

Université de Montréal

**Arab Women in Translation:
The Dynamics of Representation and the Construction of Alterity**

By

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Résumé

Cette recherche examine la traduction et la réception en France, en Grande Bretagne et aux États-Unis de la littérature contemporaine d'expression arabe écrite par des femmes, afin de répondre à deux questions principales: comment les écrivaines provenant de pays arabes perdent-elles leur agentivité dans les processus de traduction et de réception? Et comment la traduction et la réception de leurs textes contribuent-elles à la construction d'une altérité arabe? Pour y répondre, l'auteure examine trois romans présentant des traits thématiques et formels très différents, à savoir *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* (1997) par Ahlem Mosteghanemi, *Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī* (2001) par Hanan al-Shaykh et *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (2005) par Rajaa Alsanea. L'analyse, basée sur le modèle à trois dimensions de Norman Fairclough, vise à découvrir comment les écrivaines expriment leur agentivité à travers l'écriture, et quelles images elles projettent d'elles-mêmes et plus généralement des femmes dans leurs sociétés respectives. L'auteure se penche ensuite sur les traductions anglaise et française de chaque roman. Elle examine les déplacements qui s'opèrent principalement sur le plan de la texture et le plan pragma-sémiotique, et interroge en quoi ces déplacements ébranlent l'autorité des écrivaines. Enfin, une étude de la réception de ces traductions en France, en Grande Bretagne et aux États-Unis vient enrichir l'analyse textuelle. À cette étape, les critiques éditoriales et universitaires ainsi que les choix éditoriaux relatifs au paratexte sont scrutés de façon à mettre en lumière les processus décisionnels, les discours et les tropes sous-tendant la mise en marché et la consommation de ces traductions.

L'analyse des originaux révèle tout d'abord qu'à travers leurs textes, les auteures sont des agentes actives de changement social. Elles s'insurgent, chacune à sa manière, contre les discours hégémoniques tant locaux qu'occidentaux, et (ré-)imaginent leurs sociétés et leurs nations. Ce faisant, elles se créent leur propre espace discursif dans la sphère publique. Toutefois, la thèse montre que dans la plupart des traductions, les discours dissidents sont neutralisés, l'agentivité et la subjectivité des écrivaines minées au profit d'un discours dominant orientaliste. Ce même discours semble sous-tendre la réception des romans en traduction. Dans ce discours réifiant, l'expression de la différence culturelle est inextricablement imbriquée dans l'expression de la différence sexuelle: la « femme arabe » est

la victime d'une religion islamique et d'une culture arabe essentiellement misogynes et arriérées.

L'étude suggère, cependant, que ce sont moins les interventions des traductrices que les décisions des éditeurs, le travail de médiation opéré par les critiques, et l'intérêt (ou le désintérêt) des universitaires qui influencent le plus la manière dont ces romans sont mis en marché et reçus dans les nouveaux contextes. L'auteure conclut par rappeler l'importance d'une éthique de la traduction qui transcende toute approche binaire et se fonde sur une lecture éthique des textes qui fait ressortir le lien entre la poétique et la politique. Enfin, elle propose une lecture basée sur la reconnaissance du caractère situé du texte traduit comme du sujet lisant/traduisant.

Mots clés : Traduction, littérature, discours orientaliste, analyse critique du discours, différence sexuelle, éthique.

Abstract

The present research explores the translation and reception in France, the UK and the US of contemporary Arabic literature by women authors, with a view to answering two main questions that have gone largely unexplored within translation studies: how do women authors from Arab countries lose their agency and subjectivity in the process of translation? And how do the translation of their dissident writings contribute to the construction of an Arab alterity? To answer these questions, the research analyzes three Arabic novels authored by women, and chosen for their very different thematic and formal characteristics, namely Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* (1997), Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī* (2001), and Rajaa Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (2005). Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analysis aims to explore the way these authors express their agency through their texts, as well as the images they depict of themselves and of women, in general, in their respective societies/communities. The English and French translations of each novel are then compared to the original with a view to identifying patterns of textural and pragma-semiotic shifts in the translations, and gaining insight into how these shifts undermine the author's voice and agency. Finally, the analysis moves to the various practices involved in the reception of these translations in the US, the UK and France. Publishers' decisions, editorial reviews and academic discourse are investigated with a view to identifying patterns in publishers' decision-making and shedding light on the discourses and tropes undergirding the reception and consumption of these translations in their target contexts.

Analysis of the originals reveals that the authors act as agents of change through their texts. They contest, each in her own way, both local and Western dominant discourses, and (re)imagine their societies and nations in the process. In so doing, they carve out their own discursive spaces in the public sphere and open breaches for social change. However, the research shows that in several of the translations, the authors' agency is undermined and their dissident discourses are backgrounded while an orientalist discourse is foregrounded. This same reifying discourse appears to underpin the reception of the novels in translation, as well. It is a reifying discourse wherein the representation of cultural difference seems to be inextricably imbricated in the representation of sexual difference: the "Arab woman" is

(re)written as voiceless and powerless because of an Islamic religion and an Arab culture that are essentially misogynistic and backward.

Nevertheless, analysis reveals that publishers' decisions, reviewers mediation and scholarly interest (or disinterest) impinge upon the way these novels are received and consumed more significantly than do translators through their interventions. Finally, the research underscores the importance of an ethical translation that transcends binary approaches and highlights the link between the aesthetic and the political. It also proposes an ethics of reading based on awareness of the situatedness of both the translated text and the reading/translating subject.

Keywords: Translation, literature, orientalist discourse, critical discourse analysis, sexual difference, ethics.

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Arabic Transcription

ط	ط	t
ظ	اَ	z
ث	ب	‘
ذ	ت	gh
ر	ث	f
ز	ج	q
س	ح	k
ش	خ	l
ص	د	m
ض	ذ	n
ع	ر	h
غ	ز	w
ف	س	y
ق	ش	ā
ك	ص	h
ل	ض	al-
م	ع	ī
ن	غ	
هـ	ف	
و	ق	
ي	ك	
آ	ل	
إ	م	
أ	ن	
أ	هـ	
أ	و	
أ	ي	
أ	آ	
أ	إ	
أ	أ	

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To my two rays of sunshine, Rayan and Reem

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To Mohamed, my soulmate

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INTRODUCTION

In his speech before the UN General Assembly in September 12, 2002, President Bush, clearly tapping into colonial feminism, proclaimed that “[l]iberty for the Iraqi is a great moral cause and a great strategic goal [...]. They can one day join a democratic Afghanistan and a democratic Palestine. [...] These nations can show by their example that respect for women [...] can triumph in the Middle East and beyond.” Upon hearing these words, I dismissed them as the manoeuvre of a politician desperately trying to drum up support for a new war. I believed that the Anglo-American public could not possibly put any stock in Bush’s claims about an oppressed Arab woman that he wanted to liberate with the most lethal weaponry on earth. It was not long after this speech, however, that I would slowly come to a bitter realization. Indeed, on a 2003 September afternoon, in the hall of my department at the University of Leeds where I was pursuing an MA, an engaging English classmate told me about her recent visit to several Moroccan cities, including the capital Rabat, Marrakech, Meknes and Fes, all of which, I should add, boast a centuries-long Arab-Muslim-Moorish-Amazigh history. She lamented, however, that she had not had the time to visit the “real Morocco.” She had not been to the Moroccan desert and had not seen its camels, she explained! A couple of months later, on a bus trip to a nearby castle with a group of classmates, a very nice French friend must have genuinely thought that she was complimenting me when she exclaimed: “Si seulement les Marocains étaient tous aussi sensibles que ton mari et toi !”

Just like some of the oldest cities in Morocco were not representative of the “real” Morocco, so, it seemed, was the “sensitivity” of two rather ordinary young Moroccan people unrepresentative of Moroccans. The “real” Morocco seemed to be a very simple and a very dead one—one that had apparently long been frozen on the pages of the *Arabian Nights*, with deserts and camels and insensible people. The living Morocco, the one where I was born, the one populated by sensitive and not so sensitive people, and which, like all living entities, has

been changing, absorbing multiple cultural influences, constantly transforming and producing ever new meanings and practices, was paradoxically perceived to be an unauthentic one.

Then, one cold winter morning that same academic year, I woke up to the assertion that all Arabs were but “suicide bombers, limb amputators, women repressors” (Kilroy-Silk, “We owe Arabs nothing,” *Sunday Express*, 4 January 2004). It was not so much the knowledge that the person who unabashedly and publicly declared and incited hatred for Arabs was actually a public figure, an ex-MP and a BBC presenter, nor the fact that this public figure was condemning, in a what can only be described as sheer dissonance, the “Arab” violence barely a few months after his very country and its ally, the US, had killed, maimed, and displaced thousands upon thousands of innocent people, that unsettled me the most. It was rather the public reaction elicited by these statements that disturbed me. While the BBC condemned his words and terminated his show, the debate that ensued revealed that a significant proportion of the public stood by Kilroy-Silk for being “honest” and saying what people thought but were too polite or too cowardly to say—a debate very similar to others that followed, whether in France or Canada, about the meaning of free speech when it comes to addressing Arab diaspora communities in these countries. This meant that many ordinary British people, who are neither fear-mongering politicians nor media pundits catering to specific political agendas, genuinely believed all Arabs to be a threat and believed that lumping them all together in one evil category to be publicly vilified was not a form of racism very reminiscent of the anti-Semitic discourse rampant in pre-WWII Germany. It was, rather, the legitimate and brave practice of freedom of expression.

While my own experience and my reflections on it are anecdotal, they still caused me to start questioning the technologies of representation and the construction of an “Arab” alterity, which would eventually culminate in a PhD project concerned with the specific place of women in this construction, as well as the role translation plays in it. In other words, the present research stems from a will to understand and to contribute, from my own location as a woman translator from an Arabic-speaking, Muslim-majority country, to change however minimal. As I am finishing the research against the backdrop of a substantial increase in Islamophobia—which, along with anti-Semitism, has already been on the rise since 2008

according to Pew Research Center 2008 survey—in European and North-American countries, understanding and changing, each from their own location, are still as vital as ever.

1. Problem Statement and Questions

Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Rana Kabbani, Malek Alloula, Jack Shaheen, Joseph Masad are but a few of the scholars that explored the mechanisms by which the Oriental, especially the Arab Other, including women, is represented and, indeed, constructed in a dialectic relationship that also construes the European Self. These scholars, however, were mostly focused on “original” texts, be they novels, photographs, paintings or movies, that are only bound by the limit of the European creator’s worldview and imagination. On their parts, such scholars and translators as Lawrence Venuti, Antoine Berman, Lori Chamberlain, Gayatri Spivak, Andre Lefevere, Tejaswini Niranjana, Vicente Rafael, Maria Tymoczko, Harish Trivedi and Sherry Simon and very many others have already shed valuable light on how both translation and translation theory can be and have been instrumental in constructing and (mis)representing the Other, be it the Oriental, the Native American or the sexually different.

An area of research that is, however, still largely unexplored is the way women from Arab countries, who are both sexually different and standing for the Arab Other, are perceived, (mis)appropriated and packaged through the translation of their very own writings. It is true that the imagining and production of an “Arab woman” through her own texts in the Anglo-American context has been the subject of an increasing, yet still limited, number of book-length studies, including Amireh and Majaj (2000), Golley (2003) and Moore (2008). None of these works, however, approaches the subject from a translation studies perspective. Similarly, most studies exploring sexual difference in translation focused on the translator’s sexual identity and how this identity shapes and undergirds the translator’s discursive strategies (Chamberlain 1988; Leonardi 2007; Simon 1996; von Flotow 1997 and 2011).

The present research seeks, therefore, to fill in this specific gap within translation studies by examining the different ways in which translation, in its larger sense that also includes reception, contributes to the representation of gendered identity and, therefore, to the construction of an “Arab” cultural alterity. This issue is all the more important since,

according to Amireh (1996), Booth (2010) and Clark (2000), there has been a notable and increasing demand in some Western countries for literature by women from Arab countries. Statistics gathered for the purposes of this research and provided in the next chapter give credence to this claim. As a consequence, the research is articulated around the following questions:

- 1- How do women writers from Arab countries express their subjectivity and write themselves and their societies/communities in their texts?
- 2- If increasing numbers of these writers are being translated and published in Western countries, why do their texts, which are the embodiment of their agency and the expression of their subjectivity, seem to have so far played no significant role in contesting the reified image of the passive, oppressed and voiceless “Arab” woman? Along what paradigms are their texts translated and consumed in the French and Anglo-American markets?
- 3- Since translation is a reciprocal interpretation of Self and Other, what are the implications of these translations for both the Arab cultures and the Western ones?

2. Research Hypothesis

In discussing their own situations as Arab intellectuals in the United States, Amireh and Majaj (2000) maintain that, thanks to the efforts of several American feminist scholars seeking to overcome the limitations of Eurocentric feminism, many women intellectuals from Arab countries, including the two of them, believed they had finally found the opportunity to challenge the stereotyped representation in the Western context of sexual difference in Arab countries (p. 1). Amireh and Majaj, however, soon realized the existence of specific ideological, institutional and discursive structures that hijacked their discourse so that, eventually, they ended up playing “a predefined role, positioned as what Mary E. John calls ‘native informants from elsewhere’” (p. 1-2).

Accordingly, the present research seeks to verify whether the translation of texts by women from Arab countries turns them into “native informants,” instead of establishing them

as agents in their own right, inscribing their subjectivity in their texts and actively writing their nations and resisting violence of all forms. The research, indeed, posits the hypothesis that, through the translation of their own texts, these women end up playing the same (patriarchal and colonial) role that British women travellers played in the 18th and 19th centuries: confirming that which the white man already “knows” about the “Arab woman” and, by extension, the “Arab culture.” In such a scenario, the translation of literature by women from Arab countries would not be a means of reducing the difference and gap between West and East, so much as a “supplement” that adds nothing new but confirms that which is already a given: the irremediable alterity of the “Arab” (Yeegenoglu, 1998).

3. The Research Scope

To answer the research questions and verify the hypothesis above, the research will examine the translation and reception, in both the Anglo-American and French contexts, of three Arabic novels by three contemporary women authors from Arab countries, namely Algerian Ahlem Mosteghanemi’s *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* (1997), Lebanese Hanan al-Shaykh’s *Innahā Lundun Yā ‘Azīzī* (2001) and Saudi Rajaa Alsanea’s *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (2005). Drawing on the theory of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and feminist postcolonial theory, and using Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional CDA model, along with interviews with translators, the research starts by analyzing the source texts (ST) to identify their textual and interdiscursive features, explore the worldviews brought to bear on their production, and situate them within their larger socio-political and cultural contexts. It then moves to analyzing the English and French translations of the STs and investigating their respective reception in the Anglo-American and French contexts, with a view to identifying specific patterns in the translation and the reception phases and the potential role these patterns may play in the (re)production or transformation of power relations and hegemonic discourses.

The choice of the three novels was based on three criteria: the period where the novels were written and published, the qualitative representativeness of the novels, and translation into both English and French. For the present research to be of topical relevance, the time period covered is limited to the last two or so decades, i.e. from the beginning of the 1990s to

the present time. This period is a critical moment in the relationship between the Arab-Muslim world and the West. In this period, the US led two wars against Iraq, one in 1991 and the other in 2003, with the UK as an ally in the latter. In between, a terrorist group of 19 members, 16 of whom were Saudis, attacked the US in what came to be known as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and, in retaliation, the US and several Western allies, including the UK and France, invaded Afghanistan. On July 7 2005, London was hit by a terrorist attack perpetrated by individuals of Jamaican and Pakistani origin in retaliation for the killing of innocent people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, as proclaimed by some of the suicide bombers in taped videos. Each of these military incursions and terrorist attacks has been framed and (re)presented within specific discourses about Self and Other, both in Arab countries and in the West. This can only impact, in one way or another, both the literature produced within this period, and its translation and reception by the Other. Within such wider geopolitical conjunctures, the study of contemporary Arabic literature produced by women authors, then translated and consumed in the transnational context in this specific time frame, becomes a very compelling endeavour.

On the other hand, the present research does not aim for quantitative representativeness of contemporary Arabic literature by women authors. It strives instead for a qualitative representativeness by providing samples from three main geographical areas, namely the North African area, represented by Algerian Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* (1997), the Levant area represented by Lebanese Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī* (2001), and the Gulf area represented by Saudi Rajaa Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyād* (2005). While the inclusion of these novels necessarily means the exclusion of many others, they are still very different from one another both aesthetically and thematically. They bring out the rich variety of discourses and genres on which individual authors from Arab countries draw, and put to the fore the widely different worldviews that these authors bring to bear on their fiction. This, in turn, foregrounds the heterogeneities marking Arab-speaking countries as well as the reified category of "Arab woman." There are also wide discrepancies as far as the authors' statuses are concerned. While Mosteghanemi is a best-selling author in Arab countries, al-Shaykh is highly acclaimed and much more visible in the West. While Alsanea was not known as a writer, her debut novel propelled her to fame both locally and in the transnational market. Put together, they constitute a fascinating case for what they can reveal both about literary

enterprises by women from Arab countries and the subversive thrust informing them, and about the paradigms through which these enterprises are selected for translation and refracted for consumption in the target cultures covered by the present research.

The last criterion in the choice of the corpus was translation into both English and French. For the contextualization to be exhaustive and patterns, if any, to be identified in the processes of translation and reception, the novels chosen had to have been translated into both English and French. Accordingly, novels that were translated into French but not English or vice versa were automatically excluded.

4. Research Objectives and Relevance

This research has three main objectives. First, it hopes to contribute to the promotion not so much of “the right image”—any image presented as “right” would be one that the researcher fixed through her very own ideological underpinnings—as of a more complex and, therefore, more realistic image of the Other woman coming from Arab-Muslim countries. Since “woman” still seems to be the metaphor for the Arab Other in its neo-colonial relationship with old hegemonies, like France and the UK, and the new US hegemony, a problematization of the “Arab woman” would also mean a problematization of the cultures from which Arab women come. The second objective is to turn the gaze to the Western subject by investigating individual as well as institutionalized practices surrounding the translation and consumption of contemporary Arabic literature by women authors, with a view to contesting the very narratives underpinning the Western perception of Self and Other within a hierarchical schema. The debate following the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris at the beginning of the year highlights the importance of such contestation.

What was the murderous and horrific act of three French born people—two were raised from their childhood in a French orphanage by French people— with previous criminal records has been presented in mainstream media and even in official political discourse as potentially representative of the mindset of all Muslims. Accordingly, and while I, and—from the mainstream reactions in Muslim-majority countries—millions of “Muslims” around the globe, were naturally appalled by both the act and its motivation, such normal reaction was

somehow not enough. The media coverage in Western countries would have “us,” all billion and a half million “Muslims” of the world, distance “ourselves” from those three French terrorists and proclaim high and loud that “we” have nothing to do with them. This burden, totally absent in the aftermath of such ideologically motivated crimes as Anders Breivik’s murderous spree (see Chomsky, January 20, 2015), would be funny were it not revealing of frightening concepts with potentially devastating consequences.

Firstly, “Muslims” emerge as a monolithic category despite the geographical, historical, linguistic, cultural, social and economic heterogeneities marking Muslim communities. Being born to a Muslim family or even into a Muslim community seems to mean being born with a gene, of sorts, that would make of any “Muslim” a potential terrorist. For being called upon to condemn terrorism by way of distancing oneself from the terrorists implies that one is a *de facto* suspect. Furthermore, this reified category is ahistoricized through the obscuring of the historical context of its communities, including colonization as in the case of Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq; West-backed despotic and bloody rulers as in the case of Egypt; and belonging to such an immigrant community as the Algerian-French community, born out of and witness to a ruthless colonization and still suffering from ghettoization.

The overlooking of heterogeneities, combined with this muting of historical facts—which, if talked about, could (re)place violence, both discursive and material, into the very center and seriously challenge the center’s hegemonic discourses on Self and Other—reifies the “Muslim” Other, usually conflated with Arab, in a monolithic homogenous category that is locked and fixed in an essential, ahistorical and irrational state of constant rage and violence. This discourse continues to facilitate wars, military incursions and unholy alliances with murderous governments, all while covering up the crimes and genocides that these neo-imperial actions cause either through oblivion or under the guise of unfortunate but necessary collateral damages for “great moral causes,” to quote Bush above. It also paradoxically fuels that which it purports to fight: another extremist and homogenizing discourse that kills both locally and internationally, albeit much more locally. In such a context, muddying the mirror through which the neo-imperial powers, with their technologies of representation, perceive the Self becomes critical.

Finally and most important, the research strives to contribute to the growing body within Translation Studies of literature concerned with the ethics of translation. Reflection on translation has long conceived translation as a site of conflict and associated it with images of violence, including rape (Drant, in Chamberlain, 2000), slavery (Dryden in Robinson, 1997, p. 56), aggression (Steiner 1975/1998), and even cannibalism (De Campos, in Vieira 1999). However, it was not until the cultural turn that Translation Studies took in the late 1980s and early 1990s, thanks to the discipline's opening to and import from postcolonial and feminist studies, that a real theoretical debate on the ethics of translation started. As a consequence, a research body started growing around this issue, giving insight into how translation (and translation theory) is in effect a discursive weapon rather than a simple linguistic process; how it can construct and deconstruct alterity, be it a gendered one within contexts of patriarchy (de-Lotbiniere-Harwood, 1991; Levine, 1991; von Flotow, 1991), or a cultural one within contexts of colonization or resistance (Venuti, 1995, 1998; Niranjana, 1992; Tymoczko, 1999). After Translation Studies turned to postcolonial theory, it was only a matter of time before it looked into ethnography and anthropology for analytical and conceptual tools. This, in turn, brought about an increased awareness of the individual role of translators (and interpreters) as social agents and interest in how they operate within their contexts (Buzelin, 2005; Sela-Sheffy, 2005; Wolf, 2008).

Curiously, however, despite this awareness of translation as a site of conflict and of translators as social agents, the age-old idea of translators as mediators, implying conflict resolution and neutral arbitration, has remained strong and untroubled. In her theorization of translation and the work of translators as agents, in which she draws on both Bourdieu and Bhabha, Wolf (2007), for instance, maintains that translation is "a mediation space" where social interactions "open the door for negotiation. Negotiation is performed in light of the various experiences of the agents participating in the production and reception processes of translation" (p. 118). Such theorization of the role of translators ignores their embeddedness and their highly political and politicized role, particularly in contexts of conflict and extreme power imbalance.

In the present conjecture of armed conflicts, military occupation and massive numbers of refugees that have heightened the need for translators' and interpreters' services and put these agents' assumed neutrality to the test, and in an attempt to overcome the limitation above, increased numbers of scholars, including Baker (2006), Palmer (2007) and Dragovic-Drouet (2007), have been exploring the agency of translators as "individuals positioned within networks of power relationships," rather than as mediators operating within an in-between space (Salama-Carr, 2007, p. 2). This research follows these studies but with a different focus. While these studies are mostly concerned with media texts and interpreting, the present research focuses on literary texts and offers an in-depth exploration both of the context within which these texts are produced, translated and consumed, and of the agency of the translators as enacted in the act of translating, as well as the agency of other agents behind much of the reception process.

On the other hand, among the most influential ethical approaches that have been proposed in the wake of the cultural turn are Venuti's (1995; 1998) and Spivak's (1993). Influenced by Berman's "work on the letter," Venuti's ethics was reductive in its association between one specific mode of translating, i.e. foreignizing translation that brings out "the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text and [performs] a work of cultural restoration," and the democratic ideal (1995, p. 148). Likewise, Spivak advocates "a literalist surrender" in translation, where surrender "means most of the time being literalist" (1993, p. 192). While these neoliteralist and prescriptive approaches, especially Venuti's, have been very influential within Translation Studies (Robinson, 1997, p. 98), they suffer from a major flaw. Indeed, while these militant and resistant ethical approaches are premised on the very belief that translation is closely enmeshed with its political and ideological context, their reductive nature implies that the scholars advocating them fail to fully appreciate contexts in their full complexities. As Tymoczko's (1999, p. 297) study of the role of translation in the context of Ireland shows, an assimilating translation "may [also] be a translation tactic within a larger movement of cultural resistance." Likewise, far from decentering the center and contesting hegemonic narratives, foreignizing translation, as evidenced by Shamma's (2014) study of the translation of the *Arabian Nights*, may well reinforce dominant stereotypical representations. Hermans (2014) is therefore right when he maintains that "the critical task of

translation theory does not consist in advocating this or that resistant or oppositional or compliant or fluent or any other mode of translating” (p. 156). He goes on to advocate self-reflexivity and self-criticism for translation theory, holding that the study of translation “should not seek to impose on the practice of translation, but to account for its deployment and conceptualization in history [...]. It should also seek to theorize its own contingency” (p. 156).

In accordance with this view, and to overcome the limitations of the neoliteralist approaches all the while keeping their necessary ethical dimension, the present research offers a model of ethical reading based on critical discourse analysis, both for translators and for translation scholars. Rather than prescribing a particular method or mode of translating, this model equips translators with the necessary analytical tools to carry out a thoroughly contextualized reading of the source text at three levels: as text, as discourse practice and as social practice. The model also serves to keep translators aware of the contingent, situated and subjective nature of their own reading. It thus allows for the wide variety of discursive choices available to translators and that, within the same translation, may vary from the very fluent to the very foreignizing, with effects that transcend the binary and thus reductive dichotomy of democratic foreignizing vs. undemocratic domestication. On the other hand, because of its insistence on the importance of self-reflexivity, this model would allow translation scholars to cast an inward, investigative look at their own theorization of translation by stressing the importance for researchers to never lose sight of their own positionality and contingency.

The present research is, therefore, unabashedly personal and engaged as I made it amply clear at the very beginning of this introduction. I do not claim to be sitting in a neutral position nor do I seek to obscure my positionality as a Third-World woman from an Arabic-speaking, Muslim-majority country, or the rootedness of this research in my personal experience. I explore the translation and reception of literary texts and the ensuing movement of discourses, as complex social phenomena with deep implications for both source and target cultures. I do it not for the sake of some purely scientific curiosity but for potential ideological change. Accordingly, both conceptual framework and methodology should reflect and accommodate these aspects of the research, mainly its feminist and engaged dimensions and a belief in the social power of discourse.

5. The Conceptual Framework

This project draws on the theory of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and feminist postcolonial theory. The unifying threads between these two theories are political engagement and a view of discourse as constructive of reality.

5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

While the designation Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may suggest that CDA is a method of analysis, it can best be described as a “dissident research” that “aims to offer a different ‘mode’ or ‘perspective’ of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field [of discourse analysis]” (van Dijk, 2008, p. 352). In fact, since its creation in the early 1990s by a group of scholars, including Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak, this approach has grown so exponentially that Wodak and Meyer (2009) consider it “an established discipline, institutionalized around the globe” (p. 4). The roots of CDA go as far back as the Frankfurt School in Germany and Critical Theory, rejecting notions of objectivity and knowledge impartiality and highlighting the embeddedness of scholars and scientists within their social and historical context. Marx, Gramsci, Habermas and Foucault are all prominent influences in CDA research. It is, however, Critical Linguistics, making heavy use of Hallidayian linguistics, Chomskyan grammar and such analytical categories as transitivity, modality, nominalization, that CDA has most been associated with to the point where the terms CDA and Critical Linguistics have been used interchangeably (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 1).

Because of these multiple influences and its “manifold roots [...] in Rhetoric, Text Linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies and Sociolinguistics, as well as Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 1), approaches to critical discourse analysis are heterogeneous in terms of theoretical foundations and methodologies. Their overall scope, agenda and key concepts, however, remain similar. Thus, Fairclough (1995), who adopts a dialectical-relational approach to CDA, maintains that the latter

aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (p. 132)

Echoing Fairclough, Wodak, who adopts a discourse-historical approach, and Meyer (2009) maintain that CDA is “concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (p. 2). The ultimate aim of such exploration, however, is not merely to describe and document social inequalities and power relations, as they are constituted, normalized or legitimized through discursive practices. Rather, the aim is also emancipatory and militant. Thus, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) contend that CDA “intervenes on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups, and [...] openly declares the emancipatory interests that motivate it” (p. 259). In the same vein, van Dijk (2008), another key theoretician in the discipline and the proponent of the socio-cognitive approach, defines CDA as research that “primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context,” and wherein analysts “take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (p. 352). The key principles that stand out in these definitions are a view of discourse as a form of social action; power and ideology as enacted and naturalized in discourse; and a “critical impetus,” as Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 6) call it.

1) *Discourse:*

The term ‘discourse’ has come to have different uses depending on the tradition. Summing up these uses, Gee (1999, p. 17-18) talks of “discourse” with small d, referring to stretches of language as it is actually used; and “Discourse” with capital D, referring to “socially accepted associations among ways of using language” to convey knowledge, worldviews, values, beliefs and assumptions. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 6) define discourses as “relatively stable uses of language serving the organization and structuring of social life.” Key to both definition of ‘Discourse’ is the idea of co-construction by participants, or what Gee (1999) calls “recognition”:

If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in particular type of what (activity) here and now, then you have pulled off a Discourse (and thereby continued it through history, if only for a while longer). (p. 18)

This implies that discourses, if drawn upon conventionally, contribute to maintaining the order of discourse, which is nothing but “the social order in its discursal facet- or, the historical impress of sociocultural practice on discourse” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 11). If, however, they are used, juxtaposed or otherwise opposed in ways that are unconventional but that still allow for a degree of recognition, then such usage can “simultaneously change and transform Discourses” (Gee, 1999, p. 18), and therefore the social order itself.

It is discourse in this latter meaning, i.e. in Gee’s capital-D-discourse, that is of most interest to CDA researchers. The latter conceptualize language, and therefore discourse, as a “form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 63). Such conceptualization of discourse implies that it is a social action through which text producers act on the world, including on each other. However, rather than adopting a view of discourse as exclusively constitutive of reality, CDA practitioners opt for the middle ground by arguing for a dialectic relationship between discourse and social structure. Thus, Fairclough (1992) maintains that discourse is “shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels: by class and social relations [...], by the relations specific to particular institutions such as law and education, by systems of classification, by various norms and conventions [...] and so forth” (p. 64). At the same time, however, it “contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it” (p. 64). In other words, the way text producers draw on different discourses, put them in opposition to one another or in support of one another, background them or foreground them in text and talk, is at once socially reproductive and socially constitutive and transformative of reality.

2) Power:

Power, and “more specifically the social power of groups or institutions,” van Dijk (2008) asserts, is a “central notion in most critical work on discourse” (p. 354). He defines it

as the ability “to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups” through “privileged access to” and control of “scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, culture, or indeed various forms of public discourses and communication” (pp. 354-5). While access to and control of force can allow for the obvious and manifest physically coercive power, control of public discourses allows for the most pervasive and insidious type of power, that of naturalizing and universalizing social domination and hegemonic ideologies in a “myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life, as is typically the case in the many forms of everyday sexism or racism” (p. 355).

Van Dijk (2008, p. 355) goes on to argue, in what is most relevant to the exploration of how translation and reception of foreign literature can be used as discursive power, that CDA researchers can approach the issue of discursive power in two related ways by asking first how dominating groups control public discourse and, second, how public discourse, thus controlled, can influence the minds and actions of dominated groups. He (2008) contends that while most ordinary people can only have control over talk, members of powerful and authoritative social groups, like scholars, journalists and university teachers, have active control over public discourse. Thus, those “who have more control over more—and more influential—discourse (and more discourse properties) are by that definition also more powerful” (p. 356). However, since the notions of access and control remain general, CDA researchers define them as they pertain to the context and to the structures of text. According to van Dijk (2008), context can be controlled through the control of such categories as “deciding on time and place of the communication event, or on which participants may or must be present, and in which roles, or what knowledge or opinions they should (not) have” (p. 356). Since such dominant groups also control both content and the structures and strategies of text and talk, CDA researchers should likewise explore such issues as the way members of dominant groups may decide on “the topics (semantic macrostructures)” and “the (possible) discourse genre(s) or speech acts of an occasion” (p. 356).

Van Dijk (2008, p. 357) is, however, quick to warn that control of public discourse alone does not automatically allow for control of minds and enactment of power relations. For such control to obtain, he (2008) identifies four factors:

- 1) Participants in a communicative event are likely to accept beliefs and knowledge when imparted by what they perceive as authoritative and trustworthy sources/social agents.
- 2) Participants in a communicative event may not have the choice to not be exposed to discourse in specific situations, like in school or court settings.
- 3) Unavailability or scarcity of resources that provide alternative, non-hegemonic knowledge, information and beliefs.
- 4) Participants in a communicative event do not always have the necessary critical skills and knowledge to contest discourses, knowledge and opinions to which they were exposed.

Looked at from van Dijk's perspective, discursive power as exercised through translation can be investigated through the exploration not only of the general context where translations are consumed, including whether there are available resources for alternative information and knowledge to readers, but also of the way members of dominant groups can exercise control over translation as an element of public discourse to maintain existing power relations and reproduce hegemony, including the way publishers and literary scouts control the time and place of translation; the way book reviewers and scholars decide which participants/authors to review/write studies about, thereby giving or denying voice to participants/authors; the way translators and publishers control structures of text as they translate/edit; and finally the way translation scholars themselves theorize translation as a resource of discursive and, therefore, social power.

3) Critique:

Stemming directly from its roots in Critical Theory, being critical is the "shared perspective and programme" of CDA research (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 6). Fairclough (2013) defines this critical component of CDA as "essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things" (p. 39). The interconnectedness that CDA researchers want to unravel, however, is not limited to the one existing between the use of language as a social action and the existing social structure. It exceeds it to include the interconnectedness of researchers and scientists, and thus of their discourses, with their social and political contexts. Indeed, CDA analysts and researchers believe that scholars, researchers and scientists are

inherently embedded in their social context and, by extension, in the hierarchy of power in place in this context. Their scientific and scholarly discourse cannot, therefore, be considered nor presented as neutral or value-free. It is, to the contrary, “influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction” (van Dijk, 2008, p. 352). Denying the social embeddedness of scholars and scientists masks the contingency and situatedness of their discourse. Academic orthodoxy is thus stabilized and knowledge is imbued with a transparency that universalizes it and obscures the multiple situated agencies as well as the processes of exclusion and inclusion behind the production of this knowledge.

This has two implications for CDA researchers. Firstly, and as part of their task, CDA researchers have to investigate and reveal the role that scholars and scientists play, through their scholarly and scientific discourse, in stabilizing the status quo. Secondly, and consequently, they have to be (and make others) aware of their own social embeddedness and the ideological underpinnings that undergird their very own theoretical work. In other words, labeling their work as “critical” functions as an ethical standard to which CDA researchers and analysts have to hold themselves, as well, by explicitly stating their research interests and position and making the criteria for their analysis as transparent as possible (van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 293).

5.2 A Feminist Postcolonial Theory

Another theoretical approach where scholarship is not divorced from political engagement is feminist postcolonial theory. According to Abu Lughod (2001), feminist (postcolonial) theory in general is “an engaged scholarship [...] linked to personal experience” (p. 107), and which, therefore, openly endeavours to lay bare and contest not only structures of oppression and institutionalized forms of violence against women, but also hegemonic representations of the world. Feminist (postcolonial) theory also meets CDA in self-reflexivity. For Sara Ahmed (2000), this theorizing, as she insists on calling it to emphasize the agency and the process behind the formation of theory, is work that also challenges the very knowledge that it produces about the world. It is work where the focus should be more on the situated and contingent “who (does the theorizing)” and “where (is the theorizing done),”

than on the stabilized “what (is the theory)”. A similar concern for location is to be found in feminist theorizing as it pertains to the Middle East since, as Abu Lughod (2001) advances, “a good deal of the most interesting [of such research] has been about the importance of positionality (the social location from which one analyzes the world)” (p. 107).

Much of this concern, Abu Lughod (2001) specifies, comes from “the insights of [Said’s] *Orientalism*” (p. 107; emphasis in the original). She indeed argues that Said’s postcolonial theory, specifically as articulated in *Orientalism*, has stimulated and significantly contributed to feminist theorizing. Said’s insistence on the necessity for scholarship to be politically engaged meant that Middle East feminist scholars would have to face and grapple with the thorny issue of how to contest local structures of oppression without seeing their research being recuperated and (mis)appropriated in a transnational context. In addition, *Orientalism* provided the foundation for a substantial body of anthropological and historical research that sought to challenge the totalizing orientalist discourse on women in the Middle East and to highlight, instead, complexities and heterogeneities.

5.2.1 Said’s Orientalism.

Orientalism for Said is not merely to study, teach and research the Orient. It was an “enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Said, 1978, p. 3). Orientalism was, therefore, a production of knowledge about the Orient that was anchored in “an ontological and epistemological distinction” between the Orient and “the Occident” (p. 2), and that allowed for “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3). In other words, Orientalism is an institutional and discursive power that dialectically prescribes the “truth” of the Orient and the West. It is a reifying discourse that represents the Orient as intrinsically backward, irremediably different and opposing everything that the West and its civilization stands for. Orientalism, in Said’s terms, is therefore a mental construct that says more about the West than about the Orient insofar as this construct serves to reinforce the Western subject’s identity in opposition to the Oriental other. In fact, neither the Orient nor the West is an “inert” truth. Like any other form of knowledge,

including History and Geography, they are both constructs. Like the West, itself, the Orient has been endowed with a history, tropes, images and vocabulary that orientalise it; that make it alive and real for the West.

Drawing on Foucault's concept of knowledge as power and Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Said explains that all forms of knowledge that are produced by the West about the Orient—and this would include translated literature—constitute “a course of personal study that was to gather in, to rope off, to domesticate the Orient” (p. 78). Much like CDA researchers, Said rejects naïve assumptions about the neutrality and objectivity of (orientalist) knowledge. He rightly affirms that there has always existed a tight relationship between orientalist knowledge and the will to power that gave birth to the colonialist project insofar as “an unbroken arc of knowledge and power connects the European or Western statesman and the Western Orientalists” (p. 104). Moreover, Said underscores the influence of orientalism as both a discourse and a discipline. According to him, the discipline of orientalism derives its power from its association with other traditional disciplines, such as philology, with public institutions such as trade companies and universities, and with different literary genres, including travelogues and translation. It is this complicated and extended web of relationships that makes of Orientalism a “system of representation framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western consciousness, and later, Western empire” (p. 203).

Aware of the issue of correspondence between the discursive construction of reality and the physical world, and in an attempt to address possible criticism, Said points out that his objective is not to investigate the (non)correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient, but rather “the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (...) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a ‘real’ Orient” (p. 5).

Said has, indeed, been widely criticized mainly for his equivocal position on representation central to his theory. Clifford (1988), for instance, affirms that Said's definitions of Orientalism lack in rigour. While he maintains that orientalist discourse “distorts, dominates or ignores some real or authentic features of the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 260), he denies in other passages the existence of a “real Orient.” Giving credence to Clifford, Yegenoglu (1998, p. 17) admits the presence of this contradiction in Said's theory and

explains that he does not question the binary position between the real and the representation. According to Yegenoglu, this negligence would be due the simplistic notion of language that Said seems to adopt and which is limited to the linguistic activity. In so doing, Said departs from the notion of discourse “as a process which constitutes the very object it represents” (p. 18-19), which results in the dichotomy between what is discursive and what is material/real. Yegenoglu draws on Laclau and Mouffe to overcome this dichotomy without discrediting Orientalism as conceptualized by Said. According to them, to suggest that orientalist discourse constitutes the Orient would not be tantamount to denying the existence of a real material and physical world. Rather, such a suggestion implies that the Orient, like all objects, cannot constitute itself as an object “outside any discursive condition of emergence” (p. 19). In other words, orientalist discourse constructs the “materiality” of the Orient and its very “Orientalness” (p. 19).

5.2.2 A feminist reading of Orientalism.

Yegenoglu (1998), however, most faults Said for neglecting to address in any substantial way the role of gender in Orientalism. Indeed, while Said (1978, p. 207) recognizes the existence of “sexist blinders” through which the West perceives the Oriental other, he does not dwell on the centrality of sexuality and the representation of the Oriental woman in orientalist discourse. Likewise, he obscures the role of the Western woman in this discourse. This is a limitation that many scholars have criticized, including Lewis (1996; 2004) and Mills (1991) and sought to correct in what Abu Lughod (2001) calls a “wave of corrective projects” all while still drawing on Said’s theory (p. 102). These projects include works such as Rana Kabbani’s *Europe’s Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule*, Malek Alloula’s *The Colonial Harem*, and Billie Melman’s *Women’s Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work*, and “examined the way that gender inflected Western discourses on the Orient” (Abu Lughod, 2001, p. 102). Abu Lughod (2001) argues, however, that of all these works, Meyda Yegenoglu’s *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* is the one that presents an “exciting thinking” that challenges the most Said’s relegation of gender to a “subfield in [his] analysis of colonial discourse” (p. 103). Yegenoglu’s (1998) interpretation of Orientalism is particularly relevant to this research.

Yegenoglu faults Said for perceiving “the uniform association between the Orient and sex [...] in Orientalist discourse” yet still dismissing “images of woman and images of sexuality in orientalist discourse” as “limited to the representation of Oriental woman,” and thus not belonging to “the province” of his analysis (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 25). Drawing on Lacan, she develops Said’s distinction between “latent” and “manifest” Orientalism, and argues that rather than being treated as a “sub-domain of the Orientalist discourse” so that at the end “we are left with, on the one hand, the representations of the Orient and Oriental cultures, and on the other, representations of Oriental women and of sexuality” (p. 26), these images should be considered as constitutive of “*latent* Orientalism, or the unconscious site of Orientalism,” a site that is inseparable from manifest Orientalism (p. 26). Accordingly, orientalist discourse should be subjected to a “more sexualized reading,” whereby the representation and construction of alterity is perceived as being achieved “simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation” (p. 26). It is a reading that seeks to reveal the “inextricable link between the process of understanding, of knowing the other cultures, and the unconscious and sexual dimensions involved in the process” (p. 25).

According to this reading, the Oriental woman, particularly the Arab-Muslim woman, is a metaphor for the Orient/the Arab-Muslim world (p. 51), and the process of knowing her, apprehending her, and unveiling her is inextricable from the Western patriarchal enterprise to apprehend the “truth,” the “essence” of the feminized Other, the Orient, and to control it. This obsession, according to Yegenoglu, was translated in an irresistible desire to travel to the Orient (p. 51). Travel, however, was not of much help for the Western male subject insofar as he was not allowed access to the private space of the Arab-Muslim woman. Such an obstruction meant inability to accede to the Orient itself, for as d’Ampère concedes: “the Orient is [...], today, like a masked woman who has revealed only her face” (as cited in Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 74).

To overcome this obstacle, the Western subject enlisted the help of Western “masculine” women who had the task of filling what Yegenoglu calls the “orientalist lack” (p. 68), by penetrating the closed space of the Arab-Muslim woman. As Gautier puts it, “the only method to employ, in order to really obtain any authentic information, is to request some European

lady, who is well introduced and has access to harems, to recount [...] faithfully that which she has seen” (as cited in Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 75). Likewise, Sophia Poole, sister of the *Arabian Night*’s translator Edward Lane, recounts that her brother “has anxiously desired that I should supply [his information] deficiencies, both by my own personal observation, and by learning as much as possible of the state and morals of the women, and of the manner in which they are treated” (as cited in Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 76).

On the basis of a careful exploration of several travelogues, including Lady Montagu’s letters, and drawing on Derrida, Yegenoglu observes that these Western women were invited to complete “‘the essential’ picture” of the Orient that the male Occidental subject already imagined but that needed a supplement. In fact, Yegenoglu maintains that the very gesture of inviting Western woman to add her account to the patriarchal “Orientalist plenitude” serves to distinguish between what is essential and what is inessential, what is central and what is marginal, what is an ‘originary’ and ‘primary’ text and what is a secondary and additional text (p. 76).

Yegenoglu contends, however, that for the West, the veil has come to be a multilayered signifier that signifies not only the woman that it conceals, but also, through her, the very essence of the Orient itself (p. 48). Situating it at the center of the “discursive constitution” of the Orient, she maintains that it is through the veil, i.e. through the very act of concealment, that the Orient reveals itself to the Western subject. It is thus a culture that is essentially concealed, hidden, always yet to be unveiled and apprehended. As a consequence, and since the essence of this place is grasped “‘in’ and ‘as’ concealment, the essence as *essence* is never grasped” (p. 48). In other words, the Orient will always remain irremediable in its alterity. Constructing and maintaining the Orient’s difference is necessary to the construction of the Western Subject.

Yegenoglu’s analysis could help provide insight into the appeal that contemporary Arabic literature by women from Arab countries has in Western countries. The translation of this literature could be reduced from an embodiment of agency to a mere supplement of the Orientalist lack. Even as she returns the gaze and makes her voice heard through her texts, the woman from an Arab country would still be the object of the Western male gaze.

6. The Methodology

6.1 CDA and Translation Studies

CDA started to gain momentum at a time when researchers within Translation Studies were developing awareness of the social embeddedness of translation as a practice that takes place within a specific socio-political context and for specific objectives. It was therefore only natural that scholars from within the discipline start to perceive the theoretical and methodological appeal of CDA (Bennett, 2006; Leung 2006; Olk, 2002; Schäffner, 2004). Foregrounding the valuable insight that the systems theory provided into issues of creativity in translation, Tymoczko (2003), for instance, still criticizes the studies anchored in this theory arguing that “they are incomplete, eliding a central reason for the nexus of translation and creativity” (p. 29). Their limit lies in the short shrift they give to the “relation between creativity and ideology, creativity and power” (p. 29). Tymoczko maintains that CDA, specifically Fairclough’s approach to discourse as a way of “thinking and imaging the world,” could overcome this limit and provide a better “clue to the relationship between ideology, creativity, and translation” (p. 29). Likewise, Mason (2008, p. 5) suggests that since CDA openly explores issues of power and domination through language use, it would be most appropriate for research that straddles cultural studies and Translation Studies. Talking of the methodological approaches that it offers, Mason (2008) adds that use of CDA could yield “the sort of empirical evidence needed to support claims about the translator’s agency and about the powerful institutional, cultural and historical influences on translator behaviour” (p. 5).

Mason, however, is wary of the efficiency of analysis done within the framework of CDA. He (2008, p. 6) aptly points out that such an analysis presupposes that the way the author expresses her thought determines the reader’s interpretation of the text. As a consequence, the researcher’s interpretation would necessarily be similar to the reader’s. Such a presupposition obscures the interactive nature of communication as well as the reader’s active role in reading and interpreting. Moreover, the presupposition stands in stark contradiction to the very poststructuralist and Foucauldian premises of CDA. While Mason’s criticism is levelled from a Translation Studies perspective, several linguists would agree with

him (see Paltridge 2007). Patterson (1997), for instance, astutely remarks that “the idea that something resides in texts awaiting extraction, or revelation, by the application of the correct means of interpretation is precisely the assumption that poststructuralism set out to problematize” (p. 427). In the same vein, Widdowson (2004) affirms that the researcher using CDA can only offer “critical interpretations of discourse” which he reached under the influence of his own ideological predispositions (p. 109). These interpretations will therefore only be of significance to those readers/participants that share similar predispositions.

While these points of contention are valid, they do not reduce the relevance or the theoretical and methodological strength of CDA. In fact, Fairclough (1992) establishes a very useful distinction between the interpretation of a text and its “meaning potential,” which he describes as “generally heterogeneous, a complex of diverse, overlapping and sometimes contradictory meanings [...] so that texts are usually highly ambivalent and open to multiple interpretations” (p. 75). This implies that when interpreters assign a meaning to a text, they are in effect reducing the meaning potential of that text. Fairclough (1992) concludes that a researcher can only use ‘meaning’ to signify both the meaning potential and the meaning assigned in interpretation “providing we bear in mind this dependence of meaning upon interpretation” (p. 75). Besides, far from discrediting CDA, Widdowson’s claim underlines one of CDA’s merits. Any analysis of such a complex social action as text and talk can only yield interpretations by a socially and historically situated subject whose perception, approach and analysis of the object of study is shaped or constrained by the context. What distinguishes CDA is precisely the fact that researchers are encouraged to gain awareness of such influences and underpinnings and keep them in sight while doing research. By adopting such self-reflexive approach, researchers will not only be able to contest the regime of truth in a society and trouble the ideological and social status quo, they will also be able to contest theory formation within their own field, thus keeping a necessary self-critical attitude as CDA gets more firmly established as a discipline. It is worthy of recalling here that this critical impetus is similar to the one growing within Translation Studies as mentioned above.

To counterbalance this limitation, Cameron (as cited in Paltridge, 2007, p. 195) suggests complementing a CDA-based method with ethnographic data as well as analysis of texts

related to the text being examined. Within Translation Studies, Mason (2008) suggests complementing a CDA-based study of a given translation with an investigation of reception, including editorial reviews. Accordingly, and for the purposes of the present research, two methods were adopted. The primary one is Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical model. Conceived mainly for the analysis of short "original" texts like political speeches, promotional flyers and conversations, it is a multilayered model that extends beyond linguistic analysis to include analysis of genres and discourses drawn upon in the production of the text, as well as analysis of the larger social context within which the text is produced and consumed, and the reception that it has. Premised on the assumption that "language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 2), this method transcends the limiting division between social theory-inspired research that analyzes texts mainly from a sociological point of view, and work focusing on linguistic analysis of texts with very short shrift to social issues. As such, it is perfect for an adaptation for a research project within Translation Studies concerned with the way translation is used as a resource of discursive power in specific socio-political contexts. Making the case for a sociological methodology that breaks with "reductive and opposite approaches" in Translation Studies, Heilbron and Sapiro (2007) maintain, indeed, that "a proper" analysis should embrace "the whole set of social relations within which translations are produced and circulated" (p. 94).

On the other hand, and as comprehensive as Fairclough's approach is, it will be complemented with interviews, both those that the researcher conducted with three of the translators of the works under investigation, and those that were given by the authors to various media outlets. These interviews will give valuable insight not only into the agency of what Heilbron and Sapiro (p. 95) call "the agents of intermediation," but also into the way power relations between individual agents and institutions, mainly publishing houses, influence such agency.

Before introducing the primary method, it should be pointed out that while CDA methodological approaches are as different as they are numerous, they all share two commonalities. Firstly, they are problem-oriented in that they are not "focused on specific

linguistic items”; rather, the researcher should select those items “relevant to specific research objectives” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 31). Secondly, they are eclectic in that both theoretical concepts and methodological tools are chosen on the basis of their ability to account for the social problem(s) being investigated. While I introduced the “overarching” theoretical concepts above, I will define the remaining concepts that I adopt for each specific part of the analysis in their respective chapters. Likewise, while I will introduce the main analytical model and most recurring categories in the following section, other categories will be introduced in the chapters dedicated to the analysis.

6.2 Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model

Approached from a critical discourse analysis perspective, Arab women’s literature and its translation are discursive events entangled within a web of social, political and intertextual relations and connections. According to Fairclough, there are three complementary dimensions, perspectives or ways of reading a discursive event:

1- It is a *text*, be it in a spoken, written or any other semiotic mode, and it is analyzed a form-and-meaning analysis.

2- It is a *discourse practice* involving processes of production, reception and interpretation of the text. It is analyzed from a socio-cognitive perspective that includes an exploration of the discursive practices drawn upon in the production of the discursive event, the relationship of the latter to the order of discourse and the way it has been received.

3- It is a *social practice* occurring within specific contexts. Its analysis entails the study of the “different levels of social organization—the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or ‘context of culture’” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 137).

These aspects are mutually influential in that social practice shapes the processes of (the translated) text production and reception, while the latter, in turn, leave traces in the text that function as cues for the interpretation process, which ultimately contributes to the shaping of social practice.

In application to original texts, analysis of a discursive event as text is based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and entails analysis of how the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of language are fulfilled in texts. The textual metafunction allows speakers to texture a text. This is achieved through such elements as cohesion, thematization or focalization, and how information is backgrounded or foregrounded. The interpersonal metafunction enacts the relationship between participants, as well as between the speaker and the message, and is mainly realized through modality and evaluation. Finally, the ideational metafunction allows speakers to express their "experience of the real world" (Halliday, 1970, p. 143) and comprises two sub-functions, the logical and the experiential. While the former refers to general organizing relations within a text, the experiential function refers to a text's propositional content encoded as events, processes, participants in and surrounding the circumstances of such processes and events. This sub-function is fulfilled through lexicogrammatical choices that are part of the transitivity system, which allows the production of different representations of the same experience, depending on the speakers' perspectives and their positioning in the world and vis-à-vis participants in the text production.

At this level of analysis, therefore, such analytical categories as nominalization, modality, focalization, cohesion and lexical choices are important analytical categories. Assumptions constitute another such category. According to Fairclough, assumptions are a socially important property of texts in that they serve to establish "a common ground" between speaker/author and audience (2003, p. 55). He goes on to explain that "[a]ll forms of fellowship, community and solidarity depend upon meanings which are shared and can be taken as given" (p. 55). In so doing, assumptions also reinforce and, indeed, universalize the discourses they subscribe to by presenting (assumed) meanings associated with these discourses as given and, therefore, as unquestionable and factual reality. Fairclough (2003, p. 55) distinguishes between three main types of assumptions, namely 1) existential assumptions about what exists; 2) propositional or factual assumptions "about what is or can be or will be the case"; and 3) value assumptions "about what is good or desirable." Transitivity, however, remains one of the most powerful analytical tools in CDA that can be used in analyzing a discursive event as text. In traditional grammatical approaches, it refers to the distinction

between verbs that take an object and those that do not. It takes a different meaning in systemic functional grammar and therefore in critical discourse analysis, where, simply put, it means “the study of what people are depicted as doing and refers, broadly, to who does what to whom, and how” (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 104).

Within the transitivity system, there are six process types:

- 1- Material process: This describes concrete actions of doing that result in material consequences. Material process verbs always have an actor/agent/doer, but not always a ‘beneficiary,’ i.e. the participant benefitting from the process, or a goal/patient, i.e. the participant affected by the process or at whom the process is directed. Analysis of these verbs can help find out what and whether participants are activated or passivated.
- 2- Mental process: This is a process of sensing that involves a “senser,” i.e. the one who does the action, and a “phenomenon,” i.e. the thing or person that is perceived. It includes three subtypes: cognitive process verbs, like “think” and “doubt”; affective process verbs, including “love,” “dislike,” and “hate”; and perceptive process verbs, like “hear” and “see.” Use of these verbs allows the author to create the illusion that the characters are doers, i.e. involved in material processes, when they are not.
- 3- Behavioural process: This is a cross-category between material and mental processes, and includes verbs denoting both physical and psychological behaviour, like “stare,” “watch” and “laugh.” While such verbs denote action, too, they have no goal or beneficiary and the actor does not seem to exert much agency.
- 4- Verbal process: Expressed through the verb “to say” and its equivalents. This process involves three participants: the sayer, the receiver/addressee, and the verbiage. Depending on how and how often characters are depicted as sayers, they can be framed as having discursive power or as simple talkers not involved in many actions.
- 5- Existential process: This is a process that signals existence without predicating anything else, as in “There are a lot of children on the beach.”
- 6- Relational process: This is a process that expresses a stable relationship without any real dynamic action between two participants, namely the carrier and the attribute. The

verbs in this category include the copula “to be,” and verbs indicating possessive relations, like “to have.”

It is worth mentioning here that samples for analysis of novels as texts, including at the level of transitivity, were chosen through a selection strategy based on what Fairclough (1992) calls “cruces” or “moments of crisis,” which he defines as “moments in the discourse where there is evidence that things are going wrong” (p. 230). In conversations, for instance, this would include hedges, silences or hesitations. These moments are important to analyze since they reveal “aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized, and therefore difficult to notice; but they also show change in progress, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematization of practices” (p. 230).

In the analysis of a discursive event as discourse practice, all elements involved in the production of texts, mainly intertextuality, interdiscursivity and reception practices, are key analytical categories.¹ In essence, all texts are intertextual in that they are only signifying in relation to other already existing texts. New texts will draw on, substantiate, clarify, negate or oppose prior texts. Bakhtin (1986, p. 92) captures such a dialogical relationship between texts when he maintains that any utterance is “filled with dialogical overtones” in that “any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances [...] with which it enters into one kind of relation or another” (p. 69). The result is that people’s texts/utterances are “filled with others’ words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of ‘our-ownness,’ varying degrees of awareness and detachment.” It was Kristeva, however, who first coined the term intertextuality. Revising and building on Bakhtin’s work, Kristeva (1980)

¹ Drawing on Bakhtin, Fairclough (2010, p. 7) holds that in producing texts, authors juggle centrifugal pressures, i.e. the textual negotiation of differences, social relations and identities at work in producing texts, and centripetal pressures, which include not only the grammatical and syntactical possibilities allowed by any given language, but also established orders of discourse, i.e. “the social organization and control of linguistic variation” (2003, p. 24), and their elements, including discourses and genres. As social agents, however, authors’ actions and choices in the process of texturing texts are not entirely socially determined inasmuch as they can still bypass the centripetal pressures and use the resources of language to deal with the centrifugal pressures in creative ways. Approaching texts from a Foucauldian and Gramscian framework of power and hegemony, Fairclough explains that such creativity or lack thereof not only manifests itself in the heterogeneity or homogeneity of texts, i.e. the degree of their dialogicality, and the mix of discourses and genres they draw on, but it also reflects the extent of social contradictions and the state of hegemonic relations, given that hegemonic struggle involves struggle over control of discursive practices and orders of discourse.

conceives of text as “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text” (p. 36). It is, thus, a “mosaic of quotations,” that absorbs and transforms other texts (p. 66).

Drawing on both Bakhtin and Kristeva, Fairclough (2003, p. 39) broadly defines intertextuality as “relations between one text and other texts which are ‘external’ to, outside it, yet in some way brought into it.” This broad definition allows him to distinguish between two types of intertextuality: manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality. In the first, texts are incorporated in the new text through “discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 118). By bringing different texts into a new one, manifest intertextuality at once recontextualizes the prior texts, and opens the new text to difference, as they bring different voices, and “potentially different perspectives, objectives, interests” into dialogue (Fairclough, 2003, p. 48). While all texts draw on prior texts, the degree and forms of orientation to difference, however, differ from one text to another. Since hegemony is “the attempted universalization of particulars,” an attempt that necessarily “entails a reduction of dialogicality,” and thus of difference (p. 61), exploration of the degree of and orientation to difference in a text helps shed light on both the kind of action the author is trying to carry out and the state of hegemony in the author’s social context. Thus, the less different and diverging the embedded voices and texts are, the less dialogical a text is, which gives a sense of either a “bracketing of difference” or a “consensus, a normalization and acceptance of differences of power which brackets or suppresses differences of meaning and norms” (p. 42). Inversely, the more a text draws on different voices, the more it is intertextual and dialogical. Depending on the configuration of intertexts within the text, however, intertextuality might indicate “an accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power,” as it might indicate “an attempt to resolve or overcome difference” (p. 42).

In contrast, constitutive intertextuality refers to the blending in of existing genres and discourses in the new text. Drawing on Pêcheux’s concept of “interdiscourse,” Fairclough calls constitutive intertextuality “interdiscursivity.” He (2013) defines the latter as “the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses” (p. 95). In line with his view of the order of discourse as “the social order in its discursal

facet—or, the historical impress of sociocultural practice on discourse” (p. 11), Fairclough (2003) defines genres, such as letters, as “the specifically discursive aspect of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events” (p. 65). Since social change entails changes at the level of social practices, which, in turn, can only occur if forms of social action and interaction, including in their discursive aspect, change, then change in genres, in the way they are configured, mixed, blended in and hybridized, both contributes to social change and reflects it. As to discourses, like feminist discourse or liberal discourse, they are “ways of representing aspects of the world—the processes, relations, structures of the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thought, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world” (p. 124). In other words, discourses are different perspectives on different aspects of the world, perspectives that are shaped by the positions that people hold in the world, by the relations they have vis-à-vis each other, as well as by their social and individual identities. As such, discourses are part of the discursive resources that people use not only to represent the world as they see it or as they project it and imagine it should be, but to also relate to one another, be it in relations of solidarity and cooperation, or in relations of competition or domination, or in relations of difference. In so doing, discourses are potentially constitutive of reality, since, in Foucault’s words, they are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, p. 49).

Both genres and discourses are therefore historically socially organized and controlled, but through different selections, inclusions and exclusions they, in turn, contribute to the remaking of history by acting on social relations and events, by representing the world in different ways and by negotiating identities, including gendered identities, within specific contexts of situation. From this perspective, interdiscursivity becomes “key to both discursive change and social progress, and can also be seen as dialectically (sometimes retrospectively) ‘transforming’ texts through encouraging a rethinking of their meanings” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 30). Analyzing a text as discursive practice, therefore, allows the researcher to precisely explore not only the various past texts that an author quotes, directly or indirectly, in the production of her text, but also the socially organized language resources that the author has drawn upon and in what configuration she has used these resources. In so doing, analysis of a discursive event as discursive practice helps locate the text analyzed within the order of

discourse, as defined above, on the one hand, and, on the other, sheds light on the type of relationships that obtain between the text and its social and cultural context, and the kind of (gendered) identification and representation at play in it.

In application, questions to raise pertaining to intertextuality and interdiscursivity when analyzing text as discourse practice would include: to what extent are intertextuality and interdiscursivity constitutive of the text? Which relevant external textual elements are embedded in the text and which are excluded? How are the different voices framed and ordered in the text in relation to one another? And finally, what work does intertextuality do in the text? In terms of interdiscursivity, questions to ask would be what relevant genres and discourses are drawn upon in the production of the text? Per the genres used, how does the text purport to contribute to specific social actions, and to act in specific social events? Per the discourses used, what belief systems does the text subscribe to, and what kind of representation(s) of experience does it provide? What kind of relationship(s) does it establish between the different participants in the discursive event? What kind of social or individual identities do the discourses used enact and establish?

This analysis is further enhanced by the exploration of the various elements that surround and shape the reception of the text in its larger context, including paratexts. The latter are made of both the (publisher's) peritext—"the whole zone [in a book] that is the direct and principal (but not exclusive) responsibility of the publisher," like the cover and the title page (Genette, 1997, p. 16), and the epitext—i.e. those paratextual elements "not materially appended to the text [...] but circulating, as it were, freely in a virtually limitless physical and social space," including reviews, articles and even interviews with the author (Genette, 1997, p. 344). As such, paratexts are *seuils*, thresholds of interpretation that shape a text's reception by mediating it not only to its readers, but also potentially to larger audiences who, for instance, might read a book's review in a newspaper without ever reading the book. Analysis of these elements can therefore further help locate the text within the order of discourse.

Finally, in analyzing a discursive event as social practice, the focus is generally on exploring the social, political and institutional circumstances within which the text is embedded, and on whether the discursive event reproduces, challenges or transforms existing

power relations and hegemonies within institutions and society (Fairclough, 1992, p. 9-10). Fairclough (1992) prefers to leave this dimension of analysis last, proceeding from discourse practice, through analysis of event as text to analysis of social practice, i.e. from interpretation to description and back to interpretation (p. 231). He maintains, however, that these three dimensions of analysis inevitably overlap and that analysts can indeed choose to front analysis of social practice since this will give a “sense of the social practice that the discourse is embedded within” (p. 231).

In application of a CDA-based analysis to translated texts, Calzada-Perez (2007) developed a typology of shifts that the researcher should try to identify while comparing translations to their originals, based on both Blum-Kulka’s (1986) own typology and on systemic functional linguistics. Thus, she differentiates between textural shifts and pragma-semiotic ones (p. 150). The former are transformations at the level of those components that textualize Halliday’s ideational, interpersonal (enacting the relationship between participants, and realized mainly through modality), and textual meanings (that is all the components that texture a text and these include cohesion, thematization, nominalization and passive voice). Accordingly, shifts in transitivity would affect the ideational meaning of the text, especially the experiential meaning that reflects the speaker/author’s understanding and representation of her experience and the world as she perceives it or wants it to be. Shifts in modality entail a change in how the author/speaker positions herself vis-à-vis the other participants in the context of situation, and expresses her values and beliefs. Shifts at the level of modality, thematization, cohesion and nominalization/passivization would affect the textual meaning of the text—that is, how the text is textured.

As to pragma-semiotic shifts, Calzada-Perez divides them into pragmatic shifts that obviously affect the pragmatic elements of the texts, i.e. coherence, relevance and politeness strategies, and the semiotic elements of the text, i.e. its discourses, genres and text-types. In fact, the semiotic dimension of the text as understood by Calzada-Perez corresponds to a part of Fairclough’s discourse practice, namely interdiscursivity, i.e. the discourses and genres used in the production of the text. Calzada-Perez (2007), however, points out that shifts at the textural level more often than not result in shifts at the pragma-semiotic level, and therefore at

the level of interdiscursivity, since “textural, pragmatic and contextual phenomena are closely linked to each other” (p. 150). It is worth noting here that she further differentiates between two subtypes within this category of shifts:

- 1) Reader-oriented shifts: aimed to align the target text (TT) with cognitive schemes that are relevant for the readers, and thus make it coherent for the latter.
- 2) Text-based shifts: shifts resulting from translatorial choices indicating lack of awareness on the part of the translator.

Since the source text (ST) and TT audiences are culturally remote, most if not all shifts at this level can be said to be reader-oriented.

Accordingly, and for the purposes of this study, the six translations were simultaneously analyzed as texts and as discourse practices by comparing them to their originals with a view to identifying textural and pragmatic shifts and highlighting the way these shifts bring about changes at the semiotic level, i.e. at the level of the discourses and genres drawn upon by the authors. Since the examination of a text’s reception is part of its analysis as discourse practice, the reception of all six translations is investigated in a separate chapter. Likewise, Chapter I below provides analysis of the translations under scrutiny as social practice since it investigates the socio-political, institutional and historical context within which these translations were produced, consumed and appropriated.

7. Chapter Breakdown

The present thesis proceeds from interpretation to description and back to interpretation. This process is applied first to the originals, then to their respective English and French translations, albeit with a slight variation in organization. As mentioned earlier, analysis of all six translations as social practice is carried out at the very beginning of the thesis, in one and the same chapter, namely Chapter I. Likewise, part of the analysis of these translations as discourse practice, namely analysis of their reception, is the object of another separate chapter, Chapter V. Analysis of the originals, however, proceeds differently in that it respects Fairclough’s preferred order with analysis of text as discourse practice first, including the

reception, then as text and lastly as social practice. Indeed, because the wider context within which the novels were originally produced, received and consumed differs substantially from one novel to another, each novel was analyzed in these three dimensions in a separate chapter. In each of these chapters, analysis of the original is followed by analysis of the English and French translations as both text and discourse practice. Accordingly, Chapter I below provides both a review of the relevant literature and an in-depth analysis of the socio-political and institutional context within which the three novels under investigation, and indeed contemporary Arabic literature by women in general, are being translated, published and consumed. Chapter II is made up of two main parts. Part one is dedicated to the analysis of Algerian writer Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā al-Hawāss*. Part two is dedicated to the analysis of the novel's English and French translations as text and discourse practice. Following the same organization, Chapter III analyzes Lebanese author Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī* and its English and French translations, while Chapter IV analyzes Saudi author Rajaa Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* and its translations. It is noteworthy here that while the organization of these chapters is similar, the issues covered differ widely from one analysis to another. As a consequence, the analysis of each chapter requires different sets of conceptual tools. Chapter V completes the analysis of the translations as discourse practice insofar as it investigates the practices involved in the production and reception of these translations in the Anglo-American and French contexts. The conclusion provides an overview of the salient points in the previous chapters, completes the interpretation work started in Chapter I, and suggests possible directions for future research.

Finally, it bears pointing out that whenever I use terms such as “the West” or “the Western subject/gaze” in this research, this use is meant as a shorthand, of sorts, serving practical purposes rather than as a reductive, homogenizing discursive device. Based on the postcolonial theoretical premises undergirding this study, the subject is not conceptualized as unified and self-contained. Thus, when I say “West” and “Western,” I refer more to a position and positioning than to an essence. Nevertheless, and precisely because of these very theoretical foundations, belief in the heterogeneity of the subject does not imply belief in the complete “death of the subject.” The Western subject, and as analysis will show, is seen as involved in “a process of generation, [...] a process of coming into being, of invention and of

fashioning of a place called ‘Western’” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 3). In other words, as the neo-imperial subject is orientalising the Arab other, including through practices of translation and reception, it is dialectically imagining itself as Western, i.e. is involved in a process of westernizing.

CHAPTER I: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 On Literary Translation

1.1.1 The beginning: The literary text.

Literature was, for a long time, conceived as the working of the author's genius: timeless, transcending its historical context, politically and socially detached and, therefore, of "universal" interest. With the advent of the Enlightenment and the demise of the church, the subject came to be seen as autonomous, unified, sovereign and transcendental; language as giving transparent access to reality; and knowledge of the world as non-constructed, value-free, and accessible to the subject through observation and scientific method. The implications of such conceptions for textuality was that the text came to be seen as "reflecting the reality of experience as it is perceived by one (especially gifted) individual, who expresses it in a discourse which enables other individuals to recognize it as true" (Niranjana, 1992, p. 51). To borrow Barthes's (1977) words, the text was "the 'message' of the Author-God" (p. 146), giving unmediated access to the reality of experience, i.e. it was "essentially reflective or expressive ... neither a discourse nor a practice, but a form of recognition" (Bhabha, 1984, p. 100). These conceptions allowed a nineteenth century critic such as Matthew Arnold (1865/1993) to call for a "disinterested" reading that aims to appreciate literature "as in itself it really is" (p. 26), and whereby critics read the literary text independently from "any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas" (p. 37).

The literary text, however, cannot be read independently from "political, practical considerations," nor can it be, as Said (1993) puts it, "antiseptically quarantined from its worldly affiliations" (p. xiv). In fact, when poststructuralism deconstructed notions "related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center [that] have always designated an invariable presence – eidos, arché, telos, energia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject), aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness or conscience, God, man, and so forth" (Derrida, 1978/2007, p. 249), it automatically denied the presence of an objective, immutable meaning, and brought

out instead the contingency of knowledge and the role of language in constructing, not just reproducing, reality.

Thus, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2003), for instance, contend that the very promotion in Britain of the study of English into an academic discipline that fixed literary texts in historical time and that looked “for the determinants of a single, unified, and agreed meaning,” coincided with “the nineteenth-century colonial form of imperialism” (p. 3). They go on to argue that the institutionalizing of the study of literary English in the British colonies contributed to imperialism through “the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, humanity, etc.) which, conversely, established ‘savagery,’ ‘native,’ ‘primitive,’ as their antitheses and as the object of a reforming zeal” (p. 3). Drawing on Raymond William’s concept of “structure of feelings,” Said (1993) maintains that in the “major metropolitan cultures,” i.e. the US, England and France, literature, alongside history and ethnography, vehicles “structures of reference and attitudes” whereby references to geographical locations promote “an official ideology of ‘empire’” that considers the peripheral races as subordinate and deserving of control (p. 52). Literary texts are thus narratives that create “‘structures of feeling’ that support, elaborate and consolidate the practice of empire” (p. 14). Said (1993) also seems to agree with Ashcroft *et al.* when he argues that the “empire writes back” by creating narratives that circulate counter images and alternate structures of feeling whereby “the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist” (p. 212).

Said attributes this controlling power of the literary text, especially the novel, which he describes as “a quasi-encyclopedic cultural form” (p. 71), to its “appropriation of history, the historicization of the past, the narrativization of society” (p. 78). Lefevere (1985/2004), although coming from a different academic tradition than postcolonial studies, agrees with Said when he contends that “there is a control factor in the literary system which sees to it that this particular system does not fall too far out of step with other systems that make up a society” (p. 226). Lefevere (1992) further explains the power of literature in terms of poetics and patronage. Poetics, shaped by educational institutions, consists of two components. The first comprises the “literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations

[and] symbols,” while the latter the dominant perception of the role of literature within a society (p. 26). As to patronage, Lefevere (1992) argues, it has three components: the ideological component, when influence is exerted by “a religious grouping or a political party, [or] a royal court”; the economical component, inasmuch as publishers’ decisions and publishing policies are informed to a great extent by financial considerations; and the status component, since only specific literary works deemed as corresponding to the poetics and ideology of their time are canonized and anthologized (pp. 18-19).

In fact, using the concept of “refraction,” which he (1981) defines as the processing of a text “for a certain audience (children, e.g.), or [adaptation] to a certain poetics or a certain ideology” (p. 72), Lefevere (2012) maintains that anthologization, along with the various activities associated with literary studies, from commentary and historiography to criticism and teaching, rewrite the literary text to adapt it “to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work” (p. 205), thus influencing the whole literary system. Parting with the positivistic view of translation as a linear and transparent linguistic transfer and the underlying belief in the mimetic relation between signifier and signified, Lefevere argues that translation is in fact one such refraction (p. 205). It is, he (1992) writes elsewhere, a “rewriting” of an original text—a rewriting that is, much like the writing of the literary text, circumscribed ideologically by the power of patrons, and aesthetically by that of critics (p. 8). In other words, translation is about “authority and legitimacy and, ultimately [...] power” (p. 2), i.e. the power to appropriate and represent the Other. Lefevere (1990) rightly concludes that the study of translation “can tell us a lot about the power of images and the ways in which images are made, about the ways in which authority manipulates images and employs experts to sanction that manipulation” (p. 27). Bassnett (1998) seems to concur with this standpoint inasmuch as she contends, along with Lefevere, that the study of translation from this perspective “could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual processes take place” in translation, from the criteria for the selection of texts to translate and choice of textual strategies, to the role of all agents involved in such decision-making process, to the reception of the text in the target culture (p. 123).

1.1.2 Literary translation: Structures of feeling, structures of power.

Lefevere and the other descriptive translation studies scholars, such as Even-Zohar (1978; 1981), Herman (1985) and Toury (1980; 1995), have been criticized for being apolitical in their approach to translation. Robinson (1997), for instance, claims that in his analysis of the systemic functioning of power, Lefevere “scientizes it, descriptivizes it, portrays it as value-free inquiry” (p. 31). Venuti (1998) seems to concur when, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, he argues that “descriptive frameworks for textual practices are likely to encourage mechanical, unreflective translating that is not concerned with its value—or only with its utilitarian and economic as opposed to cultural and political values” (p. 26). It was Lefevere, however, together with Translation Descriptive Studies scholars, who paved the way for the cultural turn in Translation Studies by introducing a paradigmatic shift in the discipline from studying the way translation should be carried out, to studying the translated text within its new cultural context and polysystem. As a consequence, and under the further influence of Cultural Studies and poststructuralism, translation studies scholars turned increasingly to studying the way translation contributes to cultural identity formation and how it is harnessed for ideological and political purposes, at a time when other disciplines were themselves opening up to Translation Studies, including Cultural Studies. Thus, as of the early 1990s, a substantial body of literature started growing around issues of translation, power differentials and identity politics. Some scholars explored the issue from a general perspective. Venuti (1998), for instance, and while criticizing descriptive translation studies as seen above, seems nonetheless to echo Lefevere when he highlights the economic power of publishing houses and the ideological power of political, religious and educational institutions in promoting particular translation practices that ultimately contribute to the shaping of a specific cultural identity for the Self and the Other that meets cultural domestic needs.

Other scholars, however, both from within and without the discipline, explored the issue in a more context-specific way. Thus, in *The Poetics of Imperialism*, Eric Cheyfitz (1991), specializing in American Studies, explores the role of translation in the conquest of the Americas to conclude that translation “was, and still is, the central act of European

colonization and imperialism of the Americas” (p. 104). From the discipline of history, Vicente Rafael (1993) explored what he termed the “uneasy relationship” (p. ix) between translation and Christian conversion and their role in the colonization of the Tagalog of the Philippines by the Spanish. From India, several scholars looked into the workings of translation in British colonization, most notably, Sengupta (1990), Niranjana (1992), and Trivedi (1995, 1997). The first, for instance, analyzed Tagore’s self-translations into English and concluded that the Bengali poet changed not only the style of his original poems, but also their tone and the imagery they contain, in order to suit “the psyche of the colonizer” (Sengupta, 1990, p. 61). He ended up actualizing the hegemonic images of the different Oriental Other. Likewise, Niranjana (1992) maintains that translation of Indian texts, including literary ones, into English played as significant a role in colonialism as the teaching of the English language and English literature to the colonized. These practices sought, according to her (pp. 30-31), to construct a colonial subject that is more “English than Hindu,” and that sees the world through the same orientalist prism as the British colonizer, i.e. a subject that interiorized “ways of seeing, techniques of translation, or modes of representation that came to be accepted as ‘natural,’” but that were inscribed in “a teleological and hierarchical model of cultures that places Europe at the pinnacle of civilization” (p. 18).

Similar works emerged around another local reality, that of Ireland. Studying the translation of early Irish literature into English, Tymoczko (1999) aptly shows how translation, as a way of gathering information about the Other, can be a tool as much of colonization as of resistance and self-determination (p. 294). Before Tymoczko, Cronin (1996) provided an excellent historical account of the role that translation played both in the English colonization of Ireland and the formation of the Irish culture. From the other shore of the Atlantic, two important studies engaging with the Quebecois reality came to fruition. Brisset (1990) showed how translation of plays in Quebec was used to reinforce a specific linguistic and cultural identity, and Simon (1994) highlighted the nature of translation as a site of intercultural and bilingual contact where “*création et transfert, originalité et imitation, autorité et soumission se confondent*” (p. 20). This body of research in the 1990s opened the gates for even more studies from different theoretical perspectives concerned with cultural difference and power relations

in translation, such as Buzelin (2005), grounded in ethnography; Wolf (2000), grounded in both postcolonial theory and sociology; and Baker (2006), grounded in sociology.

A similar, albeit less substantial, literature grew up around another type of power differentials as they play out in translation, namely gendered identity. The cultural turn heralded by Lefevere and Bassnett (1990) also opened the discipline to feminist theory. In fact, Simon (1996) credits the reconceptualization of translation as “re-writing,” together with the mounting interest within the social and human sciences in “gender, identity and subject-positions within language” (p. viii), for the “alliance” that would form between feminist theory and translation theory, and that seeks to “identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder” (p. 1). This development in Translation Studies gave birth to several theoretical works and translation projects grounded in gendered identity politics and “engaging directly with power differentials that rule relations between the sexes [...] and that are often revealed in the detailed study of translated literatures” (von Flotow, 2011, p. 2).

Chamberlain (1988), for instance, looked into the sexist tropes used in the theorization of translation, from Gilles Ménage’s *les belles infidèles*, through Schleiermacher’s mother tongue, and translated text as either a legitimate offspring or a bastard, to Steiner’s “appropriative penetration.” Chamberlain’s (1988) objective was to explore the way the gendering of translation was mapped onto the productive/reproductive oppositional paradigm that “depicts originality or creativity in terms of paternity and authority, relegating the figure of the female to a variety of secondary roles” (p. 456). Lending credence to Chamberlain, Simon (1996) further explores what she calls the “gendered theorization” of translation and sheds valuable light into the equally “gendered positions” taken by feminist translators and translation theorists, like Carol Maier, Suzanne Jill Levine, Barbara Godard and Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood. The latter, for instance, openly writes that her “translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation used every translation strategy to make the feminine – i.e. women – visible in language” (De Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, p. 101). Along the same lines, Godard (1990) advocates a feminist translation wherein “the traditional boundary set up to separate

original works from their translations collapses,” and wherein the feminist translator “womanhandles” the literary text by flaunting “her signature in italics, in footnotes—even in a preface” (p. 50).

While the main thrust of research grounded in feminist translation theory initially took place in North America, it soon spread to the peripheries at a time when feminist theory itself was integrating a new concept, that of intersectionality, whereby gender difference is only one among other differences, including race, nation, class and religion, that intersect to make identity. Spivak (1993) and Arrojo (1999) are among the first theoreticians to explore intersectionality in translation, mainly by looking into representational practices pertaining to the Other woman from the double perspective of feminist and postcolonial theory. While Arrojo (1999) denounces the “aggressively ‘masculine’ approach to difference” that Cixous displayed in her translation and appropriation of Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector (p. 160), Spivak (2000) sees in the domesticating Western translations of Third-World women’s literature “neo-colonialist construction[s] of the non-western scene” (p. 399), insofar as these translations mute cultural differences and subject Third-World women to the Western patriarchal gaze.

While these studies are all grounded in different geographical, linguistic and historical realities, they all foreground the notion that the more narratives create images and structures of feeling, the more they lend themselves to a translation that, in turn, creates structures of feeling and images, and indeed, refracts narratives in such a way as to contribute to the construction of cultural identities and the exercise of power (Tymoczko, 2000, p. 23). This is particularly true when translation takes place within the context of a very asymmetrical and complex encounter with the Other. In present-day, post-9-11 world, one of the most fascinating and most complex encounters with Otherness is the Western-Arab encounter. It is one with a long and rich history, and with far-reaching implications for global politics. It is also one where, oftentimes, the woman, most specifically the Arab woman, emerges as a trope for the violent Other. As such, this particular encounter constitutes an excellent backdrop for the study of the translation of literary texts in the neo-colonial context.

1.2 Arabic Literature in Translation

1.2.1 The beginning: The Western-Arab encounter.

“It is a long and complicated story, and like a good complicated story it has plenty of conflict in it, and plenty of love and hate.” In these terms, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1980, p. 7) describes the Western-Arab encounter that goes as far back in the past as Islam itself. From the very beginning, it was fraught with almost unremitting conflicts and wars. In 711, Muslim Arabs and Arabized Berbers from North Africa conquered Spain where they settled and reined for eight centuries. The eleventh century saw the beginning of the Crusades. In the fifteenth century, the *Reconquista* finally put an end to the last Muslim Arab kingdom in Spain. In the eighteenth century, the French expedition to Egypt would start to be soon followed by the colonization of the Arab countries by France, Great Britain and Italy. The twentieth century would see the liberation wars and revolutions and the Suez war, known in Arab countries as the Tripartite Aggression. It would also see big movements of immigration to Europe and the North Americas, movements that would spark debates about multiculturalism, tolerance and accommodation of the foreign. The end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries witnessed the first Iraq war, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the invasion of Iraq, and the infamous Guantanamo prison. Conflicts and military contact, however, were not the only side to this story. The other side is that of mutual fascination and movements of ideas, sciences and literary genres in both directions at different periods of time. At the heart of it all was, and still is, translation.

The Middle Ages saw the biggest movement of translation from Arabic, a movement where European translators “were active participants in and even initiators of a ‘renaissance’” (D’Alverny, 1991, p. 422).² This movement focused mainly on scientific and philosophical books, including those translated from Greek into Arabic, but it also included literary texts. Menocal (2010), however, argues that while scientific and philosophical translation from

² While Toledo was the main center of translation in the 12th century (Burnett, 2001), Arabic-Latin translation “was carried on in Barcelona, Tarazona, Segovia, Leon, Pamplona, as well as beyond the Pyrenees at Toulouse, Beziers, Narbonne, and Marseilles” (Haskins, 1924, p. 10).

Arabic has been acknowledged and much documented, literary translation and the consequent role of that translation in the development of medieval literature and culture,³ have been ignored in literary historiography.

While scientific, philosophical and literary translation from Arabic in the Middle Ages was used as a means to feed a movement of renaissance, its role changed remarkably during the colonial era, where it has become mainly a means to re-present and shape perceptions of the Arab Other in Europe to answer colonialist needs. While discussing the role of translation in the colonization of Ireland, Tymoczko (1999) argues that the colonizer uses translation “to create or amass knowledge [as] part of the colonial project, a reflex of panopticonism, which can in the extreme become an intelligence operation, a way of reconnoitering a territory” (p. 294). This has been the case in Ireland and in India (Niranjana, 1992), but also in Arab countries. Hannoun (2003) explains that translation “was a part of the whole enterprise that the early colonial administration in Algeria set in place, an enterprise that made knowledge indispensable for colonization” (p. 61). Analyzing William de Slane’s (1852-1856) translation of a fragment of a text by 15th century Arab historian Ibn Khaldoun, he notes that the translation transformed a local knowledge into a colonial one that not only allowed a better understanding of the indigenous people but also their subjugation. Indeed, de Slane’s translation, interestingly published by France’s Ministry of War, was limited to a fragment of Ibn Khaldoun’s work that deals with Berbers, and was instrumentalized to legitimize the Arab/Berber division policy that France carried out (p. 62). The transformation of this local knowledge in the process of translation was possible through the use of several discursive strategies, including the translator’s introduction, along with substantial changes and additions to the original, which the translator deemed to be necessary “rectifications” and “corrections” of the original (p. 68). The end result of such interventions by de Slane was a translation that foregrounded a racial vision of Arab/Berbers relations when Ibn Khaldoun does not use any concept that implies racial hierarchy in his text.

³ Likewise, Kruk (1987) links Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Baltasar Gracian’s *El Criticon* (1651) to Ibn Tofayl’s 12th century *Hay Ibn Yaqzān*, that appeared in translation before the publication of both works.

Hannoun claims that, by imposing a categorization of the world that conforms to the objectives of the French colonizer, William de Slane's translation constituted "the most important textual event" in the history of French orientalism (p. 68). While this textual event might arguably be described as the first in the history of French colonialism of Arab countries, it was certainly not the first nor was it the most important in the history of French orientalism, as Hannoun suggests. Indeed, if there is any textual event that most contributed to Western orientalism, including the French, it is the translation, or rather translations, of *The One Thousand and One Nights* also known as the *Arabian Nights*. The first translation of the tales by French scholar Antoine Galland (1704-1717) was so great a success that the *Nights* soon spread throughout Europe, creating "an 'Oriental renaissance,' reflected in a fascination with all aspects of eastern life," as well as a new literary genre, that of "the Oriental tale" (Shamma, 2014, p. 9). In addition, Galland's translation was followed by numerous imitations, enlargements, adaptations and translations of the *Nights*, most notably Lane's, Mardrus' and Burton's. In fact, the 18th century alone witnessed the publication of 80 English translations (Haddawy, 1995, p. xvi). This popularity testifies to the scope of the *Nights*' influence on both European literature and European perception of the Orient. It also canonized the tales in the West as an example of "Arab literary genius" (Jacquemond, 2003, p. 172).

However, "most Arab critics have ignored not only [*The Nights*] but also the many other collections of popular narrative since they are not considered to be part of the literary canon" (Allen, 2000, p. 4). They are, indeed, oral folkloric tales originating in India, Persia, and some Arab countries, mainly Iraq, Egypt and Syria, and as such they were not part of high Arabic literature. They had also undergone several adaptations and metamorphoses before they reached Galland, who also modified the original manuscript in a drastic way. Indeed, the manuscript did not count more than 282 tales and Galland added the remaining tales in order for his translation to live up to the title (Shamma, 2014, p. 9). While Galland and the subsequent translators of these tales used different discursive strategies, ranging from wholesale exoticism with extensive footnotes and translator's notes, like Burton's, to extreme naturalization with deletions and additions, like Galland's, they all added "material that is, strictly speaking, alien to the Arabic original in that it comes from another world," that of the translators themselves (Hawari, as cited in Shamma, 2014, p. 14). Despite these additions, the

translators have invariably claimed that “these tales were much more accurate than any travel account and took pains to translate them as such” (Haddawy, 1995, p. xxi). By investing their translations with an ethnographic dimension, the translators helped create two images defined in opposition to one another: the image of a logical, superior Western Self as opposed to the image of an intrinsically inferior Oriental Other, depicted as violent, illogical and exotic.

This discursive power of the various translations of the *Nights* was made possible precisely because the translations were not read and consumed in a void. They met contemporary cultural and political needs and catered to the expectations of a Western audience already acquainted with this colonized Other through various colonial writings and cultural artefacts ranging from travelogues, such as Flaubert’s *Voyage en Egypte*, and the Orientalist novel, such as William Beckford’s *Vathek*, to paintings, like Ingres’ *Bain Turc*. In other words, these translations and the peoples they represented were read as part of what Said (2003) calls “the archive,” i.e. “a family of ideas and a unifying set of values” (pp. 41-42) that explained and filtered the Oriental Other for the European reader. In this cultural and literary context, the various translations of *the Nights* had a great impact on the perception of the Arab Other in the West. In fact, Jacquemond (1992, p. 150) affirms that, in France, for instance, these translations still shape a stereotypical representation of the Arab culture to this day.

1.2.2 Contemporary Arabic literary translation in the West: The picture.

Current translation practices seem to give credence to Jacquemond’s claim, as they tend to create similar stereotypes. But before looking into these practices, an overview of Arabic literature, particularly the novel, is in order. Modern Arabic literature was born between two impulses: the modern, whereby Arabs looked westwards to Europe, and the traditional, whereby they tapped into the classical Arabic literary heritage that goes as far back as the sixth century (Cachia, 2002; Cooperson and Toorawa, 2005). While contemporary Arabic literature took different courses in the various parts of the Arab world, its birth process was triggered by the *Nahḍah*, the cultural revival movement that started in the 19th century. In the Levant region, members of the Christian Maronite and Orthodox Arab communities, mostly those in

contact with the Vatican and involved in Bible translation into Arabic, spearheaded the *Nahḍah* movement and contributed extensively to raising awareness of the richness of Arabic language and reviving classical Arabic literature, including the *adab* narratives and the *maqāmah* or assembly genre (Allen, 1995, p. 14). The term *adab* is the modern-time Arabic word for ‘literature.’ The word, however, also means good education and refined manners. The word *udabā’*, the modern-day term for litterateurs, used to refer to people versed in and teaching etiquette and oratory art. Eventually, *adab* became associated with “elevated language, and text” (Allen, 2000, p. 135). *Adab* narratives included biographies, autobiographies, manuals of etiquette and travelogues, and were generally instructive and entertaining as they “took the form of compendia of information and anecdotes” on a wide range of subjects (p. 135).

As to the *maqāmah*, invented by Badī’ al-Zamān al-Hamadhāni (d. 1008) in the 10th century, it is a fictional narrative genre characterized mainly by a picaresque element, a narrative frame with one narrator and one protagonist, rhyming prose reminiscent of the Quranic text, an ornate style and a mixture of entertainment (through humour) and didacticism (through serious subjects). Because it spoke to pre-Islamic Arabic narrative forms, and reproduced forms present in Islamic texts, the genre lived on for over ten centuries, accommodating new expectations and tastes while adapting to new geographies, from Baghdad through Cairo to Seville, to finally become a marker of Arab identity and an essential part of the Arabic literary canon. Omri (2008) argues, therefore, that drawing on this tradition during the transitional and politically tumultuous period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, “was a sign of belonging to a tradition. So when the bases of identity were threatened, *maqāmah* was called upon to make sense of the threat and provide a form that would anchor resistance to it” (p. 254).

Among the most important figures to draw on this genre during the *Nahḍah* was Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1804-1887) in his autobiographical fiction, *As-Sāq ‘alā as-Sāq Fīmā Huwa al-Faryāq* (1855; one leg over another concerning all things Far-yaq), and widely considered as the precursor for modern Arabic novels. It bears mentioning here, however, that at least one critic argues against this reading of the autobiography. Indeed, Omri (2008) proposes a new

reading whereby al-Shidyāq's text, like many that would be published even after the full implantation of the Western novel in the Arabic literary canon, is not an underdeveloped imitation of the novel but rather a narrative form that resists, compromises and transforms the novel (p. 246).

Many of the families and litterateurs involved in this revival movement would, nevertheless, soon leave the Levant in the 1850s for political reasons. While some settled in the Americas, many settled in Egypt, including women poets and essayists like May Ziyādā (1886-1941), where they contributed to Arabic modern literature. In the wake of Bonaparte's campaign, Muhammad 'Ali, Egypt's Wali, launched a wide movement of translation that was soon followed by a wave of imitations and adaptations or *tamṣīr*, i.e. "egyptianization," of European works into an indigenous fictional literature, a first step towards the Arabic novel. After the importation to Egypt of the press at the beginning of the 19th century, newspapers proliferated and constituted the main platform not only for essays calling for political and religious reforms, but also for the publication of serious literature, including short stories and even entire novels, such as Lebanese immigrant Jurjī Zaydān's series of historical novels, and Egyptian journalist Muḥamed al-Muwayliḥī's *Ḥadīth 'Īsa Ibn Hishām* (1907), equally inspired by the *maqāmah* genre in its use of rhymed prose, down to borrowing the name of the narrator, 'Īsā Ibn Hishām, from al-Hamadhānī's 10th-century *maqāmah*.

