

The Self in Arabic and the Relativism-Universalism Controversy*

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Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to discuss the metaphor system for conceptualizing the Self in Arabic. A comparison of structural means for conceptualizing inner life in Arabic and English leads to the conclusion that although on the structural ('grammatical') level the differences between the two languages are indeed considerable, they become far less radical on the conceptual ('semantic') level. More specifically, it is argued here that in Arabic, as in English, inner experiences are for the most part conceptualized metaphorically and that Arabs seem to conceptualize their inner lives in a way similar, or at least comparable, to the speakers of English. While the article shows that on the conceptual level there are several important correspondences between Arabic and English, it hypothesizes that they reflect some fundamental and presumably universal human experiences and cognitive abilities. Finally, the linguistic material analyzed here provides a point of departure for touching upon the relativism-universalism debate. The paper argues that the controversy depends, at least to some extent, on whether one chooses to focus on potentially universal conceptualizations (and their underlying cognitive mechanisms) or more culture-specific structural relations (the contingent and historical conventions). Thus, while it seems to be a matter of one's personal decision whether to place the potentially universal in the foreground and the more idiosyncratic in the background, or the other way round, the article emphasizes the usefulness of explaining certain striking conceptual similarities in terms of their bodily basis.

Keywords: *Metaphors for the Self, conceptualizations of inner experiences, Arabic, cross-linguistic variation, relativism, universalism.*

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1. Introduction

There have been many justified complaints that the research on the potential universality of metaphorical conceptions of inner experiences is scarce (cf. Lakoff 1996: 118; Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 284). Accordingly, the present paper aims to make some contribution to the empirical study of the universality hypothesis. The following discussion on how Arabs conceptualize the structure of their 'inner lives', builds on the cognitive account of metaphor worked out by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and Lakoff (1987, 1996). As the present article presupposes familiarity with the framework, its exposition will be omitted. Also, with regard to the definition of metaphor, its functions, structure and origin, the reader is assumed to be *au fait* with the cognitive approach. Occasionally, references are made to Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999: Chapter 13), where a thorough presentation of the metaphor system for conceptualizing the self is to be found. Throughout the discussion I follow the nomenclature proposed by these scholars and refrain from referring to their works every time it is used.

At the beginning it also needs to be emphasized that although the article argues for cross-linguistic validity of the cognitive framework, it promotes no disregard for cultural diversity: Afro-Asiatic data are quoted as evidence for the potential universality of certain conceptualizations, but, at the same time, various structural idiosyncrasies are explicitly signaled and no claim for absolute linguistic universals is made. The paper is organized in the following way: section 2 offers a brief grammatical profile of Arabic morphology, section 3 discusses various metaphors for the Self in the language and section 4 takes a stance to the relativism-universalism controversy.

2. Grammatical profile of Arabic

Arabic belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family (sometimes also referred to as the Hamito-Semitic language family). There are many interesting differences between Arabic and Indo-European languages, but this brief grammatical profile of Arabic will focus only on three issues: the morphological strategy in general, the verb system in particular and the linguistic means for expressing reflexivity.

Arabic morphology employs a word-formation strategy that differs significantly from Indo-European languages. It is based on consonant roots which interact with patterns of vowels to form a word¹. Thus, on seeing the discon-

1. The paper deals with Modern Standard Arabic which derives from Classical Arabic. As this section provides only very basic information about the language, the reader interested in more exhaustive analyses is referred to Ryding (2005), whose work has been the primary point of

tinuous root morpheme *d-r-s*, we know it to signify the general concept of “studying/learning”. By interspersing the consonants with various vowels, specific meanings are created. For instance: *darasa*—‘he studied/learned’, *durisa*—‘it was studied’, *dars*—‘lesson/class’, *durūs*—‘lessons/classes’, *dirāsa*—‘studying’, *dāris*—‘student’, and so on. While the strategy of inserting vowel patterns into the consonantal root *d-r-s* makes it possible to derive from this root numerous words that have to do with “studying/learning”, it is noteworthy that neither a root nor a pattern has an autonomous meaning: they both need to combine to yield an actual word.

In all probability, the richness of Arabic morphology is nowhere clearer than in the very complex verb system that is characteristic of the language. In general, every verb has a lexical root whose basic form can be modified so as to vary its meaning. These various internal and external modifications of the basic root result in the so called ‘derived forms’. Let us illustrate this with the aforementioned lexical root *d-r-s*. The basic (i.e., simplest morphologically) form is *darasa*, which means ‘to study/learn’². From this base form several augmented stems or verb forms can be derived. Thus, by doubling the medial consonant, Form II is created: *darrasa*, which means ‘to teach/instruct’. By inserting the long vowel *ā* after the first radical of the root, Form III is created: *dārasa*, which means ‘to study together with (s.o.)’, and so on³. Theoretically, every Arabic verb has a template of ten derived forms, but—practically—only several stems occur⁴.

reference for this brief profile. In writing this section I have also availed myself of the work of Brockelmann (1985), Krahl and Reuschel (1987), and Smart (1993). Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that the spoken Arabic used in most Arab countries is far from homogenous. I make occasional references to Caubet (1993) and McCarthy and Raffouli (1965) so as to signal the dialectal diversity of Modern Arabic that is especially conspicuous in the Internet based data. For a comparison of English and Arabic morphological differences that are relevant for the present discussion see especially Ryding (2005: 44–56 and 433–434). While Ryding (2005) is here the major grammatical point of reference, the lexical point of reference is Wehr (1979).

2. Actually *darasa* means ‘he studied/learned’, but there is no infinitive in Arabic and, therefore, the conventional citation form for verbs is the third person masculine, singular, active and past (the so called ‘he-form of the past tense’). This form appears in the dictionary and is customarily translated as an infinitive, although it never is one. (cf. e.g., Brockelmann 1985: 33; Caubet 1993: 31; McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 40; Ryding 2005: 435; Smart 1993: 77).
3. It has to be stressed that the present article deals only with three-consonant (triliteral) roots. For a discussion of all ten forms of trilateral verbs see Brockelmann (1985: 33–40), Krahl and Reuschel (1987: 222–223, 275, 289), Ryding (2005: 455–598) and Smart (1993: 240–245). While my discussion draws on these accounts, it is noteworthy that not all derived forms exist in modern dialects (cf. e.g., Caubet 1993: 44, 47, 50; McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 40, 251).
4. While these modified stems are often arranged according to their meaning patterns, the issue remains very controversial. As Smart (1993: 242) observes: “The concept of ‘meaning

Having given this brief overview of Arabic morphology, we can move on to the matter of reflexivity, which is a very complicated phenomenon in the language. As Arabic has no reflexive pronouns, it makes use of alternative means for conveying reflexivity. Generally, the language has two major ways of expressing reflexivity. Firstly, in order to paraphrase the reflexive pronoun, the noun *nafs*, which means ‘soul’⁵, can be combined with a possessive pronoun suffix. Let us illustrate this with the verb *ramà*, which means ‘to throw’. To make the verb reflexive, one can say:

- (1) *ramà nafsahu*
 throw selfACC+his
 ‘to throw oneself’⁶

patterns’ for Forms II to X is a delicate subject. While it is impossible to assess how conscious an Arab is of the relationship between the derived forms and the basic root meanings, most European books tend to be overenthusiastic on the subject and make sweeping and inaccurate—generalisations.” Although I agree with Smart on the need to be cautious with generalizations, I find his skepticism often unwarranted. It seems that his defeatism stems from an expectation of an absolute predictability of *all* meanings. Obviously, a more cognitively oriented approach would make do with partial motivation of certain derivations. Thus, from a cognitive perspective, Smart would surrender all too eagerly. For instance, when the scholar asserts (1993: 244) that Form VIII “offers no helpful or easily traceable pattern of meaning”, it could be replied that it *tends* to convey reflexivity, much to the same extent that “IV is likely to be causative” (1993: 242). For such an account of Form VIII see Brockelmann 1985: 39, McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 255. For a very skeptical approach to the idea of meaning patterns in general see Krahl and Reuschel 1987: 222. Whichever option one chooses, the issue remains indeed delicate and deserves a paper of its own.

