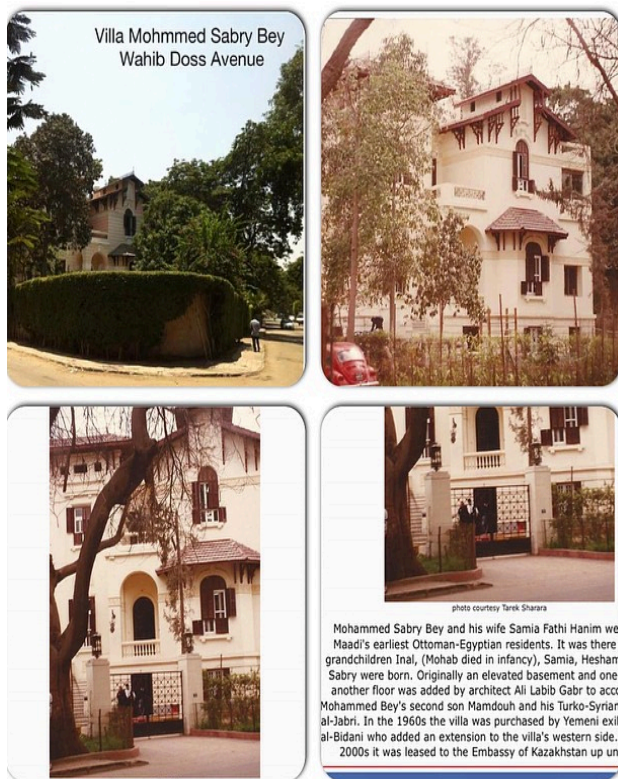


Figure 1: Facebook post. The Family’s palace was owned by the earliest Ottoman residents of Maadi. It was constructed in 1914 and my grandmother purchased it in 1966.

Three years ago, my cousin tagged me on Facebook to a photo (Figure 1) with the hashtags: #Maadihistoy, #Grandfather, #Proud. My immediate reaction was to remove the tag. During this time, I could not put my hands on the disruption I felt to my bodily senses. I could not understand why she feels proud of this palace. After all, it is a testament to our affiliation to the glory of Maadi’s nostalgic past. The space in which my mother was brought up is not only highly cherished and fetishized by some members of my family, but also by the Egyptian state. It has

been marked as an official historical heritage site. The palace once belonged to the earlier Ottoman residents of Maadi (Refaat, 1994). The palace is distinguished by its vast spaciousness, which is the first thing that always grabs my attention. The ceilings are high enough that my neck must turn straight up in order to visually reach its end point. My mother has repetitively asked me to move in with her after the renovations are completed, but the palace has a peculiar void that haunts its securely maintained walls. The minute I enter the spacious grounds, the ghostly presence that haunts its silence becomes overwhelming. The circular stairs and the hollow echoes left enough architectural “cracks” to illuminate what has been concealed, pushed aside, silenced or simply deemed irrelevant to the entire construction of the palace. For instance, the palace has a “special” backdoor where the servants could access the different parts of it. They were not allowed to set foot on the same grounds of the former Ottoman owners of the palace.

Consequently, when I was drowning in the archival documents on Maadi’s history, I hoped to find more “backdoors” that could illuminate the destructive traces that negate the teleological narration of my “green, clean and prosperous” hometown. I was preoccupied with Gordillo’s (2014) and Benjamin’s (1968) approach to rubble as historical artifacts that unveil what has been wiped away. Unlike what Gordilo calls the “elite fetishizaion of ruins” (p.26) like my family’s palace that is “cherished” by the state and my family, the rubble is the excessive remains that have not been deemed as historically worthy or relevant to the dominant narration of Maadi’s history. Since no space vanishes without leaving a trace (Lefebvre, 1991), I hoped to find more clues to the rubble that sheds light on the destruction of space, peoples, and objects in order for the continuous glorification of Maadi’s history to be as affectively present in the here and now.

Rubble Vs. Ruin

It is pivotal to highlight from the beginning how I intend to use the concept of rubble and ruin in this thesis. In order to help situate the readers of why I thought my “findings” through such concepts emulated from the work of Gordillo (2014), it is worthwhile going to the original text of Walter Benjamin (1968) in order to shed light on its relevance throughout this thesis. In his ninth theses in his chapter on the theses of the philosophy of history, Benjamin states the following:

A Klee painting named ‘Angelus Novus’ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of **debris** before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (p. 257).

Benjamin’s thesis has been interpreted as a critique to the modernist conception of history: one that teleologically (re)orders the historical present through a linear trajectory blown by the storm of progress (Gordillo, 2014; Katkin-Maier, 2006; Louveluck, 2011). Hence, “progress” is an example of a byproduct of the evolutionist enframing that aims to disconnect the past from the present and the present from the past, where its presumable future orientation masks the destructed “debris” as the storm steps over and runs through them. Benjamin (1968) notes that there is a reason why objects that are prescribed value from the past are coined “cultural treasures” (p.256) while others are simply the destructed and accumulated debris that gets swiped under the rug of the hegemonic historiography. He writes in the sixth thesis:

Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate.

According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along the possession. They are called **cultural treasures**, and ahistorical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin which he cannot contemplate without horror (Benjamin, 1968, p. 256).

Thus, the ghostly horror I encountered in my family's palace is the epitome of the fetishized ruins that Gordillo and Benjamin speak of, especially since it fits smoothly the hegemonic historiography of Maadi's glorious past and its reified present: a green, clean, elite space with an exclusionary history that its residence yearns for. Therefore, I define the term ruin to include any object that is deemed worthy of mummifying, cherishing and even fetishizing. Objects that human beings reduced to speak for a glorified history that is supposedly dead, yet their afterlife serve the mode of continuous historical repetition. Examples include the numerous palaces and villas that are marked by the Egyptian state as "cultural heritage," the railway tracks that are penetrating the fictional demarcation of the elite spaces of Maadi and the more *'ashwa'iyā* areas of Arab El-Maadi, the intentionally planted greenery throughout the old district of the town, and most importantly, the districts of Sarayat and Degla and the fetishized imagery it is prescribed to by many of its residents.

Furthermore, Benjamin (1968) might be acknowledging in his ninth thesis that the debris did not vanish. They are piling through time, carrying nodes of various spatialities and temporalities. Consequently, even if these debris did not leave archeologically the traces of destruction, we can nevertheless conceptualize debris, or as I follow Gordillo (2014) and call them 'rubble' abstractly and textually through my ethnographical encounters. The rubble of the past ignites our recognition of the past in our present experiences, where it disrupts any modernist claims of the detachment of the incongruent temporalities. Hence, I conceptualize rubble as anyone, any object and/or any space that holds the nodes of negation to the hegemonic historiography of Maadi. Furthermore, rubble are the objects and peoples that disrupt elite

sensibilities and threaten the phantasmic exclusionary imagery of a fetishized spaces in Maadi. I had hoped to find easily these traces that might shed light on the rubble of the past.

However, what I came across in the archival materials was antithetical to what I initially planned to uncover. I could not easily find these invisible traces neither in the university's archival materials nor in the meticulous work of the historical books on Maadi. Instead, Maadi's history seems to be officially documented from the stance of the of the powerful elites. For example, in the book *Maadi 1904-1962: Society and History in a Cairo Suburb*, Samir Refaat (1994) begins his tracing of Maadi's "origin" with the development of the railway that made Maadi accessible for habitation. According to Refaat (1994), Maadi was modeled after Helwan, a neighboring village, where the chess board design seemed appealing to three prominent Jewish financiers of European descent who hoped to build a space as fashionable as Helwan. Since they were major shareholders of the Delta Light Railway Company that constructed Maadi's railway, they were also responsible for the regulation and development of the entire district of Maadi.

Maadi then became a home for a diverse range of foreigners who mostly had direct affiliations with the ruling power of the town. There were Anglo-Egyptians, Syrians, Ottoman, English, French, and with socio-historical changes to Maadi, Americans and elite Egyptians as well. Maadi was designed to become the largest greenery in Africa, where there were strict rules, which any "Maadites" must adhere to (Refaat, 1994). Rules and regulations included the following: the significance of being a quiet village, the places for proper garbage disposal, the specific centimeters of greenery that must be planted in front of each house, the standardized distance between each villa, the courtesy of mowing your lawn in time, the acceptable length and

width of each construction, as well as the need to be detail oriented when describing where the host lives since outsiders tend to get lost² (The Maadi Guide, 1956).

I came across this information, among numerous others, in a Maadi guide book published in 1956 that I found in the archival documents of the American University in Cairo. As I flipped through the book, I was initially surprised to see the choice of white bodies and green landscapes represented on the cover of the book and throughout the pages. If the pages had instead been configured by colors of the pages, the level of “whiteness” and “greenness” would have been categorically labeled as the materiality of the space unfolds. For example, the following passage is an archival document which epitomizes the hegemonic representation of the town like no other piece of “ruin” that I have come across:

Maadi itself is a place of water, brooks, clean roads, shady lanes, flower garden and other features which are seldom associated with the charms of Egypt. It is the gem of beauty in a desert as the rose and that waste places may be made to bring forth fruit and flowers and glorious profusion, and this all within twenty minutes of the hot and noisy hear of Egypt’s capital. Maadi is a Cairo suburb full of rural beauty nestling on the eastern bank of the Nile where, but a few years ago, was to be found a strip of sparsely cultivated land and a great waste of desert land. Green hedges separate beautiful private gardens from public gardens which fringe the broad, well-kept shady roads-hedges of yew, rose and other green shrubs: all are watered by fresh flowing streams that resemble natural brooks rather than artificial canals. No ugly walls or railings are allowed to mar the general beauty scheme, so that the gardens in which residents delight can be enjoyed by passer-by. Keen competition produces gardens where flowers are emblems of real love and care; many are the prizes proudly shown in Maadi drawing rooms awarded by the Cairo horticultural society for excellent blooms.

Upon arriving at the railway station after the weariness of city streets, one revels in the sense of freedom. In their seasons gorgeous flowering trees adds to the general beauty: the bloom of the bauhinia seen from a distance gives the streets the appearance of being fringed with apple blossom. The houses of the town, apart from their practical value and comfort, are aesthetically in keeping with their surroundings and yet they convey to the observer the impression that their fittingness is spontaneous rather than designed. All stand lawns; each has its show of roses with a bewildering riot of foreign and indigenous blooms. It is part of the

² A rule I can relate to as I hear the confused tone of friends when they enter Maadi for the first or third time.

policy of the controlling company to allow no unsold plots to lie waste so that at many unexpected corners patches of clover, wheat or barely are to be seen.

The more beautiful parts of the town lie on the Eastern side of the railway and this was once wholly deserted land. Wherever the wayside streams carry the fertile Nile water, there the desert yields rich fruit and flowers (Maadi: the Garden, 1932, pp.121).

After immersing myself in the archival department, where I let the materials speak to me in the hopes of listening to new revelations about Maadi, I could not help but infer that everything I came across were nothing but what Gordillo (2014) describes as the fetishized ruins of the past. They have been deemed worthy and relevant for preservation not because they disrupt the colonial and elitist order of things, but because they are “things” that testify to Maadi’s glorious and nostalgic past. The more I delved into the dense material of the town, the less I found what I was looking for. The history presented to me was premised on the notion that the land was as empty as the homogenous time that Benjamin refutes (1968, p.261). The notion that the land was “wholly deserted,” as the newspaper article states, prior to the construction of the railway is a questionable historical fact to begin with, especially given how the concept of “progress” is entrenched in the rise of capitalist’s advancement in constructing such an epitomization of what Gordillo (2014, p.345) describes as “industrial modernity:” a railway that acquired a glamorous positivity while concealing and negating anything and anyone that gets in the way of acquiring such a crystalizing presence.

Furthermore, I was astonished to draw the parallels between the distant past and our immediate future. Granted Maadi has considerably changed in form and structure, I could not help but wonder whether we, as *Ma’dawiya*³, are carrying decaying ideologies of a town that seems to be designed based on exclusionary practices that feed off the flesh of the living through fictitious binary as well as boundary setting mechanisms: for example, the tuktuk cannot be seen

³ *Ma’dawiya* is the colloquial reference to the residents of Maadi.

in the clean, elite and bourgeois spaces of the old Maadi, Sarayat, where it might explicate the graduate decline of the ‘progressive’ and ‘modern’ space in the midst of ‘barbarity’ that is taking over the peoples of the old Maadi and their spaces. Refaat (1994) has been meticulous in his historical analysis in a manner that seems to shed light on “what went wrong?” As I flipped the very first page of his book, the first words he chose to write are his dedication to Maadi’s founding fathers, who he states should be turning in their graves. But the grave that has been built, the chairs that have been sat on, the tables that were cleaned, the bodies that have labored for the reification of the horror of the “once upon a time” seem to have been lost to the unexamined eye. However, these might be the examples of the traces I was trying to affectively encounter in the intentionally almost freezing temperature at the archival department at the American University in Cairo. As if the cold solidified the hegemonic historiography and I was hoping to find the liquid, the wreckage, the destructed speak to me in a coherent and consistent manner.

Since all I am left with is the victorious’ fetishization of specific spaces as green and clean, objects as palaces and railways, and peoples as white and brown elites, I chose to embrace it without being necessarily subsumed into them. In order to shed light onto the history of the present, I had to dissect the belly of the beast to see what it had devoured. After all, we are political bodies that are transcribed within power structures, histories and narratives (Feldman, 2001). The beast has infiltrated our bodies and minds deep enough to examine what it had once chewed for its carnivore-strength. According to Feldman (2001), the notion that we are passive empty vessels does not account for how the preexisting classifications are not only embedded in our modes of perception, but also constitutive of who we are as social subjects and political bodies. Through various discursive mechanisms, we carry, deploy, and conform to the coherence

and such hegemonic ideas that were unquestionably inherited by those who once occupied the same space we inhabit, especially since space is anything but a “disembodied landscape” (Gordillo, 2014, p.13). However, for such a continuous reification of a hegemonic historical narrative of Maadi, authors like Refaat (1994) seem to treat space as an ahistorical site without a life and a history of its own, where political, historical, social and colonial trajectories are not intertwined in how it is conceived in our contemporary moment. Since space is conceived as lifeless, it might explicate how Refaat (1994) is susceptible to feeding the teleological repetition that haunts the modernist linear historical trajectory, cleaning up and ordering events to fit the elitist and colonial order of things, people and spaces by adding more beads to an inanimate rosary.

As Derrida (1996) states, the archive is a history of loss, a history premised upon remembering as much as it is about forgetting. If I found “nothing” that could illuminate what I describe as “backdoors,” it is because narratives are made of silences (Trouillot, 1995). Derrida aptly states how “the absence is not nothing, but rather the spaces left by what has gone; how the emptiness indicated how once it was filled and animated” (as cited in Steedman, 2002, p.11). That being said, I found that my line of logic also reifies a positivist approach in “uncovering” a history that was “really there,” yet swallowed by the belly of the beast. As if the archival materials that implicitly or explicitly indicate a fixed past that I merely extract from its deep-ended pool.

Like a classical empiricist, I seem to treat an extrasomatic reality that I wish to discover through factual fictions, or fictional facts. Just as the binary between a fixed past and present is highly questionable since they both are fluidly constitutive of one another, the rigid dichotomy in our mode of reasoning between “what has happened” and “what is told about what has

happened” can entrap me in a positivist paradigm that Trouillot (1995) problematizes. Both, in one-way or the other adhere to an objectivist stance, which is what positivism is premised on. Both assume that our bodies, minds, and the elusive affective forces surged in human and non-human relations are mere empty vessels, clean slates that are simply dictated by the illusionary works of an “exteriorly empirical mind” that isolates and dissects the “past” as a cohesive entity. Time as a mere chronological continuum and space is as dead as the founding fathers of Maadi. But then, how can I write a thesis premised on the fluid entanglement between a history that “once was,” and a present that continues to be without lurking around the corners of the hegemonic historiography of the town that has been repetitively reified and habitually (Bordieu, 1997) embodied in our contemporary moment? Peripheries that are not only geographically located within the town, but also perpetually pushed and silenced outside the elitist frames of recognition? I must drag it down to the here and now, while simultaneously illuminating its concordance to a “distant” space that does not necessarily adhere to the dominant historiography of the town.

Consequently, I put my pen down, took a deep breath, and read Rancière’s (1994) words one more time; where I find comfort in alleviating two of my previously mentioned concerns: the problematically dichotomous dissection between a past as “it really once was” and its dominant, or in my case, “alternative” narration through the official one, and the affect of the dominant historiography as well as the silenced past on the fluid entanglements of the bodies, minds, space and historical classifications of peoples inhabiting certain spaces in Maadi.

Because there is a past, and a specific passion for the past, and there is a history because there is an absence... the status of history depends on the treatment of the twofold absence of the thing itself that is no longer there-that is in the past; and that never was-because it was never told us such (Rancière, 1994, p. 63).

Only in the present can we validate or refute a “past” that we wish to acknowledge (Trouillot, 1995), knowing quite well that, as previously mentioned in the above quotation, that it was never told as such. Traces that might seem absent at hindsight yet play a dominant role in what Trouillot (1995) describes as its “renewal” through current exclusionary practices that are alive in our contemporary moment (p. 151). This is based on the notion that historical narratives could shed light on the firmly held ideologies and positions of the present, where the dead are more alive than one would presuppose and the alive are carrying nexus of power from the predecessors of the same space and place. Thus, in light of my theoretical and historical inclinations, in this thesis, I will provide ethnographic accounts of the here and now while simultaneously shedding light on its fluid involvement with various disjointed historical events from Maadi’s hegemonic historiography. I emphasize on the disjointed because I do not wish to adhere to a chronological continuum that conceives history as what Benjamin (1968) fruitfully describes as the “beads of the rosary” (p.263). Therefore, I will not force my story telling into a linear trajectory, where time simply unfolds and space is simply left empty with such unwrapping.

The Tuktuk as Scattered Rubble

Based on what I read on Maadi as well what I came across in the archival documents, I conclude that Maadi’s History and the fetishization of the streets and palaces like my family’s palace are enclosed though narrating them, as Benjamin (1968) states, as “it really was” (p.255), when this “was” could not have either been a “was” or continue to be an “is” without what Benjamin (1968) calls, “the horror” (p. 262) faced by those who are deemed unworthy or irrelevant to have their traces in archival material or books. The peoples, materials, and objects that built these palaces, maintained their glory, as well as served the needs of the owners are not easily traceable as what Benjamin (1968) names “cultural treasures” (p. 245), like my family’s

palace. I could not hear them or see the materiality of their lives in neither archival documents nor in oral history accounts. However, if the back doors of my family's palace can scream as loud as when my brother used to scream to create the echo and hollow effect, it might amplify the presence of the silenced and the disposable, where their invisible visibility presents itself as affectively charged matter. It led me to conclude that there is nothing politically innocent about the fetishization either of my family's palace or the glamorous representation of Maadi in the above excerpt. In order for the fetishized value assigned to these spaces and places to be dominantly present until today, it must have been at the expense of those who were and are deemed unfit to such a rigid, orderly and hegemonic mental, and in many ways, physical framing.

Hence, in this thesis, as an ambitious MA student, I claim that the backdoors are awakened in the present as affectively charged matter in a three-wheeled vehicle called the *tuktuk*. With a life and a history of their own, we find them maneuvering and roaming around within the vicinity of the walls once built to exclude, remove, silence, and rigidly demarcate the social geographies of colonial and elitist power. The *tuktuks* in the old districts of Maadi negate the "once upon a time" story of the progressive railway (Al-Ghayati, 2016) by acquiring their own mode of transport, offering us a glimpse of an alternative reading to Maadi's history. They negate the conception of the "enlightened progress" that envelops the modernist epoche. They maneuver loudly without necessarily abiding by the docile performance expected from their once "silenced forefathers." They are the lurking image, of a bottled memory, passing by swiftly as they excessively pour onto the horizons of a violent past. They disrupt the elite sensibilities as they access the once "cleansed" and "untouchable" spaces. They are the sudden ruptures of a repressed memory, causing the residents to be alerted to what Benjamin (1968) calls, the

“moments of danger” (p. 255) that seem to threaten the hegemonic order of things and peoples. Furthermore, they are the personification of what Benjamin names as “constellations” (p.263), the rubble of the past that serve as a reminder that history is written by the victorious.

But if we look at how the *tuktuk* is depicted in newspaper articles, we find a vast number of articles solely dedicated to police’s efforts to surveil and contain them in their “spaces of origin” of the slums or *‘ashwa’iyat* (Ayoub, 2015). They are criminalized if they surpass the palpable boundaries set out for them by the state as well as by Maadi residents. They are



Figure 2: The decaying green fetish unleashed their guards to contain the undesirable objects and peoples in their spaces. Note that it was in the same street intersection between the areas of Sarayat and Arab El Maadi.

perceived as the “*tuktuk* problem” (tuktuk motorized, 2014), “cockroaches” (Tuktuks to be, 2015) that are infiltrating the “clean” and “proper” spaces with their social deviance, and “immoral behavior” (El Gefry, 2016). Last summer, there was a campaign sponsored by the state to place billboard signs throughout Sarayat El-Maadi, Degla, as well as the points of entry and exits to what are conceived by the state to be access points that the *tuktuk* might trespass . In Figure A. of the Appendix, I illustrated the exact locations of these billboards in the areas of El-

Sarayat and Degla. Furthermore, the interviews I had with upper class residents of Maadi seem to be drawing from the hegemonic representation of the *tuktuk* and its drivers⁴, where is deemed to be, as Douglas theorizes (1966), a “matter out of place”⁵ (p. 36). However, the *tuktuk* has been constructed as matter out of place because it has been out of sight in Maadi’s historiography. If I let my imagination become unbounded with the rigid demarcation of what constitutes “rubble” in its historical materiality, I might draw the discernable parallelism between the vehicle of the *tuktuk* and the rubble as theorized by Benjamin (1968) and Gordillo (2014). Both are “figures of negativity that exert pressure on human practice and are constitutive of the spatiality of the living” (Gordillo, 2014, p. 11). Both are present to deglamorize the fetishized ruins, which in the case of my thesis are the palaces, streets, and peoples of Maadi. Both are objects in which space, history, and memory amalgamate, having an afterlife that surpasses the taming of dominant historiography. Both are testament to the destructiveness of the past that might not be easily traceable in the present. Granted, my proposal might seem to the readers as farfetched, especially given that the *tuktuk* is not an actual rubble found buried in the once “wholly deserted land of Maadi.”

However, I argue that the artificial creation of Maadi was premised on a certain imaginary that the *tuktuk* simply interrupts in the here and now. Maadi was once designed for quietness and solitude—as illustrated from the newspaper excerpt has been altered by the presence of an affectively “noisy” and mobile object. The aesthetically pleasing greenery that surrounds the “cleansed” spaces of the village are bombarded with the sight of a dark, and, according to the interviews I conducted, ugly object. In addition, the once scrupulously designed modern space is “invaded” by the randomness (*‘ashwa’iyia*) of its adjacent neighborhoods of the

⁴ In chapter 3, I will further delve in my encounters of these interviews.

⁵ In chapter 3, I will elaboration on how Douglas’s (1966) conceptualization of dirt and danger is of relevance to this thesis.

slums or *'ashwa'yat*. The people of the backdoors of the fetishized palaces are no longer kept “out of sight.” They now step on the same grounds of the elites, obliviously to some, trespassing the existing social geographies of power. Consequently, rubble can be conceived in its ghostly presence in objects that haunt back the fetishization of the old Maadi. The visibility of the *tuktuk* counters the invisibility of the past as it “deglamorize[s] ruins by revealing material sedimentation of destruction” (Gordillo, 2014, p. 14).

Since I am also not a trained archeological anthropologist, my approach of this thesis will not be premised on “digging up” actual historical artifacts that could support the audacity of my argument. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the affective forces of the once distant past can be unlocked within contemporary objects that might seem to have nothing to do with the creation of Maadi. As I have previously mentioned, we are political bodies transcribed with power relations, histories, certain socialities, and narratives, where the space we inhabit has an afterlife of its own. If I thought of the *tuktuk* as irrelevant to Maadi’s past, then I might also fall victim in believing that space, bodies, objects, and imaginaries are simply empty vessels that are not interactively engaging with one another (Latour, 2008), where their prescribed meanings of the here and now are ahistorical.