By the 1920s, a host of young writers, striving to build a national identity proper to Egypt, had been working on domesticating European fictional genres, mainly the short story and the novel. Generally from the middle or upper classes and a Western education, these writers fully embraced Western cultural and literary values. They include Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Tāha Ḥussein and Muḥammad Ḥussein Haykal. Reflecting a center/margin dyad that would shape much of the Arabic novel, especially the immigration novel, as we shall see in Chapter III, many of these literary figures considered the apprehension of the specific form of the novel, much like other aspects of European culture, as THE marker par excellence of entry into (Western) modernity. In fact, "the Dean of Arabic Letters" himself, i.e. Tāha Ḥussein, maintained that it "will be the great privilege and honor of the contemporary Arabic writers to have literally reinstated this genre [the novel] by making it the most important in the realm of

modern prose” (Omri, 2008, p. 235). This discourse on the novel, calling to attention the relationship between the novel and colonial reality, would explain critics’ attempts to pinpoint which Arabic narrative was the first novel or which Arab author completed the domestication of the genre. Thus, Haykal’s novel *Zaynab* (1914), written in France and published in Egypt under the pseudonym *Miṣrī Fallāḥ* (Egyptian peasant), has been hailed by many as “the first genuine and original novel to have been written [in Egypt]” (Kilpatrick, 1974, p. 97).

But the novel was also seen as the pinnacle of national aesthetic achievement and a means of social reform. Therefore, after WWII, the emergence of pan-Arabism, the success of the Egyptian revolution and the other independence movements that swept through the Arab region and led to the emergence of new nation-states, a new generation of writers appeared in Egypt, this time from more modest backgrounds. Embracing Marxism and socialism, they were “capable of more nuanced depictions of the lives and characters of the lower and lower-middle classes” (al-Nuwaihi, 2008, p. 289). The most influential of these writers were Yūsuf Idrīss, ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Qāsim, Edwar al-Kharrāt, the woman writer Latīfa Zayyāt, and Naguib Mahfouz. This latter, in fact, and in perpetuation of the discourse on the Arabic novel mentioned above, has been considered the first to fully domesticate the European novel. Allen (2001), for instance, argues that Mahfouz took “the development of the Arabic novel to a stage of complete maturity” (p. 206) through his huge body of works characterized by close imitation of both Egyptian reality and the Western norms. His social realism was such that Omri (2008) suggests his novels were narratives of Egypt as a nation-state rather than of a wider Arab nation (p. 252). This earned him national institutionalization, including through the Naguib Mahfouz Egyptian state prize for the Arabic novel. Mahfouz’ complete compliance with the Western novelistic form, on the other hand, resulted in Western critics dubbing him the “Egyptian Balzac” and “a Dickens of the Cairo Cafes” (Sheppard, 1988, 75) for, as Omri (2008) aptly points out, “the postcolonial novel gains status through comparison to a Western original, model, antecedent” (p. 248). This would earn Mahfouz, albeit belatedly, international recognition and institutionalization through the Nobel prize.

In the other regions of the Arab world, however, the novel genre took longer to implant in modern literary tradition. It was not until the 1950s that Lebanon, for instance, saw the

publication of works by such novelists as the male writers Suhail Idrīs, Jamil Jabr, and the women writers Laylā Ba‘Ibakkī, Laylā ‘Usseirān, Widād Sakākīni, and Emily Nasrallah. Syria followed suit thanks to such male writers as Hannā Mīna and Ḥalīm Barakāt and women writers like Collette al-Khūrī and Ulfat al-Idlibī. A similar trend is noted in Iraq with Dhunnūn Ayūb and the woman writer Daisy al-Amīr; in Morocco with ‘Abd al-Karīm Ghallāb and al-Bakrī Aḥmad, and in Sudan with Badawī ‘Abd al-Qāder Khalīl and Shākir Mustafā.

Modern Arabic literature, and the novel in particular, would soon enter a new period, the post-1967-war period. The defeat in the Six-Day War with Israel caused a general feeling of *naksah*, setback, which was further amplified by the disillusionment with the new regimes that acceded to power and the secular projects they proposed, including socialism and pan-Arab nationalism. This period also witnessed seismic social, economic and cultural changes in the different regions of the Arab world, from the newly found power of oil and the social transformations it caused in the small Gulf countries, and the struggle for individual liberties and women’s rights, to Western economic and political incursions in Arab countries and the mounting Islamic revival following the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979.

These deep transformations and moments of crisis ushered in a new era in modern Arabic literary history, an era in which the Arabic novel proliferated so much that Jaber ‘Asfour (1999) dubbed it the “era of the novel.” Drawing on Clifford Siskin, Omri (2008, p. 250) talks of a period of “novelism” in which the teaching and publication of studies on the novel, together with the establishment of state prizes and grants to promote it, attached prestige to the genre and turned it into “the business of the nation-state” and created “a history for the genre as dominating all other narrative forms.” Far from being a success story, the temporal and geographical propagation of the novel in this period hides another story. For while on the level of content, novels were as deeply engaged with their socio-political context as ever, calling for social change, fighting for women’s rights, and challenging neo-colonialism and political despotism, they were not completely aligned with the European model. In fact, even the Egyptian Balzac, Mahfouz, grew disillusioned with his initial stance on the novel and explained:

As for us, the writers belonging to the developing or under-developed world, we used to think at the time that realising our real literary identity coincided with the annihilation of our own self-identity. What I mean to say is that the European novel was sacred, and departure from this form was sacrilege. For a while I thought that the role of our generation was to write the novel in the correct form. Now, my theory has changed. The correct form is that which comes from an inner music. I do not imitate either the *maqama* or Joyce. Frankly, what irritates me these days is imitation, even tradition! (as cited in Ouyang, 2003, p. 86)

As a consequence, he turned to an archaistic style in his post-1960s novels, including *Layālī Alf Laylah* (1979; Nights of the one thousand nights), *Riḥlat ibn Faṭṭouma* (1983; Ibn Fattouma's journey) and *Ra'aytu Fīmā Yarā al-Nā'im* (1982; I saw in a dream), where he invokes the *maqāmah* character 'Īsā ibn Hishām, the very protagonist of Mahfouz's predecessor Muḥamed al-Muwayliḥi's *Ḥadīth 'Īsā Ibn Hishām*, mentioned above. But apart from Mahfouz, a group of other writers, dubbed the "Sixties Generation," emerged in Egypt in the 1960s and introduced novels that were equally subversive both formally and politically (Amireh, 1996). Their novels drew heavily on the classical Arabic literary tradition and used "alternative texts and textual strategies that would reflect local and regional particularities" (Allen, 2010, p. 242). As a consequence, "[c]ritics can no longer speak of the late-twentieth-century Arabic novel as simply an imitation of its Western cousin" (Malti-Douglas, 1993, p. 127).

This group of writers included Son'allah Ibrāhīm, Bahā' Tāhir, Moḥammed Yāsef and Jamāl Al Ghītānī. The latter, for example, in his *al-Zaynī Barakāt* (1974) that criticizes Jamal Abd el-Nasser's Egypt in the 1960s, extensively uses classical documents dating back to the 16th century, as well as archaic stylistic features. But one of the most notable examples of this trend is Palestinian writer Emile Ḥabībī's novel *al-Waqā'i' al-Gharībah fī Ikhtifā' Sa'id abī an-Naḥs al-Mutashā'il* (1974; The strange facts in the disappearance of Saeed abi Nahs the pessoptimist [*The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-fated Pessoptimist*, 1985]), which describes the life of Palestinians in Israel in a "masterpiece of absurdist black humor, social critique, and political satire" (Heath, 2000, p. 158), and in which he uses strategies borrowed from the *maqāmah* genre, including intertextuality, anecdote and pseudo-autobiography.

Despite this richness and variety that characterize Modern Arabic literature, it has generally been shunned in the West. According to Lefevere (1992):

Of all the great literatures of the world, the literature produced in the Islamic [Arabic] system is arguably the least available to readers in Europe and the Americas. Any reader walking into a decent bookstore is likely to find anthologies of Chinese and Japanese literature, as well as fairly recent translations of important works, some even in cheap paperback editions. (p. 73)

Lefevere attributes this lack of interest to poetics. Thus, while the Japanese literary genre of *Haiku*, for instance, has managed to establish itself within the Euro-American poetics, Arabic literary genres were unable to do so not because of any shortcoming on the part of European translators/rewriters, but because of the “low prestige” (p. 75) of Islamic Arabic culture in the West and, more particularly, because of “the incompatibility of the poetics of the European and the Islamic systems” (pp. 74-5). Seemingly unaware of the historicity and, thus, ideological constructedness of the perception of the Arabic literary system as essentially incompatible with and inferior to the Western one, Lefevere goes on to explain, in very ahistorical terms, that Arabic literature, as exemplified by the *qaṣīdah*, Arabic poetry, belongs to a “Universe of Discourse” that is completely alien to the Western reader (p. 83). This same essentialization and, indeed, orientalization of Arab thought at work in Lefevere’s account of the untranslatability of Arabic literature in the West is on full display in the reception of French-Algerian author Kateb Yacine’s *Nedjma* (1956). The preface of this French novel, which will figure in subsequent editions up until the 1990s, prepares readers to the difficulty of the author’s work, warning that:

Le rythme et la construction du récit, s'ils doivent quelque chose à certaines expériences romanesques occidentales,—ce que nous ne contestons pas—résultent surtout d'une attitude purement arabe de l'homme face au temps. La pensée européenne se meut dans une durée linéaire; la pensée arabe évolue dans une durée circulaire ou [sic] chaque détour est un retour, confondant l'avenir et le passé dans l'éternité de l'instant. Cette confusion des temps, que les observateurs hâtifs imputent au goût de l'équivoque, et où il faut voir d'abord le signe d'un génie de la synthèse, correspond à un trait si constant du caractère, à une orientation si naturelle de la pensée que la grammaire arabe, elle-même, en est marquée. (p. 6)

Not only could Kateb Yacine not read or write in classical Arabic, he was also exposed to other cultures besides the Arab-Algerian one, mainly the Amazigh culture with its language

and, of course, the French culture with its language, too. In fact, several literary critics saw similarities between Yacine's style and that of the "Nouveaux romanciers," in that, like them, he contests several formal characteristics of the European novel, including "récit chronologique, narrateur central omniscient, réalisme descriptif et analyse psychologique" (Bonn, 2002, p. 37). Yet, his text, written originally in French, is seen as displaying a radically different system of thought, the "Arab thought," and necessitating mediation by the editors to facilitate the reading task.

Recalling an exchange between a major New York commercial publisher and himself, Said (1996) says that the publisher, otherwise known for his liberal ideas, refused to publish any of the Arabic literary works that Said had proposed to him on the grounds that "Arabic is a controversial language" (p. 97). Said goes on to suggest that American publishers' "embargo," as he calls their resistance to translate and publish Arabic literary works, lies elsewhere than in Arabic being problematic. Charting the modern Arabic literary scene, Said enthuses that the latter has come "excitingly far [...] since Mahfouz was at his peak about twenty-five years ago" (p. 101), explaining that what makes this literature rich and exceptional is "less the explicit subject matter than the formal and technical achievement" of the modern writers (p. 101). However, "the longstanding prejudice against Arabs and Islam that remains entrenched in Western, and especially American, culture" contributes to the politicization of modern Arabic literature and circumscribes editorial and translation practices (p. 97). Accordingly, the works chosen for translation were, since Naguib Mahfouz was given the Nobel Prize in 1988, mostly limited to novels of Mahfouz, discussed in American media not as a novelist and a man of letters but as "a hybrid of cultural oddity and a political symbol" (p. 98).

In fact, out of over 40 novels and 350 short stories by this novelist, it was mainly the trilogy, which dates back to the 1950s and fully conforms to the European model as mentioned above, that was deemed by the Nobel Committee as deserving of a prize and praise in 1988. His post-1967 works, including the ones mentioned above, where Mahfouz draws on the classical Arabic tradition, remained largely invisible. Allen (2001) remarks that *The Trilogy* is also "the only work that consistently remains on the shelves of bookstores," which, according to him, indicates a marked preference by the European reader for an Arabic novel that is

completely westernized (p. 208). This tendency to translate Arab literary works that conform to Western literary norms and that are penned by Westernized authors antedates Mahfouz' works. Thus, in the first half of the 20th century, while al-Muwayliḥī's *Ḥadīth 'Īsā Ibn Hishām* (1907) was never translated into French and had to wait until 1974 to be translated in English as part of a PhD dissertation by Roger Allen, al-Ḥakīm's *Yawmiyyāt Nā'ib fī al-Aryāf* (1937), was translated into French in 1939, under the title *Journal d'un substitut de campagne en Egypte*, and reprinted in 1942, 1950, 1974, 1978 and 1983—the last edition was published in 2009 by Plon—and into English under the title of *The Maze of Justice*, in 1947. Aware of this situation, Nash (2007) remarks that if it was only westernized Arab authors that were

well received by a Western readership, Anglo-Arab writers take note: a literature taken as too tied to the unfamiliar codes and preoccupations of Arabic literary culture would be unsuccessful unless it were domesticated to meet the expectations of a Western readership. (p. 15)

Poetics, however, is not the only factor that impinges upon the reception of Arabic literature in the West. As Said explained, ideology is the overriding factor. According to him, the works that are chosen for translation and that are well received, are mostly works that conform to the hegemonic narratives on the Arab world, including texts by the “overexposed” Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi, at the expense of many outstanding novelists, both men and women, who produce subversive literature. Coptic Egyptian writer Edwar al-Kharrāṭ and his novels are a telling example. Recipient of the Cairo Fiction Award for his novels, al-Kharrāṭ is a celebrated novelist in Egypt, known in the Arab literary scene for criticizing rigid rules of characterization, plot and narrative, for being in favour for “the intermixing of different genres of the novel, the short story and poetry,” and for drawing extensively on classical literary traditions (Fathi, 2008). Several of al-Kharrāṭ's novels were translated but were given short shrift by literary critics, including *City of Saffron* (1989). Said attributes this lack of interest to the fact that these works challenge hegemonic perceptions in the United States. Talking about *City of Saffron*, Said (1996) maintains that “[r]eaders who have swallowed the journalistic myth that Copts and Muslims hate each other will be informed otherwise by these meditative yet subversively intimate ruminations about childhood” (p. 100).

Jacquemond (1992) observes similar translation practices and modes of reception in regard to Arabic literature in France. According to him, works selected for translation were generally those that confirmed “both radical alterity and French self-representations” (p. 151). He further explains that while literary translations from Arabic into French increased during the 1980s as a response to the interest sparked in the Middle East by the Islamic resurgence, their sales remained limited and their consumption was almost exclusively by a specialized readership (p. 152). In fact, unlike literary works translated from English, Latin American or Japanese, translated Arabic literature was so imbued with the ethnographic imperative that it was critiqued by experts on Arab affairs and not by literary critics (p. 152). Echoing Said, Jacquemond concludes that “modern Arabic literature has yet to free itself from the orientalist ghetto” (p. 152).

However, Clark (2000), a translator of contemporary Arab writers, disagrees with both Said and Jacquemond. According to him, Arabic literature is not embargoed in the West since it is increasingly translated. He further explains that publishers’ choice of which literary works to translate is informed not so much by political or ideological considerations as by economic motivations insofar as publishers seek to cater to the readers’ assumed expectations. Clark is certainly right in foregrounding the economic logic underpinning international cultural exchanges and consumption of literature. As Heilbron and Sapiro (2008) explain, in the current book market context, where big economic conglomerates increasingly dominate the publishing industry, cultural products are increasingly commodified and submitted to the “law of profitability” (p. 32). However, Heilbron and Sapiro also point out that the economic logic alone cannot account for editorial practices (p. 33). Offer and demand are not mere economic data but “des constructions sociales portées par des groupes spécifiques, et dans ce travail de construction interviennent des instances non-marchandes, notamment des institutions étatiques et des instances culturelles” (p. 33). Drawing on Bourdieu, Heilbron (1999) argues that cultural exchanges like translation are best to be perceived as “a translational cultural field” with “a certain autonomy vis-à-vis the constraints of the world market” (p. 432). As such, it would be more fruitful to perceive these exchanges as “an international arena with economic, political and symbolic dimensions” (Heilbron, 1999, p. 432).

The logic of gain, therefore, cannot be separated from political and cultural considerations in analyzing the translation and consumption of Arabic literature in the West, as Clark seems to be doing. They overlap and intersect to inform the choice of Arabic literary works to be translated in the West. In fact, despite his initial disagreement, Clark eventually echoes Jacquemond above and declares at the end of his discussion that Arabic literature remains the prerogative of experts on Middle Eastern affairs, and has not been able to break out from “the ghetto” despite its richness (2000, p. 14). In the same vein, Booth (2003) maintains that American commercial publishers generally ignore Arabic literature, and that while university presses and small publishers will publish Arabic fiction, their choice is often guided by the “realist bias [and] the supposition of mimesis” (p. 49).

1.2.3 Contemporary Arabic literary translation in the West: The statistics.

The statements above find strong corroboration in statistics pertaining to translation from Arabic in Western countries with close relationships with Arab countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Historically, most Arab countries were subjected to French and British colonization well into the 20th century, and as of WWII, the United States supplanted France and the UK as an imperial power with a major role in the shaping of both the economies and politics of Arab countries. Economically, countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region ranked fourth “as an export market for [...] and 5th as the largest supplier of imports to the United States in 2008,” with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Algeria, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates on top (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2012). Politically and diplomatically, the US, UK and France are close allies with most Arab countries in the War on Terror and are generally deeply involved, albeit to varying degrees, not only in the peace process in the Middle East, but also in all political upheavals in Arab countries, from post-war Iraq to Bahrain and Libya during what has come to be known as the Arab Spring. Culturally, these three countries have large Arab diasporas, mainly because of the colonial past, and know an important human circulation from Arab countries for tourist and educational purposes. In France, for instance, immigrants from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia constitute the second largest immigrant population after

Europeans as they account for about 30% of total immigrants per 2011 statistics (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, n.d.).

Equally important, the Arabic language ranks sixth in world languages with close to 300 million native speakers (Prochazka, 2006). It is also the liturgical language of several hundred million people. In addition, Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, the only official language in 16 of the 22 member states of the Arab League, and one of the official languages in the remaining member states, including the Comoros and Djibouti. It is also an official language in three non-member states, namely Israel, Chad and Eritrea. Based on these numbers, Arabic is a major world language. However, neither the importance of the language nor the close political, diplomatic, economic and cultural interest that Arab countries hold for the West, and specifically the countries mentioned above, are proportionately reflected in the translation flow from Arabic into French and English. This suggests a huge language, and therefore power, inequality, and signals the peripheral status of Arabic language and literature in world's cultural exchanges and translation flows. In fact, according to Heilbron, "the significance of translations within language groups [...] is shown to depend primarily on the position of the language within the international system" (1999, p. 432). This dependence would mean that analysis of translation flows between language groups is essential for "understanding the role of translations in specific local or national contexts" (p. 432). But before dwelling on any statistics pertaining to such translation flows, it is worth noting that while international translation statistics have been available since WWI, the only source that readily provides such international data is UNESCO's Index Translationum (IT).

As an international bibliography, however, IT is fraught with shortcomings. The data it provides is by no means complete since many countries do not have an institution that collects or otherwise regularly updates data on translations. What's more, indexation is not always accurate. In the particular case of Arabic literature, for instance, it indexes the various editions of the *Arabian Nights* as translated literature, when they are not necessarily proper translations (Jacquemond, 2008, p. 363). Nevertheless, Heilbron (1999) maintains that the data IT provides can still be relied upon "in an indicative manner to highlight structural patterns" (p. 434). In the case of translated Arabic literature, the most recent bibliography is Salih Altouma's

Modern Arabic Literature in Translation (2005), which only accounts for English translations done up until 2003. UNESCO’s database is, therefore, still useful in forming an idea, albeit tentative, of how Arabic literature, especially novels, fares in translation.

Thus, Jacquemond (2008) uses data provided by IT to trace the evolution of the Arabic-French translation flow over the years. According to this database, France headed the “Top 10” countries translating from Arabic, with 1222 titles out of a total of 9133 titles, well ahead of the US and the UK, ranking 6th and 10th respectively (p. 360). Looking more specifically into modern Arabic literature, both prose and poetry, and its diffusion, Jacquemond (2008, p. 366) affirms that the period between 1979 and 2000 saw a steady increase in French translations, with 65% of Arabic literature published by specialized publishers, 25% by small publishers, and only 10% by prestigious publishing houses (Figure 1).

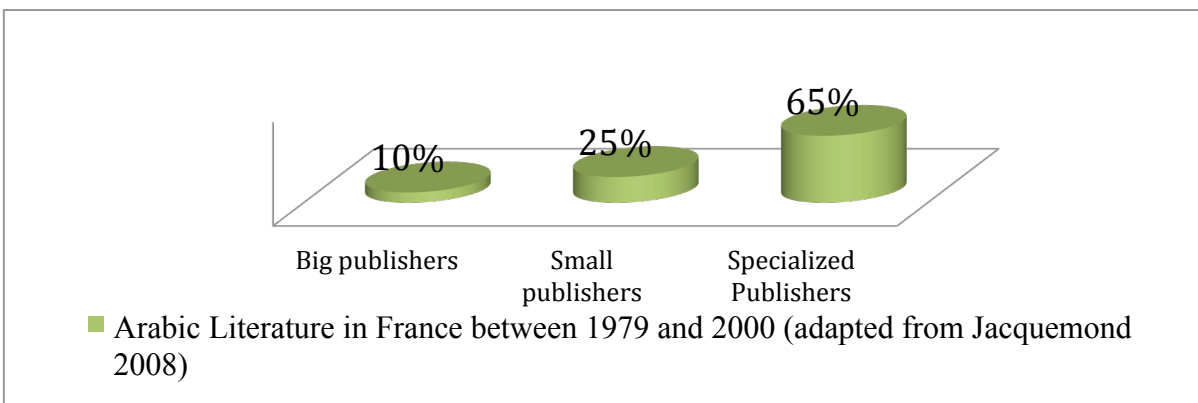


Figure 1. Arabic literature in France between 1979 and 2000 (adapted from Jacquemond 2008)

A closer look into the titles published, the year of publication and the publishing house reveals that literary translation from Arabic did not really take off until the 1970s, when such notable Arab writers as Tayeb Saleh and Naguib Mahfouz, and poets like Mahmoud Darwish started being translated into French by small or specialized publishers (Jacquemond, 2008, p. 364). The Arabic literary works that go into large prints are mainly those that are “faithful to the double paradigm of realism and political engagement,” and that thus lend themselves to an ethnographic reading, including works by women writers like Hanan al-Shaykh (pp. 366-367). Jacquemond contends, in fact, that the prestigious publishing houses show more interest in Arab women writers than in their male counterparts. Thus, Lebanese writer Laylā Ba‘Ibakkī’s

novel *Je vis!* was published by Le Seuil in 1961, while Palestinian Saḥar Khalīfa’s *Chronique du figuier barbare* was published in 1978 by Gallimard within its “Du monde entier” series, Algerian Ahlem Mosteghanemi’s *Mémoires de la chair* in 2002 by Albin Michel, within its “Les grandes traductions” series, and Lebanese Najwā Barakāt’s *Le bus des gens bien* in 2002 by Stock, within its “Cosmopolite” series (pp. 365-7). Jacquemond (2008) concludes that while a larger corpus of modern Arabic literature is being made available in French translation, most of these translations are either barely visible or are politicized (p. 366).

A search in IT for Arabic literary texts translated and circulated in the UK and the US over the period from 2000 through 2008⁴ reveals a situation very much similar to that of the French market between 1979 and 2000. During the period from 2000 through 2008, Arabic titles translated in all subjects numbered barely 180 and 206 in the UK and US, respectively. In neither countries is Arabic among the first ten source languages, while in France, it comes 10th with 1622 titles over the whole period from 1979 to 2008 (IT). A survey of literary translations in the US reveals an even bleaker picture. A total of 93 translated literary titles were published for the period from 2000 to 2008, five of which were not proper translations, such as a book entitled *Literature from the Axis of Evil* (2006), with no specific author. In other words, only 88 translated literary works were published in the US during that period, 50% of which by specialized presses, including university presses, 30.68% by small publishers, and 19.32% by big commercial houses, such as Penguin (Figure 2).

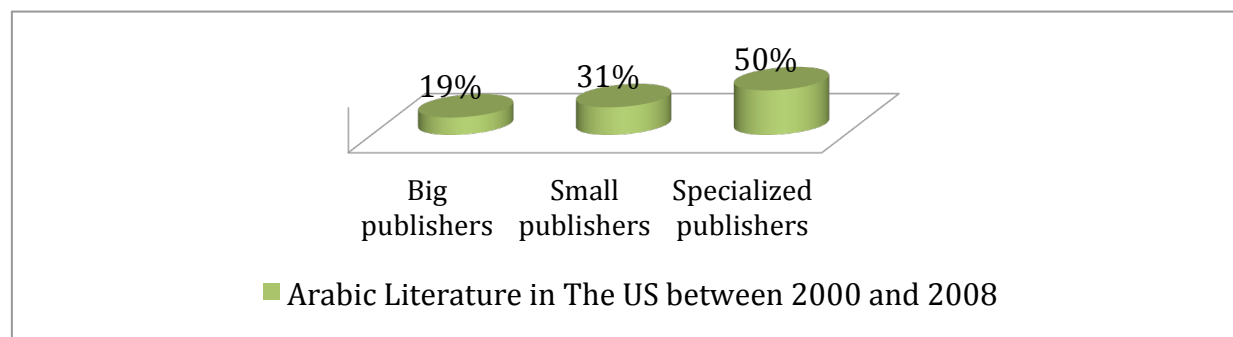


Figure 2. Arabic literature in the US between 2000 and 2008

⁴ Up until February 2015, the statistics for translation from Arabic into English in the UK and the US had not been updated beyond 2008.

The situation in the UK is only slightly different. A search in IT for literary works translated from Arabic over the same period in the country yields 72 titles, nine of which were discarded for not being translations of originary works in Arabic, such as Huri's *The Poetry of Sadi Yusuf: Between Homeland and Exile* (2006), a study in English of Sa'di's poetry. In other words, only 61 translated works were published in the UK over the surveyed period, over half of which, 52.46%, by specialized publishers, 24.59% by small publishers and 22.95% by big commercial publishers (Figure 3).

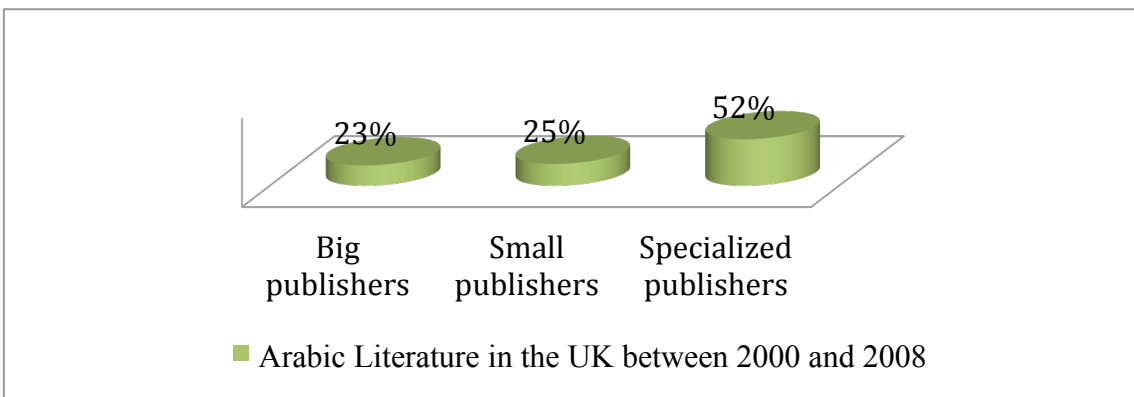


Figure 3. Arabic literature in the UK between 2000 and 2008

These results show that translation and consumption of Arabic literature in the West remain under the double bind of both ideological needs and commercial considerations. Interest on the part of specialized publishers, including university presses and publishers specialized in political and Middle Eastern affairs, highlights the ethnographic dimension that this literature acquires in a transnational context. As to the low rates of circulation by big commercial publishers, they suggest that Arabic literature is only of interest if it does not unsettle readers and challenge preconceptions. Indeed, a brief look at the translated Arabic fiction published by big American publishers, mainly Penguin, Pantheon Books, Random House and Alfred A. Knopf, over the period from 2000 to 2008, reveals that these publishers have a strong preference for what has been canonized in the West as representative of Arabic literature, and for women's literature. Thus, 65% of the literary works published by these publishers over this period are all by Naguib Mahfouz alone. A total of 18% are works by

women authors, namely two by Iraqi author Batūl Khudārī, and one by Saudi author Rajaa Alsanea, while only 12% are by male authors that have not been canonized (Figure 4).

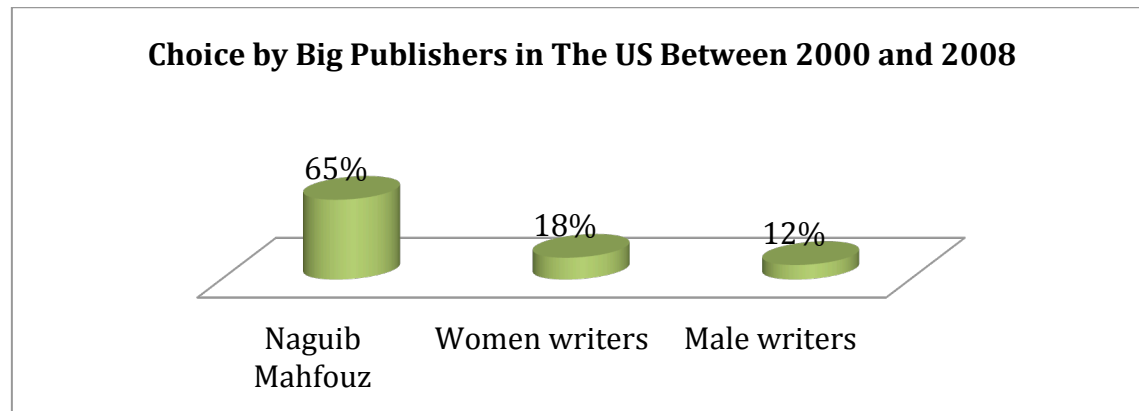


Figure 4. Choice of novels by big publishers in the US between 2000 and 2008

In the UK, the situation is slightly more varied yet not significantly different. Over the same period, 64% of literary works published by big publishers, such as Penguin, Alfred A. Knopf, Bloomsbury and Harper Perennial, were titles that have already been canonized in the West. These include *The One Thousand and the One Nights*, categorized by IT as translations; Tayeb Saleh's (1969) *Season of Migration to the North*, likened in style to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Shaheen, 1985); works by Gibran Khalil Gibran and three novels by Naguib Mahfouz. In fact, the latter only account for 21.43% of the literary titles published by commercial publishing houses in the UK, as opposed to 65% in the US. As in the US, however, women's fiction comes second in the UK, too, with 22% of all translated fiction published by big publishers, namely two novels by Lebanese Hanan al-Shaykh and a third one by Rajaa Alsanea. Only 14% are translated literary works by male writers that are not classics, like Palestinian Mourid al Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah* (2000), and Egyptian Alaa al-Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* (2002), which was described by Jacquemond (2008) as a very conventional novel that describes Egyptian society and that lends itself to an ethnographic reading (pp. 366-367).

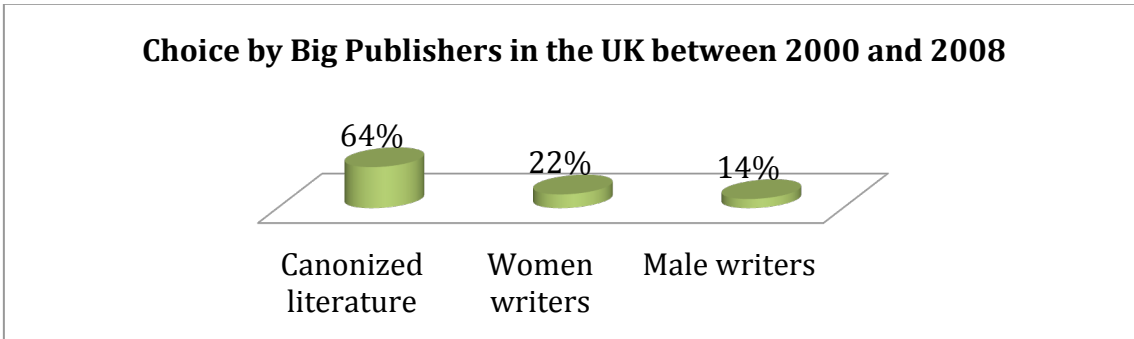


Figure 5. Choice of novels by big publishers in the UK between 2000 and 2008

While these numbers are very small, which finds explanation in Said’s “embargo” or Clark’s “ghetto,” they still bring out a pattern, that of Arab women’s literature enjoying increasing attention in the West, including from big commercial publishers, which makes them more visible and helps “build” specific authors, to borrow Sapiro’s term (2008, p. 182). Drawing on his experience, Clark (2000) confirms this advantage that Arab women writers have over their male counterparts. When he proposed to a British publishing house a collection of short stories by a Syrian writer for translation into English, the publisher rejected the proposal even though the collection had already been translated into French, Russian and several other languages. The editor responded that he would have preferred it if the short stories were written by a young Syrian woman (p. 3). This prompted Clark to wonder if the preference for Arab women’s literature was because “of lingering Orientalist fantasies of the Harem, or due to a liberal wish to offset prevailing gender imbalances and inequalities” (p. 3).

Clark’s question echoes those of several Arab women writers, like ‘Aliya Mamdouh and Ahdaf Soueif, who have expressed doubts as to the motivation behind the growing interest in their writings (Amireh, 1996). In fact, according to Booth (2003):

It would be difficult to maintain that such works flourish mostly because readers want their stereotypes broken down or complicated. Too often, the opposite seems to be true, as suggested by the popularity of the Not Without My Daughter genre, the sort that strengthens stereotypes [...] about living as a woman in Middle Eastern societies. (p. 49)

1.3 Contemporary Arab Women's Literature in translation

1.3.1 Contemporary Arab women literature.

Contemporary Arab women's literature is not to be separated from contemporary Arabic literature as a whole. Like the latter, it too is rooted in an old and rich tradition that goes back to the seventh century with such poetesses as al-Khansā', considered "not only an excellent *female* poet, but one of the best poets of the time, period" (DeYoung, 2000, p. 47). This poet was the first in a long line of poetesses through the Omayyad, Abbasid and Andalusian eras (Moussa-Mahmoud 1992), including Sufi women like Rābi'a al-'Adawiyyah (717–801); slaves like 'Arīb (797-890); and women from the ruling elite, like Wallādah Bint al-Mustakfī (1001-1080). According to Myrne (2006), early Arabic literature allowed these women "to speak and act as subjects in a manner that is sometimes astonishingly autonomous as well as contradictory to the dominating [patriarchal] ideology" (p. 157). This same resistance to patriarchy that cuts through social classes would find its way to contemporary Arabic literature by women.

'Ashour, Ghazoul, Reda-mekdashy and McClure (2008) trace the origin of contemporary Arab women's literature to the *Nahḍah* movement, and more specifically, the early calls of emancipation to which this movement gave birth, and which were sounded in the second half of the 19th century by both men, such as Qāssim Amīn and Lutfī al-Sayyid, and women, like 'Ā'isha al-Taymūriyyah (1840-1902) and Malak Ḥifnī Nāsif (1886-1918). These calls allowed increasing numbers of women in several Arab countries access to education, including university education. Soon women were holding literary salons in Egypt, including Princess Nazlī Fādīl, and in Syria, like Maryana Marrash. As already mentioned above, the wave of immigration from the Levant to Egypt brought to the latter several intellectual women who would emerge as journalists, essayists, poets or writers, including Zaynab Fawwāz (1850-1914), and May Ziyādā (1886-1941). The importation of the press benefitted women as much as it did men, and several newspapers and magazines were published by and for women, like Hind Nawfal's *al-Fatāh*, launched in Egypt in 1892, and Madīḥa Al-Sābūnī's *al-Mar'ah* launched in 1893 in Syria.

Following their male counterparts, many women would, towards the end of the 19th century, explore several forms of literary expression from essays and poetry to the short story and the novel. Already, in the diversity of their backgrounds and intellectual inclinations, together with their strong feminist stances, they were precursors of the modern Arab women writers. Among the most prominent figures in this period was ‘Ā’isha al-Taymūriyyah, an aristocratic Egyptian writer known for her lyrical poetry. Al-Taymūriyyah authored a feminist treatise, *The Mirror of Contemplation*, in 1892, and published a novel *Natā’ij al-Aḥwāl fī al-Aqwāl wal Af’āl* (1888; The results of circumstances in words and deeds), clearly inspired by the *maqāmah* genre. In the introduction to this work of fiction, she openly criticizes gender segregation to which aristocratic women were subjected, and explains that she intends her work to alleviate the grief these women feel “in the exile of solitude, which is harder to bear than exile from one’s homeland” (al-Taymūriyyah, 1990, p. 128).

But all nineteenth-century women writers were not embracing the same values, nor were they all born to aristocratic families. For instance, while Wardah al-Yāzījī, who authored the first book by an Arab woman to appear in print in 1867, belonged to the same social class as al-Taymūriyyah and benefitted from a similar education, she was very conservative both in her writings and her lifestyle and was against the rejection of traditions (Cooke, 1992, p. 445). Unlike al-Taymūriyyah and al-Yāzījī, both Sunni, upper-middle class women, the other prominent Arab woman writer of that period, Zaynab Fawwāz, was born to a poor Shiite family in Southern Lebanon but would receive education in Egypt and grow up to become one of Egypt’s pioneering feminists. Among her most known writings are her novel, *Husn al-‘Awāqib aw Ghāda al-zāhirah* (1899; Good consequences or radiant Ghada), and her biographical dictionary, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Ṭabaqāt Rabbāt al-Khudūr* (1894; Scattered pearls on the generations of the mistresses of seclusion). In the latter, Fawwāz did more than simply draw on the classical Arabic biographical tradition. She carried out what Booth calls a “gendered rewriting” of a centuries-old, mainly male-authored genre, to invest her work with more authority and to create “a new discourse of experience and aspiration that was laying the groundwork for the early articulation of Arab women’s feminism” (Booth, 1995, p. 120).

Through their content and the mere fact of their publication, the writings of these women transgressed gender segregation and spoke to the growing feminist consciousness that accompanied the nationalist one, and the mounting reformist concerns with gender roles and the place of women in society, thereby setting the stage for future generations of Arab women writers. While poetry was the prevalent literary expression among Arab women at the turn of the 20th century, the period that saw the publication of novels by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Tāha Ḥussein, Yaḥya Ḥeqqī and Maḥmūd Taymour, also saw the publication of fiction by many women writers, such as the Syrian Ulfat al-Idlibī, and the Egyptian Suhayr Qalamāwī and ‘Ā’ishah ‘Abd al-Rahmān, all addressing the position of women in society.

It was not until the 1950s that a real wave of feminine literary creativity swept through the Arab countries with increasingly higher numbers of women publishing novels and short stories. This period, the same that witnessed the emergence of such famous male Arab writers as Yusuf Idrīs, ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Qāsim, Edwar al-Kharrāt, and Naguib Mahfouz, saw a burst of literary activity by such women writers as Amīna al-Sa‘īd and Latīfa Zayyāt from Egypt, Widād Sakākīni and Collette Khūrī from Syria, Laylā Ba‘Ibakki and Emily Nasrallah from Lebanon, and Samīra ‘Azzām from Palestine. While experimental, these works, along those by male authors like Naguib Mahfouz, considerably motivated women from several Arab countries to start forging real literary careers as of the 1970s (Jayyusi, 2002, p. 4), that is with the start of the “era of the novel.” This era seems to have “opened the gates” for Arab feminist writing, to borrow Badran and Cooke’s expression (1990), throughout the Arab world, mainly in the form of novels and short stories. New names started to emerge in the Gulf countries and North Africa, where modern Arabic literature was late to take off. In fact, ‘Ashour *et al* 2008 bibliography counts over 1200 women writers from the end of the 19th century through 1999. Like their male counterparts, some wrote in the language of the former colonizer, while others chose to write in Arabic. Those who chose the former, like Algerian Djébar, would often try to “ramener les voix non francophones — les gutturales, les ensauvagés — jusqu’à un texte français qui devient enfin mien” (Djébar, 1999, p. 29). Those who chose Arabic still had to “change this patriarchal language that marginalizes them and at the same time [...] make the language acceptable enough to be published and read by a significant audience” (Zeidan, 1995, p. 2).

Their literary texts have, from the beginning, been at the intersection of multiple hierarchies, including gender, social class, patriarchal, neo-colonial and, for some writers, colonial violence. As a consequence, these texts boldly address all sorts of social and political problems deriving from the patriarchal system (Jayyusi, 2002, p. 5), as well as from the relationship with the Other. Grounded in their historical context, they shun purely romantic themes to look into issues of civil war, political corruption and social oppression all while foregrounding feminine identity. Some preferred the realistic novel with a chronological order and an omniscient narrator, while others opted for the modernist novel characterized by narration fragmentation and multiplicity of narrative voices. Some others explored the historical novel and yet others the autobiographical genre. But by and large, women writers from Arab countries

seem to be constantly experimenting with the thematic and linguistic structure of the Arabic novel and short story. Some tend to introduce into their texts authentic dialogue from their own spoken languages and unconventional themes from their immediate surroundings. Despite the strongly held view that shared Arab political history, language and social customs have no national boundaries, the discerning reader cannot but be struck by regional differences which characterizes the works of some authors. (Abu-Haidar as cited in Valassopoulos, 2007, p. 87)

While doing so, these writers have had to contend with the entire gamut of censorship, from the one operated exclusively on women because of their secondary position in male-dominated societies, to censorship resulting from both conservative social values and authoritarian regimes that quash politically transgressive voices regardless of their gender. In Egypt, for instance, Nawal El Saadawi had to divorce two of her husbands because of their opposition to her writing. She was also imprisoned under President Anwar Sadat's regime for the political views she expressed in her writings. In Jordan, Suhayr al-Tall was imprisoned for offending public sensibilities because of her short story "*The Gallows*" (1987), in which she described a public execution where the noose is a huge phallus. On quite similar charges, Laylā Ba'lbakki was tried, but acquitted, for her collection of short stories *Safīnat Ḥanān Ilā al-Qamar* (1963; A spaceship of tenderness to the moon), because of erotic passages in some of the stories.

Far from muzzling Arab women writers, such pressures encouraged them to look for creative ways to circumvent censorship (Cohen-Mor, 2005, p. 20). Highlighting some of the narrative strategies these writers use, Cohen-Mor concludes (2005) that not only do they have “keen powers of observation and extraordinary boldness and outspokenness” (p. 22), but their writings also shatter “the myth of the Arab woman as totally dependent on—and subservient to—the Arab man” (p. 25). In fact, some women writers, particularly those from the Maghreb, show more courage and success than their male counterparts in “giving us adult heroines grappling with their sexual realities coupled with their social and political ones” (Mikhail, 2004, p. 139).

Arab women writers’ visibility has thus grown both inside and outside the Arab world, so much so that they have become the subject of increasing numbers of anthologies and book-length studies, including ‘Ashour *et al* (2008), Badran and Cooke (1990/2004), Cooke (2000), Cohen-Mor (2005), Gauch (2006), Valassopoulos (2007) and Zeidan (1995), to cite but a few. These works often engage with Arab women’s literature from both postcolonial/feminist and purely feminist perspectives. Zeidan, for instance, argues that because this literature is grounded in experiences that are different from those of male writers, it warrants a reading grounded in feminist literary theory (1995, p. 3). Concurring with him, Hafez holds that Arab women’s literature enables “feminine values to penetrate and subvert the patriarchal order,” and as such, it needs to be read and studied through the prism of feminist literary theory to free it from “the lines of male tradition” (1995, p. 20). Drawing on Julia Kristeva and Elaine Showalter, Hafez elaborates a typology of Arab women’s literature that identifies three phases in the development of this literature: the “feminine”, the “feminist” and the “female” phases. While these phases coincide with distinct historical periods, Hafez (1995) prefers to look at them more as “three types of narrative discourse” than as three distinct chronological phases, to allow for the “overlapping and coexistence” of these phases in Arab women’s literature (p. 21). Thus, the “feminine” phase, coinciding with the beginning of contemporary Arabic literature as a whole, is characterized by writings that were “no more than variations on the main patriarchal discourse,” but that “were the necessary first step without which subsequent development would not have been possible” (p. 25). The “feminist” phase, from the 1930s through the 1970s, is characterized by writings that aim to subvert “patriarchal control of the

distribution of roles” (p. 29), and that were championed by the newly established nationalistic regimes, themselves aiming at instituting social change. As to the “female” phase, it is characterized by a more sophisticated discourse of difference and “self-discovery” (p. 35), whereby “the ‘female’ writer does not aspire to cancel out the male voice, or to subject it to the rubrics of feminist oppression, but rather to create a new order in which the two genders relate a different story of the female” (p. 38).

This leads Cooke to maintain that Arab women writers are feminists even when they do not recognize themselves as such or when they reject the concept altogether (2000, p. vii). In fact, feminism in Arab countries is a problematic concept. In what Ahmed (1992) dubbed “colonial feminism,” the colonizer hijacked the discourse of European feminism to masquerade as the defender of Arab-Muslim woman’s rights in order to subdue the Arab-Muslim man. This created a strong association between feminism and colonialism. Many Arab women activists, including writers, thus refuse to identify themselves as feminists⁵ out of a belief that it is a Western import that “detracts from ‘larger issues’ as imperialism, class struggle and Zionism” (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 5). Thus, Iraqi writer ‘Alia Mamdouh states in a 2002 interview with Chollet that she is “definitely not attracted to the feminist theories put forward by the French or American groups who developed feminist criticism.” Emphasizing social and economic inequalities and oppression both of men and women rather than gender, she stresses that “in Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of Europe like Spain, Portugal, and Greece, women suffer from oppression, poverty, repression, just as men do.” She concludes that there is a need for “new strategies which we human beings, men and women, need to invent or discover.”

This is not to say, however, that all women activists and writers in Arab countries categorically reject feminism. Indeed, while they have defined, translated and responded to feminism in different ways, the latter has eventually become “an inescapable term of reference” insofar as it has been “embraced, repudiated and translated [and...] implicated in

⁵ Instead of using the Arab equivalent of ‘feminist movement’, i.e. *al-ḥarakah al-nasawiyyah*, many prefer the term *al-ḥarakah al-nisā’iyyah*, i.e. the women’s movement. They believe the former to be “only concerned with *abawiyah* (patriarchy), but not including analyses or critiques of economic and political inequalities” like the latter (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 5).

contemporary politics” (Abu Lughod, 1998, p. 3). This is nowhere more apparent than in Islamic feminism. Since the 1990s, Arab women are finding themselves increasingly instrumentalized in two oppositional hegemonic discourses: a local one, that of the growing religious fundamentalism circumscribing their roles and spaces; and a neo-imperialist one, promoting a monolithic perception of a subjugated Arab-Muslim woman to justify wars (see Hunt and Rygiel, 2008). In response, many Arab women activists and writers have availed themselves of what is often perceived to be mutually exclusive ideologies, feminism and Islamism, to subvert these local and transnational systems of control. They eroded the power of fundamentalist discourse by grounding their calls for women’s rights in an Islamic discourse, all while rewriting Islamic history and reinterpreting Islam and its foundational texts. At the same time, they contest the perception of Arab-Muslim women in the Western imaginary by highlighting that conditions for empowerment and justice can very well be found in Islam and its tenets. As Cooke (2000) rightly explains, Islamic feminism is “a radical act of subversion,” whereby the feminist, instead of fixing her identity, strategically positions herself between two seemingly contradictory identities, only to be better able to engage in political insubordination (p. 60).

Through their literature, then, Arab women writers shatter preconceptions and frustrate categorization, including the very ethnic identity conferred to them, “Arab.” They problematize constructs of gender, ethnicity, language and religion. From a Translation Studies standpoint, the richness and complexity of their literature complicate the task of the translator. As a feminist literature, it may warrant the type of translation advocated by von Flotow (1997), and which stresses “difference, deterritorialization (the fact that the text has been taken out of its territory), displacement (the exile of the text into another culture) and contamination (the confluence of source and translating languages), rather than fidelity or equivalence” (p. 44). Paradoxically, as a postcolonial literature, it can call for a politically engaged translation that

strategically downplays cultural difference in the interest of expedient political action, for what is at stake here is less the preservation of cultural or linguistic specificity than the construction of a political narrative in a universal framework of “justice.” (Hassan, 2006, p. 759)

From the postcolonial and feminist standpoints, the growing interest in Arab women novelists over the past few years has had positive consequences, mainly exposure of this literature and the contestation of the belief that Arab feminism is a Western import (Valassopoulos, 2007, p. 24). Nevertheless, this interest and the ensuing exposure have also positioned Arab women's literature in a transnational context characterized by asymmetrical power relations and saturated with stereotypes. Within such a context, this literature can be (mis-)appropriated. In her discussion of the consumption of texts by Third-World feminists, Alcoff (1995) maintains that these texts "can engender diverse contexts. Not only what is emphasized, noticed, and how it is understood will be affected by the location of both speaker and hearer, but the truth-value or epistemic status will also be affected" (p. 102).

1.3.2 The Arab woman in Western narrative.

In her *Western Representations of the Muslim Women: From Termagant to Odalisque*, Kahf (1999) holds that the Western discourse on the Arabo-Muslim woman was not always negative. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, European literature represented the Arab Muslim woman as strong and brave. However, the discourse changed as the power balance changed between Europe and the Arab-Muslim world during the past five centuries. It became Orientalist inasmuch as it positioned "the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (Said, 1978, p. 7). The Arab-Muslim woman found herself accordingly at the center of this new discourse, a discourse that the modern West inherited and that got more powerful in the wake of several events of far-reaching international geopolitical significance, such as the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This discourse has become mainstream and so hegemonic that not only the mainstream media and the public at large subscribe to it, but also the politicians, the academic community and the modern feminists who, according to Ahmed, all

"know," that Arabs are backward, they know also with the same flawless certainty that Muslim women are terribly oppressed and degraded. And they know this not because they know that women everywhere in the world are oppressed, but because they believe that, specifically, Islam monstrously oppressed women. An American feminist said to me—and maintained it at great length citing numerous sources, all of them of course Western—that women, according to Islam, had no souls and were thought of simply as

animals. But she was an unusual woman, not in her certain belief that Muslim women are oppressed beyond anything known in the West, but because she was able to cite detailed, although incorrect, information in support of her belief. (1982, p. 522)

Such a representation of the Arab woman is reified as a regime of truth that transcends history, geography and class. In her critique of Western feminism, Chandra Mohanty (1984) suggests that Arab-Muslim women are particularly perceived and represented in the West as a homogeneous oppressed group regardless of the different family practices that underlie gender (p. 342). As a consequence, “Arabs and Muslims it appears, don't change at all. [...] They exist, as it were, ‘outside history’” (p. 342). According to Bhabha (1983), it is such ahistorical representation that creates stereotypes:

A stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference [...] constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relationships. (p. 27)

Literature on the representation of Arab-Muslim women in the West that are more recent than Mohanty and Ahmed hold similar conclusions. Wilkins (1997), for instance, maintains that mainstream reportage of Arab and Muslim women generally portrays them as passive objects of a traditional society, while Bullock (1999/2007) argues that mainstream media tend to conflate wearing the veil with oppression, thereby overlooking the multiplicity of practices that underlie the wearing of the veil and denying Arab-Muslim women any agency in choosing to wear it. Analyzing photographs of Arab and Muslim women in US newspapers between the invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Falah (2005) asserts that Arab-Muslim women are depicted as either weak and oppressed in need of Western help, as in the case of Iraqi Kurdish women, or as brainwashed by local dangerous and violent powers when they engage in political action and forms of resistance against US policies or Israeli actions, as in the case of Iraqi and Palestinian women, all of which again deny Arab women agency.

The Muslim-Arab woman is also the object of a literary genre that is enjoying ever increasing coverage in Western media and, thus, wider circulation in the West, namely autobiographies of Arab-Muslim women or of Western women as hostages of Islamic religion and culture. The first and perhaps most powerful example that springs to mind is Betty

Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987), with sales that have exceeded 12 million copies and translations into over 20 languages. Seeing herself and her daughter as "captives of the venomous stranger who had once been a loving husband and father," Mahmoody seems to develop hatred and disdain for all things Iranian, writing that she "had been trapped in a country that, to me, had seemed populated almost totally with villains," and arguing that the "only thing that could ever straighten out this screwed-up country is an atomic bomb! Wipe it off the map and start over." In spite of such strong negative feelings, this American woman still significantly decides to keep the Iranian name of her Iranian ex-husband, Mahmoody, on the cover of her memoir, for added exoticism and more credibility as someone who has been "inside."

While the events in the memoir have been debunked by a Finnish 2002 documentary titled "*Without My Daughter*," Mahmoody was elevated to the status of hero and celebrity as she was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1987 and was celebrated by Oakland University in Michigan as Outstanding Woman of the Year. This "hostage narrative," as Milani dubs it (2008), would soon find its way into increasing numbers of memoirs and literary works, particularly after 9/11, from Iranian Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), to Somali Ayaan Hirsi Ali's *Infidel* (2007). It also invariably enjoys great reception and wide circulation. And while it purports to uncover gender violence in Arab-Islamic countries, some of which actually exists, it also subjects the Arab-Muslim woman to another violence in the West, that of ahistorical reifying representations.

1.3.3 Translating Arab women's texts: Horizons of expectations.

Translations of texts by Arab women are circulated, read and interpreted against this archive and the backdrop of centuries-long preconceptions. Such a context is bound to impact translation and editorial practices, from the choice of literary texts to translate and the textual strategies adopted in the translation to the paratext, the editorial reviews and the marketing strategies. The first Arab writer to attract attention in the West is undoubtedly Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi. When her book, *al-Wajh al-'Ārī lil-Mar'ah al-'Arabiyyah* (1977; *The naked face of the Arab woman*) was translated in English (*The Hidden Face of Eve*,

1980), El Saadawi knew an instantaneous success. Indeed, thirteen of her works were translated in English in the 1980s alone (Amireh, 1996). It is noteworthy that El Saadawi's success both predates Mahfouz' Nobel Prize and heralded the keen interest in Arab women's literature. Thus, 1989 saw the publication of Hanan al-Shaykh's *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, which would soon be selected one of the best books of the year by *Publishers Weekly*. The novel's publishers, Doubleday, organized a tour, the first of its kind for an Arab writer, for al-Shaykh in 22 American cities (Amireh, 1996). In addition, the 1990s saw the launching of Garnet Press' "Arab Women Writers" series (Clark, 2000, p. 12). Thanks to the series, works by such Arab women writers as Alīfa Rifʿat, Ghāda al-Sammān, Emily Nasrallah, Saḥar Khalīfah, Liāna Badr, Fādia Faqīr, ʿAliya Mamdouh, Hamīda Naʿnaʿ, Salwā Bakr, Hodā Barakāt and many others would be translated and published in the West. Such efforts to make Arab women's writings available should be applauded insofar as they would preserve Arab women their voice and their right to self-representation. Such a conclusion needs more probing, however.

In his "Travelling Theory" essay, Said (1983) maintains that theories and ideas travel and when they do, they are "to some extent transformed by [their] new uses, [their] new position in a new time and place" (p. 227). As the body of literature by Translation Studies scholars reviewed above shows, translation is a travel across historical periods, languages and cultures that displaces, dislocates and transforms texts in response to new imperatives. As a meaning-making discursive process, translation answers the exigencies of its historical, cultural and socioeconomic context, all while reflecting and reacting to the power relations between the source and target cultures. The translation and reception of El Saadawi's works in the West is a case in point. After analyzing such translations, Amireh (2000) suggests that this process has misappropriated and re-written both the writer and her texts to feed a Western narrative of the oppressed Arab woman. As a consequence, El Saadawi—the most visible Arab woman writer in the West, a medical doctor, a staunch feminist and political activist, and Egypt's director of public health in the 1970s—finds herself in translation "not always in control of either her voice or her image" (p. 219).

Venuti (1998, p. 67) maintains that the process of representation in translation “operates at every stage in the production, circulation and reception of the translation.” The translation of one of El Saadawi’s best-known works illustrates this process. The discursive strategies adopted in the translation of *al-Wajh al-‘Ārī lil-Mar’ah al-‘Arabiyyah* (1977), along with the reception of this translation, have both subverted the text to serve the ideological needs of the period. In this work, El Saadawi criticizes the woman’s situation in Arab countries. Expressing a stand that aligns with what came to be seen as Islamic feminism, the writer explains that Islam endowed women with full rights, but that the current hegemonic patriarchal system stripped them of these rights. As a consequence, El Saadawi exhorts Arab women to claim these rights back. Moreover, in the preface to the British translation of this work, a preface that would not make it into the 1982 American edition, El Saadawi not only glorifies the Islamic revolution in Iran, but also considers it a victory against Western imperialism.

Far from neutral, the very choice of this work for translation occurred shortly after the Islamic revolution (1978-1979), an event that revived the Western fear and mistrust of militant Islam. As for the English translation of the work, carried out by El Saadawi’s own husband, Sherīf Hetāta, it was characterized by extreme textual interventions (Amireh, 2000). The English translation of the title was the opposite of the literary meaning of the title in Arabic, insofar as “naked face” became “hidden face,” invoking once again the image of the veil, which has “always been associated with Arab women and especially with their oppression” (Golley, 2003, p. 18). Chapter organization was also subject to much change since the translator deleted two entire chapters, those wherein the writer praises socialism and criticizes what she sees as exploitation of women by capitalism. Likewise, the passages where the writer argues that Arab women obtained gender equality long before their Western sisters were deleted in the English version. As well, the English version contains a chapter titled “The circumcision of young girls,” that is not in the original. Similarly, the first section of the translated book is entitled “the mutilated half,” an addition that is not based on the original, either (Amireh 2000).

Upon publication, El Saadawi’s work was applauded for its criticism of the women’s situation in Arab countries but was severely criticized for its glorification of the Islamic

revolution in Iran. Because of the translation strategies and reception modes of El Saadawi's book, El Saadawi's initial message—mainly that Arab women have to claim the rights that Islam granted them—was subdued. Her voice as a political dissident and feminist activist was equally muted and indeed domesticated to become yet another voice that falls in line with what Jauss (1970, p. 12) terms the readers' "horizon of expectations," thus confirming existing preconceptions and feeding the currently hegemonic perception of the Arab woman.

In her study of Hudā Sha'rāwī's translation, Kahf (2000) unravels a similar process wherein the feminist voice is muted and the writer's subjectivity contained and framed within the larger trope of harem as oppression. Sha'rāwī, the well-known Egyptian nationalist (1879-1947), is considered one of the greatest and most influential figures of Egyptian feminism at the turn of the 20th century. She penned her autobiography under the title *Mudhakkirātī*, which means "my memoirs," in which she recounts her public life as an active feminist. The English translation, carried out by Margot Badran, a specialist in women's studies with a focus on the Middle East and Islam in general, was entitled *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist*. The title positions from the outset the narrative and the source of its enunciation, Sha'rāwī herself, within the much fetishized institution of the harem, thereby shifting the focus of the memoirs from the figure of the prominent feminist agent to a woman subjected to a practice associated in the Western imaginary with submission and silence. This "haremizing" of the narrative, as Kahf calls it (2000, p. 163) would set the tone for the whole translation. Thus, the translator chooses not to translate the chapters that Sha'rāwī dedicates to recounting her years of national and feminist activism, and summarizes them instead in an epilogue, thus minimizing the importance that the writer gives to her activism in the original. The remaining of the book is then divided by the translator into four parts that are structured, according to Kahf (p. 163), around the theme of the Harem: "The Family," "Childhood in the Harem 1884-92," "A Separate Life 1892-1900" and "A Wife in the Harem 1900-18."

Sha'rāwī's memoirs undergo then a string of interventions, including excisions and content reorganization, with the overall effect of toning down some of the writer's opinions and enhancing Western influence on her upbringing and political action. For instance, Sha'rāwī's condemnation of French people's lack of sympathy towards a Frenchwoman whom

she considers “a victim of male exploitation of women’s vulnerability” is deleted from the translated version, and so are her words to Mussolini after the 1923 Rome conference, in favour of granting Italian women political rights. The incident of Mme Richard, a European friend of Sha’rāwī, who seeks refuge in the tradition of gender segregation as a way of escaping sexual harassment of a European man, encounters the same fate in translation. Moreover, many Arab, Turkish and African characters in the original are absent in the translation, mainly “indigenous women who do not fit the victim mold and who provide the reader with non-European models” that inspired Hudā Sha’rāwī in her fight for women’s rights, like Egyptian feminist Malak Nāsif (p. 158). The translation’s paratext further exaggerates European influence at the expense of Arabic culture influence. Thus, in her preface, the translator cites French first as Sha’rāwī’s social language because of her belonging to the upper class, and leaves Turkish and Arabic till the end, while in *Mudhakkirātī*, Sha’rāwī informs her readers that she learnt Arabic and Turkish first and only started learning French by the age of nine. In the blurb on the back cover, Albert Hourani follows suit when he writes “*Harem Years* shows how a gifted and sensitive woman, brought up in seclusion but with a knowledge of French that opened a window onto European culture, gradually became aware of her own predicament and that of her sex and society” (as cited in Kahf, 2000, p. 157).

Kahf (2000) argues that the translation of Sha’rāwī’s *Mudhakkirātī* transformed what is originally the story of a public figure into the story of the private life of an Egyptian woman within the Harem who owes her feminist ideas to European influence (p. 149). In so doing, the translation “packages” this Egyptian feminist in a way that conforms to what Kahf calls the “victim, escapee or pawn” triad undergirding Western representation of women from Arab countries: Sha’rāwī is accordingly both a “victim” of her own culture’s customs, and an “escapee” from this victimization thanks to European influence (Kahf, 2000, p. 149). Indeed, Kahf argues that Western representations of women from Arab countries generally subscribes to this typology whereby these women are either victims of their society’s oppression or escapees when they criticize such oppression from within the Western narrative and by adopting Western frames of reference. Echoing Falah above, Kahf adds that when an Arab woman exerts power but “does not divest herself of Arab culture and attachments to Arab

men,” she is denied agency, pigeonholed in a third negative category, that of “pawn,” and is said to be acting out of a false consciousness (p. 151). Kahf’s argument seems to lend credence to Amireh and Majaj (2000, p. 1) when they suggest that Western feminism’s increased interest in Third-World women and literature was far from innocent. According to them, this interest

often functioned to contain our voices within a predefined space. Discursive, institutional, and ideological structures pre-empted our discourse and determined both what we could say and whether we would be heard when we spoke. If we critiqued our home cultures or spoke of issues confronting Arab women, our words seemed merely to confirm what our audiences already “knew”- that is, the patriarchal, oppressive nature of Third World societies. (p. 1)

Both El Saadawi’s *al-Wajh al-‘Ārī* and Sha‘rāwī’s *Mudhakkirātī* are feminist works that lend themselves to the kind of containment that Amireh and Majaj highlight above. The first is, indeed, an academic feminist text that was written to provide facts about and improve the situation of women in Egypt. The second, while it is not an academic text, can still be contained in a similar way. Autobiography involves a reinvention and reproduction of the self that is bound to be situational, perspectival and contingent. As such, it is not different from any work of fiction where the textual “I” never refers to the referential “I,” i.e. that of the author, and where the very existence of characters is uncertain (Golley, 2003, p. 59). However, it is different from and sells much better than the novel (Douglas, 2001, p. 806) mainly because of what Lejeune (1975) calls the “autobiographical pact” and which he defines as a writer’s pact of sincerity and truth with his/her readers who expect that s/he is opening a window onto his/her life. This pact invests the autobiography with both truth and ethnographic value and makes its hijacking to confirm existing stereotypes an easy task.

Novels, however, are different in that, while they are not produced in a void and are to be read against the historical, political and cultural context of their production, they are not ethnographic and do not presuppose a pact of sincerity. Their value is derived as much from what they say as from how they say it. It would therefore be interesting to explore whether and how translation and reception processes subject them to the same discursive, institutional and ideological structures that pre-empt feminist academic writings by women from Arab countries.

CHAPTER II: *FAWḌĀ AL-HAWĀSS*

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Algerian women's literature.

If Assia Djébar is Algeria's and North Africa's most prominent francophone woman writer, Ahlem Mosteghanemi is her "Arabophone" counterpart, albeit from a younger generation. While Djébar was « intronisée à l'Académie française par la réception [de ses œuvres] dans le temple des Lettres » (Bouguerra and Bouguerra, 2010, p. 3) in 2005, Mosteghanemi was awarded the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 1998 for her first novel, *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1993; [*Memory in the Flesh*, 2000]). While *Fawḏā al-Hawāss* (1997; [*Chaos of the Senses*, 2004]), Mosteghanemi's second novel in her trilogy, has not garnered half the academic interest that its prequel has (see Ghazoul, 2004; Stampfl 2010; Valassopoulos, 2007), it is certainly no less interesting in terms of its politics, including its poetics. When Mosteghanemi wrote this novel, the Algerian civil war had already erupted in 1991. Therefore, the narrative in *Fawḏā* inevitably alludes to several events linked to the war, including the assassination of journalists. The novel is also set in the wake of another major event, the first Gulf War when the US and the coalition forces attacked Iraq in 1991. As a consequence, the narrative invokes this war and describes the feelings of defeat, disillusionment and anger that many in Arab countries felt. Accordingly, the love story that *Fawḏā* tells in Mosteghanemi's now very well-known poetic prose, becomes a "commemorative script" not only of "(self-)discovery and social critique," to borrow Mehta's terms (2007, p. 3), but also of an Algerian woman's sexuality, of her understanding of nationhood, of Algeria's recent past and present, of an illusive Arab nationalism, of Arabic literary history, of all the national and regional setbacks and the fought and lost "causes" that contribute to the make-up of an Algerian woman today. This writing of the self and the nation through the writing of personal and national memory makes *Fawḏā* a compelling case for the purposes of this study.

Contemporary North-African literature was relatively late to take up compared to its Mashreqi counterpart. This delay was in great part due to the nature of the French colonialism that tried quite aggressively to repress local cultures and supplant local languages, mainly Arabic and Amazigh dialects, with the French language. As a result of this cultural suppression, not only was literary production delayed, but when writers started writing and exploring new literary genres like the novel and the short story, most of their production came in French, when literary production in Egypt and the Levant was mostly in Arabic (Cohen-Mor, 2005, p. 7). In addition to colonial violence, however, Mosteghanemi (1985) pinpoints social practices as another key factor that slowed down the pace of a literary renaissance in North African countries. Talking about the specific case of Algeria, she (p. 17) maintains that Algerian social customs, similar to customs in the other North African countries, restricted encounters between young men and women to the bounds of the tight family structure, which severely crippled literary creativity. But if these factors impacted men, their impact on women's expression in North African countries was understandably greater. Berrada (2008) maintains that North African societies "did not have a favorable view" of women who expressed themselves through literature (p. 236). Consequently, and regardless of technique and of how subversive or conventional it was, North African women's literature emerges as a site of self-empowerment as women availed themselves of language and literature to produce their own discourse on themselves, on their respective societies and cultures.

In Algeria, and as was the case in the Levant and Egypt, women's contemporary Arabic literature benefited much from the press. Mosteghanemi (1985) and Bois (1992) both trace the birth of Algerian contemporary Arabic literature back to the 1930s with the rise of Algerian nationalism and the foundation of the reformist *Association des Oulémas* in 1931. Indeed, the latter created newspapers and journals to promote social and political reforms, including of the status of women in Algerian society and their right to education (Mosteghanemi, 1985, p. 23-24). These newspapers served as a platform for poets and short story writers to contribute to the movement (Bois, 1992, p. 104), and advocated for causes ranging from the right of women to education to the right to love-based marriages (Mosteghanemi, 1985, p. 28-29). In fact, Mosteghanemi (1985) affirms that while short stories were still a new genre in Algerian Arabic literature in the 1930s, the *Oulémas* recognized their didactic and propagandistic

potential and promoted them in their press, so much so that they quickly became a popular genre among the Algerian readers (p. 28). And it is in this genre and in this reformist platform that woman writer Zhou Wanissi will publish and get known in the 1940s.

Like her male contemporaries, including ‘Abdelmadjīd El-Chafē‘ī, Ahmed Ben ‘Achour and Houssain Kwaymiyya, she denounced social practices, including arranged marriages and total parental control over their children. Like them, too, and with the rising nationalism, she attacked Algerian women’s education in French schools. In comparison, the few emerging francophone Algerian writers did not engage with issues of social reform, nor did they call for the emancipation of Algerian women. Because of colonial mimicry, they were still “subject[s] of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite,” to borrow Bhabha’s words (1984, p. 126), and their works naturally reproduced colonial patterns of representation of both Algerian society and Algerian women. According to Mosteghanemi (1985), this difference between the francophone and the Arab Algerian writers at that period was political rather than social in that their literature used the Algerian woman as a battlefield to fight or to further French colonialism (p. 37). While this politicization of women would persist in modern Algeria long after the 1940s, the literary landscape started changing as of the 1940s. Arabic Algerian literature, hitherto pushing for social change and reforms and calling for the emancipation of women, started turning increasingly conformist precisely because of its strong alliance with a closed elite that claimed monopoly over the production of meaning, the history of Algeria and the struggle to recover its Arab identity. In contrast, francophone literature, mainly novels, increasingly distanced itself from mimicry, engaged with social issues, foregrounded indigenous cultures and questioned, albeit to varying extents, colonial practices.⁶

Arabic literature only started gaining its lost momentum back again in the 1960s. Increasing numbers of short stories were indeed published (Bois, 1992, p. 105), including by such women writers as Nūra Sa‘dī, ‘Ammariya Bilāl, and more recently Fadīla al-Fāruq. But it was not until 1971 that Algeria’s first Arabic novel was published, namely *Rīḥ al-Janūb* (wind

⁶ These novels include Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le fils du pauvre* (1954), and Mohamed Dib’s *La grande maison* (1952), as well as two novels by Algerian women: Taos Amrouche’s *Jacinthe noire* (1947), where Amrouche foregrounds her identity as an Algerian woman from Kabylia, and Djamilia Debèche’s *Leïla, jeune fille d’Algérie* (1947) where Debèche addresses the condition of women in Algerian society.

of the south) by ‘Abdelhameed Benhedouga (Mosteghanemi 1985). While the number of male Arabic-language novelists rose since then, thanks to the arabization of education in post-independence Algeria and the ensuing increase in Arabic-language readers,⁷ Algeria had to wait till the 1980s to witness the emergence of its first woman novelist in Arabic, a woman that belongs to the first class of Arabized university students, namely Ahlem Mosteghanemi. While other Algerian women, like Yasmine Benmehdi, will follow suit, and start writing Arabic novels, Mosteghanemi remains the best known and the most prolific woman writer of Algeria.

Mosteghanemi had already published an Arabic poetry collection in 1973 and a French monograph, *Algérie: femme et écriture* in 1985, when she published the first novel in her trilogy, *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, in Algeria in 1985. The novel, however, did not fare well in the writer’s homeland. Mosteghanemi (2003) reveals: “J’ai voulu donner mon premier roman à l’Algérie. Il a pâti d’une très mauvaise édition et était aussi mal distribué. On l’a pas tiré à plus de 5000 exemplaires.” The novel thus remained unknown in Algeria and in other Arab countries and had to wait until the 1990s when Mosteghanemi moved from France where she lived, to Beirut in Lebanon. There, the *Dār al-Ādāb* publishing house reissued the novel in 1993. The latter very quickly became a bestseller not only in Lebanon but also throughout the other Arab countries. In 1997, the second novel in the trilogy, *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss*, was published to become another bestseller.

2.1.2 The plot.

Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss is a love story growing and dying in 1990s’ Algeria, an Algeria plagued by State corruption and escalating political strife and social unrest. A *mise en abyme*, it tells the story of a young writer, Hayat. Married to a high-ranked military man for whose uniform she initially felt admiration but in whom she was quickly disillusioned, and having had no children, Hayat dedicates her time to writing. While writing a short story, she realizes that some of the places in her fictional story coincide with places in Constantine, her city. She is so caught up in the plot of her own story and so intrigued by her male character, that the

⁷ Among Algeria’s most notable male Arabic novelists are Tāher Wattār, Wāssīnī La‘radj and Djilālī Khallās.

lines between fiction and reality get blurred and she starts tracking her fictional male character in the places where he meets his fictional girlfriend. This quest results in a passionate love story between Hayat and a complete stranger who knows everything about her but about whom she only knows that he is a photojournalist, that he talks like her short story's male protagonist, and that he has the same taste in music, books and movies as herself. When the mystery lover finally reveals his identity, Hayat realizes that he had read her latest novel and had identified so much with its male protagonist, Khaled ben Toubal, that he adopted his name and fell in love with the writer, Hayat, long before he met her.

But in this story where personal memories are intertwined with national ones, love with politics and reality with fiction, Khaled ben Toubal is not the man from her short story that she was tracking. The Henri Michaud book that Hayat thought was annotated by him and revealed him to her, the apartment where they lived their passion and whose decoration Hayat liked, and even the perfume he is wearing are not his, but are his friend's, the journalist Abdel-Haq. The realization, however, comes too late as Abdel-Haq is the latest victim in the wave of assassinations targeting intellectuals in the armed conflict that erupted after the banning of the then-popular Islamic Salvation Front party and the cancellation of the elections by the State for fear of the party's victory. With the lover she was seeking but never got to know killed, the actual lover unable to be with her any time they want, her younger Islamist brother forced into exile, and a husband belonging to the same military institution responsible for her brother's exile, Hayat's life spirals into chaos and uncertainty. Refusing to give in, Hayat soon buys a new notebook to write a new story.

2.2 *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* as Discourse Practice

2.2.1 Interdiscursivity: Genres.

Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā* is *prima facie* a realist novel with a linear chronology and no interpretative difficulty. A closer look into it, however, reveals that it is a highly dialogical text that draws creatively on two genres other than the novel, and on several discourses relativizing each other and competing for authority.

2.2.1.1 The poetics of a verse novel.

While it is the mixing of poetry and novel genres in her writings that had some literary critics attribute Mosteghanemi's first novel to her compatriot Wāssīnī La'radj, known for his verse novels (Ghazoul 2004), this aspect of *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* has only been explored by Kammūn (2007) in her study of poetry in Mosteghanemi's novels.⁸ Although the designations for "novel" in some European languages, like the French "roman" and the Italian "romanzo," etymologically link the novel to the romance genre, characterized not only by the fantasy element but also by use, albeit not exclusively, of verse, and while verse was used by many a great author from Dante to Shakespeare, the "rise" of the novel as a new literary genre changed the relationship between prose and poetry and helped establish a distinction between the novel and poetry as two separate genres. Watt (2001), for instance, maintains that formal realism is the "defining characteristic" of the novel in that the novelist uses language "in a more largely referential [way] than is common in other literary forms," mainly poetry (p. 32). This dichotomy also seems to underwrite Bakhtin's conceptualization of the novel even as he acknowledges its plasticity and generic hybridity. For Bakhtin (2000), the novel is embedded in its social context and oriented towards the readers and their conceptual horizons. In contrast, poetry is monologic and abides by "unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life" to accomplish "the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels" (p. 344). Cut from its context, poetry is thus "a unitary and singular Ptolemaic world outside of which nothing else exists and nothing else is needed" (p. 286). On his part, Stankiewicz (1984) asserts that there is an "invariant and distinctive" difference between the novel and poetry, namely the presence of a narrator and a narrative structure in the former and its "suppression" in the latter (p. 171).

However, modern changes "in mass literacy, educational emphasis on modern literature, cultural diversity, regional interests, special thematic interest groups, and other historical and social factors" (Murphy, 1989, p. 65) favoured the rise into prominence of a genre that

⁸ In fact, according to Addison (2009), "[v]ery little has been written about verse novels" (p. 542), in general.

effectively collapses the above mentioned opposition between the novel and poetry, i.e. the verse novel (Addison 2009) or the novelized long poem (Murphy 1989) in late 20th century.⁹ These novelized poems exhibit features common to modern prose narratives, including a plot with narrative dynamics, and change at the level of “internal continuity, verbal density [...] and presentation of the poem on the printed page” (Murphy, 1989, p. 64). The new condition of silent, individual reading has also imposed a “lower level of prosodic repetition” and allowed “greater freedom to mix prosodies and utilize a variety of formal elements from other genres” (Murphy, 1989, p. 64). Addison (2009) concludes that it is “possible to claim the hybrid generic label ‘verse novel’ for a group of texts which, like electrons, may exist in two places simultaneously, in subgenres of the novel and of the narrative poem” (p. 555).

In Arabic literature, while the novel is an imported and, thus, relatively recent genre, the debate over “نثر” (prose) vs. “شعر” (poetry) is not. Narrative structure existed in Arabic poetry as far back as the pre-Islamic era, as exemplified by 6th century poet Imru’ al-Qais’ ode or *mu’allaqah* (Ghersetti 2008). Conversely, poetry was also present in lowbrow pre-Islamic folk prose, including tales and myths.¹⁰ Conceptualization of this relationship, however, often presented it as one of mutual exclusiveness (see Ibn Ṭabāṭaba, 2005), until the literary renaissance movement of the 19th century, when a new discourse on poetry and prose contributed to the emergence of new literary practices. After the initial revival of classical Arabic poetry and the emergence of the neoclassical school, a younger generation of poets and critics from the Levant and Egypt soon grew dissatisfied with the rigidity of classical poetry.¹¹ Spearheaded by Gibran Khalil Gibran, these poets introduced the prose poem to modern Arabic literature. In so doing, they “released poetry from its neoclassical limitations and introduced a great courage among Arab poets to use words and images in completely unprecedented ways” (Jayyusi, 1987, p. 4). But modern Arabic poetry will not complete its break from the conventions of the classical *qaṣīdah*, or poem, until the 1940s, with two Iraqi

⁹ It is noteworthy here that while the verse novel has only gained momentum in the 1990s, it is not new. Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* was published between 1825 and 1832. Also, Marcel Proust’s *Du côté de chez Swann* was first published in 1913, followed by such other prominent verse novels as Jean Cocteau’s *Thomas l’imposteur* in 1923 (Addison, 2012, p. 85-6).

¹⁰ Even when prose developed with the advent of Islam, leading to the rise of such highbrow literary genres as the *maqāmah*, it still exhibited features commensurate with poetry, like rhythm and elaborately crafted language.

¹¹ The classical *qaṣīdah* is, indeed, characterized by a mono-rhymed, two-hemistich structure, built on one single meter out of 16 different meters. Verses of a *qaṣīdah* are all of equal length and use the same number of feet.

poets: Badr Shāker al-Sayyāb and the literary woman critic Nāzik al-Malā'ika. Thanks to their poetry and the essays of the latter, possibilities¹² for creativity opened up for poets as symmetry, balance and even rhymes could “sometimes successfully be done away with” (Jayyusi, 1987, p. 10).

This break of poetry away from the classical two-hemistich, mono-rhymed structure seems to have also allowed for use of poetry by novelists. According to Ya'qub (2004, p. 13-19), the Arabic novel, influenced by Gibran's writings, started integrating poetic language in the early 1960s, as exemplified by such novels as Ḥalīm Barakāt's *Sittat Ayyām* (1961), that made heavy use of such techniques common in poetry as simile, metaphor and repetition (p. 19). Ya'qub (p. 13) maintains, however, that it took nearly a quarter of a century from the early 1960s to mid 1980s for poetry to fully fuse with the novel genre. In the 1980s, the period that witnessed the rise of the experimental novel (see Chapter I), poetry found its way forcefully into narrative prose, including Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1993). This also resulted in increasing numbers of studies engaged with the cross-fertilization of the novel and the poem genres.¹³ Talking about his own novels, which he has described as “trans-generic” for their blending of genres, including poetry, Edwar al-Kharrāṭ (2008), for instance, maintains that poetry in a novel is more than just keenness on the use of specific vocabulary or rhetorical devices. It is, rather, “completely welded” to the novel in what can be called “a poetic vision [that] defies the familiar logic.” Eagleton (2007) echoes a similar idea when he affirms that poetic language is not some “kind of disposable cellophane in which the ideas come ready-wrapped”; rather, it is “*constitutive*” of a work's ideas (p. 2). In fact, Eagleton denounces readings of both poems and novels that disregard their “literariness” (p. 3), and disembody their poetic language. He calls, instead, for reading of poetry as discourse, and not as language (p. 2).

Dismantling the distinction between poetry and prose, Eagleton (2007) defines poetry simply and quite un-poetically as “a fictional, verbally inventive moral [as opposed to

¹² In fact, because of the formal flexibility of modern Arabic poetry, new forms were created and “were the object of widespread experimentation”, including “ash-shi'r al-manthur (prose poetry), an-nathr ash-shi'ri (poetic prose), ash-shi'r al-mursal (blank verse) and ash-shi'r al-maqtu'I (strophic verse)” (al-Tami, 1993, p. 185).

¹³ Works like Fadl (2002), Ghazoul (1990) and al-Kharrāṭ (1994).

empirical] statement in which it is the author, rather than the printer or word processor, who decides where the lines should end” (p. 25). Rhythm, rhyme, imagery, symbolism, diction and the like are features that novels, too, manipulate, while meter, the one feature “peculiar to poetry, [...] can hardly be of its essence, since so many poems survive quite well without it” (p. 25). This, for Eagleton, leaves readers and critics “with line-endings, which the poet herself gets to decide on” (p. 25). Despite, or maybe precisely *because* of, such porous definition, Eagleton calls for a reading of the “verbally inventive” poetic language that pays “particular attention to the language itself – to [...] the words as material events,” a reading that allows for the “internal bond” between form and content to emerge (p. 47). To do such a reading, Eagleton (2007) proposes an analysis of various formal features that may not be exclusive to poetry but are still to be found more often in it, including inventive manipulation of syntax, punctuation, rhyme, rhythm, pace and imagery. All of these are inventively used in *Fawḍā*, including the one feature that Eagleton affirms is proper to poetry, i.e. line-endings. In the following passage, for instance, the author (1997/2007) describes a love scene between Hayat and her lover in the following way:

Gloss translation

Something drifts me to him tonight. Something carries me. Something gallops with me.
Something sits me down near the phone.

On the edge of the bed I sit, without sitting really. As if I were sitting on the edge of my fate.

A woman who is not me, calls a man who may be “him.” And a man whose name is “him,” finally wears his words, not my words. He becomes a phone voice. He might say “hello.” He might say “yes” he might say “who?”

A hurried woman dials his six numbers. And waits for a word from him. She decided just like that to address him in silence. As if she remembers that she does not know whom she is calling exactly.

His voice pierces through her silence. He does not say “hello.” He does not say “yes.” He does not say “who?”

He says: how are you? (p. 157; Appendix 1)

In this passage, Hayat, the narrator describes her yearning to hear the voice of her lover, whose identity she does not know yet. The passage in Arabic does not contain meter, nor does it contain rhyme, unless the reader counts the sound /unī/ repeated three times in the first two lines (/yajrifunī/; /yaḥmilunī/; /yujlisunī/, respectively: drifts-me, carries-me and sits-me), as rhyme. However, in addition to a metaphorically charged language where words are clothes that cover people, a recurrent metaphor in the novel, and where voice is a knife/sword that cuts and pierces through silence, the author uses several formal features borrowed from poetry. In the first two lines, there is repetition of the same word, /shay'un/ [something]; of the same verb form,¹⁴ form I, /fa'ala/, which in the imperfective becomes /yaf'ilu/ as in the verbs /yajrifu/ [drift] and /yaḥmilu/ [carry], or /yaf'ulu/ as in /yarkuḍu/ [gallop]; as well as of an identical syntactic structure (SVO: something drifts me, something carries me, something...). Repetition and parallelism, here, create a rhythmical pattern, as rhythmical as Hayat's pounding heart when she finds herself giving in to longing for her lover and rushing, helplessly, towards the phone. The verbs, from drift /yajrifu/, to carry /yaḥmilu/, to gallop /yarkuḍu/, help build up the momentum of the scene: what started as a mild feeling of longing that "drifts" Hayat, keeps growing in strength until it "gallops" with her to the phone. Punctuation conspires in the creation of this momentum. The full stops after each sentence almost show us Hayat putting up a fight against her feelings only for these feelings to become stronger than her will and to eventually completely carry her away.

Then the narrator starts a new stretch of lines as if to dramatically enact the end of the first scene and the beginning of a new one, the one where she picks up the phone. This stretch starts with what Eagleton (2007) calls "syntactical sidling," where the adverbial prepositional phrase, "on the edge of the bed," is fronted while the subject, "I," and the verb, "sit," are delayed. The emphasis is, therefore, on the "edge" where Hayat finds herself, an "edge" that is even more stressed through repetition in the second sentence. Thanks to this syntactic sidling and to repetition, the image of someone about to tip over, of Hayat's life about to change dramatically with that phone call, is almost palpable.

¹⁴ In Arabic, there are over 10 verb forms, or what is called أوزان.

Here again, the choice of starting a new line signals the start of a new scene: that of the tipping over of Hayat's life as she proceeds to dial the phone number. The narrator uses grammar this time, through the shift from the first person singular to the third person singular, to complete the image of the conflicted woman torn between what she desperately wants and what she needs to (not) do. Hayat, the married woman, finally loses the battle to the other Hayat, the woman in love acting on impulse and emotions, and all she can do is to stand away and watch this other woman dial her lover's phone number. Hayat tries then to imagine what this adulterous woman will hear the man say and again, the author uses repetition of an identical syntactic structure (subject- auxiliary-verb-object: he may say "hello"; he may say "yes"; he may say "who?"), in a staccato pace mirroring the rising tension and the pounding heart of that woman. The reader is then prosaically bumped down from this tension in a flat passage describing the dialling and waiting. This very bumping down, however, and the sudden absence of repetition and rhythm almost give a sense that Hayat is holding her breath. Everything has come to a stand still as all her senses are galvanized by the expectation of what will come out of the phone. Then the reader is thrown back again into full tension as the man's voice "pierces" through her silence, through her heart, and the pounding resumes: "He does not say hello. He does not say yes. He does not say who."

Throughout *Fawḍā*, Mosteghanemi interweaves passages such as this one with others that are very prosaic and flat. Because of this generic mix, one might well be tempted to put the novel within the genre of the prosimetrum, defined as "an extended work of prose into which, at more or less regular intervals, the author inserts poems or passages of verses" (Steele, 2012, p. 1509). In prosimetra, however, the prose passages are generally "devoted to narrative or argument, whereas the verse is reserved for moments of lyric intensity or summary reflection" (p. 1510). But as the example above shows, in *Fawḍā al-Hawāss*, poetic passages are equally narrative. This makes the verse novel one of the subgenres contributing to the hybrid generic makeup of *Fawḍā al-Hawāss*. This, also, situates the author, Mosteghanemi within a very select "community of practice," to borrow Bhatia's (2004, p. 149) term describing social agents using the same genre, that of poets and Arabic poetry readers, as well as within one of the oldest poetic traditions in the world, the tradition of Arabic poetry. Arabic Poetry was, indeed, the single most influential discursive device in the

context where it first developed: the tribal societies of Arabia. Because of their ability to manipulate “words, speech, maxims, [and] eloquence” (Geertz, 1983/2008, p. 114), poets wielded great political power within and between their tribes, as their poems contributed to building or destroying tribal reputation, to defending their tribes interests and recording their histories (Cunninson 1966), so much so that Arabic poetry came to be called *Diwān al ‘Arab*, literally the annals of the Arabs. Describing the status and political import that poetry has always enjoyed in Islamic civilization, Geertz (1983/2008) argues that everything, “from metaphysics to morphology, scripture to calligraphy, the patterns of public recitation to the style of informal conversation conspires to make of speech and speaking a matter charged with an import if not unique in human history certainly extraordinary” (p. 109). As a result, poetry “became the cardinal fine art in Islamic civilization, and especially the Arabic-speaking part of it” (p. 111).

While the rise of the novel in the twentieth century may appear to have come at the detriment of the status of poetry in modern Arabic literature, considering the institutionalization of the genre and such celebratory expressions as ‘Asfour’s “era of the novel” (see Chapter I), poetry still continued to function “as a register of the experiences of human beings, recording their miseries, feelings, hopes, and trials, if in new modes” (Snir, 2008, p. 125). In fact, Omri (2008) goes as far as to argue that despite the firm implantation of the novel in the modern Arabic literary canon, it never managed to acquire the same “social function usually attributed to it in the European context” (p. 250). Citing the Palestinian case, where despite great novels by such renowned authors as Ghassān Kanafānī and Emile Ḥabībī, it is Mahmoud Darwish’s poetry that has remained “the most influential expression of the people” and has never had any “narrative equivalent” in this respect, Omri (2008) concludes that the social function of the novel in the European context has, in the Arabic context, been “taken up by poetry” (p. 250). Frangieh (2008) concurs when he maintains that just as the ancient poet represented his or her tribe, and defended its interests, so have modern poets from different Arab countries “fought for social and political justice in their societies, reaffirming the continuing involvement of Arab poets in their societies,” from the Moroccan ‘Abdellaṭīf La‘abi, to Egyptian Muhammad ‘Afīfī Maṭar, through to Iraqi ‘Abdel-Wahhāb al-Bayātī.

Although Mosteghanemi was neither imprisoned nor exiled like those mentioned above, she, too, was a poet tuned to her people's needs and reality. Before she started writing novels, poetry was her way of contributing to the building of the post-independence Algerian nation:

In reality, we were a people suffering from lack of romance for complex historical reasons. [...] I made love and the beautiful word my primary cause, believing that the Algerian character was sick and void within, that all the edifice and the revolutionary slogans erected around it after independence would not help to construct it. Only language and emotions are capable of restoring and rebuilding a new Algeria. (Mosteghanemi, 1998, p. 82)

As she stood in that 1973 poetry evening, lone poetess competing with poets, to recite her love poems to “a hall crammed full of men,” half of whom “had come to applaud [her], the other half to condemn [her] femininity and [her] writing about love at a time when martyrs were still being buried on the pages of newspapers and between the covers of books” (Mosteghanemi, 1998, p. 82), poetry was also her way of opening a public discursive space for herself as a woman in post-independence Algeria. Mosteghanemi stopped writing poems but she kept on writing poetry, albeit within a new genre, the novel. In so doing, and since genres are the discursive aspect of social activities carried out both to achieve specific actions within their contexts of situation and to create particular social relations between speakers/writers and the audience, Mosteghanemi is clearly seeking to be that poetess safeguarding the annals of her people and giving voice to their aspirations and disillusionments. She is also, and precisely because of the historical status reserved for poets in Arab societies, positioning herself as hierarchically superior to her potential readers, deploying a genre that she knows still holds sway over them, with a view to influencing them. But she is, at the same time, flagging up her identity as an Arab with a specific literary heritage, thereby signifying her historical, cultural and social closeness to the community of practice that her readers constitute: a community of middle class, Arabophone readers that share the author's love of poetry and ability to engage with it. In an interview given to *La Nouvelle République*, Mosteghanemi (2003) explains her extensive use of poetry in her novels by saying that “le lecteur est en fait attiré par la poésie car il est faible devant la langue.” But poetry in *Fawḍā* is also a recovering of all those feminine voices from the past who took hold of the powerful discursive tool that poetry was

and deployed it to affirm their agency (see Hammond 2010).¹⁵ It is a recreation of a matrilineal lineage of poetesses back up to fifth century Al-Khansā' and her elegies, for *Fawḍā* seems to be itself an elegy of an Algeria sinking into chaos, of journalists assassinated, of national hopes shattered and of beliefs in an Arab unity squashed.