5. The word is highly polysemous and its senses are often interrelated. In general the English equivalents to the Arabic *nafs* include: ‘soul’, ‘psyche’, ‘spirit’, ‘mind’, ‘human being’, ‘person’, ‘individual’, ‘personal identity’, ‘self’ etc. (cf. Wehr 1979: 1155). Let us provide some examples. In the Qur’an the word is most usually translated either as ‘soul’ or as ‘self’. Thus, the phrase *wa mina n-nāsi man yašri nafsahu* (II: 207) was rendered as “and some people sell themselves” by Fakhry (2002: 37) and as “and there is a man who is willing to sell even his soul” by Ali (2001: 36). Similarly, the phrase *lā yukallifu llāh^u nafs^{am} illā wus‘ahā* (II: 286) becomes “Allah does not charge any soul beyond its capacity” in Fakhry (2002: 53) and “God does not burden a soul beyond capacity” in Ali (2001: 49). Furthermore, the word *nafs* refers to all sorts of inner experiences and that is why the phrase *mā fī anfusikum* (II: 235) can be translated as “what you have in mind” (Fakhry 2002: 43) or as “what is in your hearts” (Ali 2001: 41). Finally, without dwelling too much upon the polysemy of *nafs*, it seems interesting to observe that the word may metonymically designate an individual. Accordingly, the phrase *tuwaffā kull^u nafsⁱⁿ* (II: 281) becomes “each soul will be rewarded fully” in Fakhry (2002: 51) and “each will be paid back in full” in Ali (2001: 48). Although the present article focuses on *nafs* as a tool for paraphrasing the reflexive pronoun, its other contexts should also be kept in mind when dealing with the metaphor system for conceptualizing the Self in Arabic.
6. In the present paper, examples are given in the following manner. The first sentence is a transliteration of an Arabic expression, the second is its word-by-word translation and the third a more ‘accurate’ English rendition. In the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, the following

When reflexivity is expressed by combining the noun *nafs* with a pronoun suffix, the pronoun refers back to the subject of the verb. Reflexive expressions with *nafs* and pronoun suffixes are very common and numerous metaphors for conceptualizing the Self employ them. We shall see some examples below.

Secondly, reflexivity can be conveyed by some of the derived forms. As the most important of them will be discussed below, suffice it now to say that in the case of the verb *ramà*, it is Form VIII that signals reflexivity. The form is created by an infix *t* which is added after the first radical:

- (2) *irtamà*
throw VIII
'to throw oneself'

While it is the infix *t* that is here the marker of reflexivity, the past tense stem is also prefixed by an elidable *-i*. It is noteworthy that in this particular case both ways of expressing reflexivity yield the same meaning: the basic form combined with the noun *nafs* has the same meaning as Form VIII, for both *ramà nafsahu* and *irtamà* can translate into English as 'to throw oneself'⁷. Although one could be tempted to say that reflexivity is expressed in Arabic either by the basic verb form combined with the noun *nafs* or by one of the derived forms, it would be drastically oversimplistic to pose it as a rule. Such a sweeping generalization would hardly do justice to the complexities of the phenomenon of reflexivity in Arabic, since both ways of expressing reflexivity very often combine. Consider the expression:

- (3) *iqtatata ma'a nafsih*
fight VIII with selfGEN+hisGEN
'to be fighting with oneself'.

This expression metaphorically describes the situation of having an inner conflict, but what is remarkable about it is that it combines both the strategies that Arabic can use to convey reflexivity: the verb is in Form VIII and it is

standard abbreviations are used: 1: first person; 2: second person; 3: third person; ACC: accusative; CONJ: conjunction; DEF: definite; DU: dual; F: feminine; FUT: future; GEN: genitive; IMP: imperative; M: masculine; NOM: nominative; PART: particle; PL: plural; PREP: preposition; PRS: present; PST: past; SG: singular; SBJV: subjunctive. As it has become customary, the class of every verb is marked by a Roman numeral. At this point it has to be stressed that for the sake of brevity only the most important grammatical categories have been indicated. For instance, the abbreviation 'PREP' has been marked only when there is no English equivalent in the construction. The choice is undoubtedly subjective, yet I felt that a full specification would rather cloud the picture than clear it. Finally, I would like to point out that the data cited from Wehr (1979) appear always in the conventional citation form (cf. *supra*, note 2).

7. Obviously, both expressions are also context-sensitive and, therefore, not always equivalent.

accompanied by the noun *nafs* together with the possessive pronoun suffix (which is the Arabic equivalent to the English ‘oneself’). Presumably, the best way out of this structural quagmire is to say that both strategies for expressing reflexivity form a continuum and that the structure of Arabic excludes the possibility of a one-to-one correspondence between this language and an Indo-European one. In what follows, I would like to argue that the Self metaphors identified by Lakoff and Johnson are present in Arabic on the conceptual level, even though on the structural level their presence is frequently less obvious. In this respect, it seems advisable to recall that ever since the classical work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the Cognitive Linguistic Account of metaphor has followed the assumption that metaphor should not be reduced to language only, as it occurs, first and foremost, in thought. In the present paper, I preserve the idea by distinguishing between the structural and the conceptual level of Arabic. While I use the latter term with reference to how the expression of ideas is structured through language, I take it that metaphors make us *understand* the world in a particular manner rather than merely speak about it. Consequently, I find it useful and interesting to enquire whether, and if so to what extent, people in various cultures can share their understandings of the world they inhabit.

3. Metaphors for the Self in Arabic

When conceptualizing such inner experiences as being in an internal conflict, losing control over one’s body or assuming an external perspective on one’s actions, we appear unconsciously to differentiate between the Subject on the one hand and the Self (or the Selves) on the other. The former is the locus of subjective experience, consciousness, perception, rationality, emotionality, judgment, empathy, will, and one’s ‘essence’, whereas the latter comprises one’s physical characteristics, body, social roles, name, history, real-world actions, religious affiliation etc. (cf. Lakoff 1996: 93, 96–99, 102; Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 268). While the bifurcation of person into the Subject and the Self underlies a whole system for conceptualizing many of our inner experiences, this Divided-Person metaphor is further elaborated by several more specific conceptualizations⁸.

If Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) have made a good case for the existence of an extensive system of conceptual metaphors that specifies

8. In what follows I discuss only some of the metaphors identified by Lakoff and Johnson, the choice being naturally determined by the data I have managed to gather. While I deviate from the order of presentation that is to be found in Lakoff and Johnson (1999), it is worth mentioning that a very inspiring exposition is also given by Żabicka (2002).

how users of Indo-European languages understand their inner experiences, then the evidence from Arabic investigated below confirms an important hypothesis advanced by the scholars: metaphors for conceptualizing the Self appear to be grounded in certain fundamental and, presumably, universal human experiences and cognitive abilities. The following analysis builds on the assumption that such conceptualizations of the Self as being in an internal conflict or assuming an external viewpoint seem fundamental enough to be taken as universal. If a non-Indo-European language⁹ exhibits a system of metaphors for the Self that accords so well with Indo-European languages, then one may hazard the conjecture that these conceptual systems are less arbitrary and contingent than the more radical social constructionists would have it. The natural hypothesis is that they are rather cognitively motivated. Let us look at some examples¹⁰.

3.1. *The Internal Causation Metaphor*

One of the most basic metaphorical conceptualizations of the Self identified by Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 270) is founded on our ability to manipulate things. Manipulating objects is one of the most fundamental human experiences: the capacity to control various objects, including our bodies, is acquired in early childhood and continues to be vital throughout all our lives. Small wonder then that this experience motivates a very important metaphor in which the Self is conceptualized as a physical object that can be manipulated. The metaphor Self Control Is Object Manipulation has several important elaborations.

Thus, the act of controlling one's Self can be conceptualized as forcing it to move. The metaphor Self Control Is the Forced Movement of the Self By The Subject can be illustrated by the following:

- (4) a. *aġbartu* *nafsī* 'alā *q-ḡahābⁱ* *ilā*
force-1-SG-PST IV self+my to DEFgoingGEN to
walīmatⁱ 'īdⁱ š-šukrⁱ fī
banquetGEN festivalGEN DEFthankfulnessGEN in

9. It is noteworthy that Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) show that a very similar system of metaphors is to be found in Japanese culture (cf. *infra*, note 23).

10. All data cited in this section are collected from actual discourse. Every utterance has been followed by an abbreviation which shows where the utterance is from. The following abbreviations have been used: AC = the online Arabic Corpus, D = dictionary, I = the Internet, LT = literary text, T = textbook. At the end of the present paper, there is an appendix which provides further bibliographical references (in the case of literary texts, dictionaries and textbooks), numeric references (in the case of the online Arabic Corpus) and links (in the case of the Internet).

maṭ'amī *l-qā'idatī*.
 dining roomGEN DEFbaseGEN
 'I forced myself to go to the thanksgiving banquet in the dining
 room of the base'.