Thus, in this thesis, I approach the *tuktuk* as rubble of the historical present, which unlike the hegemonic representation of it, has a certain positivity of its own in shedding light on how its destruction doesn’t mean it is vanished absence (Gordillo, 2014). It enacts new potentialities that are not necessarily dragged to how the history of the present is narrated, “as it is” (Benjamin, 1968, p. 255). It offers an alternative reading of what has been long chewed and digested in order to recover what was once lost. However, in order to do so, I have to return back to the belly of

the beast to witness the traces that are worthy of redeeming⁶. This beast is simply a metaphor for the hegemonic historiography of Maadi, an instance of which is the book written by Samir Refaat (1994). I rely heavily on him throughout the thesis and especially in the next section on the brief historical overview of Maadi. The reason behind this is simply due to the lack of other elaborative material on the history of Maadi. Even the archival documents found in the Rare Books Collections at the American University in Cairo are solely collected by Samir Refaat as they are indexed as the “Samir Refaat Collection”. Furthermore, when I read other materials, they seem to be also secondary resources that almost always cite and reference to him. He has been thorough throughout his tracing of the historical unfolding of Maadi since its “origin”, where Benjamin (1968) might find his teleological narration as well as his glorification of Maadi’s elitist and colonial inhabitants the personification of the horror of the “bourgeois dream world.”⁷

Brief Historical Overview of Maadi

The geographical location of the town is of high significance to numerous implications throughout various moments in its historical present. The first is the choice of naming the town Maadi, which is the abbreviation of the Arabic word “*ma‘adeyyiat*” (Al-Ghayati, 2016). *Ma‘adeyyiat* are the ferryboats moving to and across from Maadi for trade and for carrying passengers. Ferryboats were one of the main modes of transport that date back to the Ancient Pharaonic era, where Maadi was an intersecting point to the kingdom of Memphis located in the west of the Nile (Al-Ghayati, 2016). Furthermore, the space of Maadi, along with the ferryboats

⁶ Although we can never really escape our habitus, it is worthwhile delving into what have been devoured in an attempt to make the familiar strange.

⁷ That being said, I also hold immense gratitude to his work, especially since he gave me the ground to mark against where I do not wish to stand.

is the medium between the Red Sea and the Nile River.⁸ However, Maadi was not the first Arabic word given to the space. In the 13th century, Maadi was called the “Sudanese lane” as a substantial number of people from Sudan and the once *Nuba* made their way through Maadi for agricultural trading. In addition, they were enrolled, whether forced or willingly, into the army of the Fatimid Caliphate (Al-Ghayati, 2016). Another example of the saliency of the ferryboats to the naming of the town is manifested in the territorial division of the space preceding its construction as a town in 1905 as well as following its establishment as the green affluent space of Maadi. According to Refaat (1994), Al-Ghayati (2016), and *The Maadi Guide book* (1956) found in the archival materials in the American University in Cairo, after the town planning was completed, the official districts of Maadi were as follows: Maadi Gardens or Hadayek El-Maadi⁹, Tal El-Maadi, Sarayat El-Maadi or Maadi’s Palaces, and Maadi El- Khabiri.

Maadi-El Khabiri is the Arab district of Maadi. El-Khabiri was and continues to be a well known family in the Arab district of Maadi as it is the family that owned and operated the ferryboats. Ali El-Khabiri was originally from *Manial Sheeha*, a district located on the west bank on the exact opposite side of Maadi from the Nile (Al-Ghayati, 2016). Consequently, given the pivotal role that ferries played throughout the course of Maadi’s history, the choice of naming the village by the family who owned and managed this business enterprise can be regarded as an expressive symbol of how essential this mode of transport was to the mobility of peoples, products, military troops, and ammunitions. Needless to say, the colonial expansion as well as agricultural cultivation and trading would not have been accessible or possible without the, the

⁸ The term Maadi as a verb in Colloquial Egyptian Arabic is “*beta’di, bey’adi, bey’ado*”-- depending on the gender-, which roughly translates as “passing by”. For example, if a friend will pick me up with her car, I would say that “*hat’ady’ alaya* (she will pass by me). Thus, it was interesting to note that the etymology of a term from my mother tongue is rooted from ancient mode of transport as well as the name of Maadi.

⁹ For the purpose of shedding light on the relevance of naming the district Maadi to the ferryboats, I only mentioned this district here. In the following section, I will briefly explicate the remaining districts.

ma'adeyyiat , crossing over and passing to distant spatialities and localities.

I coincidentally came across the importance of the El-Khabiri family name when I was conversing on the phone with an author I have repetitively cited in this thesis: Al-Ghayati (2016), the writer of the book *Maadi in the Heart of History*. I came across his book in the Maadi Sporting Club and decided to ask one of the security guards if it is possible to get his phone number. He was eager to share his painfully fulfilling and rewarding four year journey of research that was heavily premised on oral history accounts. “You know Doaa, much of the information I found out was through accidental conversation with different people in the town. For example, do you know how I found information on the El-Khabiri family of the Arab district? I was having a meeting in the Maadi Yacht Club. Then out of the blue, I came across one of Ali El-Khabiri’s great grandsons. He is working now in the club as the *bahar*¹⁰ for the *lanchat*”.

It seems that the temporal waves of the Nile are still alive and interactively affecting the family of El-Khabiri’s ties with the shores of the town. As time unfolded and the space shaped the materiality of the town, the family’s work took to a similar, yet a different form, a contemporary mode of transport that holds the traces of the ferryboats that were once the main form of commute for the preceding generations.

Since the phone conversation provided me with fruitful information that was more interesting and alive than the printed texts and articles¹¹, I decided to stir the pot and directly ask

¹⁰ When I first heard the combination between the word ‘*bahaar*’, which means sailor in Arabic and ‘*Lanchat*’, which is plural for Lunch, it ringed crude to my ear. However, it was explained to me by other interlocutors that it fits the connotations that El-Ghayati might have intended to communicate. *Bahar* is a term used to refer to a ‘higher’ social status than simply a ‘*marakbi*’, which is an Arabic word for a sailor.

¹¹ After hanging up the phone and scheduling another talk with him, I was immersed with feelings of validation to my messy approach to researching the various life words of this historical present. I remembered once again John Law (2004) and further appreciated the enchanting potentialities, which unplanned encounters like this can interactively reassemble.

Adel El-Ghayati on his choice of cover for the book. Why is a large image of a front of a modern train and not the ferryboats that the town is named after a suitable cover? “Because this is the start. This is how Maadi became Maadi. If there had not been a railway, they would not have come up with the idea of building a town in this area. Maadi is surrounded and divided by the railway tracks”.

I was not on board with his decision of depiction. When we reduce the “origin” of Maadi to the modern transport of a railway, it might be problematic as it conceals the various constellations in the different time and space continuums that shaped the historical present of Maadi. For instance, the historical ties of the El-Khabiri’s family to the Nile and the modes of transport should not be treated in isolation. If we take a step back to the larger cover of Maadi’s “book,” we might consider that Egypt’s historical trajectories are inextricably woven with the flow of the Nile river across a vast (un)cultivated and deserted spaces across the African and the Asian continents (The Maadi Guide, 1956). The fertile banks and the geographical location of Egypt in general, and Maadi in particular, were the site of colonial interest throughout its temporal continuums (Mitchell, 1988).¹² Thus, the strategic significance to various colonial powers was manifested in the close military ties of Maadi’s peripheries as well as within itself after its construction. For instance, another name given to Maadi during the Roman Byzantine Era, which lasted from 30 BC to 641 AD, was *Kalabhete*, meaning the house of the ammunitions (El-Ghayati, 2016).

In addition, if we jump into another spatial-temporal “constellation” in Maadi’s historical continuum, we will land on the current rail tracks that demarcate the old district of Maadi from the new. These tracks were initially constructed for pure military purposes (Refaat,

¹² The official historical narrative that I heard from a young age of the first “non-native” occupier and ruler of Egypt dates back to 332 B.C by Alexander the “Great”. Egypt gained its “official independence” from colonial ruling powers in 1956 as the last British troops departed from the Suez Canal.

1994). In 1873, the Khedive Ismail increased his army to 30,000 troops in order to extend his domination over the counters of Abbassia. The railroad was an efficient and effective mode of transport for mobilizing the needed musketry, troops, as well as any other objects and people for the purpose of war (Mitchell, 1988). For example, the powder gun factory as well as Khedive Ismail's garrison adjacent to the Citadel produced weaponry in need of transportation.

It is also worth mentioning that Egypt was not independent of the British Colonial power during the ruling of Khedive Ismail. After Ismail was deposed and exiled, he was succeeded by his son Tewfik who followed his family's, as well as Britain's footsteps in "flourishing" Egypt into, what Mitchell (1988) described as the modern "Machinery of truth" (p. 232). Mitchell argues that the successful invasion of Egypt would not have been possible without the mechanical efficacy of the railroads, which were used for agricultural and military purposes, and other technological innovations. Other technological resources that facilitated the British occupation of Egypt included the Gatling machine gun invented in 1860, the telegraph, and the newspapers that were used to inform the British public of their successful invasion in 1882.

According to Mitchell (2002), after the demonstration of British Colonial power that led to the destruction of the majority of Alexandria, the British decided to take it a step further and focus on the accumulation and growth of capital under colonial power. Mitchell (2002) also states that Khedive Tewfik led projects that aimed to "prosper" Upper Egypt and the Delta by introducing industrial projects such as sugar refineries on the banks of the Nile. Large-scale agricultural appropriation was taking place, where it was very common for affluent elites to forcefully "buy" the lands of the farmers (Mitchell, 2002). This resonates highly with Marx's (1990) theorization of how the capitalist mode of production operates: "The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant from the soil is the basis of the process" (Marx, 1990,

p.876), where the process of free laborers torn from their mean of subsistence and hurled into the labor market. As the farmer is no longer in control of the conditions of the mode of his production, the mode of production is altered in the colonies in order to create a new form of primitive accumulation—one that transformed the preceding system of slavery into dependent wage labor to the capitalist colonial structure.

Consequently, these wage laborers who are alienated from their land and labor are subsumed into the hegemonizing machine of capitalist modernity, where they built the tracks of the railways, harvested the soil, and collected and carried the fruits and vegetables to the train trucks to be transported. Furthermore, they built the towns and cities planned by the British and Khedive Ismail. Since capitalism was in its heyday, promoting free enterprise and personal initiatives under its rationale, Egypt in general and Maadi in particular became the “land of opportunities” for many foreigners including British, French, and Levantine (Refaat, 1994).

Maadi: The New Exclusionary Haven after Helwan

An important town to the history of Maadi is Helwan, with a booming tourist industry that includes luxurious services such as baths (El-Ghayati, 2016). It was a utopian dream with its greenery and palaces including one belonging to Khedive Tewfik himself (Refaat, 1994). Consequently, when three prominent Jewish families of European descent formed a consortium and approached him to extend to Helwan the old railway line planned by his father, he willingly signed off on the project. After all, it was a good business investment that could aid in Helwan’s prosperity. Thus, as it was a common practice to “register” or “forcefully buy” agricultural land , the three Jewish elites, who were related to each other, began “registering” the land on both sides of the new extended railway tracks in the vicinity of Maadi El-Khabiri (Pooley, 1923), known today as the Arab district. In addition to the lands owned by Menashe, Swuaries, and Cattaiu for

extending the railroad to Helwan, there was another prominent Jewish man who joined the project with his newly acquired 300 *feddans*¹³ from the Arab district: Victor Mosseri.

According to the *Maadi Guide book* (1956), there once was a cultivated land by the Nile owned by a Turkish Bickbasha, a soldier called Selim el Guindi. During the reign of Khedive Tewfik, El-Guindi was stationed in Maadi. As a token of appreciation for Guindi's loyalty and *diligence*, King Tewfik "granted" him 400 *feddan* around what is currently a space in Arab El-Maadi. As time passed by, El-Guindi had numerous wives and children, which ultimately resulted in his land being divided by several of his heirs upon his death (The Maadi Guide, 1956). Given the direct accessibility to the Nile, his farm was flourishing with fruits, trees and grapevines. Victor Mosseri had his eyes on El-Guindi's farms (Refaat, 1994). The heirs of El-Guindi, according to *The Maadi Guide Book* were "forced" to sell their land to Mosseri.

The Delta Company and the Colonial-Capitalist Structure

There are few additional points worth mentioning to properly conceptualize how the land appropriation and labor expropriation were incorporated into the capitalist colonial capitalist structure. The colonial order of things during this time was embedded in capitalism's "basic" concept of supply and demand. A land in demand yielded high profits if the space had been reconfigured for capital accumulation: whether if it was a mode of transport like a railway or the purchase of the land from the natives. If land is both accessible as well as penetrable by modern transport, it automatically, by the power of the "invisible hand", increased its potentiality for profit as its demand rises. Two companies best exemplify how the power of modern institutional practices dialectically maintain and perpetuate the capitalist mode of production. Through the rule of law, private property rights, and surplus extractions, the Egyptian Delta Light Railways, a British-Jewish company managed railways that crisscross through the Delta (Pooley, 1923).

¹³ *Feddan* is a unit of how the land is measured. It is the equivalent of around one acre (Abaza, 2013).

According to Mitchell (1988), Egypt was predominately providing the raw cotton for the global textile industry of Europe. The cotton as well as cash crops from the Delta needed to smoothly get to the port of Alexandria to reach its European destination. Thus, a suitable discourse that legitimizes the colonial order of things must predominately explicate why a railway penetrating the delta and turning natives into dependent wage laborers is a justified mean to a prosperous end. Aside from the “civilizing” discourse that will be incorporated in the next chapter, the Delta light railway’s presence as a colonial project for what Prasad (2015) states as mere “improvements” to the impoverished condition of the current colonized space Prasad points out the irony of a discourse that “improved” the natural landscape through introducing the ramifications of industrial pollutions on the environment.

I encountered this line of reasoning as I was flipping through the pages of *The Maadi Guide Book* (1956) in the university’s archive. The following passage rationalizes the emergence of Delta Light Railway to the native scene:

The Delta Railway was a company founded to cope with the communication problems in the Delta areas. It has funny little engines, a narrow single line and very bumpy carriages familiar in the countryside in the north to this day. The company had to buy strips to lay its rails but the farmers refused to sell. The company had the foresight to recognize that along the railway, little villages sooner or later would be spring with a consequent rise in the price of the land. They readily agreed to buy the whole farms, which lay on their route. They took great advantage of the land slump of 1907, when the price of agricultural land dropped due to the severe competition of the cotton market between the United States and the British empire and many farmers were forced to sell out to ridiculously low prices (p. 25).

Since the agricultural land and the railway tracks are inextricably intertwined with the entire infrastructural layout of the capitalist colonial structure, the managing entities not only have their stakes in the efficient and effective smooth operation of their mode of transport, but also in the future of the newly acquired lands alongside of it (Refaat, 1994). As mentioned in the

above paragraph as well as the example of Mosseri's and his relative's appropriation of the land, a vast number of cultivated fields along with laborers were at their disposal. The Delta Light Railway could not possibly handle alone both the land appropriation as well as the entire management of the railway industry by itself. Consequently, The Delta Land and Investment company sprung out of the organization called the Delta Railway, an English company formed in 1892 (Pooley, 1923).

According to Refaat (1994), Delta Land's main objective was the "exploitation and development of areas bordering the railway tracks" (p.15). The company "facilitated" the appropriation of land, which was a common practice at the time. However, business focused in 1904 towards one place: the planned project of Maadi designed along the parameters of an English township (The Maadi Guide, 1956). Furthermore, the same Jewish elite, Jacques de Menashe who was on the board of the directors of the Delta Railway became one of the founding members of the sister company. Refaat suspects that Mosseri's decision to buy the land in the vicinity of Maadi before its official implementation was an indication of keen eye for a future lucrative investment. It was during the time that his relatives were also appropriating land surrounding the planned railway tracks. However, he might have decided to wait, like a good capitalist with an eye for profit, before he strikes an opportunity for reselling his 400 *fedans*. That he did. After the official signing of the Maadi project, Mosseri sold his 400 *fedans* to Delta Land that resulted in a profit of 65 Sterling Pounds.

It was about time to lay down the English blue prints in the newly appropriated space. What was missing was everything: roads, houses, greenery, public utilities, and, of course, an atmosphere of a utopian colonial sight of relaxation and "peace." What is interesting to note is that, according to Refaat (1994), although both companies were registered in London they were

still named Delta, as in the “Delta lands of Egypt”. I believe that it best exemplifies not only the exploitation of the natives and their lands, but also the normalization of the entire colonial process through appropriating the terms used to describe what was there prior to their arrival, giving it a “native” flavor.

The Railway and Its Tracks as Ruins: lifeless objects and dead spaces?

In light of the brief overview of the history of Maadi, although the construction of the railway tracks drastically framed the texture as well as the infrastructural layout of Maadi, it nevertheless conceals more than it reveals regarding the violent power dynamics of the capitalist colonial structure. The story did not start with the railway tracks, and if I assume for a moment that it did, then I might wash away willfully what once was in order to reify what supposedly is.

The construction of the railway had numerous implications that are still affectively ingrained in us like its cemented tracks. According to Schivelbusch (1978), “railroads annihilate space and time” (p.31), where the space-time continuum has been dramatically shifted prior to the modernist and colonial conception of it. Shivelbusch also argues that the new ecotechnical time that resulted in the temporal shrinkage of the duration of time inevitably gave the illusion of a “condensed geography” (p.32). What is annihilated by the railroad is the space-time continuum that was premised on the previous transport means. The mathematical calculations of the time it takes to reach one’s point of destination from their departure coopted what once was the experiential dimensions of traveling.

The traveling person no longer gets to experience various localities in their spatial specificities. Instead, what solely matters is arriving in a timely matter in order to catch point A of departure and to reach point E of destination. The “letters” or spaces in between are deemed irrelevant so long as the railway tracks strikes its way through them. Thus, even though the new

transport technology makes new spaces accessible, it facilitated the loss of experiencing the spaces” in between as “they are no use whatsoever to the intervening spaces which they traverse with disdain, proving them only with a useless spectacle” (Shivelbusch, 1978, p.35). Furthermore, what is pivotal in one’s experience of space, whether it lays in between point A and E or the intended points of A and E is how this lack of experience altered our conception of what ontologically is space to begin with. The railroad is part and parcel of the colonial capitalist structure that treats space as a commodity under its disposal.

As I previously mentioned, Mosseri forcefully “bought” the land from their native owners, which ultimately altered the social relations they once had with the space and their community in the currently Arab district of Maadi. His investment was premised on treating space as dead matter, which the railway tracks can strike its way through and the in-between spaces are only irrelevant means to the end points of destination and arrival. However, Robert Sack (1980) offers an insightful reading to how space was conceived prior to the modernist depiction of space:

In the primitive view, land is not a thing that can be cut into pieces and sold as parcels. Land is not a piece of space within a larger spatial system. On the contrary, it is seen in terms of social relations. The people, as part of nature, are intimately linked to the land. To belong to a territory or a place is a social concept which requires first and foremost belonging to a societal unit. The land itself in the possession of the group as a whole. It is not privately portioned and owned. Moreover, it is alive with the spirits and history of the people, and places on it are sacred (as cited in Smith, 1984 p.96).

Thus, regardless of the problematic coining of the previous conception of land and space as “primitive,” Sack (1980) still raised a powerful reminder of the implications of what the colonial-capitalist structure have ontologically conceived of space and land: they are not dead entities in the disposal of dominant powers. They are alive with the history and peoples that once inhabited it. Consequently, depicting the railway on the forefront of Maadi’s story only serves

what Shivelbusch (1978) describes as aspirations “as old as the bourgeois modern age” (p.40), where its projects of enlightenment, progress and civilizations to its colonized subjects are embedded in their bodies as well as in their rail way-tracked spaces (p.39).

Chapter 2 Negotiating My Presence in the “Field”: My First *Tuktuk* Ride

After completing my thesis proposal, I started to become concerned about how I would enter the “field.”¹⁴ How will I meet my future interlocutors and what are the proper grounds to establish a relationship based on trust and respect to one another? How can I convey my intentions in order to reassure my interlocutors that my “outside eye” is not associated with state surveillance and the disciplinary mechanisms of control and containment?

One Thursday night in June 2015, Sara, a friend of mine and I decided to embark on my first journey in a *tuktuk*. Unlike other friends of mine from Maadi who would not dare to hop in a taxi, let alone a *tuktuk*, Sara was the perfect ally for such an “adventurous experience”. We were hanging out in our regular café in Street 9 when it dawned on us that a Thursday night would be a lively time to “enter” the “field”. We walked for about 15 minutes from the café until we came across numerous *tuktuks* parking and roaming around the central metro station of Maadi. One particular *tuktuk* was approaching us while honking in a manner that seemed to signal to us its availability for a ride. I saw the driver coming from a noticeable distance. A middle-aged driver seated alongside a minor who looks young enough to be 11 years old. Sara raised her arm for them to stop. As we hopped in the *tuktuk*, I wondered which exact destination should we state. Unlike a taxi where you have to first state where you wish to go and then the driver would decide whether he is ok with it or not, the *tuktuk* driver seemed to be content with Sara’s nonchalant utterance of *‘alatool* (straight-ahead). The road had a vibrant radiance that bounced in and through the rapid movements of cars, donkey carts, *tuktuks*, people, and street vendors, each

¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that my definition of the field here is purely geographical. However, as illustrated from the preface, I am not defining the field in solely fixed geographical terms; especially since it is an elusive concept that transcends geographical, spatial, temporal and psychological boundaries. I am and will continuously be in the ‘field’. It didn’t start when I hopped in the first *tuktuk* nor will it end when I write this thesis.

echoing different sounds, carrying affective forces as they pass by each other. It was impossible for the *tuktuk* to keep steering in a rigidly straightforward motion. With every unpaved cement on the road, every car, other *tuktuks* and pedestrians that passes by in both directions, the *tuktuk* needed to negotiate through “flexible” maneuvering the conditions in which it finds itself in.

“It is a bit busy, as it is Thursday night”. “No worries,” Sara said as she initiated a conversation with them. Out of the blue, she asks, “What do you think of the restrictions that the state is imposing on the *tuktuk*?” He turned his head to the right and raised his arm in a manner that seemed to signal his disapproval. “What can we do? It only makes roads like these ones more crowded. They don’t like the *tuktuk* to be seen inside (*gowwa*) Maadi: *bee’a w keda*”.

“Is this your son?” asked Sara. “No, this is Mohamed. He is a son of a friend of mine”. I looked at the boy and asked, “Are you also a *tuktuk* driver?” He turned his head backward, smiled and shyly shook his head right and left. I am not certain why I jumped to this conclusion. I might have digested the hegemonic representation of *tuktuk* drivers as minors to a rather an *a priori* extent.

As Sara was one who was initiating the conversation, she seemed to have also taken on the role of the mediator between myself and this new lived experience that is as swiftly mobile as the *tuktuk*. Sara, as an activist with leftist inclinations seemed to have shined in this encounter through her openly expressive discontent with the state and her passionate affiliations with the marginalized segment of the population. As the *tuktuk* repetitively reached a stagnant halt due to the traffic congestion, Sara asked if it is better to just hop out of the *tuktuk* and buy some walnuts and almonds.

“We arrived to the shop we would like to go to. Can you wait for us here?” “I cannot wait directly in front of the shop. As you can see, I will ‘close’ the street (*ha’fel el taree’ w hya mish*

na'sa). But you should take your time here and I will be waiting over there.” He extended his arm to point to a small alley ten feet away from the shop.

“Can I have please one kilo of Almonds and Walnuts?” Sara glanced on the refrigerated ice cream cones next to the numerous piles of nuts and asked: “*eh* (what), should we bring them something?” “Yes sure, why not”. After all, they have been nice to us and seem to be incredibly accommodating. We brought two wrapped ice cream cones in a white plastic bag. The cold sensational feeling was soothing to my palms. I held them both in an attempt to counter the heated ambience that had left me frozen and silent. I recall telling myself, “Speak Doaa, say something. Sara will not always be here with you!”

That I did, as we hopped back in the *tuktuk* I said “Sorry to keep you waiting. Hope we didn’t take long in there.” “No, not at all,” the man answered. “Where would you like to go next?” “Can you take us back to where we came from, or better yet, we actually would like to go to a restaurant in the middle of Street 9”.

“The middle of Street 9?” he said hesitantly. My eyeballs grew wider as I eagerly leaned closer to observe his reaction. This is it. This is what my research proposal was all about. How will he now negotiate the *tuktuk*’s controversial mobility to the “inside” of Maadi? Given light to what we have previously discussed with him on the state’s surveillance and oppressive tactics, what will be his move now?

“You know they don’t like to see us there? But for you I don’t mind taking the risk. You never know, maybe no one will be there?” “Are you sure,” Sara asked as we both glanced at each other. “Yes, we can just hop out next to the metro and we can walk this distance, no problem at all.” “No, no I insist.” The young boy looked back with a smile and said, “Don’t worry, it will be ok”.

As we were approaching the metro station and onto the square adjacent to it, the driver raised his arm and looked back at us. “You see this spot. This is normally the point where we are not allowed to pass”. His arm was signaling the palpable demarcation that is borderless in its materiality.¹⁵ It is as if an invisible fence is wrapped around the areas, which constitutes the “*gowwa*,” the inside of Maadi, where only 30 feet away is the “*barra*,” the outskirts. As if the “master” has dogs with vicious teeth that are trained to wander off the “wild” animals back into the forest and away from the “domesticated” bourgeois spaces of the town.

After reaching our point of destination, a trendy Lebanese outdoor restaurant, I observed the abominable glances that seem to scrutinize the *tuktuk* and us as passengers. A young woman wearing torn out light blue jeans was on the phone next to a tall muscular man wearing a shirt tight enough to extenuate his firm biceps reached the point of blunt stares directed towards us.

