The Book of Khalid: A Genetic Study

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In 1973, the *Arab Establishment of Studies and Publications* in Beirut, Lebanon, produced an elegant, though slightly abridged reprint of Ameen Rihani's *The Book of Khalid*, a work of fiction written in English by a Christian Arab as far back as 1911.[1] The work was initially published in New York by Dodd, Mead and Company, but was to a large extent ignored by Arab and American critics alike. Sale figures then were less than modest, even reviews were scanty. A reprint, some fifty-two years later, must have some strong motivations, one would have thought. On the one hand, the book was written by an Arab expatriate in the United States, and a revival of it may be in line with mounting interest in ethnic/American writing. The book could also easily lodge itself at the core of cross-cultural discourse as it provides an interesting precursor of transnational literature particularly in its attempts to bridge worlds and define identities. Furthermore, literature written in English by non-native speakers was also increasingly gaining recognition and critical attention; and a work written in English by an Arab could hope to acquire more legitimacy in the '70s and claim affinities with the larger body of Anglophone world literature.

Notwithstanding the real incentives behind the reprint, one is contented to see a work which demonstrates cultural encounter and literary influence at its fullest come to the fore again. It is equally interesting for the critic to show affinities that exist not only between *The Book of Khalid* and contemporary writing in English but with earlier English works that seem to have inspired the book in the first place. It is the aim of this study to trace the literary parentage of *The Book of Khalid* and to elucidate that Rihani in his experimenting with narrative techniques and in his quest for language mastery and stylistic betterment, sought to emulate the model of no one other than the 19th century, Scottish philosopher and writer Thomas Carlyle. The result was an esoteric and mystical tale founded on the curious model of *Sartor Resartus* and fashioned in the same heightened and highly ornamental style.

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Ameen Rihani, a Lebanese, belongs to a group of writers known in Arabic as *'Udaba'a al-Mahjar* (expatriate literati)—Al-Mahjar being the American continent to which Syrians emigrated at the beginning of this century in search of political, economic and religious freedom.

Rihani was a contemporary of Gibran Kahlil Gibran and Mikhail Naimy who expressed themselves creatively in two languages—English and Arabic. Writing in exile, and coming in contact with an intellectually different culture, the Mahjerite authors were able to register their cultural encounter with a laudable equilibrium of mind and soul to be envied by the post-migratory generations of writers emerging among ethnic offspring today. Acculturation as a positive enrichment of the individual and not a de-stabilizing force was most evident in their works. They were not inhibited by a so-called 'superior' culture, as they always viewed the culture of others as 'different' only (something with which post-colonial literature had long had to struggle). As a result, their themes reflected a relaxed stance regarding the question of bi-culturalism and hybrid identities. If the West has its merits, so does the East. And it is up to the individual to make the best out of the two cultures—it was as simple as that.

Where the greater need for change arose, the Arab writers felt, was in 'form.' Arabic literature, for four whole centuries during which time the Arabs were under the onerous rule of those the Arabs felt were ignorant...the military Turks...was suffering from a lapse into medieval artistry and traditional scholasticism. Contact with a new culture meant fresh inspiration which could be derived from readings of the European Romantics or American transcendentalists who sang freely of life and glorified nature and the emancipated self. Thematically, there was nothing more becoming for the thwarted souls of the emigrants than the cry of the romantic bards to strip the self of its artificial garb and indulge in the boundless freedom of nature, truth and humanity. Technically, 'free verse' which they had discovered for the first time, freed them from the weight of conventional verse forms and rhythms. The poetic works of Rihani, Naimy and Gibran, echoed Blake and Wordsworth on the one hand, and Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman on the other.

Yet, when Arab expatriates came to writing fiction, things were more difficult: the form of the novel was absent from their own literary history,[2] and they were still more concerned with depicting the unchanging moral verities in a timeless setting (e.g. Gibran's *The Prophet* and Naimy's *The Book of Mirdad*). The novel - the genre of imaginative literature which gives emphasis to the time factor not for giving shape and substance to it but also for creating the *realia* of the character could sustain neither their philosophical ramblings and timeless speculative journeyings. Rihani, for one, had to seek a looser, unbinding frame for the structure of his tale and he found his desired model in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. The result was a spiritual, philosophical romance that furnished him at once with the opportunity to 'tell' a story, yet ramble around, and *The Book of Khalid* was born.