- b. *arḡamtu* *nafsī* *'alā tanāwulī*
 force-1-SG-PST IV self+my to eatingGEN
l-baṭāṭā *l-maslūqat^a*
 DEFyams/sweet potatoesACC DEFboiledACC
l-mahrūsāt^a . . .
 DEFmashedACC
 'I forced myself to eat the mashed sweet potatoes . . .'. (LT)

- (5) . . . *lakinnahu aḡbara* *nafsahu* *'alā*
 . . . but+he force-3-M-SG-PST IV selfACC+his to
l-i'tirāfī *anna* . . .
 DEFadmittingGEN that . . .
 ' . . . but he forced himself to admit that . . .'. (AC)

The verbs *aḡbara* and *arḡama* appear in Form IV¹¹ and they both mean 'to force', or 'compel'. Form IV augments the base root by a prefixed *hamza* which is written over an *alif*. In these examples, reflexivity is signaled by the noun *nafs* ('soul') which is combined with a possessive pronoun suffix. Here the bifurcation of person into the Subject and the Self is relatively clear: the Subject¹² exerts physical force on the Self and causes it to take some action: 'to go to the banquet' (4a), 'to eat the potatoes' (4b), 'to admit something' (5) etc. In this version of the Internal Causation metaphor we can rather easily identify the Divided-Person conceptualization, in which the Subject is the cause and the Self is the affected party. Nevertheless, Arabic seems also to make use of this metaphor in a less conspicuous manner:

- (6) *imtani'* *'anī* *n-naẓarī* *ilā*
 restrain o.s. 2-M-SG-IMP VIII from DEFlookingGEN at
l-umūrī *bi-ṭarīqatīⁿ* *ḡiddīyyatīⁿ* (*abyaḍ^u* *wa-aswad^u*)
 DEFthingsGEN in+wayGEN seriousGEN (white and+black)
 'Restrain yourself from looking at things in a serious manner (white and
 black)'. (LT)

11. While Form IV does not exist in Moroccan (Caubet 1993: 47), in spoken Iraqi it is treated as a first form (McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 253).

12. In Arabic, one does not have to use a personal pronoun to mark the subject of a verb phrase, since the Arabic verb incorporates the subject into its inflection.

našwatī *š-šīrī*
 intoxicationGEN DEFpoetryGEN
 ‘... without losing (*lit.* forgetting) himself in poetic intoxication
 ...’. (AC)

Here reflexivity is expressed by the base form of the verb *nasiya*, which means ‘to forget’, combined with the noun *nafs* (‘soul’) and a pronoun suffix. There is a close parallelism between English and Arabic, since both verbs (‘to lose’ and ‘to forget’) presuppose a relation between two different entities and, thus, the parallelism is clear not only on the conceptual level but on the structural one as well. Yet, in the following expressions there seems again to be only a conceptual parallelism:

- (10) *istarsala* *fī l-kalāmī*.
 abandon o.s. X in DEFspeakingGEN
 ‘He lost himself in his speech’ / ‘He talked at great length’ / ‘He spoke
 extensively’. (D)
- (11) ... *wa-qabla an astarsila* *fī*
 and+before CONJ abandon o.s. 1-SG-SBJV X in
l-ḥadīthī *aqūlu* ...
 DEFnarrativeGEN say-1-SG-PRS
 ‘... and before I lose myself entirely in the narrative, I will say
 ...’. (LT)
- (12) *wa-lan astarsila* *fī l-kitābatī*
 and+not abandon o.s. 1-SG-SBJV X in DEFwritingGEN
‘an kullī mā ḡā’a ...
 about everythingGEN that happened-3-M-SG-PST
 ‘... and I will not lose myself entirely in writing about everything that
 happened ...’. (AC)

While in English you abandon yourself to a feeling, in Arabic you can abandon yourself to an activity. In both cases the idea is that the thing you give yourself to controls you completely. Contrary to English, however, in Arabic reflexivity is encapsulated in one word. The verb *istarsala* is in Form X, which is created by adding the prefix *ista-* to the base form and dropping the vowel between the first and the second root consonant¹⁴. Despite the structural differences, in the Arabic and English versions of the Loss Of The Self metaphor, the

14. While Form X is often the reflexive of Form IV (cf. Brockelmann 1985: 40; Ryding 2005: 584 and the references therein), in Moroccan it is “ressentie comme très classique” (Caubet 1993: 50).

Subject is in conscious control of the Self, when the latter is in its possession. Hence, a loss of control is a loss of possession. In both languages losing oneself in an activity implies a certain lack of awareness or conscious control over one's actions so that the person does not fully control their speaking (10), narrating (11) or writing (12).

3.2. The Locational Self

Another important metaphor for our inner lives conceptualizes being in control of one's Self as being in a normal location. Lakoff and Johnson explain (1999: 274) that the experiential basis for the Locational Self metaphor is the general tendency for us to feel more in control in those surroundings that we are familiar with. Example:

- (13) *ħaraġtu* 'an *ħu'ūrī*.
 go out-1-SG-PST from/out of consciousness+my
 'I was beside myself' (*lit.* 'I went out of my consciousness'). (AC)
- (14) ... *ħaraġa* 'an *ħu'ūrīhi*
 go out-3-M-SG-PST from/out of consciousnessGEN+hisGEN
wa-aflatat *a'šābuhu* ...
 and+slip away/escape-3-F-SG-PST IV nervesNOM+his
 '... he was beside himself and enraged ...'. (*lit.* 'he went out of his
 consciousness and his nerves slipped away'). (AC)

The verb *ħaraġa* means 'to go out'. In this idiomatic expression, the verb combines with the preposition 'an ('from/out of'), the noun *ħu'ūr* ('consciousness/awareness') and the possessive pronoun *ī* ('my/mine'), so as to convey the meaning of being unable to control one's feelings. While English employs a reflexive pronoun in this expression, the Arabic language does not resort even to its equivalent to the English 'oneself'. In spite of this structural difference, there is a relatively clear conceptual correspondence between the two languages: this metaphor conceptualizes the Self as a container and, consequently, the controlling of the Subject by the Self is conceptualized in terms of being located in a container. In the Arabic phrase: 'I went out of my consciousness', the understood subject 'I' refers to the Subject, i.e., the experiencing consciousness, which has forsaken the consciousness, i.e., the Self which is in this case the body conceptualized as a container. In this spatial metaphor, the Subject's ability to exercise self-control is conceptualized as the Subject's being in a normal location. In our example, the normal location is a bounded region: one's body. Thus, being outside one's body implies lack of conscious self-control. In English and in Arabic the Subject's ability to exercise self-control is metaphorically conceptualized as the Subject's being in a normal location and the Subject's inability to exercise self-control is metaphorically

conceptualized as leaving the Subject's normal location. To some extent, this can be also illustrated by the following:

- (15) *ṭāra* *farāḥan*
 fly away joyACC
 'He was beside himself with joy' / 'He was overjoyed' (*lit.* 'He flew away with joy'). (D)
- (16) *šarada* *dihnuhu*
 roam/wander/stray mind/intellectNOM+his
 'He was absent-minded' (*lit.* 'His mind wandered'). (D)

Neither of these sentences contains the Arabic equivalent to the English 'self'. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out here that some of Lakoff's examples do not make any explicit reference to the self, either (e.g., '*He's spaced out*' or '*Dude, you're tripping*', cf. Lakoff 1996: 111; Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 275). I take it that the idea of 'flying away with joy' and the idea of 'one's mind roaming away' seem to presuppose some sort of 'division' of personality into a conscious and unconscious part. This appears to be corroborated by the fact that while the Self Control Is Being In A Normal Location metaphor describes the situation when somebody fails to consciously control their actions, it is also possible to regain the control of one's Self:

- (17) *āda* (*tāba* / *raġa'a*) *ilā nafsihī*.
 return to selfGEN+hisGEN
 'He regained consciousness' / 'He came to his senses'. (D)
- (18) *raġa'a* (*tāba*) *ilā šawābihī*.
 return to reason/intellect/mind/consciousnessGEN+hisGEN
 'He came to his senses' / 'He regained consciousness'. (D)
- (19) *āda* *ilā wa'yihī*
 return to consciousness/awareness/attentionGEN+hisGEN
 'He regained consciousness'. (D)

This version of the Self Control Is Being In One's Normal Location metaphor conveys the idea of returning to the Self that has been abandoned in one way or another. Lakoff classifies (1996: 120) this conceptualization also as the Absent Subject Metaphor. With regard to the Arabic examples it needs to be pointed out that there are obviously different shades of meaning here, but generally the concept of 'returning to one's Self' connotes 'coming to one's senses' and/or 'regaining consciousness'. While all the verbs are here in the base form and roughly translate into English as 'return', or 'come back', sentences 17 on the one hand and 18 and 19 on the other differ in one important respect. In sentence 17 the verbs are accompanied by the noun *nafs* combined with the

possessive pronoun suffix, the construction being the standard Arabic equivalent to the English ‘oneself’. In sentences 18 and 19, on the other hand, the nouns *ṣawāb^{un}* and *wa’y^{un}* appear together with the possessive pronoun suffix. Despite this structural difference all three sentences have roughly the same metaphorical meaning.