“How much is this ride?” Sara asked. “*El tegbee ya ostaza* (whatever you give)”. We paid what we thought of as a “generous” compensation for their time and effort with us. “This is something for you two (*haga ‘alashanko*)”.

Their reaction was unprecedented: a shift from what seem to have been a reciprocal understanding and mutual liking to an abrupt and firm refusal to our gesture. “No. No, thank you. You shouldn’t have brought this to us”. The man said while looking away in a manner that seemed reluctant to make eye contact with us. Sara kept insisting, “Why not? Please this is only to say thank you for the ride.” “You already paid. This is more than enough”. I told Sara lets go. We made them uncomfortable and slightly agitated. Let’s just go in the restaurant.

We both said “*Ma’ el salama* (Goodbye)” and it took about 5 seconds before the *tuktuk* exited the scene completely. I stood there, rigidly planting my feet on the road, firmly pressing

¹⁵ Two months later, this exact spot had an “official” billboard sign that states: *Tuktuks* are prohibited in Maadi. Violators will be fined LE 1500 instantly. See Figure A. and B of the Appendix for more information on these billboards.

on the wrapped ice cream cones hoping to have an enlightening moment in the midst of my awkwardness in this encounter. I felt like I had to binge-eat a 5-course meal without a second in between. My gut and my head were overwhelmed by the miscellaneous ingredients, which I did not have a chance to digest or properly “take in”.

After we sat down and placed our orders, we started to wonder what to make out of this encounter. We might not have been aware of how intrusive our questions and overall approaches were. When we presented to them the ice cream cones, the meaning we prescribed to this act was for “rapport building” purposes, especially since they seemed to be approachable and open enough to engage in further conversations. I thought, maybe they might be potential interlocutors. However, the ease we felt talking and sharing time with them might not have been as reciprocal as we thought. He seemed reluctant to give me his phone number, as my insistence to exchange phone numbers might have signaled for them a hidden agenda that I did not lucidly foreclose. After we hopped out of the *tuktuk*, Sara and I started wondering, what did we do wrong? It seemed easier for both of us to point out the actions that each of us had done, and what they have might made out of it. “Dooa, you seemed very bizarre when you were trying to read the Arabic writings on the tuktuk in front of us, remember? You could not pronounce properly the writing let alone utter a coherent word. The young boy gave you a rather suspicious-like glance.”

“Me, what about when you said: the government always pressure the ‘*ghalaba*,’ the poor? They might have found it condescending the manner in which we perceived them as the passive poor (*ghalaba*) then need to be compensated with ice cream cones like children?” I later also realized that our point of destination signified who we are and what part of Maadi are we from, which might confirm our misconceived intentions to them.

“I guess we both had a part to play in this, I guess what happened today is normal. You are new in this part of the town and you will have to learn from your mistakes,” said Sara to me.

She was right. After all, the most valuable lessons are learned through experiences of trial and error. This first encounter resulted in the unfolding of my “methodological approach” to the field. Within weeks after this incident, I conducted what I called the “nuts method.” Basically, I would spontaneously hop on any *tuktuk* that was surrounding the area of Maadi’s metro on Street 9. I would ask him to take me to Hadayek where would I stop and buy nuts from the same locale that I visited in my first encounter. The distance from the metro to the shop was long enough to observe whether there is potential for rapport building. In many occasions, I found the drivers quiet and were not bothered to converse with me. In other cases, they were very vocal and would initiate conversations. As my first experience taught me, the fact that one is vocal and extrovertly approachable does not automatically guarantee their willingness to see me again, let alone be *made* into potential interlocutors. Furthermore, if my instinct signaled a green light to delve into an unknown and rather, an experimental territory, I would take my chance and openly state that I am doing research, *ba’s*, on the *tuktuks* in Maadi because maybe it was an “error” from my side not to be as transparent as my first encounter would have appreciated or expected me to be. I would like to believe that due to my enactment of a sense of transparency to my intentions, it resulted in straightforward refusal or acceptance to my proposition for further collaborations and meetings. Thanks to the “nuts method,” I met my three of my four main interlocutors: Sayed, Aly, Bayomi, and Mohamed.

The “Native” Anthropologist and the “Savage” Tuktuk Interlocutors

Months passed by and I found myself accustomed to the *tuktuk*. I no longer felt the need to go out of my way and incorporate the *tuktuk* in my every day. For about four months and until recently, I used to take the *tuktuk* to go back home after taking the metro, or after hanging out on Street 9. As I was learning to negotiate my presence in the “field,” I became aware of the irony in how, they too, are negotiating, through their maneuvering in specific routes, my requested point of destination. “Next to the Grand Mall,” I would indicate as my destination—a building only ten feet away from the railway that separate Sarayat from “New Maadi.” The routes they would take are relatively longer than if they would have just accessed the “*gowwa*,” the inside of Maadi. As if the narrow streets of Hadayek and the lively road of Ahmed Zaki are not part of Maadi, but rather the outskirts of the town. Inside, *gowwa* is where they should take me, and *gowwa*, seems to be always a calculated risk that depends on the time of the day—whether the expected hours that low rank officers are out for a hunt or the instant judgment or mood of the *tuktuk* driver.

As it is safe to mention that my intention was in no way to create hassles or the confiscation of their *tuktuks* from police officers, I would sometimes insist that they just drop me off in the Arab parking spot of *tuktuks*, and I would simply walk the one street that demarcates the Arab area from my home. With every ride, I learned something new. Every *tuktuk* driver and every ride was an entry to a new life world that sheds light on differences, rather than similarities to the rides and drivers of previous ones. For example, one of the dominant themes that sprung out of my encounters in the field is the inconsistencies, incoherence, messiness, unpredictability, and impossibility of reducing my interlocutors into a categorical label of “*tuktuk* drivers”. No matter how much information I provide through terms such as background, age, educational

level, political sensibilities, and their stance on licensing the *tuktuk*, lumping them under the



Figure 4: Mobile thoughts on scattered grounds

rubric of “*tuktuk* drivers” creates a form of fallacy that assumes a transparency and a neutrality to a phantasmic construction of a coherent, consistent “wholeness”.

I met a lawyer, a journalist, a governmental health inspector, a “sheikh,” a 13-year-old boy, a chef, a high school student, and many others with distinct backgrounds and interests. I started to question the categorical label of the *tuktuk* driver when all I have sought as a point of similarity is their dependency on this three wheeled “*makana*” for their livelihood. I was affected by the need to be strong and stand up for the right to be present, to maneuver after your livelihood. I met people that expressed what seemed to be genuine appreciation for our interactions, and others who might have perceived me as a heavy imposition. There were times when would I forget my anthropological cap somewhere buried within my daily errands. Others I would be wearing an entire ensemble of methodological insights that I hoped to retain them long enough in my memory to place them on paper. I recall hoping to keep my insights as fresh as my first lived experience. I hoped to capture the “right” angle, a fresh account that is as closely proximate to the “really real” reality that I have witnessed.

Little did I know that with all my best and diligent intentions, all that I can reconstruct is, what Romero (2015) calls, an “impoverished account of reality” (p. 3). I was not aware that the

notion of an “accurate representation” implies the “prior assumption of a difference between reality and its doubles” (Fabian, 1990, p.753), whereby my attempt to reach the “accurate” angle is to alleviate the tension between the extra-somatic happenings in the field and its reproductions in my mind. I learned that my enactment of the boundaries that separates the ontological and epistemological reality and its representations, as well as “official” writing and field notes (Segall, 2001, 581), are blurred and impossibly separable. Consequently, there is no need to buy more into such fictitious boundaries. Instead of intentionally demarcating the winds of the academic episteme, I threw the concept of the “right” angle, along with the “angle” itself back to where it came from.

Of course, there is another way that I could have approached my methodology, one based on writing reports that aims to lump all *tuktuk* drivers into a hegemonic categorical label, where I paint them all with one homogenous brush—an approach that conceives data and analysis as separable entities, taking the particulars out and producing a general depiction that supposedly encompasses them as cogs in my methodological machine. However, by doing so, I would be taking for granted several dangerous assumptions, mainly that I am granting “voice” to my interlocutors through the process of othering in my ethnographic writings: a process that operates by its plurality in the hopes of constructing an umbrella wide enough to “one size” fit them all. In addition, I would also assume that my interlocutors are not “made” but “given” (Fabian, 1990, p.769), who are merely waiting for me to “capture” them in their “natural habitat”. Thus, it is worthwhile to explicitly state to the readers that I am not speaking on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. My intention is not to impose my own world perspective on those whom I shared time, in some cases friendships, *shisha* and coffee.

My sensitivity to my upper-class upbringing that constitutes who I am, along with the pervasive forms of structural and symbolic violence that forms and shapes my subjectivity, is by no means an intentional attempt to shoot myself in the foot, or cut off the *disciplined* hands that should type my MA degree. It should also not be read as a narcissistic exercise to self-indulge in my own sense of familiar estrangement to matters that I have once unquestionably made my own. I might be intentionally raising a red flag, another painful reminder of how the anthropological epoch might not be exercising the emancipatory project that many might seem to be clinging on. Here I am in the 2016, and yet I am reproducing the colonial encounter in a different time, space and place. The privileged anthropologist who is therapeutically “reinventing” herself through the construction of an exotic alterity, the *tuktuk* other who according to Said (1989) have made enough noise for me to notice in the first place. The rubble of the past should not be also conceived of as endearing the invisible continuity of the historical present of the discipline in its production of various the modes of alterity. An interlocutor who is a “laboratory creation” (Said, 1989, p.210) that I fictionally transformed through making them a topic of field research. Furthermore, just like the savage other was one of the Janus face that the West reinvented itself through (Trouillot, 1991), I seem to be filling the savage slot through my construction of “otherness which anthropology is premised upon” (Trouillot, 1991, p.28).

The *tuktuk* and its driver filled the savage slot and I took on the historical and colonial role of the white privileged anthropologist who holds the epistemological authority to write and represent those that have voices of their own. Granted, I did not get on an airplane and travel to a different continent. I did not learn a new spoken language and suffer from problems of mispronunciations.¹⁶ All I did was walk to the other side of the same street (Street 9). I moved

¹⁶ That doesn't negate the fact that I was exposed to different catch phrases and words that have different connotations.

my body and walked across the street that separates the area of *Arab* and *Maadi el Sarayat*. I disrupted the imaginary, yet palpable barriers that cannot be physically touched, yet corporeally felt—the barriers that through discursive practices have constituted my own bounds of normality, my own sense of self. These bounds dictate whom should I be a friend with, who should approach me with ease and why, who is allowed in our “cleansed” and bourgeois areas of my beloved town, and for what purposes. The bounds “box” in certain social bodies as *nodaf*, while others, the *tuktuk* drivers, as a sight to loath and sometimes fear.

Thus, I could not help but wonder, is the close physical proximity of my “field” and the different life worlds I encountered any different than if I had, for example, went to the islands of the Caribbean and conducted my ethnographic fieldwork there? To what extent can I claim that I am in fact a “native anthropologist,” when everything I thought I knew about my town, as a social space subscribed in power relations, has been highly challenged and, in many ways, will forever remain incomplete and distorted. Does the fact that I share the same Egyptian green passport outweigh the differences between us? As Nayaran (2013) aptly questions, should education, gender, sexual orientation, and class not have significant implications on the lived realities and experiences that I encountered? Or should I fall back on the notion of an “Egyptian Identity,” a fictitious concept to begin with that conceals rather than accounts for what Law (2004) describes as the fluid mess of social realities?

My mother tongue that I assumed I share with my interlocutors was useful in very limited means. I heard my awkwardness in what I said and sometimes did. I heard terms and signs that never registered in my life and I had to constantly fight the urge to ask them all the time what does this word mean that you keep using? What exactly are you saying? The events that took place in the field were rapid as a speed of light, while my adjustment mechanisms to get a

glimpse of this briskly pace was frustratingly slow, and sometimes even stagnant. No matter how long I am in the “field,” the minute I get comfortable enough to naively assume that a concrete idea might be emerging, it gets shattered into pieces by my next encounters and conversations. Thus, I write this thesis not in spite of this shattering, but through them, since if I cleaned up the mess that this inevitable shattering does, I will fall victim, as Law (2004) argues, in messing it up even more.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that my yearnings for answers that alleviate such concerns are not intentionally driven to break the anthropological cycle of the *colonial terror*. I hope they are read in light of what might be forgotten or pushed aside for more “pragmatic” approaches to writing and representing because I cannot forget as I am reminded of my privilege every time I make a phone call to one of my interlocutors who rather not call me first as it might seem that they are only planning to “abuse” my privileged social status. I am also reminded every time I feel a rock in the pit of my stomach for not being more in touch, more available to share time and listen to their stories after I extracted enough “information” for my degree—stories I should be listening to while wearing my anthropological hat and worrying about how exactly will I be able to fictionally transform the fluidity of my experiences into the double spaced 12 font letters on my MacBook Air.

Furthermore, if I add Povenli’s (2009) critique of the politics of ethics, I find that the very act of putting myself in someone else’s shoes strengthen and reproduce the rigid dichotomy between “me” and “them,” or the “self” and the “*tuktuk* savage.” No matter how much I try to connect, the modes of separation that are premised on my sense of self as an autological subject and the forms of constraints that shape me that situate me and the tuktuk drivers in the social geographies of power will inevitably catch up with me. That being said, Jackson (2013)

alleviates a little of my concerns when he aptly states that the “gaps between the world and words can never be closed” (p. 1). I do not attempt to intentionally close what should not be by burying it in order to alleviate the uncertainties of the *scientific* episteme. I do not claim to be an omniscient scientist who looks over the shoulder of my interlocutors to analyze the “hidden meanings” behind their doings and sayings. Instead, I approach this writing endeavor as an exercise to not only share my stories of the life worlds I encountered through my own constrained mode of access, but also as words that as Fabian (1990) states, “resulted from the processes that originated from the field without being representations of them” (p. 770).

Chapter 3

The Dirty *Tuktuk* and the Clean Maadi

One summer day, I was out with one of my friends in Street 9 along with a friend of her husband. Yasser is a 30-year old man who is an affluent resident of Maadi. After hearing him previously explicating the peculiarity of Maadi by stating that there is no place like or nor people like the *Ma'dawiya*, I thought he might be a suitable interviewee for my thesis. I wondered what he would think of the presence of the *tuktuk* in our beloved Maadi. As he already knows who I am and did not find my intention for this interview in any way suspicious, I thought it might be productive to audio record our encounter. The nature of the interview was unstructured, informal and in many ways dictated by the flow of our conversation. I write this section as I listen to our conversation, taking in the sound of his words and recalling the scene that now is only a mere mental image from a recent past.

After ordering some food and *shisha*, he began to reminisce of the good old days of his school years. His school was located in Sarayat El-Maadi. Ironically enough, it is where I am currently residing.

“I used to jump the walls of the school and skip class in order to walk around Sarayat. The greenery that surrounds Sarayat has always mesmerized me. The sensual bliss and the feeling of solitude as I walk by the villas still captivates me till this very day. Sometimes when I want to clear my mind, I would just take a long walk along Sarayat. My parents could not grasp the logic of skipping school just to walk around the streets. They were convinced that I was surely up to no good, where I use this story in order to disguise my troubling doings”.

“I feel the same Yasser,” I responded. “My happy childhood is surged within these narrow streets. I still remember trick or treating during Halloween with our neighbors. Most of my childhood friends left right after high school back to their home country”.

Yasser sighed and said, “Those were the good days. Unfortunately, now it is not as smooth as during our days. Sarayat and Degla are the only remaining areas that its former glory is still to some extent ‘maintained’ (*lessa berwanaqha*)”. His eyes were beaming with a peculiar smile as he eagerly shared an image that seems to have emerged amidst his trip down memory lane.

“My old school is where you live now right? I am sure you remember Shenwai’s old Yellow Volkswagen car. Is it still parked there?” “Oh, I did not really notice!” “Oh, come on. It was one of the hallmarks of the street! He used to deliberately leave it open for kids like us to check it out. The janitor, *bawab*, would always come running and scolding us off. It was by the far the best memories of my life. How come you don’t know this car?”

“Haha, I don’t know. Maybe we have different interests. Cars are not really my thing(s). Also, don’t forget I am born and raised as a female here. I think it might have something to do with why I might not have had the same experiences in Maadi as you did”. “But it has always been right there for years and years! On your street! How come Doaa, how come?!”

His bafflement did not stop there. I seem to have been surprising him by not knowing other major hallmarks that are adjacent to the streets. “Are you kidding now? (*betharagy sah?*) How come you also don’t know the Palace of El-Sherifa Dina? It is right across from your house. How can you call yourself a *Ma’dawiya* if you don’t even know it exists, let alone know where it is? She was King Farouk’s wife. Do you at least know that fact? ... I swear it is the best area in the world. I must take a walk in these areas, especially during the winter”.

“Only in these areas?” I asked while already predicting his answer. “Yes, the majority of the cases, I walk around in El-Sarayut. Other than El-Sarayut, you feel like you are in a *morestan* (insane asylum) in the New Maadi”.

“Why so (*leh ba’a*)?” “It is too crowded now. Cars, buses and *tuktuks* are everywhere. El-Sarayāt is probably the only place in Egypt where you can smoothly walk. Unfortunately, the world was ruined (*el denia bazet*)”.

“Umm, how come?” I asked nonchalantly with a mouth full chewing my Greek salad and listening attentively to his words. “They made these areas accessible to other forms of transport like I told you, minibuses, *tuktuks*, and taxis”.

I paused for a second, hoping that the words that will be uttered though my mouth will be refrained from sounding as sarcastic as I feel. “These vehicles are the reason why the world is ruined?”

“Yes Dooa, the street parallel to street 9 is Ahmed Zaki, a very lively street that is easily accessible to the main road of Kornish. Thus, it was a matter of time till it became congested with people, *tuktuks* and street vendors. On the other hand, in El-Sarayāt, you still feel that you are in the middle of Europe”.

“Ok, so based on your line of reasoning, what do you think would happen if these ‘things’ made their way to El-Sarayāt... Like the *tuktuk* for example?” His tone shifted to a firm refusal to my proposed hypothetical scenario. “Impossible (*Mostaheel*)! No way they will enter. Even the residents will protest! Don’t forget that important people (*nas to’al*) like Ismail El Sha’er¹⁷ lives in El-Sarayāt for example.”

“I understand where you are coming from,” I said as I attempted to conceal the opposite sides of the pole that we seem to stand on, “but I just want to understand what do you think would happen if they do enter?”

¹⁷ Ismail El Sha’er is a well known major general . He was the right hand of the former minister of interior, Habib El-Adly. He was also a police officers in Maadi’s police station located in Sarayat. He was the head of Cairo’s security (*modeer amn el qahera*) from 2004 untill the 25th of January revolution. Durring the 19 days of revolution, he was infamously known as one of the main figures responsible for the violent attacks against the protestors.

“People who ride the microbus or the *tuktuk* are doing so because they are logically going to a specific point of destination. If they are going to El-Saray, where exactly are they going? Just for the sake of an outing? (*yefrasah ya‘ni?*)”

“Ok, since we are speaking hypothetically, what if I ride a *tuktuk* from the metro station back to my home in Sarayat, what then? He dropped me off and left?”

“*Hat’leb koosa*. It will turn into a *koosa*¹⁸. They will be working on Sarayat. You know, like normal cars that work, as it is a taxi. Go see for yourself the catastrophic state it is at in front of Victoria square¹⁹.”

“What exactly is catastrophic about this scenery?” He gazed in my direction with a seemingly embodied frustration as if the pool of his “commonsensical” logic should be habitually delved into by a born and raised *Ma‘dawiya* like myself.

“Please, Doaa, just come and see what happened when the microbus finally reaches a halt in their meeting point. As if someone threw a piece of sugar around ants. Takh- takh-takh- takh-, they swarm around the sugar”.

“Ok, then what do you think is a good solution to this problem.” “You mean the microbuses?” “Yes, microbuses or *tuktuks?*”

“Oh no, the *tuktuks!* the *tuktuks* should all be burned with gas (*lazem yetwala‘ feeha be gaz*)”, he said. For some reason, I started to laugh, amazed by the level of disdain and violence that he seems to direct at the *tuktuk*.

He continued, “I was in Kenya. There were *tuktuk* there. It is called *Toktu*, haha. They had their own lanes and the infrastructure of the road is ordered enough to accommodate them.

¹⁸ The literal translation of *Koosa* is Zucchini. It expressed in this context a state of ‘chaos’ and an ‘orderless’ scenery. I can only imagine how non-native speaker to the Egyptian Colloquial Arabic might find his choice of word in this context. It makes sense to my ears.

¹⁹ Victoria square is in the district of Degla in Maadi.

However in Egypt, we are a nation that loves barbarism (*ehna sha‘b ghawy hamageya*). If you introduce any form of technological development, it will fail horribly as it is incompatible with the barbaric nature of the people here. If you tried to order them, it would never work”.

“Ok, then what do you think is the solution for the *tuktuk* and its driver,” I responded. “Doaa, the problem is not the *tuktuk*. It is the same *tuktuk* in Kenya, China, Portugal and El Salvador. The problem is the creature (*el ka‘en*) that is driving the *tuktuk*. Their education level is bad (*zeft*). Consequently, they will ruin everything”

“Ok, but what I don’t get Yasser is that there are other people working other jobs that are not necessarily also as ‘educated’ as you would like them to be.” He raised his finger and said “exactly, but they are not among us! They are not having a lively form (*haga hayaweya*) among us and among areas that are not their place to begin with” .

He took a sip of his coffee, paused for about three second and said “I will tell you my conclusion to this argument (*men el akher*) the street Doaa is an image, right? The street signals that this is a clean and respectable space. When I let the *tuktuk* swarm around Sarayat with a guy playing their bizzare songs loud enough that your ear drums bursts. Imagine (*takhayaly keda*) playing Oka and Ortega along with many stuffed toys and 17 mirrors and written on ‘*el ‘ein sabenty w rab el 3arsh nagany*’²⁰(The evil eye has caught me and the lord have saved me) and

²⁰ The writings on the *tuktuk* that Yasser is referring to an example of is worth briefly discussing here. In 1972, Sayed Eweiss published a book called *the outcry of the silenced*, where he thoroughly examines the writings found on the back of minibuses, cars, taxis, donkey carts as well as other vehicles in various governorates in Egypt. His data was a total of 500 vehicles that he divides up based on the following categories: religious prayers, Quranic texts, local sayings, greetings, names, famous local sayings from movies and songs (Eweiss, 1972,). Eweiss finds relevance and significance in studying such a social phenomena as it sheds light on the creatively new ways that modern Egyptian confronts the unknown (1972, p.6). He believes that these writings reflect a new immaterial culture that is distinct from the ideological state apparatus that disperse state hegemony in schools, household, state journalism and television. Thus, for Eweiss, the writings found on the back of the vehicles are part and parcel of a new cultural apparatus that aims to give voice to the voiceless in the modern Egyptian society (1972, p.37). I drew the resemblance between Eweiss’ categorization of these writings to what I came across in the field. The time span between my own study and his work is 54 years, which interestingly legitimizes his claim of studying new social phenomena in the Egyptian society. In many ways, the results that he enacts speak of the lives of the people he defines as “silenced”, where the writings express the heterogeneity of their attempt to express their subjectivities,

these bizarre things they wrote on it. What do you really think of that? It is sight pollution for you, noise pollution, as well as ‘ethical pollution’ (*talawes akhlaky*) that contaminate the street and the people”.

“What do you mean ethical pollution?” I asked especially since it was a new terminology for me. “You must have seen some curse words on the *tuktuks*. I have seen it before.”

“I honestly never saw that” I said as I recall the numerous writings I have seen that never contained any of what Yasser is suggesting.

“Whatever, it is enough that you feel like an alien is coming in, an UFO really! He is coming from a completely different area. I mean it he is really like an alien with his flashing light coming out of nowhere. Imagine this in Sarayat, freely coming and going while you slide down the window of your car. Are you telling me that you are really ok with this?” I swallowed my food, took a puff of smoke and hoped that the unease I felt during our encounter will not make its way to my intestine.

The Tuktuk: Dirty Matter out of Place

“Dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt. It exists in the eyes of the beholder. If we shun dirt, it is not because of craven...dirt offends order... Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort organize the environment” (Douglas, 1966, p.2).

As I left the café where I met Yasser, I kept recalling the prominent work of Mary Douglas (1966), where her theories on purity, cleanliness, and the threat of dirt and contamination resembles Yasser’s justification of why the presence of the *tuktuk* in Maadi is a disorderly anomaly. Her classical text offers an insightful conception of how the meanings

hardships of the every day struggles, beliefs, experiences. Furthermore, the personification of the *tuktuk* through the inscription of names is another example of the rich and colorful means in which people make “things” their own.

assigned to “dirt” in a western context as well as in the context of Douglas’ research (the peoples of Nuer) are not as different as one would assume. She introduces her book by emphasizing how our schematic configurations are already formed and determined through “systems of classifications” that aim to maintain a certain “unity of experiences” (Douglas, 1966, p.3). Consequently, when a matter seems aberrant to the preexisting actualities, it is not only a threat to the unity of experiences, but is also deemed “out of place” as it is not properly “compartmentalized” in a familiar manner. Moreover, as a “typical” anthropologist, she aimed to shed light on the notion that Western societies operate under the same symbolic systems of classifications, where the main difference lies in the “content”, (or symbols) and not the “form” (or structure). For example, she stated that dirt in European societies is a matter of hygiene and not associated with religion.