The Book of Khalid is a difficult work to classify. Though largely based on Rihani's autobiography, it is not just a narrative but also a philosophical dissertation and a work of moral indoctrination, mystical imagination, as well as satirical and political understatement.

In his preface to the work, the author tells us that while visiting the Khedival library in Cairo, he was attracted by a modern Arabic manuscript which bore on its cover the dedication: "To my brother Man, my Mother Nature, and my Maker God." After examining the manuscript, he discovers that it reveals the life of a certain young man named Khalid, who says that his work is "neither a Memoir nor an Autobiography, neither a Journal nor a Confession. It is as it were, a book of the chart and history of one little kingdom of the soul--the soul of a philosopher, poet and criminal" (*Khalid* 17). The author, enchanted by the manuscript, seeks permission from the custodian of the library to edit the book and publish it. But first, he must gather further information about this Khalid. After some investigation and inquiries in the hasheesh dens where the "Paled-faded intellectualities of Cairo flock," he is introduced to Shakib, Khalid's best friend, who happened to have just finished writing the *Histoire Intime* of his friend who disappeared suddenly some ten days ago. Shakib is ready to give his *Histoire* to the writer with the hope that it fills some of the gaps in Khalid's memoirs. The editor rejoices, especially as he was not entirely pleased with the style of Khalid who seems not to have mastered "the most subtle of arts, the art of writing about one's self" and who does not follow the masters in their entertaining trivialities and stupidities, "like Gibbon" who interrupts his autobiography to tell how he often enjoyed a game of cards in the evening, or Rousseau who confesses to having "kissed the linen of Madame de Waren's bed when he was alone in her room." Thus, furnished with two manuscripts instead of one, the editor sets out to tell the story of Khalid, drawing his material from both sources, occasionally adding his own interpretation, commentary or criticism.

The story is of Khalid, a young Syrian born in the city of Baalbek of "brave daring Phoenician ancestors" and Arab heritage. He and his friend Shakib emigrate to the United States in search of "the gold-swept shores of distant lands--and the bounteous fields of the West" (*Khalid* 25). The book describes the five-year experience of the young emigrants in New York and tells of the vast amount of knowledge they acquired meanwhile. The voyage to the New World becomes a spiritual and intellectual experience, yet not without its setbacks. Khalid, the sojourner, discovers the horrors and abominations of materialistic society which compels him to consider returning to the more spiritual East. He is tormented by both his love and hatred of America, for, on the one hand, he sees in it prosperity and progress, on the other a bad omen for a "miserable happiness."

The contrasts between the West and the East, ambition and contentment, activity and sweet idleness are established. And Khalid seeks his World Temple, which is built "on the Borderline of the Orient and Occident...on the mountain heights over looking both" where "no false Gods are worshipped."

Beside the cultural encounter theme, the writer involves his work with socio-political motifs as well as religious matters which seem surprisingly relevant to current religious movements in the Arab world, namely fundamentalism and fanaticism (the protagonist narrowly escapes death as he preaches religious moderation). The author voices his criticism of religious establishments, both Christian and Muslim, and the clergy comes under severe, sarcastic attack. The work also includes, in typical romance fashion, a thin line love story which is of the idealized type marked by strange and unexpected incidents and developments.

Notwithstanding its metaphysical and philosophical pursuits, its political concerns and social preoccupations, it would be hard to find a work written by an Arab in English in the first decade of the last century which is richer in concrete everyday things, in earthy delightful wit and humour, and in poignant irony. Perhaps what gives it its special flavour is its juxtaposition of the daily and mundane with the most cerebral and lofty of ideas.

As interesting as such an analysis would be, the purpose of this study is less daunting, namely to show how and why Ameen Rihani came under the strong influence of Thomas Carlyle and to demonstrate how closely he emulated his *Sartor Resartus*. It may seem a contradiction, having stated earlier that Arab emigrants to the U.S. sought freedom from the artificial literary expression and the restricting forms of the past, to see an author fall upon the model of Carlyle, who himself was greatly concerned with stylistic and rhetorical devices that were far from Wordsworthian simplicity. The fact of the matter is that while the Arab writers were experimenting with new forms, they were still attached to stylistic traits which have special esteem in their original native Arabic tongue and Carlyle, at least to Rihani, was the happy compromise. Rihani adopted Carlyle's rhetorical style as well as his narrative techniques because the first seemed 'natural' enough to an ear used to classical Arabic rhapsodies, and the second furnished him with a convenient framework of narrative voices through which he could learn to tell his tale.