3.3. *Getting Outside Yourself*

Being located inside the Self implies not only self-control, but also subjective knowledge. Consequently, one may go outside and by looking from this exterior perspective obtain objective knowledge (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 277). The Objective Point Of View metaphor clearly presupposes the division of a person into a Subject and a Self:

- (20) *unzur* *ilā nafsika* *al-yauma*
 look-2-M-SG-IMP at selfGEN+yourM DEFdayACC
kamā turīdu *an* *tuṣbiḥa*
 as want-2-M-SG-PRS IV CONJ become-2-M-SG-SBJV IV
ḡad^{an}.
 tomorrowACC
 ‘Look at yourself today as you want [yourself] to be(come)
 tomorrow’. (LT)

This metaphor conceptualizes an objective evaluation as going outside of oneself. Thus, the Self is metaphorically conceptualized as some sort of a container for the Subject and the conceptualization makes it possible to construe being subjective as staying inside the Self, whereas being objective as going outside it. In our example, the interlocutor is somehow expected to step outside themselves, for when someone asks a person to take a look at themselves, they suggest that the person should assume some sort of external perspective that will enable them to objectively evaluate their actions. Having assumed such an external viewpoint, the person will see themselves as others see them. It is clear that here it is the distinction between the Subject and the Self that makes it possible to differentiate between objective and subjective evaluations, i.e., knowing the Self as others or not knowing the Self as others do. Arabic and English are here very much alike: the Subject must look at the Self from the outside in order to evaluate its actions. While both languages make use of the Subject/Self split identified by Lakoff, the conceptualization of stepping outside of oneself metaphorically refers to self-reflection.

3.4. *The Social Self*

Our culture and social environment provide the experiential basis for another conceptualization of the Self. When socialized, we are trained to conduct

ourselves in a way that is acceptable in the society we live in. The process of socialization necessarily consists in instilling values and principles into us without which we could not function in our community. Social relationships and various interactions generate numerous evaluative relationships between the Subject and Self, which Lakoff and Johnson subsume under the Social Self metaphor (1999: 278). In the Social Self metaphor the Subject and the Self are conceptualized as two distinct individuals that interact with each other. The participants of the interaction can be conceptualized as adversaries, friends or interlocutors. Additionally, the relation can also be that of a parent and a child or that of a master and a servant. While in the Social Self metaphor, numerous evaluative judgments about particular social relationships are mapped onto particular aspects of our inner lives, it seems reasonable to assume that the social roles form a cline, for evidently the difference between friends, interlocutors and adversaries is not always clear-cut. In what follows I provide examples of various conceptualizations of the Subject-Self relationship on the assumption that they form a continuum and that, therefore, their classification can be only tentative¹⁵.

3.4.1. *Subject and Self as Adversaries*

- (21) *iqṭatala ma'a n-nafsī*
 fight VIII with DEFselfGEN
 'He was fighting with himself' / 'He had an inner conflict'. (D)
- (22) *anā fī ḥarbīn ma'a nafsī*
 I in warGEN with self+my
 'I am at war with myself'. (I)
- (23) a. *aš'uru bi-ṣirāⁱⁿ fī dāḥilī*
 feel-1-SG-PRS PREP+fightGEN in inside+my
yumazziqu aḥṣā'ī ...
 rip-3-M-SG-PRS II intestines+my
 'I feel an inner conflict ripping apart my bowels'.
- b. *arānī tā'ihat^{an} bayna*
 see-1-SG-PRS+me lost/wanderingF-ACC between
kiltāhumā
 bothF+themDU
 'I see myself lost between both of them'.
- ...

15. For further classification problems see Section 4.

- c. *inna nafsī iqtatalat ma'a nafsī.*
 PART self+my fight-3-F-SG-PST VIII with self+my
 'Indeed my [one] self fights with my [other] self'.
- d. *iḥdāhumā tuḥāwilu ḡalba*
 oneF+themDU try-3-F-SG-PRS III conqueringACC
l-uḥrā
 DEFotherF
 'One of them tries to defeat the other'.
- e. *iḥdāhumā ammārat^{un} wa-l-uḥrā mu'minat^{un}*
 oneF+themDU instigatingF and+DEFotherF believingF
muḥtārat^{un}
 free to chooseF
 'One of them incites [to evil] and the other believes in having a choice'. (I)

It is a very common experience to simultaneously have two conflicting feelings toward something. Here, all expressions metaphorically describe the situation of having such an inner conflict. However, there are some important structural differences between them. Sentence 21 combines both strategies that Arabic can use to convey reflexivity: the verb is in Form VIII and it is accompanied by the noun *nafs* (i.e., the Arabic equivalent to the English 'oneself')¹⁶. Sentence 22 has no finite verb at all, but it does have the noun *nafs* with a pronoun suffix, which expresses reflexivity: the pronoun suffix refers back to the personal pronoun, which is the subject of the sentence. Thus, having an inner conflict is metaphorically conceptualized as being at war with oneself. Example 23 is an excerpt from a text in which the person very suggestively and somewhat poetically describes her inner conflict. Without denying all the structural differences between the Arabic examples and their English equivalents, it is worth observing that there is a strong conceptual parallelism between the two languages. Apart from the common experience of having two mutually exclusive needs or desires, the Split Self metaphor in Arabic and English makes use also of other conceptualizations.

3.4.2. Subject and Self as interlocutors:

- (24) ... *al-muhimm^u anna l-wilāyāt^a l-muttaḥidat^a*
 DEFimportant that DEFstatesACC DEFunitedACC
tataḥaddatu ma'a nafsihā wa-'an nafsihā ...
 talk-3-F-SG-PRS V with selfGEN+her and-about selfGEN+her

16. Cf. sentence 3. The definite form (that appears in example 21) and the pronoun suffix (that appears in example 3) are equivalent. For a discussion of Form VIII see sentences 6–7.

‘... it is important that the United States talk with itself (herself) and about itself (herself) ...’. (AC)

- (25) *atakallamu baynī wa-bayna nafsī*
 talk-1-SG-PRS V between+me and+between self+my
bi-mā yuz’iğunī,
 about+what upset-3-M-SG-PRS IV+me
 ‘I talk in my heart/inwardly (*lit.* ‘I talk between me and myself’) about that which upsets me’. (I)
- (26) *yuqni’u nafsahu bi-annahu*
 convince-3-M-SG-PRS IV selfACC+his PREP+that+he
nāla muwāfaqat^a abīhi
 got-3-M-SG-PST approvalACC fatherGEN+hisGen
wa-riqāhu
 and+acceptanceACC+his
 ‘He convinces/has been convincing himself that he (has) got his father’s approval and acceptance’. (T)
- (27) ... *wa-anā uḥāwilu an uqni’a*
 and+I try-1-SG-PRS III CONJ convince-1-SG-SBJV IV
nafsī annahā furṣat^{un} lanā ġamī^{tan} ...
 self+my that+it chance/opportunity for+us allACC
 ‘... and I try/am trying/have been trying to convince myself that this is an opportunity for all of us ...’. (AC)
- (28) *awhama nafsahu an ...*
 make believe IV selfACC+his that
 ‘make oneself believe/persuade oneself/delude oneself that ...’. (D)
- (29) *tilka l-mar’at^u ... takdību ‘alā nafsihā ...*
 thatF DEFwoman ... lie-3-F-SG-PRS PREP selfGEN+her
 ‘This woman ... deceives herself ...’. (AC)

All these expressions refer to an inner conflict of values. In all six of them the Split Self metaphor enables us to conceptualize the common experience of having two inconsistent sets of values in such a way that an inner debate or dispute is held so that all the pros and cons of the given issue could be discussed. Sentences 24 and 25 are in Form V, which has not been discussed yet. The form is created by doubling the medial consonant and adding a prefix *ta-* to the stem. While the prefix *ta-* is usually taken as a marker of reflexivity¹⁷,

17. Cf. Brockelmann 1985: 38; McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 253–254; Ryding 2005: 530 and the references therein.

both sentences contain also the Arabic equivalent to the English ‘oneself’ (i.e., the noun *nafs* combined with the possessive pronoun suffix). Sentences 26–28 are structural analogues to sentences 4–5 (see *supra*). The construction in sentence 29 is fully equivalent to English both in terms of its structure and its metaphorical conceptualization. In all these sentences different courses of actions are metaphorically conceptualized as different interlocutors. The last examples show that these conceptualizations form a continuum with regard to the authority of the participants of the metaphorical interaction. With this in mind one may move on to the next example.