However, in her book, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, she draws on the similarities between the Western concept of “medical materialism” and the symbolic “primitive” practices and rituals, where warding off spirits and maintaining a hygienic space are different means to the same end: purifying the uncleanness that is perceived to be “out of place” (Douglas, 1966, p. 36). This is due to the notion that dirt is disorder, a non-conforming matter that needs to be “ordered” back through different rituals of cleanliness and purification. Furthermore, Dirken and Lausten (2005) provided various interpretations to how the “abjection” can be defined. Although I find the manner in which they write problematic in their seemingly decontextualized and ahistorical approach to how they reached their “grand models,” I nevertheless find use in one definition of abjection that complements Douglas’ theory of dirt: Both theorized concepts of dirt and abjection share a pivotal element in common. Through crossing the boundaries and infiltrating certain ordered and cleansed spaces, they seem to disturb

the preexisting system of distinctions and classifications. They disrupt the “bounds of normality,” threatening the seeming rationality of the “normal”. They also blur these distinction, turning the black and white order of things to grey. When this happens, according to Dirken and Lausten (2005), everything, including the “ordered,” becomes in a state of abjection or, in the case of my research, dirty. Therefore, the abject and dirt are negatively infiltrating from the “outside” that threatens the constitution of the self, the social environment, and the overall phantasmic coherence of what Douglas (1966) calls the “unity of experiences” (p.5), which when applied to this thesis, the fetishized unity of Maadi’ nostalgic past and present.

Consequently, this might provide us an interpretation on how fixed spaces of the slums surrounding Degla and Maadi El- Sarayat are of no threat to the affluent *Ma ‘dawyia*’s schematic configuration. The ‘*ashwa ’yat* are not on wheels, crossing the physically and socially segregating boundaries, or infiltrating the invisible walls that determines which social subjects and modes of being are matters “out of place.” These social spaces are fixed and stagnant, making it incomprehensible and realistically impossible for a tall building in Dar El Salam to roam around in Sarayat, serving as a reminder of what has intentionally been pushed from visibility and proximity. However, the *tuktuk* is mobile and loud enough to blur these distinctions and disturb the social geographies of power. Thus, the “disorderly *tuktuk*” needs not to be present in the “pure” and “cleansed” spaces of Sarayat and Degla in order for these spaces maintain their purity and cleanliness (*hay nedeeef*). Hence, Yasser’s preexisting schematic classification that is configured through the rigid distinction between certain boundaries resonates with Douglas’s (1966) explanation of how our mental constructs aim to establish a “unity of experiences” (p. 2).

Furthermore, Yasser’s mental depiction—a depiction that was never his own but rather a form of power transcription that uses his political body as a carrier of the nexus of power—of the

affluent areas of Maadi is engendered by “colonial” narratives. For him, Maadi El-Sarayāt and Degla are “still Europe,” and the periphery areas are tainted with local “dirtiness,” barbarism and chaos. Moreover, as I have previously mentioned in the introduction, the visibility of the *tuktuk* in the present in such “cleansed” areas negates the invisibility of past matters and peoples that seem to have also been deemed “out of place” in the hegemonic narration of Maadi’s history. As evident from our encounter, the dominant sensibility of Yasser was threatened and disrupted as the *tuktuk* maneuvers into his beloved elite spaces of Maadi. The *tuktuk*, as affectively charged matter is in “place” in areas historically designed and narrated for it to be “out of.” Thus, for Yasser, the *tuktuk* is simply dirty, the persona of disorder and ‘*ashwa’yia*’ that has no established place in his mental depiction.

Consequently, it is commonsensical how the *tuktuk* didn’t extend to—or find place in—his physical environment. For Yasser, the *tuktuk* is dirt, matter which is out of place, where Yasser, as Douglas stated in the above quotation, might not fear it as much he despises it, especially since throughout his narrative he seems to want to “clean” his environments from the likes of the *tuktuk* and its drivers. This can explicate why Yasser problematized the fact that the *tuktuk* is “lively” between “us,” where for him, the *tuktuk* personifies pollution—as he previously mentioned—and dirt in all its various forms. Therefore, one reading of the *tuktuk* and its driver is that they are “outside” dirt that threatens to turn everything that it crosses by to its demeaning and loathing status.

But what exactly is this outside, *barra*, that is deemed out of place inside, *gowwa*? How “real” are these demarcations and why do they hold such much power in Yasser’s dominant sensibilities?

The Gowwa and Barra Spaces of the Clean and Bee'a People

As I enacted my encounter with Yasser on paper while simultaneously weaving it into theories that offer an analysis of our conversation, I started to become occupied with categories that I myself seem to take for granted, especially during our talk. How much is drawn from the hegemonic structures that already shaped me long before I actually “think” I know? For example, one of the themes that seems to be dominant and recurring throughout my engagement in the field is the power that everyday language carries in constructing symbolic “ordering” and boundary setting mechanisms. Regardless of whether I am conversing with a *tuktuk* driver or an affluent Maadi resident like Yasser, boundaries are similarly demarcated through what constitutes “inside” and “outside” social spaces, or *gowwa* and *barra* in Arabic. For example, when Sayed, one of my interlocutors recalled the incident of his *tuktuk* being confiscated *gowwa*, he meant within the high-end and “off limits” social spaces to *tuktuks* and their drivers: mainly in El-Sarayat and Degla. Furthermore, when Yasser is contesting the presence of the *tuktuk*, he states that it should roam around only *barra*.

The dichotomy between *barra* and *gowwa* sheds light on the power to define what is considered as *gowwa*, the center or the inside, and what is considered the periphery, *barra* on the outskirts. The interesting dimension is that if we put aside the role of this spatial imagination that shapes the everyday language, we will find that Maadi is fluidly entangled through the various social spaces, with no “actual” physical separation of the center and the peripheries. This was one of the main reasons why I was interested in Street 9 as it exemplifies the phantasmic construction of such a spatial divide. The diversity of the social fabric of the entire town is apparent in one street: Street 9. Therefore, the physical layout of the town has been in ways shaped and formed through the symbolic language of exclusions and belongings, where the

subtly and the seemingly commonsensical logic of terms like “*gowwa*” and “*barra*” aid the perpetuation of the discursive structures that naturalize who should and shouldn’t be visible and active.

Navaro-Yashin (2012) provides us with a relevant and a productive reading to the usefulness of the ordering mechanisms and boundary settings for constructing identities as well as social and political class orders. Subjectivities are interwoven with our understanding of space and boundaries. For example, the negative connotations associated with the term *bee’a* or an environment (used to describe lower class people and spaces) and the juxtaposed term, *nodaf* or clean (used to describe upper middle class people and spaces) are examples of how everyday language aid in the construction of identities and in boundary settings. Thus, the *bee’a* social space and the *bee’a* people of these spaces are deemed unfit to be among the *nodaf* people and their physical environment. The use of these terms draws from the same rationale of *barra* and *gowwa* (inside and outside), where identities and spaces are constitutive of one another. It might explain why the term *bee’a* is also used to describe a social subject, which might initially ring a little bizarre to the ear: how can a word that literally means environment describe a person?

Furthermore, what is insightful of Navaro-Yashin’s (2012) analysis of the role of the “abjected” spaces, peoples, and materials is the new approach in which she shed lights on the fluidity of these spatial and physical ordering mechanisms. In her work, she concludes the introduction by offering a novel interpretation of how fictional and ahistorical these boundary settings are. She states that “some spaces have to be left filthy so that the whole system doesn’t appear to be so” (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 160). Thus, the filthy, the abject, the *bee’a*, the *tuktuk* and all its dirty connotations are not *barra*, outside the “system,” independently constructed through its negation of what constitutes the *nodaf* peoples and spaces. It is part and parcel of the

gowwa, where the phantasmic act to construct rigid boundaries is, as Navaro-Yashin (2012) would state, performative. In an attempt to suppress history and protect the fragile identities of the *nodaf* that seem to draw their subjectivities from our colonial heritage as Yasser kept comparing the cleansed spaces of El-Sarayut and Degla to Europe and identifies himself as a *nedeef* Egyptian, the discursive structures and everyday language aid in establishing these ordering and boundaries settings mechanisms . Otherwise, the *nodaf* might find themselves aware of another suppressed possibility; one that sheds light on the stinking similarity between the peoples and spaces that they considered to be abjected and filthy: the *barra bee'a* people that include the *tuktuk* and their drivers.

The Literal Threat of Danger from the Dirty Native

As I previously explained in the section above, the boundary setting mechanisms of *gowwa* and *barra*, *nedeef* and *bee'a* are engrained in a hybrid of incongruent temporalities and spatialities. My enactment of Yasser's encounter was complemented with materials I found in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library and Archives of the American University in Cairo. These "historical" documents added another layer, which is inextricably woven with Mary Douglas's theory of dirt and danger. From the years 1915 until 1943. There were military bases in the districts of Degla and some parts of Sakanat El-Maadi. Since Maadi was the home to various colonial and/or affluent and influential elites, it might have made sense why there was a military base named "Maadi Camp" during the First and Second World War (Refaat, 1994). Furthermore, since Egypt was occupied by the British Empire in both of these wars, the troops consisted of nationals of its other acclaimed territories including New Zealanders, Australians, and South Africans.

There seem to have been a break of diseases that diffused to numerous bodies causing a substantial number of deaths. The diseases included typhoid fever, dysentery, cholera and diarrhea (Aberd, Purdy, & Edin, 1933). The documents archived were written by the military representatives based in Maadi to the department of defense back in Melbourne during World War II. In one of the materials that I came across, the Sanitary Medical Officer of the Camp, Officer Purdey, is providing evidence of the rigid “routine orders” that ensure that the military camps are as sanitized as possible. The purpose is to demonstrate to Colonel Butler, the Medical Historian in Melbourne, that the reason why there still exists an outbreak of typhoid among New Zealanders was because typhoid vaccine was not prepared from strains and of a sufficient virulence to protect the troops from typhoid in Egypt (Purdey, 1923). They seem to have taken every possible measure to ensure that the camps are as “clean” as possible, where dirt is literally a “danger” that must be controlled through strict orders that must be abided. For example, in the “routine orders,” there are written rules of how the “natives” should be treated and dealt with:

- No native employed in the horse lines are to sleep in the camp
- All natives found defecating or macerating will be handed over to the Native Police for punishment.
- No natives other than those engaging in the removal of refuse are permitted to visit kitchens or mess huts.
- Officers commanding Mounted Brigades Details will instruct their sanitary squads to see that the Natives latrines are carefully disinfected (Aberd, Purdy, & Edin, 1933, p. 3).

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In addition to the literal “threat” of the Natives’ ability to contaminate the cleansed spaces of the camps, the “routine orders” also entailed other rules that shed light on the colonial mechanisms of boundary settings

- All Native villages are out of bounds.
- Gambling with the natives will in future be considered a criminal offense.
- Men are warned against familiarly with the natives.
- Men are warned against harassing or molesting the natives (Jackson, 1915, p. 1).

Hence, the Mary Douglas' theory of dirt being matter out of place seem to transcend the rather narrow conception of space as singular (Law, 2002), where the hybridity of the different typologies in one geographical location carry within them certain ordering mechanisms from a distant past that gets interactively resembled in the here and now. Humans like Yasser and his narrative of the pollution and contamination of the *tuktuk* drivers are a pivotal example of how the reassembling of ideas takes place. The non-human connectivity of the *tuktuk* is imbued with affectively charged matter that zig-zags its way through the various topologies in Maadi's geographical location. The *tuktuk* in the here and now is configured within the figure of the native, where its confinement in certain spaces is to ensure the secularly maintained "purity" and "cleanliness" of the old bourgeois spaces of Maadi. It is precisely these historical examples that I relied on Benjamin's (1968) notion of the "rubble of the past" Yasser's commonsense is common for a deeply historical reason that has been pushed out to the fringes of our spaces back to the "native" spaces of Arab El-Maadi. The figure of the "dirty" native along with the objects associated with the spaces can be enacted as the "rubble" of the past providing us with the painful reminder of the violent demarcation of our "bounds of normality".

Chapter 4

Ethnographic Journeys of Disruption and Historical Continuity

During the very early stages of the nuts method, I met Sayed, a 45-year old male from a small district about seven minutes away by *tuktuk* from Hadayek El-Maadi. He was out of work for six months due to the decline of the tourist industry in Hurghada after the 2011 Egyptian revolution. He later explained to me that he used to work in the kitchen of a high-end restaurant in Hurghada. “*Kont shaghal shoghl aganeb* (I use to work for foreigners)”. After three seconds of conversing with him, he uttered “*alah yekhrebetak ya sisi* (God damn you Sisi).” We met during the official ban of the *tuktuk* inside the affluent areas of Maadi. Due to his openly expressive discontent with the government and the president, I allowed myself to assume that he would not be necessarily suspicious of my intentions to “make” him into one of my interlocutors. In addition, unlike other interlocutors who seemed to grant weight to the “social hierarchy of ice,” Sayed seem to be in full collaboration to break it with me. From the very first day that we met after I disclosed my research intentions, he played an active role in initiating the flow of our conversation when it came to an abrupt silence. Furthermore, the fact that I share his elder daughter’s first name seemed to have facilitated a sense of familiarity to two people who were complete strangers only sixty minutes ago. Since rapport building with Sayed took on an expeditious and unprecedented pace, I later reflected on whether our longing to escape the imposition of the “collective” contributed to our blossoming friendship. After all, it is pleasant to talk to someone who is neither part nor directly associated with our everyday. We both shared our life stories, experiences, and frustrations. I had to hold back my stories, not because it was uncomfortable sharing them, but to make sure, that to some extent, I am not projecting my subjectivity on to him. I occasionally wondered whether or not I am using him as a mirror, or

whether he is using me as one.

When we schedule our meeting times, Sayed always insisted on times that were not hectic. As he has been saying all the time, “*Ana romanci*, I am romantic, I like the quietness and the mellow way of life.” He would park his *tuktuk* in a quiet, dark street, and we would converse for a couple of hours. Through our numerous meetings, our friendship grew, sharing life stories and concerns of our every day. He expressed numerous times the “headache” that the *tuktuk* brings, which in turn disrupts the peace and quiet he longs for.

A Still Tuktuk in a Turbulent Setting

“I can’t hear you well, ya Doaa. Maybe it is better if we park somewhere quiet.” “*Yalla beena, ya Sayed* (Lets go)”. I was actually relieved. I was still not used to the multitasking that the ethnographic experiences seems to drag along in the midst of the bumpy *tuktuk* ride. The motor of the *tuktuk* is extremely loud inside and Sayed has been trying to be louder in the midst of the *tuktuk* being in motion. Furthermore, the new anti-*tuktuk* signs have already been placed, and Sayed is trying his best to stay out of trouble. We stood for a while in front of a hospital in a street parallel to Street 9. It was dark and quiet. “I usually just park here waiting for potential clients. You know, Doaa, people who go to this hospital ride the *tuktuk*”. I never knew that this hospital existed. I do not think I have ever been on this street. After spending some time there, I was comfortable enough around him to get out my notebook and start jotting down words that would remind me of our fluid encounter. I cannot hold all of his words and nuances in my head anymore, especially when we started to talk about legal documents that prove the ownership and registration of the *tuktuk*. His wife called and I can sense his resentment. He started explaining where the money is to give to the landlord that decided to show up unannounced. He then talked to him and the whole conversation seemed friendly. We started moving again. After roaming

around the back streets of Street 9, he proposed that we stop and talk again. We went to Street 13 and a group of dogs started to run towards the *tuktuk*, barking at it and chasing it away.

“*hatta el kalab bekrāh el tuktuk* (Even the dogs hate the *tuktuk*)”, Sayed sarcastically remarked as we made our way to a quiet spot as far away from dogs and traffic as possible. Sayed started to talk about the theft and corruption of politicians. Through narrating a supposedly famous story that I never knew about. He wanted to emphasize a certain morality that is missing from the evil character of the story that resembles the greedy nature of state representatives. I can sense his enjoyment—the mellow state of mind and the solitude he longs for. Suddenly, a young man came out of one of the buildings. Just like everyone else that passed by us, he kept looking at us in an attempt to “read” this seemingly odd social setting: a conversation between a man and a woman in the back of a *tuktuk* in a dark street. At the time, I did not get why Sayed intentionally turned on the light in the *tuktuk* the second he parked. I later understood that it is a sign that we are not doing anything “fishy”. The young man, wearing a white shirt and pants, decided to confrontationally and accusatorily ask Sayed, “Are you waiting for someone?”

“Yes, I am waiting for someone to come out”, Sayed replied as he used his arms to point at the building right in front of us in an ambiguous manner, but the young man still insisted, “You mean you are waiting for a call or someone in particular is coming out of this building?” “No one in specific,” Sayed non- nonchalantly answered the young man. What followed was an intensely awkward silence that lasted about five seconds. “*Law ana meday’ak ana momken amshy* (if I am bothering you, then I can leave)”. “Yes, please leave the street and stand somewhere else.” Sayed turned on the engine and we left.

It is not the first time I am in a taxi or a car and a guy says that if it was not for the fact

that I have a lady present, I would have ripped him into pieces, humiliated him (*'ata' to w bahdelto*). My initial reaction was of course he wanted us to leave because we are in a *tuktuk*. Would the young man have said the same thing if it was a private car? I shared with Sayed my impression on this encounter. Sayed tried to shake off my seemingly rigid assumptions. He explained that it has less to do with the *tuktuk* and more to do with the fact that it was a man and a woman alone in a dark street. "Doaa, if it was a taxi or a private car, he would have said and done the same thing". Sayed reacted to my attempt to find a clear-cut rationalization to this encounter.

We later met one of Sayed's friends and explained the situation. He personally knew the young man that asked us to leave and explained that he is a good guy. He works as an ironer (*makwagi*) and had been recently involved in a neighborhood fight. Apparently, his reaction to Sayed and I was just predominately based on us being intruders or non-residential people in his street at night. What was interesting to me is how the three people involved in this interaction read the situation differently. I was concerned with the notion that it has more to do with the stigmatization of the *tuktuk*, while Sayed was convinced that it had to do with the taboos between men and women, and the young man might have been concerned with the threat of unfamiliar faces and objects after the fight that took place two days ago. The entanglements of all of these elements might have enacted this situation to begin with. I decided to shake off my own biases by not holding the torch of the epistemological authority of this encounter.

The Tuktuk's Disruption of the Distribution of the Sensible

After being chased away by an exasperated resident along with barking dogs, I came to the realization that a parked *tuktuk* in Hadayek seems to be matter out of its “mobile place”. However, what I could not initially apprehend is how in a district where the *tuktuk* is ubiquitously visible in different streets and corners is somehow perceived as an anomaly to the order of things if the engine is turned off. One reading of this encounter is the fact that the *tuktuk* was not performing in a matter that was aligned with the young man’s bounds of normality. The *tuktuk* was fixed, parked in one place, conversing with a woman. His subjectivity was noticeable; he is not just a driver in this account, too comfortable and settled in a social space that is not his “own”. In a social space that I might not regard as bourgeois, the same discursive structures that situate the *tuktuk* within social geographies of power and ordering mechanisms seem to have followed me throughout the diverse social fabrics of Maadi. A Foucauldian reading is productive in this account: *power is dispersed in everywhere and in everything* (Foucault, 1977) that reach peoples, objects and spaces of all walks of life in Maadi. It is no wonder that through his witty humor, Sayed pointed out that even the dogs hate the *tuktuk*!

Another reading that would add another layer to my enactment of this encounter is how a stagnant *tuktuk* in a space that is not in its meeting point, a *maw'af*, or for the purpose of picking up and dropping passengers, is disruptive and rather threatening to what Rancière (2006) theorizes as the distributions of the sensible. According to Rancière (2006), the implicit rules and practices are what constitutes the social and police order in a certain spaces or communities. The discursive power of such rules lies in its ordering and disciplining mechanisms that habitually determine how certain roles and spaces should be distributed, ordered, and organized. Thus, the distribution of the sensible, and what he calls the police order, plays a prominent role in dictating

how our senses make meaning through “checking in” with our preexisting systems of classifications/configurations. Furthermore, the distribution of the sensible dictates the demarcations of the established roles, where it polices what should and should not be visible, audible, and sayable in different temporal and spatial realms.

When I look back at the memory of this event, the distribution of the sensible is habitually and bodily ordered and organized, where it seems that every object such as the *tuktuk*, every human such as the resident, and every non-human such as the angry dogs are well aware of the implicit demarcations of what seems at hindsight as a borderless space which is accessible to “everything” and “everyone”.²¹ As a result, I concluded that the seemingly outlandish setting in which Sayed and I found ourselves in on this street resembles the features of a “distributed sensible” that had been disrupted. Our obliviousness to the implicit and unspoken rules by our presence as two unrecognizable members of opposite genders in a dark, quiet street inside a *tuktuk* with the engines turned off was commensurate with explicitly visible and audible gestures of disapproval by humans and non-humans alike.²²

Sayed, Where is the ‘izba?

Once again, the engine was turned on, loud enough, and ready to go. Sayed glanced eagerly back at me and said, “I know where I can take you next! I will take you now to where I am originally from in Maadi.” I felt that he was attempting to dispel the negative momentum we encountered only five minutes ago. “Sounds wonderful, ya Sayed. Sounds like a good plan (*tamam awi, Fekra helwa yalla beena*)”, I replied, hoping that my displayed alacrity was successfully picked up on from his side.

²¹ It is also worth mentioning that there were no state representatives to exert externally the disciplinary and surveillance tactics to maintain Rancière’s “police order

²² The nonconforming performance of *tuktuk* across in different spaces was helpful for me as the fictitious enactment of boundaries between human and non--human, subject--object, mind--body, powerful and powerless was easier to take notice of in my every day.

I did not know how close or far his district is from El-Hadayek. However, I inferred that if we are going there *via tuktuk*, it must not be so far away. As I have previously mentioned, Sayed does not like the “headache” and the stress of negative encounters on the streets—especially from the police. Hence, the probability that we would take a main road on a *tuktuk* and travel a substantial distance is close to zero. The literal and metaphorical “cost” of getting his *tuktuk* confiscated or dealing with the hassle of police representatives does not outweigh the “benefit” of the solitude and the “*romanceya*” he seems to sedulously carve a space for in the midst of the exigencies of his every day.

As we move from one street to the other, I was still naively hoping that my geographical sense of orientation would make its highly-awaited appearance. The routes that Sayed maneuvered through did not necessarily help. Each new dark narrow street was immediately followed by an edgy/sharp corner, which inevitably resulted in the repetitive positing of the *tuktuk* across a compass-like spectrum. I initially assumed that the street that we were parked at, Street 11, was considered one of the “modest” neighborhoods of Maadi.

In comparison to Sarayat El-Maadi, Hadayek El-Maadi²³ is a relatively more affordable neighborhood. I shamefully have to lay my classist cards on the table and admit that for someone born and raised in Sarayat, Hadayek has a certain imaginary that is associated with a “slum-like neighborhood.” It is on the other side of the Street 9, which is irrelevant to my sheltered life world. But this preconceived notion I had was debunked every time Sayed had to suddenly steer the wheel to a 180-degree angle. As we further made our way to the space where Sayed was born and raised, I observed how the *tuktuk* gets more intimate with the infrastructural fabric of our

²³ Hadayek El Maadi is called Maadi Gardens in English . It was one of the earlier districts of Maadi during the initial construction of Maadi in 1904. However, just like Helwan, it currently does not hold the same ‘fetishized’ status as Sarayat and Degla. Even though Degla was relatively new in its construction in the 1930, Hadayek is not an elite district.

moving points of destinations. Unlike Hadayek El-Maadi, the grey cemented grounds are no longer present. Instead the ground was grey and had a dust like sensation that bothered my nose and eyes. As if we were in a maze, the *tuktuk* seemed to be walled in and Sayed must have had a concrete route in mind for us to find our way out. Unlike the streets in Hadayek, the *tuktuk* is substantially closer in its physical proximity to almost everything that we encountered: buildings, peoples, dogs, cats, and other objects lying on both sides of the road. In addition, we came across many more sharp corners that the *tuktuk* had to keep swerving around to elude any possibility of bumping into the flux of motion that is taking place.

“Here we are Doaa. We made it to *‘izbat Galal (Ehna hena ya Doaa khalas fi ‘izbat galal.)*” “Where is the *‘izba*, ya Sayed?” I confusedly asked “Right Here! This area is called ‘Galal. I told you I am originally from Maadi. This is *mante’ty*, my neighborhood.”