The reason why Rihani was attracted to Carlyle's style is simple. The 'architecture' of the Carlylean language would naturally appeal to Arab taste at the beginning of the century because of the Arabs' great admiration of the oratorical and highly rhetorical style of which Carlyle's writing was a good specimen. The Carlylean style exhibits a vast range of peculiarities which have their counterparts in classical Arabic. To mention but a few: alliteration, parallelism, antithesis, apposition, onomatopoeia, abstract diction and lengthy sentences.

Carlyle, for example, was exceedingly fond of alliterative couplets, "lucid and lucent," "long and lank," "tailors and tailored" etc., a device which Arab poets and writers greatly esteemed. He was also especially concerned with cadence and the rhythmic flow of language, consequently with paralleled phrases and appositive nouns which once-dominated classical Arabic rhetoric. The beat of the following passage from Book I of *Sartor Resartus* might have tickled the ear of Rihani:

> Man's whole life and environment have been laid open and elucidated; scarcely a fragment or fibre of his soul, body, and possessions, but has been probed, dissected, distilled, desiccated, and scientifically decomposed: Our spiritual faculties of which it appears there are not a few, have their Stewarts, Cousins, Royer Collards: every cellular, vascular, muscular Tissue glories in its Lawrences, Majendies, Bichats (Carlyle 2 1m-1).

Influenced by the classical Arabic models and by the Victorian masters and Carlyle in particular, Rihani rhapsodied in alliterative doublets and parallel sentences: "learn and lathy," "loud-lunged," soft and subtle," "linsey-Wolsey freedom," "a world of frills and frocks and feathers"-- are but a few examples. Any specimen picked at random from his writing would reveal his constant concern with strategy of parallel patterns disclosing "cadences, not without melodious heartiness" (Carlyle 2), as we see here:

But is it not important, is it not the fashion at least, that one writing his own history should first expand on the humble origin of his ancestors and the distant obscure source of his genius? And having done this, should he not then tell how he behaved in his childhood; whether or not he made anklets of his mother's dough for his little sister; whether he did not kindle the fire with his father's Holy Book; whether he did not walk under the rainbow and try to reach the end of it on the hill top; and whether he did not write verse when he was but five years of age (Carlyle 26).

Parallelism abounds in *The Book of Khalid*, and like *Sartor Resartus*, as Tennyson notes of the latter, the "pages are a tissue of elaborate parallel construction." Parallels in both works are not so much constructed for expanding a meaning, or adding further particulars which aim at a fuller understanding of text, rather they are used for the intrinsic movement and flow of the sentence and chiefly for their rhythmic effect. Occasionally, parallelism is used to effect a dramatic enactment of a scene as in: "Najma's father bows low, rubs his hands well, offers a large cushion, brings a leaning pillow, and blubbers out many unnecessary apologies" (*Khalid* 199). Or it is used to expand a mood or describe a state of mind: "Disappointed, perplexed, diseased, defeated, excommunicated, crossed in love, but with an eternal glance of sunshine in his breast to open and light up new paths - Khalid makes away from Baalbek" (*Khalid* 202).

From Carlyle Rihani also learns the use of exclamations and exclamatory rhetorical questions which seemed to serve the oratorical purposes which both writers greatly esteemed. The following is only one of many examples:

> And is it not Khalid, like his spiritual mother, floundering, too, in the false dawn of life? His love of Nature, which was spontaneous and free, is it not likely to become formal and scientific? His love of Country, which begins timidly, fervently in the woods and streams, is it not likely to end a Nephelococcygia? His determination to work, which was rudely shaken at a push-cart, is it not become again a determination to loaf? And now, that he has a little money laid-up, has he not the right to seek the cheapest and most suitable place for loafing? And where, if not in the Lebanon hills, "in which it seemed always afternoon," can he rejoin the Lotus-Eaters of the East? (*Khalid* 149)