2.2.1.2 The feminist politics of autobiography.

The second subgenre in the novel is autobiography. With the disintegration of the unified subject, the reconceptualization of experience itself from a transparent and immediately accessible reality, to a mediated interpretation imbued with a discursive character, autobiographies started to lend themselves, like any literary narrative, to a “reading for the ‘literary’” to borrow Scott’s expression (1991, p. 796), i.e. a reading that changes the focus “from one bent on naturalizing ‘experience’ through a belief in the unmediated relationship between words and things, to one that takes all categories of analysis as contextual, contested, and contingent” (p. 796). In other words, the autobiographical narrator is not writing a unified, authentic private and individual experience. Rather, like any author, she is narrating a situated, and indeed translated story, the story of a multilayered self, constructed within a specific historical and cultural context and negotiated in relation to an assumed and sought after readership. Still, and as Felski (1998) maintains, life narrators do tend to write their narratives in such a way as to mark them as “non-literary,” in order to “shore up [their] claims to authenticity and truthfulness” (p. 86).

While Mosteghanemi certainly does not present her text as an autobiography but as a *riwāyah*, novel, and indeed foregrounds the literariness of her narrative, she does include enough elements from her own life into the plot to imbue *Fawḍā* with a strong autobiographical dimension that contributes to achieving a similar effect on her readers to that of a life narrator: to shore up a claim of authenticity and allow for reader identification. Indeed, Hayat, *Fawḍā*'s heroine, and Mosteghanemi, *Fawḍā*'s author, seem at times to be one

¹⁵ In a very recent study, Hammond (2010) argues that while men poets were mostly associated with the *qaṣīdah* genre, ode, and women poets with the elegy genre, *marthiyyah*, in pre- and early-Islamic period, this “poetic division of labour” allowed women to actively take part “in public poetic discourse, whereby the masculine/feminine duality formed partnership of sexed subjectivities, with each member negotiating the contours of its own contingent, discursive space and encroaching upon that of the other” (p. 27).

and the same person. Their respective fathers took active part in the independence war against France. Their hometown is Constantine, but they both lived with their families in Tunisia during the independence war. They both grew up to be novelists. They both had a very strong bond with their respective fathers, as a consequence of which, they both dedicate their texts to their fathers. Finally, while Hayat in *Fawḍā* does not bear the author's first name "Ahlem" as a second name,¹⁶ like she does in the first novel of the trilogy, *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, Hayat in *Fawḍā* is supposed to be the novelist who wrote *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1997/2007, p. 303). These similarities between Hayat's life and Mosteghanemi's and the blending of real events in the plot blur the boundaries between reality and fiction in *Fawḍā*, and give her text a strong autobiographical character, so much so that Mosteghanemi's readers asked her, during the 8th International Book Fair, about the lovers in her novels (Mosteghanemi, 2003)!

This autobiographical dimension is further enhanced by a recovering of a host of collective national and pan-Arab memories that further collapse the lines between fiction and reality, self and the (Arab) nation, including the assassination of Algerian president Mohammed Boudief and of the journalist Said Meqbel; the speeches of Egyptian president Jamal 'Abdel Nasser that Hayat used to listen to in her childhood; the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the 1991 Gulf war. Commenting on the latter, Hayat recalls how her brother's expression of bitterness towards her ability to still write fiction while Iraq was being destroyed, coupled with the invasion of Iraq were both so traumatic that she stopped writing for two years, during which she "learnt to despise all those writers who, in newspapers and magazines, kept on living without shame, in front of the body of Arabness"; and "watched the American channels race to broadcast 'live' footage of the death of an Arab army whose men walk hungry in the desert, and fall over tens of kilometers like flies in the trenches of humiliation, sprayed with bombs of futile death" (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 130).

According to Smith and Watson (1998, p. 5), women's autobiographies are not only "a mode of making visible formerly invisible subjects," but they also allow women to "stak[e] out a place within political or artistic movements" (p. 6). In Mosteghanemi's narrative where

¹⁶ In *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1993), the female protagonist has two first names: Hayat and Ahlem, one given by her mother, and the second by her father.

fiction and reality are blended and where the autobiographical subgenre is strongly present, Mosteghanemi is clearly staking out a place for herself as an Algerian woman in the writing of Algeria's modern history as she interweaves embodied memories with fictional writing. But in thus bearing witness, Mosteghanemi is achieving more than the action of restituting to the Algerian woman her right to write history. She is also further strengthening relations of social closeness with the community of practice that her readership is. Indeed, Felski (1998, p. 92) argues that women's autobiographies, precisely because they are written as "authentic self-expression" of the woman author, facilitate reader identification and establish communality with a female readership. They do so through such discursive strategies as "a tone of intimacy, shared allusions, and unexplained references with which the reader is assumed familiar [... and] through appeals, questions, and direct address" (Felski, 1998, p. 92). As we shall see below, Mosteghanemi uses these same strategies in *Fawḍā* for obviously the same reason: to further establish communality with her readers that her collective memories already create. The readership she is targeting, however, is not exclusively female, nor Algerian. It is also male and from all the Arab countries given the way she interweaves events in Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait and Iraq with personal and national memories.

Mosteghanemi is thus creating a collectivity made up of men and women from different Arab countries who cherished, like her, hopes of a democratic and utopian nation and of a strong Arab unity, only to suffer, like her, at seeing those hopes crashed and the utopia turn into a dystopia that drives the young into angry despair and the intellectuals into silence. By creating such collectivity through the autobiographical subgenre, Mosteghanemi is also constructing her own identity and the identity of a whole group of educated, middle class Algerians as being Muslim Arabs, as opposed to Muslim or Christian Amazigh or French acculturated. Indeed, as Smith and Watson (2010) contend, "[i]dentities materialize within collectivities and out of the culturally marked difference that permeate symbolic interactions within and between collectivities" (p. 38). The use of the autobiographical genre in *Fawḍā*, is thus an act of "re/membering," to use Lionnet's words (1998, p. 231), i.e. an "inherently political" strategy that helps Mosteghanemi re-appropriate the past not only for herself but for her readers, as well.

2.2.2 Interdiscursivity: Discourses.

The hybridity marking the generic make-up of the novel is matched by a similar one at the level of discourses on which the author draws. Sunderland (2004) defines such hybridity as “a broadly balanced articulation of two or more discourses” (p. 30). These discourses can be configured in various relationships, including “dominance/marginality, mutual support, opposition, foreground/background and hierarchy, where one discourse ‘overarches’ several others” (p. 31). Mills (2004) argues that discourses can be detected through the recurrent “ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context” (p. 17), all of which CDA practitioners track down by looking at their linguistic traces in a text, including lexical choices, sequencing, verb types and nominalizations, etc. Sunderland (2004) distinguishes between two main categories of discourses: the “specific context” discourses, i.e. discourses that are specific to particular texts, like narrative, descriptive discourse, or argumentative discourses; and “interpretive discourses,” i.e. those that are detected through empirical exploration and processes of analysis and interpretation (pp. 28-29). Within this second category, Sunderland identifies two sub-categories: general discourses and gendered discourses.

2.2.2.1 Woman as sexed body.

In *Fawḍā*, the author draws on several gendered discourses. The overarching one is that of the woman as a subject and an empowered agent. This subjectivity is primarily predicated on writing and femininity. Textually, it is realized through explicit statements of evaluation and metaphor. Writing for Hayat is an act of “confrontation” and of “circumvention,” albeit in silence (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 96). It allows her not only to “create” and “seduce,” types of power stereotypically associated with women, but to also “kill” and “mutilate” men, types of violence conventionally associated with men. In terms of the plot, this discourse is realized through conscious behaviour on the part of the narrator. For instance, when Abd el-Haq is assassinated immediately after Hayat realizes that he was the illusive man from her short story, whom she was looking for and mistook for Khaled Ben Toubal, she defies religious practice dictating that women cannot go in a funeral procession:

I [Hayat] made myself beautiful, put on the perfume of that same man, with whom this story started, and put on that same black dress with the big golden buttons down the front, whose last button I always leave open, and which I tighten around the waist using a black belt that brings out my feminine curves. [...] I definitely did not put on the black in mourning. I was sumptuously sad, and nothing more, sumptuously seductive, extremely defiant.

I did not go to him disguised in the cloak of virtue: It is foolish to face death in such garb. But I chose my appearance with the intention of seducing two men whom I saw together for the first time in that coffee shop, while I was wearing that same dress. One of whom, if he comes to the funeral, would undoubtedly see me and recognize me in this dress, and I would finally see him. As to the second...

I do not care if I see him as much as I care that he sees me. As a female, I do not want to look any less attractive than for a first encounter. It makes me really happy to draw his attention, and distract him from his sudden death by my presence, I expect that he will notice me. For only I hold a notebook in my hands in a place where women normally come loaded with bread and dates for the poor. (pp. 357-358; my translation)

Hayat, then, flaunts both her femininity and her writing in the face of religious and social customs, and of political persecution that kills journalists who dare to write. Linguistically speaking, the evaluative adjectives and verbs that the author uses are not associated with death and funerals but with life: “seduce,” “draw attention,” “seductive” and “defiant.” In addition, Hayat is not acting as a gendered woman but as a sexed body, a “female.” She is flaunting her sex in the face of the males attending the funeral, and in the face of restrictive religious laws banning the female body from funerals. Likewise, the modest and long dress that Algerian and North African Muslim women traditionally wear to go visit graves is not referred to through its literal signifier, *‘abāyah* [long dress], but through the metaphorical “cloak of virtue,” and the verb used to signify the act of putting it on, is not the value-neutral “wear,” but the explicitly evaluative “disguise,” which serves to depict social and religious clothing codes as deceptive.

The second main gendered discourse in *Fawḍā* is that of the woman as a sexual, desiring subject. Accordingly, instead of depicting her protagonist, Hayat, as the passive object of male desire, be it of her husband’s or lover’s, Mosteghanemi depicts her as expressing active sexual desire. Linguistic traces of this discourse permeate the whole novel, and take the form of explicit sexual and bodily vocabulary, like kiss, sweat, saliva, lips, desire, arousal, touch, provoke, sensuousness, sexual rituals and body scent.

A third gendered discourse, albeit less prominent, is that women are not victims of society nor of men. They are victims of “fate” and “life,” like her mother who was orphaned at a young age, and whose daughter – Hayat—cannot bear children (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 228); of women’s own hypocrisy, like those three prostitutes who are looked down on in the public bath by hypocritical women thinking highly of their virtue; or of the cruelty of the “nation,” a cruelty that victimizes men, too, like it did Hayat’s mother when it took her husband in the war of independence, or did Mohamed Boudief when it caused him exile then assassination. Only in one passage does Hayat openly denounce social practices as responsible for women’s misery. When her lover asks her why she did not divorce her husband, she quotes Andre Gide “It is easy to know how to be free. But it is difficult to actually be free,” adding that a woman can divorce a husband in this country, but then, as a divorcee, “everybody will become [her] guardian” (p. 320), lumping men and women in the “everybody” category. Hayat/Mosteghanemi, in fact, believes that women cannot be controlled unless they accept to be controlled. Quoting the Tunisian poet, Abī al-Qāsem al-Shābbī, Hayat opines that “women are like peoples, if they wanted life, fate will answer. Whether that which controlled their fate was a big army general or a small dictator in the form of a husband” (p. 253).

The last notable gendered discourse in *Fawḍā* comes in a stark contradiction to the previous discourses. It is what Sunderland (2006) identifies as a “Gender differences” discourse that perpetuates familiar and long held stereotypes about women, including “*folklinguistic* stereotypes of how women talk” (Sunderland, 2006, p. 10; emphasis in the original), and that “allows neither for differences within women (and within men), nor similarities between men and women” (p. 8). The women around Hayat are thus overly talkative, gossipy, vain, shallow and, unlike men, unconcerned with politics or literature. Hayat/Mosteghanemi uses such negative evaluative adjectives and verbs to describe the women and their actions as “foolish,” “naïve” (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 26); they “fall victim to the attractiveness of the military fatigue” (p. 28); they “chatter,” drink the “coffee of gossip,” throw “boredom parties” and excel at “the art of wasting time,” and love “noise” (p. 335). They are “hens” that “sleep early. Quack a lot, and feed off the crumbs of masculinity” (p. 125).

The heterogeneity of gendered discourses in *Fawḍā* is a clear reflection of the heterogeneity of discourses in the world as lived and perceived by Mosteghanemi, where different gendered discourses relativize one another and compete for control within the order of discourse and, by extension, the social order. More important, this heterogeneity reveals a contradiction in Mosteghanemi's text, an unresolved tension between an emancipatory gendered discourse and a traditional one. In Sunderland's (2006, p. 3) account, the "notion of 'contradictions' is an important one for Critical Discourse Analysis." Indeed, Fairclough (2001) sees contradictions in texts as emancipatory. They are "points of leverage" for "progressive change" (p. 263) insofar as they invite text consumers to discuss, question and contest dominant discourses. Along the same lines, Edley (2001) affirms that contradictions prevent "definitive answer[s] to any given problem" (p. 203). Rather, they "generate argument and deliberation" (p. 203). By drawing on these competing, contradictory discourses, Mosteghanemi is therefore opening breaches in the dominant/traditional discourse on women, inviting her readers into a potentially emancipatory discussion of what it is to be woman.

2.2.2.2 Between despotism and fundamentalism.

The overarching general discourse is that of metafiction. While *Fawḍā* does not present its readers with formal uncertainty, it does embody a great deal of self-reflexivity, thus situating the author within a trend that was gaining momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, not only in the Arabic novel tradition (as seen in Chapter I), but also in the Western novel as writers started exploring "a *theory* of fiction through the practice of writing fiction" (Waugh, 2002, p. 2; emphasis in the original). The very choice of the plot of this novel as a "mise en abyme," is the first thread of metafiction that the author weaves in her narrative, laying bare the illusion of fiction to the reader all while she simultaneously constructs it. But the author further brings out this dialectic tension through several interdiscursive and discursive devices, including the incorporation of the autobiographical genre, lexical choices and figures of speech, mainly opposition. These devices all conspire to bring opposites, like creation vs. criticism, desire vs. death and past vs. present, together not to further establish them as dualities, but to defamiliarize them and make them question one another. Hayat thus admits that the woman writer in her engages in "mixing the complex of the past with the antagonistic

present just as I am now mixing the illusion of writing with life” (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 39). She describes her feelings for her fictional character as a “virtual love that can unite an ink man and a paper woman [who] meet in that blurry space between fiction and reality to write together a book outside of life and about life at the same time” (p. 61). Drawing on Borges, Hayat asks self-reflexively:

How can I, after this, be at once the woman narrator and novelist of a story that is my story? The novelist does not only narrate. He cannot just narrate. He forges, too. In fact, he only forges. [...] I discovered that every novel is nothing but an apartment decorated with small decorative lies and deceptive details. (p. 95)

While Mosteghanemi builds her authorial authority in *Fawḍā*, she constantly questions and undermines it. While the novel follows a chronological sequence, it attempts to represent no orderly reality. Describing metafictional novels, Waugh (2002) argues that the “historical period we are living through has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and culturally pluralistic. Contemporary fiction clearly reflects this dissatisfaction with [...] traditional values” (p. 6). While she was talking about the English novel over the 1980s and the 1990s, this same period in Algeria and throughout other Arab countries was a period of extreme uncertainty and insecurity, i.e. of *Fawḍā*, chaos, as foregrounded in the very title of the novel. By drawing on the metafictional discourse, Mosteghanemi is drawing the reader’s attention not only to the fictional status of her text, but also to the fictionality and constructedness of the “real” world, thereby opening a site for transformation and change.

The second main general discourse in the novel is that of *waṭaniyyah* [nationalism]. Anderson (1983) defines nation as an “imagined [...] community because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p. 50). By extension, nationalism and nationness become “imaginings,” and “cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (p. 48). Drawing on Anderson’s “imagined community,” but seeking to distinguish between culturally affiliated ethnic groups and stateless ethnic groups that nonetheless consider themselves nations, like the Basque and the Kurds, Dawisha (2009) defines the nation as “a human solidarity, whose members believe that they form a coherent cultural whole, and who manifest a strong desire for political separateness and sovereignty” (p. 13). In *Fawḍā*, Mosteghanemi/Hayat “imagines” Algeria as

a nation, and constructs it as a coherent cultural and a politically sovereign, albeit weak and rotten, whole. At the level of content, this imagining is realized through the recovery of the Algerian people's history during its nationalist struggle for independence, through the writing of post-independence Algeria's political failings, and through the complete obfuscation of the Kabyle voice, an obfuscation that constructs a homogeneous, unified national community. This nationalist discourse is realized textually through assumptions as we will see in section 3 below, and through lexical choices, including extensive use of the noun *waṭan*, nation, at the expense of the more geographic *balad*, country.

In parallel, Mosteghanemi/Hayat also draws heavily on the discourse of *qawmiyyah* 'arabiyyah, Arab nationalism. Twentieth century Arab nationalism is a secular ideology that finds its roots in the endeavours of Muslim and Christian Arab thinkers, including Negib 'Azoury and Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī, who challenged Ottoman control of the Arabs and promoted "the national distinctiveness of the Arabs, Muslims, and Christians alike, and their membership of one indivisible Arab nation that would find its true expression and would fulfill its promise through a secular and liberal nation-state" (Dawisha, 2009, p. 26). Expanding on his definition of nationalism, Dawisha (2009) defines Arab nationalism as Arabism, i.e. "cultural uniformity [...] with the added element of a strong desire (and preferably articulated demands) for political unity in a specified demarcated territory" (p. 13), which is commonly said to extend from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf. This discourse gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, especially with then Egyptian president Jamal Abdel-Nasser. It is the period that coincided with Mosteghanemi/Hayat's childhood, and seemed to have shaped her perception of herself as an Arab Algerian woman belonging not only to Algeria, but to the larger Arab nation. But Arab nationalism started declining with the rise of Islamism in Arab countries as of 1980s through the 1990s, the period when *Fawḍā* is set. It was a period of growing disappointment in both nationalist policies that failed to bring about any real human development and economic stability, and the discourse of Arab nationalism with the oppression of Palestinians in Lebanon, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the alliance between Arab countries and the West against Iraq and the reprisals against Egyptians in Kuwait for their support of Iraq. While this sense of disappointment in Arab nationalism is salient in *Fawḍā*, the discourse itself permeates the novel. Indeed, the author imagines a

homogenous Arab community that extends beyond geographic and political boundaries, and that is unified by cultural, historical and ethnic ties. She universalizes this imagining as an unquestionable belief held by her community of readers, through the plot by weaving the histories of other Arab nations into her narration of the Algerian nation, but also textually. Much like the nationalist discourse, the Arab nationalist one is realized through assumptions that serve to create and build a collectivity of readers belonging to other Arab countries, through suppression not only of any linguistic presence of the non-Arab Kabyle identity in the novel, but also of the pervasive presence of French as a language and culture in post-independence Algeria. The discourse is equally realized through the extensive use of vocabulary such as *qawmī* [Arab-nationalist] and *‘arabī* [Arab], throughout the novel, as well as through specific lexical choices. In reference to months, for instance, Hayat/Mosteghanemi does not use the phonetic transcription in Arabic of the French names, as is conventional in Algeria. Instead, she follows the practice in much of the Middle East and uses the names borrowed from the Aramaic calendar to designate the Gregorian months, like *ḥuzayrān* for June.

The fourth general discourse is that of religious fundamentalism as alien to Algerian society and a symptom, not the root, of political and geopolitical problems. Accordingly, when Hayat is taken to a police station after her driver was shot dead, she describes those arrested at the station in the following terms: “a bunch of people the likes of whom I had never seen in my life; scary people, serious faces, inimical looks, some in ordinary clothes, others bearded and wearing their slogans in the form of *Afghan* clothes” (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 112). Later, Hayat describes the Islamists protesting against the State in Algiers as wearing “extraordinary” clothes (p. 169) and goes on to wonder how the Algerians have come to “acquire such serious faces, unfriendly character, and such strange clothes that have never been ours” (p. 170). When she talks to her brother who started turning to fundamentalism in response to national and regional crises, she asks him: “is there room for some tenderness in *your* religious law?” The use of “your” to qualify the fundamentalist brother’s belief, as well as the use of such evaluative adjectives as “Afgan” and “extraordinary” to describe men’s clothes, and of the verb “acquire,” effectively bring out a perception of the world by Mosteghanemi/Hayat and her main characters belonging to the intellectual elite, including the

Khaled Ben Toubals and the Abdel-Haqs, where fundamentalism is not an extreme interpretation of the same religion that the majority of the Algerian people believe in, but is a new and completely alien thought.

While the author clearly perceives fundamentalism negatively and refers once to acts of violence by fundamentalists as “terrorism” (p. 212), she still allows fundamentalists a voice, albeit minor, in her narrative through the character of Nasser, Hayat’s younger brother. Through this voice, she not only casts doubt on the legitimacy of the “terrorist” epithet used to pigeonhole fundamentalists (p. 208), but she also problematizes the thought behind this movement by tracing its roots to political and geopolitical factors, mainly the corruption and despotism of the successive governments in post-independence Algeria and the successive foreign military aggressions on Arab countries. Thus, “between his national disappointments and the bankruptcy of his Arab nationalist dreams,” Hayat’s brother Nasser “washed his hands of Arabism, or more precisely, he did his ablutions to find in fundamentalism his new cause” (p. 133).

The other prominent general discourse is that of the Algerian intellectual as a cosmopolitan and secular subject, which is consistent with the secular ideology of Arab nationalism. This is textually realized through inclusion of particular cultural references at the exclusion of others. The main protagonists, Hayat and Khaled, make love to Zorba’s songs, enjoy Klaiderman’s piano, watch and discuss Hollywood movies and appreciate French poetry. They draw on Chinese wisdom (p. 265) and Japanese history to make their arguments. Hayat, for instance, recounts that she considered suicide during the American invasion of Iraq, but that she did not want such a modest suicide as that committed by the Syrian-Lebanese poet Khalil Hawi in protest against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, but a spectacular one like that of the Japanese writer Mishima in protest against the Japanese surrender to Western invasion (p. 131). On the other hand, neither Hayat nor Khaled ever draw on religious texts nor discuss religion. They do not perceive their love affair as a transgression of any religious laws, and they also do not perform prayers. This discourse seems to reflect a perception of a world where religion is or should be a private matter, an “afterlife concern” (p. 169), and

where fundamentalism is nothing but “a strike against life and elegance, because the nation is not as elegant as [people’s] dreams” (p. 216).

2.2.3 Intertextuality

The heterogeneity characterizing the novel at the interdiscursive level extends to the level of manifest intertextuality. Mosteghanemi quotes, both directly and indirectly, poets, philosophers and authors not only from the Arab world, like Mahmoud Darwish and the Muslim scholar Imam Shāfe‘ī, but also extensively from the Western world, from the French Roland Barthes and Andre Gide, to the Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges, the Irish Seamus Heaney and Oscar Wilde, the German Goethe and Nietzsche, and the American Walt Whitman. By drawing on such a wide array of literary and philosophical texts from different regions of the world, Mosteghanemi is creating a literary filiation for her text that takes the latter beyond the bounds of Arabic literary heritage and sites it within a global literature. She is also reinforcing the discourse of the modern Algerian intellectual as having a cosmopolitan knowledge and open to the world’s cultures.

On the other hand, however, what is notable in the voices that Mosteghanemi brings into dialogue through intertexts and quotes is the quasi absence of both the religious voice and the ruling elite’s one. Likewise, and in terms of the plot, Hayat/Mosteghanemi denies religion any voice, except for Nasser whom she allows to talk briefly, and when he does, the dialogue is political rather than religious. She reserves the same treatment to the ruling elite. Even when the novel follows the growth of Hayat’s love story in parallel with the growing political turmoil in Algeria, and except for one occurrence where the military husband is allowed to talk directly about the release of Hayat’s brother from prison, Mosteghanemi brackets the voice of the ruling elite by only allowing commentary on its actions by Hayat and Khaled Ben Toubal, as secular intellectuals, and by Nasser as a young fundamentalist. Mosteghanemi, therefore, does not completely suppress differences to convey some sense of consensus or a normalization of one specific discourse. She still, however, backgrounds the two main hegemonic discourses in Algeria, that of the corrupted ruling elite backed by military power and of the fundamentalists growing in power. In so doing, Mosteghanemi seems to be opening

a breach in the order of discourse to allow for a third voice to be heard, the disruptive voice of the secular intellectuals, men and women who, like Hayat, are emotionally torn between two powerful but antagonizing and antagonistic groups of their own people, the ruling elite (the military husband) and the fundamentalists (the brother); and whose voice is getting silenced in 1990s Algeria either by a bullet or under the weight of fear.

By drawing on the verse novel genre, the autobiographical genre and the secular nationalist and Arab nationalist discourse, while backgrounding religious and official political discourses in her narrative and completely suppressing French and Kabyle remainders from it, Mosteghanemi enacts an identity for herself, her main characters and the collectivity of her readers that is primarily Arab (Algerian) and secular, as opposed to Amazigh-Algerian, French acculturated Algerian or orthodox Muslim Amazigh/Arab. On the other hand, the cosmopolitan discourse and the heterogeneous voices incorporated in the narrative thanks to the intertexts foreground a hybrid dimension to this identity and situate it within a globalized culture. To borrow Bensmaia's (2009) metaphor in description of a fellow Algerian writer, Mouloud Feraoun, Mosteghanemi draws through her text "*a political and social cartography that will serve as an identity card, a map of the heart, a cadaster, and finally an inventory of cultural and geographical sites*" (p. 150; italicization in the original), where she not only anchors herself, but authoritatively anchors her readers, as well.

2.2.4 Reception

When Mosteghanemi's first novel was published in Lebanon and distributed in the rest of the Arab countries, it caused quite a stir. Many literary critics rushed to accuse Mosteghanemi of plagiarism and looked for "illegitimate fathers" for the text, to borrow Ghazoul's (2004, p. 166) expression. Because of the poetic aspect of the novel, it was attributed to male literary figures like the Iraqi poet Sa'dī Youssef, the Syrian novelist Ḥaydar Ḥaydar, and the Algerian Arabic writer Wāssīnī La'radj. McLarney (2002) calls such accusations "the worst ignominy that can befall a woman writer," especially that in the case of an Arab woman writer, it robs "the text of its powerful symbolism as a female incursion into the "father tongue" of written Arabic" (p. 24). This negative reception is only one side of the

story, though. The other side is the immediate success among lay readers across the Arab countries and the literary acclaim by many literary figures, men and women, in contemporary Arabic literature, including Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz and Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani.¹⁷

It is a dichotomous reception that, as we shall see in Chapter IV, will meet another novel published almost a decade after *Fawḍā*, namely Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyād*. This reception suggests the presence of conflicting discourses competing for control within the current social order through control of the order of discourse in the Arab literary scene, i.e. patriarchal discourses seeking to deny women their discursive agency, and liberal discourses recognizing and promoting such agency. Ultimately, however, Mosteghanemi's trilogy and works, in general, were canonized in the Arab literary scene. *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1985) will go to win multiple literary awards, and to sell 34 editions and hundreds of thousands of copies by 2012. While its sequel, *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss* (1997), drew less ink and engaged less regional and Western scholarly work, it was no less successful with 30 editions so far (www.ahlammosteghanemi.com/#!work-english/c11q). The third novel in the trilogy, *Āber Sarīr* (2003), has already sold over 22 editions. This trilogy earned Mosteghanemi the third rank in popularity among Arab readers in an Internet poll, after novelist Naguib Mahfouz and journalist Mohamed Hassanein Haykal, and ahead of Sudanese novelist Tayeb Saleh, and Egyptian novelist Alaa al-Aswany, and his co-citizen feminist Nawal El Saadawi (Toma, 2011). In fact, by 2006, the novels had already sold over 2,300,000 copies across Arab countries, making of her the top-selling Arabic novelist and the most successful Arabic writer of her time, according to Forbes Magazine (de Lafayette, 2013, p. 119).

Many literary critics and Arabic literature scholars tried to explain the success of Mosteghanemi's novels. Sabrī Hāfez (1999), for instance, while talking about the first novel,

¹⁷ The latter, in fact, wrote on the book cover of the novel's third edition: "[...] Her novel made me dizzy. And I rarely get dizzy in front of any novel. The reason for my dizziness was that the text that I had just read resembled me to sameness. It is crazy, nervous, invasive, fierce, human, sensual... and outlawed just like me. If anybody asked me to put my name under this exceptional novel bathed in the rainwater of poetry, I would not have hesitated for one moment."

advances that it owes its popularity to its “Arabness, poetic language, traditional eloquence and simplicity of structure” (p. 131; my translation). In so doing, he joins Allen’s (2009) account for the success of Mosteghanemi’s novels. Allen (2009) contends that works of Mosteghanemi, of the Egyptian novelist Alaa al-Aswany and the Saudi woman novelist Rajaa Alsanea, set a new trend in the Arab book market, that of the “Arabic best-seller.” What characterizes them, he argues, is their avoidance of “ambiguity, uncertainty, and stylistic and generic complexity,” as well as of “ambiguities and complexities of post-modernist fiction and, one might suggest, an abandonment of the ‘dialogic’ approach to the role of narration and narrator in fiction [...] in favor of a more ‘monologic’ approach” (pp. 10-11).

While Mosteghanemi— much like Alsanea as we shall see in chapter IV— eschews indeed hermetic symbolism and interpretive difficulty, her novel *Fawḍā* is not only highly dialogical, but is experimental, too. It is, in fact, so generically and interdiscursively complex, as seen in the analysis above, that Omri (2008) argues it is not a novel “in the Mahfouzian sense” altogether (p. 252). Like Mosteghanemi’s other texts, it “inhabit[s] the empty zone between poetry and prose, as narrative [equivalent] to the immensely popular poetry of Nizar Qabbani,” and far from constructing Algeria as a nation-state, it is constructed in an “Arabic and Algerian context” (Omri, 2008, p. 253) thus speaking to the wider Arab nation. *Fawḍā* is, therefore, “like the Arabic language itself and Arabic traditional forms, transnational in composition and in reception” (p. 253). It is, indeed, precisely because of these characteristics that *Fawḍā* grew popular and managed to create a collectivity of loyal readers, women and men, Algerian and none Algerian throughout the Arab countries, readers whose voices have been silenced through decades of oppression by the successive regimes; who belong, like Khaled, to a symbolically scarred and impotent intellectual elite that either gets killed or goes into voluntary exile, or, like Nasser, to an embittered and disillusioned younger generation that ends up forsaking life and seeking the afterlife because of a succession of failed national policies, the systematic theft of the nation’s wealth and weakness in front of neo-imperialist powers.

2.3 *Fawḍā al-Hawāss* as Text

In addition to the use of transitivity to textually realize the discourse of women as empowered agents, mainly through the attribution of intentional material processes to female characters, Mosteghanemi uses other discursive strategies to linguistically realize the various discourses and genres she draws on in *Fawḍā*, including assumptions and mode of address. In this passage, for instance, Hayat/Mosteghanemi shifts in her narrative from the first person singular *I* to the second person singular *you*:

(1) Before you open the newspaper, the nation attacks you with its big headlines, “the military authorities ceases curfew till after the sacrifice feast,” “469 people arrested in the past three days” [...]. (2) You run away to the bottom of the page and there other nations are awaiting for you, nations you believed were yours. (3) For that’s what a very naive poet affirmed to you since you were a child, before he died while still chanting “Arab lands are all my nations.” (4) And he is no longer here today to read with you the headlines of an Arab newspaper dated June 15, 1991: “Palestinian camps el-Mayya wel-mayya’ and ‘Ein el-Ḥelwa’ still besieged by the Lebanese Army,” “Iraq arrests tens of Egyptians and tortures them,” “Kuwait still executing Arab expatriates”... (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 155, my translation)

In addition to the blending of fiction and reality at work in this passage through the precise date and the headlines covering events that effectively happened in that date, Hayat/Mosteghanemi’s direct and informal address of the reader reduces the author/reader social hierarchy. In so doing, Mosteghanemi creates a feeling of intimacy between her and her readers and involves them directly in Hayat’s emotional trauma as she reads the news. Besides the mode of address, Mosteghanemi uses implicitness to further strengthen the collectivity of her readership and construct her and her readers’ identity. In this passage, Mosteghanemi makes, indeed, several assumptions. The first one is a propositional assumption that her Algerian readers must have felt similarly attacked by and distressed at reading the news (sentences 1 and 2). The assumption is triggered by the pronoun *you* and the verbs “attack,” which has the embedded value of feeling aggressed, victimized and therefore distressed, and “run away,” which connotes the same emotional condition. The second assumption is that her readers must all be so familiar with the poet Fakhṛī al-Barūdī and the verse she is quoting of him, that she does not need to cite him by name (sentence 3). Sentences 2 and 3 also include the propositional assumptions that 1) her readers all believed in Arab unity as chanted by the

poet, but 2) that they discovered the belief was a fallacy. These assumptions are triggered by the mental process verb “believe” conjugated in the past participle and by the highly intense evaluative adjective “very naïve.” Finally, there is a “bridging assumption” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 57) in sentence 4 that helps create a coherent semantic relation between sentences 3 and 4. The assumption is that the events happening in that date in the various Arab countries are proof that Arab unity is a myth and that the poet was naïve.

But aside from building a collectivity and constructing a specific identity for herself and for her readers, Mosteghanemi is also ideologically intervening in the order of discourse and, by extension, in the social order. Indeed, and as Fairclough (2003) argues, assumptions and implicitness in texts have an ideological function in that they allow text producers to universalize meanings and present ideas, values and whole value systems as “an unquestioned and unavoidable reality” (p. 57), and thus as hegemonic all while bracketing other competing discourses. In this passage, the value system that is being presented as an “unquestionable reality” is Arab unity. For although Mosteghanemi describes the belief as being naïve given the geopolitical events, she still assumes that all her readers must know and memorize Arabic poetry from other Arab countries, must have believed in Arab unity, and must feel as concerned for and traumatized by what happens in other Arab countries as they do for what happens in their own country. In so doing, Mosteghanemi reinforces the Arab nationalist discourse at the expense of alternative identity discourses, including the anti-Arab Amazigh discourse, that stress local differences and the presence of or affinity with non-Arab cultures, including the Amazigh culture and the African culture.

2.4 *Fawḍā al-Hawāss* as Social Practice

Algeria’s contemporary history is unlike the history of any other country in North Africa and the Middle East, despite the commonalities it has with these countries. Invaded by France in 1830, the country endured a hundred and thirty years of what Knauss (1987) labelled as “a draconian colonialism” (p. xii). Indeed, the French colonial authorities tried to not only control Algeria economically and militarily, but to also “assimilate” and “pacify” the Algerian colony and subdue it culturally, more forcefully than they did in other North African countries or in

the Levant. This cultural control was fought on two main fronts: language and women. Traditional (Koranic) schools were thus virulently attacked (Knauss, 1987, p. xiii) and French was promoted at the expense of Arabic and the Berber dialects in the French educational system. As a consequence, language would become a primary “ground on which political battles relating to control and resistance were fought” (Cox, 2002, p. 20) during the 130-year long French colonial rule in Algeria and beyond. In parallel, colonial authorities attempted to break the Algerian family and “civilize” it through the acculturation of the Algerian woman¹⁸ (Anissa Hélie, 1995, p. 276). To counter such attempts, Algerians resisted women’s education in the French system and insisted on keeping the practice of the veil not only as “the last vestige of power” that they possessed but also “because of the passive resistance that the wearing of the veil symbolized” (Knauss, 1987, p. 29). Such instrumentalization of women and their bodies on both sides reveals, according to Lazreg (1994), “the extent to which both groups understood the crucial role played by women in maintaining cultural integrity” (p. 45). Thus, the National Liberation Front (FLN) encouraged and recruited women to fight alongside men during the War of Independence waged between 1954 and 1962. According to official accounts, 11000 Algerian women combatants fought in the war (Turshen, 2002, p. 890-91), and their roles ranged from being nurses and transporting arms to actively bearing arms and carrying out military operations, as exemplified by the cases of Djamila Bouhayrad and Hassiba Ben Bou Ali. In this struggle, norms, including the veil, ceased to be upheld. Women moved from resisting the colonial rule through veiling, to subverting this rule by wearing the European clothes to carry out operations. Celebrating the role of Algerian women in this struggle for freedom, Fanon maintains that parental control in this patriarchal society was overridden by nationalist imperatives and that the Algerian woman seemed to have “ceased to be a mere complement for the man. Indeed, it might be said that she had pulled up her roots through her own exertions” (as cited in Cooke, 1996a, p. 122).

¹⁸ This attempt took the form of promoting the education of Algerian girls along divisive ethnic/religious lines, by opening French schools for Jewish and Kabyle Algerian girls that promoted French values. It also took the form of promoting a discourse on Algerian women as victims in need of liberation, which culminated in France staging “a spontaneous” unveiling and burning of veils by Algerian women in 1958. Traffic in women and promotion of prostitution was yet “another tool of social control of the indigenous society” by the colonial authorities (Lazreg, 1994, p. 45). In fact, Knauss (1987) argues that after “denuding” Algerians of their fertile lands, and the Algerian countryside of its “prosperous peasants and tribes,” the settlers attempted to “expose the bodies of Algerian women” as the “ultimate attempt at pacification” (p. 29).

However, while the nationalists were promoting women's rights and equality in their newspapers, as mentioned above, and indeed actualized this commitment during the war years,¹⁹ they were still "prisoners" of the French colonial discourses in that they were cornered into a defensive position dictating a return back to traditional social practices (Knauss, 1987, p. xiii). As a consequence, Algerian women became "the double prisoners of this nationalist antithesis of everything French. They became both the revered objects of the collective act of national redemption and the role models for the new nationalist patriarchal family" (Knauss, 1987, p. xiii). Accordingly, after the independence in 1962, patriarchal values gained momentum and the Algerian woman was reified as a symbol not only of tradition but of the Algerian national identity, too. The 1984 Family Code concretized this return to patriarchy, including by allowing men polygamy and reducing Algerian women to legal minors when it comes to marriage and divorce.

Many Algerian and non-Algerian feminists considered, and rightly so, the code as a setback after the revolution (Woodhull 1993; Bennoune 1995; Hélie-Lucas 1999). Woodhull (1993, p. 11), for instance, contends that women in post-independence Algeria underwent "exclusion from a national life that could have included them as equals," adding that it is precisely this exclusion that "increasingly constitutes the Algerian nation after independence." While the 1984 family code is clearly informed by patriarchal values, it should not conceal other developments that undermine any reductive and simplistic account of the Algerian woman condition, and indeed question the extent and nature of women's exclusion from national life. Statistics of women's participation in Algeria's public life a year after Woodhull's statement indicate that "half of university graduates were women; 50 percent of doctors (and only 48 percent of nurses), one-third of judges, and 30 percent of lawyers were women" (Turshen, 2002, p. 291). By 2007, and despite the civil war that raged in 1990s, and the momentum gained by the fundamentalist discourse, women made up 70 percent of Algeria's lawyers and 60 percent of judges (Slackman 2007). These numbers paint a different image for the Algerian woman and her role in public life, an image that is all too often glossed over or outright overlooked in Western feminist discussions of the Algerian woman condition.

¹⁹ According to Woodhull (1993), FLN's wartime tribunals, for instance, did not require the bride's father to give consent in her name, but married couples "based on the partners' mutual consent" (p. 9).

In fact, Woodhull (1993), for instance, and as she decries in Western literature on Algerian women what she calls “antithetical formulations that oppose traditional Algerian culture to modern nationalism as if each were a self-contained entity” (p. 11), goes on to make her own antithetical formulation that obscures what Spivak (1994, p. 193) calls “areas of difference and different differentiations,” by opposing the practice of the veil to progress, and reducing the problematic condition of the Algerian woman to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism (Woodhull, 1993, p. 15). In so doing, Woodhull’s own work becomes “steeped in a dual intellectual tradition, orientalist and evolutionary, resulting in an ahistorical conception of social relations and institutions,” as Algerian feminist Lazreq (1994, p. 13) puts it.

Woodhull in fact gives short shrift to the overall political and economic context in post-independence Algeria that shapes the Algerian woman’s condition. This context has indeed been characterized by growing economic and political problems, including staggering unemployment rates, corruption, state oppression and poverty. These problems eventually culminated in the 1988 riots that were bloodily repressed by the state, and in the rise of fundamentalism as an alternative political discourse to the hitherto failing nationalist discourse. In the first round of the 1991 parliamentary elections, the first democratic elections in the history of the country, the Islamic Salvation Front party (FIS) went to win by a crushing majority. Fearing the FIS accession to power, the military staged a coup d’état, cancelled the elections, banned the party and arrested thousands of its members. Islamist guerrillas soon appeared and the country sank in a brutal armed conflict during which 200.000 people were killed and other 15.000 disappeared. While the official military narrative on this war blamed the Islamist groups for the violence and the terrorist acts against civilians, a counter narrative, including by members of the military institution and retired French general François Buchwalter, would challenge this narrative. According to this counter narrative, the military created not only privatized militias that killed and terrorised (Martinez, 2000, p. 151), but also armed groups acting as Islamist guerrillas with a view to undermining the FIS all while the military is getting rid of its members (Samraoui 2003; Ryan 2010). In this context of chaos and terror, writers and journalists, men and women alike, were assassinated for their political views, including Said Meqbel whose memory Mosteghanemi retrieves in *Fawḍā*.

It is to this national chaos and loss of stability, rather than to the condition of woman, that *Fawḍā* primarily speaks. Mosteghanemi in this text is less concerned with producing a blueprint for feminist writing than in producing discourses and counter discourses that seek to redress political grievances and to create some sense of coherence and permanence anchored in the very act of writing. Mosteghanemi (1998), in fact, explains that identification with her generation of writers and poets “exceeded my feminine identity, that poetry and country are my primary cause. As for being a woman, that is my problem alone” (p. 84). Accordingly, *Fawḍā* seems to be a subversive discursive intervention in several orders of discourse. By drawing on the autobiographical genre and retrieving personal and national memories, including of revolutionist Djamila Bouhayrad, and in incorporating the discourse of woman as a sexual subject, the author actively intervenes in the local hegemonic nationalist discourse on Algerian women as symbols. As Fayad (1995) points out, Arab women writers generally have to grapple with “a master national narrative that not only homogenizes the concept of national identity itself, but also assigns woman a fixed role as an historical metaphor buried deep within the foundations of the narrative” (p. 147). In *Fawḍā*, Mosteghanemi powerfully produces a counter script to this master narrative that disembodies Algerian women by reifying them as allegories, mere signifiers of the nation.

By constructing an identity for her heroine as primarily an Arab, secular Algerian woman, and by drawing on the discourse of religious fundamentalism as a symptom, rather than the cause, of Algeria’s problems, the author is not only challenging the official State narrative on the civil war and pointing to the State’s failures, but she is also disrupting Western feminist discourses on Arab women that either “fall back on narrowly feminist [...] expectations” (Valassopoulos, 2008, p. 111), or account for the struggle of these women within a mainly religious paradigm that collapses differences, including of class and ethnicity, and obscures hierarchies other than the patriarchal one (Lazreq 1994).

However, the Algerian woman was only one of the main fronts on which the struggle for the independence, and later on for the building of Algeria as a nation, was fought. The other one was language. Indeed, because of colonialism, Arabic and French in Algeria acquired “political and social connotations as a reflection of their role in this conflict” (Cox, 2002, p.

20), connotations that lingered beyond the revolution years. Among the first regulations in this regard after the independence was the Arabization of the educational system. Nevertheless, because of the colonial past, French language remained very powerful in the Algerian society, including in the literary scene where increasing numbers of writers and novelists have been choosing French as their literary medium over Arabic. It is true that for many of the pioneers of Algerian francophone literature, like Assia Djebar, Kateb Yacine, Malek Haddad and Mouloud Feraoun, the writing language was not a matter of choice but of both necessity and resistance to colonial violence.²⁰ But for post-independence generations that were educated in an Arabized education system, writing in French has become a matter of choice informed, at least in part, by hegemonic colonial discourses and by the power imbalance.

For Algerian writer Mohamed Kacimi-El-Hassani (1992), for instance, French is the “*langue du Je,*” i.e. the language where the self can find expression, whereas Arabic is the “*langue de Dieu,*” i.e. the language of the after-life that suppresses any possibility of self-expression. For many others, however, the choice is mainly informed by economic and symbolic reasons caused by the power imbalance between the two languages. Mortimer (2001) maintains, indeed, that writing in French and publication in France offer the writers “greater distribution possibilities and therefore potentially larger reading public” (p. 4). They also open more opportunities for translation in other languages. As a result, Mortimer rightly asserts, francophone Maghrebi literary texts are “better known than their Arabic-language counterparts” outside of North Africa (p. 4). For the nationalists, this is an imbalance that needs to be redressed. Hence, some four decades after Algerian independence, president Ben Bella (n.d.) would describe Mosteghanemi, precisely because of her Arabic writings, as “an Algerian sun that has illuminated Arabic literature. With her writings, she has raised Algerian literature to a stature worthy of the history of our struggle. We take as much pride in her Arabic pen as in our Algerian and Arab identity” (as cited on Mosteghanemi’s Arabic website <http://www.ahlammosteghanemi.com/#!press/c1pz>; my translation). Commenting on her official status as the first Algerian novelist to write in Arabic, Mosteghanemi (1998) reveals,

²⁰ Educated in French, these writers could not write or read in Arabic. Perceiving French as a “*moyen de dépersonnalisation*”, in Yacine’s words, this writer, for instance, took hold of it and of the French culture it stands for, to turn the two into “*armes à longue portée de sa libération. Loin de nous ‘franciser’, la culture française ne pouvait qu’attiser notre soif de liberté, voire d’originalité*” (as cited in Bouguerra and Bouguerra, 2010, p. 6-7).

however, that this “fills me with horror, not pride. How could I be the first poetess in Arabic, and twenty years later the first woman novelist writing in Arabic in a country where thousands of women graduate and master Arabic language” (p. 79). In fact, this novelist who pursued higher education in France and defended her PhD with Jacques Berque, sees in the presence of the French language in Algeria some sort of violence, and considers writing in Arabic resistance to this violence. It comes as no surprise then that, in the acceptance speech that she gave when she was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal, Mosteghanemi praised “Algerian writers writing in Arabic who confront unarmed the onslaughts of Francophony” (Mosteghanemi, 1998). To counter this onslaught, she established the Malek Haddad prize for young Arabic writers, a prize that not only promotes Arabic, but that also constitutes a tribute to the Algerian writer and poet Malek Haddad, whom she calls the “martyr of the Arabic language,”²¹ for deciding to stop writing in French (Mosteghanemi, 1993, p. 5).

But Mosteghanemi’s novels remain her most powerful discursive resistance to the onslaught of Francophony. *Fawḍā*, through the verse novel subgenre it incorporates, and the Arab-nationalist discourse it draws on and indeed through the very language it is written in, Arabic, is a discursive subversion of the colonial discourse that attempted to suppress the Arab component in Algeria’s identity. It is a conscious and sustained effort at reconquering an Arab cultural heritage and restoring the Arabness of an Algeria whose national identity Mosteghanemi at once imagines and constructs as Arab. To go back to Anderson’s concept of imagined communities above, language, as used mainly in the novel and newspapers, is the form of imagining that provides “the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (Anderson, 2006, p. 25). In other words, Mosteghanemi is “stabilizing” her nation’s identity. She is however not doing it by being the passive object of an allegorization, as Woodhull suggested above. Rather, Mosteghanemi is being an active agent of change engaged in her own inclusions and exclusions in the process of writing Algeria’s modern history and identity, and giving it national coherence. Moreover, she is questioning yet another assumption often made about Arabic in the context of Algeria, namely

²¹ In a seminar about French in Maghrebi literature, Haddad (1965) explains: “Permettez-moi de me citer une fois de plus: ‘la langue française est mon exil’. Mais aujourd’hui: la langue française est aussi l’exil de mes lecteurs. Le silence n’est pas un suicide, un hara-kiri. Je crois aux position extrêmes. J’ai décidé de me taire; je n’éprouve aucun regret, ni aucune amertume à poser mon stylo” (p. 80).

that its use is generally undergirded by an Islamic ideology or, at least, leaning. Even Cox (2002), in her very thorough and nuanced analysis of the political and economic context of today's Algeria, makes this assumption when she maintains that "Arabic in Algeria carries with it [...] the effects of its association with an Islamist ideology" (p. 33). By backgrounding religion as a voice in the production of *Fawḍā* as shown above, and by constructing an identity for herself and for her heroine as secular, Mosteghanemi obliterates this assumption and problematizes, especially for Western readers, preconceptions of what is Muslim and what is Arab.

Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā* thus constitutes a very interesting case study of translation. How is a writer standing against Francophony reintegrated into it through translation into French? How was a female writer who ranked third in popularity in 15 Arab countries after Nobel prize winner Naguib Mahfouz and veteran journalist Maḥmūd Ḥassanein Haykal, and ahead of such names as Sudanese novelist Tayeb Saleh, Egyptian novelist Alaa al-Aswany, Egyptian woman writer and feminist Nawal El Saadawi, translated into English and consumed in the Anglo-American market?

2.5 A Woman Writer's Nationalist and Feminist Politics in Translation

Like with Mosteghanemi's first novel, *Fawḍā* was commissioned for translation into English to Baria Ahmar, by American University in Cairo Press (AUC Press). Ahmar is a Lebanese journalist, women's rights activist and a poetess that also happens to be a close friend of Mosteghanemi's. While she had experience translating journalistic texts for newspapers in Lebanon, Ahmar's experience in literary translation is limited to translating Mosteghanemi's first two novels. It was, therefore, her command of English and her friendship with Mosteghanemi that ultimately informed AUC Press' decision to give her the novels to translate (Ahmar, in an interview given in February 14th, 2013). This friendship allowed close contact during the translation process. As Ahmar explains: "we agreed on the Arabic text. Because she doesn't speak English at all [...] as to the English text, Ahlem completely trusted me with whatever decision I took." In 2006, i.e. two years after the release

of the English translation of *Fawḍā* in Cairo, Albin Michel released a French translation by France Meyer. Unlike Ahmar, Meyer is a professional literary translator that has been translating Arabic literature for over 30 years. She translated for Abdurrahmān Munīf, Naguib Mahfouz and Ghada al-Sammān, among many others. She is also associate lecturer in the Arabic program at the Australian National University. In an email exchange dated July 5th, 2012, where she talked about her experience translating *Fawḍā*, Meyer explains that since “I knew she [Mosteghanemi] speaks very good French I consulted her on all matters and she read the translation before it was published. We exchanged countless emails, had a few “battles,” and built a strong and friendly relationship.” When asked if publishers ever intervened in any way in her work, in general, and in her translation of *Fawḍā*, in particular, she answered “no, never in any way” (e-mail communication, July 5th, 2012). Ultimately, both Meyer and Ahmar maintained that they wanted their respective translations to be “a true and faithful rendition of the original work,” to borrow Meyer’s words. The analysis that follows will try to explore the extent to which their respective renditions were true and faithful and, in the process, investigate whether these two translators reproduce the same discourses and subscribe to the same mental representations as those activated in the ST.

Indeed, the way authors represent events, social actors and processes entails choice amongst process types, vocabulary, cohesion strategies, thematic structure, etc. While such choices are not always necessarily conscious (Fairclough, 2003, p. 144), they still reveal the models, i.e. the “mental representations of experiences, events or situations [and] the opinions we have about them,” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 258), that authors, as social individuals, draw upon in their understanding and re-presentation of events, actors and processes. This holds true for translation, as well. Many theorists have distinguished between two types of shifts: a) obligatory shifts stemming from the differences between source language (SL) and target language (TL) systems, and b) optional shifts resulting from the translator’s individual choices (see Toury, 1980, for instance). Even when such optional shifts are not conscious, they do not always stem from simple stylistic preferences, but are often informed by specific mental representations and ideologies, especially if, according to Calzada-Perez (2007), “they form part of a more general trend within a whole text” (p. 191). In fact, Calzada-Perez goes further as to state that even when “none of the shifts examined in [a translated text] are the result of

ideological agendas, this does not prevent them from having ideological implications, of which translators may be unaware” (p. 192).

2.5.1 Algerian woman: From agency to (sexual) passiveness.

As stated above, Mosteghanemi/Hayat represents women as both active sexual subjects and empowered agents that are equal to men. This gendered discourse is textualized through specific lexico-grammatical choices, including transitivity. On several occasions, however, and more often in the French translation than in the English one, this discourse is undermined, sometimes even completely suppressed, through lexico-grammatical choices. In Example 1, for instance, the French translation presents a transactive-to-non-transactive shift that reduces female agency as it relates to a male character.

Example 1:

ورغم اشتهائي له، شيء في كان لا يطاوعني، و يرفض الاستسلام له. (p. 311)

GT: Despite my desire for him, something in me did not obey me and refused to surrender to him.

French target text (FTT): Malgré mon désir, quelque chose en moi refusait de m’obéir et m’empêchait de m’abandonner à lui. (Mosteghanemi, 2006, p. 266)

English target text (ETT): Although I desired him, something within me refused to surrender to him ... (Mosteghanemi, 2004/2007, p. 183)

In the ST, Hayat is the grammatical subject/semantic senser of the verb “اشتھی” /ishtahā/ in the gerund form, “اشتھاء” /ishtihā’/. The verb in Arabic means “to want and crave.” It is a mental process verb with a senser and a phenomenon. In this context, the process is sexual desire and the phenomenon is the husband. Although the verb is nominalized, the female character’s sexual agency is not suppressed in the sentence since the author kept the grammatical subject/semantic senser of the verb, i.e. Hayat, in the subject position, and the husband, “him,” in the position of the semantic phenomenon/grammatical object. Conversely, the author does not make Hayat the subject of the mental process verb “to refuse” and the

material process verb “to surrender.” Instead, she passivates Hayat in this instance and personifies “something in me.” But in so doing, the author paradoxically kept the agency of Hayat intact since “surrender” connotes weakness and passivity towards the beneficiary who, in this instance, is the husband. The translator of the English TT gives Hayat even greater agency than in the original by replacing the gerund with the verb “to desire,” and keeping both subject/senser and object/phenomenon. She also personifies “something” thereby avoiding to put Hayat in the passive position of “surrender.” In contrast, the French translator limits Hayat’s sexual agency by suppressing the male character’s status as the object of Hayat’s desire, when it could have been idiomatic to say “Je le désirais, mais quelque chose...” or “Même si je le désirais, quelque chose....” She also presents Hayat as the subject/doer of the passive act of surrender, “m’abandonner,” to the male character, thereby paradoxically passivating her.

A similar suppression of sexual agency is at play in Example 2. In this passage, Hayat is back home from the public bath on a Saturday afternoon. She feels that the cleansing ritual has awakened her desire, so she plans to make love to her husband that very night against playwright Sacha Guitry’s advice that bored married couples should not “practice love” (“يمارسون الحب”), i.e. make love, on a Saturday night because should it rain on Sunday morning, they would not know what to do with their time together. Her plan for the night fails, however, because Algeria’s president makes a sudden announcement that shakes the country and has her husband spend the night at work:

Example 2:

طبعاً.. لم أكن أدري أنه يكفي أن أنوي الحب، كي تنقلب البلاد رأساً على عقب. (p. 236)

GT: Obviously, I didn’t know that it was enough for me to intend love, for the country to go upside down.

FTT: Évidemment, j’ignorais qu’il suffisait d’avoir envie d’amour pour que le pays culbute, cul par-dessus tête. (p. 203)

ETT: I certainly had no idea that it would be enough that my strong passion for my country would be turned upside down. (p. 139)

In the original, the female character is the subject of the verb “نوى,” /nawā/, which means “قصد” /qaṣada/, literally “to aim” (*Lissān al-‘Arab*). In Arabic, it is used as both an intentional material process verb as in “to aim for the house,” “to move from one place to another or from one house to another,” and a mental process verb that, nevertheless, connotes action and intention, as in “to aim to do something.” In this last instance, the Arabic verb is better rendered by “to intend/to plan to do x” in English, and “avoir l’intention de/compter faire x” in French. In addition, the word “حب” /ḥub/, in classical Arabic means the emotion, i.e. mental process, of “love.” In the way it is used by Mosteghanemi in the passage above first with the verb “practice” and then with the verb /nawā/, it refers to physical love, i.e. sex. In other words, Hayat is the grammatical subject/semantic senser of the act of intending and preparing to make love. While it is clear that the English version suffers from poor editing since the sentence is grammatically incorrect and quite incoherent, the French translation is another instance where the agency of the female character is totally muted. Not only is she absent as the subject of “avoir envie,” but the very expression “avoir envie” is a mental process that, unlike “aim,” does not necessarily connote action. As a consequence, “amour” in “avoir envie d’amour” would lend itself more to an interpretation as the “feeling of love” than as the act of “making love.” “Il suffisait que je pense à faire l’amour” would have been more felicitous as a translation transitivity-wise.

In Example 3, both the English and the French translations background female sexual agency:

Example 3:

كيف لي أن أشاعبه، أن أشعل تلك الإنارات الصغيرة التي ستجعله يوقف الكتابة ويقول لي شيئا؟ (p. 66)

GT: ... how can I tease him, turn on those small lights that will make him stop writing and tell me something?

FTT: ... comment pouvais-je m'interposer, faire jaillir l'étincelle qui l'obligerait à cesser d'écrire et à me parler? (p. 58)

ETT: how could I rebel by turning on those small flashlights that would make him stop writing and say something? (p. 35)

In the passage where this sentence is taken from, Hayat is in a coffee shop where she expects to meet the male protagonist of her latest short story. She sees a man sitting alone and writing. From his appearance, she believes he might be “him” and wonders how she can provoke him: “أشأغبه.” The verb “شأغب,” /shāghaba/, is defined as “تهيبج الشر,” literally “to entice to ill” (*Al-Qamous al-Muhit*). It is an intentional transactive material process verb with effects in the world. In this context, it can best be rendered in English by “tease” and in French by “taquiner” or “provoquer,” with the female protagonist, Hayat, as the actor and the male character as the semantic patient. In both French and English translations, the transactive material process verb “tease” was replaced by non-transactive verbs, “s’interposer” and “rebel,” respectively, that suppress the female character’s agency in relation to the male character.

In Example 4, lexico-grammatical choices by the French translator completely change the dynamics of the relationship between two characters of opposite sexes. In this excerpt, Hayat describes the interaction between the couple she is observing in the movie theater:

Example 4:

وهذا ما شجعني على الاعتقاد بأنها هي المرأة "ذاتها". ما دامت ليست معنية بهذا الفيلم، بقدر ما هي معنية بالتحرش بهذا الرجل. (p. 48)

GT: This encouraged me to believe that she was the same woman. For she was less interested in the movie than in provoking this man.

FTT: Ce petit geste provocateur me confirma que c'était « elle ». Le film l'intéressait moins que cet homme qui la captivait. (p. 42)

ETT: It encouraged me to believe that she was the same woman, since she was not nearly interested in the film as much as she was in provoking that man. (p. 24)

In this instance, we have an activation-to-passivation shift in the French translation at the level of female agency. The verb “تحرش,” /taħarrasha/, literally “to provoke” and “to excite” through action (*Lissān al-‘Arab* dictionary). However, the verb also means “harassment” when it occurs in a sexual context as in the expression “التحرش الجنسي,” literally “sexual harassment.” It is, therefore, an intentional material process verb that not only expresses a material action with a tangible effect in the world, but also connotes aggressiveness. In the immediate textual context where the verb is used in this example, it can best be rendered by “provoke,” since the scene described by Hayat/Mosteghanemi is that of the woman extending her hand towards the man’s thighs while they are in the movie theater, obviously to sexually provoke him. In other words, Hayat depicts the woman as the semantic doer/grammatical subject of a material process verb, and the man as the grammatical object and the semantic patient affected by the process. While the English translator reproduces a similar dynamics through transitivity, the French translator passivates the woman and conversely activates the man by turning the latter into the senser and the former into the phenomenon of the mental process verb “captiver.” As stated in the Introduction, such use of a mental process verb often creates the illusion that the senser is an actor involved in a material process.

Example 5 presents an equally deep change in the power relations between male and female characters as enacted in sexual encounters through what van Dijk (1988) calls “rhetorical (re-)formulation” (p. 117). Van Dijk (1988) defines the latter as “the use of rhetorical structures [...] to make the message more effective,” through such sound patterns as alliteration and rhyme, syntactic patterns as parallelism, or “semantic operations such as comparisons, metaphor, irony or understatements” (p. 82). He further maintains that the use of such structures is not due to contextual constraints but to the effect that the speaker/writer seeks to achieve on readers/listeners, which is persuasion of a “representation and a situation model as intended by the speaker/writer” (p. 82). Because such (re-)formulations as metaphor or similes activate new situation models that are “assumed to contain personal experiences and

opinions, as well as instantiated general opinions or attitudes,” van Dijk advances that when they occur, “there is no longer a direct transformation of source texts, but in fact, the production of another text” (p. 118). In other words, while these (re-)formulations and, by extension, shifts in translation, have an esthetical function, they are oftentimes ideologically motivated.

In the French translation in 5 below, the rhetorical reformulation takes the form of a metaphor that is absent in the original and that is meant to activate a situation model absent in the original:

Example 5:

ربما لذلك السبب، صنع جسدي يومها حاجزا لم يستطع زوجي تخطيه، رغم ما أوتي من إمكانيات فحولية. (p. 311)

GT: Maybe that was the reason why my body put a barrier that night that my husband could not cross despite the manly capabilities he has been endowed with.

FTT: Peut-être que mon corps avait conséquemment dressé un puissant barrage que mon mari n'avait jamais pu franchir, en dépit des assauts répétitifs de sa virilité. (p. 266)

ETT: Perhaps that was why my body that night established a barrier that my husband couldn't cross, in spite of his manly prowess. (p. 183)

The noun “قدرات,” /qudurāt/, is plural of “قدرة,” /qudrah/, which means “richness, facility and power” (*Lissān al-‘Arab*). It is best translated as “capacity” or “ability.” The implicit value embedded in this word is positive and creates the value assumption that Hayat’s husband has manly qualities that she liked and appreciated as a woman. This assumption is triggered not only by the word “capacity” itself, but also by the use of the word “barrier,” connoting a negative value, and the negative feelings described in the sentence preceding the excerpt. Hayat, indeed, says that she desired her husband on her wedding night, but she could not get the image of his first wife out of her mind, nor could she forget that her brother refused to attend her wedding ceremony. While the translator of the English TT makes the implicit positive value in “capacity” more salient through the use of “prowess,” the French translator changes the assumption altogether through the use of “assaut,” defined as a) “attaque faite

dans le dessein d'emporter de vive force une position ennemie," b) "attaque violente d'un élément naturel," and c) "attaque, critique, harcèlement de quelqu'un" (*Larousse*). Accordingly, the word "assaut" connotes violence, aggressiveness and harassment. This is a metaphor that encodes a negative value, compounded by the use of the evaluative adjective "répétitif" in the plural. This translation changed not only the propositional meaning of the sentence but also its inferred meaning since the reader is led to assume that the husband enforced (due to the violence encoded in the word "assaut") his manhood on Hayat every time (the use of the adjective "répétitif" in the plural) that his attempt to penetrate her failed.

Carrying out a shift that creates a gendered power relation where the woman is passive and the man is active to the point of enforcement and imposition happens in the French translation of *Fawḍā* outside of the context of sexual encounters as in Example 6:

Example 6:

لا تفرحي.. من الأفضل أن تحبي رجلا في حياته امرأة.. على أن تحبي رجلا في حياته قضية. فقد تتجحين في امتلاك الأول، و لكن الثاني لن يكون لك! (p. 93)

GT: Don't get excited... it would be better for you to love a man with a woman in his life than a man with a cause in his life. You may succeed in possessing the first, but the second will not be yours.

FTT: Il vaut mieux aimer un homme qui a une femme dans sa vie qu'un homme qui vit pour une cause. Tu peux espérer posséder le premier, mais pas le second ! (p. 79-80)

ETT: Don't be so happy. It's better to love a man with a woman in your life rather than a man with who [sic] lives for a political cause. You might succeed in possessing the first one, but the second will never be yours" (p. 51).

In this excerpt, Mosteghanemi passivates the male character by choosing to put him in the subject position of a verbless sentence where the predicate is nonverbal, /rajulan fī ḥayātihi imra'ah/ [man in life-his a-woman] instead of making him the grammatical subject in a verbal sentence, as in "من الأفضل أن تحبي رجلا ارتبط بامرأة.. على أن تحبي رجلا ارتبط بقضية" literally "it would be better for you to love a man who is committed to a woman than a man who is committed to

a cause,” a grammatically and syntactically correct sentence in Arabic that has the same propositional meaning as the ST, and that would have activated the male character. Paradoxically, Mosteghanemi puts the female character, Hayat, in the position of the grammatical subject/semantic doer of the material process verb “to succeed.” “To succeed” in English is a material process verb that can be either non-transactive and metaphorical as in “a mission which could not possibly succeed,” or transactive as in “he succeeded in winning a pardon,” in which case there is an implicit value of action towards the objective, since the verb in this case is defined as “to achieve something that you have been trying to do or get; to have the result or effect that was intended” (*Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary OALD*). The verb in English can also be a supervision material process, where there is no intentionality, as in “Who succeeded Kennedy as President?” in which case it means to “come next after somebody/something” (*OALD*). In Arabic language, the verb “تجح” used by Mosteghanemi corresponds to the first two meanings and functions of “to succeed.” The implicit value encoded in it is, therefore, that of action and agency, with the propositional assumption—i.e. assumption “about what is or can be or will be the case” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55)—that 1) women do act towards possessing men, and 2) they can and do, in fact, possess men. The translator of the English TT, and save for the phrase where there is a syntactic error left in the text due to poor editing, reproduces both the propositional meaning and the assumption of the ST. In contrast, the French translator makes two shifts. The first, a passivation-to-activation shift, occurs when the man takes the subject position in the relational process verb “avoir,” with the woman in the grammatical object/semantic attribute position. This shift, however, is obligatory since it can be attributed to the syntactic requirements of the French language. Nevertheless, the second shift occurs when the material process verb “to succeed” is replaced with “espérer,” a mental process verb that connotes passivity rather than action, thereby passivating the woman and implying that women can only hope to possess men.

This passivation of the female character reoccurs a few sentences later in the French translation:

Example 7:

ولم أمتلكه. أخذته مني تلك القضية إلى الأبد. (p. 93)

GT: And I didn't possess him. That cause took him from me forever.

FTT: Cet homme-là m'avait échappé. Sa cause me l'avait arraché pour toujours. (p. 81)

ETT: I hadn't possessed him. (p. 51)

While the female character, Hayat, is the subject/possessor in the relational process “possess” in both the ST and the ETT, and the male character is the object/possessed in the process, the dynamics changes in the French translation with the male character becoming the subject/doer of a material process verb “échapper,” and Hayat backgrounded to the position of patient, when it could have been equally idiomatic in French to say: “Je ne l'ai pas possédé.” The same shift is repeated again in Example 8:

Example 8:

توصلني هذه الخواطر إلى زوجي الذي لم أملكه أيضا. (p. 94)

GT: These thoughts led me to my husband whom I never possessed, either.

FTT: De fil en aiguille, je pensai à mon mari. Lui non plus ne m'appartenait pas. (p. 81)

ETT: These thoughts led me to my husband, whom I had never possessed. (p. 51)

The male character in the FTT gets activated as the subject of the relational process verb “appartenir” while the female character is passivated as the object/attribute, when in the ST, as in the ETT, transitivity is used to activate the woman as the possessor and passivate the man as the possessed. The repetitive use in the ST of the verb “to possess,” instead of “to love,” for instance, with a woman as its subject and the man as its object, reflects a perception of a world and of gendered power relations where men can and do become the possession of women. It is a gendered discourse that disrupts and indeed negates the prevailing discourse on women in Arab countries as being objects in the possession of men. It is therefore noteworthy that the French translator not only avoided in two consecutive sentences, whether wittingly or unwittingly, the use of the equivalent “posséder,” but replaced it with verbs that passivate the woman. In addition, the only time where the translator uses “posséder,” she uses it with the

verb “espérer,” thus reducing the possession to a wish and implying it is something that is hardly achievable. In so doing, the French translator is bringing a different gendered discourse to bear on the interpretation and translation of the ST.

A similar intervention is at work in the translation of the ST in Example 9. The excerpt in this example is taken from an exchange between Hayat and her lover, Khaled, where she asks Khaled about the lessons he learnt from life and he answers that patience is one of these lessons. He then proceeds to explain to her how they both need to be patient and resist their mutual sexual desires so as not to insult love since sexual pleasure can only heighten desire. He concludes: “We have now to try the pleasure of abstinence, to make peace with our bodies, to learn how to live in our bodies when we are not together... and to discover the beauty of fidelity out of deprivation” (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 323; my translation).

Example 9:

أقاطععه: لا أفهم لماذا أغريتني بالخيانة، إذا كنت ستطالبني بالوفاء.. عن جوع!
يرد ساخرا: أنت تسيئين فهمي مرة أخرى. أنا لم أطلبك بشيء. أعددتك للإخلاص، دون أن أطلبك بأن تكوني مخلصا
لي..

(...) ولكن الإخلاص لا يطلب. (p. 323)

GT: I interrupt him: I don't understand, why did you tempt me with infidelity if you were going to ask for fidelity from me ... out of hunger!

He replies sarcastically: you misunderstood me once again. I didn't ask for anything from you. I prepared you for faithfulness without asking that you be faithful to me...

- [...] But faithfulness cannot be asked for.

FTT: Je l'interrompis: je ne comprends pas. Pourquoi m'as tu séduite pour m'imposer ensuite d'être fidèle... et frustrée ?

- Encore un malentendu! Se moqua-t-il. Je ne t'impose rien. Je te prépare à être fidèle, mais je ne t'impose pas de l'être !

[...] Mais la fidélité ne se demande pas. (p. 276)

ETT: I interrupted him: “I don’t understand why you seduced me into infidelity, when you were going to demand loyalty of me out of deprivation.”

- You misunderstood me once more. I’m not demanding anything. I prepared you for loyalty, without asking you to be loyal to me.”

- [...] But loyalty is never asked for.... (pp. 191-192)

In this exchange, Mosteghanemi uses three times the verb “طالب,” /ṭābaba/, and one time the verb “طلب,” /ṭalaba/, both from the root /ṭ-l-b/. The latter means “to try to find something and to take it” (مُحَاوَلَةٌ وَجِدَانِ الشَّيْءِ وَأَخْذُهُ) (*Lissān al-‘Arab*), and is better rendered in English by “to seek” or “to ask for,” and in French by “demander.” It has thus no embedded value, negative or positive, and acquires any connotation from its context. As to the verb /ṭābaba/, it is defined as “to ask someone for a right of yours that he holds, and keep pursuing him for that right” (*Lissān al-‘Arab*). It is a verbal process that has a sayer and an addressee. It encodes the implicit value of a power relation where the subject, i.e. the one carrying out the process, is either equal or inferior in power, depending on the context, to the subject who holds the pursued right and the capacity to yield it or keep it. As such, it is best translated by “to ask for,” “to request,” “to claim” or “to demand” in English, and by “demander” or “revendiquer” in French. In its first occurrence in the ST when Hayat uses the verb to report Khaled’s speech act, the English translator renders the verb /ṭābaba/ by “to demand” and does not background either the subject/sayer, Khaled, or the addressee, Hayat. However, when it is Khaled who is using the verb /ṭābaba/ to report his own speech, the translator suppresses the addressee of Khaled’s “demand” (I’m not demanding anything), thereby reducing any effect it has on Hayat. In the second time that Khaled uses the verb, the translator completely neutralizes the force of his verbal process by replacing the value-laden “demand” by the neutral and value-free “to ask.”

The French translation, however, presents several shifts. The first and least disrupting is the passivation of Hayat through the nominalization of one of her actions, albeit a mental one: understanding. Indeed, the translator removes Hayat as a subject, along with the mental process verb “misunderstand,” and the grammatical object/semantic phenomenon of Hayat’s misunderstanding and replaces them all with the noun “malentendu.” In addition, while the

translator does translate the verb /ṭalaba/ in the last sentence by its equivalent “demander” in the passive voice (la fidélité ne se demande pas), she consistently translates /ṭalaba/ with the almost opposite “imposer.” The latter is, indeed, defined as “obliger quelqu’un à faire ou à subir telle action en se soumettant à un ordre, à un règlement,” or as “Faire connaître, reconnaître, accepter son autorité, sa volonté, ses idées, sa valeur” (*Larousse online dictionary*). The implicit value embedded in this verb is, therefore, that of social hierarchy and power. The French translator consistently puts the male character in the subject position of this verb and the female character in the patient position, thereby completely changing the power relation that exists between them as represented in the ST. This change is compounded in the first sentence where the male is translated as imposing— that is “obligeant Hayat à subir”— not only fidelity but frustration, as well. It is thus a relationship where the male character has the power, i.e. “the ability to impose [his] will,” to borrow Brown and Levinson’s (1987, p. 65) definition, on the woman. The inferred meaning of such translation is that the male character knows he has such authority over the female character, hence his exertion of this will through the imposition, and assumes that she will obey him. In fact, this meaning is made explicit in the French translation in Example 10 below. In this excerpt, Hayat replies to Khaled’s denial that he asked for anything from her:

Example 10:

تمنيت أن تقول غير هذا. كان يسعدني أن تطلب مني ذلك. (p. 324)

GT: I wish you said something else. It would have made me happy if you asked me for something.

FTT: J’aurais préféré le contraire. J’aurais été ravie de t’obéir. (p. 276)

ETT: I wish you could have said something else. It would have made me happy if you had asked. (p. 191)

In the ST, as in the ETT, Hayat is passivated as she is the grammatical object/semantic beneficiary of the process “to make happy” whose grammatical subject is Khaled’s request and not Khaled, himself. This passivation of both characters contributes to depicting the

relationship between Hayat and Khaled as one where the woman and man act as peers. Khaled uses “we” and “our” while talking of exerting patience and not giving in to physical temptation, thereby marking reciprocity and social closeness as opposed to social hierarchy. Likewise, when Hayat questions his opinion, she does not assume he is coercing her into any action. Instead, she believes he is “asking for” fidelity from her. And while she expresses pleasure at the idea of Khaled making such a request, she keeps the right to oblige him or not. The assumption in this exchange is once again that Hayat does not feel Khaled has any authority over her. The relationship constructed between the two is not one where the woman is subservient to the man, but where man and woman are peers. In the FTT, however, the French translator keeps Khaled passivated by putting him in the position of the grammatical object of “obéir,” and activates the character of Hayat by putting her in the position of the subject of the same verb. Paradoxically, this activation substantially limits Hayat’s agency vis-à-vis the male character and depicts her as inferior in social power to him since “obéir” is defined as “se soumettre à la volonté de quelqu’un, à un règlement, exécuter un ordre” and as “être soumis à une force, une action, une règle par une nécessité naturelle” (*Larousse*). This is a verb that encodes passivity and submission.

In fact, passivity and submission are two values that are absent in the ST, as in the ETT, but are embedded in the FTT in Example 11:

Example 11:

وأذكر أنه طوال ليلة زفافي، لم تفارقني فكرة وجودها، ولا مشهد حضورها الصامت، في تلك السهرة مرعاة لزوجي، الذي كان يريد أن يثبت للحضور مباركتها لهذا الزواج. (p. 310)

GT: I remember that throughout my wedding night, I could not forget her silent presence in consideration for my husband, who wanted to prove to the guests that she gave him her blessings to marry.

FTT: Je me rappelle avoir été hantée tout au long de notre nuit de noce par le souvenir de sa silhouette silencieuse, dont la présence à la fête— présence imposée par mon promis—, prouvait à l’assistance qu’elle nous accordait sa bénédiction. (p. 266)

ETT: I remember all through my wedding night she never left me, nor the vision of her silent presence at the wedding that so pleased my husband. He wanted to prove to all the invitees that she had given her blessing to that marriage. (p. 183).

In the ST, there is a nominalization of the action of a female character, the first wife: “مراعاة,” /murā‘āt/, from the verb “راعى,” /rā‘ā/, literally “to consider”. The nominalization, however, does not obliterate the wife’s agency altogether in that the phenomenon of this mental process, the husband, is not removed. In English, “to consider” is defined as “to regard or treat in an attentive or kindly way” (*Merriam-Webster*), or as “to think about something, especially the feelings of other people, and be influenced by it when making a decision” (*OALD*). The verb/process encodes the implicit value of both voluntariness and social closeness between interactants. The propositional assumption here is that the first wife, having regard for her husband and knowing he wanted to prove to the guests that she agreed to his marriage, made the voluntary decision to attend the wedding. In the ETT, the translator completely passivates the female character as it is “her silent presence” that is personified and made the subject of the mental process verb “to please.” However, although the English translator does not present the first wife’s presence as the result of a decision-making process in consideration of the husband’s feelings, the verb “to please” itself encodes an implicit value of voluntariness and positive feelings insofar as it is defined as “to make somebody happy” (*OALD*), which reproduces, albeit to a less salient extent, the meaning of the ST. In stark contradiction to the ST, the FTT not only completely passivates the female character linguistically by omitting her from the sentence as the patient of the intentional material process verb “imposer,” whose doer is the activated husband, but it also completely obliterates her agency in the process of going to the wedding. It depicts her as submissive to the husband insofar as the act of attending the wedding was not a decision she made but an imposition by the husband, an imposition that she could not disobey, hence her presence. In addition, and while parentheticals are meant to provide relevant yet not essential information, the parenthetical in this case, compounded with the repetition of the word “présence,” foregrounds for the reader the idea of the imposition.

Example 11 is therefore yet another instance in the French translation where the woman changes from an active agent as represented in the ST through lexico-grammatical choices, into a passive and submissive object on whom others', mainly men's, will and authority are imposed. Such transformation is also apparent in Example 12:

Example 12:

في الثالثة والعشرين من عمرها، خلعت أمي أحلامها. خلعت شبابها ومشاريعها، ولبست الحداد اسما أكبر من عمرها ومن حجمها. (p. 101)

GT: At the age of twenty-three, my mother took off her dreams. She took off her youth and projects and took on mourning as a name bigger than her age and size.

FTT: À vingt-trois ans, on avait dépouillé ma mère de ses rêves. On l'avait dépouillé de sa jeunesse, de ses projets, pour la revêtir du linceul du deuil et l'assommer d'un titre trop lourd à porter à son âge. (p. 88)

ETT: At the age of twenty-three, my mother disrobed her dreams, her youth, and her future plans, to assume the black of mourning, and carry a name greater than her age and her size. (p. 56)

In this example, Hayat's mother is the subject/agent of the intentional material process verb "to take off" used metaphorically, and the mental process verb "to take on." By putting her in this position, Mosteghanemi is not only activating Hayat's mother, but she is also obfuscating any exterior agency in the mother's problems. In so doing, Mosteghanemi is further textually realizing her gendered discourse of women as agents and not victims. In comparison, and beyond the grammatical error in the use of the verb "to disrobe" left in the translation due to poor editing, the English translator does not emphasize the woman's agency as much insofar as she does not repeat the material process verb "to take off." However, she still puts the mother in the same grammatical and semantic position as in the ST. In contrast, the French translator systematically passivates the mother, turning her into the object of others' agency. Moreover, the translator uses a verb with the explicit value of both physical and moral violence, namely "assommer," defined as "Tuer quelqu'un, un animal en lui portant

un coup violent sur la tête,” or “frapper un être vivant d’un coup qui l’étourdit,” or “abattre, éprouver physiquement quelqu’un, ou l’accabler moralement” (*Larousse Online Dictionary*). In so doing, she represents the female character as the victim of others’ violent agency.

Analysis of the transformations mainly at the level of the ideational (including of transitivity and modality) and textual (including nominalization and passive voice) meanings in both the French and English translations thus reveals that deep textural and pragmatic shifts occurred in the French translation. They significantly undermined the gendered discourses on which Mosteghanemi draws in her text. Women’s (sexual) agency is diminished as they turn from sexual subjects into sexual objects, and from active agents that act as the equals of men into weak victims that are subservient to male dominance.

2.5.2 The Algerian intellectual: From complicated to uncomplicated secularism

Close analysis of the French and English translations reveals that, unlike the English TT, the French TT is again replete with textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that considerably undermine the three main general discourses in the ST, namely the secularist discourse, the discourse of religious fundamentalism as the result of political and geopolitical problems, and the Pan-Arab and Nasserite discourse.

2.5.2.1 The secular discourse.

In line with the secular discourse, Mosteghanemi, like her heroine Hayat, does not believe in the “veil” as a “true” religious signifier of virtue. For her, garb, whether that of the military, of the “men of religion” or of rich people is “nothing but the notice that we want to give the others. Therefore, like any rumour, it bears the seeds of deception” (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 98; my translation). In line with this discourse, Mosteghanemi/Hayat more often than not avoids using the religiously and politically overdetermined word “hijab” to refer to scarves or head covers.

In example 1, for instance, Hayat describes herself as she walks to her lover's apartment amidst Islamist protesters in the street while wearing the cloak and shawl that she borrowed from Farida, her sister-in-law (p. 169):

Example 1:

أمشي. يقودني الخوف إلى السرعة تارة. وإلى التأنى تارة أخرى. محتمية بثياب لا تشبهني، استعرتها هذه المرة من امرأة أخرى. ليست سوى فريدة. (p. 170)

GT: I walked. Fear made me hurry at times. And slow down at others. Seeking safety in clothes that did not look like me, and which I borrowed this time from another woman. None other than Farida.

FTT: Je marchai. La peur m'obligeant tour à tour à me hâter ou ralentir, sous un voile qui ne me ressemblait pas et que j'avais emprunté cette fois à une autre femme, Farida. (p. 146)

ETT: Driven by fear, I walked quickly at times and slowly and deliberately at others, hiding behind a garment that bore no resemblance to me. I had borrowed it this time from another woman, Farida. (p. 99)

In this instance, Mosteghanemi/Hayat refers to the shawl and the cloak by the generic and value-free noun “ثياب,” /thiyāb/, plural for “ثوب,” literally “garment” or “article of clothing.” In addition, she describes the process of wearing these clothes by using the active participle “محتمية” /muḥṭamiyyah/, which describes the property of the subject of the verb “احتمى” /iḥtamā/. The latter is derived from the root verb /ḥamā/, an intentional transactive material verb that has an agent/doer, a patient and a beneficiary. It is, indeed, defined as “مَنَعَهُ” (Lissān al-‘Arab), literally to prevent something/someone from [hurting] someone. Since the verb /iḥtamā/ is the reflexive form of the root verb, it is defined as “احتمى هو من ذلك وتحمى:” “امتنع,” i.e. to prevent something/someone from [hurting] oneself. This verb encodes, therefore, the explicit values of both safety and agency. By writing Hayat as the semantic agent of the verb /iḥtamā/, in the active participle form, Mosteghanemi is activating Hayat and bringing out her agency in the choice of the clothes she is wearing. Moreover, the metaphorical use of this verb is a rhetorical device that depicts the scarf and the cloak as potentially offering safety.

The English translator translates the value-free “ثياب,” /thiyāb/, literally by “garment,” and while she does not explicitly convey the notion of such clothes as potentially offering safety, she uses the verb “to hide” in its intransitive form, which is defined as “to go somewhere where you hope you will not be seen or found” (*OALD*). It is, therefore, a verb that encodes the implicit value of safety, too. Besides, the English translator keeps the agency of Hayat in the process of hiding as she is the grammatical subject/semantic agent of the verb. In contrast, the French translator completely masks Hayat’s agency in wearing those clothes by replacing the verbal process with the prepositional phrase “sous un voile.” In so doing, however, she also masks Hayat’s perception that a shawl over the head and a cloak can be safe for her as a woman. More important, the translator translates the generic value-free “clothes” with the specific “voile,” a signifier that has become, both in 1990’s Algeria and 21st century France when the novel was published and consumed respectively, overly determined politically and religiously, an overdetermination that Mosteghanemi clearly seeks to subvert or, at the very least, to avoid.

This shift in the French translation soon turns to a pattern that undermines the author’s discourse. In Example 2, for instance, Mosteghanemi/Hayat describes the same shawl and cloak as “clothes of piety”:

Example 2:

بعد أربعين سنة، ها أنا الوريثة الشرعية لجميلة بو حيرد. أمر بهذا المقهى نفسه. متتكرة في ثياب التقوى. بعد أن اكتشفت النساء هذه المرة أيضا أن ثياب التقوى قد تخفي عاشقة. تخبي تحت عباءتها جسدا مفخخا بالشهوة. (p. 171)

GT: After forty years, here I am the legitimate heiress of Djamila Bou Hayred. I go past the same coffee shop. Disguised in the clothes of piety. After women discovered— once again— that clothes of piety may hide a woman in love. A woman who hides under her cloak a body booby-trapped with desire.

FTT: Quarante ans plus tard, j’étais l’héritière légitime de Djamila Bou Hayrad. Je passais devant ce même Milk Bar, voilée de pied en cap, les algériennes ayant découvert qu’un voile pouvait dissimuler une femme amoureuse et mettre à l’abri des convoitises un corps brûlant de désir. (p. 147)

ETT: There I was, forty years later, the legitimate heir of Jamila Bu Hrayd, passing by the same café, disguised in garments of piety. Once more, women have discovered that pious garments might conceal a passionate woman within, hiding under her abaya a body booby-trapped with desire. (p. 100)

In this passage, the shawl and cloak are no longer mere clothes. They are referred to metaphorically as the “clothes of piety.” There is social and religious criticism in this metaphor, a criticism that is enhanced through the use of the evaluative adjective “disguised.” Through the use of this rhetorical device, the author is questioning piety as a religious value. She is implying that piety may be just a front, a “rumour” meant to deceive (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 78). It can be put on and taken off, depending on the circumstances. In so doing, the author/Hayat is activating a secular representation thanks to which she also contests the religious meaning invested in the shawl and the cloak as symbols. Accordingly, what Hayat is wearing to meet her lover fulfills a deceiving social, rather than an authentic religious, function which is to help her blend in and go unnoticed amidst the Islamists protesting in the streets of Algiers. On the other hand, Mosteghanemi/Hayat uses the adverbial phrase “once again” to enhance the parallelism she makes at the beginning of the sentence between 1990s Algeria’s Hayat and 1950s Algeria’s Djamila, i.e. between Algerian women in the 1990s and their predecessors in the pre-independence period. This phrase creates, indeed, the “logical implication” (Fairclough 2003) that this is not the first time that Algerian women used “clothes of piety,” i.e. shawls/scarves and cloaks, as a means of resistance, rather than a religious symbol, to deceive and subvert a hegemonic discourse or establishment. Readers familiar with Algerian history will thus recall the role of women in the war for liberation and the war of symbols. As Malek Alloula (1986) maintains:

Western apparel [...] early in the revolution allowed Algerian women, like Djamila, to actively confront the colonial presence in the streets. Later, toward the end of the revolution, when Western-clad Algerian women became suspect, the veil was once again assumed by the women of the FLN so that they could conceal within its folds the weapons and explosive devices they carried between the French and Arab quarters of the city. (p. x)

While Mosteghanemi clearly assumes that her readers share the same historical knowledge, and thus leaves much of this history unsaid because taken as a given, she still

provides more discursive elements to help those readers that are less familiar with the particularities of Algerian history infer the same logical implication, namely the reference to one of the most known figures in Algerian revolution, Djamila Bou Hayred, and the “booby-trapped” metaphor at the end of the excerpt, both of which refer the readers to the Algerians’ armed struggle for independence. The author once again activates the female character with regard to her clothing practice by putting her in the position of the grammatical subject/semantic agent of the intentional material process verb “to hide” in the last sentence of the excerpt. Moreover, the evaluative adjective used to describe the body of the woman, i.e. “booby-trapped,” encodes, in a context of revolution, values of counter-power and resistance.

The English translator reproduced not only the social and religious criticism embedded in the ST, but also its logical implication, the agency of women behind their clothing practices and their capacity to subvert symbols into means of resistance and contestation. In stark contradiction to both the ST and the ETT, the FTT contains several shifts at the level of cohesion, lexical choices and transitivity, as well as a rhetorical (re)-formulation, which changes both the propositional and inferred meanings of the ST and ends up considerably undermining and, indeed obliterating, the politics in the ST. The first important shift is the translation of the adjective “disguised” by “voilée,” and the metaphor “clothes of piety” by “de pied en cap” in the first instance, and “voile” in the second instance. This rhetorical reformulation suppresses the secularist and subversive discourse behind the questioning of clothes as reified religious symbols, and activates the hegemonic discourse of Algerian women as Muslim and veiled. This discourse is further foregrounded in the French translation through another rhetorical device, namely the use of the hyperbolic “de pied en cap” to describe the veiling. On the other hand, the adverb “again” that refers the readers back to the Algerian revolution is omitted in the FTT. This omission is unmotivated at the pragmatic level since the French readership— especially one that is interested enough in Algerian culture as to consume its literary production— is generally familiar with the Algerian war of independence and with the role of women in this struggle. This familiarity is precisely what allowed the translator to not only keep the reference to Djamila Bou Hayred without cushioning it, but to also give the exact name of the coffee shop, Milk Bar, assuming that her readers would recognize the coffee shop where another female militant, Zohra Drif, left explosives during the Algerian revolution.

Accordingly, this shift prevents the readers from making the link between Hayat's rebellious action in wearing clothes of piety not out of piety but *against* it (since she, the married woman, was going to meet her lover), and Algerian women's actions during the war of liberation when they wore the same clothes to subvert a then-different hegemonic institution, that of colonialism.

The translator continues to use rhetorical reformulation thus obscuring this link by translating the unconventional war metaphor "a body booby-trapped with desire" by the conventional metaphor "un corps brûlant de désir." The verb "brûler" is used in the FTT in its intransitive form, defined as "se consumer par le feu," "être enflammé d'un sentiment très vif, du désir de faire quelque chose," "être détruit, anéanti, altéré par le feu, se carboniser" (*Larousse*). The verb is therefore a supervention non-transactive material process, with no intentionality or effect in the world but on the subject, which in this instance is the female character. Besides, while there is a value embedded in this verb, it is not that of resistance or counter-power, like in "booby-trapped," but of passive, endured violence. The female character is further passivated in this short excerpt since the translator removes her from the position of the grammatical subject/semantic agent of the process of hiding her body, and replaces her with the personified veil. The verb "to hide" itself is replaced with another intentional material verbal collocation, that of "mettre à l'abri." This is a process that encodes the explicit value of providing safety from harm. This value is made even more explicit by the word "convoitises," defined as "désir de posséder et de jouir d'une chose qui, le plus souvent, appartient à autrui ou est plus ou moins interdite" or "fort désir sexuel pour quelqu'un" (*Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales (CNRTL)*). The inferred meaning of the French translation is that women are passive objects with regard to the veiling practice. Their body is also the object of strong sexual desire by men who might want to take possession of it, hence the imposed veil. This image is a far leap from the secularist liberating image in the ST of the Algerian woman as an agent actively engaged in the redefinition of religious and social symbols, and in redeploying such symbols to subvert hegemonic power, be it the colonial power of the time of Djamila Bou Hayred or the emerging power of Islamists in 1990s' Algeria.

Example 3 is another instance where a textural shift due to a lexical choice by the French translator results in replacing a secular value by a religious one. In a passage where Hayat talks about her mother and how little she must know of love and sexual relations since Hayat's father spent most of his time in the front fighting for Algeria's independence, we learn that:

Example 3:

ذات يوم، ذهب ولم يعد. كان له أخيرا شرف الاستشهاد، ولها قدر الترميل في العمر الذي تتزوج فيه الأخرىات. (p. 101)

GT: One day, he left and never came back. At last, he got the honour of martyrdom, and she got the fate of being a widow at an age where other women get married.