Sayed looked backed at me, with one arm steering the wheel, and another repetitively moving his arm from left and right. “*la la la*, no, no, no. Do not judge this place for what it is now. This space used to be clean, green, modern, and filled with culture and taste (*zoo’*, *hadasa w sakafa*). No one cares about it or about us now. This is why it resulted into this chaotic and slum-like appearance.” I believe he might have picked up on my confusion as a sign of “repulsion” to the “loathing status” of this space. During the time of this incident, I did not clarify my stance to Sayed. I only listened attentively to what he had to say.

But I still could not comprehend how this space is named after a manor. After all, in my own imagery, a manor is a word mainly uttered within the umbrella of terminologies that describes the features of a rural village. Its sister terms include farmers, palm trees, agricultural landscape, poultry animals, *fas* (axe), *galabyas* (stereotypical dress of men and women from rural areas), as well as horses and donkeys as “compatible” modes of transport. I seem to have

suffered from a slight cognitive dissonance, where my mental depiction of what constitutes a 'izba was shattered in a space that many would describe as slums or 'ashwai'yat. I spaced out, finding it hard to snap out of my trance. As we moved around his neighborhood, I wondered which other terminologies and names given to different districts I took for granted. My focal concern was with the Arab district and the choice of naming parts of it a term like 'izba that does not seem to me to speak to its contemporary moment. More importantly, what do these names carry as historical nodes that might explicate the entanglement of the past in the present. Thus, I decided to trace the historical distribution and development of the town as it might grant me clues to the history of the present by situating the social geographies of power of Maadi.

It is worth mentioning that my choice of using terms like “native” spaces and peoples are by no means implying a rigid depiction of neither a “traditional” village that once existed prior to the modern colonial project nor a “non-contaminated” native peoples that can be “known” and spoken on their behalf. Not only is such depiction reductive, but also falls within the same “Orientalizing” narrative that lumps the multifariousness of the life worlds that inhabited certain geographical locations. I must admit that I myself fell victim to my own enactment of the research findings. For example, I assumed that the word “Arab” used to label certain spaces in Egypt homogenously represented the “natives,” when even the use of such term implies the very existence of a once “Egyptian native” and their space. According to Abaza’s (2013) tracing of her family’s origin from her father’s side, the *Fudda* family were originally of Bedouin Arab stock who settled in Egypt during the period of Muslim conquest. Moreover, similar historical tracing was evident in Abu-Lughod’s (1986) ethnographic work on the Bedouin of Awlad Ali where there is a discernable performance of pride and honor attached to their direct ancestral heritage to the Prophet Mohamed.

Mitchell (2002) also contributed to my awareness of the various layers prescribed to the term “Arab.” Before the middle of the nineteenth century, there were independent communities that were neither under control or affiliated by the dominant authorities of the time. They were referred to as “Arabs” or “Nomads,” where their identities were perceived in contrast to the settled villagers or *falaheen*. Furthermore, Mitchell (2002) further points out the distinction between the people who were referred to as Arabs, who were historically understood as “pastoral nomads” and the same people who farm land and live in villages. Their belongingness to the agricultural landscape does not equate them with what Mitchell (2002) describes as “the peasantry” (2002 p. 61). However, in Arab El-Maadi, the Guindi heirs were not tied to neither the “Arab Nomads” nor the “Arab Bedouins.” As I previously mentioned, Selim el Guindi was a Turkish Bickbasha, or a soldier during the reign of Khedive Tewfik. As a token of appreciation for Guindi’s loyalty and *diligence*, King Tewfik “granted” him 400 *feddan* around what is currently a space in Arab El-Maadi.²⁴ Thus, even though his heirs might have been impoverished during the time that Mosseri forcefully bought the land from them, where they were treated as the ‘native’ peoples of the land, it doesn’t automatically mean the word “Arab” or “Native” alone can explicate the complexities and fluidity of how power relations can be reshuffled in various space-time continuums.

Furthermore, I also assumed that the term *izba* implies strictly a rural scenery devoid of any feudalist power relations. Instead, as I previously explained, I automatically lumped the word *izba* to the English translation of “manor,” an ahistorical definition provided by Google Translate. My initial assumption of an existence of a place that “once was” that I termed the “native space” might have been heavily criticized by Mitchell (2002), especially given his heavy

²⁴ It seems that it is a family ritual by both Khedive Tewfik and Isma’l Pasha to grant acres of land to military officers, high officials, and household staff (Mitchell, 2002).

criticism of Henry Ayoub's depiction of the "traditional village" as an eternally static and unchanging space prior to the colonial impositions (as cited in Abaza, 2013, p. 62).

I evaporated the horrid power relations, disciplinary, and surveillance mechanisms that included the use of the whip to the people who provided the tedious labor of cotton to the elites of the time. In Abaza's (2013) book, *The Cotton Planation Remembered*, she states how the word 'izba is translated to plantation, where a *quase-corvee* labor mode of production was how the surplus extraction took place. Moreover, with the various sociopolitical changes that included Mohamed Ali's modernization project of Egypt, a wage labor system was initiated that still included a feudalist framework. Therefore, a 'izba is by no means an example of a once native space. If anything, it is another example of the incongruent temporalities that encompasses the hybrid spatial topologies found in the same geographical location; a point I will delve in in the next chapter.

Glorifying the Fetishized Ruins?

The purpose of this section is not necessarily to trace the genealogies of terms like 'izba or to uncover traces of a place that once was in its pure form. The main question is why did Sayed take me to a place that has all the characteristics of being perceived as slums or 'ashwa'iyat and refer to it as an 'izba, a plantation or manor? In addition, why did he insist on sharing that this space was once in a much superior state than its current status'? His seemingly nostalgic reminiscing remained to be a source of my continuous cognitive dissonance. If I already came to terms to what the word 'izba entails with all its historical contingencies, what still remains is how, given the numerous books written on the horrid exploitation of the farmers during the era of the 'izba systems, why would Sayed associate himself with the elites that objectified and dehumanized them?

Abaza's analysis (2013) is insightful in explicating the seemingly contradictory stance that Sayed might have demonstrated to me. On the one hand, he is heavily appalled by the corrupt practices of state officials, which led to the pauperization of people like him. On the other hand, he seems to nostalgically long for the era of the exploitive *'izba* system. Abaza (2013) states that the older generation's collective memory of the times of the *'izba* differs from the younger ones. The latter have neither experienced the "rule of the whip" nor felt the degradation of what it feels to have someone behind you, ready to whip you, in case you slowed down. Furthermore, Abaza (2013) explicated such a contradiction by stating that the "feeling of deprivation" (p.81) is commensurate by a beautification of a space that once was in order to counter the chaos and hardship of the present. Moreover, if elite *Ma'dawayias* like Yasser are already nostalgic of the old district of Maadi, why am I surprised when Sayed is also actively participating in a relatively similar narrative—the dissemination of the hegemonic discourse that consciously preserves the fetishization of the bourgeois ruins should not come as a surprise

Chapter 5

Ethnographic Journeys Through a Hybrid of Spatial Topologies

“Peasant houses and villagers speak. They recount, through in a mumbled and somewhat confused way, the lives of those who built and inhabited them” (Lefebvre, 1988, p.165).

Encountering Maadi’s Rubble in the District of Arab

On a humid day, I decided to hop into ‘Am Nabil’s taxi, the family’s driver, and go through the Arab district of Maadi. The purpose was to affectively encounter the space I have conceptualized from the pages I have read of a space that existed far before the planning of Maadi ever took place. I still remember Sayed’s use of the term *‘izba* to describe the space, which could be described by an urban planner as “informal” or “slum-like.” Why would an “informal” area be associated with a “rural scenery?” That was the question that led me to delve into the historicity of a space appropriated by colonial elites for their modernist “plans”. I explained this desire to ‘Am Nabil as the purpose of our trip. “‘Am Nabil, I read that there is a space called *‘izbat* Nafea, can you please ask where this is?”

He smiled and stopped by a *tuktuk* stop in the corner of an avenue that demarcates El-Sarayyat from the Arab district. He asked one *tuktuk* driver about the place. With a confused reaction, he replied that there is nothing with this name. There is only one *‘izba*: *‘izbat el ward* or the Manor of Roses.

After asking three more people, ‘Am Nabil concluded that this space might not exist with this name now. After all, there has been decades of substantial changes in the town and it might be reasonable to expect a change of names. I could not have agreed more especially since the

names of the streets and the avenues of the town have repetitively changed with every



Figure 5: Railway tracks in Arab El-Maadi penetrating the space as seemingly dead matter.

major sociopolitical historical event that took place globally and locally. For example, Mosseri Avenue was renamed Orabi, Menashce Avenue to Moustafa Kamel, Plamer Avenue to Damascus, Cattai to El-Nadi or the club, and Fouad Al Awal to El-Nahda (Refaat, 1994). It might be safe to assume that the “Arabization”²⁵ process was the result of the Free officers’ successful coup, or revolution, against the British colonial power. Anyways, since the exact naming of the space does not concern me as much as being there, I decided to ask ‘Am Nabil to take me to the Manor of Roses. The moment we entered the area, I could not help but notice another *tuktuk* meeting point on the very margins of the ‘*izba* signaling to us our arrival at our destination. The railway tracks’ functionality as the “divider” of the old from the new was

²⁵ This might be why in the historical archive of Maadi, Maadi inhabitants in the 1930s refer to themselves as “Maadists”, while currently, interlocutors like Yasser, myself, among others whom call ourselves “*Ma’adaya*. *Ma’dawia* expresses the colloquial Egyptian Arabic connotation of what I explained as the “Arabization” process of Maadi after 1952.

challenged as I have seen how these tracks penetrate the fabric of the space from within its boundaries. As illustrated in Figure 5, it is surged among pedestrians, *tuktuks*, donkey carts, cars and buildings in close proximity to them. I started to re-stitch the fragmented pieces of my thoughts together and realized that this might be, or at least an example of, the space Mosseri forcefully bought from the heirs of El-Guindi. It made sense to me how he needed to buy the entire lot instead of bits and pieces of the land that would crisscross the once agricultural space.

As we were leaving the area, I saw another form of the rubble of the past: a canal empty of its water yet filled with dust, smoke, and garbage (see Figure 6). It also reminded of the irony of the “improvement” discourse that the industrial modernity was supposed to bring about through colonial projects like the railway. ‘Am Nabil might have picked on my curiosity, especially since I asked him why is this place called an *‘izbt* and has an empty canal?

“Doaa, it is the norm throughout Egypt, not just here in Maadi. I will give you an example. I come from *Arab El wara*’. You know that very close to my neighborhood lies another district called *Wara*’ *Adar*. The word *‘adar* comes from *‘adara* or civilization. It was a town planned by the colonizers for themselves, while where I am from is the original native town.” He continued his argument by shedding light on the fact that all the other districts in Egypt with the name “Arab” have their roots implanted by the peoples called *Badw (Bediouns)* who would settle in a land for generations. These same people were then excluded from the planning of Maadi by the dominant colonial powers.

'Am Nabil concluded with the following remark, "You will find the *tuktuks* inhabiting these spaces more than the planned towns like Maadi and Heliopolis. This is their place (*Dah*



Figure 6: *Empty Canal in Arab El-Maadi.*

makanohom)." But the matter of the *tuktuk* and its "place" in the spaces that has been historically the native villages seem at hindsight to be excluded from the colonial enframing of their acclaimed territories. After all, Maadi can be a pivotal example of a planned English space with the fictional geographical division between its planned "formal" spaces and the native spaces where the train tracks penetrate through it as a lifeless container. The so-called "informal" space of the Arab district of Maadi might seem to be excluded from the colonial planning as disposable dead space. However, Mitchell (1988) theorizes that the native spaces are intentionally "left" as they were for existential purposes. As Trouillot (1991) highlights, the "savage other" was part and parcel of how the "modern" reinvented its self against. It needed its opposite to establish itself through it. Consequently, the colonial ordering of people did not stop nor end with the reinvention of people like the colonized "Orientals," instead it continued with the (re)ordering of spaces which serves its rationale.

However, Mitchell (1988) argues that when French experts were asked directly of the older parts of Cairo, they replied that it must be preserved to its “oriental status” where he states that:

must be preserved to show future generations what the former city of the Caliphs was like, before there was built alongside it an important cosmopolitan colony completely separate from the native quarter. There are two Cairos, the modern infinitely the more attractive one, and the old, which seems destined to prolong its agony to revive, being unable to struggle against progress and its inevitable consequences. One is the Cairo of artists, the other of hygienists and modernists” (as cited in Mitchell, 1988, p.163).

Thus, the need for the Orientals as well as for their spaces are paramount to the establishment of the colonial order that seems to exclude them from their planning. However, Trouillot’s (1991) thesis of the savage slot is productive in examining how the Janus face of the “Modern West” reserves the slot for both the people as well as their native spaces. The identity of the modern cities and people is premised on what it supposedly keeps out (Mitchell, 1988). Consequently, my prior sense of cognitive dissonance of the naming of Sayed’s neighborhood as well as the empty canal I encountered in the Arab district is no longer the case. The “native” villages, as examples of the rubble, still left enough traces of what once was prior to the colonial reordering of spaces and peoples in order to fit the modernist project. The materiality of the space is lively with nodes of past life worlds that initially presented themselves to me as dead matter as the seemingly lifeless space that is ingrained with railway tracks found in the Arab district of Maadi.

That being said, there might still be a reason why the *tuktuk*’s maneuvering is limited to these once native spaces. Why did ‘Am Nabil feel the need to point out that the *tuktuk*’s place is solely in these spaces? Of course, a “logical” conclusion to his opinion is the fact that the *tuktuk* is a recent contemporary technological object that services the peoples of the area for making ends meet. It is affordable to those who inhabit these spaces and consequently they are

ubiquitously seen in their “natural habitat.” However, I would like to push this argument further as following solely this rationalization might make me fall victim to thinking that the *tuktuk* is simply, what Latour (2008) problematizes as “hapless bearers” (p.10), dead matter without any history or life of their own. *Tuktuks* might be undermined and left in the background of what humans have made of them. However, Latour (2008) states that objects are actors with multiple socialities and temporalities that interactively engage with humans and non-humans alike. An object, like a *tuktuk* is imbued with historically charged matter that has certain implications on the spaces it zig-zag its way through. A space is neither singular nor self-evident where one space can overlap with different topologies within the same physical locations (Law, 2004). The *tuktuk* might seem like a lifeless container. However, an alternative approach is situating the *tuktuk*, as an agent crisscrossing the labyrinthic spaces from a range of space-time continuums. Objects are independently fused with what – describes as “thing-power” that excessively, pour out of the associations and the meaning assigned to them by humans, where thing-hoods like the *tuktuk* and human beings “overlap and slip-side into each other” (Bennett, 2010, p.4).

That being said, it must be lucidly stated that my theoretical inclination of this thesis does not stand on a completely non-human centered approach to the object of the *tuktuk*. Although I attempt to enact a sense of agency to an object that might seem to recede in the background when social constructivists sometimes grant a solely human-centered approach to their theorizations (Latour, 2008), it doesn’t necessarily mean that I am forsaking one approach for the entire dismissal of another. Navaro-Yashin (2009) finds a middle ground to both theoretical poles by stating that although an object-oriented approach and social constructivism are posed as an anti-thesis to one another, they can nevertheless still be fruitfully merged. In her ethnographic work with the displaced community in Northern-Cyprus, she sheds light on how objects left behind in

as “emotive energies” (p.1) that are discharged by different objects. These objects are not empty vessels. Rather, they are charged with a prior historical moment of a here and now that once were as a reminder of what has been lost from the war. Consequently, these objects are an example of Benjamin’s (1986) rubble of the past that has not been fully silenced by the dominant narration of the victorious. Objects that can still be redeemed and can transgress the hegemonic order of spaces and people while interactively affecting the subjectivity of the peoples as well as the materiality of their lives.

Consequently, the work of Navaro-Yashin echoes what Law (2002) and Latour (2008) argue: materialities, speech, bodies, architecture, and subjectivities hold everything together. The network of circulation between what Latour (2008) calls actors is how the social gets reassembled in a particular time and space, where certain meaning prescribed in certain events in the here and now sheds light on the heterogeneous actors and associations that have interactively enacted what Rancière (2006) calls the distribution of the sensible.²⁶ Furthermore, Latour (2008) states that not all actors are either conceived as social or active actors to begin with. Instead, objects like the *tuktuk* and the debris left behind in Navaro-Yashin’s work are not given the same analytical status when examining how objects in and of themselves enact certain spatial conditions that lay the groundwork in the process of both spatial multiplicities and the process of othering (Law, 2002). Hence, in the next section, I will ambitiously follow Latour’s footsteps in attempting to make these objects, like the *tuktuk*, talk in order to show what these objects are making humans and non-humans do.

²⁶ In a previous section, I provided an ethnographic enactment of how the distribution of the sensible was experienced with Sayed when the object of the *tuktuk* and the figure of the driver were met by exacerbated non-humans and a vocally expressive human.

Reshuffling Roles and Reassembling Ideas Through Various Space-Time Continuums

It's not what is past casts light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past: rather image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. (Benjamin, 1999, p.462)

As I previously mentioned, I am attempting to make the object of the *tuktuk* talk, the backdoors of my family's palace to baffle a compressive utterance, the presence of ghosts of Maadi El-Khabiri who's land have been appropriated by the Mosseri family- to be felt. The modes of existence prior to the penetration of the railway tracks to the spaces and bodies of its inhabitants throughout the diverse social fabric of Maadi should not be subsumed by a history and present of exclusions. They might be silenced and pushed out to the fringes of our thinking and elite spaces back into their so called informal settlements, where they suffer from not catching up to their contrasting conditions of modernity, but they never did "vanish" into the waste of Maadi's hegemonic historiography. As Steedman (2001) states "Dust is the opposite thing to waste, or at least the opposite principle of waste. It is about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being gone. Nothing can be destroyed" (p. 164).

Furthermore, I attempt to highlight how concepts travel from graves and ideas get reassembled in our contemporary moments. Actors might be reshuffled in various times and spaces, but the social relations within the various roles persist as the dichotomous thinking of the modern/savage, *bee 'a/nedeef*, or the figure of the civilized modern/the figure of the savage *tuktuk* driver is still rendered mutually independent of one another. Recalling the discussion of Chapter 3, the supposable *barra* spaces of Maadi is mutually constitutive of how the *gowwa* spaces of Sarayat and Degla are demarcated. Especially since the identity of the modern cities and peoples is premised on what it supposedly keeps out (Mitchell, 1998).

Hence, the hegemonic representation of the *tuktuk* and its driver is neither politically neutral nor ahistorical. The figure of *tuktuk* and its driver and the figure of the native that once inhabited the spaces of Maadi prior to the modernist project share similar connotations that are hard to dismiss as purely coincidental. Both are conceived through newspaper articles, interlocutors like Yasser, and popular opinion as savages, or *hamagi* in Arabic. Both are believed to be lacking a certain level of civility or *hadarah* that is deemed to be backward or *rag'yia*. Consequently, it should not come as a surprise when the United Nations' "development" project, an institutions that is deeply embedded in a colonial and modernist rationale to extend its civilizing mission to the rigid categorical lump of the *tuktuk* drivers (Talal, 2015). It is not an overstatement to conceive of this act as a strong indicator of a colonial heritage, which is premised on a process of othering through the figure of the savage, or in this case the *tuktuk*, as the personification of the 'cultural backwardness' of the native.

However, this is not the only example of the "reshuffling" process between the colonial past and the neoliberal present that is aided through the working of develop(mental) institutions such as the United Nations (Harassment, 2015). If I take a rather personal example, one that fills me with certain level of ambivalence to share here, I would point to the role of my grandfather that was also reshuffled in different moments in time and space. My grandfather was once a young and ambitious Yemeni student who lived with his Yemeni father and Egyptian mother in Egypt for the hopes of a better future. According to the numerous stories he once shared with all of his grandchildren, success or progress can only be reached through climbing the latter of education that enhances our cognitive capacities and combat the recent "culture" of backwardness along with its ills that decayed the Arab world. Through his diligence, hard work, and aspirations to fulfill the modernist conception of progress, industrial advancement, and

vision of a republican revolution in Yemen, his role was reshuffled from a young man with humble beginnings to a prominent Yemeni politician exiled in Egypt.

If he had no association with the Egyptian dominant powers during the 1960's, a certain phone call would not have been made to my late grandmother: a phone call from the late President Anwar El Sadat advising her to buy a newly vacant palace in the heart and soul of *Sarayut* that was worth 9,000 Egyptian pounds. Indeed, roles were reshuffled, especially if we take into considerations the historical contingency of this moment of the phone call and the moments that led up to it. My family's history and its relationship with Maadi might have enacted a contrasting unfolding of events if my grandfather was the norm and not the exception of the modernist rationale that drove his aspirations—ambitions that were laddered through a linear trajectory of progress, the pursuit of liberty and happiness, and the sloughing off of the skin of cultural backwardness of both the peoples of Yemen and Egypt.

However, if my grandfather's relationship was situated in the historical moment of Maadi in the 1904, his narrative as well as my own biography would have dramatically shifted, or still maintained within the rigid framing of the figure of the native. We, as Arabs, brown bodies would be deeply associated within the native spaces of Arab El- Maadi. My family and I, along with our modes of transport would be the matter in its suitable place and space: in the fringes of their cleansed spaces of the *gowwa* of Maadi. I cannot imagine that the white colonial elites of Maadi who constructed the space for their own modernist preoccupation that is premised on Trouillot's (1991) Janus face would allow a Yemeni, regardless of his hypothetical economic capital at the time, to step foot, let alone live among those whose identities are tied through keeping him in his designated space of Arab el Maadi and the savage slot reserved to natives like him. But my grandfather's biography is a pivotal example of how the figure of the native made

its way to the other side of the coin, which is conceived to be superior to a mode of being and existence prior to the modernist project. Roles were reshuffled and it is safe to assume that Maadi's current elites at this moment in time gladly, unquestionably, and habitually take on the roles of those who once reserved this savage slot for them. The figure of the native, along with objects that are interactively tied to his subjectivity seems to be available as new fish caught in the web of alterity.

Hence, such a reshuffling process and the reassembling of ideas are as inextricably woven to one another as the human and non-human connectivity. The materialities of the objects associated with the figure of the *tuktuk* and the socialities associated with the reshuffling process between the Janus face of the West: *bee'a* and the *needef*, the figure of the *tuktuk* driver and the figure of the modern- can be theorized as examples of the numerous ties that make up the collective. The overlap of the multiple spatialities, localities, and socialites within the same geographical locations are reassembled grids of both the living and the dead. In the following sections, I will provide other examples of the reshuffling process and the reassembling of certain colonial and modernist ideas in the various geographical spaces of Maadi and elsewhere. The purpose is to shed light on what I have previously stated in how one space can overlap with different topologies within the same physical locations.

Tracing the locations of where the toktok "should not be seen"

"'Am Nabil, I need your help for my research again," I said knowingly that he might be baffled by my continuous insistence in asking seemingly bizarre questions. "Sure, Doaa, what do you have in mind today? Are we going back to ask why 'izbat el *Ward*, The Manor of Roses, is called as such when we didn't find any?" he replied with a slight sarcastic tone while simultaneously acknowledging the seriousness of my work.: a blend that only he can pull off.

“Haha! No, this time, we need to find out exactly which streets in all of Maadi have the billboards signs that read: ‘*tuktuks* are not allowed within the premises of the neighborhood of Maadi.’ You have already told me that you have seen those.” “Yes, I did. I will take you first to the ones that immediately come to mind,” he responded.

“*Yalla beena*, let’s go”, I answered as he started the ignition of the car while I attempted to neatly fold the A4 printed Google Map paper of Maadi. The plan was to mark where these signs are on the map as I continuously and zealously attempt to orient myself to the process of deciphering maps: an educational experience that never made its attunement to my habitus.

The first two signs we encountered were exactly one street away from the street that I was born and raised are in *El-Nahda* avenue, which was once named after Cattau, one of the main elite European Jewish figures responsible to the construction of Maadi in 1904 (Refaat, 1994). In addition, a prominent Coptic church which is always protected by state officials is located approximately 4 feet away from the avenue. They are exceptionally present when there are special events such as wedding commencements. The Colombian Embassy is in one of the buildings closely adjacent to this square. In addition, one of Maadi’s famous palaces that is currently the residency of the Mexican ambassador takes a discriminant edge by the square. The square is naturally grassed and the entire scenery is filled with Maadi’s landmarks of trees dating back to the 1900s. ‘*Am Nabil* slowed down his taxi as I attempted to mark the two separate billboards surrounding the square like a secure tightening of a belt. I was initially intrigued by the choice of having two separate billboard signs. One is enough. After all, it is rather more efficient to save another billboard to another fetishized space. I asked ‘*Am Nabil* why he thinks two separate billboards are anchored here. He did not have something to say at the time.