Another peculiarity of the Carlylean style which Rihani faithfully adopted is the use of capital letters for emphasis--as can be seen in much of the afore-cited quotations. Similarly, as Carlyle was frequently taxed for his 'lexicographic' diction, Rihani can easily stand the same charge. George Meredith once described the style of Carlyle as "a wind-in-the-orchard style, that tumbled down here and there an appreciable fruit with uncouth bluster...learned dictionary words giving a hand to street slang, and accents falling on them haphazard, like slant rays from driving clouds" (qtd in Calder 187).[3] If this be true of Carlyle, it certainly is also true of Rihani. For although Rihani called for a 'revolutionary' break up in style, and reproached his contemporary Arab writers for their undue concern with the dilapidated diction and pretentious forms, he himself, when writing in the English language hunted for the outlandish and the unusual turn of expression (perhaps a desire to outbid the native speakers in their own tongue?). Added to this is his frequent use of slang and of 'uncushioned' Arabic terms which makes the reading of Khalid a tantalizing experience. Rihani was often excoriated for his ostentatious display of learned dictum, and pretentious lexicography. His justification, however, was that "diction has shades, colours and rhythms which are as important as the meaning they denote. And in selecting my wording I usually look for that shade and that colour which best befits my meaning. I believe that every thought has its own terminology, whether in English or in Arabic, which no other dictum can aptly render" (Rihani 186).[4]

Another feature common to both Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and Rihani's *The Book of Khalid* is the extensive use of the second person singular familiar, *thou*. Both use it when sermonizing or reflecting on a spiritual or moral theme. The clearest justification for this is the religious association, as the word *thou* trails some of the awesome authority of the King James Bible. For like Carlyle's, Rihani's work was intended to address human spiritual interest. An occasionally Biblical style was found to be most apt for the two *oeuvres*, although tinged from time to time, as Meredith suggested, with the slang of the day.

It is perhaps appropriate here, while investigating the stylistic similarities of the two works, to comment briefly on the nature of humour in Rihani. Carlyle's humour in *Sartor Resartus* was certainly not to be found in the inflated moralizing or lugubrious posturing of Professor Teufelsdröckh, but in his outrages on conventional thought and practice which provoked amusement as well as reflection.[5] Similarly, Rihani's 'sermons' were often drab and cheerless, but he succeeded in drawing out laughter in both his ironic portraiture of the traditional politicians or clergymen of his country as well as in the cynical delineation of the democratic candidates in the local American elections. One example occurs when early in the book Khalid's friend, Mr. Hoolihan, informed him that Mr. O'Donohue of the Wigwam party

offered him the post of political canvasser of the Syrian district, the details of which Shakib provided in his *Histoire Intime*:

> Khalid did become a Tammany Citizen, that is to say, a Tammany dray-horse; that he was much esteemed by the Honourable Henchmen, and once in the Wigwam he was particularly noticed by his Shamrag Majesty Boss O'Graft; that he was Tammany's Agent to the editors of the Syrian newspapers of New York, whom he enrolled in the service of the Noble Cause for a consideration which no eloquence could reduce to a minimum; that he also took to the stump and dispensed to his fellow citizens, with rhetorical gestures at least, the cut-and-dried logic which the committee of Buncombe on such occasions furnishes its squad of talented spouters; and that - the most important this - he was subject in the end to the public disgrace of waiting in the lobby with tuft-hunters and political stock-jobbers, until it pleased the committee of Bunchcombe and the Honourable Treasurer thereof to give him - a card of dismissal (*Khalid* 125-126).

The concocted names of 'O'Donohue', 'Boss O'Graft', and the 'Honourable henchmen' are but obvious reminiscences of the Carlylean notorious concoctions of 'Teufelsdröckh', 'Hofrath Heuschrecke', 'Weissnichtwo', and 'Entepfuhl'. And indeed, Rihani's sense of the ludicrous, as depicted in the above passage, has clear echoes of Carlylean wry irony.

The importance of citations such as the aforementioned is to be found not so much in the particular details as in the general effect. To read *The Book of Khalid* spatially is to probe the reflections of a world in which Carlyle could once have lived—that is to touch earnest philosophy disguised in sardonic garb and feel the spirituality of a message clad in the suggestive realism of a narrative. It echoes another culture's literary style in an admiring way. It follows that the stylistic similarities between Carlyle and Rihani have been pointed out at the outset because it is our belief that Rihani was primarily attracted to Carlyle on account of the stylistic traits which he as an Arab most appreciated: the excessive concern with eloquent wording, the elaborate oratory, resonance of sentence, and balance of structure. These Carlyle clearly exemplified.