FTT: Un jour, il était parti pour ne plus revenir. Il avait enfin gagné le paradis de martyr, et elle avait gagné son titre de veuve... (p. 88)

ETT: One day he left and did not return; he finally had the honour of being a martyr. Her fate was widowhood at an age where others were just getting married. (p. 56)

In the ST, Mosteghanemi/Hayat describes the father's death in the fight for the country's independence as a martyrdom that she qualifies as "honour." "Martyrdom" in both English and French is a Christian concept that found its way to both languages through ecclesiastical Latin from the Greek "martur," literally "witness" (*OALD* and *CNRTL*). It is defined as "a person who is killed because of their religious belief" in English (*OALD*), and "personne à qui on a infligé des supplices et/ou la mort parce qu'elle a refusé d'abjurer sa foi" (*CNRTL*). Similarly, although the word for "martyr" in Arabic, "شهيد," /shahīd/, is derived from the value-free root verb /shahada/,²² it is defined as "he who gets killed for God" because God and his angels are his witnesses (*Lissān al-'Arab*). In the three languages, however, the word is also used metaphorically to design any person who dies for any cause, whether sentimental like a great love, or moral, like freedom of one's country. In contrast, the word /sharaf/,

²² The verb means "to be present to something and see it" (*as-Sihah fi Lughah* 2013). Mainly non-religious words derive from it, including /shāhed/, witness; /shahādah/, certificate; /istish-hād/, citation of a work or a person, and the verb /shahida/, to testify.

literally “honour,” is derived from the value-free root sh-r-f. It is defined as “elevation and high place” (*Al-Qamus al-Muhit*), and from it are derived the noun *shurfah* [balcony] and the verb *ashrafa* [to supervise]. In description of an individual or an action by an individual, it means glory. In other words, the word denotes a moral, rather than religious, value. The same value is denoted in the equivalents “honour” and “honneur.” The first is defined as “high respect and great esteem” (*OALD*), and the second as “considération, renom, gloire qui va à quelqu’un dont le courage, le mérite, la valeur, le talent, etc., sont reconnus” or “ensemble de principes moraux qui insistent à ne jamais accomplir une action qui fasse perdre l’estime qu’on a de soi ou celle qu’autrui nous porte” (*Larousse*).

Accordingly, Mosteghanemi/Hayat uses a universal moral value, honour, to describe the father’s martyrdom. This evaluation marker fixes the meaning of martyrdom in its metaphorical, rather than literal religious sense. In other words, the father died while fighting for a moral, not a religious cause, namely the country’s independence, and this death is honourable. This rhetorical device falls in line with Mosteghanemi’s secular discourse that reflects a perception of the world where religion and its concepts are not and should not be center-stage. It also goes hand in hand with the tribute that Mosteghanemi/Hayat pays to the Japanese writer who killed himself for the cause of his country’s dignity against American hegemony, and to the Christian Lebanese poet who did the same for a moral cause, that of what he perceived as the Arabs’ loss of dignity in the face of Israeli aggressions. While the English translator reproduced the moral and secular connotation, the French translator, in contrast, translated the secular concept of honour by the very biblical concept of “paradis.” In so doing, she replaces the struggle of the Algerian people for independence within a religious discourse that masks the economic, military and cultural violence of colonialism. The implication is that the father was not fighting for his country’s independence but for God’s paradise. This particular lexical choice brings a different discourse to bear on the interpretation of the original. This is not the nationalist discourse of Algerian revolutionists who had the moral, and sometimes even active, support of people from different religions, ethnicities and regions of the world, including the Martiniquais Frantz Fanon, and the French Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Giselle Halimi. Rather, the shift situates the father’s fight and

death within the fundamentalist Wahhabi discourse that had no currency in Algeria at the time of the revolution and that Mosteghanemi/Hayat depicts in the novel as alien in 1990s Algeria.

2.5.2.2 The discourse on Islamic fundamentalism.

In fact, Mosteghanemi's discourse on Islamic fundamentalism equally changes in the process of the French translation. As explained above, while the author clearly perceives fundamentalism negatively, her own and her heroine's stance on the matter seems to be more of understanding than of overt condemnation insofar as the author/Hayat explains the beloved brother's embrace of fundamentalism as a way of seeking refuge in religion from political corruption. Example 1 is an instance of how this discourse is textually realized in the ST and how it shifts in the French translation:

Example 1:

"جبهة الإنقاذ تعلن العصيان المدني، وبدء الإضراب والاعتصام المفتوح." (p. 155)

GT: "The Salvation Front announces civil disobedience and the start of protest and an open sit-in."

FTT: Le Front Islamique du Salut menace l'État de désobéissance civile et appelle à la grève générale et à la rébellion. (p. 132)

ETT: "The Deliverance Front declares civil disobedience and announces the beginning of a public strike" (p. 88).

Like affective mental process verbs, including "to like" or "to hate," speech reporting verbs can be markers, some more explicitly than others, of the author's evaluation of an object. In Example 1 above, the verbal process verb that Mosteghanemi/Hayat uses to report the speech of the Islamic Salvation Front, a powerful but eventually outlawed Islamic party in Algeria, is "أعلن," /a'lan/, literally "to make something known," and best translated as "to announce" in English, and "annoncer" in French. Through this use of a verb of saying, the author is inscribing a specific value in the action of the party in question, and scripting a specific identity for it. Indeed, according to Caldas Coulthard's (1994, p. 305-306) breakdown

of such verbs, “to announce” is not a neutral structuring verb that introduces reported speech without evaluation, like “to say,” for instance. To the contrary, it is an assertive metapositional verb of saying. It is one that connotes both “power and legitimacy” (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 58). In other words, Mosteghanemi is representing the Salvation Front as a legitimate political entity that had the power to rally the people and was making known rational plans to carry out organized actions to pressure the State. In addition, Mosteghanemi omits “Islamic” from the name of the party. It is obvious that the author assumes that all Algerian readers and most non-Algerian Arab readers know that the party is Islamic. It can therefore be argued that this “lexical absence” stems from this assumption and is therefore discursively inconsequential. However, the omission of “Islamic” from the party’s name still has the effect, whether intended or not, of backgrounding the religious character of the party to only foreground the political dimension of its actions, thereby giving more political clout to the party.

Like the author, the English translator equally backgrounds the party’s religious identity through deletion or lexical absence. This textural choice on the part of the translator, however, has a more significant pragma-semiotic effect on her assumed Anglo-American readers who are less likely to know that the party is a religious one or that it was outlawed for that reason. By omitting “Islamic” from the name, therefore, the translator is not just backgrounding but is completely suppressing the religious identity of the party and, with it, the horizon of expectations against which the Anglo-American target audience may filter an “Islamic” political entity. Moreover, while the translator introduces the verb “to declare” in a syntactic restructuring of the original text, she still reproduces the positive evaluation statement in the ST. Like “to announce,” the verb “to declare” is an assertive verb of saying that encodes power and legitimacy. She further emphasizes this legitimacy through the translation of “protest and open sit-in” in the ST, by “public strike.” This is a lexical choice that creates the assumption that the party has the support of the people and is speaking on its behalf.

In contrast, the French translation shows three significant shifts. The first occurs when the translator restores “Islamique” back to the name of the party. It is, once again, possible to argue that this is a reader-oriented pragma-semiotic shift necessary to provide the reader with

the information kept unsaid in the ST. However, the French reader, especially one that seeks to read Algerian Arabic literature, is as familiar with the FIS, the Front Islamique du Salut, as any non-Algerian Arab reader, due to the close political and cultural ties between France and Algeria, and the media coverage of the war between the FIS and the Algerian State in France. On the other hand, “Islamique” is an adjective that can be subsumed under Fairclough’s (2003, p. 172) category of “discourse-relative” evaluative statements. For like “communist” and unlike “dishonest,” “Islamic” can only mark the author’s evaluation depending on the context where the text is produced/consumed. In post-9/11 world and in the context of the global war on terror, where numerous Islamic parties were either outlawed as terrorist or suspected as potentially terrorist in the West— as in Arab countries—, “Islamic” has come to be a politically charged word that, when associated with parties or political entities, connotes violence and irrationality. Accordingly, by restoring “islamique” to the name of the party, the translator not only shifts the focus in the TT from the political to the religious identity of the party, but she also and consequently inscribes the implicit value of potential threat in the text, a value that other shifts in the translation help trigger and consolidate. The translator indeed chooses to translate the assertive /a‘lana/, “to announce,” with the expressive “menacer,” to stay with Caldas Coulthard’s (1994) taxonomy. This is a verb that explicitly encodes the negative values of danger and hostility. In addition, and in contrast to the English translator who chooses an assertive verb with a positive value to restructure the ST syntactically, the French translator chooses the verb “appeler à.” This is a directive verb that, combined with the noun “rébellion” and the verb “menacer,” creates the value assumption that the party is a dangerous, rogue entity that constitutes a threat for the State and possibly for the people as well, since it is not speaking in the name of the Algerian people but is levelling threats and inciting (appeler à) the people to rebel.

The same discourse on fundamentalists as inherently dangerous seems to bear on the decisions of the French translator elsewhere. Example 2, for instance, is taken from a passage where Mosteghanemi/Hayat talks about brother Nasser’s plight and how he is forced to leave Algeria out of fear for his life from the regime. In this passage, the author describes the condition of fear and suspicion that spread throughout the country after the Islamists were outlawed and orthodox but not politically active Algerians were targeted by mistake. This was,

in Mosteghanemi's words, the "era of shaving razors," when men "suddenly took off their slogans and shaved off their beliefs for fear of a prison that was looming over the bearded" (Mosteghanemi, 1997/2007, p. 216), and when:

Example 2:

وامتلات السجون بالملتحين.. وبأولئك الذين أخذوا خطأ بين نارين.. كما في كل حرب. (p. 216)

GT: the prisons filled with bearded men... and with those who were taken by mistake between two fires... as is the case in every war.

FTT: Les prisons se remplissaient de barbus et d'innocents qu'on raflait par erreur, pris entre deux feux, comme dans toutes les guerres. (186)

ETT: The prisons filled with bearded men and with those caught between the fire, just as in any war. (127)

In the ST, Mosteghanemi/Hayat does not attach any explicit marker of evaluation to the "bearded men," whether positive or negative, leaving judgment open to the reader. Instead, she puts these men in structural opposition to "those who got caught by mistake between two fires." Read against the reference to the "era of shaving razors" above, the sentence may imply that there were two types of bearded men in the prisons: those who were imprisoned because they were politicized and opposing the regime, and those who were not politically active against the regime but were orthodox and wore beards, and were thus "collateral damage." The author further stresses the idea of injustice and oppression behind the state's actions by adding "by mistake." While the translator of the ETT translates the ST quite literally, she omits "by mistake," which de-emphasizes the implication of injustice. However, it is in the French TT that the biggest shift occurs. The French translation uses structural opposition to produce an overt statement of evaluation about the bearded, thus creating what Van Dijk (1998) calls "ideological squaring," i.e. the creation of discursive group polarizations. In this instance, the bearded men in the FTT are opposed to the "innocents," and so are implied to be guilty. It is noteworthy here that Mosteghanemi eschews overt criticism of the regime since she backgrounds its agency in imprisoning opposition members through the use of the passive

voice, “were taken,” and of an events material process, by putting the inanimate “prisons” in the position of subject/agent of the material process verb “filled.” Nevertheless, read against its immediate textual context as explained above, the sentence in Example 2 is more an evaluation of the regime than of the bearded men. It depicts the bearded, both those who oppose the regime and those who do not, as victims of the regime’s persecution and indiscriminate reprisals.

Structural opposition is again used in the French translation in Example 3, to produce a TT that subscribes to the discourse of Islamists as a violent threat.

Example 3:

أواجه رهطا من الناس، لم أصادف مثلهم في حياتي، أناس بمظهر مخيف، ووجوه مغلقة، ونظرات عدوانية، بعضهم في ثياب عادية، وآخرون ملتحون، يرتدون شعاراتهم داخل زي أفغاني. (p. 112)

GT: I faced a bunch of people the likes of whom I had never seen in my life; people with a scary appearance, serious faces and inimical looks, some of whom in ordinary clothes, while others were bearded, and wore their slogans in the form of Afghan clothes.

FTT: [...] Des gens effrayants, des visages fermés, des regards lourds d’animosité. Certains étaient en civil, d’autres, barbues, vêtus à l’afghane, bardés de slogans. (p. 97)

ETT: [...] Frightening people with closed faces and hostile looks, some wearing ordinary clothing, others bearded, wearing slogans in their Afghani-style dress. (p. 63)

In this excerpt, Mosteghanemi/Hayat describes the people she met in the police station where she was taken after the assassination of her driver. The description is in accordance with her discourse on fundamentalism as an alien thought that was imported to Algeria as a reaction to political and economic problems. She thus opposes the “Afghan” clothes to the “ordinary” clothes of the Algerians, thereby signifying their “extraordinary,” i.e. alien, character in Algerian society. They are a new cultural import that functions as a disruptive notice, a slogan that some Algerians appropriated by way of protesting against the regime. While the English translator misses the metaphor of clothes serving as slogans in the ST, a metaphor that recurs throughout the novel, she preserves the same structural opposition in the ST, thereby keeping

the propositional assumption that these clothes are foreign and out of the “ordinary” for the Algerians. The French translator, however, changes the values in the ST by structurally opposing “Afghan” clothes to “civilian” clothes, thereby causing a significant shift in the perception of these clothes and those who wear them. Indeed, the expression “se mettre en civil” is defined as “vêtu d’un costume de ville pour ceux que leur fonction appelle à être en uniforme” (*Larousse*), and as “endosser un vêtement civil, c’est-à-dire autre que la tenue militaire ou (plus rarement) religieuse” (*CRNTL*). Accordingly, the French TT does not imply that these Afghan clothes are not ordinary in Algerian society and are thus alien to it, but rather that they are military or serve as military garment during military action. This opposition creates the assumption that those who wear Afghan clothes actually engage in hostile and violent acts, which is in line with the depiction of fundamentalists as a source of danger and threat in Example 1, and as guilty and deserving of imprisonment in Example 2.

Similar assumptions in the French translation appear in Examples 4 and 5:

Example 4:

نعم.. ولكنها مراوغة سياسية متعددة الأهداف. إنه من جهة يجعلني مدينا له بهذه الخدمة، ومن ناحية أخرى يثير حولي الشبهات، ويجعل رفاقي يشكون في مصداقية معاداتي للسلطة. (p. 217)

GT: Yes... but it is a political manoeuvre with many objectives. On the one hand, he makes me indebted to him with this service. On the other hand, he creates suspicions about me and makes my comrades doubt my opposition to the regime.

FTT: Si, mais c’est une manœuvre politique, avec des objectifs précis. D’une part, je lui dois maintenant un service. D’autre part, il a réussi à éveiller les soupçons de mes amis, qui doutent désormais de la sincérité de mes convictions. (186-87)

ETT: Yes, but it is a calculated political manoeuvre. On one hand, he’s put me in his debt, and on the other, he’s raised suspicions about me. My comrades doubt the legitimacy of my opposition to the regime. (128)

In this excerpt, Hayat’s fundamentalist brother, Nasser, is explaining to her why her husband intervened to get him out of prison when Islamists are usually imprisoned for months,

and even years, for no reason but their opposition to the regime. What is inferred from the second sentence in Example 4 is that what unites Nasser and his Islamist “رفاق”— plural of “رفيق” /rafīq/, which is conventionally translated as “comrade” in English and is usually used to refer to fellow members of a political organization, especially socialist or communist—is opposition to the regime. In other words, the struggle between the regime and the fundamentalists is political rather than religious. While the English translator reproduces the same implication as in the ST, including through the use of “comrades,” the French translator deletes the phrase “my opposition to the regime,” that could have been idiomatically rendered in French by “mon opposition au régime.” She replaces it, instead, with “la sincérité de mes convictions.” Moreover, she translates “رفاق” by “friends,” when “camarades” is the more appropriate translation since it is defined as “personnes à qui on est lié par une vie ou des activités communes,” for instance “camarade d’enfance, de jeux, d’école ; camarade de combat, de régiment...” (*CNRTL*). In so doing, she not only changes the propositional content of the second sentence, but she also opens the possibilities of interpretation when the author clearly fixes the meaning in the political. Indeed, “convictions” can be political, moral or religious. The word is defined as “opinions, idées, principes considérés comme fondamentaux” (*CNRTL*). It is therefore the textual or situational context that helps fix the meaning of the word. However, said by a character that is presented as an Islamist, while talking about other Islamists, and without any marker of evaluation, be it implicit or explicit, the word is likely to be interpreted in its religious sense. This translational decision, then, obscures the rational political motivation behind the Islamists’ opposition to the regime, as perceived and explained by the author through both Hayat and Nasser. It creates the assumption that the Islamists are fighting the regime not because of any corruption or abuse of power, but to spread their own religious beliefs.

This is therefore a shift in the discourse on Islamism from one that represents it as a direct reaction to political problems and the corruption and failings of the successive regimes, to one that represents it as irrational religious fanaticism, where “sincerity of convictions” is the only factor that unites adherents to this fundamentalist thought. The emphasis on this irrationality and on the religious at the expense of the political is apparent in the French translation in Example 5:

Example 5:

أشعر بأمان، وسط عشرات الرجال ذوي الأزياء العجيبة والملامح العدوانية، والمشغولين عن همومي الأرضية، بهموم الآخرة. مرددين هتافات وشعارات دينية وسياسية. (p. 169)

GT: I feel safe amongst tens of strangely clad and hostile looking men, too busy with afterlife concerns to notice my earthly ones. Repeating religious and political slogans.

FTT: ... distraits de mes émois terrestres par leur obsession de l'au-delà, tout préoccupés de scander leurs antiennes et slogans politico-religieux. (pp. 144-5)

ETT: they were too busy with the afterlife to be concerned with my earthly worries, repeating their religious and political slogans. (p. 98)

The French translation presents us first with a significant textural shift when the translator translates “too busy” as “obsession,” when she could have rendered it by “tout occupés qu’ils étaient...” Unlike “occupé” which encodes neutral values of application and concentration on an object, “obsession” encodes a value judgment since it connotes irrationality, impulsiveness and inability of self-control. It is defined as “Idée, image, sensation qui s'impose à l'esprit de façon répétée, incoercible et pénible; préoccupation constante dont on ne parvient pas à se libérer,” and “Pensée, image, idée, doute, crainte, impulsion à caractère involontaire et angoissant, qui s'impose à tous moments à l'esprit du sujet, malgré son caractère absurde reconnu” (*CRNTL*). Through this lexical choice, the French translator changes the image of the Islamists demonstrating in the streets. They are obsessive, and therefore irrational, impulsive and out of control.

The French translation also presents a case of what Teo (2000) calls “overlexicalisation,” and defines as the repetition of “quasi-synonymous terms [...] woven into the fabric of news discourse, giving rise to a sense of overcompleteness” (as cited in Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 37). Giving the simple examples of “male nurse” and “female doctor,” Machin and Mayr (2012) explain that overlexicalisation “gives a sense of over-persuasion and is normally evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention” (p. 37). In Example 5, the phrase “repeating religious and political slogans” in the

original becomes “tout préoccupés de scander leurs antiennes et slogans politico-religieux,” wherein “préoccupés,” a quasi-synonymous of “obsession,” is added to the text, along with “antiennes,” itself a quasi-synonymous of religious slogans since the word is defined as belonging to the field of liturgy, and meaning “verset qui introduit ou suit la mélodie psalmodique ou un cantique” (CNRTL). The verb “ردد,” /raddada/, literally “to repeat,” was equally replaced by “scander,” defined as “rythmer, marquer fortement la cadence, d'un air, d'un chant, d'un mouvement, etc.” (CNRTL). Accordingly, unlike with the verb “repeat,” the values embedded in “scander” overemphasize what is already emphasized in the translation through the addition of “antiennes.” To follow Machin and Mayr above, this overemphasis in the French reveals an ideological contention that is absent in both the original and the ETT. It is one that is in line with the discourse on Islamists as being a threat, fighting the regime for religious rather than political reasons. This is, however, a discourse that undermines the author’s own discourse on Islamists, thus suppressing her voice and her perception of the world as she lives it and understands it. By drawing on this discourse, the French translator limits the author’s agency in (re)writing the modern history of her nation from her perspective as a young secular, intellectual woman, and prevents the French readers from getting a glimpse of the complexities of the political, social and moral crisis in this former colony, providing them instead with a discourse that is already hegemonic and very familiar in the French context.

2.5.2.3 The Nationalist and Arab nationalist Discourse.

Overlexicalisation is the main discursive device in the ST that reveals a strong nationalist and Arab-nationalist discourse. It takes the form of an extensive use of the nouns /watan/ [nation], and /ummah/ [Arab nation], along with the name Nasser. This discourse, however, is textualized in other discursive ways, from cohesion to lexical choices.

Example 1:

ولأنه كان يتردد على القاهرة لإجراء بعض المشاورات السياسية، وكان أيضا مسؤولا عن متابعة شؤون الطلبة الجزائريين هناك، والذين كان من بينهم طالب لم يكن يدعى بعد هواري بومدين، فقد أحضر لنا صورة كبيرة لعبد الناصر، مع جملة من الهدايا التذكارية. (p. 225)

GT: And because he went to Cairo frequently for political consultations— he was also responsible for the affairs of Algerian students in Egypt, including a student who was not called Houari Boumediene yet— he once brought us a big picture of Abdel Nasser, along with many souvenirs.

FTT: Comme il se rendait souvent au Caire pour raisons politiques —il y était responsable du contingent d'étudiants algériens qui comptait entre autres un certain Houari Boumediene— il nous avait un jour rapporté, avec d'autres souvenirs cairotes, un immense portrait de Gamal Abdel-Nasser. (p. 194)

ETT: The man used to visit Cairo for political purposes, and he was also responsible for the affairs of Algerian students, among whom was a student called Huwari Boumediene. One day, he brought us a large picture of Abd al-Nasser, along with other souvenirs. (p. 132)

In this example there are two significant shifts in the French translation, one of which is also present in the ETT. The latter is a reader-oriented pragma-semiotic shift that results from the deletion of the detail about the student Houari Boumediene. In the ST, the author makes the assumption that her readers not only know who Boumediene, Algeria's second president, is but that they are also aware this is not his real name. This assumption is a nod to Algeria's recent past and to the war of independence since Houari Boumediene is Mohamed Boukharouba's nom-de-guerre that he adopted when he joined the National Liberation Front. It is therefore an assumption that further builds the author's community of readers as one that is very familiar with Algeria's history or is at least interested enough in this history to go look for background information to know what was left unsaid in the ST. By omitting the adjectival clause, i.e. "who was not called Houari Boumediene yet," both the French and English translators also suppressed this assumption, replacing it with their own, namely that their respective readers do not know, nor are they interested in knowing this historical information about the Algerian war of independence. In so doing, they limited the author's agency vis-à-vis her readers as a writer of her people's history, and kept the target readers confined in the passive role of information receivers. Reproducing the author's assumption would have, indeed, been an ethical "minoretizing" move, in Venuti's understanding of the concept: it would not have been too disruptive as to interrupt the reading flow, but would be disruptive

enough to encourage the invested reader to try to understand the author's historical nod by researching the history of the Algerian people and their struggle for independence.

But a more significant shift occurs in the French translation at the level of cohesion that results in a complete change of the propositional meaning of the original, and as a consequence, in the inferred meaning. Indeed, the parenthetical element in the ST, combined with the adverb /aydan/ [also], functions as an addition to the main clause. In other words, the propositional meaning of the ST is that the family friend used to go to Egypt not only to consult with Cairo's political bodies, but also because he was responsible for Algerian students affairs in Egypt. There are two inferred meanings here: 1) Egypt lent political, and possibly even military, support to Algerians during the war of Independence since the family friend was himself fighting in the Algerian front alongside their father against the French colonization, and 2) the ties between Egypt and Algeria were more than political but cultural, as well. While the same propositional and inferred meanings were reproduced in the English TT, the French translator changes both. She keeps, indeed, the parenthetical clause but omits the adverb, which changes the function of the parenthetical element from that of addition to that of description or explanation. In so doing, the propositional meaning of the French translation is that the political reason for which the family friend used to go to Egypt was the supervision of the Algerian students affairs. As a consequence, the French reader does not get a sense of how close Egypt and Algeria were during the war of independence. The political, ideological and cultural ties between the two countries are therefore significantly reduced in the French translation, which undermines the Arab nationalist discourse informing such ties, and which the author draws on and textualizes in her novel, including through lexical choices.

This discourse is, indeed, very salient in the example that will follow, where the author describes the double trauma that reading an Arab, and not just an Algerian, newspaper can cause the Algerian reader, since the Arab newspaper does not only bring news on Algerian affairs and crises, but also news on the affairs and crises of other Arab countries. The discourse is textually realized through the use by the author of two concepts: "*ummah 'arabiyyah*" and "*qawmiyyah*." The former is conventionally and literally translated as "Arab nation," and is linked directly to the second concept of "*qawmiyyah*," "usually translated as

Arab nationalism” (Romero, 2008, p. 9). The author also uses the adjective “*waṭanī*,” literally “national.” It is derived from the noun “*waṭan*,” nation, and is defined as “national; in the sense of patriotism confined to a specific Arab country [or] ‘waṭan’ (fatherland)” (Shemesh, 2012, p. 24). In French, the three concepts are best translated as “la nation arabe,” “le nationalisme arabe” or “pan-Arabisme,” and “national(e),” respectively. But both the English and French translation present us with significant textural shifts that result in shifts at the level of the discourse:

Example 2:

أن تشتري جريدة عربية ذات حزيران من سنة 1991 لتقرأ طالع هذه الأمة، فأنت تعرض نفسك لذبحة قلبية. أما أن تشتري جريدة جزائرية في ذلك التاريخ نفسه، تجمع صفحاتها الأولى بين خيباتك الوطنية والقومية، فذلك ضرب من المجازفة بعقلك.
(p. 154)

GT: If you buy an Arab newspaper in June 1991 to read the fortunes of this Arab nation, then you are exposing yourself to a heart attack. As to buying an Algerian newspaper dated the same, and gathering on its first page your national and Arab nationalist disillusionments, it is to risk your sanity.

FTT: En ce mois de juin 1991, acheter un journal arabe pour prendre le pouls du pays, c’était s’exposer à une ablation du cœur. Quant à acheter un journal algérien, c’était y lire en première page les catastrophes nationales et risquer de perdre la raison. (p. 132)

ETT: Buying an Arabic newspaper in June 1991, to read about the fortune of this nation is to subject oneself to a heart attack. Buying an Algerian newspaper of the same date is to risk losing your mind, as you see all the local and national crises (p. 88).

The translator of the English TT omits the “Arab” qualifier and reproduces “*ummah ‘arabiyyah*” with “nation,” conventionally used to translate “*waṭan*,” one’s fatherland. She also translates the adjective “*qawmiyyah*,” Arab nationalist, as “national,” and the adjective “*waṭaniyyah*,” “national,” as “local.” The propositional meaning of the English target text is thus limited to the local and the national within Algeria. In other words, while the translation still makes room for the cultural and political imagining of the fatherland, Algeria, through the

use of “nation” and “national,” it suppresses the wider imagining of Arab countries as one Arab nation inferred from the ST, thereby erasing the Arab nationalist discourse in it. A more significant shift occurs in the French translation. In addition to what appears to be a misinterpretation whereby “heart attack” was translated as “ablation du coeur,” the French translator translates “*ummah ‘arabiyyah*” by using the rather geographical “pays,” thus silencing the Arab nationalist discourse. She equally omits the adjective “*qawmiyyah*,” which is conventionally translated in French by “nationaliste arabe.” This lexical absence of both the “nation” and the “Arab nation” in the FTT not only results in a pragma-semiotic shift at the level of discourse, but it also produces a stretch of language that flaunts the maxim of relation or relevance since the French reader will not be able to infer the difference between the news published in Arab newspapers and those published in Algerian ones.

The suppression of the Arab nationalist discourse in both translations also manifests itself in the omission in both translations of the metaphor in the ST. In the latter, “*khaybāt*,” i.e. “disillusionments,” stands for the news of political unrest and corruption in Algeria (Mosteghanemi, 2007, p. 155), and for bad news from other Arab countries, including the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the American invasion of Iraq (p. 155). By likening these bad news to “national and Arab nationalist disillusionments,” the author creates the propositional assumption that the Algerian reader has dreams not only of stability and progress for her homeland, Algeria, but also of Arab unity, and of power and progress for all other Arab countries, and that the bad news in newspapers shatter these dreams causing her to feel deeply disappointed. Instead of keeping the metaphor with its assumption, both the FTT and the ETT translators opted for a more referential rendering of the propositional content of the ST, by translating “disillusionments” with “catastrophes” and “crises,” respectively. Consequently, the strong Arab nationalist discourse underlying the ST is lost.

On the other hand, the French translation presents another shift at the pragma-semiotic level that causes, in turn, a shift at the generic level of the ST. As discussed above, one of the discursive techniques used in the autobiographical genre, drawn upon in the production of *Fawḍā*, is the use of the mode of address to create intimacy between the reader and the author and facilitate reader identification with the latter. The example above is a prime illustration of

use of such discursive technique since the author directly addresses the reader through the informal “you.” While the translator of the English TT keeps the same form of address, the French translator completely depersonalizes the TT. In so doing, she obliterates the sense of intimacy, and by extension the author’s homogenizing assumption that all her readers must experience the same trauma at reading such news, and must subscribe to the Arab nationalist discourse.

The same two shifts, i.e. at the level of discourse and genre, take place in the French translation in Example 3:

Example 3:

قبل أن تفتح الجريدة، يهجم عليك الوطن بعناوينه الكبرى، "السلطات العسكرية تعلق حصر التجول إلى ما بعد عيد الأضحى" ... (p. 155)

GT: Before you open the newspaper, the nation attacks you with its big headlines, “the military authorities suspend the curfew till after the Adha feast” ...

FTT: Avant même d’ouvrir le journal, le pays passait à l’attaque, armé de gros titres : « les autorités militaires maintiennent le couvre-feu jusqu’à la fin de la Fête du Sacrifice... (p. 132).

ETT: Before you open the paper, the nation attacks you with headlines: “The military authorities have suspended the curfew until after the Adha Feast” ... (p. 88)

In this excerpt, the author criticizes the nation, the fatherland, supposed to protect and love, for harming the people, instead. It is a narrative that permeates the novel. In this narrative, Algeria is almost always referred to in *Fawḍā* as a “nation” and rarely as a “country.” It is a nationalist discourse that emphasizes the paternalistic dimension of one’s country as a fatherland, as well as belonging, adherence and loyalty thereto. This overemphasis in the ST only serves to bring out the disillusionments of the Algerian individual in her nation: instead of sheltering its daughters and sons, the Algerian nation kills them, like all those journalists that were assassinated; it chases them away, like it chased Hayat’s brother out of Algeria; and it demands ultimate sacrifices, like the sacrifice of Hayat’s father for the nation’s freedom. This narrative is realized linguistically in Example 3, as elsewhere in the

ST, through lexical choice and the transitivity system. The author does not refer to Algeria as “*balad*,” the Arabic word for “country” or “pays” in French, but as “*waṭan*,” “nation.” The author also makes “the nation” the grammatical subject/semantic agent of the transactive, intentional material process verb /*yahjumu*/, literally “to attack,” denoting violence and aggression, while the Algerian reader is the semantic patient of this violent process. The assumption that obtains through such choices is that the nation violently victimizes its citizens through all the political and social problems that they go through, when it should be protecting them. The English translation reproduces the same assumption through similar choices.

In contrast, the French translator reproduces the political *waṭan*, i.e. “nation,” by “le pays,” when the French equivalents that would closely reproduce the same propositional and connotative meanings of the Arabic word would be “la patrie” or “la nation.” Indeed, just like *waṭan* in Arabic refers to the fatherland to which individuals adhere and show loyalty, so does the word “patrie” in French mean “Pays de la communauté politique à laquelle *on appartient* (par la naissance ou par un attachement particulier) et dont l'histoire, la langue, la culture, les traditions, les habitudes de vie *nous sont chères*” (CRNTL; my emphasis). By opting for a word with geographic and territorial, rather than political, cultural and social connotations, the translator backgrounds the fatherly aspect of the nation, and in so doing, she also backgrounds its other aspect: the individual’s feeling of belonging and adherence to the nation. This choice dramatically reduces the criticism levelled at Algeria in the original. This reduction is compounded by other lexico-grammatical choices on the part of the French translator. Indeed, the latter depersonalizes the process of “attacking,” by removing the Algerian reader as the semantic patient/grammatical object from the text altogether; and by nominalizing the verb /*yahjumu*/, “to attack,” and using instead the non-transactive material process verb “passer.” The nation’s agency in attacking and harming its citizens is therefore diminished, which results in the suppression of the author’s criticism. Finally, while the author uses the informal form of address “you” in this passage in conformity with the generic features of the autobiographical subgenre in *Fawḍā*, something that the translator of the English TT reproduces, the French translator depersonalizes the TT. As a consequence, the social closeness that the author wants to create with her readers is lost on the French reader.

The same suppression of the nationalist discourse is at work in both the French and English translation in Example 4 below, taken from a passage where Mosteghanemi/Hayat describes how Mohamed Boudief, who was betrayed and exiled after the independence by his own comrades alongside whom he fought for Algeria's independence, accepted to come back to his nation to help it out of its political deadlock only to be later assassinated by them:

Example 4:

وكان له قدرة مذهلة على الغفران، فاحتضن من نفوه ومضى نحو "وطنه". (p. 242)

GT: He had a great ability to forgive, so he embraced those who exiled him and went toward his "nation."

FTT: Il [...] savait mieux que quiconque pardonner. Il avait étreint ceux qui l'avaient exilé et avait rejoint son pays. (p. 208)

ETT: He embraced those who had exiled him and walked toward his country. (p. 142)

The bitterness towards Algeria and the criticism levelled at the ruling class for how they turned what is supposed to be a "nation" into a land that kills its sons and daughters, is graphically marked in the ST through the use of ironic quotation marks to frame the word "nation." Both target texts suppress the connotation of belonging and loyalty encoded in "*waṭan*," "nation," and the irony encoded in the quotation marks, through the use of the geographical concepts of "country" and "pays," and the removal of any marker, graphic or otherwise, of irony.

The concept of "nation" as an imagined unified community that can be unjust but to which citizens still adhere and conceive as "a deep, horizontal comradeship," is heavily present in this short stretch of the ST but is obscured in the FTT in Example 5 below:

Example 5:

ومنذ ذلك الحين، وهي تواصل طريقها هكذا، بجسد ليس لها، وبقدر يريضي كرامة الوطن، الوطن الذي يملك وحده، متى شاء، حق تجريدك من أي شيء، بما في ذلك أحلامك، الوطن الذي جردها من أنوثتها، وجردني من طفولتي... ومشى.
(p. 102)

GT: Ever since then, she goes on in her path like that, with a body that is not hers, and a fate that satisfies the dignity of the nation; the nation that alone has the right to deprive you, at any time of anything, including your dreams; the nation that took her femininity and took my childhood, and walked away. 102

FTT: Depuis ce temps-là, elle allait son chemin, avec un corps qui ne lui appartenait pas, et un destin qui devait épouser la gloire du pays. Ce même pays qui pouvait à sa guise vous dépouiller de tout, y compris de vos rêves. Ce pays qui, avant de s'éclipser, l'avait privée de sa féminité, et moi de mon enfance. (p. 88)

ETT: From that day on, she continued to live that way, with a body that was not hers and a fate that fit the dignity of a nation, that same nation that alone had the right to strip you at any time of anything, including your dreams. That same nation stripped her of her femininity and me of my childhood, then it walked away. (p. 57)

In this passage, Hayat talks about how the death of her father in the war of independence affected her and her mother. Seen in light of the previous excerpts, the author is clearly engaged in the overlexicalization of the “nation.” She is emphasizing the political and cultural cartography over the geographical. This overlexicalization helps the reader to imagine Algeria as a nation despite the hardships and injustices that the Algerian people endured during the struggle for independence and after the independence, in this fatherland. This lexical overemphasis and the nationalist discourse that informs it get obscured in the French TT since the translator systematically replaces “*waṭan*,” “nation” with “pays,” thus removing the layers of meaning ranging from the emotional to the political, encoded in the original.

This same discourse is substantially reduced through lexico-grammatical choices in the French translation of passages where the author/Hayat writes the history of the Algerian people's struggle for the independence of Algeria. Example 6 is a case in point:

Example 6:

... تجاوز فيه صورة أبي على الجدار صورة عبد الناصر، بحجم أصغر، ولكن بالحجم الكبير ذاته الذي نقلتها به الصحافة وهي تعلن في صيف 1960 على صفحاتها الأولى، مقتل أحد قادة الثورة على يد المظليين الفرنسيين، بعد معركة ضارية في مدينة باتنة. (p. 225)

GT: ... my father's picture joined that of Abdel Nasser on the wall, in a smaller size, but still in the same big importance that newspapers gave it in the summer of 1960 on their front pages: "One of the leaders of the revolution killed by French parachutists after a fierce battle in Batna".

FTT: Jusqu'au jour où mon père vint l'y rejoindre. La photo était plus petite, mais l'événement plus grand. Elle avait été découpée dans un quotidien français de l'été 1960 qui titrait en première page: "Mort d'un grand chef des fellagas lors d'un violent accrochage mené par les parachutistes français à Batna." (p. 194)

ETT: Then came the day that another, smaller picture joined Abd al-Nasser on the wall- that of my father. I clipped it, one summer day in 1960, out of the front page of a newspaper that had announced the death of a leader of the revolution, killed by French parachutists after a fierce battle in Batina. (p. 132)

The first significant shift in the French TT is a pragma-semiotic one. The ST talks of newspapers, in general, and omits to specify their language. Its readers are thus allowed to make their own inference according to the textual context. Given that the French language is absent in the narrative when it is very present in Algeria, readers are more likely to believe that Hayat read Arabic, rather than French, newspapers. While the translator of the English TT leaves the same interpretation room open for her Anglo-American readers, the French translator intervenes by fixating the meaning and flagging up the linguistic identity of the press that Hayat read in her childhood as French.

The second shift in the French TT consists of both nominalization and a material intentional-to-material supervision process shift, whereby “killed by” becomes “death of.” Indeed, in this passage, Hayat tells the story of her father’s martyrdom during the Algerian war of independence. The author uses an intentional material transactive process verb, “to kill” in the passive voice to describe how the father died at the hands of the French parachutists. While passivization is a strategy that can be used to background or even totally exclude agency, in this instance it did not involve the loss of either the semantic agent, namely the French parachutists, or of the semantic patient of the process of killing, namely Hayat’s father. While the translator of the English TT reproduces the same agentive relation as in the ST, the French translator fails to do so. She replaces a verb with a noun, a transformation that conceals agency (Fairclough, 2003, p. 143-4), and the transactive intentional material process of “killing” with the supervision material process of “death.” The death of Hayat’s father is thus presented more as an accident than as an act of violence perpetrated by the colonizer. Likewise, the French translator translates “one of the leaders of the revolution” by “un grand chef des fellaghas.” In so doing, she lexically suppresses the noun */thawrah/* [revolution], with the embedded value of a popular uprising against an oppressive system, in this case the French colonization, to replace it with the North African colloquial Arabic word “*fellaghas*,” plural of “*fellag*.” Derived from the classical Arabic “*falaqa*,” meaning to break, fracture or split, this word is used in North African countries to designate bandits and outlawed criminals that plunder people and villages. This is a pejorative word that entered the French language at the beginning of the WWI during the uprising of the Tunisian people against French colonial authorities (Blanc, n.d.). The French army was the first to call all militants and rebels, first in Tunisia and later in Algeria, “*fellaghas*.” The European press followed suit and started using the word “invariablement pour désigner tous les nationalistes, quels qu’ils soient, formant des groupes armés et engagés dans la lutte politique contre le colonialisme” (Blanc, n.d.). In the Tunisian and Algerian colonies, however, these were considered “des *mukawimoun*, résistants. Pour les discréditer, le pouvoir colonial les a qualifiés de *fellaghas*” (Chater, 2003).

Because of these lexico-grammatical choices by the French translator, Hayat’s father, represented in the ST as a freedom fighter in a legitimate revolution and a leader of Algerian militants in their fight for their nation’s independence, becomes a leader of a ring of bandits.

His death becomes an accident in a violent fight (*accrochage*) between forces of order and the bandits, and not a killing by a colonizing army. In other words, the French translator replaces the nationalist discourse that Mosteghanemi draws on in the production of her text with the French colonialist discourse. In so doing, she mutes the author's agency in the writing of her nation's history and silences her discursive resistance to the ex-colonizer's hegemonic reading of the violence that took place in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. It is a reading informed by a "politics of concealment" and that refuses to see the violence as a "war of liberation," considering it instead as "*événements, opérations and mesures pour le maintien de l'ordre*" (Jansen, 2013, p. 278). Designating the struggle in Algeria by "la guerre d'Algérie," however, obscures the century-long colonial violence that Algerian nationalists, including Mosteghanemi, insist on foregrounding through "la révolution algérienne," "ath-thawrah al-jazā'iriyyah," or "la guerre de libération algérienne," "ḥarb at-tahrīr al-jazā'iriyyah," which both imply existence of an oppressive regime, namely colonization.

In fact, and as shown in Example 7 below, when faced with the nationalist designation "ḥarb at-tahrīr al-jazā'iriyyah," i.e. "la guerre de libération algérienne," in the ST, the French translator brings the colonial discourse to bear on her translation strategy, and adopts the French hegemonic narrative of the war where there was no colonizer or colonized:

Example 7:

كيف يمكن أن تولد أثناء حرب التحرير الجزائرية، بتوقيت التواريخ الناصرية دون أن تشعر فيما بعد، بأن سلسلة من المصادفات التاريخية، ستغير حتما تاريخ حياتك. (p. 224)

GT: How can you be born during the Algerian liberation war, at the age of Nasserite events without later feeling that a series of historical accidents will inevitably change the history of your life?

FTT: Comment peut-on naître pendant la guerre d'Algérie, à l'époque nassérienne, sans être plus tard convaincu qu'une succession d'événements historiques changera forcément le cours de notre vie? (p. 193)

ETT: How could anyone born during the Algerian liberation war, during the age of Nasser, not feel that a series of historical events would irrevocably change his life? (p. 131)

Example 8 below is another instance where the lexico-grammatical choices by the French translator mute the author's agency in producing a narrative of her nation's history that subverts the ex-colonizer's still hegemonic narrative:

Example 8:

أتذكر فجأة "جميلة بوحيرد" التي، أثناء الثورة، جاءت يوماً إلى هذا المقهى نفسه. متكررة في ثياب أوروبية. وقد طلبت شيئاً من النادل، قبل أن تغادر المقهى تاركة تحت الطاولة، حقيبة يدها المملأ بالمتفجرات، تلك التي اهتزت لدويها فرنسا، مكتشفة— هي التي كانت تطالب برفع الحجاب عن المرأة الجزائرية— أن هذا السلاح أصبح يستعمل ضدها. وأن امرأة في زي عصري، قد تخفي ... فدائية! (p. 171)

GT: I suddenly remember Djamila Bou Hayred who, one day during the revolution, came to this same coffee shop, disguised in European clothes. She ordered something from the waiter before leaving the coffee shop and, under the table, her handbag filled with explosives whose detonations shook France. She, who was demanding the unveiling of the Algerian woman, realized that this weapon could be used against her. And that a woman in modern garb may hide a freedom fighter.

FTT: Je me souvenais brusquement de Djamila Bou Hayrad qui, pendant la guerre, était venue s'attablait là, habillée à l'euro péenne, et avait laissé sous la table, un sac bourré d'explosifs. La France entière en avait été secouée. Elle qui militait pour l'abandon du voile en Algérie découvrait que ce combat pouvait se retourner contre elle et qu'une femme vêtue à l'euro péenne pouvait cacher une résistante. (p. 147)

ETT: ... and I suddenly remembered Jamila Bu Hrayd, who had come here one day during the revolution, disguised in European fashion, ordered a drink and left her bag under the table filled with explosives. That bag jolted the heart of France. The same country that had been demanding the removal of the veil for Algerian women discovered that even this weapon could be used against it— even a woman dressed in modern clothing could hide a freedom fighter. (p. 100)

In this example, the textural shifts in the French translation suppress not only the nationalist discourse, but also the discourse of Algerian women as empowered agents and active subjects drawn upon and promoted in the ST. First, and as in example 7 above, “*at-thawrah*,” revolution, is replaced with “*guerre*,” suggesting violence between two equal entities and totally obscuring the colonial reality in pre-independence Algeria. In addition, the author uses the adjective “disguised” to highlight the fact that European clothes were not adopted by Algerian women as a semiotic code, and that by wearing them, Bou Hayred was in fact engaging in a conscious and intentional act of subterfuge and subversion. While the translator of the English version reproduces the same propositional and inferred meanings by translating the verb literally, the French translator replaces the original adjective with the value-free “*habillée*,” thereby undoing the subversion implied in the original.

Moreover, “France” in the ST, is the grammatical object/semantic patient of the material, intentional process verb /*hazza*/, [to shake], whose grammatical subject/semantic agent are the explosives that Algerian combatant Bou Hayred left in the coffee shop. In other words, the author uses transitivity to passivate the colonizer, France, activate the colonized and bring out the agency of these Algerian militants, including women, on the colonizer. While the translator of the English TT uses transitivity in a similar way, the French translator activates France and grammatically backgrounds the agency of Bou Hayred. Paradoxically, when talking about France, the veil and the Algerian woman, the author passivates the latter by making her the semantic patient of the material, intentional process /*naz’ al-hijāb ‘an*/, literally “removal of the veil from,” or “unveiling of.” It is a process where France is grammatically activated in that it is the agent demanding the “unveiling of” the Algerian woman. In addition, the author uses metaphor by referring to the “demand of unveiling the Algerian woman” as a “weapon.” In so doing, she adopts the nationalist counter discourse on the veil and women’s bodies, according to which France’s own discourse on the veil was not a means to emancipate women and improve their condition, but was a further passivation of women and another weapon in its efforts to culturally subdue the Algerian people.

Contrary to the ETT that reproduces the same inferred meaning and imagery, the FTT once again suppresses the nationalist discourse of the author and replaces it with the French

colonial discourse. Indeed, the verb /*tālaba*/, [to demand], becomes “*militer*,” a verb defined as “*combattre, lutter (sans employer de moyens violents) pour faire prévaloir une idée, une thèse, une doctrine*” (*CNRTL*). As such, this lexical choice not only encodes the implicit value of positive, desirable change, but it also masks power hierarchies and any colonial and cultural violence involved in the process. This violence is in fact further masked in the French translation through lexical and grammatical choices. First, the translator removes the author’s subversive metaphor of the French colonial discourse on the veil as a “*weapon*,” and replaces it, instead, with a metaphor informed by the very colonial discourse that the author was trying to subvert: France was engaged in non violent militant actions and “*combat*” for the good of the Algerian women and, by extension, the good of the Algerian people. Second, the translator uses transitivity to activate the Algerian woman in the action of removing the veil and background France’s own agency in this regard. Indeed, the original “*unveiling of the Algerian woman*” becomes “*abandon du voile*,” a process where it is the one wearing the veil, i.e. the Algerian woman, who is the empowered agent that sheds it away. It is also a process where the Algerian woman is grammatically completely suppressed when she is present in the ST as a semantic patient. This suppression distances between France’s “*militant*” actions and the Algerian woman as goal/patient of these actions, and further obfuscates any cultural violence.

A final textural shift that undermines the gendered discourse of Algerian women as active agents occurs at the lexical level in the French translation. The author qualifies Bou Hayred as /*fidā’iyyah*/, feminine of /*fidā’ī*/. It is a noun derived from the root verb /*fadā*/, meaning to redeem or offer something in exchange for another. Used in the context of resistance and revolutions, the noun *fidā’iyyah* means a woman combatant bearing arms and ready to offer her life in exchange for her cause or her people. A *fidā’iyyah* is thus an empowered woman that breaks the gendered mould of women as complements to men in times of war, and the word can be translated as “*freedom fighter*” or even a “*kamikaze*.” While the translator of the English text translates it as “*freedom fighter*,” thus preserving the implicit evaluation encoded in the original, the French translator reduces Bou Hayrad’s agency by replacing the noun *fidā’iyyah*, describing an intentional material process, with “*résistante*,” a noun describing a mental process and encoding the implicit value of passivity.

The analysis above reveals that while there were textural and pragmatic shifts in the English TT, they were not so consistent as to form a pattern that affects, in any significant way, the discourses drawn upon in the ST. This is not the case with the French TT. In the latter, the shifts were both so consistent and numerous that they form “a more general trend within [the] whole text,” to borrow Calzada-Perez’ (2007, p. 191) expression. Consequently, and even if these shifts are not the result of a conscious ideological agenda—and in fact, many of them may have been done subconsciously—“this still does not prevent them from having ideological implications” (Calzada-Perez, 2007, p. 192). Indeed, these shifts significantly undermine the dissident discourses in the ST, be they gendered or general. They put to the fore an orientalist/colonialist discourse with familiar mental representations of the Algerian (Arab) woman as passive; the orthodox Muslim subject as threatening; the Algerian revolution against colonialism as a “war”; and the “voile” as an uncontested monolithic symbol of the Arab Muslim woman. In fact, this last mental representation is activated in the French TT from the outset thanks to the book cover. The lower left part of the cover features a drawing of the made-up face of a woman wearing a blue hair cover that hides her hair and her entire forehead, and looking coyly and sideways to the reader, as if peering from behind a door or a window (see Appendix 2). It is a misleading drawing that represents neither the novel’s author—who does not cover her hair—nor the novel’s female protagonist, but that mediates the novel to its readers through a familiar, orientalist prism.

2.5.3 A poet’s authority broken.

If the English and French translations totally diverge at the level of the discourses they foreground, they slightly converge in their rendition of the verse novel genre on which Mosteghanemi draws in her novel. The translation of the excerpt analyzed in 2.2.1.1 above is a good example that shows a general trend in both translations:

Gloss translation

Something drifts me to him tonight. Something carries me. Something gallops with me. Something sits me down near the phone.

On the edge of the bed I sit, without sitting really. As if I were sitting on the edge of my fate.

A woman who is not me, calls a man who may be “him.” And a man whose name is “him,” finally wears his words, not my words. He becomes a phone voice. He might say “hello.” He might say “yes” he might say “who?” (1997/2007, p. 157)

FTT: Ce soir-là, quelque chose m’attirait vers lui. Quelque chose qui m’emportait au grand galop et me faisait asseoir près d’un téléphone. J’étais sur le bord du lit, à peine assise, comme en équilibre au bord du destin.

Une femme qui n’était pas moi appelait un homme qui pouvait être « Lui ». Et un homme prénommé « Lui » s’habillerait enfin de ses mots, pas des miens. Sa voix résonnerait dans l’écouteur. Il dirait « Allô, oui ? Qui est à l’appareil ? »... (Mosteghanemi, 2006, p. 135)

ETT: Something was drawing me toward him that evening, carrying me and running away with me and making me wait by the telephone. I sat on the edge of the bed, without sitting entirely, as if I was sitting on the edge of fate.

A woman who wasn’t me calling a man who could be him. And a man named ‘him’ finally wearing his words, not mine. He would become a voice on the phone; it might say “hello” or “yes” or “who is it?” (Mosteghanemi, 2004/2007, p. 91).

In this excerpt, Mosteghanemi uses line endings, rhythm, pace and imagery to convey Hayat’s state of mind as she was about to call her lover, in a powerfully poetic language. In the first line and a half, Mosteghanemi repeats the same word, /shay’un/, “something,” four times. She also repeats the same verb form, /fa’ala/, which in the imperfective becomes /yaf’ilu/ as in the verbs /yajrifu/ [drift], and /yahmilu/ [carry], or /yaf’ulu/ as in /yarkudu/ [gallop], four times. In this line and a half, too, Mosteghanemi repeats an identical syntactic structure, SVO, three times: “something drifts me,” “something carries me,” “something sits me”). These repetitions are accentuated through the use of periods, which creates a rhythmical pattern that replicates what must be the rhythmical pounding of Hayat’s heart as she finds herself going to the phone helplessly. Instead of continuing the description in the same line, Mosteghanemi starts a new line, as if to move to a new scene. In this line, she uses syntactic sidling by fronting the adverbial prepositional phrase, “on the edge of the bed,” and delaying the subject, “I,” and the verb, “sit.” In so doing, she emphasized the image of “the edge,” which she stresses even more through repetition of the word twice. In this same stretch, she also repeats the verb “sit” three times. A new stretch of lines starts once again, where the author uses repetition two different times: once when she repeats “words” twice, and the second time when she repeats an identical syntactic structure (subject- auxiliary-verb-object:

he may say “hello”; he may say “yes”; he may say “who?”) three times, in a staccato pace mirroring the rising tension and the pounding heart of the woman.

The first thing to notice in both the FTT and ETT is that line ending, the one feature that Eagleton (2007, p. 25) maintains is proper to poetry, has changed and so has punctuation. While line ending in the ST seems to coincide with the emotional scenes depicted, it is rather conventional in both translations. While there are eleven full stops, i.e. eleven sentences, in the ST, there are seven in the FTT and only five in the ETT, which fails to reproduce the rhythm and pace built in the ST. The rhythm is further broken in both TTs when both translators, albeit one more so than the other, reduce repetition in their respective translations. Thus, the translator of the ETT does not repeat “something.” While her use of four verbs in the -ing form; of the pronoun “me” four times; and of the conjunction “and” twice do create repetition, her failure to recreate the same punctuation, i.e. to break the first stretch into several short sentences, stands against the creation of rhythm. The translator also fails to keep the repetition of “words” and “he might say” at the end of the excerpt. While she repeats “or” twice, this repetition is still not enough to keep the same rhythm as in the ST. Repetition is even less present in the FTT. In fact, it is almost totally erased by the translator. Finally, neither of the TTs keeps the syntactic sidling present in the ST. As a consequence, both translations are prosaic and flat compared to the ST.

As discussed above, poetry is organic to Mosteghanemi’s text. It is part and parcel of its generic make-up. As such, it is the discursal means that Mosteghanemi deploys to carry out specific social actions within her context—mainly bear the flag of social change and imagine a strong Algerian nation and an equally strong Arab nation with a common history—and create particular social relationships among and with her readers—mainly a relationship of solidarity among Algerians and Arabs from the “Arab nation”, and a relationship of authority vis-à-vis her readers. As a consequence, failure to attend to this generic aspect of the ST entails failure to attend to its content and to the author’s agency. While the English TT makes up for this loss by reproducing the discourses of the ST, the effect of the loss gets compounded in the French TT due to all the textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that occur in it.

CHAPTER III: *INNAHĀ LUNDUN YĀ 'AZĪZĪ*

3.1 Introduction

With al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī* (2001), we move from a rather limited Algerian literary scene where the author was the first and is still the main woman novelist in Arabic, to a Lebanese literary scene where the author is but one among other distinguished women writers; from a national narrative to a migration and diaspora narrative; from a narrative with a pan-Arab dimension to one with a transnational dimension; from a young heroine fighting with her pen and her body the political chaos engulfing her nation, to a young heroine completely disinterested in politics but equally fighting with her body for individual freedom; from a novel speaking back to a millennium-old literary heritage, to a novel inscribed with English; and from an identity politics grounded in a belief in Arabness to an identity politics grounded in the negotiation between the Arab self and the Western Other. The novel is indeed set in late 1990s' London, in the backdrop of the first Gulf war and the rising political tension in the Anglo-American/Middle Eastern relations; and the lives of its Arab protagonists, including its British-Iraqi heroine, have all been dramatically transformed, after encounters with the Other. It has also been produced by an immigrant author who has been living in London since the 1980s, then translated and published all in the same year, in 2001, the year that witnessed the 9/11 terrorist attacks which would have a profound impact on the relationship between the Arab Self and the Western Other.

The work of representation carried out in the novel raises several questions: how does the author negotiate her position as a British-Arab writer who writes in Arabic about Arabs but who has become mainstreamed in the West through translation? How does she navigate her way as a female subject at the intersection of local and transnational dominant discourses on women, in a context overdetermined by a range of deep-impacting factors ranging from the geopolitical climate and (Anglo-American) readers' expectations, to publishers' strictures and marketing strategies? What identity and feminist politics does the author enact in her novel?

And finally, how was her novel further refracted during the process of (re)translation and reception?

3.1.1 Women's literature in Lebanon.

Unlike Mosteghanemi in North Africa and Alsanea in the Gulf region, al-Shaykh not only belongs to a generation of great many successful women writers and novelists, but she also draws on a rich literary and feminist heritage left by the pioneering women of the Arab renaissance in the Levant region. Nineteenth century Levant witnessed a host of deep political and sociocultural changes brought about mainly by the *Tanzimat* reforms launched by Ottoman Sultans; increased economic ties between Levant's Christian Arabs and Western countries; growing military contact between the Ottoman empire and Western colonial powers; and the large number of European and American missions active in the region. As a consequence, a translation movement emerged accompanied by efforts, mainly by Christian Arabs, to revive the Arabic literary heritage and by the rise of an Arab nationalist movement within the Ottoman Empire. Along with it all, a feminist consciousness was sweeping through the Levant, some of it coming from neighbouring Egypt, and some of it from Europe in the form of a colonialist interest posing as feminist discourse.

This constituted the beginning of a gestational period that would extend well after WWI and that would lay the ground for modern Arabic literature by women. It was characterized by wide calls for equal rights for women and their emancipation from entrenched repressive practices. Since women had no access to the public sphere, and a very limited access to education, it is no surprise that the first calls came from those who enjoyed such freedoms—the men. Booth (2001) argues that the impulse of the emancipation of women in the Levant and Egypt was for men “simply a question of what “women's backwardness” signified for a new (male-defined) nation,” but for women “[i]t was their lives” (p. xxii). This statement, however, only holds partial truth. The articulations of this impulse were indeed imbricated in a project of Self-evaluation triggered by the encounter with the Other. It was a project that entailed, among other things, a re-reading of religious texts and a reconsideration of cultural values, including those underpinning gendered power relations. It was, thus, in Ottoman

Levant and in Mohammed ‘Ali’s Egypt, long before the emergence of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon as new nations, that the first calls by men for the rights of women were made in newspaper articles but also in didactic narrative fiction. These included articles by Butrus al-Bustānī, followed by Ahmed Fāris al-Shidyāq’s 1855 *As-Sāq ‘alā as-Sāq Fīmā Huwa al-Faryāq* foundational book, and Egyptian Refā’a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s 1873 *al-Murshid al-Amīn lil Banāt wal Banīn* (the honest guide for education of girls and boys) textbook.

It is in this positive context, characterized by a cultural effervescence and a flow of ideas between Egypt and the Levant and the West and the Levant, that pioneering Levantine women started to carve out a discursive space for themselves, and claim their voice and their right to shape their own lives. While they found an outlet in the foundation of women’s societies and literary salons²³ frequented by men as well as women, the press was their main platform, where they published articles and essays aiming at changing the situation of women in their societies, advocating for equal rights. These writings did more than just call for women’s equality. Writing from Egypt, May Ziyādā’s activism transcended boundaries of sex, religion and race as she conceived of women’s emancipation as part of a wider project of justice and freedom for all human beings (al-‘Id, 2008, p. 16). Like her, Syrian Mary ‘Ajami²⁴ (1888-1965) fought in her magazine for the liberation of both men and women, and attacked Ottoman rulers in her poems and articles for the dire conditions where Arab political prisoners were detained (Hadidi, 2008, p. 61). More importantly, these pioneers also used the press to engage in a feminist dialogue with Western women, mainly in the US, the UK and France (Shaaban, 2003, p. 12). Some women’s magazines, like Alexandra Averino’s *Anīs al-Jalīs*, used to appoint correspondents abroad to report on women’s achievements and situation in various parts of the world (p. 12).

Moreover, the press “provided the foundations for the modern literary accomplishments of Arab women” during the second part of the 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries (Zeidan, 1995, p. 5). Poetry, translations and original fiction, including short stories and early

²³ For instance, Syrian Maryana Marrash established her literary club in Aleppo, while Lebanese May Ziyādā opened her literary salon in Cairo.

²⁴ Syrian writer Nazik al-‘Abid Bayhum (1887-1959) went a bit further by taking arms against both Ottoman rule and French colonialism, thus receiving the honorary rank of captain in the army (Hadidi, 2008, p. 61).

attempts at the novel by Levantine women, were published in newspapers and journals, both in Egypt and the Levant, to the point where Shaaban (2003) maintains that “[a]ny assessment of Arab (or, for that matter, global) women’s literature cannot be done without evaluating the Arab women’s press, which was for half a century the major platform for Arab women writers” (p. 10). Despite the dearth of studies on Arab women’s literary production in this early period, the small body of research²⁵ that has started to emerge lately around the subject has shown that pioneering women in Lebanon and Syria produced novels “at a brisk, indeed astonishing pace”²⁶ (‘Ashour, Berrada, Ghazoul & Rachid, 2008, p. 5).

Starting from the 1920s, however, the novel, whether by men or by women, underwent what al’Id (2008, p. 22) calls “an existential crisis” due to the political upheavals in the Levant, including colonialism and the 1916’s Sykes-Picot Agreement whereby French and British colonial powers rearranged the 1200-year old political and religious cartography of the region (‘Ashour, 2008, p. 204). During this period, women were as concerned with anti-colonial activism as with the feminist struggle. They participated in demonstrations for independence, fought against sectarianism, opposed the Balfour Declaration that dispossessed the Palestinians of their homeland, and took part in the International Peace and Disarmament movement. Consequently, both Lebanon and Syria, now two separate countries, had to wait until the end of the 1940s and beginning of 1950s to witness a real creative surge in women’s writing in all genres, including the novel—a surge that al-‘Id (2008, p. 23) attributes, in the case of Lebanon, to the spread of education, including at university level, the adoption of a law guaranteeing total gender equality, and the foundation of several literary journals and publishing houses interested in Arabic literature, and which turned Beirut into a cultural hub in the region. Likewise, Hadidi (2008) attributes the “qualitative leap” that Syrian literature witnessed in the 1950s to the expansion of the press and “literary cross-fertilization between Syria and Egypt, Iraq and the Levant, as well as a flourishing translation movement into Arabic” (p. 64).

²⁵ More and more scholars are showing interest in the subject, including Holt (2009), and Zachs (2011).

²⁶ The first in the Levant was Alice Butrus al-Bustānī’s *Ṣā’iba* (1891; She is right). It was followed by many other novels, including Zaynab Fawwāz’s *Ḥusn al-‘Awāqib aw Ghada al-Zāhirah* (1899; Fine consequences or radiant Ghada); Labība Hāshim’s *Qalb ar-Rajul* (1904; A man’s heart); and ‘Afīfa Karam’s *Badī’a wa Fu’ād* (1906; Badi’a and *Fu’ād*).

The first Levantine woman novelist to begin the 1950s is Syrian Widād Sakākīnī with a novel rejecting all men as treacherous and cunning cheaters lacking any virtues: *Arwā bint al-Khuṭūb* (1952; Arwa, daughter of woes). With its didacticism, however, the novel belonged more to the earlier novelistic tradition in the Levant. The first to mark a real milestone in the evolution of the women’s Arabic novel in the region would, therefore, be none other than Hanan Al Shaykh’s geography teacher and one of her role models, Lebanese writer Laylā Ba’lbakki with her *Anā Aḥyā* (1958; I live), and translated into French three years later by Seuil—but never translated into English. She started what Zeidan (1995) calls “a wave of individualism” (p. 5), marked by a shift “to a direct first-person experience montage,” and an almost “narcissistic” focus on personal ego and individual freedom to the exclusion of social realities (Allen, 1995, p. 104). In this wave, women’s rebellion against the traditional family structure and entrenched patriarchal values was the dominant theme. It is to be found in Ba’lbakki’s second novel, *al-Āliha al-Mamsūkha* (1960; Deformed deities), as in the novels of Syrian women novelists In‘ām Musālīma, Georgette Hannūsh and Colette Khūrī. The latter, granddaughter of Syria’s former prime minister, member of parliament and literary advisor to Syria’s current president, Bashar al-Assad, followed in the footsteps of Ba’lbakki and produced two rebellious novels, *Ayyām Ma’ahu* (1960; Days with Him), translated only into English in 2005, and *Laylah wāḥidah* (1961; One night), untranslated so far.

Not all women novelists in Lebanon, however, drew on the woman-as-individual discourse in their literature. Indeed, *Tuyūr Aylūl* (The birds of September), published in 1962 to great critical acclaim, sets its author Emily Nasrallah apart from her predecessors. Earning her three literary prizes,²⁷ but remaining un-translated to date, the novel is set in the village rather than in the city, and addresses but does not focus on young women’s discontent with rigid village values, and explores the broader themes of migration and exile and their effect on the village as well as on women. Writer, journalist and militant Laylā ‘Usseirān, called the Historian of Arab Disappointments for her texts that chronicled Arab defeats and disappointments, went further (al-Jack, 2007). Refusing to believe in the notion of feminist writing, she produced politically engaged texts, including her first novel *Lan Namūta Ghadan*

²⁷ These are Laureate Best Novel, the Said Akl Prize, and Friends of the Book Prize.

(1962; *We will not die tomorrow*) where she criticizes the Lebanese capitalist aristocracy and celebrated Nasserism and Arab nationalism. After the 1967 Arab defeat, she left her young son and husband—who would become Lebanon’s prime minister—to go live with Palestinian freedom fighters in refugee camps in Jordan. After her return from the camps, she wrote her second novel *‘Aṣāfir al-Fajr* (1968; *Birds of dawn*) portraying the lives of Palestinian freedom fighters and defending the Palestinian cause. This novel, like all her other novels, will remain untranslated.

Nevertheless, the real leap in Arab women’s literature in Lebanon, as in Syria, started in the 1970s and crystallized in the 1980s (al-Id, 2008, p. 30), in tandem with the surge in novelistic production across several other Arab countries, known as the “era of the novel” (see Chapter I). This was due, once again, to political upheavals, namely the 1967 Arab defeat that left the Syrian Golan Heights, the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai occupied by Israel, followed by the emergence of the Palestinian resistance, the October 1973 war and finally the Lebanese civil war. These changes had a deep impact on the Arab intellect and the impact was reflected in literature, including, and sometimes especially, women’s literature. In fact, Cooke asserts that, in the case of Lebanon and neighbouring countries, “the war had spawned extensive literary activity – and the most prominent and numerous actors were women” (Cooke, 1996b, p. 1). Increasing numbers of women, from different confessions, ideological persuasions and origins, wrote in the 1970s and 1980s about and against the war, as if to stake their claim to the writing of the war, and of the (hi)story of their country/region. In so doing, they moved from the margin into the center of what had been for centuries considered as the realm of men, and decentered the dominant male narrative of the war, thereby earning the name of “Beirut Decentrists” by Cooke (1996b).

These women writers all “shared Beirut as their home and the war as their experience” (Cooke, 1996b, p. 3). They include Laylā ‘Usseirān with *Jisr al-Ḥajar* (1986; *Stone bridge*); Emily Nasrallah with *al-Iqlā’ ‘Aksa al-Zaman* (1981; *Take-off against time*); Syrian-Lebanese Ghāda al-Sammān with *Kawābīs Bayrūt* (1976; *Beirut nightmares*) and Hanan al-Shaykh’s *Ḥikāyat Zahra* (1980; *Story of Zahra*). To these novelists, Cooke adds Iraqi-Lebanese short story writer Daisy al-Amir, Egyptian-Lebanese writer Claire Gebeyli, and Lebanese writer and

poet Etel Adnan. Cooke goes on to define this group of women writers by comparing them to their male counterparts along rather essentializing lines that reify gender differences. Accordingly, whereas the men wrote of “strategy, ideology and violence,” these women wrote of “the dailiness of war”; whereas the men wrote about “existential angst” and “revolution,” the decentrists wrote about “abandoned loneliness.” Whereas the men “catalogued savagery, anger and despair,” the decentrists “reflected the mood of the war” (Cooke, 1996b, p. 3), and “left analysis to the experts” (p. 23). In other words, the Beirut Decentrists are, for Cooke, those women writers who produced non-politically engaged literature that eschewed “political allegiance—and its corollary statist nationalism” (1999, p. 86), and, instead, documented the “dailiness of survival,” as only they can do (Cooke, 1996b, p. 27). While this reductive definition excludes them,²⁸ the 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of a few Palestinian women writers who equally wrote the war from Beirut, like Laylā al-Sayegh and Liana Badr. The latter, for instance, lived in Beirut during the war, and drew in her novel *Būṣīlah min ajl ‘Ubbād al-Shams* (1989) a vivid and detailed picture of the “dailiness of survival” of her Palestinian heroine, Jinane, through dispossession and exile, and during her life as a refugee in war-torn Beirut. Badr, however, does not write as an individual woman with no political or nationalist allegiance, like Cooke’s Decentrists do. Being at the intersection not only of class and gender oppression but also of national and colonial violence, these women writers’ struggle for emancipation as women is predicated on their struggle for emancipation as Palestinians. As Badr puts it, “neither of them is valid without the other” (as cited in Shaaban, 1988, p. 164). As a consequence, these writers could equally be added to the Beirut decentrists group, especially given the fact that they were writing from the national and social margin as women, and from the margins of a (white) feminism that excludes them by separating between feminist struggle and nationalist struggle.

Such is the impact of the civil war that it will emerge as a theme in many of the 1990s novels, including in Liana Badr’s *‘Ayn al-Mir’āt* (1990; *The eye of the mirror*), Hoda

²⁸ While Cooke (1988) asserts that she approaches the Decentrists’ literature “not as isolated literary products but rather as a whole,” she excludes Palestinian women writers from this whole. According to her, their literature resembled that of their male counterparts as it remained engaged to the Palestinian cause. These women writers “could only view [the war] as a logical extension of the Palestinian struggle” (p. 23). As a consequence, Cooke explains, they were “blinded to the war’s real nature” (p. 23), that of a process that resisted understanding and analysis.

Barakāt's *Ḥajar aḍ-Ḍaḥik* (1990; *The stone of laughter*) and *Ahl al-Hawā* (1993; *Disciples of passion*), Hanan al-Shaykh's *Barīd Bayrūt* (1992; *Mail from Beirut*), and Renée al-Hayik's *Shitā' Mahjūr* (1996; *A forsaken winter*). Departing from the theme of war and death, and showing a development in feminist consciousness, other writers produced novels that depicted women as already emancipated from male authority, and enjoying their bodies without guilt, like Ilhām Mansūr in her novels *Ilā Hibā: Sīrah Ūlā* (1991; *To Hiba: a first story*) and its sequel *Hiba Fī Riḥlat al-Jasad: Sīrah Thāniyah* (1994; *Hiba on a journey of the body: A second story*). Ilham Mansur would emerge as one of Lebanon's profuse women writers in the first decade of the 21st century with several novels, followed by Salwā Nueimi, Nadiya Zafir Sha'ban and Hanan al-Shaykh. In neighbouring Syria, the literary scene was equally rich in late 20th and early 21st centuries, where "the women's novel broke out of the shell of purely women's issues to engage in public concerns and offer its own perspective on them" (al-Qadi, p. 81). Hayfā' Bayṭār emerges as one of Syria's prolific writers in the first decade of the 21st century, with novels such as *Hawā* (2007) and short story collections such as her earlier *Yawmiyāt Mutallaqah* (1994), where she threads on the situation of women and the injustices they still endure in a politically corrupt society. But of all these women writers from Lebanon, neighbouring Syria, and for that matter all the other Arab countries, Hanan al-Shaykh is undoubtedly the most translated, the most talked about and the most interviewed in British, American and even Canadian media.

3.1.2 The plot.

Set in 1999, *Innahā Lundun* follows the journey to individual freedom of three unlikely but equally marginalized Arab friends, Lamis, Habiba, and Sameer, in London. Lamis is a British-Iraqi young woman whose mother forced her to marry a much older Iraqi businessman. She accompanies him to London where she bears him a son, Khaled, and becomes a British citizen. Feeling miserable in a loveless marriage, Lamis eventually walks out of it, leaving her son to his father. After a failed attempt at starting her life anew in Dubai close to her family, she goes back to London, where she falls in love with an Englishman, Nicholas, who is constantly traveling between London and Eastern countries due to his work as an antique expert for an Omani rich man. Lamis eventually realizes that she would only achieve freedom

as well as integration by going to school again and finding a job. Her quest for emancipation takes Habiba, the Moroccan prostitute, through a different path. To escape poverty, emotional abuse by her mother and sexual abuse by men, Habiba leaves her remote Moroccan village and immigrates to London where she ends up working as a prostitute for rich Arab men, under the new exotic name of Amira, literally princess. As she advances in age and her body starts changing, she decides to fashion herself after her new name, i.e. as a real Gulf princess in distress, and starts appealing to Arab men's chivalry and sense of honour, rather than to their sexual instincts. This stratagem allows her to live as a real princess in London until one of her male victims uncovers her scheme and, for the first time in her life, has her beaten up. Eventually, Habiba/Amira reinvents herself anew and starts telling her stories and anecdotes to rich Arabs by way of earning a living. As for Sameer, he is a Lebanese homosexual-transvestite who had to repress his homosexuality for much of his life. He thus married the woman that his aunt chose for him and fathered five children, all while continuing to lead a double life. When the opportunity to come to London presented itself, albeit through the illegal act of smuggling a little monkey with diamonds in its intestines to London, he seizes it. Once in London, he decides to stay, finds a job and starts living his homosexuality openly.

3.2 *Innahā Lundun* as Discourse Practice

This is an easily accessible novel that displays generic features of the realist novel and the immigrant novel. On the other hand, it draws on several discourses, some of them conflictual, thereby setting them into dialogue with one another, and letting them both highlight and interrogate one another.

3.2.1 Interdiscursivity: Genres.

3.2.1.1 The resistance of storytelling.

In an interview given to *al-Ittihad* newspaper, and in answer to a question about whether she considered herself a feminist, al-Shaykh (2010b) says rather defensively that she can be called a feminist to the extent that her male counterparts, Naguib Mahfouz and Yūsuf Idrīs, could be called as such insomuch as they both, like her, wrote about women's oppression and

defended the cause of women in their novels. al-Shaykh, so it seems, is as hesitant to label herself a feminist as many other women writers from Arab countries (See Chapter I). But whether she readily embraces her feminism or not, her writings are feminist in that they consciously strive to undermine a culture of subordination and challenge patriarchal attitudes. For many feminist writers, as for feminist translators for that matter, postmodernist aesthetics offers disruptive strategies capable of achieving these objectives (Michael, 1996, p. 221). They thus reject literary realism on grounds that it helps maintain the status quo by masking the historicity and contingency of values, and constructing reality as neutral and unmediated.

In *Innahā Lundun*, however, al-Shaykh seems to ground her feminist politics in the ordinary physical world, thereby giving us a realist novel. Terry Eagleton (1995) defines the realist novel as “the form *par excellence* of settlement and stability, gathering individual lives into an integrated whole” (p. 147). As simple as this definition is, it could easily account for why al-Shaykh, writing from the “settlement and stability” of the UK, appropriates the realist genre while Mosteghanemi, writing about the “chaos” of Algeria deploys what Eagleton would call “schematic devices which cut against the grain of fiction itself” (p. 147). Watt (2001), for his part, describes literary realism as a form characterized by the portrayal of an individual experience that is unique and *novel*, and, as a result, eschews imitation of previous works and any pre-existing plots or formal conventions (p. 13). The second characteristic of the realist novel, according to Watt, is one that derives directly from emphasis on individual experience, i.e. individuation, or particularisation of the characters. Watt (2001) asserts indeed that novelists in the realist tradition “paid greater attention to the particular individual than had been common before” (p. 18). This is achieved mainly through the use of proper names and background. Unlike in previous forms of fiction where proper names given to characters were symbolic, typical or characteristic, proper names chosen for the characters in a realist work “suggest that they were to be regarded as particular individuals in the contemporary social environment” (p. 19). This principle of individuation is further achieved by setting the characters against “a background of particularized time and place” (p. 21), and by closely following the development of characters both in time and in spatial environment.

Innahā Lundun displays all these characteristics of the realist novel. Unlike Mosteghanemi who uses type names for her main characters to symbolize collective values, like Hayat, life, standing for Algeria's independence, al-Shaykh gives her characters random, individuating names. al-Shaykh also uses a generally transparent language that seldom draws attention to the act of writing. She (2001a) provides extensive spatial details about London, to the point where the description reads like a tentative map of the city:

She walked along Edgware Road. She saw the European and Oriental prostitutes standing in groups or alone. She passed by Moonlight Café. The fragrances of the narghiles were flooding the street. [...] She stopped by Ranoush where she ate a shawarma sandwich. She noticed that it was no longer only for Arab customers but is full of English customers as well, especially the young men working in fashion and the media. She went into the bathroom. As she sat hunched on the toilet seat, she took out the blonde wig from her handbag and put it on, she then took out a large silk scarf that she put on her suit. She adjusted the wig in the mirror and went into Cumberland Hotel again. She stood in front of room 609. She knocked on the door. She did not hear an answer. (p. 106)

While such narrative procedures, or what Watt (2001, p. 32) calls “formal realism,” entail a forfeiting of literary values and a formal impoverishment, they help render the texture of daily experience as closely as possible, a rendering that came to be understood as an obligation on the novelist's part towards his/her readers. Watt (2001) affirms, indeed, that literary realism is premised on the assumption that the novel is “a full and authentic report of human experience” (p. 32). It is an assumption according to which readers of the novel expect the author to satisfy them as to the details of the story and its characters. Drawing an analogy with what happens in a court of law, Watt (2001), in fact, contends that readers' expectations are aligned with the jury's in many ways in that “they both want to know ‘all the particulars’ of a given case [...]; both must be satisfied as to the identities of the parties concerned [...]; and they also expect the witness to tell the story ‘in his own words’” (p. 31).

The jury for whom al-Shaykh is knowingly giving testimony in *Innahā Lundun* is a much more heterogeneous reading public than the usual. Indeed, al-Shaykh wrote the novel in Arabic and published it in Lebanon through *Dar al-Adab* publishing house that marketed it throughout the Arab world. However, when Hassan (2010) asks her “How did *Innahā Lundun* *Yā ‘Azīzī* come about?” (para. 8; my translation), al-Shaykh answers:

Before this novel, [she] had never thought of writing about London where she lived. All she was interested in was about the Arab world, ‘I think in Arabic, I dream in Arabic, I write in Arabic’. However, a British publishing house contacted her then and asked her to write a short story about London [...]. It was then that Hanan started paying attention to the Arab diaspora living in the West, or more specifically London. (para. 9; my translation)

In other words, although al-Shaykh wrote *Innahā Lundun* in Arabic, she was not addressing only the Arabic reading public, but the Anglo-American, too. It is a public whom al-Shaykh has grown to understand thanks to her long experience with Western publishers and with translation into French and English. In a very recent interview to *al-Sharq al-Awsat* newspaper, she (2013) asserts that “English speakers are not interested in Arab issues in general; however, they are interested in novels that tell interesting stories.” Likewise, al-Shaykh is very aware of how these readers’ expectations impinge on publishers’ decisions. When asked whether she caters to the Western audience, she (2004) argues that “we forget that the West doesn’t translate what doesn’t sell. They are tradesmen after all and want to make money.” With these assumptions in mind, al-Shaykh wrote a novel that tells an interesting story in an accessible language and a realist, character-based plot based on quasi-ethnographic research:

There is a street in London called Oxford Street, there I met a man who looks like Samir, and from this Samir, I heard about an Algerian young woman who looks like Amira [in the novel]. I would go everyday looking for her. I wanted to meet her. But whenever I arrived, they would tell me that she was there but that she just left, or that she would arrive in a few minutes... I spent six months trying to meet her. Then I thought that this was for the best. I could write about Amira as my imagination dictated. And that’s how Amira came to be. As to Lamis, the Iraqi young woman in the novel, she is like a girl that edits my writings. Her father lives in Iraq. He sent her once a music tape and when I listened to it, I felt like I knew this man... and that’s how Lamis came to be. [...] The authorities once caught a man calling Prince Charles and pretending to be a prince. When they asked him how he did that, he told them about a Moroccan young woman who conned people by pretending she was a princess, and he imitated her... And this Amira is the character that appears in the novel. (2010b; my translation)

This life-inspired testimony to the jury is reinforced by all the spatial and temporal details, and the “particulars” that she provides in her individuation of these characters. More importantly, usage of Arabic imbues the testimony with a more enhanced sense of authenticity in the eyes

of the Anglo-American audience. The community that she translated in her novel thus appeared to be so authentic that “people started going to Oxford Street to look for the characters of this novel” (al-Shaykh as cited in Hassan, 2010).

For her Arab reading public, al-Shaykh flags up her objective in the very title: *Innahā Lundun Yā ‘Azīzī* literally means “it is London, my dear!” with “dear” being inflected for masculine. al-Shaykh is therefore promising her Arab reader an authentic depiction of London as lived and experienced by Arab immigrants and tourists from her first-hand experience as a London-based writer. This promise is compounded by the book cover featuring a plump woman with long black hair and outrageous make-up, wearing a revealing, tight red top that shows a mole on the right breast, and holding a Gulf sword on her right hand while her left hand is behind her back and her head is slightly tilted to one side, as if dancing a famous folkloric Gulf dance (see Appendix 3). The image is not only a stereotypical representation of a prostitute, a representation that talks back to and intertexts with other Arabic literary texts as well as with Egyptian movies, but it is also a stereotypical representation, albeit inferred, of the clients of this prostitute: the oil-rich Gulf, mostly Saudi, men generally believed to only go to London for (sexual) freedoms that are not allowed in their countries. With the image, the promise in the title becomes also a titillation of readers’ voyeuristic sense as it enhances their expectation of a realistic depiction not only of the extravagances carried out by the rich Gulf men but also of the kind of life that women from poor Arab countries lead in London. al-Shaykh’s all-knowing, omniscient narrator meets these expectations to a great extent by providing detailed descriptions of Amira’s life, of her sexual encounters with rich Emirati and Saudi men, and of her meetings with prostitutes from other Arab countries. What al-Shaykh does, however, is that although her focus is on immigrants and visitors from Arab countries, rather than on the large British society, her narrative seems to be lulling her Arabic readers into a sense of familiarity only to contest several of their assumed misconceptions about London and its English people. When, for instance, Nicholas returned from Oman where he works, one of his neighbours told him that he warded off three young people who were trying to steal his car in his absence. The narrator then reports that “Nicholas thanked him while thinking that there was a sense of neighbourhood, after all, and that London is not immense and uncaring, as he used to believe” (2001a, p.70).

The realist aesthetics serves a similar purpose for al-Shaykh's English reading public. She is, indeed, playing to their expectations and demands of familiarity to turn the tables on them by bringing them to face and interrogate their own prejudices. In a very poignant passage describing Lamis' first encounter with Nicholas' friends during a party that he threw to introduce her to them, Lamis quickly realizes that nobody is interested in her as an "ordinary" subject that came to London under ordinary circumstances. For "the man considered that her coming to London in ordinary circumstances did not deserve any interest" (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 226; my translation), so he cut her quickly, "nodded his head, saying 'oh', and turned to talk to another guest" (p. 226; my translation). Lamis realizes then that their only interest in her is to the extent that she can supply them with bloody information about her country. She, therefore, turned into "a book of history after she had been acting like a book of geography," lied about numbers, and told about the Iraqi diaspora in London, about Iraq and the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. "She felt as if a TV screen stood between her and them. They were the viewers and she was a reporter from Iraq. She did not discuss. She did not converse. Rather, she provided information very generously" (p. 226; my translation).

She is also trying to undo the monolithic categories of "the Arabs," and the "Arab woman" by highlighting in the plot the heterogeneity of these "Arabs." Upon learning that Nicholas was back from Oman, David, a friend of his, called him to enquire whether his Omani employer was going to buy an antique gazelle statue. When Nicholas replied that the gazelle was too expensive for Sayf, his employer, to buy it, David asks in disbelief: "you want me to believe that there are actually prices out of reach for the Arabs? Nicholas, please! Stop pretending! You're actually telling me that they do count their money and know the limit of their wealth?" (p. 111; my translation). Likewise, while Lamis comes from a poor background, her mother-in-law belongs to aristocracy, as do many of her other Iraqi acquaintances in London. And while former belly dancer, Katkuta, turned to religion by putting on the scarf and ending her dancing career as incompatible with religion, Amira practices her very own version of Islam that reconciles prostitution and theft with love of God.

al-Shaykh is therefore clearly deploying realist aesthetics to make her postcolonial and feminist politics of unsettling the Anglo-American audience stereotyped narrative of the

“Arabs” and the “Arab woman,” more recognizable and, therefore, more effective to a mainstream reading public that is more schooled in realist fiction. In other words, she is strategically playing the role expected of her and explicitly given to her, the role of Scheherazade, or “the New Scheherazade” as she came to be called by English critics and reviewers much to her dislike at the beginning (al-Shaykh, 2012). For like Scheherazade, she is no subservient storyteller. She is no docile witness like the jury, her readers, would have her be, and like she would have her jury believe her to be. In a discussion with cultural historian Marina Warner and literary editor Erica Wagner, al-Shaykh (2012) explains that Scheherazade only gave the impression of being weak, of being “a prisoner.” But “she wasn’t a prisoner at all- she knew exactly what she was doing.” She was, instead, like all female characters in the *Nights*, a very crafty and intelligent woman who knew that her apparent subservience and her discursive power were her weapons, the “weapons of the oppressed” (2012), and so she deployed them to her advantage, i.e. to challenge the king’s vision of himself and of women, and to open discursive breaches in his narrative about women.

By drawing on the realist novel genre, al-Shaykh is creating different social hierarchies with her different audiences. With the Arab audience, she is assuming the role of the knowledgeable guide that takes visitors from Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and other countries where her Arabic novel was published, in a tour around London, to show them what this city means and what it offers to its Arab visitors. To her Anglo-American audience, however, al-Shaykh is not the guide, but the writer belonging to a minority community, that of the Arab diaspora in London, telling her audience how this minority community lives and integrates in, or otherwise stays at the margin of, London. She is the instrumental witness that does not judge, but gives facts and “particulars,” then lets the jury decide. Paradoxically, and precisely because she positions herself as seemingly inferior to her English readers, she is able to create another social hierarchy, one where she is the interpreter, i.e. “an agent of a dominant social code,” as Deleuze and Guattari (1983, p. 13) defines it. As such, she codifies and reproduces both the Other/minority community and the Self/the majoritarian community in such a way as to consciously unsettle the dominant narratives that she assumes her English readers subscribe to, and shakes them out of the comfort of their misconceptions.

But al-Shaykh is doing more than that through her use of a realist mode of fiction. Raymond Williams (1975) affirms that in such modes of fiction, there is “an underlying stance and approach- that the novelist offers to show people and their relationships in essentially knowable and communicable ways” (p. 243). These knowable relationships are therefore known and contribute to the making of “a wholly known social structure.” Williams concludes that “both societies and persons are knowable; indeed certain fundamental propositions about them can even be taken for granted, in terms of a received and mutually applicable social and moral code” (p. 243) As such, the realist novel creates a “knowable community.” In fact, Williams argues that the knowable community was a crisis that 19th century novelists had to grapple with. Their society was undergoing deep transformations due to rapidly growing communities and cities as well as increasing division of labour that caused rifts between social classes, which made “any assumption of a knowable community- a whole community, wholly knowable- become harder and harder to sustain” (p. 244). Paradoxically, because of this social crisis, the knowable community was also part of “the creative response,” since “what is knowable is not only a function of objects- of what is there to be known. It is also a function of subjects, of observers- of what is desired and what needs to be known” (p. 244). The “problem” then for novelists relying on realism is “of finding a position, a position convincingly experienced, from which community can begin to be known” (p. 244).

Late twentieth and early 21st century Britain is a complex multicultural landscape, a community of disparate communities, of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, from different cultures and different backgrounds, challenging any belief in a wholly knowable community. This period was also characterized by increasing numbers of Iraqi refugees that left Iraq in the wake of the first Gulf war and during the subsequent embargo imposed on the country. This was all accompanied by an increasing identity anxiety as well as increasing interest in and debate about multiculturalism, as is clear from the publisher’s request from al-Shaykh and other “non-British” writers to write about London from their perspective. In this juncture, al-Shaykh emerges as a novelist trying to find that “convincingly experienced position” from which she can begin to make the diaspora coming from Arab countries knowable in communicable and intelligible ways to the majoritarian community in the British context, thereby reducing the cultural rift and promoting understanding. In addition to all the

details she provides of the landscape, she uses cultural references familiar to the British audience, from names of TV series, like *Bewitched*, to songs, like Jimmy Cliff's *I can see clearly now* song, and TV ads, like the "things happen after a Badedas bath." These are all such communicable ways helping her translate the diaspora minority identity to the majoritarian reading public in terms of a "mutually applicable social and moral code," thereby challenging any perception that the Arab diaspora community is inassimilable or extraneous to the majoritarian community.

3.2.1.1 A woman's immigrant narrative.

The narrative in *Innahā Lundun* is clearly one about migration. Classification of this genre, however, is particularly problematic. Decolonization movements, the emergence of totalitarian regimes, the outbreak of regional wars, the intensification of economic ties, and the astounding progress in communication technologies as well as in transportation, all resulted in borders becoming porous, triggered great migration and forced migration waves, and blurred the line between the global and the local as one started to permeate the other. As a consequence, it can, indeed, be argued that "the political and social processes of immigration shape the whole literary system [...] in a literary culture, and not simply the part of that system that involves books generated by immigrant populations" (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 533). In other words, migration literature "would have to include all works that are produced in a time of migration" (p. 533). This holds especially true for the literary system in different Arab countries precisely because of local political problems, oftentimes with geopolitical and international dimensions, and the multiple strong economic, cultural and political ties with ex-colonizers, especially France and the UK. Exile, including in France, is very present as a theme in Mosteghanemi's trilogy, just as mobility across borders and its cultural and social ramifications for the ultra-conservative Saudi society are, as we shall see in the next chapter, very present in Alsanea's novel. In fact, the Arabic novel is in itself the product of migration and mobility between East and West.

To solve this conceptual problem, Frank (2008) distinguishes between "migrant literature," where the "authorial biography [is] the decisive parameter," and "migration literature" where intertextual features such as content and form as well as extratextual forces

such as social processes are emphasized (p. 3). However, the “migrant literature” category, itself, defies classification and poses its own set of questions. Merolla and Ponzanesi (2005), for instance, ask: “what are the implications of globalization for literature? [...] To which audiences is migrant literature directed? Does the migrant label enhance the visibility of writers shifting between languages and cultures or does it simply relegate them to a luxury ghetto?” (p. 4). Aware that the label “migrant” is more often than not “imposed upon exoticism and ethnic difference in order to mark “otherness,” they also enquire whether the “migrant writer” “is not just a traveler, a wanderer, but implicitly the person who produces the colonial divide in new global terms” (p. 4).

While Merolla and Ponzanesi raise these questions with regards to (intra-)European migrant literature, their questions apply a great deal to Arab migrant literature in Europe and the US. In fact, they become more urgent in cases such as *Innahā Lundun*, where the immigrant writer writes in the diasporic minority language an immigrant narrative suggested by a publishing house belonging to the majority community, and destined from the outset for both minority and majority audiences. This case, in fact, raises another set of questions: Does the novel belong to English literature being authored by an English writer, albeit of Arab origins, and suggested by an English publisher for an English audience? If Arab immigrant narratives in English function as a minor literature within the American and English literary systems following Deleuze and Guattari, as Hassan (2011) convincingly argues, then is *Innahā Lundun* a minor literature within the Arabic literary system given it is in Arabic, or within the English literary system? Faced with such classification difficulty, Merolla and Ponzanesi (2005) agree that the “only clear connection is that these are writers and artists who address and investigate issues of home and abroad, identity and language, private and public domains, in more acute forms” (p. 4). By adopting such definition, the two scholars seem to echo Boelhower’s (1981) generic model of the “immigrant novel.” To fill what he perceived as a gap in American literary criticism where the immigrant novel genre was overlooked, Boelhower developed a generic model that identified two main characteristics of this novel. The first is the characters/actants. They are all “*foreigners* (aliens) and immigrants (uprooted); they are *naïve*, *ignorant* of [...] have a *language* barrier, are *unassimilated*, and crucially, *hopeful*” (1981, p. 6; italics in the original). Their actions are initially always shaped and

motivated by the “Old World’s” (OW) view insofar as they either bring their culture of origin to bear on their actions in the “New World” (NW), or they keep contrasting OW and NW. The second characteristic is that the plot always involves, to varying degrees, a constellation of “characteristically immigrant frames” (p. 7), including religion, language, memory and, through it all, a bildungsroman type of journey that takes the characters from their OW through a series of trials to final assimilation and acculturation.