3.4.3. *Subject as Caretaker of Self*

(30) *tasāmaḥ* *ma’a nafsika*
 be indulgent-2-M-SG-IMP VI with selfGEN+yourM
li-tatasāmaḥa *ma’a l-ḡayrī*.
 CONJ+be indulgent-2-M-SG-SBJV VI with DEFothersGEN
 ‘Be forbearing to (or: indulgent/tolerant with) yourself so that you could be forbearing to (or: indulgent/tolerant with) the others’. (I)

(31) *iḡā* *kāna* *mina l-ṣa’bī* *an*
 When/If be-3-M-SG-PST PREP DEFdifficultGEN CONJ
tataṣālaḥa *ma’a*
 become reconciled/make peace-2-M-SG-SBJV VI with
nafsika *fa-mina l-mustaḥīlī* *an*
 selfGEN+yourM then+PREP DEFimpossibleGEN CONJ
tataṣālaḥa *ma’a*
 become reconciled/make peace-2-M-SG-SBJV VI with
ḡayrika.
 othersGEN+yourM
 ‘When it is difficult to become reconciled (or: make peace) with yourself, then it is impossible to become reconciled (or: make peace) with your fellow men’. (AC)

(32) a. *iḥtibār^{un}* *nafsiyy^{un}*: *hal anta sa’īd^{un}*
 test mental: PART youM happy
bi-nafsika?
 with+selfGEN+yourM
 ‘Psychological test: Are you happy with yourself?’.

...

b. *min-nā* *man huwa muḡram^{un}* *bi-nafsihi*
 of+us who he enamored with+selfGEN+hisGen
wa-ya’taqidu *annahu aḡsan^u*
 and+believe-3-M-SG-PRS VIII that+he best

*šahšiyat*ⁱⁿ 'arafahā!
 individualityGEN know-3-M-SG-PST+her
 'Many a man is enamored with himself and firmly believes that he
 is the best person he has ever known!'

- c. *wa-min-nā man lā yakuffu 'an*
 and+of+us who not cease-3-M-SG-PRS to
taubīhī dātihī¹⁸ wa-ka'annahu lā
 reproachingGEN selfGEN+hisGEN and+as if+he not
yaşluḥu li-šayⁱⁿ
 be good-3-M-SG-PRS at+somethingGEN
 'And many a man never ceases to reproach himself as if he were
 no good at anything'.

- d. *wa-min-nā man huwa mutaşālihī^{un} ma'a*
 and+of+us who he reconciled with
nafsihi bi-'uyūbihā
 selfGEN+hisGEN with+flawsGEN+her
wa-mumayyizātihā wa-rāḍī
 and+peculiaritiesGEN+her and+satisfied
bi-ḥālīhī
 with+situationGEN+hisGEN
 'And many a man accepts himself with all his flaws and
 peculiarities and is content with his condition' (*lit.* '... accepts his
 Self with all her flaws and peculiarities ...'). (I)

- (33) ... *wa-sa-yata'ālafu ma'a nafsihi ...*
 and+harmonize-3-M-SG-FUT VI with selfGEN+hisGEN
 '... and he will be in harmony with himself ...'. (AC)

In this example, the social relationship between the Subject and the Self is of a different kind. It is not a relationship of equality but rather authority. Just as the Subject can converse, debate, convince or even deceive the Self (cf. examples 24–29), so too it can establish certain standards that need to be met

18. The form *dāt* that appears here is, along with *nafs*, another tool for paraphrasing reflexive pronouns in Arabic. While generally in such contexts the form appears to be less frequent than *nafs*, sometimes both forms can be used interchangeably. For example, the Arabic equivalent to the English 'suicide' is either *qatlū d-dātī* or *qatlū nafsihi* (*lit.* 'self-murder'). In some cases, the two forms can combine to form one expression. For instance, the expression *dātū nafsihi* means 'his self/his very nature'. Although in general the form *dāt* appears to be more common in such types of compounds as 'self-denial' (*inkārū d-dātī*), 'self-love' (*ḥubbū d-dātī*), 'self-respect' (*iḥtirāmū d-dātī*), etc., the issue clearly deserves a separate paper.

by the Self. Thus, the Subject can be indulgent (30) or reconciled (31, 32d) with the Self, the Subject can be happy (32a), enamored (32b) or in harmony (33) with the Self, the Subject can reproach the Self (32c), etc. While sentences 32a, 32b and 32c translate rather naturally and directly into English, sentences 30, 31, 32d and 33 are very interesting in terms of their structure, since their verbs appear in Form VI¹⁹. Ryding characterizes the form in the following manner: “Form VI verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that there is a prefixed /*ta-*/ and a long vowel /*-aa*/ inserted after the first consonant of the triliteral root.” (Ryding 2005: 543)²⁰. The prefix *-ta* is often taken as a marker of reciprocity. Let us briefly analyze the verbs that appear in examples 30, 31 (32d) and 33, respectively. The verb *samaḥa* means ‘to allow’, or ‘permit’. In Form III (which is created by inserting the long vowel *ā* after the first radical of the root), the verb means ‘to treat with indulgence’, or ‘forgive’ (*sāmaḥa*). In Form VI the verb (*tasāmaḥa*) means ‘to be indulgent/forbearing/tolerant’. The verb *ṣalaḥa*, on the other hand, means ‘to be good/right/proper/righteous’. While in Form III the verb means ‘to make peace’, or ‘become reconciled’ (*ṣālaḥa*), in Form VI the verb (*taṣālaḥa*) means ‘to become reconciled with one another’. Lastly, the verb *alifa* which means ‘to be acquainted/familiar’, or ‘be on intimate terms’ does not have form III, but in form VI (*ta’ālaḥa*) means ‘to be in harmony/harmonize’. Again all constructions are complemented by the Arabic equivalent to the English ‘oneself’ (i.e., the noun *nafs* combined with the possessive pronoun suffix).

Since in the Social Self metaphor Subject and Self are metaphorically conceptualized as two different individuals that dwell in one body and often enter into various interactions, the conceptualizations that employ the metaphor could be subsumed under the Self As Companion category. The metaphor that underlies the above sentences, where the Subject can be (un)reconciled with the Self, seems to overlap with the next metaphor.

3.5. *The Essential Self*

Lakoff and Johnson argue that The Essential Self metaphor presupposes a Folk Theory of Essences (1999: 282). Our Essence is part of our Subject and it makes us what we normally are. While our Essence guarantees the predictability of our actions, our conduct can sometimes be strange and unnatural. Thus, the Essential Self metaphor seems to be founded on the existence of two Selves: one of them is compatible with one’s Essence, and the other one is not. I shall confine myself to two cases of the Essential Self metaphor.

19. In sentence 32d it is the *active participle* of Form VI.

20. Cf. also Brockelmann 1985: 38; McCarthy and Raffouli 1965: 254.

3.5.1. *The True Self*. In this metaphor, the Subject has inhabited a Self that is incompatible with their Essence and in order to fit their true nature, the Subject must find another (i.e., “true”) Self.