But then I took a moment and reflected on this space. I gave room for my positionality to kick in along with the affective attachments that are not necessarily tamed by neither words or emotions. We are at the heart and soul of Maadi's formal and historical planning, where this space always signals, no matter how far I traveled abroad, or how long I commuted around Cairo, a return to my "origin" back home where I belong. A moment of relief that I could relate to when Yasser was explaining how we, as *Ma'dawiya*, experience the minute we are back in our comfort bubble. However, the romanticized and sometimes fetishized notions of this space might conceal the reshuffling process and the reassembling of historical ideas that are masked behind the protection and secular maintenance of what I described as the "fetishized ruins" of the past. In this space, there is the formal English town planning, the green ambiance that surrounds its every corner, the palace that was possessed by the last Jewish Pasha Emanuel Mizrahi Pasha and his wife Leah Samuel Assayas (Refaat, 1994). Needless to say, we are in a district called El-Sarayyat, which is the Arabic word for palaces: a clearly demarcated and labeled bourgeois space that holds the fetishized ruins of the past in its center while placing the objects of the billboards in its peripheries.

As we were on our way to a new space, I decided to hold my horses of analysis and patiently wait to immerse myself in the different spaces where the billboards are located. However, as illustrated in Figure B. in the Appendix, my impulsive horses might have caught up with what I plan to enact in these pages. Six out of the ten billboards were anchored within spaces that are considered the "old" Bourgeois district of Sarayat El-Maadi, where Figure C. depicts the overlap of these billboards with the numerous historical villas and palaces that Refaat (1994) had meticulously documented. Furthermore, only one billboard in Degla, a district in Maadi that around the 1940s became constitutive of the nostalgia and fetishization of the heart

and soul of the “old” Maadi. The three remaining billboards seem to serve the points of entry and exit to the entire districts of Maadi, old and new. For example, the two billboards (illustrated as signs 1 and 2 in figure B. in the appendix) signs are adjacent to the Kornish street, where one can access various locations in Giza and Cairo. The same goes to the remaining billboard (sign 10), which mark the connection to the Autostrad. After 30 minutes of circling around the narrow streets of Maadi, ‘Am Nabil glanced at my direction and informed me that this is it.

After our circular journey around Sarayat and Degla, I asked ‘Am Nabil if it is possible to go to the Arab district again. There might be a billboard sign there that we failed to mark down. With a rather affirmative tone, he replied, “*la yomken*, no way. It is their space”. This is where the police confine their maneuvering. All the billboards we encountered are only to warn *tuktuk* drivers of where they should be seen. Arab is their district. I doubt the police will intentionally mark their own spaces as off limits”.

Although I can follow the logical traces of his argument, neither my strong curiosity nor my impulsive horses could follow ‘Am Nabil’s proposal of dismissing another journey to Arab-El Maadi. “*M’alish ya ‘Am Nabil*. One last stop and we will be done”.

As we entered Arab El-Maadi, we found a *tuktuk* meeting point a square called *El-Arab*. Its location to me seemed to be a practical and a strategically calculated point as it seems to be the entrance and exit to the narrow and unpaved roads of Arab el Maadi. I could not help but notice how ‘Am Nabil’s taxi seems to be an anomaly in this space, where the vehicles are predominantly *tuktuks* and donkey carts. In some relatively wider streets, ‘Am Nabil’s taxi is immersed within the flux of the heterogeneous mode of transports: *tuktuks*, private cars, police cars, and pedestrians ubiquitously surrounding the various corners and center of the streets. However, as we continued to delve into the district, I could sense ‘Am Nabil’s discomfort.

Unlike the *tuktuk*, the taxi is not commensurable to the physical conditions of the street, where at times, it cannot move forward any further. After a thorough navigation of this district, we did not find any billboards signs. Instead, *tuktuks* were parked adjacent to the Arab police station, where if I use Rancière's (1994) term, the *tuktuk* was not distributing of the sensible. Furthermore, if I rely on Mary Douglas's conceptualization of how dirt is matter out of place, in this scenario the *tuktuk* is matter within its space.

As we were on our way back to Sarayat, 'Am Nabil took a large breath and asked me if I am interested in his take on our journey. "Doaa, you might be forcefully trying to trace the line of logic into why the *hokoma*, government, decided to place these billboards *gowwa*. It makes sense why we didn't find these billboards in Arab el Maadi as I told you, but in Sarayat and Degla, a couple of state officials just started placing these signs wherever space they stumble across. Maybe this is why we found two billboards in the same square. They are not really efficient people".

As I held my printed map in my lap, I asked him, "So you think this is a mere coincidence (*sodfa*)?" He firmly replied, "Yes. You are giving them much more credit than they deserve". The lingering phenomenologist within could not help but sympathize with his analysis. After all, things are, as Jackson's title of his book states (1999) "*As They Are*." There is not always a need to unveil the masks of power to examine the underlining rationalities behind peoples' doings and sayings. 'Am Nabil might have enacted a reasonable argument, especially if we take into account how Degla, a space regarded as "cleansed" and bourgeois, only has 1 billboard. Maybe the state officials started off their billboard-placing journey from the police stations, which are located in the center of El-Sarayat. They might have run out of billboards as they finally made their way to Victoria Square in Degla—a probability worth considering.

But even if we took into consideration this hypothetical scenario, it is worth mentioning how the vast majority of the “fetishized ruins” of Maadi’s historical palaces are in the area that is named Palaces (Sarayat)! Even if the journey initiated in Sarayat, it is still pivotal in seeing how the majority of the billboards are allocated within this district. Furthermore, if we follow ‘*Am Nabil*’s argument that the specificities of placing the anti-*tuktuk* billboards are a mere coincidence, we might be dismissing how space is neither singular nor self-evident (Law, 2004), where one space can overlap with different topologies within the same physical locations. The different topologies and multiple spatialities can be seen as Maadi’s colonial past, the “there” and “then” which is immersed within Maadi’s “here” and “now.” Furthermore, just as the *tuktuk*, as an agent crisscrossing the labyrinthic spaces from a range of space-time continuums, so are the objects of the billboards that seem to serve a certain surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms that are anything but ahistorical. The billboards can be regarded as objects that are interactively engaging with the overlap of such multiple socialites as they maintain their continuous reshuffling of roles and reassembling of ideas.

Telal: An Exclusionary Haven in Egypt’s North Coast

There is another reason why I am reluctant to dismiss the anchoring of the billboards in the bourgeois spaces of El-Sarayat and Degla with the overlap of the numerous historical palaces in the district as purely “coincidental.” The language used to justify why the presence of the *tuktuk* in these areas are “matter of the place” seems to be anchored in a certain discourse that sheds light on the reshuffling of the roles and the reassembling of ideas that I previously explicated. As demonstrated from my encounter with Yasser in Chapter 3, the figure of the native seem to be habitually embodied within the figure of the *tuktuk* driver. It is as if as soon as the driver enters the *tuktuk*, the figure of the native is imbued with both the object of the *tuktuk*

and its driver. Yasser romanticized El-Sarayut and Degla as cherished replicas of Europe, the persona, and hub of the colonial modernity. On the other hand, the savage slot of the native seems to be reserved for the *tuktuk* drivers as a homogenous group incapable of transcending the ‘innate’ characteristics that constitute the figure of the native: *hamagi* (barbaric), *rag‘i* (backward), and lack the civility to flip the coin of the Janus face of the West. Yassin among numerous newspaper articles perpetuate this discourse, which is anything but ahistorical.

Furthermore, if we leave Maadi for a moment, with all its present and historical contingencies, we might encounter yet another example of how concepts do travel from the graves of the colonial fathers. If we travel to Egypt’s North Coast, where many gated compounds of Egypt’s wealthiest strata are located, we can halt, for a moment, and examine a recently built compound called Telal. In the summer of 2016, the Telal management decided to find a solution for the rather hilly landscape that might be uncomfortable as well as inaccessible to many residents. They introduced the *tuktuk* as an additional mode of transport exclusively for the residents of the compound. However, unlike the *tuktuks* found in Cairo and in many districts in rural Egypt, which are predominately sprayed with black ink, the *tuktuks* there are “colorfully” sprayed with pink paint. In addition, the *tuktuk* is integrated with the Uber service, where one can simply order a *tuktuk* from one’s phone application.

The aesthetically pleasing coloring of the *tuktuk* in Telal might not have created the disassociation of the figure of the savage *tuktuk* driver found in the streets of Cairo. Instead, many residents were outraged that the objects and peoples that should be kept on the other side of Telal’s cemented walls now bombard their exclusionary haven. As I read the language used on a Facebook group of Telal’s residents expressing their repugnance and fear of the presence of the *tuktuk* in the compound, I could not help but draw the line of resemblance, one again, between

the figure of the native and the figure of the savage *tuktuk* driver in a “clean” modern compound which is rooted in exclusionary politics. The following are excerpts from this discussion thread:

- Why are Arabs allowed to enter the compound in the first place?
- I don't find the presence of the *tuktuk* in the compound an ‘honorable’ image (*manzar mosharef*). On the contrary, it gives a slum-like appearance (*Manzar ‘shwa’i*). We already have our buses.
- It is not safe for anyone to use at Telal given the heights. Plus we already have golf carts. They look more decent and safer.
- The Arabs might have forcefully imposed the *tuktuk* on Telal’s administration.
- What is worse is that the email they sent us has an image of the *tuktuk* as if it is a cool thing to have. They painted it the same color as our shuttle bus. Not only does this show a lack of respect to the residents, but an attempt to deceive us.
- Arabs can easily smuggle drugs to our kids. We need to at least have dogs to sniff every *tuktuk* coming in and out of the compound.

Thus, given the discourse used in the above excerpt, it is safe to trace the connectivity between Yasser, the Telal residents, and the newspaper articles that articulate the hegemonic representation of the *tuktuk* drivers with the colonial discourse of the figure of the native. The matter of the *tuktuk* is dirty and dangerous within the space of Telal, the *gowwa* of Maadi and numerous other spaces that are regarded as cleansed, modern, and bourgeois. I was initially surprised by how the figure of the native was intertwined in Telal with both the “Arabs” and the object of the *tuktuk* on the other side of the Alexandria-Marsa Matrooh Road. However, I realized that just as Arab el Maadi existed as a native space long before the establishment of Maadi as an English town in 1904, so did the Arab nomads that lived for decades long before Telal or other gated compounds in the North Coast were ever constructed. As peoples that were not successfully tamed by the colonial capitalist structure, living communally apart from the urbanites, they seem to be the suitable peoples to reserve the savage slot for them. After all, it might not be a coincidence that every major district in Cairo has one adjacent to it that is called “Arab.” Consequently, I conclude this chapter with the following: concepts travel, roles get reshuffled and ideas get reassembled through the zig-zagging of objects like the *tuktuk* from

human to non-human connectivity. The figure of the native *tuktuk* driver seem to be stuck in the web of alterity, where it evokes pre-conceived notions that are anything but ahistorical.

Chapter 6 Ethnographic Journeys along phenomenological tracks

After meeting a friend of mine last November in Street 9 in *Sakanat El-Maadi*, I decided to walk down to the Central Maadi Metro station and take a *tuktuk* home from there. I kept walking until I reached my destination. After arriving to the entrance, I found taxis all over, but there was no sign of any tuktuks. I thought to myself that I just needed to keep walking and delve deeper “inside”. After all, that is where their “place” is: direction *Hadayek, Dar el Salam and El-Basateen*.

I finally found a *tuktuk* in sight and made my way towards it. Suddenly, a man in civilian clothes stopped the *tuktuk*. He aggressively yanked the keys from the engine of the *tuktuk*. The *tuktuk* driver was caught by surprise. It was hard for me to just continue walking. It was also not the wisest reaction to keep staring; especially due to how obviously out of place I looked: a tall woman wearing Indian hippy pants, light blue Nike shoes and carrying a Colombian mochilla bag. My instincts about my oddness to my surrounding environment were confirmed as people were not only looking at what was going on with the *tuktuk* driver and the state representative, but they were also looking at me “looking at what is going on”. The “conversation” between the *tuktuk* driver and the man took an exacerbated turn. The body language of the *tuktuk* driver resembled that of a fish “acting dead” when there is a vicious shark around. The *tuktuk* driver seemed to be malleable, demonstrating to the police officer his docility and obedience to him. The lady in the *tuktuk* was begging him to let the *tuktuk* driver go. He did not want to: “I swear, I will not let you get out of here”. The police officer seemed to be using words and facial expressions that matches his horrid intentions. I did not want to get any closer, but I also wanted to witness how this event continues to unfold. I decided to make it look like I was buying

something by actually buying something from the ladies selling food on the street. I needed to buy spinach anyway, so I might as well act as “organic” as possible. I bought bread, rocca, and eggplant. We had a nice conversation and I asked her what is going on. “Why the crackdown on the *tuktuk* driver?”, I asked.

“The government is cracking down today (*El hokoma nazla el naharda*²⁷)”. She mentioned how they kept insisting that she should immediately evacuate her spot. They hoped that she would move behind the stairs that are adjacent to the Central Metro station on Street 9. She does not know what it is going to be like tomorrow. This is how they are (*Homma keda*). At any given moment they come and then go. I cannot go in the back of the stairs. No one would see me and I would not be able to sell anything”.

I took my groceries and continued walking down Street 9. The *tuktuk* and the driver are no longer in the spot I left them in. I kept walking and I found one standing and the driver was outside. His embodied position was that of silence, keeping still. His body language signaled a reaction to highly threatening situation. I asked whether or not he was available. He said, “No! these people are government representatives (*El hokoma nazla el naharda*)”. Through “the language of the eyes”, I believe he understood what I intended to convey. I told him (*Ma’lish*) I am sorry”. I then looked straight in the state representative’s eyes and said “*salamo ‘aleeko*”. I was not afraid of him. I could not afford to be afraid of him. I left this encounter and continued walking. I found another *tuktuk* heading towards me from the opposite direction of the street. I stood in the middle of the street while waving my hand in an attempt to signal the *tuktuk* to stop.

²⁷ The choice of terms to describe the state representatives is interesting.. Her choice of naming state representatives as the entire government, “*hokoma*”, or “*Baladya*” might signifies the mental association she had with these representatives, as they might be representing the “government” apparatus in its totality. The disciplinary and surveillance of the representatives are those that the “government” is deploying and disseminating through these people. Therefore, it is interesting how she might have cut the middle man and choose words that reflect who is behind these “crack downs”: the government or the baladeya.

I told him that he must turn around. I remember how I displayed a sense of immediate urgency in my tone. He nevertheless seemed nonchalant. I saw with my own eyes what they are doing and I was provoked. However, it seemed that for the third *tuktuk* driver I came across, Mohamed who ended up being one of my main interlocutors, there was nothing really new here and this is in fact his every day. He was smiling while laughing at me, and he kept going forward. I insisted: “I am telling you this guy over there is the “government (*ba’olak el ragel el wa’ef dah hokoma*)”. When he noticed that it was serious and that the guy in the pink shirt (the “government”) was looking in our direction waiting for us to make it to the point where they were standing, he simply nonchalantly turned the *tuktuk* around and kept going. He smiled so genuinely with a slight laugh and said: “Just hop in (*tab erkabi*)”. While we were turning around, I found another *tuktuk*, I told Mohamed to tell him what awaits him if he continues to drive down this street. He flashed his lights and made a sign with his arm that signals that he should turn around and said, “There is government ahead (*Fe hokoma odam*)”. We met another one, and then another one. They all shared something in common: nothing aberrant about this crackdown. I seemed to be the only one that embodied a sense of urgency and threat from what would happen if they would get caught. He then explained that all they want is money. Once they take it, they go away. We kept talking and laughing. I do not remember the actual sequence of the events, but what I do know that it was very “organic”. It was not a socially fabricated setting as I normally find myself in with Hussein where prior to our meeting, he knew my intentions and the social dynamics dictated our modes of interaction: a member of the bourgeois class that happened to know his brother. Anyway, out of the blue, he parked two streets parallel to Ahmed Zaki. He said that “The tire is sleeping (*el ‘agla nayma*)”, sorry I need to call someone. He got out of the *tuktuk* and reached down the pocket of his pants to grab his small black phone. I noticed he is

wearing white pants and a white pullover. I did not notice how young he looked. I later found out that he is 21 years old and comes from Fayoom. He studies business at an institute for higher learning in his hometown. He tried calling, looking at the sky and hoping someone would pick up. "I am sorry I do not have credit on my phone. May I please use yours?" I said, "*taba'an bas keda* (Of course)". I kept searching for my phone in my bag and could not find it. "Give me a second please." "If you don't want to don't worry. You don't have to". He assumed that my inability to quickly find my phone from my bag is a sign of my reluctance to hand it to him. "No, it is not that. I cannot find my phone. Can you please turn on the light?" The light was reddish and with it came to my attention the decorations in the *tuktuk*. The inside of the *tuktuk* was also red. The back of the *tuktuk's* furniture had some cartoon posters of Tweety, the cartoon bird. There was a USB and tape plugs above the main glass, and his number along with his name were written in a black marker. He called a number, no answer. "I am very sorry, but I must try another number". He felt it that he was asking too much and felt embarrassed. I tried to express that I am not disturbed or uncomfortable. He tried the same number three times, no answer still. It was the same scenario for about 3 new numbers. He was getting agitated and uncomfortable. "If you want me to stop you another *tuktuk*, it will be no problem". The irony for me is that his reaction to this situation elicited a form of urgency that I might have expected from him when he saw the police officers. Unlike how we first met, he was not obliviously nonchalant about this incident. He was anxious, embarrassed and felt that he needed to "solve" this problem as fast as possible. "I am really ok". He still did not know how wonderful I was finding this, how relevant it was to my research and how presently mindful I was in these moments that I was sharing with him. I had to pull out my laptop from my bag to act as a charger for my phone. I must admit it that looked a little bizarre and caused some stares as people were passing by: me sitting in the

tuktuk in a dark alley with a red light on and a MacBook air in my lap with a *tuktuk* driver using a phone connected to the laptop. Finally someone answered! “(Aywa yabni, wenaby ta’ala bestebn. El makana we’fet meni w ma’aya zeboona w lat’ha) Hey man, come quickly with a spare tire. The *tuktuk* is broken and I have a client waiting for me”. I noticed he had a slight rural accent. I asked him where he was from. This is the moment I found out that he is from Fayoom. He had been a *tuktuk* driver only for the past 6 months. He went and came back with juice saying that he could not find Mango. “This is strawberry with milk, is this ok?” Of course, I did not want to tell him that I was lactose intolerant, but I remembered that actually, the percentage of “real milk” is mostly likely nonexistent and nothing embarrassing would have happen if I drank this!

Mohamed’s cousin finally made an appearance. As usual, his cousin’s facial expression signaled confusion to how the scene was presented to him. Mohamed and I found humor in his estranged glances. He said “Of course he had no idea what was going on (*Taba’an howa mish mesada’ nafso w mish fahem el beyhsal*)”. Since I had no idea where I was, I opened Google maps on my phone in an attempt to situate myself within the social geographies of power. Where in the world am I? As the application was loading, turns out I was in *Basatein*. I was not even an area that is considered Maadi by this software application. Ok, how to track my moves? I kept trying and trying, the application kept popping up notifications on privacy restrictions that I kept canceling. Nothing still was tracked. All I can do is pin where I am in the hopes that it would be enough for my supervisor. Afterwards, I was also reluctant to act as the “academic police” who aim to share with the world the tactics in which my interlocutors maneuver to survive within the face of acute and structural violence. Suddenly, Mohamed asked me: “Doaa, could you please go to the right side?” I said sure while holding on to my bag and still preoccupied with the

application on my phone. Suddenly, I found the entire *tuktuk* in a 90 degree angle, with Mohamed's arms extended to balance the *tuktuk* in its new position. I was not consciously aware that his previous question would result in me placed as an object, along with my grocerybag, laptop and phone. It was a disruption to my habitus. I felt, no, I knew that I would fall over to the left side. The rules of gravity informed me that there is no way Mohamed's arms alone are capable of balancing a *tuktuk* and 71 kg person inside of it. He saw how I started to freak out and laughed again "*Matkhafeesh ya Doaa ana 'aref ana ba'mel eh* (don't worry Doaa I know what I am doing)". His words alleviated my fears. My body went from being completely in shock to more or less acclimated to this lived experience. In many ways, I felt my body not only had a life of its own, but in many ways understood what Mohamed was trying to convey: don't worry, this is completely normal, your normal is what you should be horrified by.

Disrupting my bounds of normality

The disruption of my habitus (Bourdieu, 1997) and my embodied sense of urgency From the above ethnographic experiences, it is evident how there were different reactions from the threat of the "crackdown" of the state representatives. As I have previously mentioned, I witnessed two hostile encounters with two different *tuktuk* drivers and police officers prior to meeting Mohamed. It was only one street and the time span between the two incidents was less than 10 minutes. This is aberrant to my every day. I was appalled to see how the "government" deployed humiliating disciplinary tactics to the *tuktuk* drivers. Through my lens, the manner in which they want to establish their domination and control was simply appalling. The disciplinary mechanisms of surveillance and control and the role of gender in humiliating their constructed masculinities were so also interwoven with how the entire scene was perceived by me. The embodiment of all these elements that I cannot capture in words was reflected by the way this

tuktuk driver was standing, the tone of his voice, the embodiment of inferiority, his place in the social hierarchy and its relation to the social geographies of power that we are all circumscribed too. However, for Mohamed, my sense of urgency in expressing the danger that lurked 10 feet away was to some extent laughable. In the manner in which he smiled and obviously turned the *tuktuk* around, he showed no real concern regarding the police officer. We both could see him. He was right there, visible, noticeable and ready to “crackdown” on us if we dared to approach closer to where he and the other police officers were standing. Furthermore, this was not the first time that Mohamed gave me the impression that the government’s spontaneous “crackdown” is part of his habitus. It is inclusive in his bounds of normality to the extent that he does not feel the urge to share with me the exceptionality of such encounters with state representatives²⁸. Therefore, the habitual body of Mohamed did not trigger any change in his bodily and mental disposition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2000). His body has been shaped and formed through lived experiences that ultimately formed his perceptions and thereby constituted his “bounds of normality”. As Merleau-Ponty (1963) and Bourdieu (1997) would agree, Mohamed, an embodied social subject has been shaped and formed through spatially and temporally contingent mode of access to world that is organized by his body. Therefore, in a context that is familiar to him due to his lived experiences and the symbolic forms of violence that constituted who he is in the social geographies of power, Mohamed’s lived body caught up with the situation before my body did.

The tuktuk and me in a 90 degree angle

According to Jackson (1983), many anthropologists are preoccupied with unveiling what

²⁸ For example, when we met for the second time, he apologized for his tardiness as the police stopped his *tuktuk* in *Hadayek el Maadi* and would not let him leave unless he pays him off. As usual, he did not seem concerned with such an encounter as it is part of his every day.

bodies represent to the semantic and semiotic ordering of the world where bodily praxis must be dragged down to linguistic models in order to apprehend what they aim to convey. However, his ethnographic work shed light on to how lived bodies are predominately how one collectively recognizes oneself and others. It is through the bodies that experiences are lived, perceptions are formed and the reciprocities of viewpoints are experienced before the mind (Jackson, 1983). Moreover, it is through the bodies those other peoples' intentions and mutual recognitions are conveyed in a manner that precedes any intellectual or cognitive mechanisms. When I was in a 90-degree angle in the *tuktuk*, I initially drew on my bounds of normality, on my words and concepts that separates and divides: a mind that is terrified from the foreign setting that deeply disrupts my habitus. On the other hand, when I glanced at Mohamed's body, I reached a unifying ground, and emphatic understanding, a mutual recognition where my body caught up with the situation before my "mind" did²⁹. Therefore, the sudden movement of the *tuktuk* and my experience in a body is not a mere symbol of a foreign external reality, it is an enacted reality by itself, beyond the reduction to my cognition and words, and beyond the reduction to a semiotic and semantic truth (Jackson, 1983). Furthermore, it was beyond a Cartesian split between the mind and the body, language and the body, and the body and language (Grosz, 2004). If anything, words and language played a minimal role and my lived body was pushed to the forefront in acquiring knowledge, adjusting to the foreign situation that disrupted my habitus, and caused a form of reciprocity between me and my interlocutors that is ungraspable to language and words alone. Furthermore, since we are subjugated into the structures of language, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is politically motivated, which is driven by social, cultural, historical, and political forces (Viego, 2007). Language does not reflect an

²⁹ As if the two are mutually exclusive to begin with.

external reality; instead it organizes reality for us through an order of signifiers (Viego, 2007). We think, speak and interact with our surroundings based on a structure that dictates our modes of rationale; which includes believing in a graspable externally material reality.

By not undermining the role of the body in being in the world and the power of language in explicating a reality that was never graspable to begin with, I hope to move away from enacting a form of knowledge that is fixated on providing my readers an “impoverished” account of reality (Romero, 2015) or an account that assumes a dichotomous relationship between me, “the observer”, and the field, “the observed” (Mitchell, 1988): an account that is reductive in its actualization that subsumed bodily praxis in a linguistic model of “discourses” and “hidden” meanings (Jackson, 1983). If I do so, I will be an active player in dragging my written work back to the world of existing actualities that are left unchallenged and unquestioned (Romero, 2015).