While Boelhower elaborated his model on the basis of early English-language immigrant novels in the US, the model can still, according to Madelaine Hron (2009), account for many contemporary immigrant novels that all invariably explore issues of integration and acculturation (p. 7). In *Innahā Lundun*, the narrative starts with a flight from Dubai to London gathering all main characters: Lamis, Amira and Samir. The flight, connecting two international airports, symbolizes not only departure from the “OW” and uprootedness, but mobility as well, since it also carries regular tourists, health tourists, like the Emirati man heading to London for treatment, and globe trotters like Nicholas who works between Europe and the Middle East. The lead characters are all immigrants with language obstacles, albeit to varying degrees. Although Lamis speaks English fluently for having lived in London for thirteen years after her marriage, she still feels that her inability to pronounce English like an English person hinders her full integration in the English society. As she tells her phonetics teacher, “I decided to integrate in this society and become a member of it... I need to work... I believe that acquiring a pure English accent would help me achieve that” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 81). Samir, by contrast, has very poor English, but he never associates language with integration, nor does he undertake any action to remedy his problem. Linguistic identity for these characters seems, indeed, to be shaped by their respective expectations and goals from the immigration experience.

Upon arrival in London, Lamis will immediately and consciously embark on a bildungsroman journey of integration and assimilation to overcome her history of multiple dislocations. Lamis’ first dislocation occurred when she fled Najaf in Iraq with her family, to Beirut in Lebanon because of religious persecution by the Iraqi secular government. The second dislocation was geographical, from Beirut to London, and emotional from childhood to

adulthood and motherhood in a loveless marriage imposed on her by her mother. After her divorce, Lamis tries to construct a new identity in Dubai close to her family, but will ultimately fail because of archaic laws in the UAE, and finds herself back again to London. Returning to London was a process of rebirth for her. She decides: “this country will be my country” (al-Shaykh, 2000, p. 31; my translation). Before she reaches her goal, however, she shuttles back and forth between her past and her present; between hatred and love for her culture and mother tongue. She will try to shed her Arabic language for English but will fail because, as she says, “[her] memory is Arab” (p. 265). Through contact with the Other, Nicholas who, among other things, introduces her to a 13th century Arabic manuscript, she rediscovers herself and her heritage and learns to appreciate both:

“I can’t believe that Arabic language is still the same as it was hundreds of years ago,” and her heart fluttered in love for the language. She thought that what they used to say in schools about the great Arab civilization in the past, was true... She [...] chastised herself in regret for thinking, when she was in Dubai, that her being an Arab was an obstacle in her life. (p. 183)

Only through this process of constant transformation was Lamis eventually able to reach the end of her journey and achieve integration. While Amira and Samir are less fleshed out as characters than Lamis, they both go through a similar process of self-reproduction in this immigrant narrative. Samir’s journey is one of self-realization as a homosexual subject. Repressed for much of his life, his only goal in London is to enact his identity freely through his embodied actions without any social stigma. While his poor English impedes communication with his English partners, he keeps on flagging up his marginality as both an immigrant and a homosexual, and constructs, in this marginal space, a ‘home’ for himself in London with people he came to love as family, and the job he had always wanted to do but had never been able to do due to social stigma back home (p. 218).

Likewise, Amira reproduces herself several times, the first when she fought her poverty to immigrate to London for a better life. In London, Amira literally reinvents herself as a Gulf princess in distress and learns how to swindle men to live in luxury. After a series of trials, including an encounter with the Interpol, violence by a prince to teach her a lesson, and momentary regrets about immigration and work, Amira metamorphoses into a Scheherazade:

She went back to her job, not as a princess in distress, but as a witness to what happened to the princess, and her customers would laugh, be entertained and ask her to repeat a phrase or a story, and she would tell them how she outwitted the British secret services, and this rich man, and that Sheikh, and this prince, how they all believed she was a princess... Then one man told another who told a friend of his about Amira's adventures, and men started flocking to hear her stories and her description of men in high office. (p. 399).

For Amira's journey is not one of integration in London. Beyond the freedom it gives her, London seems to be immaterial to her, as she evolves almost exclusively within a community of immigrant prostitutes and rich tourists coming from Arab countries. Amira's journey is first and foremost one of class fight to redress the economic injustice from which the poor and destitute suffer in Morocco. When she finds herself near the Hyde Park Speaker's corner, Amira imagines herself telling the crowd: "It's simple. There's a lot in this world. There are the rich and the poor. The poor's here to swindle the rich as much as he can, for the rich man is lost and doesn't know how to spend his money" (p. 323). Amira's journey is also one of gender struggle against entrenched prejudices both about poor women and sex workers. So she takes ideological stands to prove that she has dignity: "she refused to have sex with Iraqis when the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. Then she stopped having sex with Kuwaitis when they expelled the other Arab nationalities from their country." However, she soon realized that "prostitutes did not belong to society. They were not born from the uterus of a mother, but from trees, with no fathers or brothers, no siblings or relatives." (p. 381)

By depicting these variegated experiences of immigrant subjects, al-Shaykh successfully captures some of the complexities of the migration situation and shows her English readers that "[t]here is never acculturation pure and simple but rather [...] a pluricultural reality depicting minority cultures with specific languages, world views, customs, and memories" (Boelhower, 1981, p. 12). Indeed, Boelhower maintains that the immigrant novel serves to depict "unique historical subjects" in their reaction to the dominant culture. In so doing, it leads the reader "primarily to familiarize himself with new ethnic values and traditions and to naturalize these differences as an integral part of the [host society's] experience" (Boelhower, 1981, p. 12). In fact, the immigrant narrative in *Innahā Lundun* also brings the English reading public to familiarize itself with the foreignness within it and to accept the differences inherent in it. It does so through the character of Nicholas. Nicholas was on the same flight as the lead

characters. English in origin, working between London and Oman, and roaming the world first as a tourist and then as an expert in antiques, Nicholas is himself a modern nomad, living in between multiple geographies and cultures, constantly negotiating his identity between the Other/Arab East and the Self/English West. A negotiation that helps him redefine himself and the culture he belongs to:

the more I get into contact with other cultures, the more I realize we are naïve. [...] The more I travel, the more I discover that we are a strange people. When I was a child, I used to believe that we were normal. But now I feel that we, the English, are introvert and shy and lacking self-confidence. We have a lot of taboos that we try to avoid: money, sex, religion... (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 236; my translation)

Along with the immigrant characters of the novel, Nicholas forms what Seyhan calls a “paranational community,” inasmuch as they all live “within national borders and alongside citizens of the host country but remain culturally and linguistically distanced from them and, in some instance, are estranged from both the home and the host country” (Seyhan, 2001, p. 10). Thus, when Lamis hesitates to let Nicholas kiss her at the entrance of the theater for fear of being seen by an Arab, he gets irritated at the “Arabs” and their “Arab logic,” and swears “fuck them,” at which he quickly comments to Lamis: “see, I am back to being English again!” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 264; my translation). In other words, Nicholas does not see himself as an Englishman, or at least as fully English. For him, as for the other characters, identity is an ongoing process of constant negotiation, definition and redefinition as he moves within and outside national borders.

In this immigrant narrative, London emerges as a rhizomatic space, a heterogeneous terrain, as it is constantly being imagined and re-imagined by its immigrants and cosmopolitan subjects. For Amira, the immigrant looking for ease of life, “authentic London” is being able to live in luxury (p. 53). For Samir, the oppressed homosexual immigrant, London is not “Piccadilly Circus. Oxford Street, Big Ben and Buckingham Palace” (p. 218). It is being able to do what he wants to do (p. 218). For Lamis, the character looking for roots and anchor, London is initially a carefree stroll in unfamiliar streets, a pure, accent-free English language, and anything not Arab: not Arabic language, not Arab friends, not Arab food, not eye kohl (p. 31). Eventually, however, and after failing to shed her accent and obliterate her Arab memory,

Lamis reconstructs London as being her Arab self, with her Arab accent, but free of her traumatic past, free of the weight of suffocating traditions, and free of the censorship practiced by fellow members of the Arab community. But *Innahā Lundun*'s London is also imperial London, saturated with icons of its imperial past, from Marble Arch to Leighton's House. Even its immigrant communities evoke the collapse of the Empire and its on-going ties with ex-colonies, thereby bringing this aspect of the city out as they resist it in their re-configuration of London.

Through her immigrant narrative, al-Shaykh seems, therefore, to be trying to decenter London, to defamiliarize it to the English reading public by highlighting its heterogeneous identity, precisely to familiarize them with the heterogeneities of its diasporic minority, and "naturalize [the latter's] differences as an integral part of [English society's] experience" as Boelhower would put it. In fact, she is also dismantling the construct of "home," equating it with essentialism as it is clear in the description of how static life is in Lamis' native city of Najaf. In so doing, she is appealing to and creating a community of practice made up of immigrants and cosmopolitan subjects, be they Arab of origin or English, thereby creating a hybridized identity for herself and promoting it, that of "the nomad and the immigrant and the gypsy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 19) who deterritorializes English even as she writes in Arabic, through depiction of her characters' accents, broken language and Arabic-borrowed metaphors and idioms, and deterritorializes Arabic by inscribing English language including in Latin script and several Arabic dialects in the Arabic text. It is worthy of note here, however, that because al-Shaykh chose Arabic as the language through which to address her English audience, her attempt to decenter London for the English audience remains distant and foreign, in the same way that her novel is classified in the Foreign Literature category when she is British of both nationality and residence, and when she wrote her novel in response to a need in the English literary market. Likewise, the deterritorialization of English within Arabic contains and, indeed, neutralizes the subversion inherent in this linguistically subversive act. What remains, therefore, is an enhanced deterritorialization of Arabic language for Arabic readers and a heightened subversion not of the center, but of the margin and its language and canon.

Moreover, by writing London/the center as a heterogeneous space that allows for the differences of its Arab immigrants precisely because of its heterogeneity, al-Shaykh is paradoxically investing it with a unifying value, that of freedom insofar as “only in London” could all her lead characters, all marginalized back home either because of their social status, gender or sexual orientation, realize themselves whichever way they wanted. In so doing, al-Shaykh was also dialectically writing the different Arab countries where her immigrant characters originate as homogeneous and homogeneously unaccepting of such heterogeneities. Here, one harks back to Merolla and Ponzanesi’s question of whether the migrant writer implicitly “reproduces the colonial divides in new global terms.” al-Shaykh is, in fact, decentering the center following a traditional center/margin dyad that, according to Lionnet and Shih (2005), serves to maintain the center and contain the margin (p. 3). Within this dyad, too, the margin always appears to be “mediated by [the center] in both its social and its psychic means of identification” (Lionnet and Shih, 2005, p. 2). Indeed, al-Shaykh immigrant narrative opens and ends with a clear, and quite literal, articulation of such mediation. Thus, when the narrator sets to introduce Lamis to the readers at the beginning of the novel, she tells us that the English gynaecologist who delivered Lamis was “the mediator between her and her progeny, between her and her husband” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 28). Likewise, the novel which opens up with English Nicholas handing a distraught Lamis her English passport that she had lost during a severe air turbulence, comes full circle as it closes with a self-content Lamis on a flight from London back to the Middle East, to Oman, to join Nicholas: “She prepares her passport which the English passenger, Nicholas, had found. The same Nicholas who brought her back to Arab lands” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 408; my translation).

While *Innahā Lundun* writes al-Shaykh as a nomad with a hybridized identity, this genre and its inscription within the dyad above situate her within an Arabic literary tradition that goes as far back as the nineteenth century, with such writers as Lebanese Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq who, after spending close to ten years in Europe, romanticized the East’s encounter with the West in his reports on his experience of Europe in his autobiographical fiction *As-Sāq ‘alā as-Sāq Fīmā Huwa al-Faryāq*, published in Paris in 1855 (El-Enany, 2006, p. 19). This tradition would soon develop with the increase in the number of writers from Arab countries who come into contact with Europe and the Americas. It was thus significantly enriched with

the *mahjar* (migration) literary school formed by mostly Lebanese Arab writers in North America, like Gibran Khalil Gibran, Elia Abu Mādi and Mikhāʿīl Naʿīma, in the first decades of the twentieth century. The tradition gained more momentum as of the 1930s with such literary figures as Egyptians Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm and Yaḥya Ḥaqqi during the colonial period; Sudanese Tayeb Saleh with his iconic novel *Mawsim al-Hijrah ilā ash-Shamāl* (1967; *Season of Migration to the North*, 1969), and Moroccan ‘Abd al-Majid Ben Jelloun in the period following independence; and Syrian Ḥannā Mīna and Egyptian Bahā’ Tāher in the post-*naksah* (the Arab defeat in the 1967 Israeli war) period through the 1980s.

The discourses about West/East articulated in these writings reflected a high coefficient of ambivalence depending on the domestic, regional and global political climate. During the colonial period, for instance, writers would criticize colonialism yet admire the European thought and value system. After the decolonization movements, the postcolonial nationalist and pan-Arabist tide infused Arabic migrant literature with a sense of pride and self-assertion vis-à-vis Europe only for it to give way, after the defeat in the 1967 war, to “a period of undisguised self-denouncement, coupled with the idealisation of Western culture” that lasted through the 1980s (El-Enany, 2006, p. 6). While Barbro Sellman’s (2013) excellent study of forced migration in Arabic literature shows that as of the 1990s, the discourse in Arabic migrant narratives articulated by Arab refugees and forced migrants markedly shifted away from the dyad to re-imagine the West as a “wilderness,” Hassan (2012) argues that, at least in the tradition of the Arabic immigrant novel in the US and the UK, Arab immigrant writers are all burdened by “the existential fact of being immigrants [...] whose relationship to their readers is mediated by the dominant discourse of orientalism that defines them” (p. 7); as a consequence, Orientalism, with its imageries and tropes, remains “the reigning episteme within which that literature is produced” and to which it responds. El-Enany’s (2006) investigation of several Arabic immigrant novels gives Hassan credence by showing that through the 1990s, Orientalism and the West/Center vs. East/margin dyad continued to impinge, albeit in divergent ways, on immigrant narratives mainly by women writers, chief among them Hanan al-Shaykh (p. 185). It should come as no surprise then that *Innahā Lundun* articulates several discourses, both general and gendered, some of which are oppositional, but that are all, in one way or another a response to Orientalism.

3.2.2 Interdiscursivity: Discourses.

3.2.2.1 Self-orientalizing.

The main general discourse in the novel is orientalist discourse whereby London/UK and its people are a refuge and saviours, respectively, and the Arab/East are a homogeneous entity that is non-tolerant and sometimes violent. The reification of the Arab/East as homogeneous is textually realized through lexical choices signifying the “groupness” and “togetherness” of this reified “Arab.” Accordingly, the immigrant characters are not primarily British immigrants from Morocco, Iraq or Egypt. Nor are they Moroccan, Iraqi, Lebanese or Egyptian. They are primarily “Arab.” Also, when the narrator tells the readers about Lamis’ gynaecologist, she informs us that: “he pulled an Arab boy from inside her” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 28), and that an “Arab friend” of hers found in him a refuge. When Lamis is on a flight bound to Oman, the narrator speaks of “the Arab lands,” not of Oman or of an “Arab country.”

As to the non-tolerance and violence of this homogeneous entity as opposed to the tolerance of England and the English, it is textually realized through “structural oppositions.” Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 39) maintain, indeed, that words do not signify only on their own but as “part of a network of meanings.” This allows for the creation of structural oppositions in texts, such as between values of good/bad, often by association and without necessarily overtly stating the opposition. Thus, in Lebanon, Samir was so persecuted as an adolescent for his sexual orientation that he attempted suicide. His parents put him away in “the hospital of the mad people” for three years (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 219). His aunt would beat him up and enjoin him to “walk like a statue” before she eventually married him off to a woman to set him straight (p. 135). In contrast, Mrs. Cunningham, the “extremely sweet and kind” English Lady from the British Embassy in Beirut (p. 255), was “the only person” to show him any kindness as “she sent him with her driver to the dentist and paid for the treatment. She brought him a new pair of shoes” (p. 245). Ultimately, it is Mrs. Cunningham’s country, England, that allows Samir to form his homosexual subjectivity:

[T]he main reason he loved London was that he was able to do the job he had always wanted, which is to make people laugh. Here, it is as respectable a job as any other, including an engineer, a doctor or a bus driver [...]. The truth is that London is freedom and you can breathe it. You do what you love the most without any need for a war to break out so that people would be too busy to care, and then you can do what you want without guilt or shame, without having to lead a double life that either frustrates you or drives you crazy. (p. 218)

In Nahed's Egypt, domestic animals are so starved and cruelly treated that Stanley, Nahed's English husband, is shocked to the point where he starts heaping insults on Nahed and her country: "look, look... you can see its ribs. You are beasts" (p. 327). In contrast, pets are well taken care of in London: "even dogs here have identity documents and health files and their names are all registered on the computer" (p. 368). Likewise, in Amira's Morocco, she was wished a boy at birth, brutalized by her mother as a child, and sexually abused by her aunt's husband. When, as a result, she thought of suicide and was heading to the rocks to commit it, it was an English female tourist who saved her by the mere act of asking her for directions and then thanking her: "I thought, how kind London is; and how very polite! Then I changed my mind about suicide and instead, I had an idea that changed my destination." That idea was immigration to London (p. 249). Lamis' Iraq does not fare any better in al-Shaykh's narrative. Indeed, her father was never allowed to play or learn music because of very strict upbringing. And once again, it was Lady Drower, probably the British anthropologist that studied the Marshes, who happened to give him and his peers toys and hats, something he still remembers fondly (p. 344). It so happens that it was also to a teacher sent by the United Nations to the Marshes that Lamis' father owes the education he had, since it was thanks to his encouragement that his father accepted to send him to school in Najaf (p. 341). Once in Najaf, however, Lamis' father was still not allowed to play the lute and had to wait until the call for prayer to play it so that the sound of his music would not be heard (p. 184). In fact, intolerance of music and art in Najaf takes caricatural proportions in the novel with little birds being chased away for daring to sing (p. 341). In contrast, the English people revel in and appreciate arts to the point where the English audience in a theatre respond deeply to the drama playing on stage when Lamis could not (p. 265).

The novel draws, albeit minimally, on another general discourse that is in stark contradiction to the previous one, namely that of the Arabs as not radically different from the

English people. Towards the end of the novel, Lamis meets her boyfriend Nicholas at the entrance of the theatre. As they consult their wristwatches at the same time, she notices an old Englishman watching them indiscreetly and smiling at their synchronized movement. She comments to Nicholas: “Only the old English people are like Arabs” (p. 264). On the second and last occasion in the narrative, when Lamis asks for permission to go up the BT tower to watch London from above, and is met with refusal, she muses: “how can I be English when I still have an Arab mentality? An English officer cannot possibly think: ‘I will allow this non-English woman to go up the tower because she called a dozen times” (p. 392). The BT officer, however, soon contacts Lamis and informs her that she will be allowed to go up the tower because they appreciated her keen interest (p. 392). As a consequence, Lamis concludes: “The English people are like the Arabs, then. They find holes in their laws when they want to!” (p. 392). While it is true that the traits that Lamis perceives as common in both the “Arabs” and the English are negative ones, namely indiscreetness and violation of laws, her identification of such common traits could very well be seen as a discursive attempt to show that the Arab difference is not an unbridgeable one.

The last conspicuous general discourse in the novel is a religious one, that of the existence of “Islams of their own,” to borrow Hafez’ (2011) concept. Hafez applies this concept to “Islamic women activists” within the Egyptian Islamic private voluntary organization, *al-Hilal*, to summarize how these women go through on-going and complex processes of becoming where desire and subjectivity, “always incomplete, fragmented, often contradictory, and unstable” (Hafez, 2011, p. 4), are formed through the imbrication of secular values in the subject’s understanding of religion and piety. While Hafez’ stated objective is “to enable an understanding of the heterogeneity of desire and subjectivity that embedded discourses of religion and secularism make possible, in scholarship on Islamic movements, translational feminism, religion and religious activism” (Hafez, 2011, p. 4), she also manages to bring out the heterogeneities within Islam as performed and lived. In *Innahā Lundun*, al-Shaykh seems to be doing the same through the characters of Amira and Samir. These characters, one being a prostitute and the other a gay man, lead a life that monotheist religions and believers deem unreligious. From the responses that al-Shaykh received from her English readers, as we shall see below, these characters also represent individuals that many in

Western countries believe are not only persecuted but killed in Arab-Muslim countries. al-Shaykh, however, challenges these two worldviews through a discourse of Islam as lending itself to multiple, heterogeneous interpretations. She thus portrays the prostitute and the gay as going through constant processes of becoming where Islam as they understand it is embedded in their daily practices. Textually, this is realized through the ubiquitous use by these two characters of religious formulas and expressions, such as /Allah yastur/ [may God help us]; /bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm/ [in the name of God the Merciful]; /law mā ‘ayn Allah ‘alay/ [if it weren’t for God’s protection].... It is also realized through dialogues between these two characters and God, where they express sometimes fear of punishment, but mostly love for God and trust in God’s love for them even as they prepare to sin. Islam, for them, seems to mean love and forgiveness rather than rigid notions of piety and punishment in the hereafter.

3.2.2.2 A Woman author caught in a double bind.

The other main discourses are gendered and they are directly related to the overarching general discourse above. The first one is an Orientalist/colonialist discourse where the relationship between Arab East and English West is conceived of through “sexist blinders,” much like nineteenth century Orientalist literature in Europe did (Said, 1978). Indeed, Said (1978) affirms that Orientalism “encouraged a peculiarly [...] male conception of the world,” where the Orient was not only constructed as passive, supine and feminine waiting to be taken by the virile, masculine West (p. 138), but was also associated with sex (p. 188). It suggested “sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, [and] unlimited desire” (p. 188). Twentieth century Arab immigrant narratives will reproduce this sexualisation of the East/West either “by conformity, variation or downright reversal,” as El-Enany’s study shows (2006, p. 13).

Innahā Lundun is no exception. It both feminizes the Arab East and sexualizes the Arab/West encounter. The Arab characters are thus either female, homosexual, or, if they define themselves as men, symbolically castrated (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 186). These feminine/feminized characters all look, and indeed beg, for sexual satisfaction by Western males. When Lamis, for instance, goes to Nicholas’ apartment for the first time, she is hoping to be taken by him. When Nicholas initially does not show any inclination to have a sexual

relationship, she feels disappointed, engages him and when she notices he was aroused, she “held him from his leg. She smiled to him and leaned towards him and put her mouth on his” (p. 152). Finally, “[w]hen he penetrated her, she thanked God that she was normal” (p. 153; my translation), even as there was no satisfaction in the act for her since her body was unable to feel anything (p. 154). Even Amira, who only ever sells sex to rich Arabs, wishes that Nicholas would take her on the very first time he comes to visit her. When he does not notice how attracted she is to him, she tries to sexually assault him much to his shock and dismay, and he pushes her away (p. 74). Amira explains her assault by invoking cultural repression: “no matter how much they try to cage me, they will never imprison what I have in my body. I am a human being before I am Arab. [...] I let myself act freely and assault you. For I know that even if I throw myself at you, you will not blame me; you will even justify my action” (p. 74; my translation). With yet another structural opposition whereby an unnamed but inferred collective and homogeneous “them” is repressive of its women and their bodies, whereas England and the English are understanding and tolerant of their agency, al-Shaykh seems to be subscribing to a sexual politics of colonialist discourse where women from Arab/Eastern countries are cast either as metaphors for virgin territories ripe for colonization or as “sexually hungry subalterns” (Shohat, 2006, p. 42), literally assaulting the (desired) white man. This politics is, indeed, made blatant through lexical choices, qualifiers and evaluative adjectives. Nicholas, for instance, is so horrified when he enters the bedroom and finds Lamis masturbating just minutes after he refused to have sex with her, that when she smiles at him while continuing to masturbate, he yells at her: “Jesus... you’re a sex beast. Stop it, stop it!” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 301; my translation).

Deriving directly from this discourse, the second gendered discourse which al-Shaykh draws on is that of Arab women as both sexually and emotionally fulfilled, and intellectually nurtured by Englishmen. With Nicholas, Lamis feels “confident” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 264), “uninhibited” (p. 186), learns a “lot of information and stories” from him (p. 274), and finally reaches a “long climax” and is “forever” cured from her failure to get aroused (p. 188).

In direct opposition to these two discourses, is a third gendered one, that of Arab women as active agents and self-empowered subjects who do not need to be rescued. Textually, al-

Shaykh realizes this agency through transitivity. Amira and Lamis are thus generally the grammatical subjects of material process verbs, such as /taḍa‘u/ [she puts]; /ta’khuḍhu/ [she takes]; /takhla‘u/ [she removes]... They are, therefore, the semantic doers of material actions, even in situations where men are conventionally perceived as the active doers, i.e. in sexual encounters. This discourse is also realized through the very choice of female characters to be the protagonists of an immigrant novel, and consequently at the heart of a bildungsroman journey where both Lamis and Amira undertake a series of actions to make their lives and their immigration experience better. Thus, Lamis is the one who leaves both her marriage and her son, despite the stigma associated with a mother abandoning her children. She does not cave to friends’ and family’s pressure to go back to her husband. She also refuses to cave to Nicholas’ insistence on getting married when she felt she was still hostage to her past and her fears. It was only after she got a job and went back to school, that she decided it was time to commit to Nicholas. Likewise, Amira’s character conjures up some of the *One Thousand and One Nights*’ images, as she is capable of conning not only the Gulf men but also the Interpol. She is clever, witty, and extremely resourceful. Accordingly, she successfully plays the princess by cleverly investing some of the money she makes in:

The Rolls Royce, Samir, the maids of honour, the restaurants, the afternoon tea, the tips to informants working at hotels, casinos, airlines, banks and cabarets, and hotels’ hairdressers who brought her the names of the female customers going to their salons. She also followed the names of princes and Sheikhs in the Arabic newspapers and weekly magazines published in London. (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 246; my translation)

The last main gendered discourse in the novel is that of Arab men as not essentially violent, and this is realized through inclusions in and exclusions from the acts of violence depicted in the novel. It is thus the aunt who would beat Samir, and the mother who forced Lamis to marry a much older man much to Lamis’ father’s disapproval and incapacity to oppose his wife. It is again the mother who lashes out at Lamis for divorcing, while her father shows her sympathy and understanding. It is also Amira’s mother who brutalized her when she was a child. More important, Amira was never battered by any of her Arab customers, and when it finally happened after an offended prince wanted to give her a lesson so she would stop impersonating a princess from his family, Amira is surprised because all the Arab men to whom she sold her body “left their authority at the door [...] that is why she was never able to

understand why the European prostitutes were victim to violence nor why they relied on an English pimp instead of finding Arab customers” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 380).

In sum, al-Shaykh draws on extremely conflicting, sometimes mutually exclusive, discourses, which reflect the heterogeneity of discourses on women and men, and on Arab/West encounters, as experienced and perceived by al-Shaykh both in her Arab and English worlds. This discursive heterogeneity, much like the deployment of the realist novel genre by al-Shaykh, also reveals a deep tension between the imperative of catering to her English audience’s expectations and the representational burden both incumbent on and expected from her. Nevertheless, while these discourses clearly compete in al-Shaykh’s narrative for control over the social order, the general discourse of the West as the refuge vs. the Arab East as non-tolerant and violent seems to frame the whole narrative and to be generally hegemonic, thereby reflecting the hegemonic social order, that where the power balance is steeply tipped towards the West.

3.2.3 Intertextuality.

Unlike Mosteghanemi, al-Shaykh does not strive to create any literary filiation, whether European or (especially) Arabic, for her novel. As a consequence, the reader will not find much by way of quotes, either direct or indirect, to any writers, philosophers or thinkers. What she will find, instead, is a lot of references to writers such as Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde and Shakespeare, not so much as literary figures than as identity markers that bring out the author’s acculturation and hybrid identity. She will also find references to Orientalists, like T.E Lawrence and Burton, in addition to an abundance of references to cultural artefacts, mostly English, including Lord Leighton’s House and its content, but also Arab and Indian, including a gazelle statue in a Moorish Castle and antique daggers. While such references serve the plot inasmuch as Nicholas is an antique expert working for Sotheby’s and an Omani collector of Islamic daggers, they also enhance the Orientalist discourse shaping the narrative and add a sense of exoticism to it.

al-Shaykh also extensively references English media products like TV shows, ads and songs, alongside Arabic songs, including by Egyptian iconic singer Um Kalthum and

Lebanese singer Sabah. In so doing, she anchors her identity in both cultures, thereby highlighting her hybrid identity. Moreover, she generally eschews any discursive cushioning for the English references in her Arabic text and does not provide Arabic translations for several of her English expressions and phrases. While one can arguably attribute this to the fact that she is primarily addressing her English audience, it can also be reasonably argued that al-Shaykh assumes that her Arab readers do not need any cushioning or translation as they are already familiar with most, if not all, the foreign references. In so doing, she is constructing an identity for her Arab readers as cosmopolitan or, at least, as open to and receptive of English culture.

On the other hand, there is a quasi absence of any political voice in al-Shaykh's immigrant narrative even as it touches on a very political matter, that of a diaspora minority in England at a juncture where the debate surrounding issues of multiculturalism, migration and public policy was increasingly raging. In fact, al-Shaykh seems to be still conforming to Myriam Cooke's criterion for being a decentrist woman writer from an Arab country: that of producing an apolitical text confined to the "dailiness of life." As a consequence, and while al-Shaykh's narrator does make references to the situation in Iraq or to the civil war in Lebanon, these references are always vague and cursory with no dates or clarifying details. When the narrator tells of how, during the war, homosexuals in Lebanon have sex in parking lots and roadblocks, there is never any sense of time nor of who is fighting who or what war that was exactly. Similarly, when the narrator tells us how Lamis' childhood female friends who remained in Iraq must now be hungry and miserable, there is no sense of why, how or of whether the decade-long stringent sanctions imposed on Iraq and the American air strikes in the years following the 1991 Gulf war, played any role in this hunger and poverty. When a friend of Nicholas expresses her discontent with Iraqis leaving Iraq, Lamis "shuts her up" by telling her how the members of her extended family were "exterminated by Saddam's planes," while they were waiting for "American rescue" (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 236). And again, at no point is the reader told when or where this extermination happened, especially considering the fact that since 1991, the UK, the US and France enforced the no-fly policy in Iraq whereby Saddam could not fly any planes over the Kurdish north and Shiite South where Lamis' Shiite family is supposed to come from.

This has two implications for the novel. Firstly, the absence of a political voice that can shed nuanced light on the references to political events creates an overall effect that the situation in Arab countries is naturally precarious and violent, especially for its minorities, including women and homosexuals. Not only does this effect reinforce the frame-discourse in the novel, but it also feeds directly into the neo-colonialist narrative about the necessity of intervening in Arab countries to save their minorities. It also brings out the extent to which al-Shaykh's assumptions about her English audience as not being interested in Arab political issues, but only in interesting stories about Arabs, shape her discursive strategies. Second, the absence of such a voice reduces the dialogism of the novel to the benefit of its frame-discourse, and therefore its subversive potential as a minor literature.

3.2.4 Reception.

To talk about the reception of *Innahā Lundun* in its source context is to face again the problem of classification that this novel creates since the source here is unclear: is it the English context where the story is set and for whose audience the novel speaks, albeit through a process of translation? Or is it the Lebanese context where it was published in what was marketed as the source language? But since the reception of this novel in the Anglo-American and French contexts will be discussed at length in Chapter V, the present section will be limited to discussing *Innahā Lundun*'s reception in the Arab countries.

Innahā Lundun received reactions that range from virulent criticism to high praise. Samir al-Youssef (2001), for instance, finds the novel disappointing given the author's status and the promise articulated in the title of exploring the critical East/West relationship issue. He argues, indeed, that the plot is not well conceived because al-Shaykh fails to come up with a "cohesive narrative structure" that explains the relationship between the three lead characters. In fact, al-Youssef questions the very presence of the character of Samir in the novel since the plot does not explain how he manages to become a resident in London nor does it provide enough insight into his past and his family ties. Al-Youssef (2001) concludes that apparently al-Shaykh's "main objective is to narrate or tell what can make [the reader] laugh" (my translation), but because of a "weak" literary language, the narrative hardly comes

out as comical (2001). As a consequence, this novel is like a “bag full of tales, but in need of the hands of an expert to weed the bad tales out and reformulate the good ones” (al-Youssef, 2001; my translation). In stark contrast, Umayma al-Khamis (2002) thinks that the novel is a milestone in Hanan al-Shaykh’s literary career, since in it, the author “overcame all the weaknesses and imperfections present in her previous works” (my translation). Unlike al-Shaykh’s novel *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, which presented an underdeveloped plot relying on “tales and women’s rumors,” as on “the dominant stereotypical image of the Gulf [region]” (al-Khamis, 2002; my translation) to the point of yielding a “crude [novel], resembling the details of the *One Thousand and One Nights*,” *Innahā Lundun* showcases al-Shaykh’s professionalism and creativity as it portrays “vivid characters exuding life, pain and nostalgia to the home country.”

While these two critics differ widely in their evaluation of *Innahā Lundun*, they both seem to agree that al-Shaykh’s works generally suffer from literary and artistic weakness, which could explain why al-Shaykh never achieved the kind of institutional recognition and canonization that several other women writers have achieved, including Ahlem Mosteghanemi, Alia Mamdouh, Huda Barakāt and Saḥar Khalīfah, for instance, who have all been awarded the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature.

At a more scholarly level, El-Enany (2006) praises al-Shaykh in *Innahā Lundun* for bringing “freshness to this long-established tradition of Arabic fiction [...]. Her characters are real flesh and blood people that can be bumped into among the burgeoning Arab community in London” (p. 200). El-Enany (2006) points out, however, that al-Shaykh’s narrative is very much imbricated in the Orientalist hierarchical binary oppositions between East and West (p. 200), a trait that seems to permeate other works by al-Shaykh, since Dallal (1998) points it out in *Misk al-Ghazāl* (1988; *The deer’s musk*, [Women of Sand and Myrrh, 1989]). But while Dallal (1998) decries it as a form of self-orientalizing and a case of “writing for translation” to cater to existing stereotypes, El-Enany (2006) refrains from outright denouncing the narrative. He argues, indeed, that it is the natural outcome of “the age of Arab defeatism when Arab societies and their ruling regimes have failed in achieving liberty and dignity for their citizens in the post-independence era” (p 200).

The ambivalence characterizing her reception in the Arab countries mirrors the author's own ambivalence in her writings. al-Shaykh navigates indeed the difficult maze where she finds herself as an Arab British woman who translates her culture from within a politically asymmetrical transnational context. She has to strike that hard balance of representing and critiquing her diasporic community without playing to clichés and stereotypes, yet still attract the attention of her Anglo-American readers.

3.3 Innahā Lundun as Text

As it must be already clear by now, the discourses contributing to the make-up of the novel are textualized through various linguistic devices, from lexical suppression and lexical choices, to modality, evaluative adjectives and assumptions. The passage below is an interesting example that lays bare the ideological underpinnings of, or at least influences on, the text. Here, Lamis' father is telling her about his love for music:

My father, may God bless his soul and put him in his wide heavens, prevented me from music. But all that I saw around me was music. How could he forbid me to play music when everything around me was music infused by God in the Marshes? I hear the river's waves and I know it's turned red from the mud, and that it will soon spill out of its banks. I hear the sound of ducks and the croaking of thousands of frogs and the sound of kites and swamphens, and the crying of kids and the barking of dogs. I hear the sound of palm tree leaves bending to drink water by the side of cows. I liked the sound of my little siblings' pee as it touches the water. (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 336; my translation)

Texts do not signify solely by what they include but also by what they exclude. Since the Marshes in Southern Iraq, at the time when Lamis' father was still a child,²⁹ constituted a large wetland ecosystem within the arid region of Mesopotamia, that was known more for its sugar cane trees and rice trees than for palm trees, and for being the stopover for millions of such migratory birds as flamingos and pelicans, then what is excluded from this description of nature's music in the Marshes is not only the laughter of kids, but also the chirping of all sorts of birds and the rustling of (sugar cane) tree leaves under the wind, which are all sounds universally associated with the music of nature. What is also excluded, and since this scene is

²⁹ The marshes started to be drained in the 1960s and 1970s for agricultural reasons, then through the 1980s and 1990s for political reasons, mainly to control its dissident Shiite population.

supposed to be taking place in a Shiite-majority region, is the mnemonic, rhythmic and indeed musical aspect of the call for prayer and the recitation of Quran mentioned in the text before the quoted passage, an exclusion that disassociates the Quran from the universal value of music and maintains its association with rigidity. Equally excluded is the sound of drums “used to accompany dance, song, and poetry” (Ochsenschlager, 2004, p. 91). What is included, in contrast, are the cries of children, the off-putting sound of thousands of frogs, the waves turning the river all muddy, and the sound of children’s pee as it touches the surface of the river. The overall effect is that the Iraqi Marshes is a hostile and strange space where there is no room for laughter, only for cries; no place for the chirping of birds, only for the barking of dogs and the sound of birds of prey (the kite); a frozen and static space where no wind blows to move the tree leaves, and where people are so starved for some music and so unfamiliar with beauty that even the inappropriate and non-poetic image of children peeing in a river is music to their ear.

Exclusions and inclusions as a discursive tool also play towards the depiction of a certain portrait of the diaspora from different Arab countries. As we have seen with Williams above, while realist narratives individuate characters, they also create (knowable) communities and collectivities. This effect is compounded in an immigrant narrative given its representation burden. The community of immigrants and visitors from Arab countries as depicted in *Innahā Lundun* is made almost exclusively of prostitutes, belly dancers and cabaret workers (Amira, Nahed, Bahia, Katkuta and their acquaintances); half educated people, like Lamis and Samir; low wage workers, like Samir who earns his life in London working as a clown and in parking lots; and sexually frustrated oil-rich Gulf men. While these categories of immigrants certainly exist, the narrative excludes other categories that would have given a more nuanced image of these minorities, including highly educated people and tourists from non oil-rich countries coming for regular tourism and not for sex tourism.

Assumption is another discursive tool that is heavily deployed in the text to create co-membership, as in the example below:

She knew the structure of the language, but she found difficulty speaking in it, because language looked to her like a private club exclusively limited to those individuals in

whose minds the language was sown like a seed. How can she mix English history, literature and politics together? And know without asking that the “Scottish play” is *Macbeth* [...] and when David Copperfield sits in front of the chimney, will she feel the heat of fire like the English would as he reads it? (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 229; my translation)

In this passage, al-Shaykh invokes, but does not name, Shakespeare and Charles Dickens not as literary figures to create some literary lineage, but as identity markers. Indeed, by not naming them, al-Shaykh assumes that her readers do not need to be told who wrote *Macbeth*; that they know who David Copperfield is, who created him, and what images the mention of the name might conjure up. In so doing, she is, in fact, creating a co-membership first with the English readers even as she is questioning her character’s integration in and belonging to the English culture, and second with like-minded members of her Arabic reading public. As a consequence, she is also creating and highlighting her identity and that of her Arab readers as hybrid and English acculturated.

3.4 *Innahā Lundun* as Social Practice

To talk about Arab British people is to talk about a collective category that cuts across numerous confessions, but where the common denominators of culture, language and history override religion and political considerations. According to El-Solh (1992), this collective consciousness gets activated during times of crisis, like the 1991 Gulf War, for instance, when Arabs from across the geographical, economic and political spectrum, including Somali refugees who “tend to be the most ambivalent about their African versus Arab identities,” responded “in similar ways to what they perceived to be a double standard fuelling this war” (p. 243). This consciousness, El-Solh (1992) argues, is also activated and further fed around particular historical events that see an upsurge in the alienating and reifying discourses on Arabs in British media, especially the tabloid. El-Solh (1992), however, is quick to point out that the existence/activation of such collectivity should not obscure nor collapse the many differences within the Arab communities in Britain (p. 243). Even when there exists a pattern of horizontal ties that cut across national origins, these ties are still “regionally bounded” in that middle- or upper middle-class Moroccans and Algerians generally evolve within their own social network separate from middle- and upper middle-class Egyptians and Middle-

easterners (p. 243). Indeed, these cleavages stem from a combination of factors ranging from socio-economic status, national and geographical origin, dialects, gender differences and the very immigration and settlement experience of these Arabs in Britain.

According to Jalili (2004), the presence of Arabs in the UK goes as far back as the Romans when they brought Arab archers who settled in what is now South Shields (p. 1). The most thoroughly documented historical accounts, however, trace the presence of significant Arab communities in Britain back to the nineteenth century. As the British Empire expanded, so did its economy, especially after the annexation of the Port of Eden in 1839, and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1860. Consequently, increasing numbers of merchants from Arab regions flocked to Britain's economic and industrial centers, especially Cottonopolis or Manchester, where they settled as traders as early as the 1830s (Ansari, 2004, p. 34). By the end of the nineteenth century, there were several dozens 'Arab' trade houses, "including some from what later became Syria as well as merchants with their families from the Moroccan city of Fez" (Ansari, 2004, p. 34). The second significant category of immigrants from Arab origins that settled in Britain were the Yemenite lascars: seafarers who were recruited by British merchant ships for their low wages, and who also ended up settled in Britain (pp. 34-41). While the number of the first category of immigrants plummeted after the WWI for obvious economic reasons, the numbers of Arab lascars working with British ships increased during the war because of increased need in seamen. After the war, however, Britain was left with an ailing economy, a surplus of lascars, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, competing with demobilized soldiers over jobs, and growing (violent) intolerance for and suspicion of these aliens, especially the Arabs (p. 41). This problem was solved by the adoption of the Alien Restriction Bill in 1919, whereby Arabs and other "aliens" were sacked from their jobs and some repatriated. In 1920, the Aliens Order was adopted "to penalize underdocumented Arab seamen and by the autumn of 1921 hundreds had been deported" (p. 43). As a consequence, the number of "Arabs and Somalis out of work, estimated by the police at 600 in 1919, rose to 2,000 by 1930. By the summer 1930 many Arabs in British ports were virtually starving" (p. 43).

Under these circumstances, migration from Arab countries almost came to a halt and only started picking up towards the 1950s with a flow of dispossessed Palestinians, first. After the Free Officers revolution in Egypt in 1952, and a series of socialist measures, including to end feudalism, and a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood by Gamal Abdel Nasser's secular government, Egyptians, mostly belonging to both aristocracy and to the Muslim Brotherhood, would follow suit and immigrate to Europe, including Britain. The subsequent 1973 Israeli-Arab war, the oil crisis and the ensuing emergence of rich elites, in addition to political instability in many Arab countries, are all circumstances that "encouraged an Arab brain drain as well as a flight of the Arab capital in search of investment opportunities in the West, including Britain" (El-Solh, 1992, p. 241). In fact, political instability was "a major reason for Arab immigration, bringing in the decades spanning 1960s to the 1990s, Iraqis, Egyptians, Sudanese, Algerians, Somalis and some Gulf Arabs" (Jalili, 2004, p. 1). On the other hand, while Arab ex-colonies were never members of the Commonwealth, which deprived Arabs citizens from the automatic right to settle in Britain, this exclusion would prove to have facilitated another kind of Arab migration to Britain. Nagel (2001) explains that while Britain was targeting New Commonwealth immigrants by "increasingly harsh restrictions on unskilled labour migration in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s," it welcomed skilled and student migration from Arab countries (p. 387). Consequently, "thousands of Arab students, professionals and exiles [...] were able to settle and attain British citizenship with relative ease" (Nagel, 2001, p. 387), just as many Arab financial institutions and media companies were readily welcomed.

As a result of this skill-based, non-colonial type of immigration, the Arab population in Britain is "disproportionately represented in higher educational and employment categories and in upper-middle-class residential areas" (p. 388). Like all stories, however, this migration success story hides another one: the story of the othering of Arabs in Britain's racial system. Spencer (1997/2002) argues that while its colonial history and the requirements of economic expansion turned Britain into a migration destination for Asian, West African and Caribbean communities, this transformation from an all-white society into a multi-racial one was "not welcome at any stage" (p. xiv). As a consequence, Britain legislated several laws through the 1970s to restrict immigration, including the 1971 Immigration Act that withdrew the right for

Commonwealth citizens to enter and settle in Britain. Underpinning such policies was a consensus among policy-makers that while minorities should be treated equally in British society, their numbers should be firmly controlled as a “prerequisite of good race relations” (Spencer, 1998, p. 74), insofar as this would also curb the growing hostility towards minorities by some white people feeling threatened, or “swamped” by aliens as Margaret Thatcher put it, in their own country. With the rise of a nationalist rhetoric and the introduction of the racist discourse into politics by Thatcher, and the National Front before her, many voices rose to counter nationalism and racism in British society with such concepts as multiculturalism and anti-racism.

However, in these debates about multiculturalism and racism, as well as in the policies regulating immigration, the one minority that has been largely left out was the British Arabs. The exclusion extended from public policy and political discourse to academia. For instance, in his book-length study of “British immigration policy since 1939” referenced above, Ian Spencer (1997/2002) barely touches on immigrants from Arab countries, and focuses almost exclusively on Caribbean, Asian and African minorities. But this exclusion is no more glaring than in the 1991 census. The latter, the first of its kind to include questions about race and ethnicity in Britain, did not include a category for Arabs. While Arab immigrants were estimated at 200,000 in 1991, that is more than the estimated members of the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities who did have census categories in 1991, they were forced to scatter themselves in categories ranging from white and black to “other.” As to British-born Arabs, they remained completely invisible in the census. According to Nagel (2001), underpinning this exclusion from the census as well as public policy is a public discourse that “portrays Arabs as an Other, but Arabs are not part of an officially designated Other. They are instead, as the census reveals, the ‘other-Other’- foreigners rather than minorities who fit uneasily into the system of racial categories and identities” established in Britain over the last decades (p. 389). In other words, British Arabs remain invisible until the ebb and flow of political relations between Britain and Arab countries, like the 1973 oil-crisis, and geopolitical events, like the 1991 Gulf war, the 2001 terrorist attacks, the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the London 77 bombings, bring them to visibility, in which case it is a reifying, homogenizing light that is shed on them.

Arabs continue, therefore, to be depicted in mainstream media and public discourse as “the Other, with a host of new images – the oil sheikh, the playboy, the terrorist, and the submissive woman- superimposed on the old images of the shifty merchant, the pasha, and the harem girl” (Nagel, 2001, p. 388). In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war, for instance, British tabloid press portrayed Arabs as “closet Saddamists,” while such political figures as Robert Kilroy-Silk called the Arabs as “suicide bombers,” “limb amputators” and “women oppressors,” after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. While the discontinuation by the BBC of Kilroy-Silk’s talk show in the aftermath of his declarations reveals, according to Bodi (2004), an increase in the number of British Arab organizations active against discrimination and racism, this community continues to remain invisible in both academia and public policy since little is done to shed light on it, on the commonalities and cleavages characterizing it and on the variegated experiences of its members. Thus, in 1992, El-Solh pointed out that much of the knowledge available on British Arab communities was derived from “media reports” and “the voluntary sector,” or based on “anecdotal evidence” or “gleaned from sociological books on race and ethnicity in which Arabs are for the most part incidentally mentioned” (p. 237). More than a decade later, the 2009 report of the Atlantic Forum on British Arabs states that most of the information it used about British Arabs was “anecdotal in nature or based on small-scale research” due to the dearth of significant studies of these communities (p. 7).

It is in this context of invisibility, of lack of knowledge about the British Arabs, and therefore of a perception of Arabs moored in lingering orientalist and colonialist discourses that al-Shaykh’s *Innahā Lundun* is set. In such a context, al-Shaykh’s text is bound to be imbued with an anthropological/documentary dimension that she does not necessarily want it to have. Indeed, while her Arab readers criticized her for choosing a “prostitute,” “a gay” and a “divorcee” to represent British Arab communities that, as we have seen above, are very diverse but generally highly educated and well-adjusted, her English audience similarly took the novel as if it was meant to be a transparent representation of the reality not of British Arabs in Britain but of the “Arab world.” They wrote to tell her “[w]e never knew there were prostitutes in the Arab world. It’s good they come here so they can become prostitutes. We’re happy the gay man is here so he isn’t killed in the Arab world” (al-Shaykh interviewed by Ball, 2011, p. 65). al-Shaykh’s response to this interpretation of her novel as a (transparent)

representation of reality is equivocal. To her Arab readers, she replied that *Innahā Lundun* and its characters are not to be taken as representative of the Arab world. “Shame on you,” she (p. 65) told them, “we’re not in Stalin’s era; you cannot tell a writer what to write. I can choose my characters; I’m not the spokeswoman of the Arab world and I write whatever I want.” But when, during a tour in the US, an American professor confessed to her that while she loved her work, she does not “dare teach it” because “I love the Arab world, I don’t want to give my students bad ideas about it,” al-Shaykh’s response was that she was indeed only depicting the reality of this “Arab world”: “I looked at her, not believing what I heard – that she didn’t want to show that conflicts between men and women, and oppression or taboo subjects exist. I mean, this is the society we live in, and I draw my characters from society” (p. 65).

In other words, al-Shaykh at once rejects and assumes the role of the spokeswoman, the representative of the Arab world, just as she is at once wary of being pigeonholed as a writer, yet appreciative of the privileges that come from it. In answer to how she responds to being branded at times as a feminist and at others as the spokesperson for Arabs in the West, she explains:

I understand why, in a way, they have to pigeonhole me. Sometimes I get tired of that- I wish I could be only a novelist, but it’s fine – I also gain from all these adjectives that go side by side with my name, because I become different from other writers- and people have more curiosity towards my writing (al-Shaykh, interviewed by Ball, 2011: 63).

It is this same ambivalence, reaching sometimes a point of contradiction, that transpires in the novel itself. As a social practice within the context delineated above, and through its discursive heterogeneities and the choice of realist aesthetics to achieve decentering objectives that have come to be associated with postmodernist strategies, *Innahā Lundun* is doubly contrapuntal, to borrow Said’s concept as applied by Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001) on Said himself. It is contrapuntal insofar as it constructs for al-Shaykh a hybrid identity that “involves a continual dialogue between the different and sometimes apparently contradictory dimensions of [her] worldliness” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 92) as a subject negotiating two languages, two different cultures and two different worldviews. It is also contrapuntal insofar as it emerges as a site of conflict and tension where the author negotiates two contradictory

objectives, i.e. bringing the British Arab communities into visibility and dispelling the preconceived ideas she assumes her Western readers have of them, all while playing to these readers' (assumed) expectations; just as she negotiates two mutually exclusive agencies, i.e. her very own agency as a minority woman writer who wishes to write herself and her community without being pigeonholed as the expert on all matters pertaining to her culture of origin, and the agency of her Western readers, be they feminist scholars or lay audience, bringing their own horizon of expectations to bear on what texts to read, what to read in them and how to translate them.

3.5 An Immigrant Woman's Grammar of Resistance in Translation

Innahā Lundun's English translation appeared in 2001, by Bloomsbury in the UK and Pantheon Books in the US, both big commercial publishing houses, while its French translation, *Londres mon amour*, followed in 2002 by Actes sud. In English, it was translated by literary translator and Arabic literature scholar Catherine Cobham. Cobham specializes in modern Arabic literature, specifically twentieth century Iraqi fiction. She teaches at St-Andrews University and has translated several other novels by Hanan al-Shaykh, including the much studied and talked about *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, and by such iconic Arab authors as Naguib Mahfouz, Yusuf Idriss and poet Mahmoud Darwish. In French, the novel was translated by literary translator and Arabic literature scholar Rania Samara. Like Cobham, she teaches Arabic literature at Damascus University and L'Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III, and has already translated works by such writers as Naguib Mahfouz, Sa'dallah Wannūs and Eliās Khūrī.

A first cursory look at both translations reveals a few particularities in the English translation. First, al-Shaykh blurs the lines between original and translation by including in the English version of *Innahā Lundun* original peritextual elements that are neither in the Arabic original nor in the French translation. These are Permissions, Acknowledgments and Dedication. The Permissions page, which might be less of a choice by the author than a legal requirement due to specific legal and editorial practices in the Anglo-American publishing

industry, lists the permissions obtained for the English songs used in the narrative. In the Acknowledgments page, al-Shaykh starts by extending her thanks to feminist writer Marsha Rowe, to now late American photojournalist and close friend Eve Arnold, and to publisher and writer Carmen Callil, all three very famous figures in the publishing industry in the Anglo-American context. According to Genette (1997), the main function of paratextual elements, including the peritext, is not only to surround the text and extend it, but precisely “to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form [...] of a book” (p. 1; emphasis in the original). By including acknowledgments to such figures in the English translation of her novel, al-Shaykh is making her book “present” in the British literary system and ensuring its consumption as British literature, albeit in translation. She is also replacing herself as a writer within this system by bringing out the British literary network within which she evolves. But al-Shaykh also extends her acknowledgments to “Leighton House, The British Library- particularly the Oriental and India Office Collections for letting me handle rare manuscripts- and to British Telecom for taking me up the BT tower.” These are all real places that fictional Lamis visited during her journey, which both imbues her narrative with a stronger sense of realism and firmly places it within the genre of immigrant novel.

As to the dedications page, it names the author’s children, Tariq and Juman Maaluf, in addition to the city of London. Genette (1997) argues that “dedicating a work is a public act that the reader is, as it were, called on to witness” (p. 134). By dedicating a novel about London to both London and her family, al-Shaykh seems to be equally alerting her English readers to her hybrid identity, to her belonging to Britain despite her and her children’s difference. Most importantly, Genette (1997) contends that “the canonical time for the dedication to appear is obviously the original edition” (p. 127). By putting the Dedication, along with the acknowledgments in the English edition, al-Shaykh invites the question as to which is her primary audience, and complicates even further the classification of her novel and the notion of original as authentic and authoritative and translation as secondary.

Moreover, and although the English text is clearly presented as a translation, its classification becomes even more problematic in light of the history of the translation. Talking of her experience in translating *Innahā Lundun*, Cobham reveals indeed:

As I remember, *Innahā Lundun* had a slightly strange publishing history. I worked from the Arabic of an unpublished typescript. When the English publishers saw the English translation draft (not being able to read the Arabic of course), they had a number of queries and suggested some changes – e.g. the introduction of the prologue was entirely their idea, and they also suggested several other small changes to explain things to the English readership which they thought would be confusing to them (e-mail communication, June 28, 2012).

The publishers also requested the deletion of “several sections [...] as they were extraneous to the main action of the novel in their view” (e-mail communication, June 28, 2012). Cobham further reveals that the publishers “were discussing the editing issues with Hanan rather than with me, and I was only called back to translate new small additions to the Arabic when relevant” (e-mail communication, June 28, 2012). Since the prologue is present in the Arabic original, and since Cobham was called on to translate “new small additions to the Arabic,” it is safe to conclude that al-Shaykh accepted to substantially change her unpublished original to accommodate the English publishers and align the Arabic version with the English one. As to Cobham, she asserts that she “reversed quite a few of the editor’s decisions, but not all” (e-mail communication, June 28, 2012). Comparing the Arabic version to both the French and English translations will reveal the textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that took place in the translations and the extent to which the Arabic was further refracted in the process.

In light of Cobham’s account, however, while she is technically and officially the sole translator of the novel, the agency behind the discursive decisions made during the translation is far from clear, or at least not as clear as in the case of Meyer’s translation of *Fawḍā*, for instance. As a consequence, it is necessary to precise that “the English translator,” as referred to in the analysis below, designates more the agency behind the translating act than Cobham per se.

3.5.1 The ideology of realism.

Unsurprisingly, analysis reveals that it is in the English translation that the ST gets the most deeply refracted. The most astounding and most recurring textural shifts that occur in the English TT belong to a category of changes that van Dijk (1988, p. 117) calls “local transformations,” namely additions and deletions. Talking about local transformations that occur during the processing of news source texts, van Dijk (1988, p. 117) defines addition as the act of inserting “relevant details from other source texts or from previous models and general knowledge of the reporter. Often, additions are used to provide blither information about previous events, context, or historical background.” Deletions, on the other hand, are a “first and strategically efficient move” that may be brought about either by external physical factors, such as space or legal limitations, or by internal conditions. These involve “decisions about the relative irrelevance of details or details that are not consistent with the models, scripts, or attitudes” of text producers or of those of the readers as assumed by text producers (p. 117). These are, therefore, shifts that change the ideational meaning of a source text. In the English translation under investigation here, additions have the semiotic effect of enhancing the novel’s formal realism. In Example 1 below, for instance, the English translator adds more details to the description of the character of Amira.

Example 1:

اتساع وجهها وتبرجه، والنظارات الطبية الكبيرة ذات الإطار الذهبي تحيط بعينيها، وأحمر شفاهها الفاقع، كل هذا جعلها تبدو وكأنها رفراف سيارة أولدموبيل قديمة. (p. 5)

GT: The broadness of her face, the make-up, the gold-rimmed big spectacles and the bright red lipstick all made her look like the bumper of an old Oldsmobile.

ETT: And her broad face resembled the bumper of an antique Oldsmobile, with its heavy make-up and big gold-rimmed spectacles, and her light brown, shoulder-length hair, teased to make it look fuller. (p. 1)

FTT: La largeur de son visage, son maquillage, les grandes montures dorées de ses lunettes, son rouge à lèvres outrancier lui donnent l’air d’une vieille Oldsmobile. (p. 9)

The local transformation in this example has the effect of enhancing the particularization of a main character for the ETT reader. Addition in Example 2, however, is of a different nature and has different effects.

Example 2:

تبدل أميرة لهجتها المغربية إلى لهجة مصرية تستأنس بها، وتجعلها تشعر أن الحياة كلها لعب ومزاح. (p. 54)

GT: Amira replaces her Moroccan dialect with the Egyptian dialect that she likes and which makes her feel that life is but play and fun.

ETT: ... said Amira, switching her Moroccan accent to an Egyptian one. Ever since she'd watched Egyptian films as a child, with their crafty and coy and glamorous film stars, she'd felt that life with an Egyptian accent would be definitely more fun. (p. 35)

FTT: Amira troque son accent marocain pour l'accent égyptien qu'elle préfère et qui lui donne l'impression que la vie consiste en divertissements et en plaisanteries. (p. 46)

The passage where the sentence is taken from describes an encounter between Amira and a few of her friends, including Egyptian Nahed. The author clearly assumes that her readers do not need an explanation of how Amira, a Moroccan woman, not only speaks but also likes the Egyptian dialect. This assumption clearly establishes what Fairclough calls "a common ground" insofar as it creates a collectivity of Arab readers from different countries that all understand and can speak the Egyptian dialect. The French translator chooses to keep this assumption in the French text. In so doing, she lets the French readers infer that while the Egyptian and Moroccan dialects are different, they must be mutually intelligible. In contrast, the English translator makes a local transformation by adding details about how Moroccans learn the Egyptian dialect from being exposed to it since childhood. As a consequence, she removes the assumption and the inferred meaning behind it, and adds an anthropological, or at least documentary, aspect to the text.

Addition in Example 3 does more than add anthropological information to the text:

Example 3:

عمتي كانت تظهر لسانها عندما كانت تقول: "هاللو عيني"، فنجيبها "هاللو عيني" عشرات المرات حتى تعيدها، ويبدو لسانها وكأنه يلاعنا. نتشددق باللبان ونجعله كرة صغيرة نقوم بترقيصها على اللسان، وكأنها كرة على فم دلافين في السيرك.
(p. 140)

GT: My aunt used to show her tongue when saying “Hello, my eyes,” and we would reply “hello, my eyes” tens of times so she would say it again and we would see her tongue as if it were playing with us. We used to chew gum, blow it into a little ball that we would make dance on the tip of our tongues, like the dolphins balance balls on their mouths in a circus.

ETT: ‘My aunt always used to say “hello, sweetheart,” Lamis elaborated, ‘sticking out her tongue, and we’d say it back to her to make her repeat it, because we thought it was funny. And we chewed gum into little balls, and made it dance on our tongues as if we were dolphins balancing balls on our noses. And if we’re enjoying our food, our tongues dart around like lizards in the sun’. (p. 95)

FTT: Ma tante laissait voir sa langue en disant : “Bonjour, ma chérie !” et nous lui répondions “Bonjour, ma chérie !” des dizaines de fois pour qu’elle recommence et pour voir sa langue qui paraissait jouer avec nous. Nous mâchions notre chewing-gum et le roulions en boule que nous faisons danser sur le bout de notre langue, comme un ballon sur la tête d’une otarie, au cirque. (p. 116)

In this passage, Lamis is trying to dispel her pronunciation teacher’s stereotypes. The latter told Lamis that perhaps the reason Lamis could not pronounce “the” properly was that showing the tongue was a taboo in her culture, like an Israeli student of hers had pointed out to her when she despaired of teaching him how to pronounce “the.” Lamis proceeds then to explain to the English teacher that her Iraqi culture was different from the Israeli one, and that showing the tongue was not a taboo in it. The French translator rendered Lamis’ explanation quite literally except for the dolphin imagery that she replaced with that of a sea lion, probably because sea lions are more commonly used in circuses than dolphins. The change, however, is inconsequential in that the cognitive association remains the same for the French reader as for the Arabic one: sea animals used in circuses, an image that has become universal. In contrast, the English translator adds a whole sentence and, with it, new details about the Iraqi culture

and a new image. The added text describing this Iraqi's way of savouring their food, whether it is accurate or not, adds an anthropological dimension to the text and infuses the novel with a greater sense of realism. As to the image in the simile, that of lizards darting around under the sun, it is a rhetorical formulation that invokes the desert with its heat and creatures. As a consequence, the translation displaces the text and the Iraqi culture away from what is universal and readily accessible to the English reader, sea lions in the circus, to what is exotic and geographically and culturally remote, thereby widening the cultural distance between the English reader and the British Arab of Iraqi origin.

In fact, the English translation abounds in instances of local transformations where details are added with the effect of enhancing not only the realism of the novel but also a feel of exoticism in it. Example 4 is a case in point:

Example 4:

كن يعبقن بالشهوة وهن يسرحن شعرهن أو يطرحن رؤوسهن إلى الخلف، بأثدائهن المنتصبه وقاماتهن الممشوقة المتماسكة.
(p. 7)

GT: They exude desire as they comb their hair, with heads tilted to the back, erect breasts, and firm, slender bodies.

ETT (page 2): ... with their seductive bodies, full breasts, bracelets on their arms and ankles, rings in their ears, girdles around their waists and ties that hung down at the back- whether they were sitting, standing, looking straight ahead or to one side, with their hair flowing or their faces raised, they evoked desire. (p. 2)

FTT: Une sensualité extraordinaire émanait de la pose de ces femmes occupées à se peigner, la tête rejetée en arrière, le sein dressé, le corps ferme et élancé. (p. 11)

This example is taken from a passage where Nicholas watches Lamis and she reminds him of the Devadasis servant girls in the Khajuraho Temple. While the author provides a brief description of the Devadasis, leaving it up to the readers' imagination to complete the image, the English translation provides additional detailed information about these temple servants. In so doing, the ETT not only reduces the processing effort required from the reader and

enhances the realist aspect of the novel, but it also intensifies the orientalist and exotic aura of the text. A similar effect is present in Example 5:

Example 5:

... كان ديفيد، زميله السابق لدى سودوبيز، يسأله إذا كان العمانيون مهتمين بالغزال وما إذا كان قد جاء من أجله، وما إذا كان يعتقد أنه سيحقق أعلى الأسعار في عالم المزادات الإسلامية؟ ويقصد بذلك: غزال القرن العاشر النادر الذي استراح في بركة النافورة في حدائق مدينة الزهراء الأموية قرب قرطبة قبل أن يحل أخيرا منذ القرن الماضي في أحد القصور النمساوية. (p. 69)

GT: ... It was David, an ex-colleague at Sotheby's, asking him whether the Omanis were interested in the gazelle and whether he believed it would bring in the highest price in the history of Islamic auctions. He was talking about a tenth-century gazelle that rested in a pool in one of the gardens of the Umayyad city al-Zahra near Cordoba, before it ended up in an Austrian castle in the past century.

ETT: It was David, an ex-colleague from Sotheby's, asking whether the Omanis were interested in the gazelle. A tenth-century gazelle that had stood in a pool for hundreds of years in the gardens of the Umayyad Madinat al-Zahra near Cordoba – a palace with about five hundred rooms for men, two hundred for women, and fifty servants who fed leftovers to the peacocks, scattered seed for the birds and tore up twelve hundred loaves of bread a day to feed the fish in the palace ponds – before ending up in an Austrian castle. (p. 47)

FTT: C'est David, son collègue de chez Sothby's, qui lui demande si les Omanais sont intéressés par la gazelle, s'il était rentré pour cette affaire et s'il croyait que cette statue allait battre des records au cours des enchères d'art islamique ? Il voulait parler de la rarissime gazelle du Xe siècle qui s'était reposée pendant des milliers d'années dans un bassin des jardins d'Al-Zahra, la ville arabe édifiée par les Omeiyades près de Cordoue, avant de se retrouver dans un château autrichien au siècle dernier. (p. 60)

While the French translator rendered a literal translation of the original, the English translator once again chooses to add details. The latter may or may not be factual since a research, including in Ali's (1999) book-length study *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art:*

From the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries, which contains detailed description of Madinat al-Zahra, did not verify the veracity of the information provided by the translator. Whether they are true or not, however, this local transformation invokes imageries from *The One Thousand and One Nights* with its harems and palaces teeming with women and servants and exotic birds. The choice to add such details when the author has already provided enough background information about the Gazelle and its whereabouts, exoticizes the novel more and further enhances the orientalist discourse on which it draws.

Some additions, however, have an effect other than exoticization of the text, as it is the case with Example 6:

Example 6:

يسرع الآن، يدير رقم هاتفها، ليرد المسجل. لم ييأس. كان يعرف أنها أحيانا تقلد آلة التسجيل. ينادي: "أنيئا. هذا نيقولاس. عدت لتوي!" (p. 63)

GT: he hurries to dial her number only to hear the answering machine respond.

ETT: He dialled her number. He missed her friendship and the company of a woman who offered more than small talk and social niceties, which were all he'd exchanged with any woman during the last six weeks in Oman. But there was only her answering machine. (p. 42)

FTT: Il se hâte de l'appeler. Il tombe sur le répondeur. (p. 54)

The English translator once again chooses to add details about the character of Nicholas and his life back in Oman. While these details further individuate Nicholas by giving insight into what his life could be like in Oman, they also imply that in Oman, men and women, including Westerners, do not have the freedom to meet and develop friendships nor to engage in anything more significant than "small talk and social niceties," or that Omani women are not socially equipped to do more than exchange "small talk and social niceties." Coupled with other decisions that we shall see below, this addition contributes to the structural opposition between Britain and Arab countries that is already established by the author herself, and depicts Oman as a land of frustration.

In light of these many additions to the original that are found in the English translation, the deletion in Example 7 is quite intriguing.

Example 7:

وإذا بدبي تتبدل، لم تعد البلد الذي تنفست فيه لميس الحرية ما إن حطت في مطارها، الذي كان إلى جانب أناقته ونظافته وضخامته وسرعة خدماته لا يمت بصلة إلى أي مطار وحدود عربية بل كان أشبه بفندق. حتى جواز سفرها بدا لرجل الأمن الذي قام بختمه كأنه فاتورة مطعم، خلافا لأي بلد عربي دخلته كلاجئة عراقية. (p. 17)

GT: and suddenly, Dubai metamorphosed. It was no longer this country where Lamis breathed the air of freedom the moment she landed in its airport which was, besides its elegance, its cleanliness, its vastness and the promptness of its services, unlike any other Arab airport or point of entry. It was more like a hotel. Even her passport did not seem to hold any more interest for the officer who stamped it than a restaurant bill. This was so different than in any other country that she visited as an Iraqi refugee.

ETT: Lamis watched Dubai change in front of her eyes, from the place where the official stamped her passport as casually as if it were a restaurant bill- which, as an Iraqi refugee, was something she'd never experienced before- to a place where ... (p. 8)

FTT: Et voilà Dubaï qui se métamorphosait sous son regard qui n'était plus ce pays où elle avait respiré la liberté lorsque son avion s'était posé à l'aéroport. Celui-ci- mis à part son élégance, sa propreté, son immensité et la promptitude de ses services- ne ressemblait à aucun autre aéroport ni à aucune autre frontière arabe. Il avait plutôt l'air d'un grand hôtel et, entre les mains du policier qui y avait apposé son tampon, son passeport même ne paraissait pas plus précieux qu'une addition dans un restaurant, contrairement à tout autre pays arabe où elle était entrée auparavant comme réfugiée iraquienne. (p. 17)

In this instance, the details giving insight into how Lamis initially perceived Dubai and its airport as an Iraqi refugee were deleted in the English translation even though there are no “external physical factors, such as space or legal limitations,” to quote van Dijk above. In other words, this local transformation is motivated by internal conditions deriving either from the translator's script, models and mental representations or from her assumptions about the

readers' own models and mental representations that are inconsistent with the representation of a Middle Eastern airport as vast, clean, elegant, administratively efficient and thus welcoming contrary to the image of Middle Eastern airports as universalized by Hollywood movies. The effect of this shift, assessed against the backdrop of the additions above that exoticize and orientalize Arab countries, is that an Arab space in the English translation gets removed away from freedom, modernity and technology, which eases its association with an exotic, orientalist image.

3.5.2 The Muslim creed.

The discourses drawn upon in the original have undergone a similar change due to textural and pragmatic shifts in the English translation. The first notable change affected the discourse on Islam as not a rigid religion but one that lends itself to different interpretations and practices.

Example 1:

" الحمد لله على السلامة" ردد الركاب العرب أحدهم للآخر، ما إن أعلن كابتن الطائرة أن الهبوط في مطار هيثرو بعد 15 دقيقة. (p. 9)

GT: "Praise be to God for safety," the Arab passengers said to one another when the captain announced that the plane would land after fifteen minutes.

ETT: 'Praise God for our safety,' the Arab passengers repeated to one another when the Captain announced that the descent to Heathrow would begin in fifteen minutes. For once, the overworked phrase really meant something. (p. 4)

FTT: « Remercions Dieu d'être arrivés sains et saufs », se congratulent les passagers Arabes, dès que le Capitaine annonce que l'avion va atterrir dans quinze minutes sur l'aéroport de Heathrow. (p. 12)

In yet another instance of local transformation, the English translator adds not so much a detail about a practice, as an evaluation of and a commentary on the practice, i.e. Muslim people thanking God for something. The value judgment embedded in the adjective

“overworked” that the translator uses is a negative one suggesting excess and, in a religious context, fanaticism. Indeed, the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines the verb “to overwork” as “to work too much on” and “to make excessive use of.” The translator is, therefore, making two negative assumptions about this practice, namely that the Muslims thank God excessively and that it never means anything of substance. In so doing, she is not only universalizing a negative image of this Muslim practice, but is also bringing out her own agency and bracketing that of the author. The voice of the translator is also conspicuous in Example 2:

Example 2:

تنظر إليهما أميرة التي خف بكأؤها، وجلست تستغفر ربها واعدة إياه بالتوبة. (p. 7)

GT: Amira- who had stopped crying and started asking God for forgiveness and promising him repentance, was looking at them.

English TT: Amira, whose weeping fit had subsided, stopped reciting the Muslim creed to prove to God that she’d repented, and looked at them. (p. 3)

French TT: Amira les regarde. Ses larmes se sont taries. Elle a demandé pardon à Dieu et Lui a promis de se repentir. (p. 11)

This example is an instance of rhetorical reformulation whereby the English translator does not transform the source text, but produces a new one, according to van Dijk above. In the original, Amira is performing two illocutionary speech acts common to all monotheist believers, namely asking for forgiveness from and promising repentance to God. By replacing these familiar illocutionary acts with a description that places the locutionary act “reciting,” within the Other’s creed, i.e. “the Muslim creed,” the translator is establishing a distance between the character and her creed, on the one hand, and the English readers with their own creed(s) and herself, on the other. The implication of such translation is that Muslims have totally different religious practices. The rhetorical “Othering” present in this example will be enhanced elsewhere in the text, including through more additions, as in Example 3:

Example 3:

ETT: Nicholas nearly added that, all the same, it *wouldn't be advisable* for his father to wear his dog collar when he visited Oman. (p. 79)

The English translator added this whole sentence to a passage where Nicholas and his father are talking about the former's trip to Oman and the bible (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 113-114). Nicholas' father, who is a priest, had given him a bible and asked him to give it to his Omani employer, Sayf. When Nicholas' mother started expressing her worries about giving a bible to a Muslim, his father cut her off and continued his talk with Nicholas. In this passage of the novel, the author is clearly confronting her English readers with what she assumes to be another one of their misconceptions, not about Arabs this time but about Muslims, i.e. that they are intolerant of other religions. Having both Nicholas, who lived in Oman, and his father give short shrift to the mother's worries is the author's way of dispelling the stereotype. In the English translation, however, the translator adds her own commentary on the subject—one that runs in stark contradiction to the author's objective. Through a marker of modality that expresses a rather high level of "commitment to truth" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 170), namely "wouldn't," and a marker of a rather explicit evaluation, namely "advisable," the addition creates the value assumption that a Muslim country is a hostile environment for Christian priests. It is an assumption that conjures up and, therefore, consolidates images of the Muslim world as religiously intolerant and dangerous. It also contributes to the amalgam that all Arabs and Arab countries are Muslim, with no indigenous communities of any other confession, when Oman—like many other Arab countries, has several non-Muslim religious communities, including Hindus, Buddhist, Sikhs and more than fifty Christian groups (American Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's 2007 report on religious freedom). Whereas the dialogue between Nicholas, his father and mother in the original might have awakened the reader's curiosity as to why a priest would think of giving a bible to an Omani and why Nicholas would agree, upon which she could have discovered that both the Catholic and the Protestant churches were officially accepted in Oman, the local transformation by the English translator obliterates any doubt and confirms the orientalist stereotype.

Unlike most of the examples above, the English translator's intervention in Example 4 is more subtle but still one that conjures up images straight from Hollywood movies about Islam.

Example 4:

"أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم. هذا بيت نكاح! الطفلة تنكح الكرسي، و العصافير تنكح قماش الصوف، و حواف الخشبة، وذكر البيغاء الذي دأب على مناداة: أهلا وسهلا، الله أكبر" يعلو الذكر الآخر". (p. 225)

GT: May God preserve us from Satan! This is the house of copulation! The girl is mounting the chair, the birds are mounting the perches, and the parrot, who used to call "Welcome! God is great!" is now mounting the other male parrot!

ETT: 'God help us! They're all at it in there. The child's fucking the chair, the birds are fucking their perches, and the parrot shouts, "Hello! God is great" all the time and mounts the other male.' (p. 152)

FTT: "Dieu nous préserve de Satan et de ses malices ! C'est la maison de la copulation ! La petite copule avec la chaise, les oiseaux copulent avec leurs perchoirs et le perroquet mâle qui ne cesse de claironner : "Soyez les bienvenus. Dieu est grand," le voilà qui chevauche un autre mâle !" (p. 183)

The example is taken from a passage where Lamis is trying to think of something funny to tell her and Nicholas' guests to engage them and make them see her not as an Iraqi but as a woman with her own identity and memories, and she remembers when her aunt apparently saw her masturbating with a chair, and left the house screaming in horror. In the original, as in the French version, the phrase "who used to call 'Welcome! God is great'" is an appositive relative clause signalled by a WH-relative pronoun, namely "الذي," /alladhī/, literally "who" in Arabic, but that could be translated with either "who" or "which" depending on whether it refers to a human or non-human. As such, it is external to the main clause "the parrot is now mounting the other male parrot," and functions as a non-restrictive, appositive clause that modifies the parrot in a way that opposes the main clause. In other words, Lamis' aunt was shocked to see that even the parrot that normally repeats the pious phrase "welcome! God is great!" was now mounting a male parrot!

In the English translation, however, the WH-relative pronoun disappears and is replaced with the coordinator "and," thereby transforming the non-restrictive/appositive relative clause

into a restrictive clause, i.e. one that is an integral part of the main clause. The translator also adds the adverbial phrase “all the time,” suggesting that the parrot was repeating the phrase when the aunt saw it. Moreover, the verb “to shout” is used to render the verb “نادى” /nādā/, which contributes to changing the meaning of the clause. Indeed, this verb encodes an implicit value of music, since it is derived from the noun “نداء” /nidā’/, defined as “a voice like in a prayer or a rumble” (*Lissān al-‘arab*), and is etymologically related to the verb “أندى” /andā/, defined as “to have a good voice” (*Lissān al-‘arab*). While the French translator kept this value in the French translation by using the verb “claironner” for /nādā/, the English translator removes the value by using the verb “to shout.” The rhetorical reformulation and addition here transform the meaning of the sentence so that the aunt in the English translation saw the parrot shouting the pious phrase while mounting the other male parrot. The inferred meaning in this example is that since the parrot only imitates, then what it is doing, i.e. shouting the phrase and mounting a male bird at the same time, is but an imitation of what it sees. Going back to Example 1 above where the translator comments on how Muslims senselessly repeat another Islamic phrase, the image portrayed in the present example also becomes reminiscent of images of “bad Arabs” in Hollywood movies indulging in violence or vice all while shouting “God is great” (Shaheen, 2001).

The discourse on Islam changes in another way in the English translation. Indeed, the author portrays Islam as lending itself, like all religions, to interpretations going from the very rigid to the very lenient and accommodating. It is, therefore, very much a part of the daily life of her homosexual and prostitute characters, including through dialogue, as in Example 5:

Example 5:

تشعر أميرة بالخوف من جديد فهي قد وعدت الله بأنها ستصبح في غاية الاستقامة.. لكن أليس فعل الخير عند الله حسنة وثواباً؟ (p. 9)

GT: Amira was scared again. She had promised God that she would become very honest. But doesn't God consider doing good a charitable deed that deserves reward?

ETT: ... Amira felt uneasy because she'd promised herself that she would become an honest woman. Yet wasn't helping people a good deed? (p. 4)

FTT: Malgré tout, Amira se sent un peu mal à l'aise car elle vient tout juste de promettre à Dieu de rentrer dans le droit chemin. Mais, faire une bonne action, n'est-ce pas déjà un acte de charité qui devrait lui valoir une récompense ? (p. 12)

The example is taken from a passage at the very beginning of the novel where the plane taking Amira, Samir and Lamis to London is going through strong turbulences. Amira is so scared that she promises God that she would become an honest woman who earns her living in honest ways. But Samir asks her to help him hide the monkey he is smuggling into London and just as she thinks of helping him she remembers what she has just promised God, but then remembers that God rewards believers for every good deed they do towards others, and so she accepts to help Samir. The French translator produces a more or less literal translation, and while she does not repeat "Dieu" in the second sentence, her lexical choice, namely the word "charité," keeps the religious dimension of the exchange intact, implying that it is Amira's God that encourages people to do good towards other people. In contrast, the English translator, who already classified Amira's confession as "her Muslim creed," removes this creed and its God from the passage by turning the dialogue between Amira and her God into a monologue where she talks to herself. This has two consequences. Firstly, it distances between the act of helping others and Amira's "Muslim creed" since it is not because of any of its tenets that Amira is encouraged to help Samir. Secondly, it obscures Amira's intimate relationship with her God. The same effect is present in the following example.

Example 6:

" على كل يا ربي أحب الشقر والعيون الزرق ". (p. 126)

GT: 'In any case, Lord, I like blond hair and blue eyes.'

English TT: 'In any case, I prefer blond hair and blue eyes.' (p. 86)

French TT: "De toute façon, Seigneur, j'adore les blonds aux yeux bleus. » (p. 106)

This time, it is Samir who is opening up to God about his preferences in men. Following the pattern, the French translator keeps God in the exchange while the English translator

deletes it and, with it, the conversation that Samir holds with his God and the implication that Samir's religion, Islam, as he understands it and lives it is tolerant of homosexuals.

Example 7:

تماما كما قالت بهية يوما: "الحمد لله أنا صليت قبل ما أسكر." (p. 376)

GT: Just like Bahia had once said: "Thank God that I had already done my prayer before I got drunk."

In this instance, Amira recalls how Bahia, the prostitute, thanked God for having already done her prayer before drinking, because alcohol in Islam nullifies the prayers. This implies that Bahia is not only a practising Muslim but that she also believes that God will accept her prayers even though she is a prostitute. This recollection by Amira, however, gets deleted in both translations. The suppression of this passage in the English translation where these local transformations are a pattern, undermines the discourse on Islam in the novel. In so doing, it allows beliefs that gay men and prostitutes are killed under Islam as expressed in the letters that al-Shaykh received from her English audience, to go unchallenged.

3.5.3 Men with no virility.

The English translation also significantly undermines the discourse on women as self-empowered agents rather than powerless victims, and the discourse on Arab men as not violent.

Example 1:

بينما صيحة أميرة الأولى تعالت بين التحسرات وخيبات الأمل. أمها كانت تود لو تعيدها إلى الرحم، فلربما سمع الله ابتهاالاتها وحولها إلى ذكر. (p. 100)

GT: Whereas Amira made her first cry amidst regrets and disappointment. Her mother wished she could return her back into her womb. Maybe then, God would hear her prayers and change the newborn into a boy.

ETT: When Amira uttered her first cry, it was echoed by the disappointment and regrets of the women who attended her mother during her birth, who wished that this baby girl could return to the womb, and stay there while they prayed to God to change her sex. (p. 68)

FTT: Tandis que le premier cri d'Amira a jailli parmi les lamentations et la déception. Sa mère aurait aimé la faire rentrer dans son utérus: le Seigneur entendrait peut-être ses invocations et transformerait le nouveau-né en mâle. (p. 85)

While both the original and the French translator clarify that it was one woman, Amira's mother, who felt disappointed at having a baby girl, the English translator attributes the disappointment and regrets to the plural "women," thereby transforming what is portrayed at least in the original as the action of one individual into that of a plural collectivity. Likewise, while in the original, as in the French translation, it is the singular "mother" who is making prayers wishing that God would transform baby Amira into a boy, it is a plural "they," referring to "the women who attended her mother during her birth," that makes the prayers. This turns what was depicted in the original as individual prayers into a collective ritual, suggesting that it is a habit and a rite in Morocco to make collective prayers for God to give a baby boy and not a girl. This suggestion keeps alive the perception that Arab societies are misogynistic. It will be repeated, rather explicitly, in the English translation in Example 2:

Example 2:

مش أختي خسرت الدعوى التي رفعتها على زوجها عشان يدفع تعويض بعدما طلقها زوجها بالثلاثة بحجة أنها أهملت نفسها وزاد وزنها. (p. 56)

GT: My sister lost the compensation lawsuit she filed against her husband after he divorced her irrevocably under the pretext that she had neglected her body and had become overweight.

ETT: 'My sister's husband wanted a divorce after she put on too much weight. And then he married his secretary, and my sister couldn't get any money out of him – even the judge blamed her for being overweight in the first place. (p. 37)

FTT: - Mon beau-frère a demandé le divorce sous prétexte que ma sœur se négligeait et avait grossi. Elle a perdu son procès contre son mari et n'a obtenu ni pension alimentaire ni indemnité après la séparation. (p. 48)

While the ST mentions that the sister lost her lawsuit, it leaves the reason why open to interpretation and does not pinpoint any one's agency in it. The French translator adds specific information about the "compensation" women are entitled to in a divorce within Islamic law, namely "food alimony" and "compensation for separation." However, she does not give any reason as to why the sister lost her lawsuit. In contrast, the English translator closes the door on any interpretation by adding a clause whereby the judge put equal blame on the woman for being overweight. The translator also adds another piece of information, namely that the husband married his secretary after he divorced his wife. While this addition is irrelevant to the lawsuit or the weight, it is consistent with the model of the Arab woman victimized by misogynistic Arab men. Example 3 is yet another instance where the gendered discourses in the original are undermined in the English translation through local transformations, i.e. addition and deletion:

Example 3:

يضعن سماعات الووكمن وهن متمدات وحيدات أو مع أزواجهن.. لا شك أن المغنين الأجانب يدغدغن طبلة أذانهن، وكذلك الممثلون من نجوم هوليوود في المجلات التي يتفحصونها. (p. 74)

GT: They wear their walkman's earphones, while lying, alone or with their husbands... Western singers must be titillating their eardrums, just like Hollywood movie stars in the magazines they were leafing through must be titillating their eyes.

ETT: They wore earphones, listened to Walkmans; Western pop singers caressed their eardrums, and Hollywood movie stars their eyes, creatures like the constellations in the sky, of different clay from ordinary mortals. (p. 50)

FTT: Les écouteurs du baladeur dans les oreilles, elles étaient allongées, seules ou avec leur époux... Les chanteurs occidentaux leur caressant sûrement les tympanes, de même que les

acteurs et les jeunes premiers d'Hollywood dans les revues qu'elles feuilletent leur caressaient le regard. (p. 64)

In this passage highlighting the heterogeneities of Arab women, Nicholas is thinking that Lamis was neither like those rich bejewelled Arab women attending cocktail parties but not really participating in them as they looked scared of their husbands, nor like those other Arab women lying under the sun in beautiful swimsuit, wearing earphones, alone or with their husbands. The lexical presence of “husbands” in this passage, especially after the mention of the other wives who are scared of their husbands, suggests that just as there are Arab women who dare not behave spontaneously in social gatherings because of their husbands, there are other Arab women who are carefree around their husbands. By suppressing “husbands” from the target text, the English translator fails to produce the same assumption, thereby producing an opposite one: Arab women can only behave in what English readers might think of as free manner if there were no Arab men watching over them. The intervention in the English translation does not stop at this level. There is, indeed, a local transformation in the form of addition of details not present in the original: the description of Western pop singers and Hollywood movie stars as “creatures like the constellations in the sky...” This transformation does not contextualize or cushion a concept in the ST for the TT readers, nor does it explicitate an implied meaning in the ST. It seems rather to draw on “previous models” of the translator to create a metaphor that places Western singers and stars light years away from the “ordinary mortals” that the sun-bathing Arab women are.

While addition in the example above serves to leave unchallenged perceptions of Arab women as scared of their husbands, it serves a different purpose in the following example:

Example 4:

هربنا إلى سوريا لعامين ثم إلى لبنان الذي كان يتمتع آنذاك بهدنة طويلة.. شاعرة قريبة لوالدي شجعته على الانتقال بنا إلى بيروت. (p. 147)

GT: We fled to Syria for two years then to Lebanon, which was enjoying a long truce. A poetess who was a relative of my father encouraged him to take us to Beirut.

ETT: We fled to Syria, but a woman cousin encouraged my father to go to Lebanon, where she lived. (p. 100)

FTT: Nous avons fui vers la Syrie où nous sommes restés deux ans avant de partir au Liban qui jouissait alors d'une longue trêve. Une poétesse, parente de mon père, l'avait incité à nous emmener à Beyrouth. (p. 122)

The author specifically defines Lamis' father's cousin by her occupation as a poetess, thereby creating the logical implication that there are poetesses among Iraqi women and that Lebanon offered a space where women could write poetry. By this mention, the author is also hinting at the diversity among Arab women: just as there are the half-educated Lamis-like Iraqi women, there are also the poetesses. The assumption in the sentence is kept in the French translation and with it the insight into the diversity of the category of "Arab women," but this all gets obliterated in the English translation due to the suppression of "poetess."

In Example 5, the shift in the discourse on women occurs through both overlexicalization and transitivity:

Example 5:

رجل ينظر إلى كل امرأة يصادفها بينما زوجته ملتفة بالقماش وكأنها ذاهبة إلى حفلة تنكرية تسير إلى جانبه، تجر طفلا بيدها، والخادمة الفلبينية تجر آخر، ويدها الأخرى تحمل كيسا يطفح بالموز والبطيخ. (p. 70)

GT: A man was looking at every woman by whom he passes. Meanwhile, his wife, wrapped in a fabric as if going to a masquerade ball, was walking by his side, dragging a child along with her hand, while a Filipina maid dragged another child with one hand and carried a grocery bag full of bananas and melons with the other.

ETT: A man accompanied by his wife was looking at every woman who passed; the wife meanwhile was muffled from head to toe, her face masked. A Filipina maid was with them, dragging a child along with one hand; the wife held on to the other, and both women carried shopping bags full of bananas and melons. (p. 48)

FTT: Un homme, accompagné de sa femme, lorgnait toutes les femmes qu’il croisait, tandis que la sienne était enveloppée de la tête aux pieds dans un tissu comme si elle allait au bal masqué, traînait un gosse par la main, tandis que la servante philippine en traînait un autre et portait de son autre main un sac débordant de bananes et de melons. (p. 61)

This example is taken from a passage where Nicholas describes the Arab people he saw in Edgware Road when he went to visit Amira. While in the ST he describes the wife as simply being “ملتفة,” /multaffah/, literally “wrapped” in a fabric, both the English and French translations overlexicalize the description by adding “from head to toe” and “de la tête aux pieds,” respectively. However, the ETT overlexicalizes it even further by adding yet another phrase, “her face masked,” when the original has left it to the readers’ interpretation whether or not the woman was wearing a veil, since not all Arab women who wear long robes cover their faces. Moreover, whereas in both the ST and the FTT, it is the maid that carries one grocery bag, the English translation operates a lexico-grammatical shift by having both the wife and the maid carry grocery bags, when the man walks empty-handed. This translation not only homogenizes Arab women by imposing the veil on the face of the wife, but it also carries the implication that for an Arab man, a wife has the same status as a servant.

In fact, Arab men also emerge as less valiant and less rational in the English translation than in both the original and the French translation. Example 6 below is a case in point.

Example 6:

وأتاريه عامل حالو كاز انوفا وصار يبسطهن بدل ما هن يبسطوه. (p. 59)

GT: He is acting like a Casanova, satisfying them instead of having them satisfy him.

ETT: ‘But that wasn’t because he likes the blondes, Amira. He was just looking after all the money he’d spent getting them there in the first place. He was making sure of his investment. And remember, he’s desperate to prove his virility, that he can still perform.’ (pp. 38-39)

FTT: Il se prend pour un Casanova maintenant ! C’est lui qui cherche à satisfaire toutes ces blondes, et pas le contraire ! (p. 51)

This is a comment that Nahed makes to Amira after the latter complained to her from an Emirati client who used to find her body extremely attractive but who is now preferring English and Russian prostitutes to her and is treating them like “daughters of good families” (al-Shaykh, 2001a, p. 58; my translation). The exchange clearly implies that the Emirati man not only liked European women but treated them valiantly, an implication that the French translator keeps by translating Nahed’s comment quite literally. In contrast, the English translator explicitly brushes away both the literal and implied meanings of Nahed’s comment by replacing the latter with what she assumes to be more relevant to her English readers’ mental representations of Arab men. The Emirati client’s positive behaviour towards European prostitutes is explicitly chalked up to him being a shrewd businessman looking after his investment, with the implication that European prostitutes are nothing more than mere objects for him. The English translation also explicitly casts doubt on the Emirati man’s virility.

In Example 7, the English translator’s intervention is subtler but equally significant in how it contributes to the stereotypification of Arab men.

Example 7:

حاولت رفض هذا الزواج، حاول والدي مساعدتي، لكن أمي كانت قد صممت على زواجي. (p. 147)

GT: I tried to refuse the marriage. My father tried to stand by me, but my mother had already decided that I should marry.