However, apart from the stylistic similarities, there exist a number of common features which certainly bring *The Book of Khalid* and *Sartor Resartus* much closer to one another. In making out the framework of their narratives, both Rihani and Carlyle purport to possess manuscripts which profess to be a guidebook, "a voice publishing tidings of...philosophy...a spirit addressing spirits" (*Sartor Resartus* 15), or "a book of the chart and history of one little kingdom of the soul" (*Khalid* 17). Both manuscripts are written in a language foreign to the English reader: Teufelsdröckh's in German and Khalid's in Arabic. The writers decide to translate, edit and publish the books with the hope of introducing them to the English public. But they express dissatisfaction with the manuscript's style and the deficiency of biographical information which they yielded. Carlyle thinks of Teufelsdröckh as an "uncultivated writer" (*Sartor Resartus* 34), and the book at large does not content him. The work on clothes by Herr Teufelsdröckh, he says, is "a mixture of insight, inspiration, with dullness, double-vision and even utter blindness." And "it may now be declared that

Professor Teufelsdröckh's acquirements, patience of research, philosophic and even poetic vigor, are here made indisputably manifest; and unhappily no less his prolixity and tortuosity and manifold ineptitude." Carlyle further concludes that "there is much rubbish in this book" (*Sartor Resartus* 31-32).[6]

Likewise, Khalid's editor refers to that "vexing manuscript" and chides its author for stylistic rambling and discrepancy, as Khalid

> for ten whole pages, beating continually, now in the dark of Metaphysics, now in the dusk of science; losing himself in the tungled bushes of English Materialism, and German mysticism, and Arabic Sufism; calling to Berkeley, to Hackel; meeting with Spencer here, with Al-Ghazzaly there; and endeavouring to extricate himself in the end with some such efforts as 'The Natural being Negativity, the spiritual must be the opposite of that, and both united in God from the Absolute.'" (Khalid 248-249)

The editor adds that "whoever relishes such stuff, and can digest it, need not apply to Khalid, for, in this case, he is but a poor third-hand caterer. Better go to the Manufacturers direct; they are within reach of everyone in this age of machinery and popular Editions."(*Khalid* 249)

To make up for the inadequacies of the manuscripts, and in order to obtain biographical data on both Khalid and Teufelsdröckh, Rihani and Carlyle both seek additional information from the protagonists' friends. Shakib, "Khalid's most intimate friend and disciple"(*Khalid* 28); and Herr Hofrath Heuschrecke, the "professor's chief friend and associate in Weissnichtwo" (*Sartor Resartus* 38), offer to provide the editors with the lacking information on the lives of their masters. Moreover, they supply them with letters and similar materials which they hope would aid them in their editing of the books.

Still this is not all. The central characters in *The Book of Khalid* and *Sartor Resartus* have striking similarities, both physical and mental. Teufelsdröckh has a "little figure" and "thick locks" of hair, "long and lank, overlapping the gravest face we ever in this world saw." His eyes are deep, "and looking out so still and dreamy" (*Sartor Resartus* 18). He sits whole days "in loose ill brushed thread-bare habiliments...to think and smoke tobacco." Khalid is also "little" with "bushy hair" (*Khalid* 174) which he wears long (*Khalid* 108). He looks like a dervish (*Khalid* 108), or as a monk as he wraps himself in a loose black garment of coarse wool (*Khalid* 270). And his general outlook is that of "phantom-like dreamer" (*Khalid* 128). Both are "speculative radicals" (*Sartor Resartus* 67), "feverish and clamorous" (*Khalid* 264) "always invoking the distant luminary of transcendentalism for light" (*Khalid* 265), displaying an obvious "tendency to mysticism" (*Sartor Resartus* 70) and both are men "devoted to the higher philosophies" (*Sartor Resartus* 70).

These are not the only parallels which suggest Rihani's reliance on *Sartor Resartus* for the creation and development of his protagonist. The entire development and growth of Khalid as a character/diminutive prophet runs along parallel lines with Teufelsdröckh's. Like the German professor, Khalid grows by a succession of insights and intuitions, or what Carlyle described as "Intuition quickened by experience". He

passes through a number of intense experiences from which he emerges with new insights and visions. And what matters here is not the episode that Khalid narrates, but the pure thought with which he emerges. Indeed, what we witness in *The Book of Khalid* is not so much the progress of a fictional character as much as the progress of a philosophical argument. And in *Sartor Resartus* "though our attention is focused on Teufelsdröckh as an individual momentarily", as G.H. Brookes maintains in his study *The Rhetorical Form of Carlyle's* Sartor Resartus, "he is never made our exclusive interest" (Brookes 97). On the whole, interest in both characters is minimal compared to the more engaging concepts they postulate.