Chapter 7 Drinking from the Wrong Kazouza

“Aiwa ya Doaa (Hi Doaa) Hanshufek el naharda? (See you tonight?)”

“Yes Bayomi. It has been a while.”

“I miss you. Let’s meet today at 8:00 PM at a very nice cafeteria called Kazouza. It is right across from El Fahthe Hospital. Naharek abyad ya set el kol. (Your day is white, lady of all).”

“Naharak Abyad, bye bye”

End phone call

Thought to self: Who says “nahawark abyad, bye bye”. You sounded awkward as usual.

As I was already at the end of Street 9, attempting to write at my regular place, I decided to go back home in Sarayat El-Maadi and grab heavier clothing. The weather conditions significantly changed from midday to the early afternoon. I was already cold and could not bear to be outside wearing only a cotton t-shirt at night, especially knowing how windy it would be inside the *tuktuk*, where the knife-like cold breeze infiltrates every atom in my body. As I hopped out of the taxi in front of Maadi’s central metro station, I immediately searched for my phone to call Bayomi and let him know that I am on my way. Little did I know that when I switched bags (I did not need a big one since I would not be carrying my laptop and books), I forgot to grab my cell phone too. I tried to recall exactly where is Kazouza that we were supposed to meet at. I then realized that I could not recall really a space I have never been to. He said it is next to a famous hospital. I went into a restaurant adjacent to the metro.

“law samaht, ana tahya ma’lish (Excuse me, I am a little lost). Do you know where Kazouza is?” He looked at me from top to bottom and then glanced at my colorful Asics shoes.

*“I think you are talking about the *kazouza* café at the end of Street 9. This is not here at all”. “No, I know which one you are talking about,”* I said. He is referring to the upper class hang out

which is a great example of, what El-Kafrawy (2016) describes as a “baladi chic place which gentrify(ies) Egyptian cuisine” to the *nodaf* people of my town. I probably seemed to be really lost to the delivery guy. The Kazouza he is referring to is aligned to what he might assume as a social space that I supposedly belong to.

“No, the *kazouza* I am referring to is a relatively more *baladi*, an *ahwa* in the beginning, not the end of Street 9. Do you have any idea where it is located?” He smiled with a slight laugh and said, “Sure, I know where it is”. He explained accurately where I should go, and in about 13 minutes, I found myself in front of the correct Kazouza.

I went feeling a little concerned that I might not find Bayomi. As I walked by, I found the place occupied with young adult males playing *tawla* (backgammon), smoking *shisha*, and some playing games on their laptops. A sympathetic looking waiter immediately approached me and asked, “May I help you?” I felt that he could read my out of place-ness. “Yes, I am supposed to meet someone here, but, unfortunately, I don’t have my phone to call him”.

“You know mam, there is another Kazouza in the very end of this street,” he replied. “I know, I am in the correct place but I am not sure my friend is coming here”. “No worries, please take a seat. I am sure he will turn up at some point”. I sat down and noticed the glances from other clients in the *cafeteria*. The place seemed to be a middle ground for Bayomi and me. It is not the “bourgeois” Kazouza that people seem to mistakenly think I might have meant, nor was it a traditional *baladi qahwa* that I occasionally meet Bayomi at. It is somewhere in between, a space where we can negotiate the circumscription of the social geographies of power that demarcate which social subjects should be seen in which spaces, and for what purposes.

The waiter came back again with his cellphone. “Please feel free to use it”. “Thank you very much.” Now I have to figure out who exactly I should call. I do not have a photographic

memory and cannot recall Bayomi's exact phone number. The only number I know by heart is my brother's. His voice was sleepy and I could barely hear him due to his continuous coughing.

"Haytham, could you please go to my place and grab my phone. I need a number as soon as possible".

"Donna, where are you?"

"I am in a *qahwa* in the beginning of Street 9 and this is the phone of the waiter. I am meeting one of my interlocutors now but cannot reach him".

"Ha ha, ha, inter-meen? (inter-who) *Ana mish fahem menek haga* (I don't understand anything from you)".

"Please just do it! You sound sick but it will not take a second".

My brother lives in a building that is right across from the building that I currently reside in. I told myself, selfishly maybe, it is as if I am asking myself to do an urgent errand. Since my brother and myself enact a certain "twin-like" bond, I often have to remind myself that he is a separate individual with thoughts and a life of his own. In this moment, I felt that I do not have the "luxury" for such a reminder, where the myth of the wiser and older sister seems to be as distant as my cell phone.

"I don't have your keys. You took them last time when you locked yourself out of your apartment. You really need to do something about this". I started to become a little agitated. He was right, especially since I too often rely on my brother in similar last minute crises that I often find myself in.

"Ok. Ok, I have an idea. Skype saves my phone contacts automatically. Can you please login into my Skype account and find a contact named Bayomi *tuktuk*?" He started to laugh again and asked me to wait a second as he opens his laptop and signs in. After giving him two

different user names and passwords, our attempts were still unsuccessful. I had to throw in the towel and accept that it looks like I will not be able to meet Bayomi today. The next day, I called him and he explained that he got into a fight with a “car owner”. I told him no worries. I also failed to bring my phone and could not reach him to let him know that I had already arrived at Kazouza. We agreed to meet later that day at 8:00 PM at the same place.

Drinking from the Right ‘Kazouza’

I left my apartment and this time, I made sure I had my cell phone with me. As I parked my 4x4 car in the square adjacent to the central metro station of Maadi on Street 9, I called Bayomi to let him know that I am on my way to our meeting spot. I arrived at Kazouza wondering if Bayomi is already there. As I walked in, I noticed that the place is filled with men watching football. I went inside hoping to find a space for us to sit. The place was completely occupied and the glances of yesterday were somehow transformed to unceremonious gazes. While I was walking outside the place to find a seating area among the tables in front of Kazouza, a “funky” looking young man with an afro braid approached me and said, “There is another Kazouza at the very end of Street 9.” I courteously smiled and stated that I am in fact in the right place.

The waiter came and set up two chairs and a table that were stored in the back for me. “Is it ok for you to sit here?” “Yes, of course. It is more than ok”. Bayomi made his appearance with a beaming smile and a charismatic approach to greeting me that I could not help but feel uplifted when I am around him. “*Ezayek ya basha?* (how are you?),” he said as he was on his way pulling a chair. “I am doing alright. How are you doing? What happened to you yesterday?” “You missed out on the fight I had with this guy with a car yesterday. As I was parking my

*makana*³⁰ in front of this cafeteria, a car on my right side bumped into my elbow and broke the plastic lid on the side of the *makana*”.

He pulled his grey sweater to show me his elbow. It was noticeable scratched with chunks of his skin peeled off. It was still red and did not look in any way healed. “*Salamtak ya Bayomi* (Bless you, Bayomi)”, I said as I tried to imagine the close proximity of the car to the *tuktuk* and Bayomi that resulted in a “double crash” of both the *tuktuk* and himself. How could the car driver not calculate a reasonable distance between his own vehicle and Bayomi’s? Was he drunk, or high, or something? “What did the guy say?”

“He aggressively reacted that I should not be parking here to begin with. This is *not my place*”. I noticed Bayomi’s fury in his telling of the story—a need to react to the continuous harassment that often comes with being a *tuktuk* driver.

Later that day, he told me that he feels that people think they “bought me” (*eshtaroonny befulusuhum*) because of the five pounds they pay. “The audacity, Doaa that I have ‘zabayen; (clients) that hassle me for a lower rate. As if I am the one who is abusing my power through dictating the price of the fare. Sometimes the clients do not understand that just like the taxi, we all operate under a certain fixed rate for every distance or location”. As he always does, he provided his own lived experiences³¹ with clients to validate his claims. “*Marra* (one time), a client insisted to only pay five pounds for a *meshwaar* (ride) that costs 7 pounds. I told him let’s stop two different *tuktuks*, and if they say that it costs only five, I will not take anything from you (*mish hakhod ay haga menek*)”.

³⁰ It is worth mentioning that when my interlocutors refer to the *tuktuk*, they use the word *makana*, which means machine in Arabic.

³¹ The articulation of his stories is as captivating as they are intimating for a novice ethnographer like myself. As he meticulously explicates the details of his encounters, I could not help but wonder, Will I be able to use my words as eloquently as he did to illuminate the colorfulness of the field in my own writing style?

He then continued narrating the story of the day before. He told the car owner that he is a client in this cafeteria and he has the right to park here. As the exchange between Bayomi and the car owner took a louder and an antagonistic tone, he found the owner of the cafeteria by his side, backing up Bayomi's position.

“You are not even coming to stay at my cafeteria. I own this parking area and this man is a regular client. You should leave this place now. *Ana mish hasmahlak terken hena* (I will not allow you to park here)”.

“This is one of the main reasons why I like this place and occasionally switch my regular hang outs. The owners are genuinely tolerant and do not care that I am a *tuktuk* driver. So, what, (*eh y'ani*), that I pay here 3 pounds for tea instead of a pound and a half at my old hangout. At least *sakhafet omnaa el shorta*³² (absurdity of the police officers) does not harass me. Doaa, you know this is a *cafeteria* not an *qahwa*, there is a big difference. Here, no one can come and tell me to leave without a valid reason.

Before, I used to always meet Bayomi in a space that Bayomi describes as “qahwa baladi.” It was a space between a large road where the tables and chairs were positioned on the side of the road. To my elitist eyes, I could not immediately identify the difference between an *qahwa* and a *cafeteria*. The same male-dominated sphere, the same tea, the same aesthetics of the *shisha*, and the same tables and chairs positioned on a side walk on the street. Furthermore, the same gazes from people trying to read the bizarre setting of a tall “foreign looking Egyptian” with a *tuktuk* driver. As if Bayomi's discernment eye could sense the manner in which I perceived both spaces, he started to explain the difference between them both for me.

“Look inside, see how the men here are from different ages and wear different clothing”. He looked back and asked me to notice the men with the suits and the funky looking young man

³² Ameen Shorta is an Arabic word for a low rank police officer.

that previously alerted me to the “other” Kazouza café that might seem more appropriate for me as an upper class *ma’dawayia*. “Inside, there is a T.V. and people come to watch football sometimes. Here, I am a client and this matters, unlike the unpredictable unfolding that might result with an annoying *ameen shorta* (Low rank police officer) in an *qahwa baladi* when they notice my *tuktuk* parked. Here, no one can talk to me. Here it is a clean place (*hena makan nedeeef*).”

In this exact moment, it was one of these delusional moments of attunement between my fragmented impressions in the “field” and a larger concrete narrative of the lucid hostility between state representatives (police officers, *omna’ el shorta*, etc.) and *tuktuk* drivers. After all, a large chunk of my ethnographic fieldwork is filled with a wide range of stories with different interlocutors of the continuous harassment and occlusions of state representatives to the precarious status of *tuktuk* drivers, especially when it comes to their right to mobility within the different areas of the town. Yes, I said to myself so assertively this makes sense. There is a clear dichotomy between the state representative and a *tuktuk* driver: a dichotomy that is rigidly defined through violent practices of exploitations and oppression. However, Bayomi’s relationship with the owner did seem to have disturbed such a binary.

Before I fall comfortable to my seemingly commonsensical “grand narrative” that I previously explained, Bayomi uttered a surprising turn to this story that caused both of my eyebrows to lift as high as my sense of astonishment. “The owner of the cafeteria is actually *rae’es shorta hay el basateen* (The head of the police division of the neighboring district of El-Basateen). I had no idea! Can you believe it? He sided with me and had my back even though he is not only a state representative, but one of the highest ranks in the police force”.

“This is strange isn’t it Bayomi?” He replied, “No, not at all. There are many rightful people among them (*ged ‘an w btoo’ haa’*). Just like *tuktuk* drivers, there are many of them that put the rest of us to shame. This is why many women fear us and others think that we are all the same”.

The waiter came and asked us what we would like to order. “Can you please order something else other than your tea without sugar?” “Thanks, Bayomi, but I just had my dinner and I am feeling stuffed”. Normally, I would go for a *shisha*, but for some reason, my instinct told me not to. I wondered whether it is because of my feeling of being surveyed by the surrounding men, especially the owner who is wearing a winter vest and dark blue jeans and his friend who is accompanied by a Dalmatian dog. They have been intensely looking in my direction, maybe in the hopes of reading my intentions with a *tuktuk* driver. Bayomi’s conversations did not really help alleviate their concerns. A loud and gregarious character who does not seem to hold back when it comes to expressing his discontent with the way the “government,” *hokooma*, is abusing the power and monopolizing the state’s resources. “I do not understand. Will these people die with their money? What is the point of filling their guts and pockets with greed while the rest of us fight for our daily survival? They are not leaving us alone (*mish saybena fe halna*). They still find ways to block our attempts to run after our bread and butter (*akl ‘eshna*)”.

I think it is worth mentioning that when Bayomi speaks to me, I find myself overwhelmed sometimes with the rapid motion that is taking place around me. His words, although lucidly articulated, are as fast as his corporeal expressions. The vehicles in front of the *cafeteria* are circulating as physical human bodies, going somewhere, telling me something that I should pay attention to. The curious gazes of the men in the *cafeteria* feel like they are coming at

me from various stances: behind me, in front of me, next to me, and if I even looked up, even above me from the residents of the buildings from the top floor. I might be depicting an image where these glances are as blunt and discernable as my words. However, they were still coy and subtle enough not to make it seem that my imposition in this space is not disturbing its norm.

While Bayomi was in his venting mode, I glanced at the parking area wondering where his *tuktuk* was? I recalled how when I was with Mohamed and his friends, there seemed to be always the issue of where to park the *tuktuk* without the hassle of the owners and *omnaa' el shorta*. Mohamed could not park his *tuktuk* in front of a *cafeteria* where he could not have direct visible access to it. Two months ago, there was a *cafeteria* in the middle of Street 9 that seemed appropriate for all of us to sit in. He even assured me that women smoke *shisha* there too. "It is a clean place." However, we could not go there, as he feared that his *makana (tuktuk)* would get robbed. "You see, Doaa. This is not a car or a taxi. Anyone can unplug the wire and take off with my *makana*. useless if this happen". Because of his concern, we always end up riding around his *tuktuk*, listening to his friend's latest song. He would invite me to drink juice and share together our biggest fears and blessings in life. "Life will always throw you negativity and people will keep undermining you. But if your mental state does not give these people a place bigger than what they deserve, you will not suffer more than you should".

"Bayomi, where is your *tuktuk*?" "Oh, my friend Gamal is working on it until I am done with our meeting." Later, I looked to the right and could identify Bayomi's *tuktuk* in motion. The stuffed Bob Marley toy hanging in the middle of the driver's sight, the discernibly colorful lighting that surrounds the interior of the *tuktuk*, and the two honks that seems to signal a greeting to Bayomi as the *tuktuk* passed by was an image that temporally took place in less than three seconds.

As I saw myself drifting away from Bayomi's words, I quickly reminded myself to pay attention to him, even if sometimes it feels overwhelming to my bodily senses to keep up with the pace of this ethnographic race. I painfully admit that my attention span sometimes resembles that of a lost fish in the sea. I forget the "here" and "now." I constantly "space out" to distant imaginaries that aim to connect past experiences that resembles the present moment. As I brought myself back to Bayomi's words, he extended his arms, pointing to a white *nos naal* (pick-up truck) passing us by. "Look, these are *baladyia (dool baladyia)*³³ Bayomi said. "How do you know that Bayomi?"

"You missed the theatre that was just taking place thirty minutes ago. This exact vehicle parked in front of street vendors and started to *load up* all the fruits and vegetables."

"Do they only target street vendors?" "No! Anyone for that matter. You never know when they will come and how hard they will hit. Ya Doaa, they are like the storm. No matter how seriously you take safety precautions. If you don't know when they are coming, you will be an object at their disposal". Since I notice how spacious this government vehicle is, I asked him what else gets placed in the car.

"Use your imagination (*takhayali keda*). Everything and everyone. *Tuktuks*, their drivers sometimes, fruits, vegetables, items of clothing, caps, shoes, socks, hair accessories, make-up, and of course us, the people. And don't think they don't take some or sometimes even all these items for themselves." "But why?" I heard the naivety of my question as soon as I uttered it. "I

³³ Baladaya is a term I often heard in the field in reference to the government's spontaneous and abrupt "crackdown" on street vendors, *tuktuk* drivers, or on activity that is believed to be "illegal". When I tried to understand why they are not referred to them as 'police officers', Bayomi and Mohamed explained that it is because the 'crackdown' had no specific group in mind. They can go to any cafeterias and load up on the unlicensed shishas, or load the chairs and tables found in the outdoor spaces of the cafeteria. In addition, the crackdown by the baladaya also includes street vendors, *tuktuk* drivers, or anyone that look 'suspicious' enough.

will tell you”, as he sipped some of his sugared tea, paused for about three seconds and resumed the conversation.

“I think they think this is the only way to mold us into their will. Think about it. Imagine if these police officers hopped out of the van that passed by and asked the people nicely and respectfully, ‘Please sir, can you move your commodities somewhere else?’ Do you think anyone will fear them and take them seriously? How else will they exploit their status over us and grab whatever they want from the carts? Also, how will they then ask for money since our source of survival (*masadar rez’ana*) is somehow always against the law? It works out perfectly for them”. I kept nodding along while I am hearing the logic in his argument.

“This is why I keep telling you that the only way for us to have legitimacy in the streets of Maadi is for the *tuktuk* to be officially recognized by the government. How hard it is to slap on some numbers that makes my *makana* easily identifiable for them. If someone steals it, they can bring him in (*yetgab*). If someone harasses a woman, they will also bring him in (*yetgab bardo*), and then we will be done with the stigma that all *tuktuk* drivers are dirty criminals that must be contained like tuna fish in a can. We will not be, through their eyes, against the law. We will have the law on our side”.

“But what I don’t get, Bayomi, is why are you sure that licensing the *tuktuk* will automatically yield to less harassment and exploitation from the government and their representatives? Why wouldn’t they continue to do exactly what they are doing now if their objective, as you always keep telling me, is to grab more money and commodities from you?”

He started to repetitively shake his head right and left, signaling disapproval to my line of reasoning. “*La, la, ya Doaa* (No, no, Doaa). We will be like a taxi, microbus or even a regular

car (*malaki*).” We will have our papers and then we won’t owe anyone anything (*w mahadsh leh ‘andi haga*).

I nodded and asked myself, “how are you planning to represent his justification for licensing the *tuktuk*?” Will I fall back to the classical anthropological cannon that operates through the abstraction of the “native’s” sayings and doings in search for a deeper and an unconscious level that explicates the manner in which they make meaning to their life worlds? Will I rely on Foucault’s (1978) dispersion of power theory that sheds light on how we, as social subjects and political bodies, are the carriers and perpetuators of the state’s nexus of power. Or maybe here even Bayomi’s claim for official recognition from the state is only an example of how, as Feldman (1991) theorizes, fragmented subjectivities call on the power of the state to re-stitch itself back together? After all, Foucault (1979) states that power is everywhere and everything, even in the precarious bodies that seems to be the most abused, exploited, and brutally disciplined by the same hegemonic powers that Bayomi simultaneously calls onto for his right to have rights. Or will I take another approach, a phenomenological one, where I do not reduce the fluidity of Bayomi’s storytelling and his lived experiences, as well as my own, to abstract thought which grant epistemological authority to deceased white bodies that knows nothing about myself, Bayomi, Kazouza, the *tuktuks* and the town of Maadi?

Furthermore, as I previously explained, the categorical “lump” of the *tuktuk* presupposes that one narrative such as Bayomi’s justification for the “formality” of the *tuktuk* through licensing speak on behalf of every *tuktuk* driver. Consequently, before further moving into theorizing and analyzing my encounter, I would like to briefly introduce another interlocutor, Aly and specifically his position on the issue of licensing the *tuktuk*.

Aly, His tuktuk and Its licensing

Aly is one of my main three interlocutors. He is a 22-year-old man who originally comes from Hadayek El-Maadi. He moved with his family to Ma'sara where he was born and raised. He was the first interlocutor that I met and conversed with. The nature of our social encounters has been in many ways dictated by how we got to know each other. Through a café that I am a frequent client at for three and a half years, I shared with his brother, a security guard of a building adjacent to the café, my interest in meeting *tuktuk* drivers. The brother gladly referred me to this brother. Since myself and my 4x4 car are well known on this part of Street 9, I was approached by Aly as a member of the bourgeois class, where it took five months for him to finally be “relaxed” around me. He still calls me “*doctora*”, a title I didn't earn but for some reason he finds it a sign of respect to call me so. In the section, I will primarily focus on the question of licensing the *tuktuk*, where I will explicate Aly's views on this issue. Furthermore, in order to shed light on the different stances that my interlocutors have on this subject, I will provide the view of my other main interlocutors.

Prior to our meetings, I always asked Hussein if it is safe for him to come and meet me at the end of Street 9 from Ma'sara. He must cross the Kornish, where there are usually police checkpoints present. The oblivious reaction to my concerns is similar to those of Mohamed. "Don't worry", he always said. It did not make much difference to Aly whether it was before or after the licensing of the *tuktuk* in Ma'sara. which he works on, he explained how the



Figure 9: The licensed tuktuk that Hussein works on. The district and the registration number are written in a large font. In order to respect my interlocutors' anonymity, I brushed over the registration number.

government was concerned with the crime rates in his district that eventually led for *Ma'sara* to be the first district in Cairo to be officially licensed. Prior to the licensing of the *tuktuk*, he expressed his discontent with the whole issue of legal registration as it is only a form of surveillance and control. As shown in Figure 9, the writing in large font of "Ma'sarra" on the *tuktuk* makes it easily identifiable in which area the *tuktuk* is allowed to maneuver in, leaving the *tuktuk* vulnerable for confiscation if it is found outside the bounds of its "legal" maneuvering³⁴.

For Aly, the official status of the *tuktuk* is only a mask for the state representatives to exploit their position through asking "officially" for money. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning possible reasons for Aly's reluctance to state surveillance. As a young man who seems to despise any oppressive control, he defies any authority figure (whether from family members or police officers) that plan to mold him into a docile social subject. Throughout the numerous times we

³⁴ After the licensing of the *tuktuk* in Ma'sara, I have numerous times found many *tuktuk* parked in front of Maadi's police station in Sarayat.

met, it seems that the notions of respect and dignity are very important to him. A popular guy in his neighborhood who seems to be in-between worlds: the family man who invites me to his house and lets me meet his family members and the *tuktuk* driver that is neither a goody two shoes nor is involved in any negative conduct. He once told me: “I do not have to be either or, everyone else expect me to define myself through their own terms”. He longs for freedom and resents social interactions with people who plan to erase his subjectivity. After the ice was broken, he narrated an incident where he felt humiliated by a police officer. He knew in this setting that he could not react the way he wished. He had to keep quiet and take the “degradation of his dignity”. Furthermore, two statements that he repetitively utters in various situations expresses, among other things, his reluctance to licensing the *tuktuk*: “*Mahadish leeh ‘andy haga* (I don’t owe anyone anything)” and “*ana mabahbish el bahdla’* (I don’t like humiliation)”.

In addition, Sayed’s views on licensing the *tuktuk* are relatively similar to Bayomi’s. he associates the licensing of the *tuktuk* as a legitimizing act in the eyes of the government and society. “Just like taxis and minibuses, we should be granted legal official documents that proves our legitimacy in the streets of Maadi”. For Sayed, licensing the *tuktuk* is associated with legal rights that grant him the freedom to commute through various social spaces in Maadi. However, this line of reasoning is not shared by Aly and Mohamed as they both feel that licensing the *tuktuk* is just another mask of the state’s surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms. As Mohamed one said to me on this topic, “*kolo mehasal ba‘do* (it is all one of the same).” Mohamed and Aly did not perceive a real change of the everyday hassle in the *tuktuk*’s legality status. If anything, they both feel that it is only clever tactics for state representatives to further exploit the *tuktuk* drivers.

The Paradoxes of legality: Can Tuktuk drivers afford to Not have them?

It is easier for me to sympathize with Aly's and Sayed's views. After all, my discipline as an aspiring anthropologist truly "disciplined" me to be critical of the subtle working of power and its effect on marginalized subjectivities. On the one hand, there is "cruelty" in Bayomi's optimism in regards to licensing the *tuktuk*. According to Berlant (2011), sometimes people aspire and desire the very same things that are obstacles to their flourishing and emancipation. Brown (2000) also echoes a similar line of reasoning when she explicates the paradoxes of calling on women's right for freedom, equality, rights to choose and social justice through legal means. It seems that the question of "rights" and the jurisprudence it entails does nothing more than alleviate the "symptoms" to why such cries for legal reform is needed, and not the actual causes or the conditions and discursive mechanisms that produced them in the first place. Hence, Bayomi's desire might be inevitably shaped by the "modern order" and what he called "papers".