ETT: I tried to refuse the marriage, and I thought my father would stand by me, but he didn’t, or couldn’t. My mother was so determined that I should marry my husband. (p. 100)

FTT: J’ai essayé de refuser, mon père a tenté de m’aider, mais ma mère était bien décidée à me marier. (p. 122)

The example is taken from a passage where Lamis tells Nicholas about how she married her Iraqi husband. Her explanation that her father tried to help her against the marriage implies that not only he did not want for his daughter to marry a man she did not love, but that he also did not want his wife to force his daughter into a marriage that Lamis refused. The use of the coordinating conjunction marking an opposition relation, “لكن,” “but,” implies that the

mother's will both opposed and overcame the father's. In other words, the author gives a stronger agency to the mother than to the father, thereby undermining his patriarchal power within the family nucleus. She is also depicting the father, a man, as more compassionate towards the daughter, a woman, than the mother. As a result, Lamis' depiction of her father is another discursive strategy by which the author challenges stereotypes of Arab men in the Anglo-American context. Whereas the French translator keeps both implications and their subversive effect, the English translator deletes the whole clause about the father trying to help his daughter. In so doing, she removes both the assumption present in the ST that the patriarchal figure of the father actually opposed the idea of an arranged marriage for his daughter, and the assumption that the mother was more authoritative than the father. Moreover, by using the coordinating conjunction "but" to coordinate, in an oppositional relation, Lamis' belief and her father's refusal to help her ("he didn't"), the translator implies that the father's action opposed Lamis' will and therefore disappointed her. It is true that the translator adds "or couldn't," but she does so at the very end of the sentence, after inserting a comma, which makes of it an afterthought clause. She also omits to put the mother's will and the father's in an oppositional relation, by starting a new sentence reporting on the mother with no coordinators. As such, the translation not only obscures the father's will to help his daughter against an arranged marriage she does not want, but it also significantly downplays the mother's agency over both her husband and daughter.

Example 8 is another illustration of the semiotic shifts occurring in the ETT:

Example 8:

"يا ليتني طلبت الشمبانيا و الكافيار". يضحك السكرتير. يشاركه الثلاثة.
 إذن، نعتبر القضية منتهية؟

نعم، أتمنى لو تتوقف السيدة عن اللعب بالنار (يقول السكرتير). (p. 245)

GT: 'If only I ordered champagne and caviar!' The secretary laughs and the other three join him in. 'So we consider the case closed?' 'Yes, I hope the lady stops playing with fire' the secretary answers.

ETT: ‘If only I’d asked for champagne and caviar!’ The secretary laughed, and the others joined in. ‘So can we consider the case closed?’ the Scotland Yard officer said, astonished, convinced that the Arab mentality was a puzzle. The Prince had made a complaint, then forgiven the woman. It was as if she’d broken into a shop and the owner not only dropped the charges but invited her to take what she wanted. ‘Yes, I hope the lady stops playing with fire.’ (p. 166)

FTT: “J’aurais dû commander du champagne et du caviar !” Le secrétaire rit, les trois autres partagent son rire. “Donc, l’affaire est classée ?” “Oui, mais je souhaiterais que madame arrête de jouer avec le feu,” dit le secrétaire. (p. 198)

This example is taken from a passage where Amira is caught impersonating a princess, and the prince she was trying to swindle calls Scotland Yard. Eventually, however, the prince’s secretary convinces him of dropping the charges against Amira. While the author, like the French translator, leaves it to her readers to decide how to evaluate the prince’s decision, whether it is a sign of clemency and kindness or of stupidity, the English translator brings her own worldview to bear on the translation and adds a whole commentary on the prince’s behaviour, which collapses all possible interpretations into one: the Arab prince has an “Arab mentality” that an English person, represented by the Scotland Yard officer, cannot begin to understand. It is an irrational mentality that rewards thieves for their crimes.

Compared to the French translation, the English one changes the novel and its discourses in significant ways. Through the addition of details, it enhances its realist aspect and imbues it with a pronounced ethnographic dimension, thereby inviting a reading that overlooks the novel’s situatedness and perceives it as an even more transparent representation of the “reality” of Arab diaspora in London than it set out to be. Moreover, while the general and gendered discourses on which al-Shaykh draws to contest several misconceptions about Arabs in the Anglo-American context are already undermined in the ST because of the overarching orientalist discourse that frames the whole novel, they get even more undermined in the English TT. As a consequence, the latter substantially reduces the discursive heterogeneity present in the ST. It also resolves the tension between the author’s will to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions, on the one hand, and her need to hold the attention of her

Anglo-American readers by addressing them in terms that are intelligible and familiar to them, on the other. This resolution, however, comes at the expense of the author's agency and gives precedence to the Anglo-American readers' agency, thus setting in motion what Spivak (1993) calls a "species of neo-colonialist construction of the Western scene" (p. 181). In other words, al-Shaykh, whose voice has been mainstreamed in the West, including through translation, appears to lose much of her voice in the process of the English translation.

CHAPTER IV: *BANĀT AL-RIYĀD*

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Gulf literature, Saudi literature.

Rajaa Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (2005) was an overnight sensation in Arab countries and was soon translated and published in several Western countries where it gained unprecedented visibility for a Saudi writer, male or female. However, the novel is neither the first nor considered the best by a Saudi woman writer. Like its counterpart in other Arab countries, Saudi women's contemporary literary activity was closely linked to two factors: girls' education and publishing in newspapers, which both started in the early 1960s. Accordingly, the 1960s would witness an increase in women's publications in Saudi newspapers. Papers started dedicating a page to women's questions, and even published poetry, literary essays and short stories penned by women. Saudi women's visibility in the press would grow so substantially over the years, especially during the 1980s, that critics believe newspapers, particularly *al-Riyad*, contributed to the emergence of a new feminist expression, that of *muḥarrirāt*, whereby women writers played on the double meaning of the word, which in Arabic could mean either female editors or female liberators (Cooke, 1992, p. 448).

The first generation of Saudi women writers to graduate in their country coincided with the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period that would witness the flourishing of a wide literary movement. Poetry collections multiplied and short stories collection mushroomed as increasing number of women were publishing their stories either in collections or in newspapers, including Khayriyya al-Saqqāf, Sharīfa al-Shamlān and Badriyyah al-Bishr. The themes tackled ranged from national, pan-Arab concerns, to rebellion against the pigeonholing of women and calls to educate women. While physical intimacy seemed to have been a taboo in the early movement of short story writing, increasing numbers of women writers started to broach on it in the 1990s, including Umayma al-Khamīs who, in *al-Qamar al-Fāhim* (The

waning moon), explores a homosexual relationship in Riyadh, and Badriya al-Bishr who describes moments of marital intimacy in her short story *Kāmira* (Camera). This thematic evolution reflects, according to al-Mana (2008, p. 269), an evolution in the audience's expectations, and suggests that writers are enjoying more freedoms in their literary expression.

Unlike poetry and short stories, novels by women writers in Saudi Arabia, as in other Gulf countries, would only start flourishing in the 1990s (al-Mana, 2008, p. 273), which, significantly, coincides with the first Gulf War of 1991. According to Arebi, the need for women writers to provide an alternative ideological discourse, which arose in the 1980s with religious revivalism, was indeed further enhanced by the huge political and historical ramifications of the 1991 Gulf war for Saudi Arabia,³⁰ a country where “cultural discourses are formed around the challenge of Western civilization” (Arebi, 1994, p. 5). Saudi women novelists therefore grew in numbers, and included such names as Rajā’ ‘Ālim, Salwā Damanhūrī, Samīra Lari, Layla al-Jahānī, and more recently Rajaa Alsanea. These writers experimented with different styles and techniques, most noteworthy of which is intertextuality. Their writings are generally heavily laced with references to classical Arabic literature, and are, in the words of Ramsey (2006), “representing, bringing up to the present and recycling archetypal characters, themes, imagery and literary techniques from the more than a thousand-year-old Arabic literary heritage” (p. 161). By speaking back to and from these remote texts, Saudi women writers are looking for support, for legitimization of the alternative discourse that they generate. But these writers also speak to other contemporary texts, particularly those by women writers from other Arab countries. In so doing, they are contributing to the establishment of a women's literary tradition both locally and regionally, and to the strengthening of their voices as women.

Saudi women writers' texts are also generally characterized by heavy use of symbolism and ambiguity. This ambiguity is in fact so strong that famous Egyptian novelist Yusuf Idrīs decides to call the “writing by female writers from Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf States: *the short story from behind a veil*” since it is “a literary action arising under an overpowering

³⁰ During the 1991 Gulf war, American soldiers were stationed in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the ultra-conservative and sex-segregated Saudi society came into close contact with a different social and cultural system.

feverish pressure that interferes with the creative process to the extent that the writing appears like a puzzle to the reader. She wants to say something and yet she does not want to say it” (as cited in Cohen-Mor, 2005, p. 19). Idrīss’ commentary grasps, to a certain extent, the reality of women’s literary production in the Arab Peninsula, particularly in Saudi Arabia where writing is generally “a precarious venture,” as Ben Driss maintains (2005, p. 161). Because of its unique position in the Islamic world, any textual production therein, whether by men or women, “is contained within a conservative rhetoric which is not only self-imposed but also expected” both in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab and Islamic world (p. 162). Understandably, a narrative becomes even more precarious when it is produced by a woman. When the mere act of writing and getting published by a woman in Saudi Arabia is subversive in that it displaces her from the realm of the private to that of the public, women writers more often than not have to tread on the fine line between producing their own transgressive discourse and not alienating their conservative audience. As Fawziyyah al-Bikr argues, writing for Saudi women is “like walking along a firing range. It is the confrontation with social problems in their entirety so as to change culture” (as cited in Cooke, 1992, p. 456).

However, Idrīss’ comment is both reductive and simplistic. Kuwaiti women live a different reality from Saudi women and so the category of “female writers from Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf States” is far from homogenous. Idrīss is also simplifying the notion of self-censorship by gendering it when in fact it cuts through multiple hierarchies. Due to the autocratic nature of the regimes in all Gulf countries, political censure and social conservatism are two main obstacles that male writers have to grapple with as well. As Cohen-Mor (2005) rightfully states, one should “not look for a distinct type of literature with particular qualities in women’s writings, although one should acknowledge that women have different interests owing to their different social and psychological circumstances” (p. 18). What’s more, the implication that all women writers in the Arabian Peninsula “want to say something” that is necessarily against the grain, and that they thus hide behind a veil of obfuscated narratives, overly simplifies the complexities of the cultural and socio-political context in which these writers evolve, and overlooks the multiplicity of actions and reactions available to women writers—actions exemplified in *Banāt al-Riyād*, as we shall see.

In Saudi Arabia, i.e. the most restrictive country in the Arabian Peninsula, while some women writers, such as Sharīfa al-Shamlān and Najwā Hāshim, produce what Arebi calls a “victimization literature” wherein they bring to the fore the struggles of women, others like Juhayer al-Musā‘ed and Sohaila Zain al-Ābedīn, subscribe to the dominant discourse. While some, like Ruqayyah ash-Shabīb, look to the past for models of female empowerment, others like Rajā’ ‘Ālim, delve into issues of gender, sex, creativity and self-liberation. As a consequence, women’s literary production in Saudi Arabia, as in all other countries of the peninsula, needs to be read, interpreted, critiqued and translated against this complex background, rather than through the narrow lens of a restrictive gendered perspective.

However, modern literary production, including that by women, in the Arabian Peninsula has generally been given short shrift in literary criticism. Despite the richness of this production, Jayyusi (1988) argues, Arab literary critics seem to snub it. Almost a decade afterwards, Starkey (2006) observes that “[l]ittle has been said so far about the modern prose literature of Arabian Peninsula itself” (p. 153). This lack of visibility and exposure on the regional level also means that Saudi literature has had little visibility through translation outside the region. Even Abdurrahman Munif’s epic quintet, *Cities of Salt* (1989), which enjoyed a very wide and warm reception in the Arab world despite its being banned in Saudi Arabia for its damning criticism of the royal family, and which was described as the “most ambitious literary exploration” of the “dominant story of petroleum, the one linking the United States to the Middle East in a matrix of mutual, volatile dependencies” (Nixon, 2002, p. 2), did not fare very well in translation. In fact, the first volume of the quintet had to wait until 2013 to be translated into French by France Meyer and published by Actes sud, while only the first three volumes thereof have been translated into English so far.

The shunning of Saudi literature in the West would end just a few years after Munif’s passing in 2004. Yousef al-Muhaimeed would see his novel *Fikhākh ar-rā’ihah* (2003) translated and published in English in 2007, under the title *Wolves of the Crescent Moon*, by Penguin in the US and AUC Press in Egypt. Shortlisted in 2010 for the inaugural Jan Michalski Prize for Literature, the novel was translated into French and published in that same year by Actes Sud, under the title *Loin de cet enfer* (2007). This acclaim resulted in the

translation of his works into many other languages, including Italian and Russian. Arguably, however, al-Muhaimeed's visibility in the West would be a direct offshoot of the success through translation of Rajaa Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* and the interest it sparked in Saudi literature (McEvers, 2009).

4.1.2 The plot.

Set mainly in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, in the year 2004, the novel is a *mise en abyme*. It tells the story of an unidentified young woman from the upper-middle class, the narrator, as she tells another story, that of four of her female friends from the same class, as they grow up into women and pursue happiness and love: Gamrah, the shallow, unambitious and spoiled girl who drops out of college to enter into an arranged marriage; Sadeem, the travelled and cultivated young woman; Lamees, the extroverted, success-driven and stubborn girl who transgresses social norms and boundaries; and Michelle, daughter to a Saudi businessman and an American housewife, who is very critical of Saudi traditions and social and religious restrictions. In their respective quests for true love, the girls face setbacks and disappointments. The reason seems to be invariably the men's powerlessness and passivity, and their uncritical compliance with family power, especially mothers, and with rigid social norms. As the narrator tells her stories, she simultaneously exposes and discusses the effects of her narrative on her readers, from outrage and outcry to acceptance and encouragement, as they reach her through emails, articles in newspapers and TV programs. In so doing, the novel could be seen as staging its own reception, collapsing thus the boundaries between the fictitious and the real world/readers, and giving the work an autobiographical dimension.

4.2 *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* as Discourse Practice

4.2.1 Interdiscursivity: Genres.

4.2.1.1 Chick lit in Saudi garb.

Alsanea's novel has been described as belonging to the chick lit genre (Booth 2008; al-Gadeer 2006; Ommundsen 2011). I would argue, however, that this genre is only one of the

several genres mixed and blended in the production of this novel. While some critics trace chick lit as far back as Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (Rasmusson, 2008), it was not until Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diaries* (1996) and Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* (1996) were published that the genre became widely known, resulting in what Zernike (2004) calls "a commercial tsunami," especially after the successful crossover of the two novels to the screen, as feature film and HBO series, respectively. Since then, with illustrations on the covers invoking "Girl Power," including the color pink or high-heeled shoes, and with descriptions inside the novels of shopping sprees, complete with references to high-fashion brands, chick lit has become a commodified brand (Rasmusson, 2008, p. 229). As such, it not only greases the wheels of the publication industry, but it also, as a consequence of its commercial success, promotes a notion of women's liberation that conflates freedom with consumerism and individual power with purchasing power (Rasmusson, 2008, p. 229).

Thus, chick lit, as conceived and marketed by publishers, diverges widely from chick lit as conceived by Mazza, the first to use the term to describe postfeminist fiction. A year before the chick lit craze started, Cris Mazza and Jeffrey DeShell (1995) edited an anthology of experimental fiction that they entitled *Chick Lit: Postfeminist Fiction*. "Chick lit" here was, according to Mazza (2005, p. 18), used in an ironic way that was not meant to "embrace an old frivolous or coquettish image of women but to take responsibility for our part in the damaging, lingering stereotypes." The kind of fiction that Mazza describes as postfeminist and calls chick lit is one where women authors must be "grinning (or sneering) as they write" about women's issues in an "often irreverent way." Their fiction, however, is not comedy nor is it meant to "turn laughter *at* women's concerns into laughter *with* a woman." It is meant to say that women are "no longer afraid to honestly assess and define themselves without having to live up to standards imposed by either a persistent patriarchal world or the insistence that we achieve self-empowerment." It is writing that suggests that women "are not lacking in their share of human weakness and not necessarily self-empowered; that they are dealing with who they've made themselves into rather than blaming the rest of the world," so that at the end, while these authors' "styles and forms are at times quirky, droll, jocular, frisky, ironic," their texts still "carry weight and power" (1995, p. 9).

The chick lit genre, in the ways it is conceived of both by publishers and by Mazza, is one of the several genres drawn upon in the production of *Banāt al-Riyād* (2005). The novel gives a nod to the *Sex and the City*'s series (Alsanea, 2005, p. 91); and, like Bushnell's book, it chronicles the lives of four rich, young and single women as they look for Mr. Right. It makes, moreover, a few references to high-end fashion brands and plastic surgery. The novel also fits Mazza's definition of chick lit in many of its aspects. While it discusses issues of great concern for upper-middle class Saudi women, from not having the right to drive cars or to go to public places with male friends, to being treated like underage citizens by not having the right to sign official forms or represent themselves in financial transactions, it does so with a great deal of irreverence: rhetorical irreverence to literary conventions through the mixing not only of English, Arabish (Arab-English), classical Arabic and various Saudi colloquialisms and regional Arab dialects, but also of genres and seemingly contradictory discourses (as we shall see); political irreverence to official authorities by exposing their common practice of stifling public debate; and social irreverence to society by revealing the contradictions and hypocrisy that riddle social and religious practices.

4.2.1.2 Digital Scheherazade.

However, the book cover features several emoticons of young men and women in Saudi headgear and a mouse on one of the emoticons, all against a background of different hues of blue, invoking a Windows screen (see Appendix 4). In so doing, the publishers situate the book within the email genre, which is indeed one of the two main genres of the book. The narrative in the novel takes the form of electronic messages that the narrator, who is an anonymous young woman, sends to a Yahoo subscription list. At its very beginning, the novel mimics an electronic welcome note to a listserv, with the insertion of these lines in English:

Welcome to the subscribers' list of Seereh wenfadhahet, Or: A Life Story... Laid Bare

To subscribe, send a blank message to:
seerehwenfadha7et_subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To cancel your subscription, send a blank message to:
seerehwenfadha7et_unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

To contact the list manager, send a message to: seerehwenfadha7et@yahoogroups.

The narrative, then, follows as a body of separate emails that juxtapose English with Arabic:

To: seerehwenfadha7et@yahoogroups.com

From: "seerehwenfadha7et"

Date: 13/2/2004

Subject: سأكتب عن صديقاتي

Use of this genre underscores from the outset the heterogeneity constitutive of the text. It also brings to the fore the empowering role of communication technology for women in this conservative, sex-segregated society. It signifies the author's belonging to a community of practice comprised mostly of educated, middle- and upper-middle class youth, both male and female, and thus her ability to have access to, and to redeploy this language resource for self-expression and self-empowerment.

The narrator sends only one message, containing part of a story, each Friday after the midday prayer; her readers have to wait till the following Friday to know what happens next. This type of storytelling strongly conjures Scheherazade's storytelling and deferral techniques. To save herself and the other maidens of the kingdom from King Sheherayar's violence, Scheherazade only tells her stories during the night to keep the king enraptured enough to be willing to keep her alive, as she promises to end her stories in the following night. As already mentioned in Chapter III above, Scheherazade seems to be wielding stories as power with a view to ultimately subverting the reductive discourse on women to which the king subscribes and which reifies women as a threat to control by death. Storytelling for Scheherazade is then a form of empowerment and liberating agency. Thanks to it, she inverts roles so that the king becomes the passive listener while she is the agent of change (see Ghazoul 1996 and Malti-Douglas 1991).

Alsanea would be a modern Scheherazade in Saudi guise and her narrator a "digital Scheherazade," in Mernissi's terms (2004), as she seeks to wield the same power as *The Nights'* Scheherazade, albeit through a modern medium, to achieve a similar action: social change by disrupting preconceived stereotypical ideas about men and women, and exposing

social hypocrisy. “To you, I am writing my letters. Maybe they will pull the trigger of change ...” the narrator declares at the beginning of her narrative (Alsanea, 2005, p. 10; my translation). While Scheherazade addresses her sister, Dinarzade and Sheherayar before the start of her stories to keep the king engaged, Alsanea’s narrator, helped by the email format that allows for the simulation of a two-way mediated communication, makes a point of addressing her readers in a mix of conversational and oral performance genres. This mix is actualized in the text by the use of textual techniques proper to dialogue, such as turn taking in this excerpt:

My friend Bandar, from Riyadh, is upset with me because, in his opinion, I try to depict men from the Western region like angels [...] all while portraying Bedouins and men from the central and eastern regions of the country as vulgar [...].

It has nothing to do with geography, Bandar. This is a story that I tell as it happened. I am sure we cannot generalize about such issues [...] I hope that you, my dear, are the rule, not the exception, among those you defend (pp. 242-243; my translation).

It is also actualized by the use of appellatives and expressions suggesting immediate engagement with the audience proper to oral performance genre, like “Ladies, young girls and gentlemen, I am about to reveal to you the most explosive scandals and the wildest parties of all...” (Alsanea, 2005, p. 9; my translation), with which the anonymous narrator starts her very first email. But the parallelism between the storyteller and the narrator is nowhere more obvious than in the metaphor used in this passage in which the narrator addresses threats of censorship by the State:

I’ve heard that King Abdulaziz City is trying to block the email sites through which I send my weekly emails by way of preventing vice and debauchery [...]. I’ve only asked for a small space within the spider web where I can sit down with my legs crossed, and tell you my stories. (2005, p. 97; my translation)

Another sub-genre in the novel is that of the classical *adab*, as defined in Chapter I above. Indeed, the emails are a composite of Western and Arabic poetry excerpts, verses from the Quran and the prophet’s tradition, anecdotes, proverbs and popular sayings from both Arab and Western traditions, as well as excerpts of songs.

Genres are social activities in their discursive aspect, meant to achieve specific actions or purposes (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 70-71), and “constitute particular sorts of social relations between interactants” (p. 75). Accordingly, through the storytelling genre, the narrator/author positions herself hierarchically as a storyteller vis-à-vis her silent readers, and seizes control over them so she can wield discursive power in her public sphere, both the fictional and the real. By drawing on the conversational, email and adab genres, however, the narrator/author also clearly seeks to demystify this hierarchy, for stronger discursive power, by establishing relations of social closeness and belonging to particular communities of practice, mainly the community of young readers adept at using the e-mail genre, and the wider community of readers familiar with classical Arabic literary heritage, thus cutting across generations as well as across the Peninsula and the Arab world, in general. The author’s higher purpose seems to be to promote ideas of social change along with the very kind of debate and participative public sphere that she believes her socio-political context lacks. In one of the emails staging a conversation between Alsanea and her anticipated readers, the narrator/author says:

I assure you that I enjoyed reading all your opinions, even the ones I don’t agree with. I am happy that you follow my emails, and I am even happier to see how varied and different your opinions are, because this shows that some of you have started to develop the ability to think for themselves, independently of what the majority thinks, and the ability to form a strong opinion which they firmly defend...” (Alsanea, 2005, p. 103; my translation)

4.2.2 Interdiscursivity: Discourses.

4.2.2.1 Islam for women’s rights.

This hybridization of genres is mirrored at the level of discourses; indeed, Alsanea’s novel incorporates three overarching discourses. The first one is a general discourse critiquing social practices. It permeates the novel, and linguistic traces of it are found both in the emails’ introductions and in the narrated stories. In the introductions, the author stages dialogues with her anticipated Saudi readership by having the narrator simulate dialogues, often with critical readers. The point seems to be not so much to give space to critical voices in society, as to dramatically enact and stage dialogue with such voices in the author’s real world, in order for her to better unsettle narratives that she sees as resisting a necessary change. This

argumentation often takes the form of indirect reported speech or narrative reporting of speech, sometimes with implicit/assumed values, as in “[s]ome raised hell over my last email and the story of Faisal and Michelle. Unfortunately, these people always shout louder than the rest...” (Alsanea, 2005, p. 113; my translation). In this instance, the narrator (and through her, the author) does not name her interlocutors, nor does she specify what community they belong to as social actors—whether they represent the religious institution, are journalists or intellectuals with access to media platforms, or are some of her regular readers—thus giving herself leeway to criticize their voices forcefully, without risking to be challenged. Instead of reporting their speech either directly or indirectly using “neutral structuring verbs” free of any evaluation, such as “say”, or even metapositional expressive verbs, such as “complain” (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994), the narrator chooses to ignore the content of their speech altogether. Instead, she reports on their manner and attitude, using hyperbole “raised hell,” and what could be described as an explicitly evaluative “prosodic descriptive verb” (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994), namely “shout.” In so doing, the narrator makes her detractors appear emotional and incoherent rather than authoritative or legitimate. She thus voids their speech and undermines whatever argument they may have. After such instances of speech reporting, the narrator often answers in evaluative statements or even in modalized interrogative sentences, as in “*wouldn't* it have been *more appropriate* if those *vengeful* people revolted against the *ugly ideas* and *sick* traditions instead of revolting against the one who's only talking about them?” (Alsanea, 2005, p. 112; my translation and emphasis). The introductions are also replete with affective and cognitive mental process verbs, some of which are explicit markers of modality. The narrator's readers thus “condemn,” “blame,” “long to,” “warn,” and “annoy,” while she “likes,” “knows,” “admits,” “hopes” and “appreciates.” The values embedded in the narrator's introductions, traces of which are also to be found in the narrated stories, are therefore of explicit criticism of the “rotten” society, full of “contradictions” that lead to “sorrows,” “disappointments,” “sad” poetry, and “depressive” songs; and an equally overt call for peaceful “rebellion.”

The second overarching discourse is a gendered one, that of Islamic feminism, where Islam is seen as a frame of reference for gender equality and women's rights. This discourse is textualized not so much through evaluative statements or modalized interrogative sentences, as

through the use of intertextuality and framing. Indeed, specific Quran verses and sayings about and by the Prophet are featured as epigraphs, at the margin of emails talking specifically about how one of the female characters is victimized by men or society. If the margin, like Kristeva (1984) suggests, is the locus of subversion and dissidence, then these intertexts constitute strong moments of disruption in the misogynistic discourse. For instance, the 12th email tells in detail how Gamrah's husband was very demanding of her with regards to housework. Interestingly, it starts with a quote of Aisha, the prophet's wife, maintaining that the prophet was the one serving his family and not the other way around. The thirteenth email, recounting how Rashid slaps Gamrah twice, starts with another saying by Aisha to the effect that the prophet never laid a hand on anybody nor did he ever strike anything with his hands in his household. The epigraphs clearly function here as points of opposition to male authority—an authority that, as we shall see, derives in great part from a particular reading of religious texts. By grounding her critique of misogynistic social practices in the same religious scriptures that religious authorities claim to uphold, the narrator/author is underscoring the historicity of the dominant religious discourse, disrupting hegemonic structures governing social and religious praxis, and redeploying them for her own interests.

Emancipatory discourse is a second gendered discourse in the novel and is manifested in terms of content through the author's exploration not only of multiple forms of oppression but also of multiple forms of self-empowerment and rejection of victimhood. The novel thus exposes oppressive practices against women, including laws prohibiting women to drive, all while exploring ways of self-empowerment. As the story progresses, getting settled in a happy marriage progressively takes a second stage to other means of self-affirmation. Gamrah contests her maternal uncle's involvement in her life as well as her father's passivity, and turns to religion and prayers to find the power to reject the husband proposed to her. Lamees always prioritizes her studies and career over her love life, and denies her husband the right to give his opinion on important decisions, like the decision to don the most strict Islamic garb. As to Sadeem, after her father's death, she decides to take matters into her own hands and to stop counting on a man to take care of her, so she starts a business and rejects the marriage proposal of the man she loves because he proved he was weak before traditions and family.

A third gendered discourse is that of men as weaker than women. Unlike her female heroines, her male characters are unable to reflect on, let alone fight against, oppressing social norms. While high school graduate Gamrah can and does reject a marriage she does not want, PhD student Rashed submits to his parents' will and marries a woman he does not want. While Nouri's father left his family because he could not face society's stigmatization of his son due to his sexuality, Nouri's mother flaunts her son's sexuality by consistently introducing herself as Um (mother of) Nuwayyer, a diminutive of the name Nouri that denotes effeminacy, and thus acknowledges the son's homosexuality. While the 30-something famous and authoritative man of politics is unable to marry the woman he loves because his parents and friends did not approve of his choice, young Sadeem decides for herself whom to marry and whom to reject. In terms of texture, male characters are thus passivized through lexico-grammatical choices denoting weakness and passivity: they are "passive," "chess pawns" *moved by* their families, easily "threatened" *by strong intelligent women*, put on "smiles that hide bleeding hearts," and have "souls deprived of the right to choose." They "kneel" helpless "at the mother's feet," and do not trespass "the boundaries delineated for them by their families." They are "weaklings" denied, by law, entry to malls if they are single.

4.2.2.2 When Quranic verses and Barry Manilow rhyme.

The novel also draws on a cosmopolitan discourse. It is replete with excerpts from poems, songs and sayings not only by Arab but also by Western and Eastern poets or philosophers, such as the classical Greek philosopher Socrates, Irish Oscar Wilde, Indian Tagore, British George Bernard Shaw, French Victor Hugo, Lebanese-American Gibran Khalil Gibran, Egyptian Ibrahim Naji, and Syrian Nizar Qabbani. Examples of sources of inspiration for her actions as social agent trying to initiate change in society include Martin Luther King (Alsanea, 2005, p. 113). On Saint Valentine's day, the men in the novel give their sweethearts teddy bears, singing Barry Manilow's *You know I can't smile without you*; and Paris, London and Chicago are but some of the places where, like the author herself, the heroines evolve as they travel for all purposes, from recovering from a broken heart and receiving professional training to spending a vacation, shopping and doing graduate studies.

Another general discourse in the novel is the State oppression and persecution discourse. It is a minor one and gets backgrounded even as it is enacted. The author achieves this backgrounding through several techniques. She only refers once to the “Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice,” i.e. the Religious Police, even when she talks about particular actions by Saudi youth that derive directly from the State control of the public space. When the author/narrator talks about the repression of the Shiite minority in Saudi Arabia, she does not use the verb “persecute”, but nominalizes it both times it appears in the novel, and completely suppresses the State as the subject/agent to obscure its agency (Alsanea, 2005, p.161).

If discourses are ways of representing the world and the system of beliefs, and of establishing identities and social relations, the specific combination of discourses in the novel, along with the genre mixing and the complex web of intertexts that accompany these discourses, represents a world characterized by a “mélange culture” (Pieterse, 2003), where social subjects, men and women alike, are looking beyond local hegemonic narratives for identification, and are constantly negotiating their way through multiple cultural and historical influences. They navigate between two impulses: that of modernization, conceived in its narrow sense as Westernization, on the one hand, and of local social and religious norms, on the other, thereby carving for themselves hybrid identities. In this world, the women are active agents. More than the men, they incorporate heterogeneous elements from their remote past as well as from the present’s global culture, to re-create and re-vision both selfhood and community.

4.2.3 Intertextuality.

This criss-cross and cross-over at the level of interdiscursivity is paralleled at the level of manifest intertextuality. Indeed, the very first and very last lines of the novel are intertexts. The electronic welcome note to the listserv that the narrator sends to her audience is a case of both constitutive intertextuality—whereby the author signals her use of the email genre—and manifest intertextuality. The listserv’s name “seerehwenfadhahet”, literally “a life story and it has just been exposed,” is a direct nod to and a play on the words of a Lebanese TV show’s

title, *Seereh Wenfatahet*, literally “a story and it has just been opened”. This show, presented by famous and multiple award-winning Lebanese talk show host, Zaven Kouyoumdjian, is one of the highest rated shows not only in Lebanon but in Arab countries as a whole. In it, Kouyoumdjian boldly explored the most sensitive social and political issues of relevance to Arab societies. In fact, he took the show to several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. This instance of intertextuality is therefore an elaborate *mise en scene* whereby the narrator and, through her, the author, flags up her project and takes the staging in her writing a step further: she is not only a digital Scheherazade but also a younger and feminine version of Zaven Kouyoumdjian, promising her audience a show where she boldly “exposes” her society’s ills and taboos.

The author/narrator also ends her storytelling with a common Islamic prayer, which helps accentuate the religious voice in the novel—a voice that is very prominent throughout the text, including in epigraphs. In fact, much of the intertextuality in *Banāt Al-Riyād* takes the form of epigraphs. Genette (1997) defines the epigraph as simply “a quotation placed en exergue [...], generally at the head of a work or a section of a work” (p. 144). Linking the body of the text to its periphery and guiding the reader in how to read the text, the epigraph is part of the paratext that is not always semantically relevant to the text body but that always fulfill one function or another. One of its most powerful functions is what Genette (1997) calls “the epigraph effect,” an effect that the epigraph has by its mere presence in the text (p. 160). Quoting previous authoritative voices gives authors, especially the young ones, “consecration and unction of a(nother) prestigious filiation” (p. 160). As such, epigraphs function in themselves as “a signal [...] of culture, a password of intellectuality,” and their inclusion in a novel betrays “a desire to integrate the novel [...] into a cultural tradition” (p. 160). Epigraphs, however, are also intertextual in that they link prior texts to a new one, thus creating dialogic relations between texts and voices.

In *Banāt Al-Riyād*, epigraphs frame almost all emails. They vary from Quranic verses and sayings from the prophet’s tradition as explained above, to poems, excerpts from songs and quotations by authors and philosophers. While religious epigraphs serve as a frame of reference for the author’s feminist agenda, the other epigraphs serve a “consecration” function

for this young, first-time author. They betray a desire to integrate not only a local or even regional literary and cultural tradition, but to world literature and culture. This desire is in accordance with the discursive and generic mix as discussed above, in that it is one aspect of the author's/narrator's hybrid identity as constructed in the novel. In addition to this consecration function, the epigraphs all function as a comment on the emails. Many talk, indeed, of love, heartache and the differences between men and women in a way that reinforces the narrator/author's view of love as essential but full of traps. The variety of the sources seems to be constructing romantic love as a universal value, and to signify unity in that construct despite differences of gender, race, religion and culture, which goes again hand in hand with the dialogical quality of the novel and the hybrid identity of its author and heroines.

Through hybrid discourses, genres and multiple intertextualities, Alsanea actively enacts in her novel a gendered identity for her and her heroines as hybrid, glocalized subjects with access to language resources and ability to redeploy them for self-empowerment. Through the production of her text, she positions herself as equal to social actors representing hegemonic literary and religious institutions, and capable of engaging them in dialogue to precisely open breaches in their narratives. Her text is thus highly dialogical, seamlessly weaving a multiplicity of voices, some of which are conventionally perceived as antagonistic (like the feminist emancipatory voice and the official religious voice) into its narrative fabric. However, rather than bracketing or accentuating difference, her objective is to resolve the struggle over meaning by appealing to common ground, be it logic, universal values or religion. She seems to be saying that differences need not be seen as mutually exclusive, nor as contradictions, but as complementary and necessary to form one healthy whole. In fact, in her 23rd email, the narrator addresses this heterogeneity directly. After a quote by T.S. Elliot, she goes on to say:

The Quranic verses, prophet sayings and religious citations that I include in my emails inspire me, and so do quotations by famous people and the songs that my messages contain. Is this a contradiction, as some claim? Should I lie and pretend to only like one thing and to be one-dimensional? I am like any other young woman of my age, or rather like any other human being anywhere else! (Alsanea, 2005, p. 158; my translation)

4.2.4 Reception.

Official reception of *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* went through two stages already set up in the novel's narrative. The novel was published in Lebanon and initially banned in Saudi Arabia, due to its detailed description of socially transgressive practices among upper-middle class youth, from drinking wine and flirting, to young women easily transgressing laws like the ban on driving. Although not stated, the ban might also have had to do with the clear, although timid, criticism of State practices, including the stifling of opinions and censure on the Internet and literature. Paradoxically, however, and despite the official ban by the State, it was Saudi writer and then Minister of Labour, Ghazi al Gosaibi, who introduced the novel on its back cover as a work "worthy of being read," from whose author he "expect[ed] a lot." Such an introduction undermines the State's power, and further enhances the struggle over the order of discourse enacted in the novel. It is thus no surprise that the ban was soon lifted and the book could circulate freely in Saudi Arabia where it became a bestseller.

At the literary level, local and regional Arab literary critics and literary bodies have not given much importance to the novel, in part because of its mixing of classical Arabic and several colloquialisms, deeming it unrepresentative of Saudi literature, in particular, and Arabic literature, in general. Al Ghadeer (2006), for instance, argues that the novel is not "an innovation in the Arabic novel and any comparison will result in showing the narrative's aesthetic limitations, including its glaring lack of characterization and its shallow views on gender and on the writing of modernity" (p. 301). She further criticizes the novel for failing to "reflect on the human-machine interface, informational globalization, and technology writing," as well as for its "traditional modes of narration, overstuffed prose, and chatty language" (Al-Ghadeer, 2006, p. 301). Ultimately, Al Ghadeer attributes the novel's commercial success in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to the voyeuristic experience it offers its audience (p. 299). The novel became indeed so popular that Allen (2009) places it, at least in terms of popularity, in the ranks of Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jassad* (1992; *Memory in The Flesh*), and Alaa al-Aswany's *Imārat Ya'qoubiān* (2002; *The Yacoubian Building*), both award-winning novels by older authors with longer literary careers than Alsanea (p. 10).

Voyeurism might indeed be, to a certain extent, behind the reception of the novel by audiences from Arab countries outside of the Gulf region, for whom Saudi social practices, especially within the closed and wealthy upper-middle class, may seem curious and strange. Besides, the name of the listserv, as discussed above, gives readers a rather explicit promise of scandal talk that must titillate their voyeurism. However, this cannot account in itself for the success of the novel, especially in Saudi Arabia. Through its irreverence towards established literary conventions, towards social practices oppressive of both men and women, its hybrid discourse, its rejection of grand nationalistic and identity narratives and its emphasis on forms of oppression of immediate interest to young Saudis, the novel speaks to and engages a young hybrid generation looking forward to social change, all while it undermines official and hegemonic narratives and values, hence the contradicting types of reception. In fact, these conflicting reactions to the novel are symptomatic of the dissonance between the State and its institutions, on the one hand, and, on the other, the youth and dissident movements in many Arab countries, the same dissonance that developed into the Arab Spring. They establish the young author as an active agent of change whose minority text, through its aesthetics as much as its content, successfully showed not only social contradictions, but also the historicity of literary conventions and the hegemonic readings of religious texts.

4.2 *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* as Text

Analysis of transitivity in *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* as in any other novel, mainly the material process verbs, can give insight into the author's own understanding and experience of gendered power relations. For the purposes of this study, I chose the only instance where there is interaction between more than one female and one male character all at once. It is a chapter in the life of the weakest, least educated and least proactive of the four female protagonists, i.e. Gamrah (Alsanea, 2005, pp. 212-216; Appendix 5). In it, the author describes a very traditional event, that of an uncle trying to arrange a marriage of convenience for his divorced niece, Gamrah. The latter approaches the idea with reluctance; her uncle is dismissive of her feelings and the potential husband is rude. As such, the passage describing the event is an ideal "moment of crisis" to submit to transitivity analysis.

In this short passage, the three male characters are the syntactic subject/semantic agents of no more than eight material processes, while the mother, Gamrah and her sister are depicted as subjects/agents of 15 material processes.

Male characters	Female characters
The eight years he spent with	Um Gamrah was literally pushing <u>her daughter</u>
... when he had come to ask for her hand three years before.	Gamrah sat not far from him
... an opportunity he had not given <u>her</u>	A scrutiny she did not subject <u>Rashid</u> to when
... who did not move	His sister was waving <u>at him</u>
Abu Musa'ed suddenly set off a <u>bomb</u>	Although she had just joined <u>them</u> a few minutes
Her uncle came with her father...	Gamrah was shifting <u>her gaze</u> from her father to her uncle to Abu Musa'ed.
Her uncle left	She stood up
Her father left , too	... and left <u>the room</u>
	She gave <u>her uncle</u> a scathing look
	Her mother soothed <u>her</u>
	And cheered <u>her up</u>
	You spoil <u>her</u> a lot
	What is <u>this man</u> that you took ?
	Gamrah performed <u>the prayer</u> ...
	... after Mudi taught <u>her</u> how to.

What is noticeable in this passage is that the father's figure is both passive and voiceless. He is involved in one material verb process, i.e. "the opportunity he had not given her," and in only two verbal processes. The other remaining material verb processes attributed to the male characters do not have an effect on the world. They "come" and "leave." In contrast, the mother is depicted as an active agent whose actions have an outcome; she is the one literally pushing her daughter to go meet the potential groom, the one to sooth, calm, and spoil the

children. She is also a key “sayer,” who “enjoins,” “repeats” and “advises.” This denotes that the mother figure is “activated” while the father and the uncle are “passivated” (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 111). The only verb attributed to Gamrah’s sister, “teach,” is a material process verb with a goal and a beneficiary, and thus an effect on the world. However, though Gamrah is an agent, most of her actions do not affect the world. She “sits,” “shifts” her gaze, “gives” a scathing “look,” and “performs” a prayer. Compared to the mother figure, she, too, is passivated. This passivization will resurface at the end of the marriage proposal story: after performing a prayer asking for guidance from God, Gamrah “dreams” a dream—a behavioural process that further passivates her—that scares her off the marriage proposal. It is her mother who ultimately rejects the proposal on her behalf. Transitivity choices in this passage go in line with both the characterization of Gamrah as weak, and the gendered discourses adopted in the production of the novel. They reflect a world experience in which male kin members are in no way more powerful than or in control of women, and where religion and female solidarity are strong forms of self-empowerment.

4.3 *Banāt al-Riyād* as Social Practice

Besides its religious position as host of two of the holiest sites in the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia owes its particularity not only in the Arabian Peninsula but in the Arab world, in general, to other two factors. Both the legal and political systems are derived directly from scripture as interpreted by the ruling class. On the other hand, the state enforces radical sex segregation in society, which has had tremendous impact on women’s conditions and status in the country. Prior to the formation of Saudi Arabia as a nation-state, and up until the 16th century, women could still benefit from a tradition that started in the peninsula with the advent of Islam and that allowed women to be leaders, authorities in political and religious matters and speakers in their own right.³¹

³¹ According to Arebi (1994), by stating that both man and woman were created from the same soul, which in Arabic is a feminine concept, *ruh*, and by presenting narratives of women establishing them as capable of leadership and of contesting dominant discourses, the Quran “inaugurated a revolution” by reconceptualizing woman as equal to man and as a subject capable of leadership and independence of judgment (p. 12). Roded (1994) concurs by holding that biographical collections from early Islamic history up until the 16th century show

However, women's status in Arabia changed dramatically with the formation of the new nation-state and the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1936, based on an alliance between the Saudi royal family, the tribal leaders and the religious *'ulama* adhering to Wahhabi thought. This alliance did not guarantee a power balance between these three centers insofar as power was mostly concentrated in the hands of the monarchy, which was increasingly introducing modernizing policies and implementing economic changes patterned on capitalism. This growing power of the state constituted a threat for the *'ulama*, while the social changes resulting from the economic ones presented a civilizational challenge for them, which all created a struggle between the state and the *'ulama*. At the center of this struggle for power were women. The religious leaders started constructing a contesting discourse that troped women as honour, and construed them as the "gate of westernization" (Arebi, 1994, p. 18). In the public realm, women were less individual human beings than symbols of a culture, "physical markers" of norms and traditions, as Cooke puts it (2000, p. 118).

Thus reified into a homogenous category, women were weak and fragile and needed to be controlled and/or protected by concealment in order for norms to be preserved against the onslaught of westernization. As a response, Saudi monarchy always sought to appease the *'ulama* and confirm its strict adherence to religion, including through restrictive measures against women. Women's education was thus, until 2002, under the Department of Religious Guidance, while that of their male counterparts has always been under the Ministry of Education (Hamdan, 2005, p. 44). In addition, in the aftermath of the 1979 Mecca uprising by the *'ulama*, the State legislated a series of laws, including gender segregation, a ban on women's travel abroad unless with a close male relative, and a ban on conducting and managing their own businesses unless through a male representative.³²

In the 1980s, Saudi Arabia was going through the *ṣaḥwah* (revivalism) and increasing religious conservatism, a movement that would gain more momentum in the 1990s as the State would try to balance its acceptance of Western armies on its land. Paradoxically, the country

an astounding number of entries dedicated to famous women, including religious authorities, speakers, poets and war leaders.

³² This law is very paradoxical in that "40% of the nation's private wealth" is owned by Saudi women (Hamdan, 2005, p. 47).

was undergoing at the same time deep social changes that touched many segments of society, thanks to extreme affluence and to the implemented capitalist model of change that goes starkly against the tribal structures that Saudi Arabia was, and still is, maintaining, as well as the Wahhabi thought it is upholding. Since these contradictions undergird the belief in the necessity of controlling women, they constituted a “center of gravity” for their writing (Arebi, 1994, p. 16). In an interview during her tour in the US to promote the novel, Rajaa Alsanea (2007; interviewed by Tareen) holds that it is an attempt at not only highlighting the contradictions riddling Saudi society, but also fighting them:

We’re living in the 21st century and there are still traditions from the 19th century, and that’s just insane [...]. You have the Internet... and freedom of speech. You have modern schools and modern hospitals. And everything around you is digital. And yet you have to go through all this pain when you want to get married [...]. It’s my obligation to try to fix things in Saudi.

It is, therefore, at this precise juncture of Saudi history that ever-increasing numbers of women, concealed and confined to the realm of the private, paradoxically started to appropriate the powerful discursive device of literature that belongs to the realm of the public. In other words, increasing numbers of women started trafficking in words, bypassing the enforced concealment, and constructing an alternative discourse aimed at redefining women from reified symbols and tropes to complex social subjects.

Another resource of empowerment for Saudi women came from technological development, mainly Internet use. While use of communication technology is shaped by already existing institutional, social and political structures, the Internet still provides new ways of (inter)acting, and therefore of knowing, being and doing that allow social subjects to construct their identities through “mixing spirituality, advanced technology [...], and the culture of millenarist doom” (Castells, 1996, pp. 23-4). Not originating from within established hegemonic institutions, these identities can “introduce, from the outset, an alternative logic” that erodes the power of these institutions. Thus, while Saudi Arabia exercises heavy censorship on Internet use, its 53.5% household Internet penetration rate (the Communication and Information Technology Commission, 2010) meant abolition of sex-segregation online, more connectedness and networking for Saudi women with communities

across the world, and therefore more access for them to knowledge and information resources, as well as more visibility and possibilities for self-expression within the online community.

Banāt Al-Riyād, in its production and texture, is both a discursive manifestation of all these changes and a discursive action on the order of discourse, and consequently on the social order. In it, Alsanea joins many other contemporary Saudi women writers in putting forward an alternative, feminist reading of the very religious texts on which much of the official religious discourse is based, and in dismantling the structures of power that try to control women's lives. Alsanea, however, sets herself apart from her predecessors in three specific ways. While texts by Saudi women writers of the 1980s and 1990s are characterized by symbolism and metaphoric language, Alsanea's escapes any easy categorization as the author threads between realism, in the way she shuns symbolism and interpretive difficulty, and a more experimental writing through the incorporation of the *mise-en-abyme* technique, the metatext and the linguistic collage. While her predecessors adopt a narrative of gender equality within victimization, whereby "man" is constructed as the equal of woman, and thus "not only as a needed mate but also as a victimized 'inmate'" (Arebi, 1994, p. 272), Alsanea pushes this narrative further to write men as less powerful than, and so inferior to, women. But the most subversive aspect of Alsanea's novel yet is its identity politics and its implication for Saudi society. As much through the genres, the discourses, and the intertexts, as through the stories themselves, Alsanea enacts her own and her heroines' gendered identity as active agents, constructing for themselves that empowering space of "fuzziness and *mélange*, cut-and-mix, criss-cross and cross-over" that is hybridity (Pierterse, 1994, p. 171). Far from being the passive "products of the neoliberal capitalist economy," that al-Rasheed (2011) claims they are, thereby nourishing the hegemonic narrative of Saudi women as objects easily manipulated by external forces, they are active parts in a movement of globalization, where globalization is "the framework for the diversification and amplification of 'sources of the self'" (Pierterse, 1994, p. 168). By drawing on local, regional and Western literary and cultural resources, mixing classical Arabic, English and vernaculars, and moving easily between multiple geographies, all while keeping religion as a frame of reference, Alsanea and her heroines create a "tandem operation of local/global dynamics" whereby they at once "assert local loyalties [...] and share in global values and lifestyles" (Pierterse, 1994, p. 165). In so

doing, Alsanea's novel signals social renewal as it confronts the centers of power with the futility of trying to keep a monopoly over production of meanings and discourses. More importantly, it shatters any essentialist myths in Saudi Arabia about women and men and about a cultural and identity purity that needs to be preserved.

4.4 Islamic Feminism in Translation

In addition, Alsanea is shattering other essentialist myths—myths this time residing in the West about the Arab-Muslim difference, and about Arab-Muslim women as silent and voiceless objects, leading shuttered lives and waiting for rescue. Alsanea and her heroines are globetrotters living within the same 'global mélange' (Pierterse, 1994) where the Western subject lives. They are pursuing similar commodities of gratification and partake of the same cultural goods and artifacts. They may uphold a different religion and wear head covers, but they appreciate Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, and socialize to the tunes of Pink Floyd. In fact, it is this similarity within difference that Alsanea wanted her novel to showcase in its English version. She (2007/2008) explains that she wants her Anglo-American audience to read it and say:

Oh, yes. It is a very conservative Islamic society. The women there do live under male dominance. But they are full of hopes and plans and determination and dreams. And they fall deeply in and out of love just like women anywhere else. And I hope you will see, too, that little by little some of these women are beginning to carve out their own way—not the Western way, but one that keeps what is good about the values of their religion and culture, while allowing for reform. (p. viii)

For while Alsanea fails to articulate or even hint at "questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations" in her original novel, something that Ella Shohat (1992, p. 109) warns against in relation to any celebration of hybridity, she is very aware of the power balance that constructs her and her culture in the Western gaze (Alsanea, 2007/2008, p. viii). So in addition to the subversive politics behind her translation project, she and her heroines defiantly and unapologetically flaunt their Muslim identity in the face of post-9/11 Western discourse on Islam through the very symbol emblematic, in the West, of "Muslim women's" victimhood. Gamrah goes against her husband's wishes and refuses to remove her head cover while in Chicago. After Lamees' return from Canada where she pursued graduate studies in

medicine, she leaves the conventional head cover to don the complete veil, without consulting her husband; and Alsanea, herself, did not depart from her head cover in the United States where she went to pursue graduate studies in dentistry.

So how has this Other woman that is different from, yet similar in so many respects to, the Self been translated in the West? What refractions has the novel gone through in the process of its translation and reception? How did translation rewrite the identities and voices of the social actors involved in the original context, starting with the author herself? Two years after its release in Arab countries, Penguin selected the novel for translation into English and commissioned the well-known Arabic-English literary translator and translation scholar, Marilyn Booth, to translate it. Both editors and author, however, rejected Booth's translation (see Booth, 2008), and the author reviewed the English text before it was finally published in 2007. Within the same year, the French Plon would commission two Arabic-French translators, namely Simon Corthay and Charlotte Woillez, to translate *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ* in French, and soon versions of the novel in other languages would appear. The novel is Alsanea's very first and hitherto only published literary piece. While it developed into a bestseller in Saudi Arabia, it was still, as mentioned above, not critically acclaimed, and moreover, it belongs to both local (Saudi) and regional (Arab) literatures that, according to Chapter I above, are still shunned in the West, compared to other world literatures. Consequently, the simple fact of such a rapid selection of the novel for translation by such a big publisher as Penguin raises a series of other questions pertaining to center/periphery power relations and to modes of consumption of Third-World women's literary texts, thereby casting doubt from the outset on whether the gendered politics in the original will make it across language and culture barriers to the transnational market. Why has Rajaa Alsanea's novel been translated so quickly in both French and English when it is a first-time novel that has not been canonized locally? In addition to refractions in the process of translation, what other refractions has the novel gone through after its release to the market? To answer these questions, the French and English translations will be analyzed first as text then as discourse practice.

A cursory comparison of the three texts suggests that the French translation is the closest to the original with barely any overtly significant shifts apart from the obligatory ones due to differences between the Arabic and French language systems. It can broadly be described as foreignizing in that it does not erase the cultural difference inscribed in the original. Culture-specific concepts are generally transcribed, and while the translators did not preserve the variety of vernaculars and Arabic dialects in the process of translating, they generally reproduced the rhetoricity of the original, to borrow Spivak's term (1993), by translating colloquialisms, songs and poems literally, and kept all English texts that were in the original. The example below is a case in point. The author writes in the introduction of the sixth email:

هو أنا اتكلمت انجليزي أصلاً؟! صحيح تجيك التهاميم وانت نايم! يو قت أكبوزد وايل يور اسليب! حتى لا تقولوا أنني لا أعرف انجليزي... (p. 45)

Gloss translation: Have I talked in English at all? Indeed, accusations fall on you while you're sleeping! Or like the English say: *you get accused while you're asleep!* Just so you don't think I don't speak English ...

In this example, we have both a proverb, i.e. "les accusations te tombent dessus alors que tu dors" and an English text in Arabic script. The French translators rendered it as follows:

French target text (FTT): Mais d'abord, d'où elle sort que je parle anglais? C'est vrai ça, on t'accuse alors que tu es en train de dormir! *You get accused while you're asleep.* Juste pour que vous ne disiez pas que je ne parle pas anglais! (p. 45)

In other words, the proverb has not been domesticated. Instead, it was translated literally, and the English text was kept in English and italicized to signify it was in English in the original. Drawing on Spivak and talking about her own experience of translating *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* into English, Booth (2008) argues that such "literalist surrender" and engagement with the rhetoricity of the original are "a key to responsible translation" (p. 200). Indeed, she explains, the translation of such subversive texts "must also 'skew' and skid, disrupt and poke, and above all avoid what Spivak calls 'a sort of with-it translate'" (Booth, 2008, p. 200). It was "a maximum amount of [such] 'literalist surrender'" that Booth (p. 201) attempted in her translation of *Banāt al-Riyāḍ*, but both editor and author rejected it, opting for a more "domesticating" translation. It was a decision that Booth condemned on grounds that so much of the rhetoricity, and therefore the language politics, of the original is lost. In the example

below, for instance, all four sentences were deleted by the author, and the passage where they appear in the original was significantly abridged in the translation.

However, a deep analysis of the French and English translations in comparison to one another and to the Arabic ST outside of the foreignizing/domesticating paradigm, and from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, reveals that while the English translation presents the most pragma-semiotic shifts, ranging from deletions to additions in the form of footnotes and embedded contextualization to make the TT more coherent for readers, it is the French translation that contains the most textural shifts, mainly at the level of transitivity, passivization, cohesion, thematic structure and lexical choices. While not necessarily conscious, these reflect two different, and indeed opposing, ideologies, or at least have two different ideological implications. Where the ETT seems to be aligned with the discourses of the ST and based on a similar mental representation, the FTT draws on a different mental representation of events, processes and interactants involved in the ST, and ends up undermining the discourses of the ST. The overall ideological implication of the shifts in the FTT is the activation of specific mental images of the women/female characters in the novel.

4.4.1 Woman as passive.

Going back to the short passage describing the scene of an arranged marriage above, comparison between the original and the French translation yields interesting findings. The passage opens up with an action by Gamrah's mother:

Example 1:

كانت أم قمره تدفع ابنتها دفعا لمقابلة أبو مساعد. (p. 212)

GT: Um Gamrah was literally pushing her daughter to meet Abu Musa'ed.

FTT: La mère de Gamra encourageait vivement sa fille... (p. 201)

ETT: Gamrah's mother prodded her daughter to meet Abu Musa'ed. (p. 203)

While in the original, the character of the mother is attributed an intentional, causative material process verb, "to push," that has both a patient, Gamrah, and a material effect on the world, i.e. having Gamrah enter the room to meet the potential husband, the French translation

gives the mother figure a verbal process verb, “encourager,” thereby limiting the mother’s agentive power. In contrast, the English version uses the verb “to prod,” which has two meanings: 1) to poke or stir; 2) To incite into action (*Merriam-Webster*). In other words, the English verb describes both a material process with an effect and a patient, and a verbal process that is itself causative, and thus with stronger effect on the patient than “to encourage.”

The passage then proceeds to describe the potential husband, Abu Musa’ed:

Example 2:

كان أبو مساعد في السادسة والأربعين، سبق له الزواج لكنه على السنين الثماني التي قضاها مع زوجته لم يرزق منها بأطفال... (p. 212)

GT: Abu Musa’ed was forty-six, and had already been married, but despite the eight years that he had spent with his wife, he hadn’t been blessed with children from her...

FTT: Après huit ans de vie conjugale, sa femme ne lui avait pas donné d’enfants. (p. 201)

ET: He had been married, but in the ten years he had spent with his wife, God had not blessed him with children. (p. 203)

In this instance, we have a total passivation-to-activation shift in the French text as it attributes to the female character, Abu Musa’ed’s ex-wife, a material process verb, while both the Arabic and English texts entirely suppress her by making God, the former implicitly and the latter explicitly, the subject and thus agent in the process of not giving Abu Musa’ed children. But in the process of activating the female character by involving her in a material process, the French translation constructs the narrator’s, and therefore the author’s, world as a misogynistic and backward one where women are still unjustly and unscientifically held accountable for not giving their husbands children. In contrast, in suppressing the agency of the wife, both the Arabic and English texts reflect a perception of the world whereby wives are not held accountable for husbands not having children. In fact, the ETT translators³³ go further in their attempt to mitigate the Anglo-American audience’s possible expectations as to the

³³ While Booth (2008) affirms that her translation has been substantially modified by the author, and while it is easy in some cases to know that the translational choice is that of Alsanea, it is not possible to rule out Booth’s decisions in all cases, especially that her name features, along with Alsanea’s, as a translator of the novel. So for purposes of fairness, I include Booth and talk about “the translators,” instead of “the author.”

misogyny of social practices in the Muslim Saudi society, by increasing the number of years that Abu-Musa'ed spent with his wife before they divorced, and by rendering explicit the idea of God as responsible for giving or withholding children, implicit in the original.

In the following example, an action by a female character as it relates to the male characters undergoes a shift in the same passage:

Example 3:

... وأوشكت أن تغادر الغرفة مع أنها لم تدخل عليهم إلا قبل دقيقتين... (p. 213)

GT: ... and she was about to leave the room even though she had just entered on them a few minutes before.

FTT: Gamra ... était sur le point de quitter la pièce à peine deux minutes après y être entrée (p. 202)

ETT: ... not to walk out of the room even though she had made her entrance no more than a few moments before. (p. 204)

The verb “دخل” /dakhala/ in Arabic means “to enter.” Grammatically, it can be intransitive as in “قد دخل,” literally “he entered,” in which case, it is an intentional non-transactive material process that has an actor but no patient or beneficiary. It can also be transitive as in “دخل الغرفة,” literally “he entered the room.” In this form, it is an intentional non-transactive material process verb that has an actor, namely the person doing the process, and a “range,” i.e. the domain or the scope of the process (Halliday, 1985, p. 134), which is the place. But the verb can also appear in a verb collocation, “دخل على” /dakhala ‘alā/, literally “to enter on [somebody].” In this case, “دخل عليه الغرفة” /dakhala ‘alayhi/, literally “he entered the room on him,” could better be rendered in English by “she joined him in the room,” and in French by “elle l’a rejoint dans la pièce.” In other words, when it takes this form, the verb has, in addition to the actor and the range, a beneficiary. However, in both TTs, the ST verb with beneficiary and range was replaced by the verbs “entrer” and “to enter.” Although the French and English verbs express an intentional material process, they have neither range nor beneficiary, thus limiting the actor’s agency. A few sentences later, when the narrator is talking about the uncle and father, the verb “جاء” /jā’a/, literally “to come” and “venir,” and

which is a material non-transactive process verb that has no range, patient, or beneficiary, is used:

Example 4:

جاء خالها مع أبيها... (p. 214)

GT: Her uncle came with her father.

FTT: Son oncle ... les rejoignit avec son père. (p. 203)

ETT: ... her uncle, with her father behind him, came into her room. (p. 206)

While the ETT gives the figure of the uncle a material process verb with no patient or beneficiary, i.e. “to come,” the process type shifts in the FTT, and instead of the verb “venir,” which is the literal translation of “جاء” /jā’a/, and which does not have a grammatical object/semantic patient or beneficiary, the translators use “rejoindre” where the male character is now involved in a material process with a beneficiary, i.e. the female characters of Gamrah and her mother. Accordingly, where it would have been more “equivalent” transitivity-wise to translate an Arabic verb with “rejoindre” in French, the translators used a French verb with limited range, i.e. “entrer” to describe the female actor’s action. Inversely, when it would have been more “equivalent” to use a process verb with a limited range, like “venir,” they used “rejoindre,” to describe the male actor’s action.

Example 5:

While Gamrah was still in the room, the narrator tells us:

كانت قمره تقلب ناظرها بين أبيها وخالها وأبو مساعد. (p. 214)

GT: Gamrah was shifting her gaze from her father to her uncle to Abu Musa’ed.

Here Gamrah is the doer in a material verb process, “to shift,” with a patient, gaze, and beneficiaries, the men in the room with her. In translation, this becomes:

FTT: Le regard de Gamra passait de son père à son oncle. (p. 203)

ETT: Gamrah was shifting her gaze from her father to her uncle to Abu Musa’ed. (p. 205)

In this instance we have an intentional material process-to-events material process shift in the FTT. Indeed, Gamrah is activated in both the ST and ETT when the author and the English translators respectively put her in the semantic position of doer of the intentional material process verbs “to shift” in the ST and the ETT, when they could have reduced her agency by using a perceptive mental process verb such as “نظر إلى” /*nazara ilā*/, and its English equivalent “look at”. In contrast, the French translators remove the female character from the position of grammatical subject/semantic agent, and, instead, put an inanimate, “le regard,” in the grammatical position of subject, thereby turning an intentional material process into what is called an “events” material process and refers “to the use of verbs with an inanimate Actor, where human agency is either missing or played down” (Jeffries, 2009, p. 41). Since the actor/agent is not missing in the ST, her agency was played down by the French translators through this optional shift.

Example 6:

Gamrah listens to her mother’s advice so she calms down and seeks guidance from God by performing the *Istikhārah* prayer, i.e. the guidance prayer, and here again the text is subject to an optional shift in French translation that diminishes a female character’s agency:

(p. 216) ...صلت قمره ركعتين مساء تلك الليلة بعد أن علمتها موزي صفة صلاة الاستخارة...

GT: Gamrah performed two genuflections that night after Mudi taught her the guidance prayer.

FTT: Ce soir-là, Gamra demanda à Moudi comment dire cette prière. Elle fit deux genuflections... (pp. 204-205)

ETT: That night, Gamrah performed the nightly prayer followed by the nonobligatory prayer for seeking guidance that Mudi taught her. (p. 207)

In this example, we have a textural shift in the French translation and a reader-oriented pragma-semiotic one in the English translation. In the latter, the translators make two local transformations, namely deletion of information that they assume to be irrelevant for the target reader (the number of genuflections). Instead, they cushion the culture-bound concept of *istikhārah* prayer, i.e. the guidance prayer, by adding contextual information about the nature of this prayer (non-obligatory) and explaining its objective (prayer for seeking guidance).

However, and as far as transitivity is concerned, both female characters are engaged in intentional material processes, Gamrah in performing the prayer, and her sister Mudi in teaching Gamrah the prayer. In contrast, the French translators, who transcribed the concept of *Istikhārah* in French and provided a footnote decoding it for the French reader, limit female agency. Only Gamrah is involved in an intentional material action (performing the prayer), and Mudi's material action that has a material effect on the world is suppressed, and is instead replaced by a verbal process verb, "demander," attributed to Gamrah.

Passivating female characters and activating male characters through transitivity shifts is, in fact, a pattern that extends beyond this short passage and permeates the whole French translation. When Faysal's mother, for instance, learns about his love for Michelle, her first reaction was to suspect Michelle of trapping her son:

Example 7:

ويالابنها الصغير الغر الذي لم تكن تتوقع أن يقع في شباك فتاة كهذه! (p. 110)

GT: Ah, her green little boy, whom she never would have expected to fall into the trap of a girl such as this!

FTT: Jamais elle n'aurait imaginé que son fils, son petit garçon chéri, cet innocent, puisse jeter son dévolu sur une fille comme ça! (p. 106)

ETT: And aah, for her young, green son—she never would have expected him to fall in the trap of a girl such as this! (p. 102)

Both the ST and the English TT attribute to Faysal a non-transactive supervision material process, "to fall," i.e. a process that has "no deliberate will" behind it and that seems "to take place by accident" (Gavins, 2007, p. 56). On the other hand, the verbs "to fall" and "وقع" /waqa'a/ connote passivity and helplessness. Indeed, and as Fairclough (2003) argues, while some verbs, especially affective mental verbs, such as "like" and "hate," encode explicit values, others encode "assumed values" that are "often much more deeply embedded in texts" (p.173). In contrast, while the process of trapping Faysal by Michelle is nominalized into "the trap," a transformation that can background, sometimes even exclude, agency (Fairclough, 2003, p. 143-4), the process in this instance did not involve the loss neither of the "subject" element/semantic agent, Michelle, nor of the object element/semantic patient, Faysal, in the

clause. As a result, Michelle's agency in trapping helpless Faysal, is not suppressed. The French translators, however, completely change the dynamics of Faysal-Michelle's relationship as perceived by the mother. Michelle is totally agentless. She is the passive patient of Faysal, the doer of a metaphorical material verb process "jeter [son dévolu sur]."

Example 8:

Another intriguing shift in transitivity and therefore in agency in the FTT occurs in a passage when Sadeem remembers her daydreams of the honeymoon that never took place with Waleed. Sadeem thought that she would:

سوف تجعل وليد يشتري لها أحدث موديلات الثياب والجلديات من هناك كما أوصتها أم قمره، بدلا من أن تشتريها مسبقا
بمهرها. (p. 76)

GT: She will get Waleed to buy her the latest fashion in clothes and leather accessories from there (London), as Um Gamrah advised her, instead of buying them in advance with her dowry.

FTT: Elle se serait certainement débrouillée, comme le lui avait conseillé la mère de Gamra, pour se faire offrir les derniers vêtements et cuirs à la mode là-bas, plutôt que de les acheter elle-même avec sa dot. (p. 74)

ETT: She would get him to buy her the latest fashions in clothes and accessories, just as Gamrah's mother had advised her to do, instead of buying them in Riyadh in advance of the wedding with her dowry. (p. 69)

In this instance, the ST and the ETT activate the male character, Waleed, by making him the doer of the intentional material process verb, "to buy," a process where the female character is the passive beneficiary. But in this specific context, Waleed's material process is the direct effect of Sadeem's causal agency, as she is the one that "gets him to." In this example, Sadeem is both an actor and an initiator. However, the French translators completely changed this dynamic. They entirely elided the male character and his agency, thereby significantly reducing the female character's action on and power over him.

Example 9:

In an email where Gamrah was complaining from her status as a divorcee, the narrator informs us that:

أما قمره فلم تتوقف عن الشكوى من تضيق والدتها عليها ومنعها من الخروج كما في السابق... (p. 142)

TG: As to Gamrah, she didn't stop complaining from her mother restricting her movement and not allowing her to go out as she used to do before.

In translation, this was rendered as:

FTT: On lui interdisait de sortir comme avant... (p. 137)

ETT: she moaned that her mother forbade her to go out the way she used to... (p. 133)

In this example, there is a personalized-to-depersonalized shift in the FTT. Indeed, in both the ST and the ETT, the mother is the agent of the action of forbidding, while the FTT depersonalizes the action and suppresses the mother as a subject/agent, leaving it open for the audience to decide who might be the person who forbids Gamrah from going out, when it could have been idiomatic to say: "sa mère lui interdisait de sortir comme avant." In fact, the same suppression of the mother's agentive power will occur in the FTT through an active-to-passive voice shift, just a few sentences further on:

Example 10:

لم تتمكن من الخروج من المنزل منذ عودتها من أمريكا قبل ثلاثة أسابيع إلا في ذلك اليوم، ولا تظن أن والدتها ستسمح لها بتكرار ذلك. (p. 142)

GT: She had not been able to leave the house since her return from America three weeks before, until that day, and she did not believe her mother would allow her to repeat that outing again.

FTT: C'était la première fois que Gamra sortait de la maison depuis son retour d'Amérique, trois semaines auparavant, et elle pensait que cette permission ne se renouvellerait pas de si tôt. (p. 137)

ETT: this was the first day she had been allowed to leave the house since her return from America three weeks before, and she did not think her mother would let her repeat an outing like this anytime soon. (p. 134)

Gamrah's mother, however, is not the only mother who gets passivated in the French translation. Um Nuwayyir, Nuwayyir's mother, is passivated in the French TT as in the following example:

Example 11:

تعود لتكمل قصتها بعد انصراف أم نوير وهما يتناولان ما وضعته أمامهما من مكسرات وبنك ونقل تأتي بهم من الكويت.
(p. 106)

GT: She turned to finish her story after Um Nuwayyir's left the room, while the two of them munched on the special mixed nuts that Um Nuwayyir had brought from Kuwait.

FTT: Michelle revint à son histoire après le départ d'Oum Nouayr, tout en grignotant avec Fayçal des fruits et gâteaux secs ramenés de Koweït. (p. 102)

ETT: After Um Nuwayyir left the room, Michelle turned to her story as the two of them munched on the special mixed nuts that Um Nuwayyir had brought from Kuwait. (p. 98)

In both ST and ETT, Um Nuwayyir is the grammatical subject/semantic agent in the material process of “bringing” the nuts from Kuwait. In the FTT, the female character is deleted altogether and, instead, the passive voice is used, when the French translators could have still produced an idiomatic translation by saying: “tout en grignotant avec Fayçal les fruits et gâteaux qu'Oum Nouayr apportait du Koweït.”

4.4.2 Victims of arranged marriages.

Another mother that gets passivated in the FTT is Faysal's mother even though she only makes two appearances in the narrative. When Faysal tells her about his love for Michelle, his mother is dismayed at learning that her son wanted to marry a half-American, and forbids him to think of marrying her because of her half-American origins:

Example 1:

وهي تسح دموعا كثيرة، وتتحدث وهي تمسح على شعره بحنان عن أمالها الكبيرة في تزويج ابنها الأصغر من أحسن البنات، وإهدائه أحسن منزل وأحسن سيارة وتذاكر لقضاء أحسن شهر عسل. (p. 111)

GT: ... and she shed a lot of tears and talked, as she stroke his hair with tenderness, about her great hopes to marry her youngest son to the best of girls, and to offer him the best house and the best car, and tickets to spend the best honeymoon.

FTT: Elle lui caressa tendrement les cheveux et lui parla, en se lamentant, de tout l'espoir qu'elle avait mis dans le mariage de son petit garçon, qu'elle voyait épouser la fille la plus

exceptionnelle, à qui il offrirait la plus belle maison et la plus belle voiture, et la plus belle des lunes de miel. (p. 107)

ETT: She wept hot tears and she stroked his hair gently as she talked about her great hopes to marry her youngest son to the best of girls, to give him the best home there ever was, and the best automobile, plus all-expense-paid tickets to spend the best honeymoon ever. (p. 103)

The first clause in the ST contains a verbal process, “تحدث عن” /taḥaddatha ‘an/ literally, “to talk about.” This verb has a sayer, the mother, the verbiage, “her great hopes to...,” but no immediate “target” (Simpson, 1993, p. 90) or addressee, since the mother is not talking *to* her son, but rather *at* him about “her hopes for him.” By using the verbal collocation “تحدث عن” [to talk about], and omitting the son as a direct target/addressee, the author is clearly signalling that the mother is not addressing her son as an active interactant but as a passive listener, insofar as she is expecting neither disagreement nor simple feedback. In addition, the mother is also the doer/agent in two intentional material processes where the son is the passive beneficiary: marrying and offering material objects. By giving agency to the mother in these processes, the ST implies that not only is the mother the one who chooses the bride for the son, but that she also has her own wealth that she uses freely, since she will offer her son all those expensive presents. While the ETT reproduces the same dynamics of the mother-son relationship and the same assumptions about the mother, the French translation deviates on all levels. Instead of “parler de,” the translators used “parler à ... de,” thus making the son a direct participant in the verbal process, and masking the mother-son hierarchy present in the ST. In addition, they shifted agency in the material processes of “marrying” and “offering” from the female character, the mother, to the male character, the son. The result is that the male is activated and the female is passivated both socially, i.e. pertaining to the social institution of marriage, and financially, pertaining to women’s ability to dispose of their wealth and provide for men. These shifts in the FTT undermine the two main gendered discourses in the narrative, that of women as no victims, and of men being as powerless as, sometimes more so than, women.

In fact, suppressing women’s agency and activating men’s is systematic in the FTT whenever the context is that of marriage decisions. When Gamrah confronts her husband

about his American mistress, Kari, and why he kept her after their marriage, Rashid tells Gamrah that Kari let him live with her when:

Example 2:

أهلي رفضو يزوجوني إياها وقطعوا عني المصروف ثلاث سنين! (p. 100)

GT: my family refused to marry me to her and cut off my allowance for three years!

FTT: les trois années où j'étais fauché parce que ma famille refusait que je l'épouse et m'avait coupé les vivres! (p. 96)

ETT: my family refused to let us get married and cut off my money for three years! (p. 92)

In the ST, the agency in the marriage process is attributed to the family, and denied to Rashid, which implies that just like Gamrah herself, Rashid did not have a say in whom to marry. While Rashid is less passivated in the ETT, he is still not fully activated since he is attributed a relational process verb, “to get [married],” by the translators. In the FTT, in contrast, Rashid becomes the grammatical subject and semantic agent of “épouser.”

Likewise, when Sadeem was talking to 30-something Feras on their plane trip back from London to Saudi Arabia, she asked him why he was not married at his age when:

Example 3:

العادة شبابنا من قبل ما يخط الشنب وهم مرتكرين في الطالعة والنازلة عند أميماتهم: يمه تكفين أبي أعرس! تكفين زوجيني! (p.138)

GT: the custom is that our boys, before a moustache grows on their face, don't leave their mothers' side: Mother, please, I want to wed! Please marry me [to someone]!

FTT: D'habitude, les gars, à peine ils ont la moustache qu'ils harcèlent leur mère : « Maman, ça suffit, laisse moi épouser une fille! » (p. 132)

ETT: Usually our boys start nagging their mothers to find them someone to marry even before they have the faintest shadow of a moustache! (p. 128)

In the last sentence of the ST, the boys utter a directive speech act that 1) has the force of a request; 2) presupposes the authority and agency of the mother since “تكفين” /tkaffin/, repeated twice in the excerpt and translated in the gloss translation as “please” for lack of a better equivalent in English, means “asking for rescue” from those “who are worthy of

responsibility and are known [...] either for their courage, social status or generosity...” (al-Humeidi, 2012; my translation); and 3) activates the mothers and passivates the boys by presenting the first as the agents/doers of arranged marriages and the latter as the passive beneficiaries of this intentional material action. The ETT reproduces this authority and makes the assumption encoded in the ST very explicit. Mothers are, therefore, attributed the intentional material process of “finding,” with a patient, the bride, and a beneficiary, the son. In the FTT, however, while the boys make two imperatives that have the force of requests, the translation still significantly reduces maternal authority by 1) omitting to translate “تُكفّين,” and 2) presenting the boys as the agents/doers of the intentional material process verb “marry.” The shifts occurring in the FTT create the implication that while mothers might hold the power of giving or withholding permission depending on the son’s age, they are not the ones who choose the brides or arrange marriages. The sons are.

In fact, the French translators’ mental representation of marriages in Saudi society, and how women might be silent victims thereof, was apparent in their interpretation and translation of the following sentence occurring at the very beginning of the ST:

Example 4:

مع تلك الإضاءة المزعجة والأعين المثبتة عليها، يصبح الزواج العائلي الضيق الذي طالما نفرت من فكرته، أروع حلم، في ليلة من كابوس طويل. (p. 14)

GT: With that annoying light and the eyes fixed on her, the restricted family wedding the idea of which she had rejected now became the sweetest of dreams in a long nightmarish night.

FTT: Malgré ces éclairs éblouissants et tous ces regards fixés sur elle, cet angoissant mariage familial, qui lui avait donné la nausée chaque fois qu'elle y avait pensé, resterait le rêve le plus doux d'une longue nuit de cauchemars. (p. 15)

ETT: With the blazing lights and all those dreadful peering eyes fixed on her, the small family wedding she'd always disdained suddenly began to seem like a heavenly dream. (5)

In this example, there are shifts at the level of cohesion, transitivity and lexical choice that completely change the propositional and inferred meaning of the sentence in the FTT. This sentence occurs in a passage describing Gamrah’s big wedding ceremony. “مع” /ma‘a/, [with], is a preposition indicating reason. It functions like “because of” and signifies that the

content of the main clause is a consequence of the content of the prepositional phrase. The word “تلك” /tilka/, [that], is a deictic that contextualizes the sentence by linking it to its previous co-text: the lights that the readers already know are bothering Gamrah. The verb “يصبح” /yuṣbiḥu/, literally “to become,” clearly signifies a change in status, so that what Gamrah did not like before the wedding, has become desirable “because” of the lights and the eyes fixed on her. What she did not like before her big wedding ceremony is the idea of the small family wedding, but with/because of all the lights and guests’ scrutiny, the idea became a nice dream for Gamrah in the long nightmarish night that her big wedding is. The inferred meaning of this sentence is that the idea of having a small family wedding was proposed to Gamrah, but she rejected it and insisted on a big wedding ceremony, and now she is regretting it because of the lights and the guests scrutinizing her.

Both the propositional and the inferred meanings of the ST were reproduced in the ETT. In the FTT, however, the preposition indicating reason changed into a preposition indicating contrast, “malgré.” As an anaphoric, the demonstrative pronoun “cet” refers back to a referent that has already been mentioned in a previous stretch of the text. In this instance, it is the wedding taking place and being described in the passage. The adjective qualifying the wedding also changed, so that “ضيق” /ḍayyiq/, literally “narrow,” and which could be rendered in French by “restreint,” was translated as “angoissant,” frightening, an adjective that acquires a referential value in this context insofar as the readers could take it as referring to the way Gamrah must be feeling under the lights and the guests’ scrutiny. The following clauses further establish the wedding referred to as the wedding taking place both through the use of “nausea,” generally a symptom of fear or anxiety, and the verb “rester” instead of “devenir,” “يصبح.” In other words, despite the glaring lights and the eyes fixed on Gamrah, this frightening familial marriage that had caused her nausea every time she thought about it, remains the sweetest dream in a night of nightmares. This also suggests that the marriage was not welcomed by Gamrah, as it was causing her to feel anxious to the point of being nauseous.

In translating the ST in this way, the translators not only changed its propositional and implied meaning, but they also seem to have flaunted the maxim of relation or relevance, thereby producing an incoherent stretch of discourse. If Gamrah was so scared of her wedding,

and if the wedding night is a night of nightmares, why does she still think of it as a sweet dream? If readers are to assume, as they should, that the translators were being cooperative in the communicative act of translation despite this apparent flouting of the maxim of relevance, then this translation would create what Verschueren (1999) calls a non-standard conversational implicature.³⁴ In such implicatures, the speaker/text producer appears to be flouting one of Grice's conversation maxims when s/he is, in fact, implicitly abiding by it, leading the text readers/receivers to try and guess the meaning that the text producer wants to convey. In this instance, will the readers assume that the reason why Gamrah still finds a wedding ceremony that makes her nauseous "a sweet dream" is that she knows that what will follow the ceremony, i.e. the consumption of the marriage and marital life, will be even worse?

4.4.3 Victims of patriarchal violence.

The textural shifts occurring in the French translation do not only activate male characters while passivating female characters. Many of these shifts also accentuate patriarchal ties and patriarchal authority over women, thereby creating an image of women as victims of male characters, when the original narrative strives to create the opposite effect. Going back to the passage about Gamrah's arranged marriage, when Gamrah's father and uncle leave the house, she first criticizes her father for his passivity, and then starts insulting her uncle for interfering in her life, so her mother tells her:

Example 1:

استحي على وجهتس! مهما كان هذا خالتس، بس ما عليتس منه. (p. 215)

GT: Have some shame! Despite everything, he is your uncle. But don't pay attention to him.

FTT: Tu devrais avoir honte! Quoi qu'il arrive, c'est ton oncle, tu n'as pas à t'occuper de lui. (p. 204)

³⁴ Both implicatures and assumptions (or what is known in linguistic pragmatics as "presuppositions") are types of implicitness. They differ in that implicatures are inherently strategic, i.e. they are "fundamentally about the strategic avoidance of explicitness" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 60), while assumptions "take as given what is assumed to be known or believed" (p. 60). In that respect, they may be strategic but are not necessarily nor always so.

ETT: Shame, shame, Gamrah, dear! He is your uncle, after all, he is family. Don't worry about him now. (p. 207)

In this instance, there are significant shifts at the level of cohesion, politeness strategy, and lexical choice, in both English and French translations, but they change the dynamics of the relationship between mother and uncle, mother and daughter and uncle and niece in equally opposing ways. The first sentence in the example is a directive speech act to 'have some shame'. The desired effect, or what Austin (1962) calls the perlocutionary effect, of this speech act by the mother is to shame the daughter for a reprehensible behaviour, namely insulting the uncle, and get her to stop. In making such a command, the mother is establishing a family hierarchy whereby an uncle has to be respected. Moreover, and to borrow Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 65) taxonomy, such a speech act by the mother involves a high degree of imposition, since it is a command, and is thus a "face-threatening act" insofar as it threatens the "positive face" of her daughter, i.e. the daughter's desire for her self-image to be appreciated by her interactants. However, the mother does not use any politeness strategy to mitigate imposition or the threat in her speech act. In so doing, she is also encoding her own power—which in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, would be equivalent to the ability to "impose" one's will and wants on others—over her daughter. But while the mother thus asserts her authority over her daughter, she proceeds to limit the uncle's authority through the use of the adversative conjunction "but," followed by another directive speech act, "don't pay attention to him," whose desired effect is to calm the daughter and get her to understand that while she owes respect to her uncle, she should not pay heed to his words.

While the English translators delete the logical connector "but," they significantly diminish the authority of both the mother and the uncle on Gamrah. They delete the verb from the mother's command and add two lexical units to it, i.e. the daughter's name, Gamrah, followed by "dear," a form of address signifying affection and endearment. These changes mitigate the imperative mood and enhance social closeness, i.e. the affectionate mother-daughter bond, rather than power, i.e. the mother's authority over her daughter. The translation also mitigates the patriarchal authority of the uncle, by adding the clause, "he is family," signifying that the daughter should respect him not because he is her uncle, per se, but because

he is part of her family. The translator keeps the translation of the mother's last directive speech act very close to the original, "don't worry about him now."

In stark contradiction to both ST and ETT, the French translators remove the adversative conjunction "but" and replace it with a comma, followed by the clause "tu n'as pas à t'occuper de lui," so that the relationship between the two clauses is not as clear as in the ST, and may be interpreted as causative in light of the prohibition that follows in the next clause. The prohibitive command in the clause contains the verbal collocation "avoir à" in the negative form, which signifies an obligation not to, and the verb "s'occuper de quelqu'un," which could mean either "lui régler son compte" (*CNRTL*) or "ne pas tenir compte de" (*Larousse*). With the omission of the adversative conjunction and the use of the command with no politeness strategy, the meaning of "t'occuper de lui" becomes ambiguous, as it may lend itself more to the meaning provided by *CNRTL* than the one by *Larousse*: he is your uncle so don't take him to task for what he said. Accordingly, the shifts occurring in the English translation reproduce and indeed enhance the feminist agenda of the author by limiting patriarchal power as exerted by male characters or as perpetuated by any female character, in this instance the mother. In contrast, the French translation suppresses the agenda of the author and instead of undermining patriarchal hierarchy, enhances it.

This passage ends up with another shift in the French translation at the level of lexical choice that affects female agency. A few days after the prayer, we are told, Gamrah dreams a dream that scares her off the marriage and it is her mother who informs the uncle that Gamrah was not going to marry his friend.

Example 2:

لكن أم محمد امتصت غضبه بخبرتها حتى انتهى الأمر... (p. 217)

GT: But Um Mohammed absorbed his anger with her experience, until the whole matter was over...

FTT: Mais Oum Mohammed, forte de son expérience, endura sa colère jusqu'à ce que le sujet soit clos... (p. 206)

ETT: But Um Mohammed, with her long experience in such matters, just absorbed his anger until the whole thing was over... (p. 209-210)

In both the ST and the ETT, Gamrah's mother, called here Um Mohammed, is the active agent in the material process verb “امتص” /imtaṣṣa/, literally “to absorb,” used metaphorically and endowed with a patient, namely the uncle's anger. In contrast, the French translators translate that verb by the mental process verb “endure,” which means “supporter, subir avec fermeté ou avec résignation quelque chose de pénible, de désagréable ; tolérer” (*Larousse*). The female character here is being attributed a verb that connotes passivity and resilience in the face of adversity, which presents her as the silent and patient victim of her brother's anger, instead of the tactful and resourceful woman who knows how to absorb her interactant's anger.

Likewise, the narrator tells us what happens when Rashid learns that Gamrah has confronted his American mistress and insulted her for their adulterous relationship:

Example 3:

دخل عليها بعد أقل من ساعة من لقائها بكاري، وليته لم يدخل! (p. 99)

GT: He came [home] to her in less than an hour after she met Kari, if only he never came!

FTT: Il se rua sur elle moins d'une heure après sa rencontre avec Kari. Si seulement il n'était pas rentré! (p. 95)

ETT: Less than an hour after Gamrah had seen Kari, Rashid came home. If only he had not. (p. 91)

In the ST, the author uses the same material process verb twice, “دخل” /dakhala/, literally “to enter,” but which in this context means “to come.” In the first instance, it is in its transitive mode, with a beneficiary, who is Gamrah, as it means “he came [home] to Gamrah.” In the second instance, the verb is in its intransitive mode and means “to come [home].” In neither case does the verb have any violent connotation or value. In the ETT, the translators render the verb literally but only in its intransitive form. In contrast, the French translators give that same verb two different translations. In the first sentence, they translate it as “se ruer sur,” which according to *Larousse*, means “se précipiter avec violence sur quelqu'un, sur quelque chose.” In the second sentence, the same verb is, however, translated literally: “rentrer.” In other words, the French translators completely changed the propositional meaning of the first sentence, and encoded violence in the action of the husband against the wife.

Another salient instance of presenting a female character as a victim of men is in the translation of an exchange between two of Gamrah's sisters about Gamrah and her status as a divorced woman. In this exchange, Gamrah's sister, Hassah, complains to Naflah about her husband and how he insults Gamrah to her:

Example 4:

تخلي ياختي إنه صار يعيرني بقمرة! ما غير يقول لي وش سوت الداشرة ووش ما سوت!! كله عشان سمع من أخواني إنهم ركبوا لها نت في البيت! (p. 181)

GT: "Imagine, sister, that he's started to shame me for Gamrah! Always telling me 'the loose [woman] did this or that,' and all this because he learnt from my brothers that they set up an Internet connection for her at home."

FTT: Il arrête pas de me dire : « Qu'est-ce qu'elle a encore fait cette traînée ! » Tout ça parce qu'il a appris, par nos frères, qu'on lui avait installé Internet à la maison ! (p. 172)

ETT: "He started calling her names just because he heard that my brothers set up an Internet connection for her at home." (p. 171)

The first intriguing shift occurring in the FTT in this instance is at the level of lexical choice. The word "داشرة" /dāshrah/, is a pejorative word in Saudi vernacular that literally means: a very free woman who does anything she wants. It can be rendered quite well by "loose" in English, and "légère" in French. As such, "داشرة," or "loose" is a negative but relative value that differs from one person to another. What one may see as loose, maybe the norm for another. In other words, the ST, while still presenting the brother-in-law's perception of Gamrah as a negative one, left it open for readers to interpret just how "bad" Gamrah was in the man's mind. In the FTT, however, the translators render "داشرة" by "traînée," i.e. "femme de mauvaise vie" (*Larousse*), and which in English can be translated by "slut" and, in Saudi vernacular, by "sharmouta." This is a very specific pejorative word that does not support as many variations in interpretation as the one in the original. The French translators not only fixed meaning in this text, but they also amplified the verbal violence to which Gamrah and her sister are submitted.

In contrast, the English translation completely suppresses the original insult by having Gamrah's sister use indirect reporting, whereby she summarizes what the husband said:

“calling her [Gamrah] names,” instead of quoting his exact words. In the ETT, therefore, the verbal violence to which the husband submits both his wife and her sister is significantly diminished in comparison to the ST. What’s more, the ST makes it clear who is the subject/agent of the process of setting up the Internet connection for Gamrah, namely Gamrah’s brothers. The latter are thus depicted as different from the brother-in-law in that while he considers an Internet connection for Gamrah something reprehensible, her brothers saw no wrong in it since they were the ones who installed it. The ETT not only reproduces the same propositional and inferred meaning as the ST, it also further creates distance between Gamrah’s brothers and her brother-in-law by suppressing the brothers’ involvement in the process of “learn/apprendre.” Indeed, the English translation does not specify from whom the brother-in-law learnt about the connection, so that readers may infer that he learnt it from his wife. In the French translation, however, the process of setting up the Internet connection is depersonalized so that the readers cannot infer from the context who was it that helped Gamrah with the connection. Instead, the brothers are only involved in the verbal process of telling the brother-in-law about the connection. This ends up depicting Gamrah’s brothers as having the same mindset as the brother-in-law and even complicit in his attempt to control Gamrah, since they were the ones to tell on Gamrah.

It is noteworthy that patriarchal relations are not only amplified in the FTT, but some are also created at the expense of matriarchal ties. In the three examples below, the French translators make the same lexical shift that transforms sister(s) into brother(s), or siblings male and female into brothers.

In the following excerpt, the narrator tells us that Sadeem has great respect for how Feras has become such a famous politician when his father was always sick, his mother could barely read and write, and:

Example 5:

... وأخواته البنات آخر همهن السياسة وأعلامها. (p. 165)

GT: as for his girl sisters, their last interest would be politics.

FTT: Quant à ses frères, la politique et les politiciens étaient le cadet de leurs soucis. (p. 158)

ETT: As for his sisters, the last thing to interest them would be politics and its great men. (p. 155)

Even where the ST makes very clear the female gender of the siblings, by repeating “girl” next to “أخوات” /akhawāt/ which is plural of “أخت” /ukht/, the French translators change the sisters into brothers. The same curious shift occurs in the passage where the narrator describes the feelings of Sadeem’s aunt upon the death of Sadeem’s father:

Example 6:

عندما رأت الخالة إحباط ابنة أختها الوحيدة وممانعتها فكرة السفر، قررت أن تلمح لها برغبتها في تزويجها من ابنها طارق... (p. 247)

GT: When the aunt saw the depression of her only sister’s daughter, and her rejection of the idea of travel, she decided to hint to her about her desire to marry her to her son, Tareq...

FTT: Quand la tante vit la frustration de la fille unique de son frère, et le refus qu’elle opposait à l’idée de déménager, elle décida de lui faire part de son désir de la marier à son propre fils... (p. 234)

ETT: When she saw the daughter of her only sister in such a severe state of depression and still firmly refusing to go to Khobar, Aunt Baddriyah decided to broach the subject of Sadeem’s getting married to her son- Sadeem’s cousin Tariq. (p. 235)

In the ST, the spelling of the word “أختها” /ukhtuhā/, [sister-her], makes it clear that the gender is female, since the male for “أختها” in the genitive case would have a “ي” instead of a “ت” which leaves no room for confusion as to the gender and raises a question mark about this change in the FTT. On the other hand, it is noticeable how the ETT translators make a shift to give agency in marriage to the female character, the niece, when in the ST, this agency is given to the aunt, the one representing patriarchal authority. In the ST, it is the aunt who is, indeed, the subject/agent of the material process of marrying her niece, the patient, to her son, the beneficiary, whereas in the ETT, the niece, Sadeem, takes the subject position for the verb “to get [married].” Such a shift gives the niece more say power in the process than in the original.