Hence it is not merely for a few episodes, chance phrases, or general thoughts that Rihani is indebted to Carlyle. There are instances in his book where the influence is a pointed echo of the Victorian writer: In his chapter on "Flounces and Ruffles", for example, he philosophizes on clothes in the manner of Herr Teufelsdröckh and even specializes in "ruffled garment." The following is one example:

> What can you do without your flounces? How can you live without your ruffles? How can you, without them, think, speak, or work? How can you eat, drink, walk, sleep, pray, worship, moralize, sentimentalize, or love, without them? Are you not ruffled and flounced when you last see the darkness? The cradle and the tomb, are they not the first and last ruffles of man? And between them what a panoramic display of flounces. What clean and visible edges of unclean invisible common skirts! Look at your huge elaborate monuments, your fancy sepulchers, what are they but ruffles of your triumphs and defeats? The marble flounces, these, of your cemeteries, your pantheons and Westminster Abbeys. And what are your belfries and spires and chimes, your altars and reredoses and such like, but the sanctified flounces of your churches (*Khalid* 182-183).

Much of what Carlyle was concerned with was "to strip away coverings, taking man down to the bare essentials, which prove to be not merely the naked, unclothed human body but the incorporeal invisible human soul," (Brookes 97). Rihani seems to be working on the same essentials: Man's "spirit, in the course of time was born; it grew and developed zenithward and nadirward as the cycles rolled on. And in spiritual pride, and pride of power and wealth as well, it took to ruffling and flouncing to such an extent that at certain epochs it disappeared, dwindled into nothingness, and only the additions remained" (*Khalid* 183).

One cannot fail to be struck by the similarity between the motif of clothes symbolizing several social institutions in *Sartor Resartus* and the flood of symbolic images relating garments to political and religious offices in *The Book of Khalid*. The world in Rihani's work is a "Dress Ball of the human race" (*Khalid* 185). "The Pope of Christendom, in his three hats and heavy trailing gowns, blessing the air of heaven; the priest in his alb and chasuble, dispensing of the blessings of the pope; the judge, in his wig and bombazine endeavouring to reconcile divine justice with the law's mundane majesty"(*Khalid* 185) to the rest of this bewildering variety of the pageant.

Still, there are more of Rihani's borrowings from Carlyle to be mentioned. Apart from Khalid's development along lines similar in pattern to those of Teufelsdröckh,

the closing scene also bears a striking similitude. Khalid at the end of the book disappears suddenly, and the final 'Conjecture' of his new 'spiritual' abode is given by his scribe Shakib. Similarly Teufelsdröckh disappears abruptly and Heuschrecke, the faithful friend, speculates that "Es geht an--Teufelsdröckh has departed Weissnichtwo to witness the new birth of society."

To indicate his dependence on the model of *Sartor Resartus*, Rihani adopted several of Carlyle's narrative devices, chief of which is speaking through a fictional editor. At its face value, the editor device is employed to maintain an artistic distance between writer and reader; a "hoax" as Moore calls it, when reviewing the Carlylean editor, "of a kind developed by all great satirists, which influenced its readers for their betterment whether they were deceived or not." Such a possibility was, in fact suggested when, early in the book, Rihani, with tongue in cheek, said that the "K.L. Manuscript which we kept under our Pillow...was beginning to worry us. After all might it not be a literary deception, we thought" (*Khalid* 26).

Yet, it seems there is more to it than the mere deception of reader and artistic estrangement. In both *Sartor Resartus* and *The Book of Khalid*, the editor assumes a wide range of roles and performs the activities of editor-narrator, translator, critic, reviewer and biographer simultaneously (see Tennyson 48-79). And, indeed, since the narrative enfolds through a multiplicity of voices, Khalid's, Shakib's, and the editor's, the last takes the mediating role manipulating all voices into a coherent order.