However, according to Brown (2000), these aspirations were not and cannot be gratified by the legal procedures that mask the reasons why he as a social subject transcribed with various fragmented historicity's and power relations is formed in the first place. This is due to the universal claims that the legal framework that is part and parcel of a modernist imaginary hold—claims that tend to be ahistorical and do not take into account the various modalities that forms and shapes the construction of the subject. Thus, following Brown's (2000) analysis, one cannot take the race out of gender, the gender out of class, the Janus face of the West out of the native and the "colonial modern", the *bee'a* out of the *nedeef* as they are not neatly compartmentalized as the rule of law might like us to believe. On the other hand, the paradox still remains, as she cites Spivak (1993) when she states that modern emancipatory claims such as right are things "which we cannot not want" (as cited in Brown, 2000, p.230). After all, I have to admit the

privileged positionality I have by my freedom not only to depict my encounters with my interlocutors, but also to claim an epistemological authority by stating, one way or the other, that they are “oppressed and marginalized and do not really know they are”.

Consequently, at least in this section, I decided that my choice of depicting this narrative might be seen as a balance between both: taking their words at face value while simultaneously acknowledging the unpredictable unfolding of his assertive position regarding licensing the *tuktuk* in a different temporal and perhaps even spatial dimensions. After all, one thing I learned with certainty in the field is that everything is in motion, including bodies, the *tuktuks*, beliefs, feelings, desires, as well as affective forces that cannot be ontologically claimed, nor “properly represented”. Maybe it is as best to acknowledge that any attempt from my side to fix a pattern in my encounters will result in not only falsifying it, but also occluding potential enactments of alternative actualities.

Chapter 8 (Un)Concluding Ethnographic Journey with Bayomi

“The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies, for the pattern is new in every moment. And every moment is a new and shocking valuation of all what has been” (T.S. Eliot, 1940, pp. 85).

As my encounter was unfolding with Bayomi, it seems that he was comfortable enough to share his yearnings to provide a better quality of life for his family and for his current girlfriend that one day he intends to marry. The idea of owning a taxi and working on it seems to mean for him a higher social status in the eyes of state representatives, especially since unlike the *tuktuk*, the taxi’s registration procedures have a certain imaginary in its official “legality” and “formality”. As he previously explicated, the “paper” meant being included in the “political imaginary” of the formal. Thus, the likelihood of him as a precarious body subjected in any unprecedented moment to violent disciplinary and surveillance mechanisms might be substantially diminished. I was sympathetic to his words, his dreams for a better future, for kinder social relations among members of his community as well as by the various faces of the “state.” He went on depicting the image of a helpless woman in his neighborhood that he is planning to collect money for. Her husband died, and she has three children to support under extremely limited means. I felt connected to Bayomi. I felt flattered that I am finally connected on an “on the ground level” with the happenings surrounding my home town.

It was not the first time that Bayomi approached me with a story imbued with a certain level of affectivity which my sensibilities are always inclined to immediately solve. I could not help but instantly respond through an attempt to alleviate his pain expressed through his rather victimizing tone. The second day we met, he narrated his experience with a police officer, where he violently and “unlawfully” exerted his power through fabricating a court case against him.

“All I did was look back at him. I stared into his eyes and told him in the politest tone possible that I have rights! He was not allowed to frisk me if I have not demonstrated any unruly behavior. All I was doing is roaming around El-Basateen. I was not even *gowwa* and still, it did not make any difference to unleash their madness (*genanhom*)”. He asked me for 500 pounds for a witty lawyer that can get him out of it. He tried to assure me that this lawyer knows what he is doing, and for him, this case can be simply resolved in maximum one hour.

In all of these stories, the taxi dreams, the helpless widow, the precarious body subjected to violence against police officers, I resolved by giving him what he directly and indirectly asked of me. I did not question for a second my decision. However, I did wonder the vast difference between Bayomi and my other interlocutors. For example, Mohamed, Sayed, and Aly demonstrated highly offended stances when I would suggest any form of monetary compensation for their time. I still remember Mohamed one day after one of the best ethnographic experiences in the field, where we spent almost 11 hour together. He introduced me to his friends, invited me to three fresh juices, and conversed on matters that could be reduced to superficial “small talk.” As he dropped me off behind a famous mall center in Maadi, where the railway tracks demarcate the “old” Maadi district from the “new”, I reached to my pocket. Mohamed instantly knew what I was planning to do and firmly said, “Go! I am telling you to go right now (*emshy, ba’olek emshy halan!*)”.

However, Bayomi never signaled a firm “red light” like the ones expressed by Mohamed. At first glance, instead, his encounters always left me with indulging in the mirror that he holds right up to my face. His charismatic presence has a charm. His choice of words and his wit always seemed to leave me looking in this mirror. Furthermore, the mirror held had an image of a benevolent soul that is out to help the “marginalized poor”. I must admit that I was drawn to its

reflection. I was feeding off from its affect on my inflamed ego. Mohamed on the other hand did not sugar code his words. If I had any elitist assumptions, he did not hold back and would shatter them as we would maneuver with his friends in the *tuktuk*. For example, one day I was out with one of his closest friends, where they were both tired of roaming around the *tuktuk* aimlessly with me. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, there seem to be a certain social stigma when a *tuktuk* is stagnant in a location, in which the object seems “out of place”. When I insisted that we simply pull over and sit together at any *qahwa*, Mohamed tried initially to explain why this might seem odd. He suggested that maybe the next time, we should plan to sit in a cafeteria that is relatively more heterogeneous in its social setting. I thought I was demonstrating how “tolerant” and “cool” I was by my comfort in sitting down in a male dominated setting in a relatively impoverished area. Mohamed reacted by saying, “It is not about you Doaa. It is not only your decision to make (*malhash da'wa beeki ya Doaa. El qarar mish kararek lewahdek*)”.

Thus, I couldn't help but notice the discernable differences in both Bayomi's approach and the other interlocutors. It was as if Bayomi had tapped into my insecurities, sensibilities, and awkwardness in a manner that wished to bring closer the four different sets of shoes in our encounters.

One evening, I glanced at my cell phone and found four missed calls and one WhatsApp message from Bayomi. “*Doaa, ana mehtaglek awi delwa'ti* (Doaa, I really need you right now).”

My first instinct was doubt. Why does every time he calls or needs me involves a new story that concludes with financial ends through his charismatic means? Why do the rest not deploy the same tactics? What is wrong with me? Is not this what I was working very hard in the “field” for? Finally diminishing the historically present affect of the social geographies of power on both my body and mind?

I left my wallet at home as I was calling him to give him the benefit of the doubt. We agreed to meet at our regular hangout in *Kazouza*. I parked my car three streets away, sat down, and waited for Bayomi to make an appearance.

Bayomi showed up without his *tuktuk*. With one eye covered with a white badge and a seemingly depressed demeanor that signaled to me that a crisis was about to unfold.

“Thank you, Doaa for meeting me in such a short notice. I think of you as my sister, a family member. My father just passed away and his body is in the hospital. He underwent an operation on his heart. We were warned that the risk of death is very likely. However, my father suffered from enduring pain all his life. Since he was a retired state employee, he was offered a discount on the operation. However, since he also passed away, we do not have enough money to release his body from the hospital”.

“I am very sorry to hear this Bayomi. My heart goes to you and your family through this difficult time. How is your mother doing?”

“My mother had a nervous breakdown and we had to send her home. I tried to collect money from the neighborhood, but I am short twelve thousand pounds.” “Let me see what I can do Bayomi. Which hospital is your father in right now?”

“*Mostashfa el qowat el moslaha* (The Armed Forces Hospital). I told you that my father used to be a government employee.” “No problem Bayomi. I will call my father now. He is a cardiologist with enough connections to resolve this matter as swiftly as possible”.

“No Doaa, please. You do not have to go through all this trouble. All I need is twelve thousand pounds. My girlfriend is generous enough to give me 2000 pounds. With her limited means, she is trying to help me out.” “Wait, Bayomi, please. I am calling my father”.

The moment I grabbed my phone from my bag, Bayomi excused himself to make a phone call.

I called my dad and explained the situation. As usual, he was happy to help me with any request that I throw his way, especially if I am positioning him as a “highly respected” cardiologist with enough influence and connections in the public health sector. “Sure, *Dodo*. Please give me his father’s name. I also sense from your tone that you are not really buying this story. Who is this guy anyway?”

“Not important right now! Please if you can just check whether there is in fact a body under this name. In case this story checks out, I will personally make my way to the hospital and pay whatever needs to be paid.” “No. Please don’t go anywhere. I will make some phone calls right now. What is the father’s name?”

I realized in this moment that I need this information. I called out Bayomi, who was about fifteen feet away from me on his cell phone. He was circling around the cafeteria. The name he gave me is one that I can not recall. However, it sounded a little made up. When I told my father the name, he asked me if I am sure that this is the official name. I asked Bayomi again and he firmly replied “Yes, I know my father’s name”.

After I hung up with my father, waiting for him to call me back with any news, Bayomi made his way back to the chair he was sitting on. “I am sorry, Doaa, I had to make some phone calls to my neighborhood friends to collect more money. So far, I managed to collect another five thousand pounds. In total, all I need now is another five thousand. It is times like these that the people who claim that they are really there for me show action rather than words”.

It is in this exact moment that all the benefit of the doubt that I had in store for him evaporated into thin air. It became strikingly clear that his words are insincere and emotionally manipulative. The discrepancy between the affective qualities of this encounter was stronger

than any words that came out of his mouth or mine. The moments of silences grew between us as he awaits my final verdict. Will I pay up again?

“I am very sorry for your situation Bayomi. However I offered what I can do. We can both get in a taxi and go to the hospital and I will pay directly whatever needs to be paid. My father will call me any minute now with the news he has for us about your situation”.

“Thank you Doaa. I appreciate your efforts with me, sister. Let me make another quick phone call and I will be right back.” I sat there for about 15 minutes waiting for Bayomi to come back. He never did. It was the last time I ever saw him. I ordered the check and left.

The next day, my father called me, apologizing for the delay in getting back to me. He explained to me that there was no body under this name and that I should learn to stop naively trusting anyone who comes up for help.

Rubble as Dispersed Geneologies

“It is the revenge of the intellect upon the world. To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world—in order to set up a shadow world of ‘meanings.’ It is to turn the world into this world. (‘This world!’ As if there were any other.) The world, our world, is depleted, impoverished enough. Away with all duplicates of it, until we again experience more immediately what we have (Sonntag, 1996, p. 3).”

There is a rationale behind why the above ethnographic segment is placed in the concluding chapter of this thesis. I would like to highlight a significant moment within the shattering of preconceived notions. Furthermore, I would also like to critique what I have made of this thesis in light of both the ethnographic excerpts it entails as well as the theoretical references that supposedly complements and consummates them. In Chapter 2, I have attempted to highlight the inevitable discrepancies between the voices in the field as well as outside of the field (Segall, 2001). Furthermore, one of my goals is to come to terms with the academic standards expected of me to deliver this work, which include reading, digesting, and embodying

the canonical authors assigned to us as students. Although I am thankful that I am within a tolerant terrain that allows me to depict, as creatively as possible the intricate interconnectivity between myself, the field, my “made” interlocutors, humans and non-human alike, I nevertheless still had to rely on “disciplined academic knowledge” to make sense and meaning of my fieldwork experiences as well as my own subjectivity at times.

The gap between the academic jargon of our discipline seems to have had a contradictory effect of what it supposedly intends to do in our here and now. Instead of attempting to critically examine and understand the various modes of alterity, the normalized symbolic violence of our everyday, or even enact a new potentialities for change, resistance, or simply survival, academic knowledge seems to have occluded me into a circle of those who were privileged enough in their social, cultural, economical capital accumulation to comprehend where I am coming from. Hence, where I am coming from is another form of reviving the dead and the living, as I am still granting epistemological authority to authors from a different here and now to explain my contemporary moments. Thus, when the unfortunate encounter with Bayomi was unfolding, I went back to my circle in order to make meaning and sense of the “why” of his actions. Was I, as Navaro-Yashin (2002) explicates in her book another “face of the state”, which makes his actions justified through his eyes, especially given how much he felt “exploited” by state representatives? Should the readers or myself suppose to take anything he said as face value given his deception? Or are these encounters shedding light on the inevitable destruction of any attempt fix a pattern within the flux of motions?

With all my criticality on granting the epistemological authority now to Foucault (1979), he seems to have two important points worth adding here. The first is his conception of power that is dispersed enough to reach different bodies in Maadi’s social geographies of power. As I

previously stated, we all carry the “state’s” nexus of power, where a simple “victim/oppressor” binary is too limiting and restrictive in encompassing the various creative means that the object of the *tuktuk* as well as its drivers have their own agency. Power is not always “deductive” (Foucault, 1978, p. 135). Instead, I have encountered many incidents that colorfully display the wide range of actions and reactions that my interlocutors have in the face of what they believe to be an unjust exercise of power by state representatives. For example, after my ethnographic experiences, I find myself more comfortable taking a tuktuk when I hop out of the metro station rather than a taxi. In all the of almost fifteen times that I did so, they seem to be willing to “take the risk” of crossing over to Sarayat instead of dropping me off, as I always insist, behind the railway tracks that separate the old Maadi from the new. After all, if the *tuktuks* and the people steering them did not in various ways disrupt the docile performance expected of them, neither will I have “noticed” them for this thesis to begin with, nor would there have been currently such a social stigma towards them. Through people like Yasser conceive of them as “doing something wrong,” they might be in fact “doing something right”.

The second point that Foucault (1978) is productive for explicating my encounters with Bayomi is his reminder of the “dispersed genealogies” (Burchil & Miller, 1991, p.5) that have been silenced, pushed aside, as they might not have been deemed as worthy as the “disciplined knowledge” in the academic institutions. Since I used the concept of “rubble” to shed light on the historical struggles that seem to have been long gone but instead are more alive than what we might have initially conceived, it is perhaps “rational” to add another layer to my enactment. The dispersed genealogies that I did not encounter or rely on in this thesis might have had valuable insight to my experiences. Are they also another example of the rubble of the past that is deemed

unworthy, unimportant, and irrelevant to be conceived of as legitimate sources to make sense of the various life worlds that I have encountered?

This thesis is as fragmented as the subjectivities it depicts, as incongruent as the temporalities it encompasses, and, hopefully, as disruptive as we maneuver with the *tuktuk* through the order of things and peoples. I attempted, as Benjamin (1968) proposed, to collect and reassemble the “wreckage,” the rubble left behind. The rubble that is assumed to be silenced and buried under the elitist and colonial graves of modernity. I might have been ambitious, or even infatuated with Walter Benjamin to an extent that I enacted his usage of the term “rubble” to prescribe meanings to objects like the *tuktuks* and people like the *tuktuk* drivers. They are not, as I previously stated actual “historical rubble” in its physical sense. However, they are imbued with what the hegemonic historiography swiped away under the rug. However, his historical materialism is embedded in a dialectical relationship between the rubble and the “recovery” or the redemption process (Maier-Katkin, 2006). I might have been influenced by Benjamin’s mysticism in the manner in which I attempted to redeem back the piles of rubble left behind, instead of stepping over and through them by teleologically (re)arranging the fragmented mess. Thus, in doing so, I paid close attention to the reshuffling of roles and the reassembling of ideas that interactively place “matter in place” and people in their designated slots. Furthermore, I also explicated the relationship between the rubble of the past as “dispersed genealogies” to the knowledge production process that seem to exclude them through the rigid construction of the discipline’s canons.

My utopic yearning to connect with the multiple socialities were sometimes met with dystopic experiences. This thesis process was an emotional roller coaster, where my own bounds of normality were shattered, resulting in several existential crisis. As I mentioned in Chapter 3,

the gap between the world and the word, as Jackson (2013) states, can never be closed. Now as I am concluding the inconcludable with an attempt to finish the unfinishable, I am left with an optimistically cruel hope for the fictional concept of a kinder tomorrow along with kinder social relations. Have I, through my usage of the dialectical relationship between rubble of the past redeemed and recovered what had been disrupted? Will this thesis become accessible one day for others and especially the elite *ma'adawiya* to think twice before casting their explicit and implicit historical spells on those who were once all in the same Janus face? For now, this is all I have to say as I am still, more reluctant than ever, to move in the ghostly horror of my family's palace.

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APPENDIX



Figure A. The Billboard signs found around various points in Maadi. What is worth mentioning here is how the sign reads, "Tuktuks are prohibited from Maadi, violators fined LE 1500 instantly. It is interesting how it supposedly means that the tuktuk is not allowed to maneuver in all of Maadi, yet it is acceptable for the tuktuks to be found in *Arab El-Maadi and Hadayek el Maadi*.

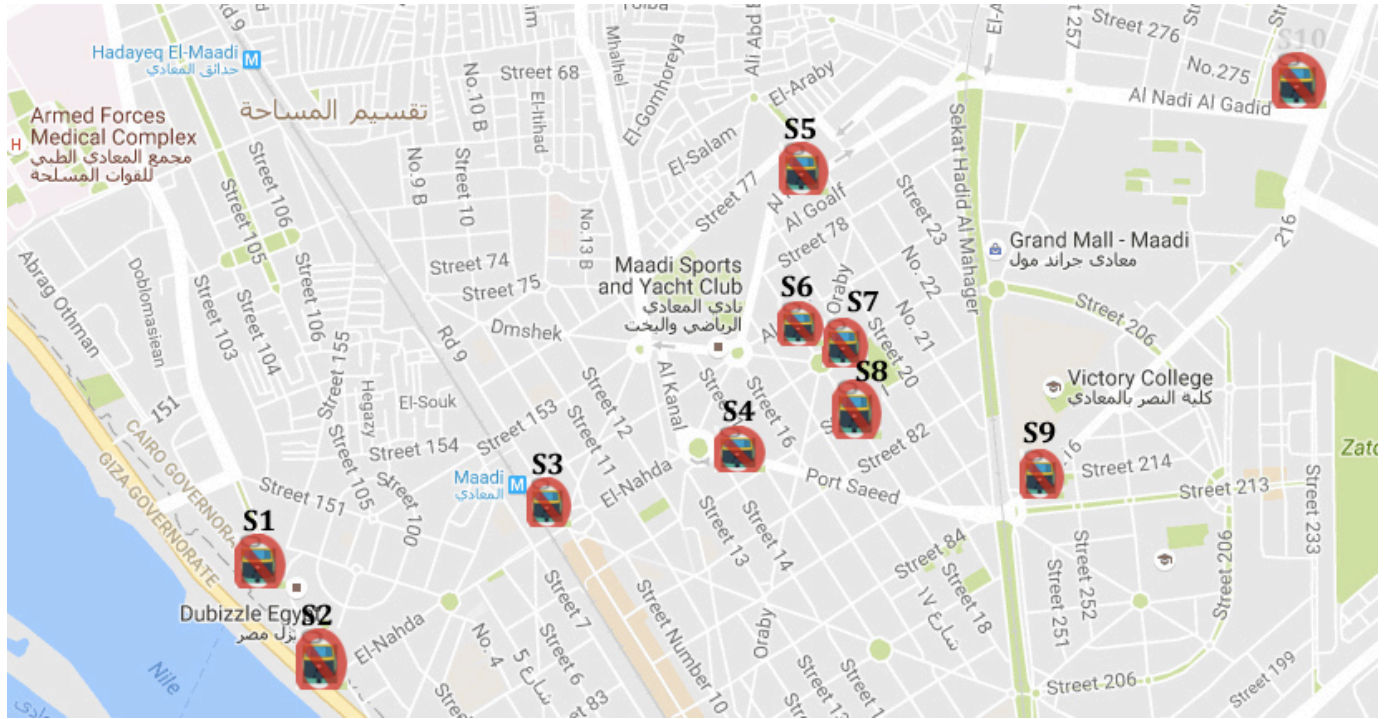


Figure B. An illustration of the exact locations of the Billboards from Figure A. Note that there were no billboards found in Hadayek and Arab-El Maadi. Not all signs are still anchored in the grounds marked on this map after the completion of this thesis.

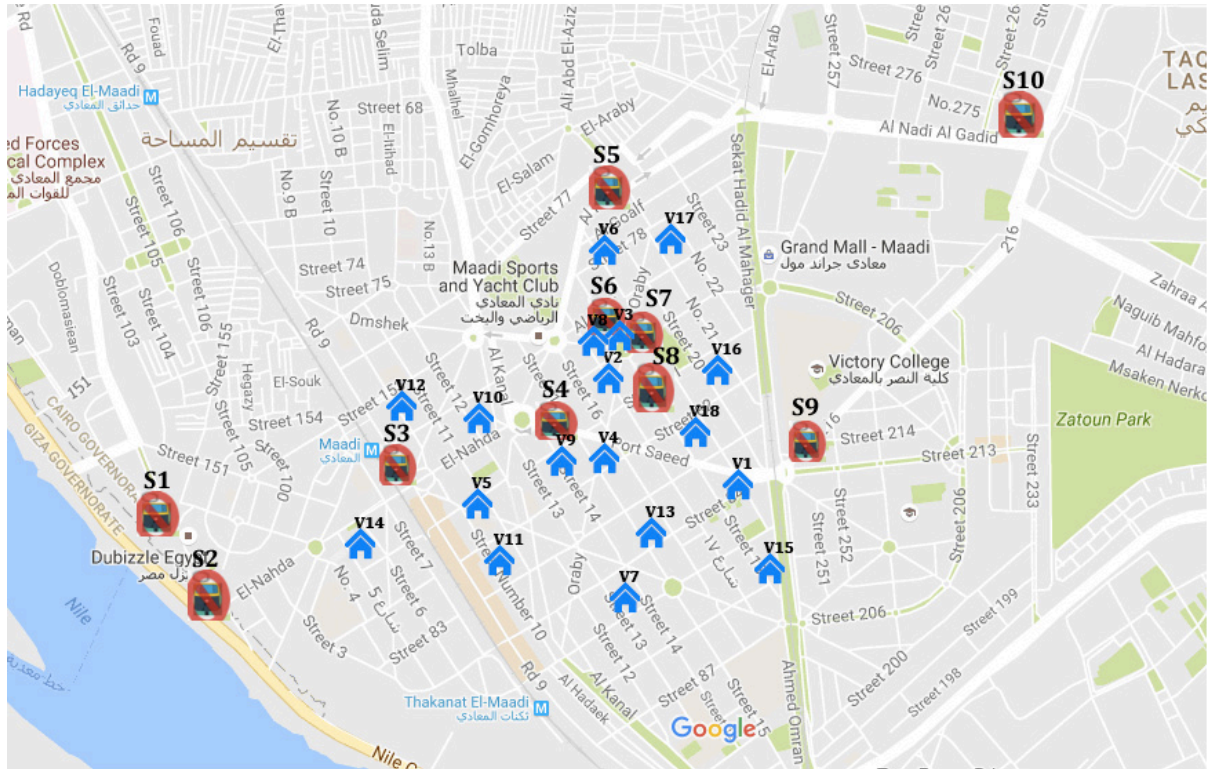


Figure C. An illustration of the overlap of the different spatial topologies within the same geographical locations. The villa icon demonstrated the fetishized palaces of Sarayat El-Maadi surrounding the anti-tuktuk billboard signs. Note: this map was designed based on not the exact number of the houses, but by the streets.

List of the former owners of the villas illustrated in Figure D (Refaat, 1994):

Villa 1: Villa belonging to Geoffrey Dale, Delta Land's fourth general manager on Road 84 in the 1940.

Villa 2: Mushroom house belonging to Eduard Haym of the prominent news Paper Egyptian Gazette as well as the person who owned the law firm that handles Delta Land's legal affairs.. The villa is in the corner of the once Mosseri street (now named Orabi add later) and road 17 built during World War II.

Villa 3: Villa Mizrahi on ex-Mosseri (Orabi) Square belonged to history's last Jewish pasha Emanuel Mizrahi Pasha and his wife Leah Samuel Assayas. In the early 1960s, in order to save it from a government takeover, the pasha's daughter leased it to the Mexican government. It is still to this day the residency of the Mexican embassodor in Cairo.

Villa 4: Vila was belonged to Mohamed Say Bey.

Villa 5: Villa onc belonged to Paul Rubin Lifshitz in 1920 on road 10. He was a lawyer from Russia who moved in Maadi durring 1916. He was hired to promote Maadi's properties and eventually owned many properties in Maadi.

Villa 6: Villa once belonged to Doctor Emil Lister.

Villa 7: Villa once belonged to Herman Wolf

Villa 8: Once belonged to Adolf Levi

Villa 9: Undocument or known owner. It was the fourth villa built by the Delta Land company.

Villa 10: Borromeo Convent at the northern end of road 12 built in 1913

Villa 11: Villa once belonged to Donald Andrew, General Drury Blakeney, Thomas Steven, Hilali Pasha.

Villa 12: Villa once belonged to Hunter Pasha in 1912 and Baligh Sabry Family later.

Villa 13: An alpine cotttage Villa was belonged to Aziz Zaki Bey by the 1930s.

Villa 14: undocument or unknown owner.

Villa 15: Villa once belonged to Mizrahi Family and later to Princess Ulfat Osama

Villa 16: Villa once belonged to Ismail Kanizade.

Villa 17: Villa Hamama, road 21

Villa 18: Villa once belonged to Welsh Murray