The other instance where patriarchal relations are enhanced at the expense of matriarchal ones, is when the narrator tells us about how Tariq’s family moved to the city of Khobar:

Example 7:

وأتم المرحلة الثانوية في الخبر التي انتقلت إليها الأسرة بعد تقاعد الأب الذي أراد أن يصبح قريباً من إخوته في المنطقة الشرقية... (p. 288)

GT: ...and he completed high school in Khobar where his family moved after the retirement of his father who wanted to be close to his siblings in the Eastern region...

FTT: Il était ensuite entré au Lycée à al-Khobar, où sa famille avait déménagé quand son père avait pris la retraite et voulu se rapprocher de son frère, qui habitait dans l'est du pays. (p. 271)

ETT: But after retirement, his father had moved the family to Khobar so that he could be near his siblings. (p. 273)

In Arabic, “إخوة” /ikhwah/ is plural of “أخ” /akh/, while “أخت,” sister, in plural is “أخوات.” However, when an individual’s siblings include brothers and sisters, they are called “إخوة,” too, so that this term could either mean “brothers” or “brothers and sisters” depending on the context. Accordingly, the ST does not clarify which gender the siblings are or whether Tariq’s father only had brothers or sisters, as well. The ETT keeps this ambiguity by translating the term in English as “siblings.” In contrast, the French text fixates meaning again and reduces the “siblings” to one “brother,” thereby strengthening the patriarchal bond. Moving the family to a remote place to be with a brother is quite a leap from moving one’s family to be close to all the remaining members of the family, both women and men.

4.4.4 Irremediable difference?

The ST was clearly written for local consumption, in that the author makes heavy use of Saudi vernaculars, which are not easy to understand for all readers from other Arab countries, especially the ones outside of the Arabian Peninsula. Local concepts, like the word “لقافة” /laqāfah/ [gossip], and geographical and tribal references are mentioned in the text without any cushioning or contextualization, clearly indicating that the author is leaving much unsaid to be decoded by readers that she assumes understand her, i.e. the Saudi audience. In contrast, whenever the author mentions a concept that she deems foreign, she includes cushioning. For instance, when she talks in the second email of the “bachelorette party,” which she transcribes in the Arabic alphabet, she immediately cushions it by explaining that it is the party that “they

throw for the bride in the West before her wedding” (2005, p. 23; my translation). In dealing with these culture-bound references for their respective audiences that do not share the same values and background, the ETT and the FTT took two opposing strategies.

The ETT translators chose indeed a foreignizing strategy that specifically preserves the Saudi cultural difference against any homogenization, while the French translators opted for a strategy that domesticates and homogenizes Saudi difference even as it uses foreignizing techniques to capture this difference. Thus, when the narrator talks in the ST of the “bachelorette party” that Gamrah’s friends threw for her, she says that the friends decided to opt against the now very conventional DJ party, for the “طفاقة,” which could be transcribed as /taqqāqah/ and which refers to a traditional female singer. The author assumes her audience would be able to infer that the traditional *taggaga* that had become frowned upon by Saudi youth under the influence of American culture, has now become the exotic, and thus more fashionable option for pre-wedding parties among the “velvet society.” The ETT kept the original concept transcribed following the way it is pronounced in Saudi dialect rather than in standard Arabic, /taggaga/, and added the background information necessary to make the same inference as the ST readers: “a female singer, the kind that once upon a time just had a drum backup but now might have a whole band” (2007/2008, p. 15). In contrast, the French translators translated “*taqqāqah*” or “*taggāga*” by “chanteuse d’ambiance,” without providing any cushioning, which leads to a substantial loss of pragmatic meaning in the translation. The FTT will not convey any idea about the identity politics at work in this stretch of the ST, nor about how there is a movement back to traditions among Saudi youth.

Likewise, when the narrator talks of Gamrah’s preparations for the wedding, she describes her trip to the spa to have beauty treatments, including a “الحمام المغربي” /al-ḥammām al-maghribī/, [Moroccan bath]. The author described the “حمام” /ḥammām/ [bath], as Moroccan, thus signalling that it is not a specifically Saudi practice, but one imported from Morocco. Saudi readers would know what the Moroccan bath refers to and what treatments are included in it, mainly body scrubbing in the Moroccan way. The English TT translators keep the qualifier “Moroccan” to describe the *hammam*, which they transcribed in English, thus keeping the encoded information about the foreign origins of the practice. The French

translators, however, remove the adjective “Moroccan,” and keep the transcribed word “*hammam*.” In so doing, the French readers are confronted with a word that is linguistically foreign, indeed, but that has been completely domesticated through the archive of literary, artistic and ethnographic texts and discourses on “the Arabs” available to the French audiences over the years. Keeping the qualifier “Moroccan” would have been a more successful foreignizing technique. It would have encouraged the French readers to question their understanding of the *hammam* as an “Arab” practice, and would have been a hint to the existence of different cultural practices within Arab cultures.

The same pattern is reproduced in the translation of clothing. The ST systematically refers to the Saudi traditional men’s garment as “ثوب” /*thūb*/, which has two meanings in classical Arabic: 1) fabric, and 2) garment. In Saudi context and dialect, however, “*thobe*” has come to specifically mean the long, loose dress that Saudi men wear, and which is similar to women’s, except that it is white and the women’s is black. The ETT translators systematically transcribe the word as “*thobe*” and provided a footnote explaining the concept at its first occurrence in the text (2007/2008, p. 15). In the FTT, however, the translators systematically translate this specifically Saudi concept as *Djellaba* (2007, p. 24), which is still a foreign concept for the French audience since it originates in North Africa, mainly Morocco, but that is already domesticated and assimilated by the French audience from its cultural and political contact with North-African countries. Likewise, when the author talks of the “شماغ,” [shimāgh], which is a red and white scarf that Saudi men wear to cover their heads and which they hold with a rope-like sash, called ‘*eqāl*, the ETT translators transcribe the word using “*shimagh*,” and provide a footnote explaining it at its first occurrence. In contrast, the French translators once again domesticate this Saudi concept by translating it with the linguistically foreign but very familiar and thus already domesticated concept of *keffiyeh* that has come to be associated with the Palestinians. To complete this domestication, the translators omit the “‘*eqāl*” mention from the text altogether. The use of domesticated, homogenized difference to translate a very local difference is in effect a dilution of the cultural specificity that the ST represents. Such difference is not heterogenizing in the ethical sense, insofar as it builds an essentializing difference. Read and filtered through the archive and the hegemonic discourse

on Arabs as a reified, homogenous category, this French translation could only feed into such discourses.

Another significant translation choice by the French translators that homogenizes differences is the invariable use of the over-determined “voile” to translate different ST concepts. For instance, in the second email, the narrator describes how some of the girls wore the “لثام,” /lithām/, a short piece of cloth that hides the space “between the nose and the bottom of the throat and that brings out the beauty of their kohl-lined eyes” (2005, p. 23; my translation). The French translators choose to render the word *lithām* by “voile,” while the English translators keep the word in the TT and transcribe it as *litham*. In the eighth email describing Gamrah’s new life in Chicago with her husband, the narrator says that when Gamrah goes out, she puts on a long overcoat with “a black or grey hijab” (2005, p. 60). While the English translators (2007/2008, p. 50) transcribe the word and add a footnote explaining that it was “any kind of head cover that conceals the hair and neck of a woman,” the French translators (2007, p. 59) translate it as “voile.” Similarly, in the 39th email, the narrator informs us that:

لاحظت قمره ولميس وأم نوير أن سديم أصبحت أكثر تهاونا في أداء صلاتها مؤخرا وأنها صارت تكشف عن شعرها عند ارتدائها للطرحة أكثر من ذي قبل. (p. 247)

GT: Gamrah, Lamees and Um Nuwayyir noticed that Sadeem became more neglectful of performing her prayers, and lately, she started to expose her hair when she threw on her hair cover, more than before.

FTT: Gamra, Lamis et Oum Nouwayr remarquèrent que Sadim faisait ses prières de façon moins assidue depuis quelque temps. Sa façon de porter le voile aussi avait changé, puisque ses cheveux étaient désormais en partie visibles. (p. 233-234)

ETT: Gamrah, Lamees and Um Nuwayyir began to notice that Sadeem had started to become careless, even neglectful, about performing her prayers. They also observed that she was exposing some of her hair when she threw on her hair cover, which was supposed to leave only her face visible. (p. 235)

Through the use of the comparative “أكثر من ذي قبل” /akthar min dhī qabl/, literally “more than before,” the author suggests that Sadeem used to expose some of her hair before, which creates the assumption that in Saudi Arabia, not all women observe this practice very strictly. While the ETT translators delete the comparative, they translate “طرحة,” [ṭarḥah], a scarf covering the hair, with “hair cover” and bring out the fact that it is strictly meant to cover the hair by adding a whole explanatory clause to this effect, creating the assumption that not all Saudi women hide their faces under a veil, and that some do go out with their face uncovered. Instead of using the more appropriate “foulard” to render the meaning of *ṭarḥah*, the French translators used “voile,” defined as “pièce d’étoffe servant à cacher le bas du visage ou à couvrir la tête des femmes dans certaines circonstances : Les femmes musulmanes portent un voile. Voile d’infirmière, de première communiant, de deuil” (*Larousse*). In other words, when “voile” is used in reference to Muslim women, it is usually understood as a piece of cloth that hides part of the face, as well as the hair. Moreover, the French translators make the same local transformation as the English translators by deleting the comparative. In so doing, however, and precisely because they use “voile” instead of “foulard,” the local differences among Saudi women and how they adhere to the practice of covering to different extents is lost in the French translation.

When the story of the four friends was close to its end, the narrator/author tells us that after her honeymoon, Lamees suddenly takes an unexpected decision, that of donning the strict “حجاب” [ḥijāb], without discussing the decision with her husband. The narrator/author clearly assumes that her Saudi readers will mark the difference between the strict *ḥijāb*, the regular hair cover *ṭarḥah*, and the *lithām* and know which kind of cover Lamees decided to don. In the English translation, the translators transcribe the word as they did with the other concepts, and provide a lengthy embedded explanation to help the Anglo-American reader make the difference between the three forms of head cover mentioned so far in the text, and that was left unsaid in the ST. The translators thus explain:

Lamees announced that she would officially start wearing the hijab after returning from her honeymoon. In Saudi, as everyone knows, women have to wear some form of hijab—some kind of head cover to conceal their hair and neck—but women have the choice to take it off, even in front of unknown men, within the confines of houses and as soon as they cross the country borders. Lamees decided that she would start to wear it

whenever non-Muhram men were around, following the rules of Islam. She would wear it in front of her cousins and coworkers and whenever she traveled outside of the kingdom. Her friends all congratulated her on this bold spiritual step—except for Michelle... (Alsanea, 2007/2008, p. 261)

Upon reading this contextualization, the Anglo-American reader is finally able to understand that *hijab*, as transcribed in the TT, refers to the more rigorous but voluntary head cover that Saudi women have the freedom to choose or to shed, as opposed to the headscarf, *tarḥah*, enforced by law in public spaces but that women can remove without any legal consequences in private spaces as well as outside the country. *Litham* appears as more of a social practice that some young women would subvert by using it as a device to highlight the beauty of their kohl-lined eyes. In the French translation, the word *ḥijāb* is transcribed as *hijab* without any cushioning since it is a well-known concept in French, too: “Lamis déclara qu’elle porterait le hijab en rentrant de son voyage de noces. Ses amies la félicitèrent du pas courageux qu’elle franchissait, sauf Michelle...” (2007, p. 260).

However, the use of *hijab* at the very end of the novel after the systematic use of “voile,” without providing any cushioning to differentiate between the two practices, flaunts the relevance maxim and breaks the text’s coherence since readers are left with the question of why would Lamees’ friends congratulate her on something that they all have been doing all along, even when in Chicago, like Gamrah, for instance? And why would Michelle object to the *hijab* when she, herself is obviously wearing it? More importantly, the gendered discourse of Islamic feminism is completely undermined since readers are not allowed to know that young empowered Saudi women who graduate in Western universities, follow fashion, and criticize misogynistic social practices, can in fact choose of their own volition and often against their husbands’ wishes, a stricter form of hair cover than the one enforced by the state, one that they have to wear even in private spaces where there are men other than their husbands, brothers and sons. More importantly, by using the word “voile” for most forms of head cover—when they could have used the equally known terms of “foulard” and *hijab*—the translators are collapsing all the layers of meaning behind the veiling practices exclusive to Saudi Arabia. In so doing, they homogenize both the Saudi difference and the differences within the Muslim world. Instead of preserving foreign heterogeneous concepts in the French text through transcriptions and cushioning when necessary, thereby drawing the readers’

attention to the multitude of social, cultural and political practices behind this piece of cloth within Muslim societies and communities, the translators opt for the readily available “voile” trope. In the French collective imaginary, especially after the long debate on the veil that took place in France and the ensuing law, the veil trope has come to symbolize Muslim woman’s victimhood and entrapment. It is belief in this entrapment that seems to be behind the following translation choice in the FTT:

سياسة ال"ياالله ياالله" بمد الياءين مد حركتين، أي ب"الكاد" هي أضمن الطرق في مجتمعنا المحافظ إلى خطبة سريعة حسب تعليمات أم نوير، "وبعدها استخفي مثل ما تبين!". في الأعراس والنزالات... يجب اتباع هذه السياسة بحذافيرها: "ياالله ياالله تمشين، ياالله ياالله تتحركين، ياالله ياالله تبتسمين، ياالله ياالله ترقصين. الله الله بالعقل والنقل، لا تصيري خفيفة! (p. 15)

GT: The politics of “yallah yallah,” by extending the sound “ya” in yallah to sound like yaaallah, which means “barely,” is the most effective way in our conservative society to a quick engagement, according to Um Nuwayyir’s instructions. After that, “you can be as frivolous as you want.” In weddings and ceremonies [...], it is important to follow this politics to the T: barely walk, barely move, barely smile, barely dance. You do everything with reason and poise, don’t be frivolous...

FTT: Se plier au rituel du « Yallah yallah » - exclamation accompagnée d’un geste des deux mains – qui veut que l’on se montre « juste à peine », c’est, dans notre société conservatrice, le meilleur moyen d’obtenir des fiançailles rapides, d’après Oum Nouwayr : « ensuite, disparais comme tu es apparue !” (p. 16)

ETT: The strategy of yaaalla yaaalla, which means « get going, but just baaarely, » is the most foolproof path to a quick marriage proposal in our conservative society. The idea is to be energetic and constrained at the same time. “And after that you can be as foolish as you want,” according to Um Nuwayyir’s counsel. (p. 6)

In the FTT, there are two main shifts that cannot be attributed to misunderstanding. The first affects the propositional meaning of the phrase “by extending the sound ‘ya’ in yallah to sound like yaaallah.” In the ST, this phrase is relevant to the Saudi reader and coherent with its co-text in that it differentiates between “yallah,” which means “come on,” and Um Nuwayyir’s “yaaallah” politics. The French translators render it as “exclamation accompagnée d’un geste des deux mains.” This shift not only changes the propositional meaning of the phrase for some obscure reason, but it also produces a stretch of discourse that is not very relevant, and thus incoherent, since the readers are not told what kind of hand gesture it is, nor why is it relevant as information to the remainder of the sentence. But the most intriguing shift

is the one at the level of verbs and the processes that are covered by the “barely” politics. While in the ST, these processes are those of moving, smiling and dancing, processes normally carried out in ceremonies, they are translated by one verb/process: “se montrer.” In other words, the girl seeking marriage in the FTT has to barely show herself in the ceremony, while the same girl in the ST is not only present in ceremonies, but also participates in them by moving around, dancing and smiling but with poise. More important, the verb “استخف,” in Standard Arabic means “not to take something seriously” as in “استخف بالأمر” or “to ridicule and undermine” as in “استخف به.” In Saudi dialect and from the context, it means to behave in a non-poised, frivolous way. The inferred meaning is that once a woman is engaged or married, she is free to be as frivolous as she wants around people. The same meaning obtains in the English TT even if there is a syntactic restructuring of the ST. In the French TT, however, “to be as frivolous as you want” became “disparais comme tu es apparue!” The young woman in Saudi society as represented in the French TT seems to be permanently entrapped and condemned to concealment.

Conversely, when the ST makes use of concepts that are familiar to and deeply embedded in the French cultural heritage, and that would have allowed for a domesticating, yet ethical, translation that brings the ST and TT cultures closer in their differences, the French translators neutralize these words even when the French language contains equivalent concepts. For instance, when the narrator/author mentions a *hadith* by the prophet to the effect that “كل ابن آدم خطاء، وخير الخطائين التوابون” literally meaning “every child of Adam commits errors, and the best of those who commit errors are those that repent,” the French translators remove the reference to the common prophet Adam, and render the hadith by: “tous les êtres humains ont leurs torts, et les meilleurs sont ceux qui s’en repentant” (2007, p. 66), when they could very well have said: “tout enfant d’Adam commet des erreurs, et les meilleurs de ceux qui commettent des erreurs sont ceux qui s’en repentent.” As expected, the English TT translators produce a literal translation of the hadith: Every child of Adam commits errors, and the best of those who commit errors are those who repent (2007/2008, p. 57).

A similar choice was made in another passage. When Sadeem’s father dies and she remains alone in her family house, her maternal aunt asks her to come live with her family and

proposes to her the idea of marrying her son. Sadeem is furious at her aunt for the proposal, and in her anger, thinks that she should just “تترهبن” /tatarahban/. This is a verb derived from the root r-h-b, which is the same for the noun “راهب” /rāhib/ [monk], and “راهبة” /rāhibah/ [nun]. The verb means literally to lead the life of a monk/nun. While the ETT preserves the Arabic concept: “She would shut herself up like a monk in her father’s house,” the French TT replaces the Christian concept that belongs to the Arabic language with the neutral: “Elle mènerait une vie austère dans la maison de son père” (2007, p. 234). While monks and nuns do lead an austere life, it is specifically the celibacy aspect of their life that Sadeem refers to. She would rather be celibate than marry her cousin. The shift in the FTT fails to reproduce not only Sadeem’s intention, but also a commonality in the Arabic language and, by extension, Arabic culture. Translating the sentence in a domesticating way by something close to: “Elle vivrait comme une nonne dans la maison de son père,” would have paradoxically been a foreignizing technique in the ethical sense meant by the neo-literalists, as it would have shown a novel and foreign side of the Arabic culture other than the one reified in Western imagery as irremediably different. It would have allowed the French readers to know that there are Christian concepts engrained in Arabic language. Such a translation would have hinted to the fact that Christianity, along with Islam, has been practiced in the Arabic language and, thus, in Arab societies for hundreds of years.

It is already clear that the textural and pragmatic shifts that occurred in the FTT resulted in semiotic shifts, i.e. shifts at the level of the discourses drawn upon and promoted in the ST, especially the gendered discourses. Indeed, by passivating female characters, activating male ones, and amplifying or indeed creating patriarchal ties, the FTT undermines the discourse on women as agents capable of self-empowerment and the discourse on men as powerless or, often, more so than women. Apart from these discursive changes, however, the French translators did not significantly transform or change the text at the level of genres, nor at the level of intertextuality. They translated all songs, epigraphs, proverbs, sayings and poems in the ST, thereby reproducing the cosmopolitan discourse and the high dialogicality of the text. They also preserved the generic structure of the main email and storytelling genres. In contrast, the ETT, while it reproduced the main discourses, both general and gendered, shows

some mild changes at the level of genres, and heavy changes at the level of intertextuality, which has a direct effect on the discourses.

While the chick lit genre is a secondary genre in the ST after the email and storytelling genres, the ETT is repositioned both through editorial decisions and translation as a chick lit novel first and foremost. The first edition features the title written in studded pink letters between oriental motifs also in studs, and at the bottom of the page, the name of the author appears in studded white letters, in what seems an effort to market the book as chick lit without losing the “exotic” nature of its content. This idea took more prominence in the 2008 edition, with a cover featuring not only images associated with chick lit, like stilettos and a handbag, but also an excerpt from the *Daily Telegraph* review presenting the book as a “tale of sex and the city” (Appendix 6). The ETT translators, in turn, substantially enhance the consumerist aspect attached to the genre, by adding brand names either in the text or the paratext. In the footnote explaining the “*thobe*” and “*shimagh*” concept, for instance, the translators explain that, “[n]owadays the *shimaghs* and *thobes* are designed by such famous names as Gucci, Christian Dior, Givenchy and Valentino” (2007/2008, p. 14). While the author only mentions the type of car that the friends drove to the mall, i.e. an X5, the translators specify that it is a “BMW X5 SUV” (p. 16).

In addition to the insertion of brand names, the translators added cultural information of particular relevance to the Anglo-American readers. In the passage describing Lamees’ involvement in a case of smuggling movies into school for exchange, the narrator/author does not specify what movies they were. In the ETT, however, the translators add:

They were the latest American movies and she was sure that Ms. Ilham had heard about each one of them. There was *Braveheart*, *The Nutty Professor* and a few others that the girls’ brothers got from Dubai or from American compounds in Riyadh where they sell noncensored movies. (Alsanea, 2007/2008, p. 41)

Not only did the translators add the names of the American movies but they also added that the headmistress, too, must know about them, which implies that the young generation is not the only one that consumes American cultural goods, but the older one does, too. Moreover, the translators embed ethnographic information about Saudi society that reminds the Anglo-American readers of a geo-political reality that they might be oblivious to, namely the

presence of American workers and soldiers in Saudi Arabia. The addition of brand names and names of American cultural goods enhances not the cosmopolitan aspect of the ST, but rather the influence of American culture on Saudi society, particularly the younger generations, an influence that was backgrounded in the ST through inclusion of voices from different Western and Eastern cultures. The heterogeneity of these voices was, in fact, significantly reduced in the English TT, including in the salient space of the epigraph.

Alsanea, indeed, removed several epigraphs from the English TT and most of those that she kept are religious. Drawing on Genette's explanation of epigraphs as a means of concretization, Alsanea's omissions might indicate that she has already had her literary validation through local success and offers of translation. As a consequence, epigraphs become of little use, except for the religious ones. As already mentioned, the religious epigraphs, from Quran verses to sayings by and about the prophet, serve as a critique of misogynistic social practices. They contribute to the author's subversive Islamic feminist discourse on Islam as a frame of reference for women's rights, which challenges local hegemonic interpretations of Islam's foundational texts. These religious citations were already focalized in the ST. They were not, however, the main voices given this physical prominence in the text. By deleting many epigraphs and mostly preserving the religious intertexts/voice in the epigraph position, all while enhancing the Anglo-American voice by adding references to Anglo-American artifacts and cultural goods, Alsanea is reconfiguring the voices in her text and starting a dialogue between two main voices/forces: the Anglo-American and the Islamic. Nevertheless, it is a dialogue that strives to show commonalities within differences and possibility of cohabitation, rather than mutual exclusiveness. In so doing, she is problematizing Anglo-American prejudices and categories. The enhancement of the domestic Anglo-American voice in the English TT might seem at prima facie a domesticating move that erases differences. Seen against the textural decisions as shown above and the reconfiguration of intertexts and voices, it is effectively a foreignizing move that shows an aspect of the ST culture that is foreign to the TT readers: the hybrid, heterogeneous aspect of a culture that is not hermetically closed to the progression of time or to cultural difference.

CHAPTER V: RECEPTION

5.1 Introduction

The journey of a text from its source culture to a target culture does not start with translation, just as translators are not always the first target culture agents to read a ST nor the only ones to refract it through their interventions. In the course of this journey, a text goes through several phases during each of which it is read, interpreted and refracted by different agents, some of whom, like literary agents, scouts and editors, are gate-keepers, while others, like literary critics, scholars and jury members, are consecration-authorities. The decisions and choices that these agents make, as well as the texts that they write about the translated text—be they peritexts physically surrounding the TT, or epitexts circulating freely in the media, in academic journals or in university curricula—all contribute to mediating the translated text and shaping its relationship to the order of discourse: whether it will challenge naturalized discourses and constitute a “point of leverage” for a potential change in the order of discourse or, instead, strengthen existing power structures. The following chapter will thus complete the analysis of the translations as discourse practice. Drawing on Broomans and Jiresch (2011), it will explore editorial decisions, publishers’ peritexts, editorial reviews and academic discourse to identify the discursive practices underpinning the reception and consumption of the three novels in their target contexts.

5.2 The Reception Journey: Telling Discrepancies

In their attempt to account for the cultural transfer and reception of a (literary) work, Petra Broomans and Ester Jiresch (2011) conceived a model in which they identify six different phases in the process of transfer and reception. The first phase is where an author is discovered and introduced by a “cultural transmitter,” like a publisher, a scout or a translator (2011, p. 10). This phase is followed by a phase of “quarantine,” i.e. the time that the discovered book/author takes to be published in translation, a time that can take several years

(p. 12). The quarantine is also a “grey zone, which may be entered at various stages of a work’s reception” and not only after discovery (p. 12). Translation is the third phase. It is “a point of no return and can be regarded as an important event in the process,” although it can also be followed by a period of quarantine (p. 12). After this stage comes the publication of the translated work. In this phase, considerations of profitability play a big part insofar as a publisher may only decide to publish a work in translation after a previous work by the same author achieved commercial success. The fifth phase is that of the actual reception of the published translation. In this phase, the publisher “may spend a lot of money on promotion [...], give priority to a select number of translations, or might lack the resources to support the work at all” (p. 13). At this stage, the work may well be read by the wide public but shunned by reviewers and critics, in which case, the work “may enter another grey zone or period of quarantine” (p. 13). Finally, the sixth phase is “a second phase of post-publication reception in which the publication of reviews, articles, lectures and books enhance the cultural position of the work” in the target context (p. 13). When the work reaches such a stage, its cultural transfer is said to be successful.

In every one of these stages, it is the (non)reading of the source text by the various agents involved that decides the fate of the text and whether it goes to the next stage and reaches success or not. In the case of the three texts under scrutiny, and according to the model above, it seems that Mosteghanemi’s novel, *Fawḍā*, is the one that remained in quarantine for the longest period not only after the discovery of the author, but even after its translation and publication.

5.2.1 From discovery and quarantine to translation and publication.

Of the three authors included in the current study, only one has been canonized in the larger Arab literary field, namely Mosteghanemi, through numerous prizes, including the Nour Foundation Prize for Women’s Creativity in Egypt in 1996, the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature for her first novel, *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, in 1998, the George Tarabeh Prize for Culture and Creativity in Lebanon in 1999, the Amman Loyalty Medal for Creativity in

Jordan in 1999, and the more recent Shield of Al Jimar Foundation for Arabic Creativity in Libya in 2007, all in recognition of her literary prowess (de Lafayette, 2013, 117-118). In addition to institutional and peer recognition, Mosteghanemi is by far the most popular of all women writers in Arab countries and second in popularity to no other Arab novelist, male or female, but Naguib Mahfouz (see Chapter III). Thanks to this popularity, the *Arabian Business* Magazine put her among the 100 most powerful public figures, including pop stars, in the Arab world in 2007 (*Arabian Business* magazine, 2007).

Despite this institutional recognition and the popular acclaim, Mosteghanemi's books remained in the grey zone for a long time in both the Anglo-American and French contexts. Indeed, *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, the first novel, first published in Algeria in 1985 and re-issued in Lebanon in 1993, had to wait until 2000 to appear in English translation commissioned not by a US- or UK-based publisher, big or small, but by the Egypt-based American University in Cairo (AUC) Press. While it was the prestigious Albin Michel, specialized mainly in Francophone literature, that picked up the title for translation and publication in French, it did so only two years after the release of the English translation. This is a very intriguing delay considering the close geo-cultural relations between Algeria and France, but especially given that Mosteghanemi had already been introduced as a writer in the French context through a previous book she penned in French, namely *Algérie, Femmes et écriture* (1985), prefaced by Jacques Berque, and re-issued two years before the French translation of *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, i.e. in 2000 by Harmattan.

Despite the huge regional success that *Dhākirat al-Jassad* enjoyed and the subsequent introduction of both book and author in the Anglo-American and French target cultures through translation and publication, *Fawḍā al-Hawāss* (1997) remained in the quarantine for seven years before it appeared in English translation in 2004, again by AUC Press. Although Albin Michel was already familiar with Mosteghanemi and her work through the publication of *Mémoires de la chair* (2002), it only published *Fawḍā's* translation, *Le chaos des sens*, in 2006, that is two years after the English translation and almost a decade after the publication of the original. When it did, the publisher's peritext, mainly the dust jacket featuring the veiled face of a woman (Chapter II), framed *Le chaos des sens* within an orientalist discourse. The

third and last sequel of the trilogy, *‘Āber Sarīr* (2003; *Passer by the bed*), has yet to be translated into either languages and get out of the grey zone. The same quarantine is enforced on Mosteghanemi’s latest novel *al-Aswad Yalīqu Biki* (2012). In fact, even when the latter proved to be such a huge commercial success in Arab countries that Hachette-Antoine, a joint venture between the large French publisher Hachette Livre and the leading Lebanese publisher, Librairie Antoine, acquired the rights to publish the author’s entire work in Arabic (*Anā Zahra* magazine, 2013), French and Anglo-American publishers have yet to publish it in translation. What’s more, only the first novel of the trilogy was deemed commercially viable enough to be reprinted in 2008 by the UK-based Haus Arabia Books, an imprint owned by Haus Publishing. Originally a joint venture with Arcadia Books and now exclusively belonging to Haus Publishing, Arabia Books is still a small-scale specialized imprint that acquires “most of its fiction” from AUC Press (Büchler and Guthrie, 2011, p. 30).

It would, in fact, take exactly two decades since its publication in Lebanon in 1993, for Mosteghanemi’s first bestselling novel to be finally (re-)translated and published by a prestigious Western publishing house, namely UK-based Bloomsbury.³⁵ Coming in the heels of the major political upheavals and revolutions that rocked several North African and Middle Eastern countries at the beginning of the decade, this interest could lend credence to Jacquemond’s opinion above that prestigious publishers’ interest in Arabic literature is mainly ethnographic (Jacquemond, 2008, p. 366). On the other hand, the peritext mediating this translation seems to displace the novel within a striking exotic discourse from the outset. In *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, literally “memory of the body,” the author flags up her novel as a narrative that inscribes memory (of a nation) in the body (of the two male and one female protagonists) (see Stampfl, 2010). Unlike the first translation of the book, titled *Memory in the Flesh*, the new translation is entitled *The Bridges of Constantine*. This title flags up the geographical location, Constantine, which is an Algerian city named after Constantine the Great. To add to the exotic value of such a title, the book cover features the face of a woman peering seductively into the camera lens with kohl-lined eyes, from behind a black transparent

³⁵ It is noteworthy that as I was wrapping up this thesis, Bloomsbury published a new edition of *Chaos of the senses* (2015), translated by Nancy Roberts. It would have taken exactly 18 years for Mosteghanemi’s *Fawḍā* to finally start gaining visibility in the Anglo-American context.

veil that highlights the eyes and accentuates the seductive look (Appendix 7). While the deployment of the veiled woman as a marketing strategy may stem primarily from commercial considerations, it still has ideological effects. It both mediates the novel through and perpetuates an already existing orientalist prism that fetishizes the veiled woman and keeps the Arab-Muslim woman locked behind the veil as a signifier of her difference. This mediation, however, is not addressed simply to the book readers, but to a much larger audience. As Genette rightly (1997) explains, while the text itself is addressed to the reader, the cover is addressed to all those people who might play a role in the text's transmission (p. 75). While the text is "an object to read," what is on its cover is "an object to be circulated – or if you prefer, a subject of conversation" (p. 75).

In other words, Mosteghanemi's titles that spoke so strongly to the audience, both the lay and the cultured, in Arab countries as to earn the author a great acclaim that put her ahead of all Arab novelists but Mahfouz, got short shrift from the French publishers, and, until very recently, almost no attention at all from prestigious Anglo-American publishers. But when a title, *Dhākirat al-Jassad*, was finally pulled out of the quarantine in the Anglo-American market, the title and book cover chosen for it mediate it in a way that would add the translation to the "family" of texts, ideas and values constituting the orientalist archive, as Said would put it (2003, p. 41-2).

In contrast, al-Shaykh who did not reach a similar institutional canonization, have seen most her novels, including *Innahā Lundun*, enjoy a very quick record of getting picked up for translation and publication by prestigious publishers. This record started with al-Shaykh's third novel, *Hikāyat Zahra* (1980; The story of Zahra). When al-Shaykh authored *Hikāyat Zahra*, no publisher in Lebanon accepted to publish it for its explicit sexual content. As a consequence, she published it at her own expense. Subject to wide controversy in Arab countries, with some states banning it for its sexual explicitness while many an Arab critic applauding it for possibly being "the most impressive work in the history of Arab women's novels," since for the first time "in this literary tradition, nationalist and feminist causes are treated as inseparable and equally critical" (Zeidan, 1995, p. 205), the novel was very successful in getting picked up for translation. According to its author, "*Hikāyat Zahra* arrived

at the right time” as it coincided with two main events: the inauguration of L’Institut du monde arabe in Paris and the Islamic revolution in Iran (al-Shaykh, 2004). It was, thus, one of the very first ten books to be selected for translation by the French institution (al-Shaykh, 2004), and for publication in 1985 under the title *L’histoire de Zahra* by J. C. Lattès, a non-specialized publisher owned by the prestigious and large-scale Hachette-Livre. *L’Histoire de Zahra* was so successful as to obtain le Prix des lectrices Elle.

Whether this success, coupled with the prestige attached to the novel and its author by the mere fact of the French publisher that published it, played any role in the discovery and introduction of the author and her works in the Anglo-American context is not clear, but both Quartet Books and Readers International published the title one year later, i.e. in 1986, under the title *The Story of Zahra*. al-Shaykh attributes this success primarily to geopolitical and cultural reasons, “because [the novel] was talking about war or maybe because I am Shiite from the south. Besides, there was a lot of talk about Khomeini and the Islamic revolution” (al-Shaykh, 2004).

The same success story would await al-Shaykh’s following novel, *Misk Al Ghazāl* (1988; The deer’s musk), chronicling the lives of several women living in a Gulf country, believed to be Saudi Arabia, where al-Shaykh lived for a while. Because of both its political and sexual explicitness, the novel was banned in several Gulf countries. Arab literary critics were divided in their reaction as it is clear from Dallal’s criticism of the novel (see Chapter III). In Western countries, however, the acclaim was unanimous, though only partly immediate. Whether *The Story of Zahra* and its success in translation had been enough for al-Shaykh’s name to acquire value in the Anglo-American and French literary markets, or its subject simply appealed to publishers for its potential profitability, or both, *Misk al-Ghazāl* was selected for English translation and publication barely a year after it appeared in Arabic. Thus, Quartet in the UK, and both Anchor Books and Doubleday in the US published it in 1989, under the title *Women of Sand and Myrrh*.

The publishers, however, seem not to have marketed the novel enough and, as a consequence, it failed to gain visibility, much to Edward Said’s (1990/1996) dismay since he urged Western feminists to “attend to [...] Shaykh and not just to the overexposed (and

overcited) Nawal El Saadawi” (p. 101). This changed barely a year after Said’s plea. In 1991, the first Gulf war broke out bringing about an increased interest in the Middle East and all things Middle Eastern, especially women, similar to the interest brought about by the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, as described above. It was only then, that the novel gained real visibility, including thanks to a big publicity campaign by the American publisher, as discussed in Chapter I. In what was an unprecedented move for an Arab writer, Doubleday organized a book tour for al-Shaykh in 22 American cities in 1992. The campaign was successful since in the same year, *Publishers Weekly* voted it one of the year’s best books in the US. Two years later, the book would be picked up for publication by the large publisher Allen & Unwin in Australia. In 2010, it was Bloomsbury Publishing in the UK that bought the right to reprint it. In France, however, and despite the fact that the author had already been discovered and introduced in the French target culture, the novel remained in the quarantine until right after the outbreak of the first Gulf war in 1991. Actes Sud thus published the novel in 1992 under a title that replicates the title of the English translation: *Femmes de sable et de myrrhe*.

Surprisingly, however, al-Shaykh’s following novel, *Barīd Bayrūt* (1992) would fare a little less well in translation than *Misk al-Ghazāl*, although still much better than all Mosteghanemi’s books. Indicating that novel selection in al-Shaykh’s case might be less informed by any literary credit she might have acquired than by the subject of her books, *Barīd Bayrūt*, which departs from the voyeuristic subject of women’s life in a closed Gulf society to focus on the subject of the Lebanese civil war, remained in the grey zone for three years before it was published in English and French. But when this happened, in 1995 under the titles *Beirut Blues* and *Poste restante Beyrouth*, respectively, it was still by major UK- and US-based publishers, including Anchor Books, Chatto and Windus—a Random House’s imprint, Doubleday and Vintage Books, and by Actes sud in France.

It was by far *Innahā Lundun* that broke a record as far as reception is concerned since it skipped the quarantine stage altogether. While not directly commissioned by a foreign publisher, the novel was still born in response to a request for a short story on the same subject by a UK-based publisher as discussed in Chapter III above. Besides, not only was it picked up

for English translation directly from an unpublished typescript, but the translation, normally chronologically secondary, has significantly changed the “original,” according to Cobham’s testimony (see Chapter III). In fact, Cobham who admits that she has “never actually read the published Arabic of *Innahā Lundun* [...] to see how different it is from the English, if at all,” suspects that “there may have been a 2000? Arabic edition that was withdrawn and re-issued with some changes to bring it more into line with the English version” (email communication, June 28, 2012). A search in Worldcat.org does not reveal the existence of any earlier Arabic edition than the 2001. But even if no such earlier edition existed, the analysis of the English and French translations of the novel in Chapter III has shown that the 2001 Arabic edition has definitely undergone changes “to bring it more into line with the English version.” These changes were not limited to the more obvious prologue and the small additions proposed to and accepted by al-Shaykh and that Cobham said she was called on to translate. They also include the deletion of entire sections since the analysis has shown that there are no sections in the Arabic original and the French translation that are not also present in the English translation.

The implication of Cobham’s testimony is that the reception of the novel by the British publisher significantly refracted the novel and reshaped it not just for its Anglo-American readers but also for the Arabic, French and all other languages’ readers. Through at least part of such modifications—since it is not possible to determine which were the publisher’s decisions and which were the translator’s—the British publisher did much violence to the original by emphasizing an already existing orientalist discourse in the text, and de-emphasizing the few subversive discourses that al-Shaykh draws on in the novel as discussed above. Consequently, the Anglo-American readers are exposed to more of the same stereotypes and are deprived of the opportunity to witness the tension present in the original—between the imperative to accommodate the Anglo-American marketplace’s expectations, on the one hand, and to contest dominant discourses on “Arabs” and “Arab” women, on the other hand. In other words, the British publisher significantly undermined the voice of an author whose voice is already stifled by the pressure of the target audience demands, of which she is acutely aware (see Chapter III).

It is noteworthy here, however, that the reshaping and refraction of the novel for both its source and target readers was not only the result of the discursive interventions of the editors. It was also a result of the mere status of the publishing houses that published the novel. Although *Innahā Lundun* never acquired best-seller status in Arab countries like Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jassad* and *Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss*, it was published by commercial, mass-market publishers Bloomsbury, Knopf Doubleday publishing house, within its Pantheon Books imprint, and Random House, within its Anchor Books imprint. The mere selection by these publishers unavoidably contributes to “mainstreaming” it, to borrow Cheng's (2004) very apt expression. This, in turn, reduces the subversive effect the author might hope to achieve within the receiving order of discourse.

In the French context, *Innahā Lundun* was published in translation as *Londres mon amour*, by Actes Sud exactly a year after it appeared in the UK, i.e. 2002, which is a record time considering how long Mosteghanemi's books took before they were translated into French despite the historical and economic ties. While the French translation reproduces the same interdiscursive features as in the original, the packaging of the first edition, published within the Mondes arabes series, is a clear nod to orientalist imagery and France's colonialist past. Indeed, the front cover of the translation features a photograph showcasing a woman, against a dark background, wearing a blue transparent veil and a blue long and transparent dress that reveals her naked skin and her left breast. The dress is belted on the hips with what looks like a belly dancer's belt and on the left hip, the woman is resting her hand in a belly dance move. While the woman's face is towards the camera, she is looking down, offering herself submissively to the French readers' gaze (see Appendix 8). Reminiscent of Algerian women's photographs as used in postcards during the French colonization of Algeria, this photograph plays on what Alloula (1986) calls “obstacle”—the exotic veil that invites the male's gaze and elicits the desire to unveil the feminine Other, and “transparency”—the gauzy belly dancer's veil invoking the “sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality” that the Orient holds for the West, to quote Said (1978, p. 188). In other words, the front cover invites

an orientalist reading of the novel and its characters, and resituates the text within an exoticizing discourse that is bound to influence its consumption.³⁶

But while al-Shaykh's success in translation seems to have come gradually, Rajaa Alsanea's took her and the national literary system by a storm. The first novelistic experience of a very young and until-then unheard of writer, *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* was still deemed so commercially viable as to be picked up for translation and publication not by a locally- or regionally-based publisher like AUC press, but by mass-market publisher Penguin, barely two years after its publication in Arabic. It was then heavily marketed in the UK and the US. In France, a country far less politically and economically interested in Saudi culture than both the US and the UK, the novel was still published by the prestigious and well-known Plon in 2007, under the title *Les filles de Riyad*. Five years later, i.e. in 2012, it was reprinted in a paperback edition by Presses Pocket. However, this second edition was published within Presses Pocket's Documents et essais series instead of the more appropriate Romans étrangers series. More important, and unlike the cover of Plon's 2007 *Les filles de Riyad* (Appendix 9), the cover of this last edition imbues the novel with a strong ethnographic and exoticizing dimension. It includes the mention "Document" right under the title printed in red (Appendix 10). At the bottom of the cover, the publisher announces: "La vie amoureuse des femmes en Arabie Saoudite." The background, all black, is a veil covering most of a woman's face and only letting one cheek and two kohl-lined eyes appear. There is a smile on this partly covered—or partly revealed—face and the eyes, looking directly to the camera lens, are giving the reader a playful look.

Comparison between these three novels at the level of translation and publication abroad reveals three main issues. Firstly, translation and publishing structures in the Arab countries are poor. Amireh (1996) argues, indeed, that in order for stereotypical representations of Arabs and Arab women to be undermined, the Arab context needs to be more accessible to a Western audience, which in turn requires "the translation of both literature and criticism. So far, the Arab world has been supplying the cultural 'raw materials' which then get ground in the First

³⁶ It is noteworthy here, however, that the same publisher, Actes sud, would eschew any orientalist connotations in the cover of the 2010 edition of *Londres mon amour*, published within the Babel collection (Appendix 8).

World critical mill” (1996). The translation and reception (regional and global) trajectories of the three novels examined in this study prove Amireh right. Despite a notable and welcome increase in initiatives and publishing houses investing in making Arabic literature more available at least in English language, like *Banipal Magazine*, Saqi Books and Haus Arabia, all UK-based, it appears from the data provided by Index Translationum (Chapter I) that literary translation from Arabic is still a specialist activity and therefore lacks visibility among the larger audiences. Except for AUC Press and the recent well-funded Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing established in 2008, there are no local/regional publishers or institutions undertaking the translation of Arabic novels, whether by women or men writers, and investing in the promotion of the translations on a large scale. Moreover, while AUC Press remains the main English-language publisher in the Middle East with over 1000 fiction and non fiction titles, and while it is rightly credited for launching the international career of many an Arab writer, including Mosteghanemi herself and Naguib Mahfouz before her, AUC Press has been criticized for “not always being rigorous enough when it comes to translation quality” (Büchler and Guthrie, 2011, p. 27). The poor editing of *Chaos of the senses* as pointed out in the analysis in Chapter II would lend credence to this claim.

Secondly, while at the level of textural and pragma-semiotic shifts, analysis of the translations has not revealed a more pronounced pattern in French than in English (or vice-versa), a pattern did emerge at the level of publishers’ peritext. Indeed, the French publishers appeared to be more prone to visually reframing the translations within a clearly orientalist and colonial discourse than their Anglo-American counterparts. A painted image of a woman’s face with a scarf around it thus graces the cover of Albin Michel’s *Le chaos des sens*, while Actes Sud’s *Londres mon amour* and Presses Pocket’s *Les filles de Riyad* have a medium shot of a veiled woman and a close-up shot of a woman’s veiled face, respectively. The same does not hold for any of the English translations covered in the analysis. The French publishers appear to be indeed redeploying the fetishized veil to elicit desire in the feminine and feminized Other (and interest in buying the book), and promising the French readers the truth of this Other, delivered unveiled and naked between the covers of the book.

This discrepancy might find its explanation in the difference between French and British orientalisms and how visual arts were more prominent in French orientalism even when they were “not so much associated with imperial ideology as with the new crafts-based anti-industrialism of the Western arts” (John MacKenzie, 1995, p. 51). In his study of orientalism in art, John MacKenzie (1995) concludes indeed that there is a “distinction between French and British Orientalism. The British never indulged in the grandiose gestures of Delacroix and other French artists... [T]heir approach was generally more pragmatic and low key” (p. 51). The discrepancy could also be stemming from the way the French, more so than the British, instrumentalized photography in their imperial project. Referring to the identity-photographs and anthropometric classification systems imposed on the Algerian people by the French colonial authorities and the *Scènes et types* colonial tourist postcards of Algeria, Susan Slyomovics (2013) maintains that “the camera and conquest overlapped chronologically, linking French photographic representations of Algeria and Algerians to the larger phenomenon of Orientalism in its enduring historical and visual aspects” (p. 128).

Thirdly, French, British and American publishers seem to follow the same tendency as far as what books to (not) translate. To say that some books get quarantined or not translated/published at all is, however, to make a conspicuous observation. Indeed, Koster (2010) maintains that cases of non-translation, and therefore non-publication, occur “far more frequently than translation; perhaps we might even say that in the world republic of letters non-translation is the standard situation [...] even in cultures that show high import flows” (p. 29). There is, nevertheless, a dearth of studies exploring the reasons behind such quarantine, which Koster (p. 29) attributes to the difficulty to account for what texts/genres/authors are not translated. He (2010) adds that even should the researcher come up with an answer, it may not necessarily be insightful “because for most of those books the fact that they have not been translated is incidental, is a matter of cultural indifference, more so than the result of a conscious choice” (p. 29). In the case of the books under scrutiny in this study, however, the quarantine where *Fawḍā al-Hawāss* was kept, especially by the French publisher, cannot be incidental since the publisher had already discovered the author; nor can it be “a matter of cultural indifference,” since the publisher eventually brought the book out of the nine-year long quarantine.

In their attempt to account for what informs publishers' decisions, Broomans and Jiresch (2011) argue that the discovery and introduction of a work/author "increasingly takes place within a commercial environment," as a consequence of the globalization of the book market (p. 10). Globalization has, indeed, paradoxically sparked national protectionism with literary critics and reviewers increasingly focusing on national literature and only giving attention to bestsellers from other literatures, like Swedish author Marianne Fredriksson's *Anna, Hanna och Johanna*, the Kurt Wallander mystery novels by Henning Mankel, another Swedish, or British J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* fantasy novels. Heilbron and Sapiro (2007) seem to concur when they maintain that publishers, especially in countries where the book market is liberalized such as the US, increasingly treat literary texts as a commodity whose exchange obeys "the law of profitability" and submits to "the process of manufacturing standardized worldwide bestsellers" (p. 98). Broomans and Jiresch (2011) conclude that authors who fail to produce bestsellers in the source context find it difficult to be discovered and introduced in a new target culture (p. 10). From the analysis above, however, it appears that bestseller status of an Arabic novel in its source context plays a minimal role, if at all, in determining when and whether it will be introduced in the Anglo-American and French target contexts. In other words, while Broomans and Jiresch's rule might apply to exchange flows between literary fields within the European context, i.e. within the center, from which Broomans and Jiresch and Heilbron and Sapiro were talking respectively, it does not hold, or at least not in the same way, when applied to the flow between the US, the UK and France, on the one hand, and the Arab countries, or third-world countries for that matter, on the other.

In the international literary space, or what Casanova (2005) calls the World Republic of Letters, it is the center, not the periphery, that wields the most power and creates bestsellers thanks to "real and measurable effects, notably the 'transfer of prestige' through reviews or prefaces by prestigious writers [...]; or the complex mechanism of recognition through translation" (p. 84). Applying this to the three novels under scrutiny in this study, one can easily notice that while Mosteghanemi's novel was not translated by a known translator, Alsanea's *Banāt Al-Riyād* and al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun* were consecrated through the mechanism of translation by well-known literary translators and published scholars, namely Marilyn Booth and Catherine Cobham respectively, as well as through the quick publication

by large, prestigious publishing houses. In such domination, the economical factor, i.e. profitability for publishers, still plays a prominent part, but is significantly overlapping and interpenetrating with the aesthetic and political factors to the point where one, the political for instance, might obscure the other. In fact, Broomans and Jiresch (2011) themselves, drawing on Heilbron and Sapiro, attenuate their statement about profitability and agree that the decisions of the cultural transmitters “must be considered in the broader context of political, economic and cultural power relations” (pp. 11). Accordingly, what makes a commercially viable author from the periphery is, therefore, largely defined by what is politically and aesthetically sellable and marketable in the center. According to Nandi (2013), a marketable third-world writer is she who offers a familiar text, “echoes the structures of the West- hybridity instead of fixed national identity,” and reproduces “western” values [...] instead of traditional cultures” (p. 82). This writer is also one who produces literature that is “more appealing to the global audience through the conventions that the West finds easier to grasp” (p. 82).

Of the three novels examined here, Mosteghanemi’s text is the one that meets these conditions the least. Formally, it is the one that contaminates the novel genre the most by extensively drawing on an indigenous literary form, i.e. poetry. It is also the one that most calls attention to the act of writing, by drawing on the metafictional discourse and the autobiographical genre, thereby disrupting the reading act and destroying the illusion of fiction for the reader. In so doing, the novel draws the reader’s attention to the fictionality, and therefore constructedness, of the real world, including the Other, as he grew to perceive it. Politically, Mosteghanemi’s novel is the one that promotes not only a unified Algerian national identity that excludes Amazigh and French elements, but a wider pan-Arab identity, as well. It is also the only one that openly criticizes both state failures and neo-imperialism as exemplified by the US-led war on Iraq in 1991. In contrast, while Alsanea references Islamic texts in her novel, she contaminates her Arabic text with English language and draws on genres that are very familiar to the Western reader, mainly the chick lit and the email genres. The identity she discursively creates in her novel is hybrid, locating her within two main cultures: the conservative Saudi- rather than Arab- culture, and the Anglo-American culture. As to al-Shaykh’s novel, the discourses it draws on and the genres it incorporates conspire to

enhance Western rather than Arab or Islamic values, and confirm rather than question a number of familiar stereotypes about the Arab Other.

A priori, therefore, it may very well be the search of what is familiar in the foreign, as Nandi would put it, that accounts for how quickly al-Shaykh's and Alsanea's novels went through the first four stages of reception, while Mosteghanemi's lingered in the grey zone for such a long period despite its bestselling status and institutional consecration in its source context. In other words, the publishing practices in the French and Anglo-American contexts as far as Arabic literature by women is concerned follow a tradition of domestication, whereby the foreign and the different are erased, including through non-translation and the translation and publication of more easily assimilated texts. But while Nandi understands domestication in Venuti's terms (1995), domestication here, and as already discussed in the previous chapter, is not to be always and necessarily equated with erasure of the foreign and the different/exotic for what is similar. Rather, it is understood in the sense that differences of the Other, including perceivably incommensurable ones, are kept and even highlighted in text after text to the point where they become domesticated and familiar. Any discourses or images that might unsettle such domesticated difference will thus appear to be alien to the point of rejection, however much they may be familiar to the Self.

Before exploring whether and how this tradition of domestication affects the actual reception of the novels, it is worth mentioning here that such a selective publishing practice brings about the depoliticization of literature coming from the periphery insofar as they disarm or even exclude "writers from the periphery who are seeking recognition strategies that would be both subversive and effective" (Casanova, 2005, p. 88). For while the consecration power of publishers, scouts and cultural mediators from the center is "exercised over every text, every writer in the world," Casanova (2005) rightly points out that it is much greater "over those who originate from a literary space [...] located in one of the subordinate regions of the World of Letters" (p. 87). In such an asymmetrical context, third-world writers can only gain worldwide recognition if they manage to conquer the center, a conquest that is itself only possible if it is done in terms that are intelligible and familiar to the center. Formally and politically subversive literary texts are thus excluded or quarantined in the publishing process.

5.2.2 Reception: Constructing the Arab woman (writer)'s image.

5.2.2.1 Media interest: A story of inclusion and exclusion.

The discrepancy between the reception of Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā*, on the one hand, and of the other two novels, on the other, goes well beyond the first four stages of the reception process. After its publication in translation as *Chaos of the Senses* and *Le chaos des sens* respectively, the book is met with an unsuccessful reception. An online search reveals the absence of any editorial review of the English translation save for one by an Arab critic in a Cairo-based newspaper, *al-Ahram*. *Le chaos des sens* did not receive a better treatment with no reviews at all. It is, therefore, safe to assert that after its translation and publication, Mosteghanemi's book entered a new grey zone insofar as it failed to elicit the attention of critics and reviewers. Thus quarantined for the second time in the process of its cultural transfer and reception in target contexts, Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā* fails to make it to the sixth phase in Broomans' and Jiresch's reception model, i.e. the second phase of post-publication reception.

In contrast, an online search reveals that al-Shaykh's *Only in London* was reviewed by *Publishers Weekly* (2001), *The Observer* (2001), the *Times Literary Supplement* (2001), *Booklist* (2001) and, according to the American publisher Anchor Books, by *The Washington Post*, the *Literary Review* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, as well. *Girls of Riyadh* was substantially more successful at getting reviewed (see Figure 6). In addition to many readers' blogs, *The Guardian*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Economist*, the *New Statesman*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Forbes*, the *New York Observer*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, are but a few of the media outlets that published reviews of this novel, thereby contributing to its commercialization and, at the same time, (re)framing it for the audience and heavily mediating it to its readers. Likewise, both al-Shaykh's *Londres mon amour* and Alsanea's *Les filles de Riyad* are recommended in *Lechoixdeslibraires.com*, a French online resource dedicated to promoting libraries and publishing book sellers' recommendations. Besides, and while there were barely- and surprisingly- any editorial reviews of al-Shaykh's novel in the French media, several media resources published reviews of Alsanea's *Les filles de Riyad*, namely Kabbal

(2007) in *Le Nouvel observateur*, *La Nouvelle Critique* (2013), Cazes (2007) in *Le Point*, as well as Papy (2008) in the Belgian daily, *La Libre*.

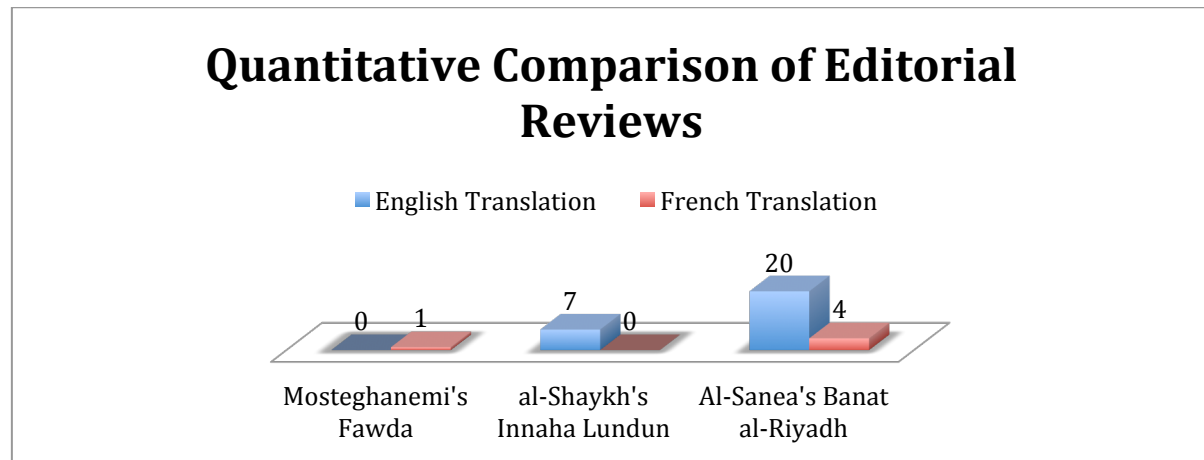


Figure 6. Quantitative comparison of editorial reviews

In addition to the fact that reviewers almost totally shunned Mosteghanemi's novel, two other preliminary observations can be made on the basis of the data above. The first observation is that for both successful books, i.e. al-Shaykh's and Alsanea's, reviews of the English translations always outnumber those of the French translations. This is due in part to the fact that the Anglo-American book market is larger than the French one. It can also be explained by the nature of the book market in France as opposed to the Anglo-American market. While the latter is governed by the exigencies of the free market, resulting in publishers heavily investing in the promotion of their books, the French book market is still state-regulated to some extent (Sciolino, 2012). But whatever the reasons, and at least in the case of contemporary Arabic literature, the Anglo-American book market obviously emerges as "the Greenwich Meridian of literature," i.e. the place that "allows us to gauge the distance from the centre of the protagonists within literary space," and where "the measurement of literary time—that is, the assessment of aesthetic modernity—is crystalized, contested, elaborated" (Casanova, 2005, p. 75). The implication is that for texts by Arab writers to be assessed as aesthetically modern and gain visibility across the world, they have to conform to this center's criteria.

Secondly, between the two novels most successful in translation, it is by far Alsanea's that drew the most ink and gained the most visibility, both in the Anglo-American and the French contexts, although more significantly so in the former than in the latter. This is quite surprising given that out of the two, it is *Only In London* that was shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in the UK—a shortlisting that adds to the novel's epitext and consolidates al-Shaykh's mainstreaming. This might be due, in part, to the difference in the type of relationship between the ST culture and the French TT culture, on the one hand, and the ST culture and the English TT culture, on the other. The United States have much more stakes as a state and a nation in Saudi Arabia, than France. American soldiers are stationed in Saudi soil. Economic exchanges are stronger between the US and Saudi Arabia, and even the flow of people is higher between the two than between France and Saudi Arabia. The latter is also at once and paradoxically the country where Ben Laden, the orchestrator of 9/11 terrorist attacks, came from, and the US biggest ally in the Gulf region in the war against terror. But while the geopolitical and economic alliance between Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, and the US and the UK, on the other can be said to account in part for the novel's success in the Anglo-American context, the same cannot be said for the book's success in France since similar ties do not unite France and Saudi Arabia. Besides, *Only in London* is approaching a subject of far greater and more immediate interest for the British audience than the life of upper middle class Saudi women, namely the integration experience of Arab diaspora in London. What is of immediate and topical political interest does not, therefore, necessarily explain why Alsanea's novel far outdid the other two novels. Only a close examination of the reviews of the English and French translations of *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ* can therefore give insight into the reasons behind the marked visibility of the novel in its target contexts.

5.2.2.2 Editorial reviews: Refraction through an orientalist prism.

A close examination of the reviews of *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* and its English and French translations reveals an orientalist reading of the novel not unlike the one that appears to be underpinning Presses Pocket's choice for the cover of *Les filles de Riyad*, and the textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that occurred in this French translation (and in *Innahā Lundun*'s

English translation and *Fawḍā*'s French translation, for that matter). This reading results in the framing of the novel within three orientalist images: the image of Saudi society as dark, dangerous and irremediably different as opposed to the Western society as enlightened and safe; the image of the Saudi woman as a subjugated individual with no voice; and the image of the woman writer as an “informant from within” supplementing the orientalist lack. It is in fact a reading that is already present in the blurb of the first edition by Plon of *Les filles de Riayd*, and that mediates the book to its French readers, including the critics who would do the reviews. The blurb informs the readers of how the novel has been banned in Saudi Arabia, before proceeding to affirm that it “permet au lecteur de pénétrer le plus secret des univers. En brisant le silence, Sadim, Michelle, Gamra et Lamis nous éclairent sur un mode de vie stupéfiant et parfois choquant.”

In this text, the publisher is making several assumptions, none of which are subjectively marked, about both the novel's protagonists and the world they are assumed to represent and belong to, as well as about the French readers and their assumed shared value system. As already explained above, assumptions are a powerful discursive and ideological tool that help speakers demarcate fellowship and universalize the discourses they subscribe to by presenting (assumed) meanings as given and factually true. In this short text, the publisher makes four existential assumptions, i.e. assumptions about what exists. The first one is that Saudi Arabia is the most secretive world. In “en brisant le silence,” two other existential assumptions are triggered by the definite article “le”: there is a silence in the world of Sadeem and Michelle and their likes, and second this silence is not theirs, “leur silence,” and so it is not a voluntary but an enforced one. The fourth existential assumption is triggered by the use of yet another marker of definite reference, this time the first plural pronoun, “nous.” The assumption here is that both publisher and readers belong to the same community and fellowship. This assumption also helps establish an ideological squaring whereby the “nous,” and consequently “our” value system, are delineated in opposition to “them” and “their” value system.

The publisher also makes a propositional assumption, i.e. an assumption about what is or will be, in “Sadim, Michelle, Gamra et Lamis nous éclairent sur un mode de vie stupéfiant et parfois choquant.” The assumption here is triggered by the factual verb “éclairer,” defined as

“fournir à quelqu’un des renseignements, des explications, pour lui permettre de mieux comprendre; informer, renseigner, instruire.” What the publisher assumes here is rather explicit: the author’s world, inhabited by the likes of Sadeem and Michelle, is hermetic and cannot be understood or grasped by the publisher and the French readers unless there is insight by such native guides/informants as the author and her fictional characters. More important, there is a value of light embedded in the verb, also defined as “fournir à quelqu’un la lumière dont il a besoin pour y voir.” Coupled with such markers of evaluation as the adjective “secret,” the noun “silence” and the verb “pénétrer,” the use of “éclairer” implies that the Saudi world is dark, scary and hitherto impenetrable for the French readers.

In addition to very explicit value statements expressed in the adjectives “choquant” and “stupéfiant,” the publisher makes a value assumption through the use of the verb “briser.” Defined in *Larousse* as “Abattre, vaincre quelqu’un, interrompre le déroulement d’une action, d’une évolution, faire cesser un état,” this verb triggers the assumption that the silence is undesirable. It is a state to which they are subjected. Thus, the female protagonists of the novel “break the silence,” “brisent le silence” instead of “get out of their silence,” “sortent de leur silence,” for instance. The verb also implies that the silence has been hitherto un-shattered, i.e. that Alsanea and her female characters are the first to break the chains. More importantly, through these assumptions and value statements, the publisher is universalizing and presenting as given the simplistic and reductive idea of fictional female characters and their creator as allowing their readers to have direct and unmediated access to the “astounding” and sometimes “shocking” way of life in their society.

After a first refraction of Alsanea’s novel through the French translators, whereby female agency was significantly reduced and the author’s subversive gender discourse was subverted, the publisher, through the peritext, is further refracting the novel by framing it within a clearly orientalist discourse. Indeed, and as Fairclough (2003) aptly points out, assumptions, especially existential and propositional/factual ones, can be “discourse-specific—a particular discourse includes assumptions about what there is, what is the case, what is possible, what is necessary, what will be the case, and so forth” (p. 58). In the case of the blurb, the discourse is one whereby Saudi society is a world that could come straight out of the

Arabian Nights: dark, full of secret and fearful things, keeping its women in check and stifling their voices. It is so far removed in time and space that the French reader would be hard-pressed to grasp it or be able to walk through its meandering mazes without the testimony of one of its subjugated female voices. In fact, this framing of the text creates another implicit assumption in that it suggests that Alsanea's voice is the first to be heard in the Saudi literary scene. This assumption obscures both the local and regional reality that the author is one in a long line of women writers who preceded her, some of whom are Saudis while others are from other Arab countries, but many of whom broke more social taboos than she did and were more politically subversive than she was. By presenting Alsanea's voice as a unique and rare voice that finally broke a hitherto unbroken silence, the publisher is paradoxically silencing all other feminine voices that preceded her; voices that inspired her to both believe in and perpetuate the discourses on gender equality and women's self-empowerment, and to produce a text where the voice of women is louder, stronger and wiser than that of men.

These orientalist images of the irremediable difference of a dark and dangerous Saudi culture as opposed to an enlightened Western culture, the weak and silenced Saudi women, and women being informants from within capable of filling Yegenoglu's "orientalist lack" and confirming century-long perceptions would be echoed in many, if not most, of the editorial reviews further mediating the novel to its French readers. Gerald Papy (2008), for instance, has this to say about Alsanea's *Les filles de Riyad*:

Malgré les encouragements de Nicolas Sarkozy, la liberté des femmes est loin d'être un droit acquis dans une Arabie Saoudite qui professe encore une vision très rigoriste de l'islam (le wahhabisme). En témoigne un livre qui a connu un grand succès dans le monde arabe à sa sortie à Beyrouth en 2005 : "Les Filles de Ryad" (*). L'auteur, Rajaa Alsanea, une jeune Saoudienne qui a grandi à Ryad et suit désormais des études d'orthodontie aux États-Unis, relate, à travers des courriels, les aventures amoureuses et familiales de quatre jeunes filles de la bonne société saoudienne, Gamra, Lamis, Michelle et Sadim.

Ces chroniques amusantes, parfois empreintes de gravité, toujours agréablement écrites n'en donnent pas moins de la société saoudienne une image rétrograde qu'on connaissait, certes, mais qu'on découvre sous un angle particulièrement cru. D'autant que ces e-mails ont suscité de vives réactions au moment de leur diffusion sur le Net, que leur version livresque a d'abord été interdite, puis a circulé sous le manteau avant apparemment d'être autorisée.

Other than the fact that the reviewer appears to be considering the text as a mainly ethnographic commentary on Saudi society, he establishes an ideological squaring at the very beginning of his text between a French (Western) culture represented by a then French president battling for women's rights in Islamic Saudi Arabia, and a misogynistic Saudi Arabia refusing to concede these rights. By thus putting this statement in a salient position, Papy is not only foregrounding the good "us" vs. the bad "them," but is also framing the novel within this image. He also universalizes, through a propositional assumption triggered by the verb "connaître," a French community that shares the same pre-established "image" of the Saudi Other that the author and her characters do not reveal or draw, but merely confirm, albeit in "crude" details.

But where *Les filles de Riyad* for *La Libre*'s reviewer is a testimony, for *Le Nouvel Observateur*'s (2007), it is infused with a scientific and, therefore, a more precise dimension:

Le romanblog de Rajaa al-Sanie, née en 1981, docteur-dentiste, en livre une radioscopie lustrée. A sa sortie en 2005, les muftis n'ont pas hésité à attaquer le récit et l'auteure, demandant son interdiction. D'ailleurs le livre est toujours interdit à la vente en Arabie Saoudite.

Chaque vendredi après-midi, jour sacré, juste après la prière commune du milieu de la journée, l'auteure livre sur son site un bout d'histoire de sa vie mêlée à celles de ses quatre copines, toutes issues de la grande bourgeoisie saoudienne : Lamis, Michelle, Sadim, Kamra. On y découvre ce que Rajaa al Sanie appelle un « milieu de velours, profondément archaïque », avec sa misère sexuelle, son hypocrisie, la vassalité des garçons aux traditions, le sexe qui supplante l'élan du cœur.

Les quatre filles feront les frais de cet archaïsme. Après des mariages ratés, des voyages avec leur mari en Europe ou aux USA, elles reviennent au Royaume ou pour se terrer chez elles ou pour divorcer, se trouvant ainsi mères-veuves dès l'âge de 22/23 ans. Quant aux garçons « ils finissent par ne plus bander ».

The reviewer's use of the medical term "radioscopie" connotes the idea that Alsanea's society is a sick one and implies that whatever diseases are plaguing it, the novel will reveal them as precisely and accurately as a fluoroscopy does an illness in the human body. The truth-value thus attributed to the novel is reaffirmed in the second paragraph when the reviewer conflates narrator with author, claiming that it is the latter who tells the stories of her friends, thereby transforming what has always been promoted as fiction into an autobiography, and reducing a

text that is postmodern in its generic and interdiscursive make-up to a text that offers nothing but social realism and a true-to-life image of its society. The summary of the novel as presented in the last paragraph completes the transformation of the text. From a narrative where three of the four friends have found happiness, self-empowerment and liberation in pursuing successful careers and claiming their right to decide whom to marry and where to live rather than in seeking validation from a man, be it a husband or a father, while the fourth found them in a successful career, a loving marriage and Islamic feminism, the novel as presented by the reviewer becomes a monochromatic story where all four friends met the same bleak fate, that of being helpless and voiceless victims.

In fact, the victimhood status is textually foregrounded at the very beginning of the review when the reviewer starts his text by bringing up the initial decision to ban the novel/silence the woman writer. He then attributes the ban not to one specific individual, namely the minister of information and culture, the one who is most likely to have ordered the ban, but to a plural, generic and religious “les muftis.” This is a case of both categorization and collectivization, to borrow van Leeuwen’s (2003) taxonomy, where the reviewer collectivizes a whole group of people and categorizes them in terms of their religious function. These two representation strategies help to paint them all as a “homogeneous, consensual group” (p. 50) who, because of the religious tenets they believe in, stand invariably against freedom of speech for women. This, in turn, frames the novel within the narrative not only of enforced silence but also of religious violence as practiced on (women) writers. Besides, while “mufti” is not inherently and transparently evaluative,³⁷ it is one of those evaluative nouns that Fairclough (2003) describes as “discourse-relative,” i.e. they become evaluative “but only relative to a particular discourse” (p. 172). In this review, framed within a clearly reductive Orientalist discourse, and juxtaposing “muftis” to the transparently evaluative verb “attaquer,” and noun “interdiction,” the collectivization of “mufti” is conducive to a negative evaluative interpretation that touches the entire religion rather than one or two specific jurists, and conjures up images of religious violence on female subjects, a violence most specifically and,

³⁷ “Mufti” is defined in the Merriam-Webster as “a professional jurist who interprets Muslim law,” whose authority has been “significantly reduced” by the “the development of modern legal codes in Islamic countries,” so that *muftis* “now deal only with questions of personal status such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce.”

indeed, almost exclusively associated with the religion of Islam in Western mass media (see Gabrielatos 2013).

Alsanea's novel seems to have been subjected to a very similar reading in the Anglo-American context. In the *Economist* (2007), for instance, the reviewer states in the opening paragraph that:

Rajaa Alsanea's novel, set in the form of a gossipy internet blog about four upper-middle-class Saudi girls and their calamitous love lives, was officially banned in Saudi Arabia when it was published in Arabic two years ago (and a lawsuit was briefly filed against the author, fortunately away in America studying dentistry). But the book was still read, eagerly. Now, translated into English, it is easy to see why.

The reviewer uses strategies from inclusion and exclusion to indirect speech to frame the novel within the same orientalist discourse depicting Saudi women as helpless victims, defining the enlightened and female-friendly Western "us" in opposition to a dangerous, misogynistic "them," and assuming that women's fiction is, or is expected to be, a transparent guidebook to Saudi society. S/he thus starts the review by selectively including bits of information about the local reception of the original all while excluding other relevant information. S/he informs the reader of both the ban and the lawsuit, despite the fact that the latter was inconsequential, thereby activating from the very beginning the image of enforced silence and oppression and framing the review and the book within this discourse. On the other hand, the reviewer totally suppresses, through the passive voice, any relevant information about the social actors involved. There is, for instance, no information about who banned the book: was it the ministry of culture and information, the institution that is normally responsible for control over books in Saudi Arabia or some other, possibly religious, institution? Just as there is no information about who filed the lawsuit: was it one particular citizen not agreeing with the author, a civic institution speaking in the name of Saudi readers or a religious institution? What remains equally opaque is who eagerly read the book: was it only young Saudi women, women from all age categories, or young people of both sexes, a wider readership that cut across gender, age categories and social classes and therefore undermines the ban and subverts the law, or was it a strictly non-Saudi Arab readership which would mean that the unofficial Saudi public stance endorsed the official ban?

Suppression of social actors here where they could have been mentioned leads to an interpretation where the atmosphere of censure and silence is left open, and therefore more enhanced than it would have been had the reviewer specified the person or the institution that ordered the ban as well as the person or the organism that filed the lawsuit. By the same token, suppression of the identity of the social actors who “eagerly read” the book is equally conducive to an interpretation where the book might have only been read in secrecy by a fringe readership and therefore remained of no consequence to the hegemonic order of discourse. But while these suppressions or exclusions left traces in the form of the passive voice and the inclusion of specific social activities (the banning, the filing of the lawsuit and the reading), the review makes two radical suppressions, defined by van Leeuwen (2003) as “excluding both the social actors and their activities” (p. 39). Indeed, while the reviewer deems it relevant to mention the ban, he omits to clarify that it was soon removed, and while he mentions the lawsuit, he keeps the detail about Ghazi al-Gosaibi, the Saudi writer and minister who prefaces the book. These radical suppressions serve to enhance the image of coercive silence and the dangers a woman who breaks it might be facing. In fact, the implication of imminent danger is signalled through the use of the evaluative adverb, “fortunately,” implying that because of the lawsuit, the writer was in real physical threat, maybe of execution, a danger from which she escaped by being in the US. The reviewer is, therefore, making at once an implicit evaluation and an ideological squaring whereby Saudi Arabia is portrayed as a dangerous place for this woman writer, and possibly for all women, while the US is quite explicitly portrayed as the refuge and the protector of Saudi women.

The reviewer, however, is not satisfied with the story told by the narrator, and makes another assumption: “The narrator does not rant at the state laws and family customs that dictate the way she and her fellows live.” In this sentence we have a case of logical implication, inferred from features of language, in this case from the negation in “does not rant.” The statement triggers the assumption that a narrator like Alsanea’s is expected to voice and, thus, should have passionately voiced her anger at and condemned the local laws and customs. This, in turn, implies that when reading a novel, the readers as imagined by the reviewer are looking for the author’s baring and criticism of local culture and its aspects. Failure to do so warrants expression of disappointment. This representation does not transcend

what Kahf (2009) calls the “the victim, escapee and pawn triad” that denies agency to Arab and Muslim women (p. 32). According to Kahf, these women are generally represented as either victims of their culture and societies or, if they come to criticize their societies, especially from within the West, as escapees for whom the West provided a safe haven from which to revolt. If, however, an Arab or Muslim woman can and does speak up, but does not openly criticize her culture, she is then called as a manipulated pawn.

Alev Adil’s review of the novel for the *Independent* (2007) is not very different:

This cheeky and salacious portrait of the loves and lives of four privileged twenty something girls in Riyadh, banned in Saudi Arabia on publication in 2005, has become a controversial bestseller across the Middle East. Unlike Bushnell's columnist heroine Carrie Bradshaw, Alsanea's narrator must remain anonymous, posting each chapter to a Yahoo group.

[...] However, sequestered under Sharia law with little in the way of basic human rights, they must display a great deal more ingenuity than their Western counterparts in order to meet men.

[...] The impossibility of independent lives does not politicise them, or alienate them from Islamic fundamentalism. Instead they congratulate one woman for the "bold spiritual step" of deciding to wear the full hijab.

This review—excerpts of which would land on the front cover of the second UK edition of *Girls of Riyadh*, thereby framing it in exoticizing terms—converges with the previous ones on many levels. Here, too, there is inclusion of the information on the ban and exclusion of the social actor(s) responsible for it, coupled with radical exclusion of information about the subsequent removal of the ban. The inclusion is foregrounded in that Adil places it in the textually salient position of the introduction, so that the idea of imposed silence frames the reading of the novel. Likewise, Adil establishes ideological squaring between an enlightened West with its free women and a dangerous Saudi Arabia with its victimized women. This is done quite explicitly through comparison between Bushnell’s Carrie Bradshaw and Alsanea’s narrator and between young Saudi women “sequestered under Sharia law with little in the way of basic human rights” and “their Western counterparts” enjoying human rights and freedom of speech. Collectivization of Western women through use of the plural, here, serves to represent them as homogeneously emancipated regardless of class, nationality, ethnic origin or

sexual orientation. The collectivization of Saudi women has two effects. First, it equally represents these women as homogeneously oppressed regardless of class, educational level, ethnic origin and religious identity (Shiite vs. Sunni). Second and most important, it serves to perpetuate the assumption that Alsanea's female characters are representative of these collectivized and reified Saudi women, and that Alsanea's fiction is therefore a transparent guidebook to Saudi society.

In the last paragraph, the reviewer invites the reader to make yet another assumption, a logical implication in this instance, inferred from the use of the negative form (does not): that the female characters and their creator should have attacked their country's politics and rejected the "Sharia law" sequestering them and "Islamic fundamentalism." She also invites the reader to make what Fairclough (2003) calls a "bridging assumption," i.e. an assumption that is "necessary to create a coherent link or 'bridge' between parts of a text, so that a text 'makes sense'" (p. 57). Indeed, the first and second sentences of this last paragraph can only have a coherent semantic relation if the reader assumed that wearing the full hijab is an aspect of Islamic fundamentalism. The image conveyed by this review is of hijab as inherently oppressive of Muslim women, who should therefore reject it. Instead, they appear to be "pawns": these women have been so deeply manipulated that they seem to have accepted and internalized Islamic fundamentalism.

Oppression of women because of Islamic teachings and fictionalized women's lives as filling an Orientalist lack seem, in fact, to be recurrent tropes in the novel's reviews. In the *Los Angeles Times* (2007), for instance, the reviewer, Judith Freeman, assesses the book in these terms:

In September 2005, when the novel was first published (in Arabic, in Lebanon), a firestorm erupted. For months, the book was banned in the Saudi kingdom, although it circulated there in bootlegged editions; throughout the rest of the Middle East, it was widely read and discussed.

Moreover, this novel's stated aim is nothing less than to expose the hypocrisy and contradictions inherent in a highly rigid society ruled by "Sharia," the law derived from the Koran. For those of us who know little about day-to-day life in Saudi Arabia, "Girls of Riyadh" affords a glimpse into a hidden culture.

Saudi girls are not allowed to meet men in public (the religious police arrest Lamees merely for sitting at a cafe with a man who is not a relative). Their marriages are arranged, in a culture that disdains romantic love even as its appeal is continually spread by Western movies and Western music.

And yet, however we may characterize this book, one thing is indisputable: It's the work of a brave and intelligent young woman. Alsanea currently lives in Chicago.

Again and again, the same tropes emerge in these reviews. While the ban was not attributed to any religious authority, be it collective or individual, religion is still directly and reductively represented as the source of women's oppression through the use of "sharia," an overdetermined signifier that conjures up frightening images of stoning and beheading from the sensationalist overuse of the word in mainstream media. Paradoxically, Alsanea's loyalty to the hijab even when she is "safe" in a Western country, as well as her and her female characters' insistence on drawing on this very Sharia to contest local dominant discourses on women is completely and strategically excluded from the review. Such inclusion and exclusion contributes to a monolithic and reifying representation of Islam as a timelessly oppressive and misogynistic religion.

In addition to inclusion and exclusion, the reviewer uses another discursive strategy in the review, namely a non-standard conversational implicature, as defined above. In the last paragraph quoted from the review, the reviewer uses the evaluative adjective "brave" to imply that Alsanea knew that by writing her book, she was braving some kind of imminent danger. Then, in what appears to be a flouting of the maxim of relevance in that it is not immediately clear how the author's current residence relates to being a brave writer (or to the review of the novel, for that matter), the reviewer states that Alsanea is currently living in Chicago. If the reader is to assume, as she should, that the reviewer is necessarily being cooperative in his review and is respecting the relevance maxim, she will rightly infer that Alsanea escaped the danger she braved by fleeing to the US. The exclusion of the reason behind her presence in Chicago, namely postgraduate studies, strategically reinforces this implicature. This is, therefore, one more review that confirms Kahf's "victim, escapee and pawn triad" insofar as Saudi woman is represented as both a victim (of Sharia law and cultural customs) and an escapee since the author managed to escape whatever fate befalls brave women like her by living in Chicago.

It is worthy of note that even the more sober reviews seem unable to read the novel from a different perspective, as it is clear from Ahmed's review of the novel for *The Guardian's* (2007):

When Rajaa Alsanea's novel was published in Saudi Arabia in 2005, it was quickly withdrawn from bookshops and the ministry of information placed it for a while on its lengthy list of banned books. Photocopies of *Girls of Riyadh* subsequently changed hands for up to \$500. In a country where novelists are forced to publish their work abroad (usually in Lebanon), it's not surprising that this first novel by a 25-year-old dentistry student seemed subversive; it offers a rare glimpse into the lives of women of "the velvet class" –

[...] *Girls of Riyadh* is unromantic - bad things happen to its heroines - but Alsanea is clearly on the side of romance, and her exploration of whether it can exist in Saudi Arabia is brave and surprisingly informative.

Unlike the previous reviewers, Ahmed reveals the identity of the social actor responsible for the ban, the minister of information, thereby not allowing for collectivization of this negative act. She also does not draw on the discourse of religious violence. However, she still frames the novel within the trope of women as being victims of violence, once when she textually foregrounds the information on the ban, and a second time when, by describing the author as "brave," she implies that Alsanea knowingly exposed herself to some severe form of retribution by publishing her novel. Likewise, the reviewer does not transcend the belief that the value of a novel by an Arab-Muslim woman lies not so much in its aesthetics as in how "informative" and documentary it is, and in whether it "offers a glimpse" of the society in which it was produced, i.e. opens what has hitherto been a veiled space to the gaze of the Western subject.

Thanks to these reviews, all praising *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ* and its author for "bravely" documenting Saudi society and life under Islam for women, the novel gained visibility and reached a mass readership made up of different constituencies having different codes and values, and ranging from a general audience reading dailies like the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Independent*, to a more specialized audience reading weeklies like *The New Statesman* and *The Economist*. In other words, because of the reviews, the novel crossed not only language borders, but also cultural borders, and the crossing was so successful that its sales far surpassed those of the two other novels, to the point where one can talk of *Girls of Riyadh* and

Les filles de Riyad as bestsellers compared, of course, to the French and English translations of the other novels. Thus, in Amazon.com's Best Sellers list, Mosteghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* and al-Shaykh's *Only in London* rank 2,404,484 and 1,538,832 respectively, while the 2008 paperback edition of *Girls of Riyadh* ranks 40,211. In Amazon.fr, likewise, *Le chaos des sens* and *Londres mon amour* rank 337,750 and 774,610 respectively, while *Les filles de Riyad* ranks 43,757. The same goes for Amazon.ca, where *Girls of Riyadh* ranks 64,919, while *Chaos of the senses* and *Only in London* rank 1,107,557 and 742,737 respectively. Even in the UK, *Only in London* lags far behind *Girls of Riyadh* in terms of sales with amazon.co.uk ranking the first at 96,845 and the second at 47,398. *Chaos of the senses*, on the other hand, falls far behind the two with 496,914. While these numbers are only for one book seller, namely Amazon, in four different countries, they show a consistent trend and can, therefore, be taken as indicative of how the three novels fared in this stage of their reception.

In literary translation, structures of feelings and alternate structures of feelings clash and compete for control and a tension rises between source and target cultures' values, between the author's subjectivity, on the one hand and, on the other, the multiple subjectivities including that of the translator, the publisher, the editor, the reviewer and all those target text readers reading the text within a different horizon of expectations. According to Venuti (1998), however, only when this tension is resolved for the benefit of all these target text readers, i.e. only when the translation and reception processes refract the original in such a way as to serve the target culture's ideological interests, and how to the expectations and aesthetics prevalent in the target culture, can the translated original appeal to the different segments constituting the type of mass readership that makes of a translated book a success within the target culture (p. 125). The reception of *Girls of Riyadh* and *Les filles de Riyad* proves Venuti right. Underlying the reviews are images and structures of feelings that counter and supplant the images and structures of feelings present in the original. Indeed, gone are the nuances found in *Banāt Al-Riyād*, together with the dialogicality characterizing it, the subversive (gendered and religious) discourses intricately woven into its interdiscursive fabric and, above all, the various images of women as empowered agents and active social actors as opposed to the images of men as weak and submissive that Alsanea portrayed in her novel. What the reviewers did, instead, was collapse all those "areas of difference and different

differentiations,” as Spivak (1993, p. 193) would call them, and mediate to their French and Anglo-American readers a novel inscribed with the same hegemonic domestic values according to which the Arab-Muslim Other has been constructed and perceived over the centuries. They thus re-painted pre-existing and century-long stereotyped images of Arab and Muslim women as eternal voiceless victims of their misogynistic religion and backward societies. In other words, these reviews refract Alsanea’s novel and filter it through the discursive filters of Orientalism in such a way as to contribute to the construction of a familiar and already domesticated inferior alterity of the Saudi (Arab-Muslim) Other, itself necessary to the dialectic construction of the superior Self. Alsanea’s novel is, thus, reduced to a text that lays bare what Hardy, *The New Statesman*’s reviewer, calls “the world’s oddest and most closed societies” under the gaze of the Western subject better “than a library of books and articles by supposed western experts” (2007). It appears, therefore, that the main reason why Alsanea’s novel was the one that garnered the greatest visibility in its Anglo-American and French target contexts lies in the fact that due to its subject matter, i.e. the lives of Saudi women, it is the text that lends itself the most to an interpretation that best fills the orientalist lack. It is, indeed, constructed as giving insider knowledge not only about the Saudi other, but also and particularly about the Muslim other. The novel becomes, therefore, one more discursive contribution to the orientalist “archive” through which other texts by and about Arab Muslim women will be filtered in turn.

The positivism underpinning these reviews, and which prevents their authors from recognizing their own assumptions, seems to be shaping the reviewers’ understanding of both the act of writing and the act of translating. Indeed, while they use different terms to describe it, from the less exhaustive “glimpse” to the scientific and precise “radioscopie” and “better than a library of books” and “experts,” the reviewers all approach the original as giving immediate and unmediated access to reality. As a consequence, they obfuscate the historicity and contingency of the act of writing itself and mute the work of re-presentation and, indeed, of translation that it does. Along the same lines, most of these reviewers omit to mention the translating act behind the version they are reviewing, thereby enacting a construction of translation as a true and indistinguishable copy of the original and, thus, as transparent communication of what is presented as knowledge that is itself transparently produced. In so

doing, the reviewers obfuscate the various translation practices, from inclusion and exclusion to the discursive work of the translator, behind the construction of alterity. Whatever image of the other and the self these reviews mediate to their readers becomes, therefore, de-historicized and unquestionable.

The obfuscation of translation practices has another consequence, a scandalous one as Venuti would undoubtedly describe it, namely the marginalization of translators. While the reviewers talked, directly or indirectly, about various social actors involved in or related in one way or another to Alsanea's novel, from *muftis* to the ministry of information and from Saudi readers to readers in the Arab world, most of them gave short shrift to the translators, thereby contributing to their invisibility whether in the Anglo-American context or the French one. Their subjectivity, as enacted through their discursive choices, is thus relegated to a secondary status behind that of the author, and their work of creation and production is reduced to a work of mere re-creation and re-production. After the publication of *Girls of Riyadh*, Marilyn Booth shed her translator's garb and donned her scholarly one precisely to take issue with this scandalous marginalization of translators and take the book industry to task for it with her translation of Alsanea's novel as a case in point. For just as *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ* was very successful in the first five stages of its reception, so was it in the sixth stage, i.e. the second phase of post-publication reception as conceived by Broomans and Jiresch.

5.2.3 Second phase of post-publication reception: First-world feminism vs. third-world feminism.

Following the trend in all the previous stages, while Mosteghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* and *Le chaos des sens* were ignored by scholars, Alsanea's *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ*, very closely followed by *Innahā Lundun*, drew a lot of ink among this important constituency of the Anglo-American and French audiences, namely literary and feminist scholars. Thus, al-Shaykh's *Only in London*, along with other al-Shaykh's novels, was the subject of an interview with Canadian writer and broadcaster Eleanor Wachtel on her literary show *Writers & Company* on Canadian CBC Radio One. The same novel was adapted by playwright Shelley Silas for British Radio 4. *Only in London* was also the subject of several scholarly

works, including Hout's (2003) article "Going the Extra Mile: Defining identity, Home, and Family in Hanan al-Shaykh's *Only in London*," Fischer's (2004) article "Women Writers, Global Migration, and the City: Joan Riley's *Waiting in the Twilight* and Hanan al-Shaykh's *Only in London*," and al-Samman's (2013) book chapter "Border Crossings: Cultural Collisions and Reconciliation in Hanan al-Shaykh's *Only in London*." The same holds true for Alsanea's *Girls of Riyadh*. While it was not adapted for any radio station, it received a nod in the award given to Alsanea by the University of Illinois in Chicago "for distinctive research in stem cells and her work in neurology. The university also recognized her literary efforts, singling out *Girls of Riyadh*" (Wagner, 2013). Likewise, the novel earned Alsanea several newspaper and radio interviews, and was equally scrutinized in as many scholarly works, including Gwynne's (2013) "The Lighter that Fuels a Blaze of Change???: Agency and (cyber)spatial (dis)embodiment in *Girls of Riyadh*," and al-Ghadeer's (2006) "*Girls of Riyadh*: a new technology writing or chick Lit Defiance".

The reception of the three novels among this specific constituency had different implications for each author. For Mosteghanemi, and according to Broomans and Jiresch, lack of interest on the part of scholars and experts means the complete failure of *Fawḍā*'s cultural transfer in the Anglo-American and French target contexts. It also means that consecration-authorities, just as much as the publishing industry, helped keep Mosteghanemi invisible in the West. One cannot but hark back here to Casanova's contention above about the depoliticization of literature coming from the periphery. Indeed, out of the three novels, *Fawḍā* is the most politically militant one. The discursive strategies it uses disturb the most the reading process, and challenge the most established values and preconceived ideas. In fact, it should come as no surprise that this Algerian novel barely gained any visibility among the diverse constituencies of the French readership despite the very strong historical, economic and political ties between France and Algeria. These very ties may have been an obstacle to a better reception of the novel in France. The mere fact of Mosteghanemi's use of Arabic in rejection of French, coupled with the way she discursively weaves an identity fabric for the Algerian subject almost exclusively made of Arab threads to the exclusion of any French, Amazigh or even pronounced religious threads, turns *Le chaos des sens* into a de facto decolonizing text that decenters France as an imperial power, and that challenges any givens

about the Algerian people, including the cultural attachment of its France-trained intellectuals to France.

The consequence of *Fawḍā*'s shunning at all levels of its reception is that the polyphony in *Fawḍā* and the heterogeneities that Mosteghanemi embodies as a subject representing herself as cosmopolitan yet distinctly Arab, Muslim yet secular, open to world's literature and yet so deeply anchored in classical Arabic literary heritage, critiquing local customs and political corruption, yet rejecting Western interference, putting forward her authorial status yet constantly questioning any authority she might have as an author are all muted. An Arab feminist agency that tries to discursively subvert both local and neo-imperialist forms of violence thereby having the potential to undo the image of the Arab woman as "victim, escapee or pawn," is therefore subdued. A political text that militates against cultural and political woes plaguing the author's society all while calling attention to its own situatedness, thereby unsettling the trope of Arab woman author as informant from within, gets defanged of its politically subversive bite through quasi complete erasure.

What remains then are al-Shaykh's and Alsanea's less politicized narratives. In al-Shaykh's case, however, the positive reception did not have any significant impact on the status of the author insofar as these same canon-making authorities had already canonized al-Shaykh as "one of the leading contemporary novelists of the Arab world; as a standard-bearer for Arab women writers," after her *Story of Zahra* and *Women of Sand and Myrrh* (Ball, 2011, p. 63). Literary scholar and Middle Eastern studies specialist Miriam Cooke praised her apolitical writing even as she was paradoxically bestowing upon her the title of "decentrist" (See Chapter III). This inclusion, into a group that included Syrian-Lebanese writer and poet Ghada al-Sammān and the Lebanese prize-winning Emily Nasrallah, both iconic and greatly acclaimed in Arab literary circles by then, happened at the end of the 1980s, i.e. when only one work by al-Shaykh had been translated into English and French, namely *Hikāyat Zahra* (1980), and when her status within the Arab literary system had been equivocal at best. Literary scholar Larson (1991), for his part, describes *Hikāyat Zahra* as "certainly a major work of Middle Eastern fiction," and insists on branding al-Shaykh a feminist, even though he finds her a "reluctant" one since her female protagonists are "more acted upon than active" (p.