Before any discussion of the role of the editor is attempted, the question that poses itself is whether Rihani, in creating this character, was aware of its tremendous potential, or was simply emulating the Carlylean model with whatever intrinsic advantages it unconsciously yielded. Critical studies of *Sartor Resartus* have emphasized Carlyle's deliberate use of the fictional editor as a successful means of voice manipulation. Brookes maintains that the fictional editor has offered Carlyle some considerable rhetorical privileges. He believes that through him, the writer can reinforce Teufelsdröckh's philosophy by direct advocacy; or by occasionally criticizing or ridiculing this philosophy, he can ease his reader into a careful evaluation. Furthermore, he can express astonishment at Teufelsdröckh's views in order to accommodate certain of his readers' fears. In short, Brookes concludes, the editor can perform a wide variety of rhetorical operations which help advance his philosophy (Brookes 97).

Certainly, Brookes' comments on Carlyle fit Rihani closely, and may be read as comments on his own fictional editor. After all, it is highly possible that Rihani was first and foremost attracted to the figure of the editor for all the rhetorical services it seemed to offer. To give him the benefit of the doubt, a closer observation of his editor must be attempted.

In making up the manuscript and editing story, Rihani seems to achieve two main purposes. Firstly, the fact that Khalid's memoirs are preserved at the Khedival library amongst the papyri of Amen-Ra and ancient Egyptian manuscripts, lends it a special importance and immediately links it with history. Consequently, the story it unfolds,

which is Rihani's own (as his brother affirms), seems to come from a remote authority which could readily persuade the reader of its truth. Secondly, by pretending to be writing *The Book of Khalid* by drawing on both the K.L. Manuscript and the scribe's *Histoire Intime*, the writer can attain a flexibility of tone and point of view which allows him to take a number of stances from the material he postulates, pointing out its pros and cons and gulling the reader into acceptance.

That the editor takes a variety of roles is quite evident throughout the book. At the beginning, he seems to be seeking the confidence of his reader by pretending to be the fair judge of the material he is editing. By criticizing Khalid's manuscript, which he often does, he sets himself apart from the protagonist and allies with the reader instead. He merely arranges the material to what he thinks is the reader's best interest. When Shakib, for instance, is carried away in his descriptions, the editor stops him, thus exercising the privilege of his editorial office (*Khalid* 58). Also, he selects from Khalid's book what he thinks most revealing of his character. Not infrequently,

he gives 'the head and tail' of a story leaving the rest to the imagination of the reader. By so doing he prepares the reader for more involvement in the work and assigns to him the task of seeker.

By the same token, when the editor's comments turn from the linguistic and stylistic criticism of the K.L. manuscript, to the nature of the intellectual and spiritual experience of the protagonist, the reader is also invited to practice the same vein of criticism which in fact is no more than a sel-analysis process.

Other than being the mere reporter and commentator, the editor assumes the capacity of guide and interpreter. His involvement in the philosophy he is editing, gradually increases and he is tempted into judging and evaluating the concepts at hand. Occasionally, he gives a brief 'prologue' or 'epilogue' to an episode, explaining the symbolic meaning or stressing its importance in connection with what follows.

Although the editor is never allowed to develop as a character in the narrative, we gradually learn more about his beliefs and convictions through his approvals and disapprovals of what Khalid does or thinks. In fact, while playing the cicerone in Khalid's land, the editor acquires a more authoritative stance and displays better erudition and wisdom than Khalid. And although, early in the book, speculative thought comes only from Khalid the editor, towards the end, Rihani takes the liberty of introducing his own views on philosophical and moral concepts. No longer can he be seen only as a bridge through which the reader has access to Khalid and his thoughts; rather he is a guide, thoughtful and reflective. He galvanizes moral or metaphysical reflection, provokes the reader to different reactions and stimulates him both intellectually and spiritually.

The fact that *The Book of Khalid* is basically a didactic work lends emphasis to the function of the editor as a guide and decipherer. Khalid/Rihani have an insight into a number of things: Man at large, man and society in the Orient and Occident, and matters of spirit and mind. Rihani wished to introduce his reader to this spiritual and intellectual revelation. In the preface to his book, he purports the work to be not

"merely as a certificate of birth or death," to raise it up not "as an epitaph, a trade-sign, or any other emblem of vainglory or unworthy riches; but truly as an entrance through which a race and those above and those below that race are invited to pass to that higher temple of mind and spirit" (*Khalid* 18).