- (34) a. ... *wa-a'ūdu* *li-abḥata* 'an
and+return-1-SG-PRS CONJ+look/search-1-SG-SBJV for
nafsī fī l-kitābatī.
self+my in DEFwritingGEN
'... and I return to look (or: search) for myself (or: my Self) in
writing'.
- b. *kuntu wa-mā ziltu*
be-1-SG-PST and+not cease-1-SG-PST
ukāfiḥu kay lā
struggle/fight-1-SG-PRS III so as to not
atanāzala 'an *nafsī allatī*
renounce/abandon-1-SG-SBJV VI PREP self+my whichF
aḡiduhā fī l-kitābatī ...
find-1-SG-PRS+her in DEFwritingGEN
'I have always been struggling (or: I still struggle) so as not to
renounce (or: abandon) the Self (*lit.* my Self) which I find (or:
have found) in writing'. (AC)
- (35) *anā aqtani'u* *bi-anna ayya*
I be convinced-1-SG-PRS VIII PREP+that whoever ACC
insānⁱⁿ ... lau baḥata 'an *nafsihi*
manGEN if look/search-3-M-SG-PST for selfGEN+hisGEN
l-ḥaḡīḡiyyatī dūna musā'adatⁱⁿ min aḥadⁱⁿ
DEFtrue/realGEN without helpGEN from somebodyGEN
la-waḡḡadahā ...
PART+find-3-M-SG-PST+her
'I am convinced that if every man ... looked (or: searched) for his true
self without anybody's help, he would find it ...'. (I)
- (36) a. ... *wa-qad naḡī'u qad*
and+perhaps get lost-1-PL-PRS perhaps
nabḥatu 'an *anfusinā* ...
look/search-1-PL-PRS for selvesGEN+our
'... and we may be getting lost or looking (or: searching) for
ourselves ...'.
...
- b. ... *al-baḥṭu* 'an *nafsⁱⁿ uḥrā* 'an *ṣayⁱⁿ* ...
DEFsearch for selfGEN otherF for somethingGEN

naftaqiduhu *fī nufūsinā!*
 miss-1-PL-PRS VIII+it in selvesGEN+our
 ‘... the search for the other Self, for something ... we miss in ourselves!’. (AC)

In terms of structure, the constructions are similar to the other sentences discussed so far (cf. e.g., sentences 1 or 8–9). In Arabic, as in English, this metaphorical expression describes the activity of trying to fulfill an aspect of one’s personality that is yet unfulfilled and, at the same time, incompatible with what has been fulfilled so far. As the unfulfilled aspect of the whole person is not ‘in the same place’ as the Subject, the aspect is conceptualized as a Self that only needs to be found. Thus, the person is conceptualized as split into two incompatible Selves: the Self already fulfilled is in the same place as the Subject, while the Self which is yet unfulfilled and striven for is ‘the True Self’ that precisely needs to be found. Consequently, the Subject may find the Self (34b, 35), look for it (34a, 35, 36a, 36b), renounce or abandon it (34b), miss it (36b), etc. What all these cases show is that the True Self metaphor presupposes a split into a ‘desirable’ part of our personality and an ‘undesirable’ one. The next metaphor, on the other hand, builds on the opposition between an ‘acceptable’ part of our personality and an ‘unacceptable’ one.

3.5.2. *The External Real Self (the “Real Me”)*. This expression is often used when the speaker wishes to signal that their behavior deviates from the standard:

- (37) *anā lastu ṭabī‘iyān al-yauma.*
 I not be-1-SG-PST natural/normalACC DEFdayACC
 ‘I’m not myself (*lit.* normal) today’. (I)
- (38) a. ... *qālat:* «*yabdū annaka*
 say-3-F-SG-PST appear-3-M-SG-PRS that+youM
lasta ṭabī‘iyān al-yauma!?»
 not be-2-M-SG-PST natural/normalACC DEFdayACC
 ‘... she said: «It appears that you are not yourself (*lit.* normal) today?»’.
- b. *fa-ağāba:* «*bal anā al-yauma aktar^u*
 and+answer-3-M-SG-PST IV no I DEFdayACC more
min ṭabī‘iyān!
 than natural/normalGEN
 ‘And he answered: «On the contrary, today I am more than myself (*lit.* normal)!’.
- c. *anā al-yauma fī l-qimmatī mina l-ḥālī*
 I DEFdayACC at DEFtopGEN of DEFstateGEN

l-qalbī *wa-n-nafsī!*»
 DEFcardiac and+DEFmental
 ‘Today, I am at the top of my spiritual and mental abilities!»’. (I)

As this conceptualization is used when there is an incompatibility between the public and the private Self, the expression again presupposes two different entities: when a person says that they are not themselves, the person indicates that one aspect of their Self is compatible with the Subject’s values and, therefore, ‘real’, whereas the other one is not. In terms of structure, sentences 37 and 38 deserve attention, since they contain nothing even remotely close to the English reflexive pronoun. The verb *laysa* (‘not to be’) combines with the adjective *ṭabī‘īyy^{un}* in the accusative. The adjective translates into English as ‘natural’, ‘normal’, ‘ordinary’, ‘usual’, ‘regular’ etc. Although in terms of structure the sentence is very different from its English equivalent, in terms of conceptualization the entailments seem to be the same, since The Real-Me metaphor in both languages builds on the dichotomy of an exterior and interior Self: the exterior Self represents the values accepted by the Subject and stands for what is generally considered to be normal.

In conclusion, we might observe that The Essential Self metaphor presupposes our personality to have an invariable core, which defines what and who we are. Hence, the person is conceptualized as comprising one Subject and two Selves: one compatible with our essence and the other not.

4. Relativism-Universalism Controversy

When a theoretical construct worked out for an analysis of one language is to be applied to an analysis of another language, there is always the danger that the target language will be crammed into the self-imposed confines of the source language. Thus, the analyst may inadvertently ‘trim’ the language under analysis so as to fit it to the analysis of the source language. In this context, it has to be emphasized that Lakoff’s metaphor system for conceptualizing the Self was not only designed for analyzing the English language, but in all probability it was also determined by the structure of the language. Consequently, its applicability to another language—especially a non-Indo-European one—can always be questioned, particularly in the light of the fact that certain metaphorical expressions are very hard to classify. Let us look at some recalcitrant cases:

- (39) *ṭawwa‘at* *lahu* *nafsuhu*
 permit-3-F-SG-PST II for+him selfNOM+his
 ‘He allowed himself to . . .’ (*lit.* ‘His soul permitted him/made it easy for him . . .’). (D)

- (40) *sawwalat* *lahu* *nafsuhi*
 seduce-3-F-SG-PST II for+him selfNOM+his
 ‘He let himself be seduced to . . .’ (*lit.* ‘His soul seduced/enticed him . . .’). (D)

The verbs appear here in Form II, which is created, as already noted, by doubling the medial consonant. What is interesting about the sentences is that they seem to reverse the standard conceptualization identified by Lakoff. As the phrases mean literally: ‘his soul permitted him’ and ‘his soul seduced him’ respectively, one could argue that here it is the Self that causes the Subject to act in a particular way. Thus, the Subject would be the patient and the Self would be the agent. As shown above, even greater classification problems have to be faced when dealing with constructions in which both concepts distinguished by Lakoff (the Subject and the Self) seem to be encapsulated in one word (cf. examples: 2, 6–7 and 10–12). Apart from all such structural difficulties in classifying various metaphors, there are also certain conceptual difficulties. Consider two more examples:

- (41) *ḥarramahu* *‘alà* *nafsihi*
 forbid II+it PREP selfGEN+hisGEN
 ‘He denied (*lit.* forbade) himself something’. (D)

- (42) *kam* *asā’tu* *ilà* *nafsi*
 how wrong/harm-1-SG-PST IV PREP self+my
 ‘How I wronged (or: harmed) myself’. (AC)

It is quite difficult to ascertain which metaphors are instantiated by these expressions. Sentence 41 could be classified as an instance of either The Internal Causation Metaphor (i.e., Self Control Is The Forced Movement Of An Object) or The Social Self (i.e., Subject as Master, Self As Servant). Sentence 42, on the other hand, does not fall easily into any of the categories suggested by Lakoff: it seems close to the category Subject and Self as Adversaries, but perhaps it could better be described as Subject and Self as Enemies. As many of these roles overlap, it is often difficult to distinguish between these types of metaphors²¹. Obviously, it would be hairsplitting to complain vociferously that there is no clear demarcation between such metaphors as ‘Subject and Self as Friends’ and ‘Subject and Self as Interlocutors’, for, frequently, it will suffice to assume that they form a continuum. However, the point here is not to make

21. Żabicka (2002) discusses analogical difficulties in her analyses of the Polish metaphorical system for the Self and draws conclusions that are generally consistent with my findings.

a mountain out of a molehill, but merely to emphasize that Lakoff's pioneering analyses will have to be verified by a body of research that is not yet even close to answering conclusively the many relevant questions posed by the scholar. With that we may move on to an even more perennial problem: the relativism-universalism debate.

Again, the research on metaphors for the conceptualization of the Self is by no means advanced enough to justify any strong claims about the universality of the system identified by Lakoff. Consequently, it yet remains to be seen whether, and if so to what extent, the system is actually cross-cultural. Without stampeding into the hasty conclusion that the aforementioned experiences of inner life and their corresponding metaphors are universal, we may, however, note that despite various radical structural differences, the Arabic conception of inner life appears to bear a striking resemblance to the English one. The personality of both language users' seems to be "split" in the sense that within one and the same person there is an interplay of one's Subject and one's Self. The general metaphor for conceptualizing the split is the Divided-Person metaphor. While the Divided-Person metaphor makes it possible to conceptualize each individual as consisting of a Subject and a Self, the metaphor builds on such spatial relationships between the two as possession or being inside, and so on.

Naturally, there can be no one-to-one correspondence between the Arabic system for conceptualization of the Self and the English one due to the numerous important structural differences between the languages. To enumerate some of the most important ones, we may first observe that Arabic has no reflexive pronouns and no exact equivalent to the English 'Self' (as a result of which examples 2, 6–7 and 10–12 exhibit no clear structural parallelism to English). Still, to take the matter further, we could observe that Arabic has no infinitives. Similarly, the inflection (both conjugation and declension) that is prevalent in Arabic is virtually absent from English. Consequently, Arabic, in opposition to English, not only allows but very often requires null pronouns. The word order in Arabic is generally VSO, whereas in English it is SVO. The tense and mood systems in the languages do not overlap at all. To add insult to injury, we might further note that according to the typology proposed by Talmy (1985, 2000)²², Arabic and English differ considerably with regard to their lexicalization patterns: Arabic is a verb-framed language, whereas English is a satellite-framed language. The difference in encoding the path of a motion event in either a verb or a satellite results in distinct conflation patterns, which may, in turn, affect the codability of such semantic components of a motion

22. Talmy's (1985, 2000) dichotomous typology has been modified, but this is irrelevant for the point I am making here.

event as manner of motion (cf. e.g., Chen and Guo 2009; Naigles et al. 1998; Özçalışkan 2004, 2005; Papafragou et al. 2002; Slobin 1996, 2000, 2003 and the numerous references in these works). The strong typological difference between satellite-framed and verb-framed languages may theoretically lead to a situation where speakers of English will develop a richer lexicon of manner verbs than Arabs. This empirical issue remains yet to be investigated. But it is evident that the same conceptual domain may be differently carved up by different languages, that particular words will display various degrees of polysemy and enter into specific arrays of syntactic constructions, that various idealized cognitive models will be employed by Arabic and English, and so on.

Nonetheless, the present article has focused on the conceptual overlaps between Arabic and English. The point was not to deny the diversity of inventories of conventional schemas or the richness of culturally specific metaphors in the two languages but rather to base our considerations on what seems to be the common ground. I believe that it is simply *useful* to assume that there is a fundamental level on which certain conceptual metaphors are understood naturally and automatically. It is this level that greatly facilitates the process of understanding and learning a radically different language. It is also on this level that the translation is fairly easy and smooth (whereas cultural interpretation of this fundamental level is obviously responsible for the lack of complete or full translational equivalence). Thus, the paper has demonstrated that on the conceptual level there seems to be an important similarity between Arabic and English. Suffice it to mention such metaphorical conceptualizations as The Divided-Person metaphor, Incompatible Aspects of One's Personality Are Distinct Selves, Self-Control Is Possession (of the Self by the Subject) or Location (of the Subject in the same place as the Self) etc. If both languages make use of our functioning in space when metaphorically conceptualizing our inner lives, then the natural conclusion would be that not all metaphors are purely arbitrary and contingent. The fact that similar, or at least highly comparable, conceptual systems for inner life appear in Arabic and English²³ can best be accounted for by an appeal to their common, and possibly universal, experiential basis. Hence, I am inclined to exclude the possibility that *all* the aforementioned similarities between Arabic and English should be regarded *solely* as a result of a culture contact, even though the similarity between the Arabic and English systems of metaphors for conceptualization of the Self could, at least to some extent, be due to—say—the commonality of certain fundamental religious assumptions of Islam and Christianity.

23. For Japanese see Lakoff 1996: 119–122 and Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 284–287. For Polish see Żabicka 2002: 57–76.

In the relativism-universalism controversy, scholars all too often subscribe to extreme and diametrically opposed views²⁴. Presumably, most metaphor systems are best seen as an interface between the biological and universal, on the one hand, and the social and culture-specific, on the other. While such embodied experiences as the correlation between manipulating physical objects and controlling one's own body are probably universal, the interrelation between our evaluation of our actions and that of other members of our community is subject to cultural variation (as is every set of values and norms particular to a given community). Thus, a "full-blooded" theory of language should take into account the biological properties of humans interacting with the physical world, on the one hand, and the importance of culture and social interaction for the cognitive development, on the other. In other words, a serious linguistic study must steer carefully between the Scylla of overemphasizing the cultural diversity of languages and the Charybdis of ascribing to them biologically grounded universality. Such a balanced approach to the perennial relativism-universalism debate emerges in one way or another from the works of Gibbs et al. (2004), Grady (1997), Kövecses (2000, 2005), Levinson (2003), Maalej (2004), Marmaridou (2006), Özçalışkan (2003), Palmer (1996), Shore (1996), Sinha and López (2000), Tendhal and Gibbs (2008), Yu (1998, 2003).

It does not seem particularly controversial to repeat after these researchers that our concepts are a consequence of not only our biological endowment but our social environment as well: metaphors are biologically motivated and culturally interpreted. Probably, it is more interesting to ponder whether, and if so to what extent, the relativism-universalism controversy is simply a matter of emphasis. Kövecses aptly, in my opinion, suggests that one can put the emphasis on "general image-schematic and potentially universal aspects of emotion concepts, on the one hand, and more specific cultural aspects, on the other" (Kövecses 2000: 185). In a similar vein, Langacker observes that concentrating "on the grammatical behavior of subjects has the effect of highlighting cross-linguistic variation and lessening one's assessment of their universality" (Langacker 1991: 318). The context of Langacker's statement is quite different, but he also seems to suggest that a semantic approach, which deals primarily with the conceptual level, tends to be more universalistic.

Every analysis serves (a) particular purpose(s). Consequently, every linguist who deals with comparative analyses must make up their mind whether they

24. To cite an example, in one and the same issue of *Journal of Pragmatics*, we encounter discord with regard to whether metaphors are characteristic of certain cultures only (Goddard 2004) or whether they (or at least some of them) reflect certain fundamental aspects of human experience (Gibbs et al. 2004). The point that I will be trying to make is that the old culture-nature controversy is, at least to some extent, a matter of emphasis.

wish to speculate on the potential universality of a language aspect or whether to stress some grammatical uniqueness. Thus, it is, at least to some extent, a matter of one's decision whether to emphasize potentially universal conceptualizations (and their underlying cognitive mechanisms) or more culture-specific grammatical patterns (the contingent and historical conventions). As a result, every cross-linguistic study may focus either on the preponderance of equivalent or non-equivalent expressions across given languages. In the present paper, I have tried to show that although on the structural ('grammatical') level the differences between Arabic and English are indeed considerable, they become far less radical on the conceptual ('semantic') level. Presumably, one could say that the more detailed the level on which given languages are contrasted, the more striking the differences will appear and, consequently, the more relativistic implications the analysis will have.

The proponents of biological universalism and social constructionism focus on various aspects of natural language communication. However, without subscribing to any rampant neural reductionism, I would like to observe that emphasizing the bodily basis of natural language communication is more useful in accounting for certain striking similarities in the conceptualizations that we encounter in radically different languages. Denying the potentially universal embodiment of certain metaphorical conceptualizations would be tantamount to discarding a very powerful heuristic tool. In this context, it is worth pointing out that constructions such as the ones discussed above point to the usefulness of incorporating human cognitive abilities into analyses of natural languages. As an illustration let us quote yet another metaphor.

- (43) *lau kuntu makānaka, la-ḥaqidtu*
if be-1-SG-PST placeACC+yourM PART+hate-1-SG-PST
'*alayya*.
PREP+me
'If I were you, I'd hate me'. (YOU's Subject hates I's Self)

- (44) *lau kuntu makānaka, la-ḥaqidtu*
if be-1-SG-PST placeACC+yourM PART+hate-1-SG-PST
'*alā nafsī*.
PREP self+my
'If I were you, I'd hate myself'. (YOU's Subject hates YOU's Self)

This metaphor is founded on our ability to project ourselves onto someone else's body. While the ability to imagine ourselves in the body of someone else is developed in the process of socialization, the ability is best regarded as universal, for without this assumption it is very difficult to account for the similarity between sentences 43 and 44 in the two radically different languages.