And, as the fictional editor in *Sartor Resartus* is considered by critics to be one of the strengths of this persuasive work (see Tennyson 48f.), and to reveal a deliberate and intelligent use of the potentials of the device in order to stimulate and persuade the reader, so Rihani, by the same token, seems to contrive to exploit the rhetorical advantages for the purpose of engaging his reader in constructive speculation. By creating an intrinsic dialogue between editor and protagonist, and wavering between belief in Khalid's righteousness and skepticism of his doings, Rihani, too, preserves his work from the 'dryness of philosophy and the tediousness of speculative advocacy.'

Still, our argument is that if the editor in *The Book of Khalid* succeeds in encouraging intellectual or spiritual striving in his reader, it is mainly the fruit of a Carlylean

lesson. In his "State of German Literature," when explaining how a writer with an "invisible and immaterial object" must win a reader, Carlyle said that "the reader must faithfully and toilsomely cooperate with him, if any fruit is to come out of their mutual endeavour "(Tennyson 48). Ameen Rihani was indeed a faithful disciple.

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Endnotes

1. Arab intellectuals and readers were then little aware of Rihani's writings in English. They knew him better for his Arabic works, e.g. *Faisal Al-Awal* (*King Faisal the First*), *Qalb al-Iraq* (*The Heart of Iraq*, 1935) *Qalb Lubnan* (*The Heart of Lebanon*, 1947), *Mulouk al-Arab* (*The Arabian Kings*, 1929), *Hutaf*

al-Awdiyah (*The Calling of the Valleys*, 1955), *Wujouh Sharqiyah wa Gharbiyah* (*Eastern and Western Faces*, 1957). Little attention if any was paid to his nearly twenty-five works in English, some of which still need to be published, others to be reprinted or at least translated into Arabic.

Among his published English works are the following:

- *The quatrains of Abul Ala'a al-Maarri* (New York: Doubleday Page and Co., 1903)
- *Myrtle and Myrrh* (Boston, the Gorham Press, 1905).
- *The Luzumiyat of Abul Ala'a* (New York, James T. White & Co., 1918)
- *The Descent of Bolshevism* (Boston, the Stratford Company, 1920)
- *The Path of Vision* (Boston, the Stratford Co., 1921)
- *A Chant of Mystics* (London, Constable & Co., 1928)
- *Ibn Sa'ud of Arabia* (Boston, Houghton Miffin & Co., 1928)
- *Around the Coasts of Arabia* (London, Constable & Co., 1930).
- *Arabian Peak and Desert* (London, Constable & Co., 1930)

His unpublished works in English include:

- *In the land of the Mayas.*
- *The Lore of the Arabian Nights*
- *Wajdah*, a play in four acts.
- *Letters to Uncle Sam.*
- *Jahan*, a short novel. (An Arabic translation under the title *Kharijal Hareem* [*Outside the Harem*] was rendered by Abdul Massieh Haddad and published in Beirut in 1917).
- *Turkey and Islam in the War.*
- *Doctor Della Valles or Dr. Beppino*, a novel. A copy of the manuscript is deposited at the library of the American University of Beirut. (312 pages, n.d.) The manuscript of a collection of short stories *The Green Flag* (58 pages, typescript, n.d.) has also been deposited at the same library.
- *Arabia's Contribution to Civilization.*
- *The Poetry of Arabia*
- *Iraq During the Days of King Faisal the First.*
- *A Book of Poetry.*
- *Critics in Art*
- *Critics in Dancing*
- *Letters of Ameen Rihani.*

The above manuscripts are in the possession of the writer's brother, Albert Rihani, and his family, Beirut, Lebanon.

2. The 'novel' is a recent literary genre in the Arab world. It made its first appearance at the beginning of xxth century but had to wait for some five decades before it could reach maturity.

3. From *Beauchamp's Career*, "Works of George Meredith," XIII, 24-25, http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/4/4/6/4460/4460.txt.

4. See Rihani's letter to Mikhail Naimy, dated 1921, in *Rasai'l Ameen Rihani* 186. The translation is my own.

5. In my analysis of the style and technique of Carlyle I am wholly dependent on Tennyson's work. My study does not aim to make any contribution to existing Carlylean criticism, but to apply this very criticism to Ameen Rihani.

6. In my discussion of the role of the editor in Khalid I have followed the arguments presented by Tennyson and Brookes concerning Carlyle.