Constructions such as these present a formidable challenge to formal and non-cognitively oriented approaches to the semantics of natural languages. In the cognitive account, however, their interpretation becomes natural and straightforward. Firstly, we conceptualize the person as split into a Subject and a Self, then we metaphorically project the Subject onto another person's Self²⁵. Thus, constructions such as these result in blends, where the Speaker's Subject can be in control of the Addressee's Subject. If our ability to understand such sentences builds on the ability to mentally project our Subject onto someone else's, then it seems reasonable to assume the ability to be universal and, consequently, to be reflected in all languages.

Naturally, one should be extremely cautious with bold statements about the universality of any metaphor, as all such speculations need to be verified by a body of research that no individual can conduct on their own. Yet, even though the process of collecting such data is a collective enterprise and even though any conclusions about universality must always be seen as tentative and subject to revision, it seems useful to talk of the *potential* universality of certain metaphors²⁶. This potential universality can signify not so much that a given metaphor has actually been lexicalized in all languages of the world, but rather that it will be understood by users of all languages. When trying to learn a language whose structure is radically different from one's mother tongue, one may benefit from being shown these potentially universal metaphors, for any commonalities facilitate the learning process in accordance with the ancient *similis simili gaudet*. Fundamental bodily experiences are subject to cultural interpretation, but concern for universal aspects of natural language communication is *useful*: by providing a very good point of departure for acquiring the 'exotic' target language knowledge of certain embodied experiences makes it possible to automatically understand, learn and translate certain metaphorical conceptualizations.

5. Conclusions

Let us recapitulate. The purpose with this paper has been to confront the structural means for conceptualizing the Self in Arabic and English. The general findings could be summarized in the following way. Although on the structural ('grammatical') level the differences between the languages are indeed considerable, they become far less radical on the conceptual ('semantic') level. First of all, in Arabic, as in English, inner experiences are for the most part concep-

25. Lakoff (1996: 94) accounts for such counterfactual sentences in terms of Fauconnier's (1985) mental spaces.

26. Although in a different context, the notion of 'potential universality' was introduced by Kövecses (2000: 165).

tualized metaphorically. Secondly, Arabs seem to conceptualize their inner lives in a way similar to the speakers of English. In particular, The Divided-Person metaphor is very productive in both languages: whether or not it is a conceptual universal, the metaphor motivates a great deal of expressions in both languages. Relatedly, such experiences of the Self as being in an internal conflict or assuming an external viewpoint seem to be good candidates for experiential universals. If metaphors for conceptualizing our inner lives are grounded in many fundamental experiences and cognitive abilities, they should not be seen as arbitrary but rather as motivated.

At this point it has to be stressed that although the metaphor systems for conceptualizing the Self in English and Arabic seem motivated, they are not entirely self-consistent: when talking about our inner experiences, we employ conceptualizations that are often at odds with one another. If two mappings can have contradictory entailments, then it seems plausible to acknowledge the important tenet of Lakoff (1996: 117) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 267) that in lieu of a monolithic, unified and consistent conceptualization of the Self, we avail ourselves of a system of multifarious and often inconsistent metaphorical conceptions that are partially overlapping and partially contradictory. Still, if our general conclusion is sound and Arabic and English metaphor systems for conceptualizing the inner life are similar, or at least highly comparable on the conceptual level, then one can observe that structural incompatibilities do not prevent the users of both languages from expressing the same conceptualizations.

It appears that the old nature-culture debate, which is also disguised as the relativism-universalism debate is a matter of emphasis which option one chooses to concentrate on. Presumably, language production and comprehension is best seen as a result of an interaction between the biological and universal, on the one hand, and the social and culture-specific, on the other. As some human faculties are inborn and some are socially acquired, natural language communication comprises aspects that are biologically determined (e.g., articulation, audition, inference, learning abilities etc.) and some that are socially constructed (e.g., values, specific semantic, syntactic and phonological rules etc.). As the biological and the social clearly affect each other, it is obvious that a language theory should not favor one over the other. Once it is agreed that a language theory should take the cognitive agent as its proper point of departure, then it follows that the theory must pay heed to their biological endowment (cognitive processes) and their social environment (values). Clearly, only such a well-balanced approach can do justice to the intricacies of natural language communication.

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Appendix: The sources of the examples analyzed

The data analyzed in the present paper have been collected from literary texts (LT), dictionaries (D), textbooks (T), the Internet (I) and Online Arabic Corpus (AC). This appendix provides bibliographical references in the case of literary texts, dictionaries and textbooks, links in the case of the Internet and numeric references in the case of Online Arabic Corpus. The Online Arabic Corpus has the following URL: <http://arabiCorpus.byu.edu> [accessed 15 November 2010].

4. Spinner, Jackie and Jenny Spinner. 2007. *Qul lahum anā lam abki* [Tell Them I Didn't Cry], transl. Fāḍil Ġatkar, Riyadh: Obeikan Publishers, p. 252.
5. Reference: archive60139.
6. Gatto, Rex P. 2004. *Dalīl^u l-mudīrⁱ d-dakiyyⁱ li-akṭar t-tasā'ulātⁱ wurūd^{an}* [The Smart Manager's F.A.Q. Guide] transl. Hišām ad-Ḍaġānī, Riyadh: Obeikan Publishers, p. 43.
7. Reference: 011899AMOD02.
8. <http://forums.learn4arab.com/viewtopic.php?f=41&t=1116&start=0&st=0&sk=t&sd=a> [accessed 15 November 2010].
9. Reference: 103199WRIT03.
10. Wehr 1979: 391.
11. al-Musafar, Muḥammad Šāliḥ. 2005. *Ḥiwārāt^u fī qaḍāyā 'arabiyyatⁱⁿ mu'āširatⁱⁿ* [Discussions of Contemporary Arabic Issues], Beirut: al-Mu'assasat^u l-'arabiyyat^u li-d-dirāsātⁱ wa-n-našrⁱ, p. 169.
12. Reference: 010821t11683MQAL.
13. Reference: 071099SPOR06.
14. Reference: 051399AMOD08.
15. Wehr 1979: 677.
16. Wehr 1979: 541.
17. Wehr 1979: 765, 130 and 379.
18. Wehr 1979: 379 and 617.
19. Wehr 1979: 1268.
20. Cowper, David. 2002. *al-Mabī'āt^u l-'imlāqat^u. Asrār^u aḥadⁱⁿ akbar^a riġālⁱ l-mabī'ātⁱ* [Mega-Selling. Secrets of a Master Salesman], transl. Rafīf Maḥmūd as-Sayyid, Riyadh: Obeikan Publishers, p. 30.
21. Wehr 1979: 870.
22. <http://akhawat.islamway.com/forum/lofi/version/index.php?t252975.html> [accessed 15 November 2010].
23. <http://www.arabicdream.com/--t9955.html> [accessed 15 November 2010].
24. Reference: open10892.
25. <http://www.jeeran.com/blogs/blog/addcomment.aspx?b=602484&p=115155&lang=a> [accessed 15 November 2010].

26. Danecki, Janusz. 2001. *Gramatyka języka arabskiego. T. II* [Arabic Grammar. Vol. II]. Warszawa: Dialog, p. 101.
27. Reference: Remem4:399.
28. Wehr 1979: 1292.
29. Reference: archive60139.
30. <http://www.a00a.net/vb/showthread.php?t=19145> [accessed 15 November 2010].
31. Reference: 081899ARTS02.
32. <http://www.gustvoice.com/vb/showthread.php?t=3677> [accessed 15 November 2010].
33. Reference: GEN1996:14415.
34. Reference: GEN1996:14474.
35. <http://www.alaws2006.com/vb/showthread.php?p=121536> [accessed 15 November 2010].
36. Reference: GEN1996:5041.
37. <http://mziko.blogspot.com/2009/03/most-dangerous-game-1893-1949-1924.html> [accessed 15 November 2010].
38. <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=185912945858&topic=12228> [accessed 15 November 2010].
39. Wehr 1979: 670.
40. Wehr 1979: 518.
41. Wehr 1979: 201.
42. Reference: GEN1996:14474.

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