14). They are either “the victims of an Islamic patriarchy that treats them as second-class citizens [...]. Bewildered and passive, they permit themselves to drift along from event to event (and often from man to man) with little sense of fulfillment or awareness that their situations might be altered”; or “when they attempt to assert some kind of independent stance from male authority, it is only with a sense of reluctance- not that this is their right, but simply a matter of happenstance” (Larson, 1991, p. 14).

After the publication of *Only in London*, Christiane Schlote (2003) introduces a review essay on the novel by highlighting what seem to be some of the major feats a woman writer from an Arab country can achieve: the acclaim that her books meet in the West and the banning they get in Arab countries:

Hanan al-Shaykh is considered one of the leading contemporary Arab women writers. Born in Beirut in 1945, she lived in Egypt as well as in Saudi Arabia before she settled in London in the 1990s. Her oeuvre includes novels and short stories as well as plays. al-Shaykh writes exclusively in Arabic, but her work has been translated into English and several other languages. Her novels such as *The Story of Zahra* (Ḥikāyat Zahrah, 1980), which was banned in most Arab countries, *Women of Sand and Myrrh* (Misk al-Ghazāl, 1988), which was named one of the 50 Best Books of 1992 by Publishers Weekly, and *Beirut Blues* (*Barīd Bayrūt*, 1992) have received international attention.

The reception of al-Shaykh’s works in the West, especially in the Anglo-American context, thus occurred in so familiar terms, those of feminism as conceived of in the West, of marketability in Western countries and of misogyny in Arab countries that al-Shaykh ended up institutionalized and, indeed, mainstreamed. Her fiction started to be taught in university curricula and discussed in academic conferences. Her persona, as reluctant as some might have found her to be, was appropriated to “speak” in feminist terms for the subaltern Arab woman and, indeed, for all Arabs and Muslims. As al-Shaykh reveals to Ball (2011):

[...] they want me to be a spokesperson for Arab women and I have refused in various circumstances; I didn’t want that at all. If something happened at a political level, they would immediately think, who shall we ask about the war in the Gulf or Iraq or Afghanistan? They [the press] lump us all in one category. From the beginning, I tried to differentiate myself */ I said I’m a novelist. You don’t go to Zadie Smith or Margaret Drabble and ask them about British foreign policy. You go to a political analyst!

What the canonization of al-Shaykh does, in fact, is filter and channel her texts, along

with any discursively subversive tools she might be deploying to effect a change in the hegemonic discourse on the monolithic “Arab woman,” through the very institutions and structures of authority that (re)produce this hegemonic discourse and perpetuate it. Through such a reception of her texts, al-Shaykh has therefore been engaged in what Trinh T. Minh-ha sees as “a conversation of ‘us’ with ‘us’ about ‘them’, of the white man with the white man about the primitive-nature man [...], in which ‘them’ is silenced [...and] is only admitted among ‘us’, the discussing subjects, when accompanied and introduced by ‘us’” (as cited in Mohanty, 2003, p. 75). In other words, al-Shaykh’s mainstreaming displaces her from the postcolonial minority literature site into the privileged site of the canon, and her voice is appropriated by the hegemonic order of discourse, thus being subverted even as it is becoming hegemonic and authoritative in the way it is made to speak for and translate the Other to the Self.

Where the reception within academia and specialized circles of *Only in London* and *Londres mon amour* only reinforced the location of privilege from which al-Shaykh speaks for the Arab Other to the Anglo-American and French audience, the reception of Alsanea’s *Girls of Riyadh* and *Les filles de Riyad* within the same constituencies reveals the workings of such modes of reception in constructing the authority of women writers from Arab-Muslim countries all while paradoxically subverting their voices and undermining their agency. Marilyn Booth’s scholarly texts on Alsanea’s novel, its English translation and reception can give valuable insight into these workings. Booth is not only a seasoned Arabic-English literary translator that boasts a long list of translated works, including by such acclaimed women writers as Egyptians Latīfa al-Zayyāt and Nawal El Saadawi, Iraqi ‘Alia Mamdouh and Lebanese Hoda Barakāt; she is also an Arabic literature professor who was, until Fall 2014, holding the Iraq Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. More important, she is a feminist scholar who has been exploring issues of gender, representation and Orientalism as they pertain to Arab women. In the introduction of her edited book *Harem Histories: envisioning places and living spaces*, Booth (2010a) insightfully maintains that

In the West, images and attitudes that the discourses and images of Orientalism shaped continue to saturate assumptions about Middle eastern, Arab, Muslim, and Eastern women, and to underlie judgments about their societies. After all, in “Western” as well

as “Eastern” societies, representations of women’s bodies and the spaces they should, might, or do inhabit have carried heavy symbolic burdens, often standing in for particular political agendas... (p. 3)

This sensitivity to the politics of representation and her awareness of the location of Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim women at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression, local and transnational, allows her to be equally sensitive to the politics of translation and reception of Arabic literary works in the West:

the political valences of our world at the start of a third millennium mean that a work of contemporary Arabic aesthetic culture released (like a chemical cloud?) into North American, English-language circulation will take on a particularly intense burden of representation. [...] If processes of translation, especially into languages of colonial powers, necessarily entail degrees of violence, as one vocal strand of thinking in translation studies now has it, what of violence that might be entailed in reception, and not only in the translator’s and publisher’s inevitable constructions of hoped-for audiences? (Booth, 2003, p. 48)

In a very recent interview, Booth ably reveals one aspect of such violence when she affirms that “certain rather narrow conceptions of ‘market’ – and holdovers of Orientalist concepts of what writers from Arabic-speaking societies should be saying—govern what gets taken” (interviewed by Sarah Irving, 2013). Booth’s multiple positionalities as a translator, a published scholar and a feminist speaking to and for Arab feminism (see Booth 2001), make of her work on Rajaa Alsanea, *Banāt Al-Riyād* and its translation a most interesting and compelling enterprise that would undoubtedly shed light on how First World academia contributes to the production of knowledge on and, as Said would add, the construction of the Other Arab woman through her own texts.

When Penguin approached Booth to translate *Banāt Al-Riyād*, she readily accepted. Appreciating the linguistic richness of the novel and aware as she is of the politics of translating Arab women’s texts in the Anglo-American target context, Booth states in a first article published in the *Translation Studies* journal in 2008, that she drew on both Venuti and Spivak and opted for a foreignizing translation where she “attempted a maximum amount of ‘literalist surrender’ on the level of semantic equivalence, language level and juxtaposition, and stylistic play, though not that of syntax” (2008a, p. 201). Her objective was both democratic and anti-colonialist, as Venuti and Spivak would describe it respectively, in that

she wanted to avoid succumbing “to a homogenizing language that erases or diminishes the differences within the original text, and that forces the reader (rather than the text) to accommodate to ‘the other’” (p. 200). Booth (2008a) reveals, however, that Alsanea, backed by her publisher, objected to such literalist translation and “requested that she be permitted to revise my translation without consulting me” (p. 201), a request that the publisher granted Alsanea despite her inexperience as a novelist and very young age.

When the author finished the revision, Booth (2008a) was “given only the opportunity to read the final text and decide whether [she] wanted [her] name to appear on the title page” (p. 201). Booth eventually accepted for her name to appear on *Girls of Riyadh*'s title page. In the aftermath of this incident, however, and prior to writing the article above, Booth (2007) published a disclaimer of sorts in the *Times Literary Supplement*, where she reveals the circumstances surrounding the translation of the novel and defends her name by stating that the clichéd language some reviewers criticized in *Girls of Riyadh*, was the result of the author's revisions, which do not “reflect the care that I took to produce a lively, idiomatic translation.” In this same letter to the editor, Booth points out and rightfully so that “the larger scandal, though, is that for some publishers and writers, literary translators remain derivative servitors rather than creative artists.” In 2008, Booth published the peer-reviewed article mentioned above in the *Translation Studies* journal, where she talks about the same subject but gives detailed comparison between her own translation and the novel as it was published. That same year, she (2008b) published an article in the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Weekly* online newspaper decrying the unprofessionalism of both the publisher and the author and criticizing the author's intervention. Two years later, Booth (2010b) published yet another text, a peer-reviewed article in the *Journal of Middle East Women Studies*, talking about the experience and exploring its implications for “Muslim women.” She also presented this last article in two seminars, one at the University of Manchester and the other at the University of Edinburgh.

In her 2008a article, Booth raises some critical and necessary questions about the status of translator and author:

This situation raises questions of authority as it reveals clashing concepts of translation. Shouldn't the author of the original text have the ultimate say? Well, no: the translation

is the translator's text, as most translated authors recognize and respect. Yet if the author wants to rewrite, isn't that permissible? Well, yes. Where are the boundaries between the author's authority and the translator-author's authority? ("Authority" here in its acquired meaning also returns us to "author-ity".) (p. 201)

In her 2010b paper, she ably analyzes the effect of going West and through publishers' and reviewers' framing and reframing, on the reception of texts by a "Muslim woman," as she chooses to refer to Alsanea. In so doing, however, she is also constructing her status as an authoritative and vocal agent within Translation Studies and First World feminism, while simultaneously constructing a different image for the "Muslim woman" (2010b). So what is this image and how does it differ from, or otherwise conform to, the images that the press and the reviewers drew for "the Muslim woman" as shown above and that Booth herself so vehemently decries? All four texts talk about the same subject and can, therefore, be seen in and by themselves, as a case of overlexicalization that, at best, reveals the scholar's desire to (re)establish a hierarchical relationship and, indeed, her authority over "the Muslim woman" even as she bemoans the translator's lack of authority, and, at worst, betrays a desire to undermine the author for her intervention in the translation. One could ask, for instance, had the editors been the agents to dictate the most radical changes, as it was the case with Catherine Cobham's translation of al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun*, would Booth have decried their interventions as vocally?

A close analysis of transitivity in Booth's articles can reveal how she constructs an image for the Muslim woman author. Booth extensively refers to Alsanea's decisions and discursive strategies in both her scholarly articles. Surprisingly, however, she significantly passivates the author. In the 2008a article, for instance, she refers to such actions and choices by Alsanea forty times (See Appendix 11). However, in thirty-three of these references, Booth either erases completely Alsanea's agency or undermines it through several lexico-grammatical choices, including nominalization as in "The published English version excises this passage"; the passive voice, as in "Perhaps it was felt that such a commentary was irrelevant"; the gerund as in "Substituting a smooth, cliché-ridden language for the "unevenness" of colloquialism and punning perhaps indicates a desire to create a style and a work that is both 'more serious' and easier to read for an Anglophone reader"; and the infinitive as in "To omit names of Arab singers while leaving in those of European designers

alters the text's politics of cultural consumption." The passivation of Alsanea is sometimes so strong that it distances Alsanea the author from the original that she penned. While criticizing the revisions that Alsanea made as undermining the original, Booth (2008a) states that "one made-up poem is a word game from one lover to another—and which I translated as a parallel word game—is gone" (p. 208). Elsewhere, she laments that "omissions concern extended references to local knowledges and literary discourses through which gender politics are shaped, contested and reworked" (p. 206). In fact, through such systematic instances of passivation, Booth presents herself as more aware of the gender and identity politics that Alsanea enacts in her novel than Alsanea herself. After pointing out how the names of local singers were deleted while those of European designers were kept in the translation, she explains to the reader that "the point [behind the presence of the names of local singers in the original] is that young Saudi bourgeois subjects are consuming both 'the local' and 'the globalized'" (p. 208), a point that Alsanea must have failed to understand since she deleted those local references.

But the passivation of Alsanea is surprisingly more conspicuous in two of the only seven instances where Booth activates her. In a very interesting passage where Booth touches on issues of translator vs. author, ethics, and center/periphery, she (2008a) opines:

... the author of the Arabic text, in her origins and the tradition from which she writes, is not "Western"; and yet in her interventions in the translation, with a major transnational corporation behind her, she is. In cooperating to homogenize the language of the translation, where are her investments? The result exemplifies not a "global North-global South" hierarchy but rather an older hierarchy that has plagued translation work: the author (of the original) is powerful to define the translation as the translator is not empowered to do. Deep-rooted Euro-American conceptions of the author-ity of the origin mute the translator's voice. (p. 209; my emphasis)

In the italicized part of the passage, Booth activates Alsanea by putting her in the grammatical position of a subject—albeit of a relational and not material process verb. However, she still passivates her by totally dis-empowering her. Indeed, in her appreciation of Alsanea's revision of the translation, she equates discursive power with the Western subject, and denies the non-Western author all (will-to) power and all knowledge necessary to have such power. It is not Alsanea's awareness of the issues at stake in the translation of her text as

a Saudi woman into a transnational context, nor is it her desire to take control of this process and try to shape its outcome that underpin her discursive incursions into the translation. Rather, the non-Western author emerges as an objectified tool used by the Western publisher to exercise a power shaped by the Western conceptualization of author vs. translator, as well as by the market rationale and an orientalist perspective. Booth similarly mutes Alsanea's voice in this passage by putting her "investments" into question when Alsanea (2007) lays bare those investments in the "Author's Note" that she adds to the English translation. In this note, Alsanea shows deep awareness of both the representation burden that a translation of her work puts on her, and the political and cultural context where her novel is to be received and consumed:

It never occurred to me, when I wrote my novel (*Banat Al-Riyad*), that I would be releasing it in any language other than Arabic. I did not think the Western world would actually be interested. It seemed to me, and to many other Saudis, that the Western world still perceives us either romantically, as the land of the Arabian Nights and the land where bearded sheikhs sit in their tents surrounded by their beautiful harem women, or politically, as the land that gave birth to Bin Laden and other terrorists, the land where women are dressed in black from head to toe and where every house has its own oil well in the backyard! (2007/2008, p. vii)

She equally draws the Anglo-American readers' attention to the heterogeneity of Saudi women and warns them against an ethnographic, homogenizing reading of her book. First, she strictly refers to her female protagonists as "Riyadh girls," rather than "Saudi girls," which in itself underscores the social and regional differences within the wider category of Saudi girls. Second and most important, while she concedes that her female characters represent many Riyadh girls, she adds that "I have to make clear that the girls in the novel do not represent [them] all." She then proceeds to explain the discursive choices she made in her revision of the translation:

In my Arabic version of the novel I interspersed the classical Arabic with language that reflects the mongrel Arabic of the modern world—there was Saudi dialect (several of them), and Lebanese-Arabic, English-Arabic and more. As none of that would make sense to the non-Arab reader, I had to modify the original text somewhat. I also had to add explanations that will hopefully help the Western reader better understand the gist of the text, as it was originally intended in Arabic. (2007/2008, p. vii)

What Alsanea describes here is a domesticating translation that takes the text to the

Anglo-American reader. Her decisions are reminiscent of the editors' decisions with regard to al-Shaykh's novel as described by Cobham above, which greatly conflicts with Booth's foreignizing strategy. Nevertheless, while Alsanea's strategy clashes with Booth's, her "investments" are strangely similar to the scholar/translator's, although not recognized by her. While Booth asserts that her choice of strategy was for the democratic and ethical objective of unsettling the center's cultural and linguistic hegemony by bringing out the "text's heterogeneity" (p. 209), Alsanea's objective is no less democratic or ethical:

I hope that by the time you finish this book, you will say to yourself: Oh, yes. It is a very conservative Islamic society. The women there do live under male dominance. But they are full of hopes and plans and determination and dreams. And they fall deeply in and out of love just like women anywhere else.

Alsanea wants to complicate homogenized and reductive images of the Saudi subject, and to reduce the perception of irremediable cultural and gendered difference, a difference in the name of which, many imperialist and neo-imperialist wars have been fought. As a consequence, her domesticating translation appears to be an attempt to render a text written in a language perceived by American publishers to be "controversial" (Said, 1991/1996), and coming from a culture constructed in mainstream media and political discourse as radically different, in terms that are neither controversial nor very different.

In other words, an identical ethical position gave birth to two conflicting strategies. In line with her foreignizing strategy, Booth (2008a), for instance, chose to "mimick" (p. 205) the Arab-English that Alsanea heavily uses in her novel, through the transliteration of what she assumes to be how the protagonists, all cosmopolitan and travelled Saudi young women from the elite, would pronounce English. She thus transliterated "سوفالقر!" which is the English "so vulgar" that Alsanea wrote in Arabic script in the original, as "sooo falguur" (p. 204). Likewise, Booth transliterated "شيز سو كيرفي," which is the English "she's so curvy" written in Arabic script, as "sheez soo kiyirvy" (p. 204). Within the framework of a domesticating translation, Alsanea rejected such solutions and opted instead for the proper English spelling, reflecting proper English pronunciation.

Booth (2008a) rightly argues that the use of Arab-English in the original points out not only "the invasion and saturation of consumption of European cultural goods and concepts in

Saudi Arabia,” but also “the cross-continental coming and goings of Saudi subjects, in particular women, who are cosmopolitan in their consumption habits [...] but are not free to enter and leave their locales of residence without the permission of men” (p. 205). She also rightly maintains that “this rupture [...] disappears in the translation authorized by Penguin” (in what is yet again a complete passivation of Alsanea and attribution of all discursive power to the Western publisher). Nevertheless, would a “broken” transliteration of English as spoken by what is presented in the original as a cosmopolitan young Saudi woman decenter the Anglo-American neo-imperialist center as Booth hopes for, or would it instead only summon and, therefore, buttress the now very familiar Hollywood image of the invariably inarticulate Arab always speaking broken English as a sign of difference and inability to assimilate? Would a domesticating translation that, as shown in the previous chapter, brings into a harmonious dialogue that which is considered to be the ultimate signifier of difference, i.e. Islam, through the extensive religious intertext that Alsanea kept in the translation, and values of sameness, not do exactly that which Booth (p. 200) advocates, namely “‘skew’ and skid, disrupt and poke” the dominant discourse on the Arab (Saudi) Other’s difference and exoticism more than a foreignizing translation that resists assimilation? In a geopolitical context where cultural difference has been imagined and constructed to be as extreme and threatening as to be on a par with weapons of mass destruction and to justify the invasion of an Arab country, Iraq, would a foreignizing translation not be, in fact, a domesticating and maybe even an unethical one: bringing out a difference that has been domesticated and politically instrumentalized? In a post 9/11 era, and in fact, and as both history and Hollywood have been showing us, in the whole post-oil discovery era, just how domesticating is a domesticating translation of a Saudi novel and how truly foreignizing is a foreignizing translation of the same novel?

In a discussion of the merits of foreignizing translation, Booth herself raises similar questions and acknowledges the import of domesticating translation as it specifically pertains to Arabic texts. She (2003) aptly contends, indeed, that “Too much of what we see in American print and visual media on the Middle East conveys a message of cultural untranslatability that isn’t an invitation to work toward an understanding of and respect for difference” (p. 51). She then proceeds to ask:

Is it politically responsible right now to produce an English novel from an Arabic novel as a locus of difference? Perhaps it is more possible right now to foreground the strange when translating from languages that do not carry this political weight of difference a sort of difference that has an enormous political identarian role right now, that forms Americanness through a constant construction of exclusions, hardly mitigated by politicians assurances of inclusiveness. My bottom line is that I want more Americans and not just in college classes to read contemporary Arabic novels. (2003, p. 51)

In other words, by rejecting foreignizing techniques in the English translation of *Banāt Al-Riyāḍ*, and as she explained it in her author's note, Alsanea could be seen as trying to *not* "produce an English novel from [her] novel as a locus of difference." To what extent she succeeded in this endeavour is not clear, but judging from some reviews, she did manage to get her point through and unsettle quite a few reviewers. Although she joins the reviewers above in adopting an orientalist discourse whereby the whole Middle East, and not just Saudi Arabia, is not only "unknown" but "unknowable," and whereby "Alsanea has had the courage to lift the veil of an obscured world," Beresford (2007) finds that Alsanea's characters "echo educated girls the world over: they giggle, they bitch, and their dreams are often thwarted by social constraints." While she expresses no disappointment in this aspect of the novel, some other reviewers do. Thomas (2007), for instance, believes that "*disappointingly*, the scenes are not too dissimilar to a Western hen party: bitching, belly dancing and gossiping about men" (my emphasis). Commenting on the author's "Americanisms" and how they convey a sense of negotiation between global modernity and local traditions, Aspden (2007) from *The Guardian* is no less disappointed at how the novel remains "more a love letter to America than a poison to the Saudi establishment." Similarly, Koning (2007) finds the English novel full of images that are clichéd and very familiar to her, giving the narrative "a relentless 'Valley Girl' perkiness," which ultimately makes of it a "not [so] good book," albeit "a brave one [that] deserves to be read for that reason." These reviewers, assessing the book negatively for not living up to stylistic and thematic expectations that the author never promised to deliver, all express a sentiment of disappointment that Booth (2010b) herself acknowledges to be stemming "from demands for difference" that the published English translation leaves "unsatisfied" through its "wired young protagonists [who] are not the exotica of Hollywood's Arabia" (p. 167).

Arguably, then, Alsanea did manage to challenge, to however limited extent, prejudices and stereotypes, and to decenter the center precisely by not delivering the familiar and, therefore, expected exotic. Her revision of the translation was not, therefore, the submissive exercise of a Western will-to-power underpinned by a Western concept, but the embodiment of her own will to discursively undermine this power and deconstruct what has been constructed as the Saudi Other, including by such big commercial publishers as Penguin. Obscuring this agency, and giving short shrift to Alsanea's concerns and objectives, Booth constructs the author's domestication of the English translation as, at best, an ignorant exercise of a power that is not hers, and, at worst, an opportunistic endeavour to "make money from her Penguin contract" and build a "celebrity-author status" for herself, even as she would try to "distance" herself from the marketplace in her subsequent interviews (Booth, 2010b, p. 167). As a consequence, Booth would rather the "Muslim woman's" discursive power be excised: "the novel will be luckier in languages that the author cannot read and control," she argues (2008a, p. 209).

While Alsanea's novel was luckier than al-Shaykh's, and significantly much more so than Mosteghanemi's, in the French and Anglo-American marketplaces in terms of wide circulation and visibility, the author's voice was not less exposed to the violence of this marketplace and academia than Mosteghanemi's. While the latter was silenced through multiple periods of quarantine and outright exclusion in Western academia, Alsanea's voice was silenced through the subversion by reviewers of the identity and gender politics that she enacts in her novel. Most reviewers mainly filtered the novel against an orientalist horizon of expectations thus reading in it familiar images of women's victimization and radical cultural difference, and celebrating it for confirming these givens. Instead of reading the overlaying of indigenous cultural and religious elements with Western, mainly American, cultural imports as an invitation to rethink stereotypes of a culture frozen in time and hermetic in its difference, they dismissed it as a failure to deliver. Alsanea's voice and agency were also severely undermined in academia when a major scholar in Arabic literature constructed an image of the "Muslim woman" that is not very different from the image that surfaced in several of the reviews: weak and ignorant, and only able of any discursive power if empowered by the Western publisher.

CONCLUSION

1. Three Novels in Translation: A Summary

In this study, I explored the translation and reception practices involved in the cultural transfer of three contemporary Arabic novels by women authors in three contexts, namely US, UK and France. Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical model, and drawing on the theory of critical discourse analysis and feminist postcolonial theory, I started by analyzing each of the novels then its French and English translations, in a separate chapter each. Analysis at this level explored the textual and interdiscursive properties of the source texts, as well as their relationship to and effect on their respective orders of discourse and, by extension, social orders. I then moved to analyzing the type of textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that occurred in the translations, and the discourses that shaped these shifts. Text consumption/reception being a key component in Fairclough's model, I dedicated the last chapter to investigating the reception of the six French and English translations in their contexts. The investigation, drawing on Broomans and Jiresch's (2011) six-stage model, covered publishers' practices, editorial reviews, and academic practices.

While the three novels were aesthetically and thematically very different from one another and deployed different narrative strategies, analysis has revealed a significant commonality as well as overlapping concerns. While none of the three authors overtly espouses a feminist stance—and, in fact, Mosteghanemi openly distances herself from feminism (see Chapter II)—their narratives touch on important feminist issues, albeit through different genres and from different times/locations. Mosteghanemi, for instance, explores women's subjectivity and predicates it on the act of writing-as-agency and of femininity-as-power. She also grapples with the troping of (Algerian) woman as embodiment of nationhood and deploys a counter-discourse that reconstructs woman as a sexual subject with a sexed body that lives, loves, errs, grows and dies. Speaking from a different (historical and generational) location, Alsanea posits through her narrative the combination of writing and

technology as the ultimate instrument for women's social rebellion. While she depicts her female protagonists as cosmopolitan, sophisticated women finding personal fulfillment in venues other than marriage and children, she presents religion as the other precondition for women's subjectivity. She thus avails herself of a feminist reading of religious scripts which she uses to subvert local official interpretations of Islam, and which she presents as a frame of reference for women's rights and emancipation. In so doing, she was also challenging a hegemonic discourse on Islam in Western countries as misogynistic. In contrast, al-Shaykh, speaking from yet another location, significantly departs from the trope of writing-as-agency. Unlike Mosteghanemi and Alsanea, she openly bespeaks a generally orientalist/colonialist discourse feminizing the Arab other and enhancing a reified Arab alterity. She still, however, explores women's subjectivity in Scheherazade-like fashion: her female characters reach self-empowerment and achieve agency through (oral) storytelling and use of reason instead of emotion.

All three novels are also marked by substantial interdiscursive heterogeneity and show the extent to which the authors are "multiply positioned" within a multiplicity of discourses. According to Scollon and Scollon (2008), participants in communicative events are indeed necessarily "multiply positioned" within different and numerous discourses that are "manifested in a complex network of forms of discourse, face relationships [...] and ideologies." Such positioning reveals "multiple membership and identity [and] produces simultaneous internal (to the person) and external contradictions" (p. 544). The same holds true for the three authors in the present study. They draw not only on multiple genres and discourses, but on competing and, sometimes, incommensurable and contradictory ones, as well. Thus, throughout her novel, Mosteghanemi deploys a discourse of metafiction to call attention to and undermine the very authorial authority she is constructing as an author through a text that she presents as *riwāyah*, novel, but that is riddled with autobiographical elements. She is thus alerting her readers not only to the fictional nature of what they are reading but also to the narrativized nature of reality and the authorities behind this narrativization. Likewise, she incorporates a traditional discourse on women's difference in the novel, only to interrogate it with an overarching feminist discourse of agency. She also opposes an imagined pure Arab identity, which she heralds through, among other strategies,

the politically-charged choice of Arabic and the use of what has always been considered the Arabic literary genre by excellence, poetry, to a cosmopolitan discourse drawing mainly on Western philosophy and wisdom. Alsanea, on her part, draws on a criss-cross of genres from Scheherazade-like storytelling and *adab* genres to chick lit and the e-mail genre, thus bringing her Arabic literary heritage to the fore yet still irreverently contaminating it with English language and foreign literary norms. Similarly, she stages a conversation between the seemingly mutually exclusive religious (feminist) discourse and a discourse of global modernity anchored in Western values. She also incorporates the official religious discourse only to contest it with a feminist Islamic discourse. As to al-Shaykh, she draws simultaneously, albeit to different extents, on an orientalist discourse reifying the Arab Other as radically different and inferior, the sexual politics of the colonialist discourse objectifying women, a discourse of Arab/English similarity and a feminist discourse of agency/non-victimhood.

The interdiscursive heterogeneity and multiplicity of voices in these novels point if not to a similar heterogeneity in the world as lived by these authors, at least to the world as imagined or wished to be not only by the authors but also by the local audiences that made of their books bestsellers, especially in the cases of Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā* and Alsanea's *Banāt Al-Riyād*. The societies where these authors appeared and to which they appeal emerge in the novels as looking for change rather than static, open to foreign values rather than culturally hermetic. More important, the women in these novels emerge as rejecting victimhood, capable of contesting, sometimes vociferously as in the case of Alsanea's narrator, dominant misogynistic values and oppressive social structures, and looking for personal fulfillment and self-empowerment in different ways, from professional success and writing to spirituality and story-telling. In other words, these women, contrary to prevailing misconceptions in Western countries, are active agents rather than passive subjects, rebellious rather than subservient.

On the other hand, the heterogeneous and, sometimes, contradictory discourses suggest unresolved tensions in all three novels. In CDA, such contradictions and tension would indicate a healthy instability in meaning in the societies concerned, as well as an ongoing struggle over control of the order of discourse and, by extension, the social order. They have

an emancipatory potential and “provide leverage for change,” to borrow Fairclough’s (2001, p. 253) terms, insofar as they open the dominant discourses, both in the local and transnational contexts, to interrogation thereby allowing for social change. In other words, through their novels, the authors are actively engaged in the contestation of the order of discourse. Their writing has thus an undeniable dissident aspect and political edge—albeit one that is much sharper in Mosteghanemi’s novel than in the other two, which only further challenges images of the silent Arab woman waiting to be rescued.

The journey that these books went through in their way to the US, the UK and France naturally yielded transformed texts. The transformation, however, was at times extreme. The translation of Mosteghanemi’s *Fawḍā*, specifically the one by French translator France Meyer, carried out quite significant interdiscursive changes that undermined several of the discourses in the original, including the discourses of women’s agency, of nationalism and of religious fanaticism as a direct result of political and economical problems. It was, however, the reception process that completely muted the voice of the author. The novel was ignored for a long time by publishers, and when it was finally published in translation, it was put in quarantine not only by reviewers but also by scholars. In other words, save for the very expert readers with prior interest in Algerian Arabic literature, neither the audience at large nor university students were exposed to the novel and its emancipatory identity politics and poetics.

While Rajaa Alsanea’s novel was translated and published both in English and French sooner, the French translators carried out textural and pragma-semiotic shifts that significantly undermined the discourse on women as agents capable of self-empowerment and the discourse on men as weak(er than women). The translators also collapsed the Saudi difference and the differences within the Muslim world to reproduce an already domesticated unified “Arab” alterity. Paradoxically, they omitted familiar concepts present in the ST even when they are deeply embedded in the French cultural heritage and have direct equivalents in the French language, which could reinforce perceptions of radical religious and cultural difference. Once published in French and English translation, the novel underwent yet another layer of dramatic refraction as it was reviewed through mainly orientalist lenses that backgrounded all the

discourses capable of challenging a century-old imaginary where all Arab men are misogynistic and violent, Arab societies are backward and mysteriously dark, and Arab women are silent vassals.

al-Shaykh, as an author, and her novel *Innahā Lundun* remain, however, the best illustration of the hierarchical West-Arab power relations, and of hegemony in general, as enacted in translation. In this Arabic original written by a perfectly assimilated postcolonial subject for an Anglo-American readership about Arabs in London, the author makes an effort at dismantling hegemonic representations of what has come to be seen as a monolithic category, that of Arabs. To catch her Anglo-American readers' attention and ascertain that her resisting voice gets heard, she extensively deploys, much like her Iraqi character Lamis, familiar narratives about the "Arabs." These narratives, however, stress the difference of Arabs while muting the differences within this homogenized category. They are, in fact, the very narratives that she apparently seeks to challenge through the discourses of women's agency and cultural commonality on which she draws, albeit minimally, in her novel. The end result is a text that brings out the hegemonic representations more than it challenges them in any significant way. In the process of English translation by Catherine Cobham, the challenging discourses get further backgrounded while the dominant discourses get drastically foregrounded through sometimes questionable interventions, including addition of whole stretches of discourse. The paratext mediating the translated text, including the peritext (Acknowledgements in the English TT), and the epitext (the academic articles, the shortlisting for a literary prize, and the numerous interviews in the media), all imbue the author and her texts with authority and bestow on her canonicity and a majority status even as they undermine her resisting, minority voice and commodify it so that it would authoritatively confirm already existing (mis-)conceptions.

2. Implications

2.1 The (re)Production of Power

The translation and reception of the novels under scrutiny de-emphasized their heterogeneities for a more homogeneous and totalizing discourse, that of Orientalism. Through strategies ranging from backgrounding the voice of the author (as in Alsanea's case) to almost totally muting it (as in Mosteghanemi's case) and commodifying it (as in al-Shaykh's case), the reception structures, along with some of the translations, resolved the conflicts and tensions present in the originals. In so doing, they produced texts inscribed with familiarly foreign and foreignizing values, excised the authors' dissident agency and obliterated their subjectivity as enacted in writing. Commenting on Foucault's theorization of power and how power, as regimes of truth, subjectifies the subject, Judith Butler (1997) wonders: "How can it be that the subject, taken to be the condition for and instrument of agency, is at the same time the effect of subordination, understood as the deprivation of agency?" (p. 10) A similar question can be asked—and in fact was asked at the beginning of this research—about the women authors in this study: how did subjectivity as enacted in their appropriation of written fiction, and taken to be an instrument of (oftentimes visionary) agency, become in translation a tool of subjection and subordination, understood as deprivation of agency and voice? The analysis above reveals that this transformation was possible through two key elements: a) a hegemonic reading/consumption of the authors' texts that is deeply shaped by social cognition, and b) control of discourse and access thereto.

a) Hegemonic Reading

Like the authors, the translators are themselves multiply positioned not only within their own nexus of discourses but also within the author's as manifested in the text to translate. This positioning affects their discursive choices and translatorial decisions. It can also reveal "multiple membership" and could entail contradictions. This is nowhere clearer than in Catherine Cobham's translation of *Innahā Lundun*. In producing *Only in London*, Cobham indeed subverts, per her assertion, several of the editors' decisions, some of which could be perceived as potentially "anthropological" in motivation (e-mail communication, June 28,

2012). Yet, this translation is the one that displayed the most radical changes. In other words, the translator in this case adopted positions that went from subversion of to compliance with dominant discourses and ideology. This “ongoingly negotiable nature” of translators’ positioning, as Baker (2007, p. 152) would call it, leads her to argue against the study of translation within the framework of binary approaches and such reductive categories as “race, gender, ethnicity and religion,” which limit perception of translators’ agency. She thus criticises norm theory, for instance, for giving short shrift to translators’ individual choices and for having “nothing to say on the intricate patterns of interplay between repeated, stable patterns of behaviour and the continuous attempts at subverting that behavior—the interplay between dominance and resistance” (p. 152).

However, echoing Tymoczko’s (2003) call for “promoting a view of a translator as embedded in and committed to a specified cultural and social framework and agenda, however broad” (p. 199), Baker (2005) takes Translation Studies to task for the “over-romanticization” of the role of translators and for “abstract[ing] them out of history, out of the narratives that necessarily shape their outlook on life” (p. 11). For, according to Sunderland (2006, p. 13) while readers, as participants in communicative events, are multiply positioned within a multitude of discourses, this positioning also “allows reader[s], to a certain extent, to *choose* which to ‘access’” at “a given moment within a given space” (p. 13; emphasis in the original). Talking about why feminists might read sexist jokes, recognize them as sexist yet still laugh at them, Sunderland (2006), in fact, maintains that in reading texts, including those that are undergirded by antagonistic discourses, readers are not only “likely to be aware of [...] another, intertextually-related set of discourses” but are also able “to invoke” these related discourses in their interpretation of texts (p. 12). Because of their positioning within multiple discourses, feminist readers will thus be able to recognize the sexist discourse in the jokes and even laugh at the jokes. Because of their own worldview and ideological inclinations, they will, nevertheless, also invoke the contradictory but intertextually related discourses of anti-sexism and agency/non-victimhood in their interpretation of the sexist jokes.

Analysis of the translations and therefore of the readings by the translators in this study did reveal this grounded nature of translation as well as the embeddedness of translators within specific discourses or what Baker would call “narratives.” In her French translation of *Fawḍā*,

France Meyer, for instance, seemed to have “accessed” and invoked different discourses than those in the original, resulting in significant interdiscursive changes that reflect an orientalist and colonial reading of the original. In contrast, Baria Ahmar accessed and invoked the same discourses in her English translation of the same novel as those enacted by the author. In her French translation of *Innahā Lundun*, Rania Samara seemed to have accessed and invoked discourses that were similar to those in the original, while Catherine Cobham accessed and reinforced the orientalist discourse existing in the original, and downplayed other discourses, including the discourse on Islam as lending itself to various interpretations and practices. Like Meyer and Cobham, Corthay and Woillez, in the process of translating *Banāt Al-Riyād* into French, activated discourses that reflected an “outlook on life” shaped by a monolithic representation of Arabs and Arab women, an outlook that was generally absent in Alsanea’s and Booth’s translation of the same novel. In other words, Meyer in *Le chaos des sens*, Cobham in *Only in London* and Corthay and Woillez in *Les filles de Riyad* offered, albeit to different extents, a generally hegemonic reading of the respective source texts, whereby discourses that would have subverted dominant narratives were undermined, and the TTs were inscribed with domestic hegemonic discourses on a homogenized Arab culture and an intrinsic Arab difference. While Booth contends that a foreignizing translation of *Banāt Al-Riyād* would have been more ethical insofar as it would have been more efficient in bringing out the same gendered and cultural identity politics as in the original, she herself questions, in another scholarly work, whether such a translation would necessarily be ethical for Arabic literature. A foreignizing strategy in this particular communicative event may very well serve to perpetuate hegemonic readings of and discourses on the translated Other. For as Hassan (2006), drawing on Booth herself, argues,

Whether the subaltern can speak [...] depends in this context on fluent translation that does not so much domesticate the original as strategically downplay cultural difference in the interest of expedient political action, for what is at stake here is less the preservation of cultural or linguistic specificity than the construction of a political narrative of a universal framework of “justice” that foreignizing strategies may undermine. (p. 259)

Insofar as this same hegemonic reading emerges in post-translation phases, particularly in editorial reviews, but is absent in Ahmar’s English translation, in Samara’s French

translation and in Alsanea's and Booth's English translation, it cannot be solely traced back to target audience's assumed expectations or what Chesterman (1997) calls expectancy norms, or to professional norms. In fact, many of the textural and pragmatic shifts that occurred in *Les filles de Riyad*, *Only in London* and *Le chaos des sens*, including replacing female characters with male ones, as encountered in *Les filles de Riyad*, addition of whole chunks of orientalist discourse as in *Only in London*, and skewing of the author's resistant writing of her nation's history for a colonial reading of that history as in *Le chaos des sens*, clearly flout both accountability and relation norms, to stay with Chesterman's taxonomy. Most, if not all, of these shifts were also optional rather than obligatory in that they did not stem from differences between Arabic and the two target languages, English and French. Accordingly, the hegemonic reading in the translations strongly points to translators as social actors (van Dijk, 1993) who read source texts against specific mental representations that they also bring to bear on the way they *re-present* the events, actors (characters) and processes present in the ST. These representations are at once shaped by and shaping of social cognition. Indeed, and as already mentioned above (See Chapter II), even those shifts that are less likely to be conscious, including such subtle lexico-grammatical changes as those at the level of transitivity, have ideological implications when "they form part of a more general trend within a whole text" (Calzada-Perez, 2007, p. 191). As to the more blatant and less likely to be unconscious shifts, they reveal the way translators can sometimes consciously enact the social power of their dominant group by exercising "control not only over content, but over the structures of text [as well]" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 356), thereby further shaping social cognition.

Van Dijk (1990) defines social cognition as "a socially shared system" of social representations that are closely related to and dependent on discourse in that "social representations are largely acquired, used and changed, through text and talk" (p. 165). In his account, social cognition and social representations are the "interface" between discourse and the reproduction of power relations (van Dijk, 1993, p. 251). Indeed, "social cognitions of the powerful" result in the discursive reproduction of power through "various structures of text" which, in turn, shapes social cognitions (p. 259). Van Dijk goes on to distinguish between two dimensions in the reproduction of power, namely a) production, which is "the enactment, expression, or legitimation of dominance in the (production of the) various structures of text,"

and b) reception, which is “the functions, consequences or results of such structures for the (social) minds of recipients” (p. 259). As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, “privileged access” to socially valued discourses and resources is a key element in the production and enactment of such social power.

Analysis of data reveals that in their reading and recoding of the source texts, Ahmar and Samara remained positioned within a more or less similar nexus of discourses as the authors they translated, Mosteghanemi and al-Shaykh, respectively. In contrast, Meyer, Cobham, Corthay and Woillez appear to have read the source texts against a different social cognition and to have filtered them through rather monolithic representations of “Arabs.” The Arab Other is thus frozen in stereotypical images as the discursive choices made in the process of translating promote familiar discourses of an unbridgeable and unchanging cultural difference. In so doing, these translators became “dominant participants” in the communicative event (van Dijk, 1993), who controlled, albeit to varying degrees, the voices of (women) authors thereby contributing to preserving the hierarchical power relations and shaping social cognitions accordingly.

b) Control of (access to) discourse

On the other hand, van Dijk (1993) contends that power is usually institutionalized in that it may “be supported or condoned by other group members [...] and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks” (p. 255). He further explains that this institutionalization means “a hierarchy of power: some members of dominant groups and organizations have a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power” (p. 255). He calls such groups “power elites.” Analysis of the reception of the translations under scrutiny has revealed that while translators can be dominant participants in the communicative event, their control over “the relations and processes of the enactment of power” remains limited. This power resides more with publishers, critics and scholars, who all control public discourse by controlling, at one point or another in the reception phase, the presence or absence of participants, access to or exclusion from the communicative event, as well as content and sometimes even text structure.

In the present study, publishers exercised such power by deciding “on the time and place of the communicative event” that translation is; “what participants [including authors] may or must be present” through translation, non translation or quarantine; and even sometimes “the topics (semantic macrostructures)” and “the (possible) discourse genre(s) or speech acts of an occasion,” as evidenced by the heavy interferences of the publisher in Cobham’s translation of al-Shaykh’s *Innahā Lundun*, and by the publishers’ restriction of Booth’s say in the translation of *Banāt Al-Riyād*, when both Cobham and Booth are not only established translators, but published scholars as well, and therefore dominant participants in the context of reception. All these are forms of control of both context and content that power elites use to influence the minds and actions of dominated groups, as discussed in the Introduction. Likewise, book reviewers and scholars exercised the same control when they decided what translations to review/study and how. Mosteghanemi’s voice was censored through exclusion and quarantine. As to *Girls of Riyadh*, as revised by its very author, it was reframed in editorial reviews within a hegemonic reading that completely subverted the dissident identity and gendered politics enacted in the original, and summoned century-old images of a silent, oppressed Arab-Muslim woman waiting to be rescued by the white man whether it is Sarkozy or George Bush. The media and academic exposure that this novel obtained at the exclusion of the others ensured the propagation of these stereotypical images to the widest audience possible.

These specific agents’ ability to thus control (access to) discourse is enhanced in this case and made effective by the presence of at least three of the four conditions that van Dijk identifies as necessary to influence dominated groups’ minds and actions and thus shape social cognition (see Introduction). Indeed, these power elites and dominant participants, be they publishers, editors, translators or scholars are all perceived as knowledgeable and thus authoritative and trustworthy, which makes readers more likely to accept the beliefs, knowledge and mental representations that they vehicle and consolidate. Second, since the discourse on the unbridgeable difference of the (Muslim) Arab Other has been universalized in mainstream media, Hollywood movies, and political narratives, readers are left with few reliable sources of alternative, non-hegemonic knowledge that could compete with and contest the orientalist discourse. Finally, not all readers are endowed with the necessary critical skills to challenge by themselves hegemonic knowledge. Accordingly, the translation and reception

practices as explored above and as carried out in the current larger (geo)political, social and historical context, emerge to be a powerful discursive tool that allows power elites to reproduce and maintain hegemony.

Equally important, power is not an exclusively top-down structure. Drawing on Herman and Chomsky, van Dijk (1993) maintains that “one major function of dominant discourse is precisely to manufacture [...] consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance” (p. 255). Hegemony, in fact, is only possible when the subordinate accept and internalize dominance and power to such an extent that they begin acting in the interest of the dominating participants out of free will. This is why van Dijk (1993) is quick to point out that dominance “is far from straightforward, and does not always imply a clear picture of villains and victims” inasmuch as “many forms of social dominance appear to be ‘jointly produced’ through intricate forms of social interaction, communication and discourse” (p. 255). The present study reveals the extent of truth behind van Dijk’ theorization of hegemony and power. While the processes of translation and reception by such a wide gamut of dominant participants, from translators and editors to critics and scholars, do transform the original texts, no matter how dissident they might be, into texts that conform to and confirm hegemonic discourses, the role of the subordinate in this particular communicative event is not to be overlooked or undermined.

In addition to the absence of strong local institutional structures that encourage the translation of Arabic literature into the main languages, insure the quality of such translations and promote them within appealing yet resisting frames in the transnational market, the authors themselves appear to be playing to the hand of Orientalism. Alsanea’s “Author’s Note” and the reasons behind her insistence on revising the translation betrayed an anxiety stemming directly from internalization of power. Her revision, which was indeed the expression of her agency, was still a reaction to this power, an impulse to prove equality to the powerful. With her acceptance of significant discursive changes that Cobham identified as potentially ethnographic and, thus, of a colonialist import, and with the overarching orientalist discourse that she used to frame her narrative of Arab diaspora in London, al-Shaykh not only accepted this neo-colonialist form of control, but was actively complicit in it. Paradoxically,

the one author who rejected the dominating/neo-colonialist subject as a model, and whose narrative could not lend itself to a hegemonic reading, including because it de-familiarized and contaminated the novel with the indigenous genre of poetry, questioned authorial authority and thus the truth of her representation of her own culture, and focused more on national and political issues than on gender issues, was left in the grey zone.

Translator's agency is an important aspect of translation to explore. Understanding the why and how behind translators' discursive strategies is essential to gaining insight into the act of translating and its complexities, as well as to proposing an ethics of translation. Nevertheless, translators' interventions, especially in communicative events such as the one in this study, involving hierarchical power relations and/or conflictual groups, may be informed more by a cognitive consumption shaped by social cognition than by conscious individual choices dictated by the new context of situation, with its new intent and new audience. Conceiving of translators' interventions and discursive choices as the result of "sway", Robinson (2011) seems to lend this conclusion credence by arguing that "sway is *always* a group phenomenon, part of some larger group dynamic, and that as such it is always driven by a group-organized rationality" (p. 13; emphasis in the original). In addition, it would seem that in literary translation within such a context, issues of ethics and agency as they pertain to translators are, at best, secondary to the power elite's agency and ethics, and at worst, a moot point in the reproduction of power. The work of the translators in this study has been systematically controlled before, during and after the fact. It is this awareness of the limitation of translators' role that seems to underlie Robinson's (2011) criticism of Venuti's "utopian" thinking. According to Robinson, Venuti "oversimplifies and exaggerates the role translators might play in societal transformation" and places, as a consequence, "great activist or 'positive' hope and trust in the formal interpretant of foreignization as a vehicle of [such] transformation" (p. 14).

It is noteworthy, however, that the control of translators' work does not always so much point to what Booth (2008a) sees as "[d]eep-rooted Euro-American conceptions of the authority of the origin [that] mute the translator's voice" (p. 209), as it points to the hierarchy within the organization and institutionalization of power. Publishers, critics and scholars hold more

discursive sway than translators because they have more privileged access to discourse, which gives them greater ability to control/restrict other participants' access to discourse. When Penguin gave precedence to Alsanea's domesticating revision over Booth's foreignizing translation, Booth (2008a) explained, somewhat simplistically, that the publishers' decision "exemplified not a 'global North-global South' hierarchy but rather an older hierarchy that has plagued translation work: the author (of the original) is powerful to define the translation as the translator is not empowered to do" (p. 209). From the marketing strategy of the publishers, however, it would appear that Penguin allowed Alsanea preferential access to discourse not because she was the author and Booth the translator, but because her revision coincided with the publisher's commercial considerations. Indeed, the publisher's peritext repositioning *Girls of Riyadh* more firmly within the chick lit genre (see Chapter IV) and presenting it in exoticizing terms (see Chapter V), proves that while Alsanea wanted access to the audience to locate her similar otherness in the heart of the dominant (Anglo-American) subject and deconstruct hierarchical (mis-)representations, the publisher only granted her that access to better sell the book within a "global North-global South" hierarchy. In other words, even as it was giving the author leeway, Penguin was in fact exercising control over her text.

2.2 Authors' Texts as Supplement

Translation is a purposeful activity, to quote Nord. Since, as the study has revealed, there are already pre-established structures through which translation of literature by contemporary women writers from Arab countries goes, and pre-existing frames within which the product of such translation is consumed, the question asked in the introduction remains: what is the purpose of increasingly translating and consuming this literature if the outcome is already known?

If the West needs a "detour" (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 1) through the (Oriental) Other to reach the Self, then the representation of (Oriental) women is a crucial stop in this detour. In fact, Yegenoglu (1998), as discussed in the Introduction, maintains that orientalist discourse is couched in a language of phallogentrism and that representations of cultural difference are imbricated in representations of sexual difference. Analysis of the data in this study has

revealed that sexual difference is, indeed, constitutive of Orientalism. According to the statistics provided in Chapter I, there is a higher interest in literature by women as compared to that by men from Arab countries in the US, the UK and France. In addition, Alsanea's *Banāt Al-Riyād*, with its focus on female characters from a closed society, received a disproportionately higher attention than even al-Shaykh's *Innahā Lundun* with its focus on diasporic female characters living openly in a Western capital. In stark contradiction, the one novel with the least focus on female characters, Mosteghanemi's *Fawḍā*, received very short shrift both in the media and academia. More important, many, if not, most the editorial reviews mediating the translations to the audience, perform an ideological squaring between Arab-Muslim society and Western countries based essentially on women's treatment. These translation and reception practices reveal that the discursive construction of the Arab woman is inextricably linked to the constitution of the Arab other, and together they contribute to the formation of the neo-colonial subject.

At the heart of such representation of sexual difference at play in Orientalism, is a “metonymic association” between the veiled woman and the Orient, whereby the veil becomes a “concept-metaphor in the construction of the reality of the Orient” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 48). In fact, the veil emerges as a powerful trope both in the translated texts, especially in *Le chaos des sens* and *Les filles de Riyad*, and in the translations' book covers. The Orient, more precisely the Arab world, like its women, is thus ontologically veiled and concealed. To apprehend it and uncover its truth implies to unveil its women, its hidden essence. This would explain why, along with, or rather precisely because of, the overarching Orientalist discourse informing many of the translation choices as examined above and the editorial reviews by critics in this study, the main common thread in both the translations and the reviews appears to be the overuse of the signifier veil/voile and such metaphors and (sexual) fantasies attached to it as “secret,” “hidden” and “pénétrer.” It is, however, not so much the veil or what it conceals that is of relevance to the Western subject in this process of unveiling. It is, in Yegenoglu's account, the supposition of concealment, of an essential difference behind the veil, and its role in constituting the subject, that is of relevance. This supposition functions as an “imaginary anchor” for the subject's identity (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 49), hence “an obsession with the ‘hidden’ and ‘concealed’ Oriental life and with the woman behind the veil”

(p. 73). This has resulted in the “overrepresentation of Oriental women in an effort to evade the lack posed by a closed ‘inner’ space” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 73).

During the colonial era, European woman’s accounts of her travels to the Orient and of her experience inside such inner spaces where she was allowed as a woman, supplemented this orientalist lack. As supplement, however, her account filled a void in something that already existed, remedied “an imperfection in the origin” that was already drawn by the white European male subject. Hers was, as already pointed out in the Introduction, “nothing more than an optional extra, an appendix to the original, to what was complete in itself” (p. 77). From the analysis above, it would seem that now that Arab women authors are deploying an indigenized genre, i.e. a genre very familiar to the European subject, the novel, and are writing about themselves and their “inner spaces,” including for the neo-colonial subject, they are being increasingly translated and consumed precisely to fill that void, supplement that orientalist lack, and confirm an image that is complete in itself. As the Belgian critic above opined, Alsanea’s novel and her characters “n'en donnent pas moins de la société saoudienne une image rétrograde qu'on connaissait, certes, mais qu'on découvre sous un angle particulièrement cru” (2008).

3. Critical Discourse Analysis: A Reading and Translation Model

A wealth of studies about the ethics of translation has been published since Venuti’s (1998) *Scandals of Translation*. Building on Venuti yet aware of the limitations of a binary—and significantly prescriptive—approach to translation ethics, scholars proposed a rich variety of approaches all accommodating the complexities of translation and many extending the scope of interest to include news translations, interpreting and subtitling (see Baker 2006; Buzelin 2005, 2007; Inghilleri 2009; Tymoczko 2010). These studies certainly enriched the debate on translation ethics, especially within contexts of conflict and war. They provided valuable guidelines for translation researchers and translators alike, and gave much needed insight into what Chesterman (2006) calls the sociology of translators, including their agency and the constraints and norms that shape their work. On a more practical level, however, it

seems that the age-old binary of literal vs. free translation, reinvented under various guises from formal vs. dynamic equivalence (Nida), through semantic/communicative translation (Newmark) to foreignizing vs. domesticating translation is still holding sway over translators' practice. Marilyn Booth's translation of Alsanea's novel, along with her reflection on it, is a case in point.

Validating the voices that criticized neoliteralist approaches, Booth restricted the choice open to her as a translator to either a mainly foreignizing or mainly domesticating translation, and attached an ethical value to the first at the exclusion of the second. While her reading of the novel certainly took into account the situatedness of both original and its translation, it still failed to attend to some critical nuances. She was so focused on the textual aspects of the source text that she overlooked its discursive complexities. While she attended to the literariness of the original, she all but missed its contradictions and tensions. Discussing women's literature, Chakravorty (2008) contends, indeed, that the value of such literature "lies in its accommodation of the factual as well as the imagined or visionary, for a visionary dimension is essential to a politics of change" (p. 11). As a consequence, she advocates a reading of women's text that not only attends to the "literariness" of women's literature but that also pays "special attention to gaps or contradictions that indicate the value systems implicit within it," for only then can the "vital link between the aesthetic and the political" be established (p. 11).

More important, while Booth is acutely aware of the way translation and consumption modes construe a totalizing gendered identity for the Arab-Muslim woman in the current transnational context, analysis of her reflection on Alsanea's actions has revealed that her awareness stops short of including her own location as a white feminist intellectual reading and re-presenting a third-world woman, and how such positionality might influence her reading act. Spivak (1994) contends that before reading/representing the subaltern, feminist intellectuals must go through an "unlearning project" whereby they deconstruct "the masculine-imperialist ideological formation" that not only constructs "the monolithic 'third-world woman'" (p. 92), but also influences the (postcolonial) intellectual.

Analysis of Booth's reflection has revealed that CDA, especially Fairclough's three-dimensional model, can help translators and scholars alike circumvent the pitfalls above. As such, it offers the tools for an ethical reading and translation of literary texts within asymmetrical power relations. Indeed, with its attendance to the aesthetic—through the dimension of discursive event as text—and political—through the dimension of discursive event as both discursive and social practice, this particular model has made it possible to discern that Alsanea's discursive strategies did not result in any significant changes at the interdiscursive level even when she seemingly chose a domesticating translation that required significant textual and rhetorical changes, including additions, omissions and cushioning of cultural-bound concepts through footnotes and lengthy explanations that were absent in the original. Alsanea maintained in the English translation the same gendered discourses of gender equality, women's self-empowerment and rejection of women's victimhood present in her original text. Many of her textual choices that were a marked departure from the original—much to Booth's disagreement—also served to emphasize, rather than de-emphasize, the subversiveness of the text, this time to its Anglo-American target readers. Indeed, Alsanea counterbalanced her decision to reduce the plurivocality characterizing the original (local/regional dialects and Arabish, epigraphs by philosophers and literati from around the world, etc...), with the choice to discursively enhance the contradictions and tensions in her original. She realized this through the addition of Anglo-American cultural references to her translation, all while retaining almost all the Islamic intertexts in the salient and subversive position of the epigraph when she had omitted many of the non-religious epigraphs. In thus bringing out the Islamic feminist discourse in opposition to the more hegemonic discourse of global modernity deeply engrained in Western culture, Alsanea was in fact displacing that which has come to be a signifier of radical difference, Islam, in the heart of the Anglo-American subject and vice-versa.

In other words, this particular analytical model has allowed the researcher to go, and therefore to see, beyond the limited scope of binary approaches, and find out that even when a translation might seem domesticating like Alsanea's, it might still have a foreignizing and thus ethical effect if it managed to retain the plurivocality, the contradictions and the moments of tension present in the original. By allowing room for analysis of a discursive event not only as

a discourse practice but also as a text, this model has likewise helped to showcase the way Mosteghanemi's poetics contributed to the charting of a social and political cartography for Algeria and the imagined Arab nation.

On the other hand, precisely because critique is one of the key principles in CDA, the researcher's own discourse becomes subject to critical analysis. Self-reflexivity and awareness of one's own positionality as a researcher are, in fact, vital to CDA as already discussed in the Introduction Chapter. As such, a CDA-based reading would have helped Booth to question her own location and ideological underpinnings in reading Alsanea's translation, and thus achieve the kind of "unlearning project" that Spivak would have intellectuals like her go through. But where Spivak's project seems to be essentially about unlearning the influence of "the masculine-imperialist ideological formation," CDA extends it to include all discursive positionalities, including those opposed to masculine-imperialist discourses. According to Theo Hermans (2002), such self-reflexivity is exactly what is needed in the study of translation, which he (p. 22) conceives of as a translation of translation that is always done "in compromised and compromising ways." Hermans (p. 20) believes it therefore "essential [...] to create within the discourse about translation a certain self-critical distance." This would entail making "explicit the position from which the analyst is speaking—even if [...] there can never be a stable, ultimate position to work from" (p. 21). Accordingly, throughout my research, I was constantly interrogating my own reading, trying to uncover my own biases and whether my location as an Arab, Muslim woman trying to fight stereotypes and misconceptions about Arab, Muslim women and therefore identifying at some level with Alsanea, was influencing my reading of Booth in some way or another.

Accordingly, Fairclough's analytical model can allow for a reading of the source text that acknowledges not only the text's situatedness, but also the reader's, whether a translator or a translation scholar, own situatedness; a reading that accommodates the aesthetic and political and traces their articulation in the text, then transcends them by looking for those moments of tension, interruption and contradictions that best reveal the discursive and social function of the text within the order of discourse. As such, it can function as the basis for a

value-based ethics of translation that transcends the reductive and prescriptive binary of foreignizing vs. domesticating translation.

More importantly, because the model does not focus on one process at the exclusion of others in the cultural transfer of literature, it has given valuable insight into the hierarchy of power at play in the processes of translation and reception. While literary translators can and do exercise the power of perpetuating hegemonic discourses through their discursive choices or, to the contrary, the power of emphasizing dissident discourses and narratives, the overall effect of their agency remains very limited within the powerful reception and consumption structures through which the product of their work goes. Besides, as Abu-Lughod (2001) rightly points out, “offering positive images or ‘non-distorted’ images [like Alsanea tried to do] will not solve the basic problem posed by [...] Orientalism” (p. 105). For the problem, according to her and as the present study has revealed is “about the production of knowledge in and for the West” (p. 105). In other words, it is not so much about how dissident an author is or how ethical a translator is, as it is about how the structures of Western authority—which include but far exceed translators—select, mediate and distribute texts from the Third World in their production of regimes of truth about the Self and the Other.

4. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

The biggest limitation of this study was one dictated by its very methodology. Where I initially included four novels with their French and English translations, I soon realized that the particular analytical approach I adopted, namely Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, which Fairclough developed for and applied to the analysis of short media texts, required a lot of space, not to mention effort, to apply on whole novels and their translations. I ended up omitting one novel and limiting my investigation to three. While it is true that the method was the best adapted to the objectives of my study, and allowed me to produce “an analysis of all possible givens in a situation,” as Derrida would put it, a larger corpus would have undoubtedly been more quantitatively representative not only of contemporary Arabic

literature by women authors, but also of the translation and consumption modes surrounding this literature.

A second and equally significant limitation was the quantity of data I managed to derive from interviews. The authors I contacted, including one that was not covered by the study, either did not reply or could not cooperate because of their schedule. Only a few translators actually responded and were willing to take part in the investigation. I tried to make up for lack of data from the authors by mining every single public interview they have given. This proved to be valuable in that it provided me with great insight into their experience both with writing and with translation/reception, and shed new light on the source texts. There have remained a few unanswered questions, however, whose answers would have been an added value to the study, including about the dynamics of the relationship between al-Shaykh and her publisher, her own appreciation of the anxiety marking her writing, and Alsanea's opinion of Booth's articles. More important, the scope of the present study and the detailed multilayered analysis of both source and target texts did not allow for space to integrate ethnographic data pertaining to or derived from publishers. While the effect of publishers' decision, including control of access to discourse as discussed above, does not necessarily require their feedback, interviews with publishers would have given more precise insight on the assumptions on which they premised their decisions and choices.

Taking these limitations into account, but remaining within the scope and intent of this investigation, two recommendations for future research could be made. For greater (quantitative) representational value, a larger corpus of contemporary literary texts by writers (men and women alike) from Arab countries and their translations could be delineated for analysis following an adapted version of Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical model that does not include analysis of reception modes. Such a study would indeed allow a comparison between original texts by men and those by women at the interdiscursive level and as far as formation of gendered identity is concerned. On the other hand, it would allow either the confirmation of the results of the present study or a further problematization thereof.

A second interesting research venue would be the study of the "translation in the making" (Buzelin 2007) of literary texts by women writers from Arab countries, specifically

ones where the publishers were more heavily involved like Alsanea's and al-Shaykh's. Such an investigation would aim for the analysis of correspondence between translators and authors, translators and publishers, and authors and publishers. It would also aim for the exploration of the revision work carried out by editors on the translators' manuscripts. While such a study, especially one that recognizes and heralds its militant nature, would undoubtedly be met with many a hurdle since, as Buzelin (2007) points out, "this aspect of the translation/publication falls partly within the private sphere of the publishing house and is thus less easily studied" (p. 141-2), its realization would give valuable insight into the manufacture not merely of literary translation, but of knowledge about the other/self as carried out by the power elite that publishers are.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Passage from *Fawdā* (1997/2007, p. 157):

شيء يجرفني نحوه هذا المساء. شيء يحملني. شيء يركض بي. شيء يجلسني جوار هاتف.

على حافة السرير أجلس، دون أن أجلس تماما. وكأنني أجلس على حافة قدري.

امرأة ليست أنا، تطلب رجلا قد يكون "هو". ورجل اسمه "هو". يرتدي أخيرا كلماته، لا كلماتي. يصبح صوتا هاتفيا. قد يقول "ألو". قد يقول "نعم" قد يقول "من؟".

امرأة عجلت تطلب أرقامه الستة. وتنتظر كلمة منه. تقرر هكذا أن تبادره بالصمت. كأنها تتذكر أنها لا تعرف هي من تطلب بالتحديد.

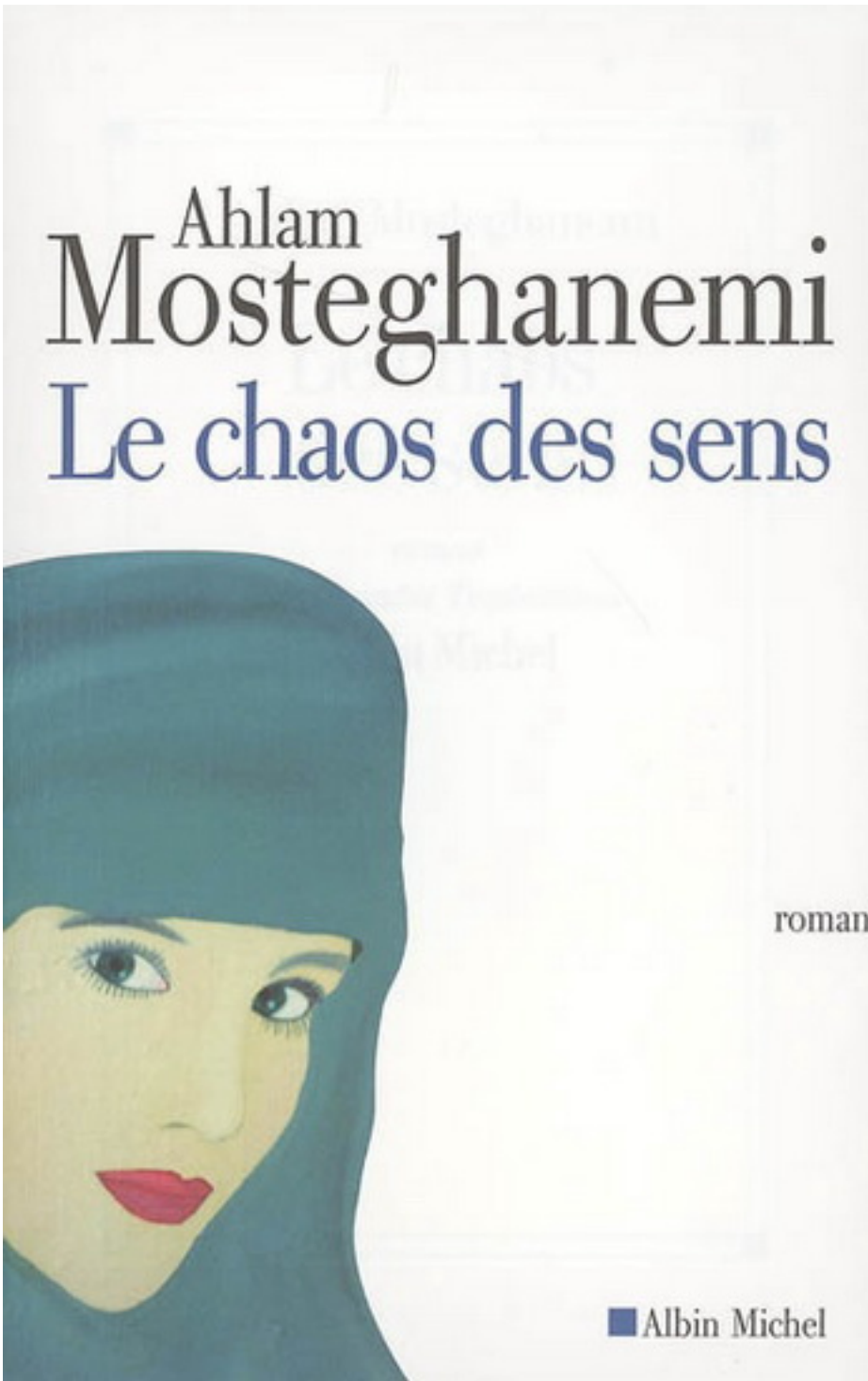
صوته يخترق صمتها. لا يقول "ألو". لا يقول "نعم". لا يقول "من؟"

يقول:

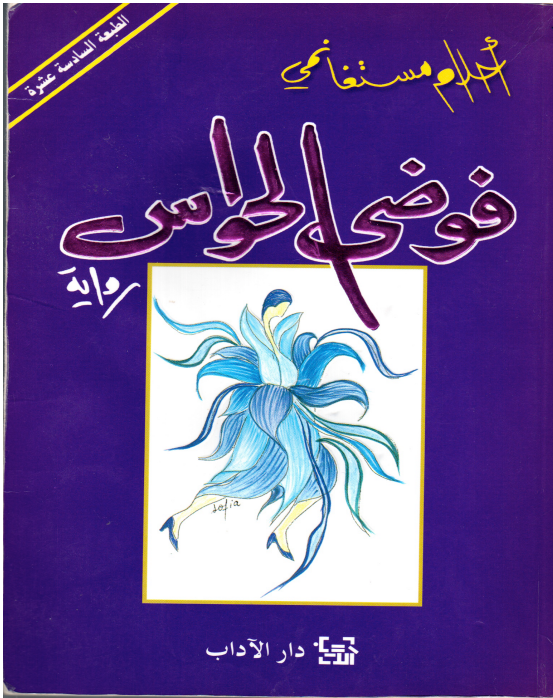
كيف أنت؟

Appendix 2:

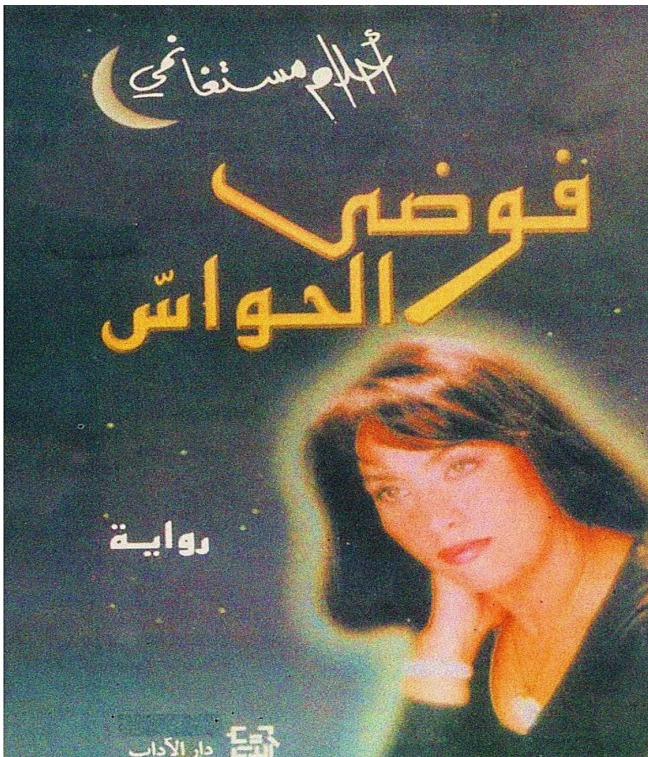
Le chaos des sens (Mosteghanemi, 2006)



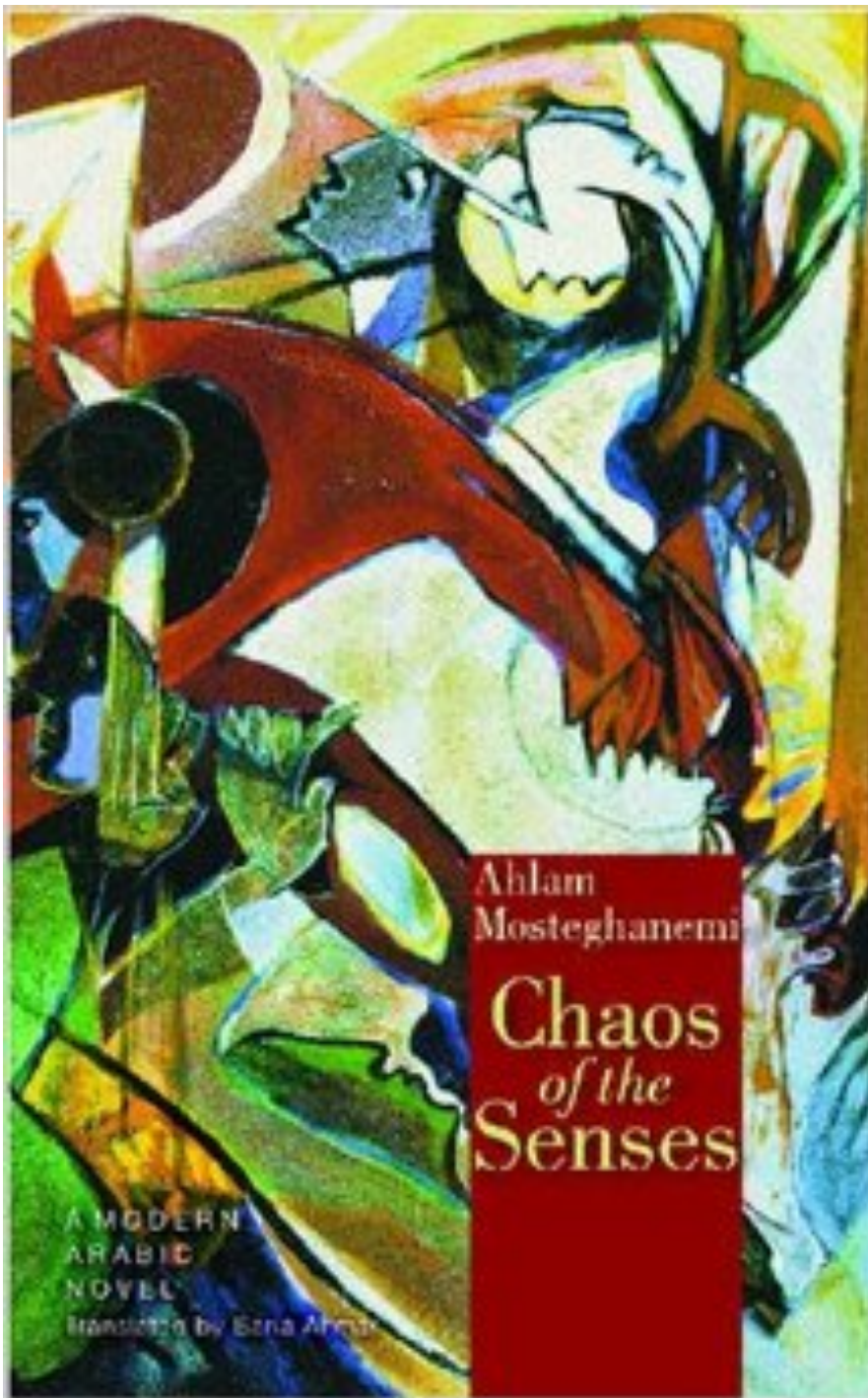
Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss (2007, 16th edition)



Fawḍā al-Ḥawāss (1998, 5th edition), featuring a picture of the author

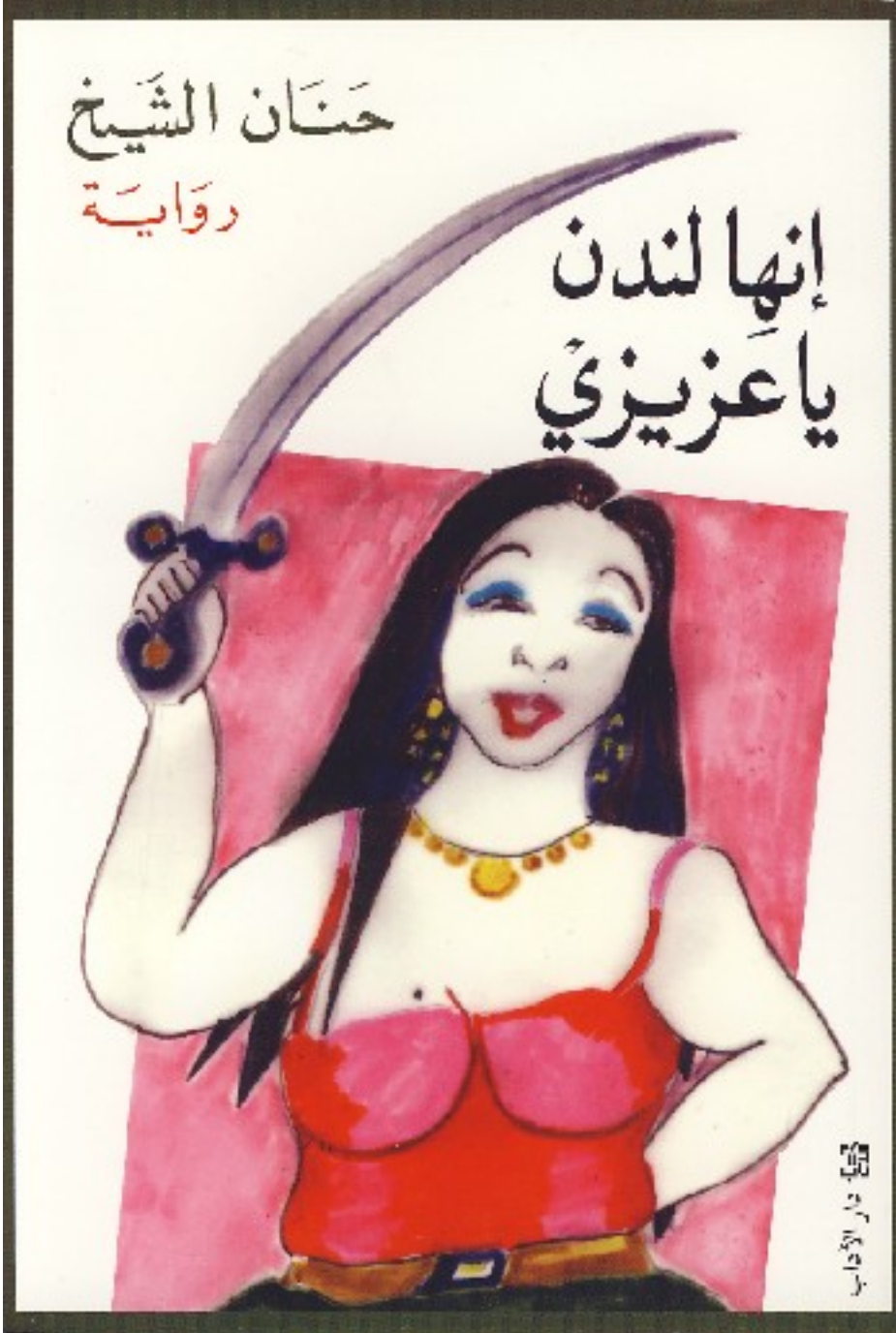


Chaos of the Senses (2004/2007, first paperback edition)



Appendix 3:

Innahā Lundun Yā 'Azīzī (2001)



Appendix 4:

Banāt Al-Riyāḍ (2005)



Appendix 5:

Passage from *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (2005, p. 212)

كانت أم قمره تدفع ابنتها دفعا لمقابلة أبو مساعد، العقيد في الجيش وصديق خالها منذ سنين. كان أبو مساعد في السادسة والأربعين، سبق له الزواج لكنه على السنين الثماني التي قضاها مع زوجته لم يرزق منها بأطفال "ورغم ذلك فالجميع يكونه أبو مساعد". قرر الزواج بعد أن بلغته أنباء حمل زوجته السابقة من زوجها الثاني. عرض الموضوع على أصدقائه فما كان من صديقه أبو فهد - خال قمره - إلا أن رشح له ابنة أخته وهو يظن نفسه بارا بها بفعلته تلك.

جلست قمره غير بعيدة وراحت تتفحصه بدقة لم تتفحص بها راشد عندما أتى لخطبتها قبل ثلاث سنوات. ما عاد يعترها ذلك الخجل القديم ولم تعد تتعثر في مشيتها. لم يكن الرجل عجوزا كما تخيلته، يبدو في نهاية الثلاثينات. لا شيب في شاربه لكن بعض الشعيرات الفضية فرت من تحت عثرته البيضاء لتبدو واضحة عند جانبي وجهه.

كان خالها يعرف أبو مساعد جيدا ولذلك بدا دور والدها ثانويا. أراد الأب أن ينهض من مكانه لدقائق كما أوصته الأم حتى يتيح لابنته فرصة التحدث إلى خطيبها والتي لم يتح لها قبل زواجها السابق لكنه كان بانتظار نهوض الخال الذي لم يتحرك من مكانه، ضاربا بتوسلات أخته التي تشير له من خلف درفة الباب عرض الحائط. ظل خال قمره متوجسا ومتيقظا بانتظار أي لفتة أو نظرة أو همسة منها، كي يصب جام غضبه عليها وعلى أمها بعد انصراف أبو مساعد.

أهمل هذا الأخير وجود قمره وانصرف للحديث مع خالها عن آخر أسعار الأسهم. اغتازت قمره كثيرا من أسلوبه وأوشكت أن تغادر الغرفة مع أنها لم تدخل عليهم إلا قبل دقيقتين، لكن قنبلة فجرها أبو مساعد حملتها على البقاء حتى ترى شظاياها:

- أنا مثل ما انتم عارفين عسكري بدوي وما أعرف لكلام الحضر المزربق وسوالف اللف والدوران. أنا سمعت منك يا بو فهد إن بنتكم عندها ولد من رجلها الأول، وأنا شرطي في هذا الزواج إن الولد يظل في بيت جده وما يسكن في بيتي. أنا بصراحة ما نيب مستعد أربي ولد مهوب من صلبي.

يرد والدها:

- بس يا بو مساعد الولد توه صغير!

- صغير والا كبير. هذا شرطي يا بو محمد، والحق ما ينزل منه.

يحاول خالها تهدئة الوضع قائلا:

- طول بالك يا بو مساعد وما يصير إلا الخير إن شاء الله.

كانت قمره تقلب ناظريها بين أبيها وخالها وأبو مساعد. لم يفكر أحدهم أن يشاور صاحبة الشأن الجالسة إلى جانبيهم كلوح من الخشب! قامت وانصرفت من الغرفة بعد أن جددت خالها بنظرة حارقة!

في عرفت أنها كانت أمها بانتظارها بعد أن سمعت كل شيء. شكت لها قمره برود خالها وسلبية أبيها وغرور هذا الرجل الملقب بأبو مساعد. هونت عليها والدتها وطبيب خاطرها بالقدر الذي تستطيع، ثم أثرت أن تصمت بعد أن رددت على ابنتها ما ملت هي من كثرة ترديده وملت ابنتها من كثرة سماعه. ظلت قمره ثائرة على هذا الذي يطلب منها بكل صفاقة أن تتخلى عن ابنها من أجله، مع أنه غير قادر على الإنجاب كما هو جلي وواضح! كيف يريد أن يحرّمها من ابنها الوحيد الذي لن تشعر بأمومتها مع غيره؟ كيف يسمح لنفسه بأن يأمرها أن تضحى بابنها فوق تضحيتها بالإنجاب إن هي قبلته زوجاً؟! ثم من يظن نفسه هذا العسكري البدوي حتى يكلم أباها بتلك الطريقة المتعجرفة؟ لقد سمعت عن رجال البدو وعن العساكر وطباعهم الصعبة لكنها لم تصادف في حياتها أحدا بهذه الصفاقة!

جاء خالها مع ابنيها بعد انصراف الرجل غاضباً من طريقة انصرافها بلا استئذان، وكما أهمل وجودها أما الرجل، أهمل وجودها هذه المرة أمام أمها:

- بنتس "بنتك" ما تستحي يا أم محمد. الله يهداتس مدلعتها واجد. أنا أقول نتوكل على الله ونزوجه إياه. الرجال ما يعيبه شي، والحمد لله البنات عندها ولد يعني ما ناقصها أولاد، وحنا كلنا عارفين إن قعدتها في ذا بدون رجال يضيفها ويستتر عليها ما تنبغي. كلام الناس كثير وحنا عندنا بنات نبي نزوجهن. انتي فيتس الخير والبركة يا أم محمد والله يطول لنا بعمرتس وتربين عيالنتس وعيال عيالنتس. ولد قمره نخليه يتربى عندتس وأمه تجي تشوفه كل ما بغت وماظن رجلها بيمانع. وش رايك يا خوي يا بو محمد؟

- والله انت تعرف الرجال يا بو فهد وانت أبخص به. إذا انت مانت شايف عليه خلاف، توكل على الله.

انصرف خالها بعد أن أعطى رأيه كاملاً مفصلاً في أمر ليس من شأنه، وانصرف والدها هو الآخر ليبدأ سهرته مع أصدقائه في المزرعة "الاستراحة"، وبقيت قمره تهدر في وجه أمها بعصبية:

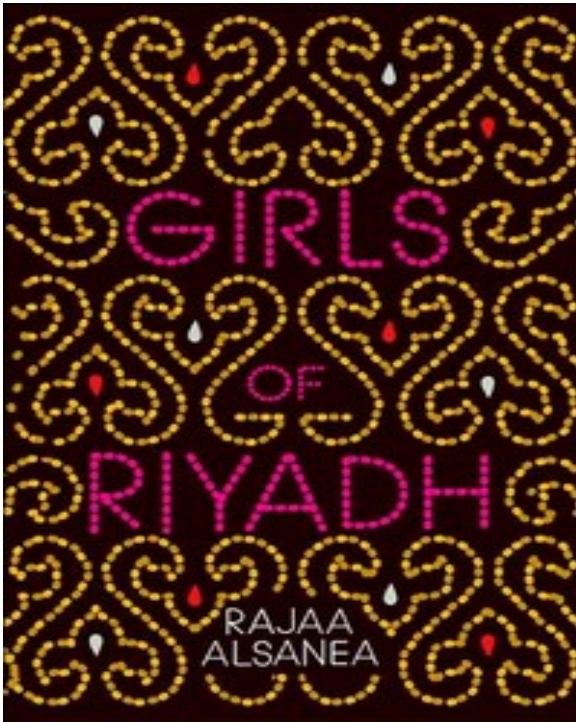
- وش اللي رجال يضيفني ويستتر علي؟ أخوتس شايفني مفضوحة والافيني عيب بيبي يخيبه؟ هذا وأنا يقال لي حرمة الحين وعندي ولد زالمفروض يوخذ بكلمتي وينسمع رأيي! شكل الدنيا عندكم ماشيتن عكس الناس! بزواجي الأول ما سويتوا فيني تسدا! بعدين وش هالرجال اللي انت ماخذته؟ ما له أي كلمة على بنته قدام أخوتس؟؟ وأخوتس هذا أنا وش دخلني بنات اللي بيبي يزوجهن؟؟ إن شا الله لا عمرهن تزوجن! بيبي يذيني على ذا العلة المستعلة عشان يخلص من همي ويزوج بناته؟ جعله ينهد هو وبناته!

- استحي على وجهتس! مهما كان هذا خالتس، بس ما عليتس منه. استخيري واللي ربتس كاتبه ببصير. سلمى أمرتس لربتس وتوكلي على الله. لم تنصحها أمها بأن تستخير قبل زواجها الأول. هل كانت مواصفات راشد بالروعة التي

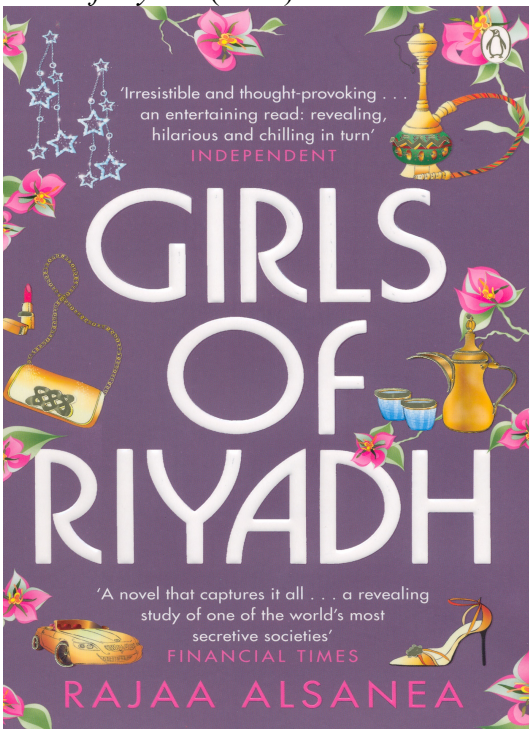
تغني عن الاستخارة فيها؟ صلت قمره ركعتين مساء تلك الليلة بعد أن علمتها ماضي صفة صلاة الاستخارة، ثم افترشت
سجاتها وراحت تدعو:

Appendix 6:

Girls of Riyadh (2007)

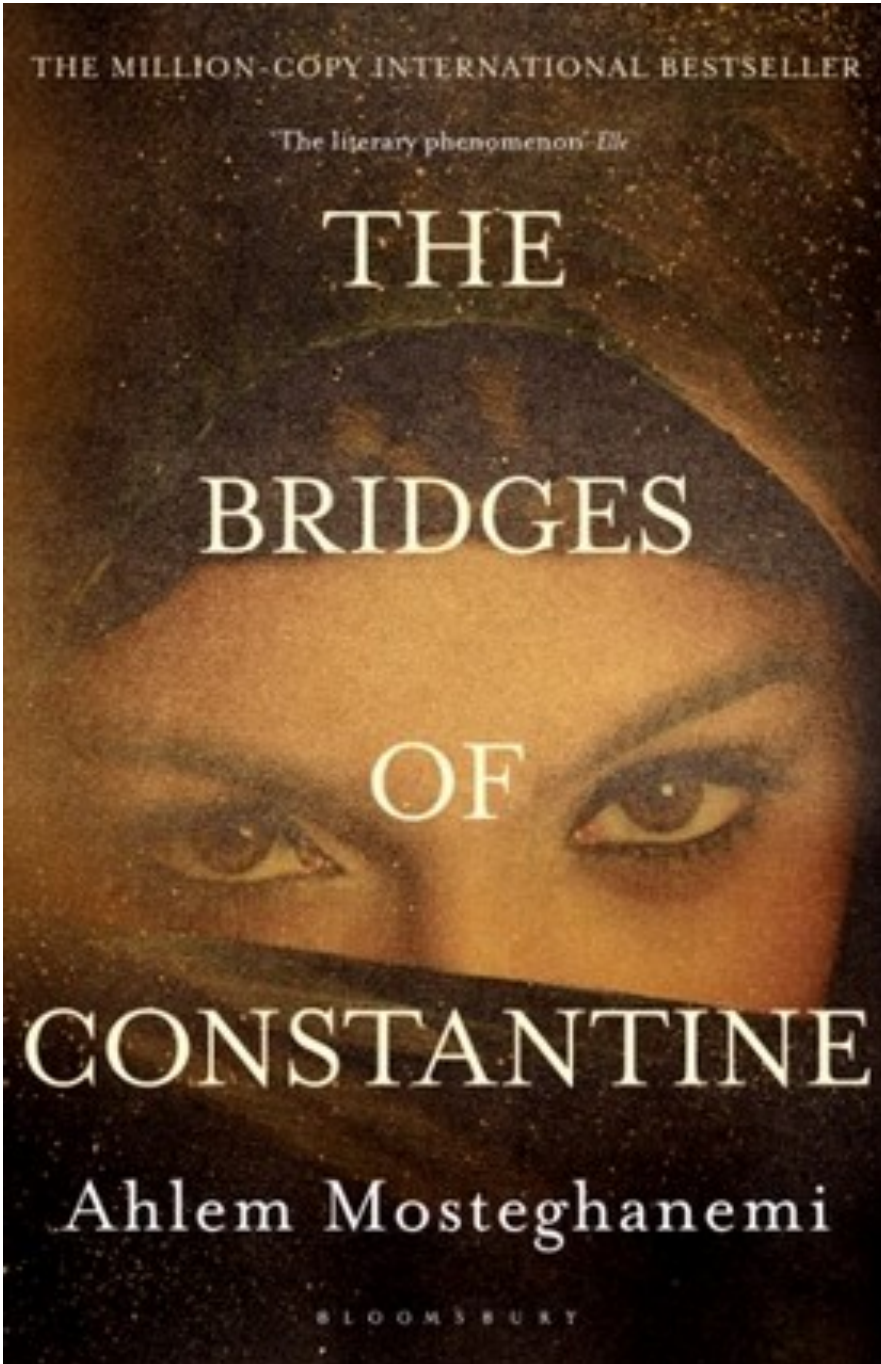


Girls of Riyadh (2008)



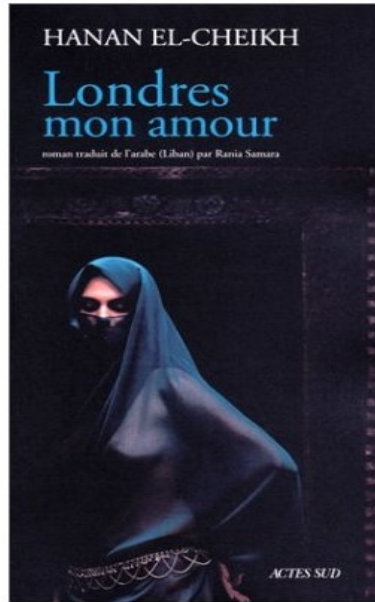
Appendix 7:

The Bridges of Constantine (2013, Bloomsbury edition)



Appendix 8:

Londres mon amour (2002)



Londres mon amour (2010)

HANAN EL-CHEIKH
LONDRES MON AMOUR

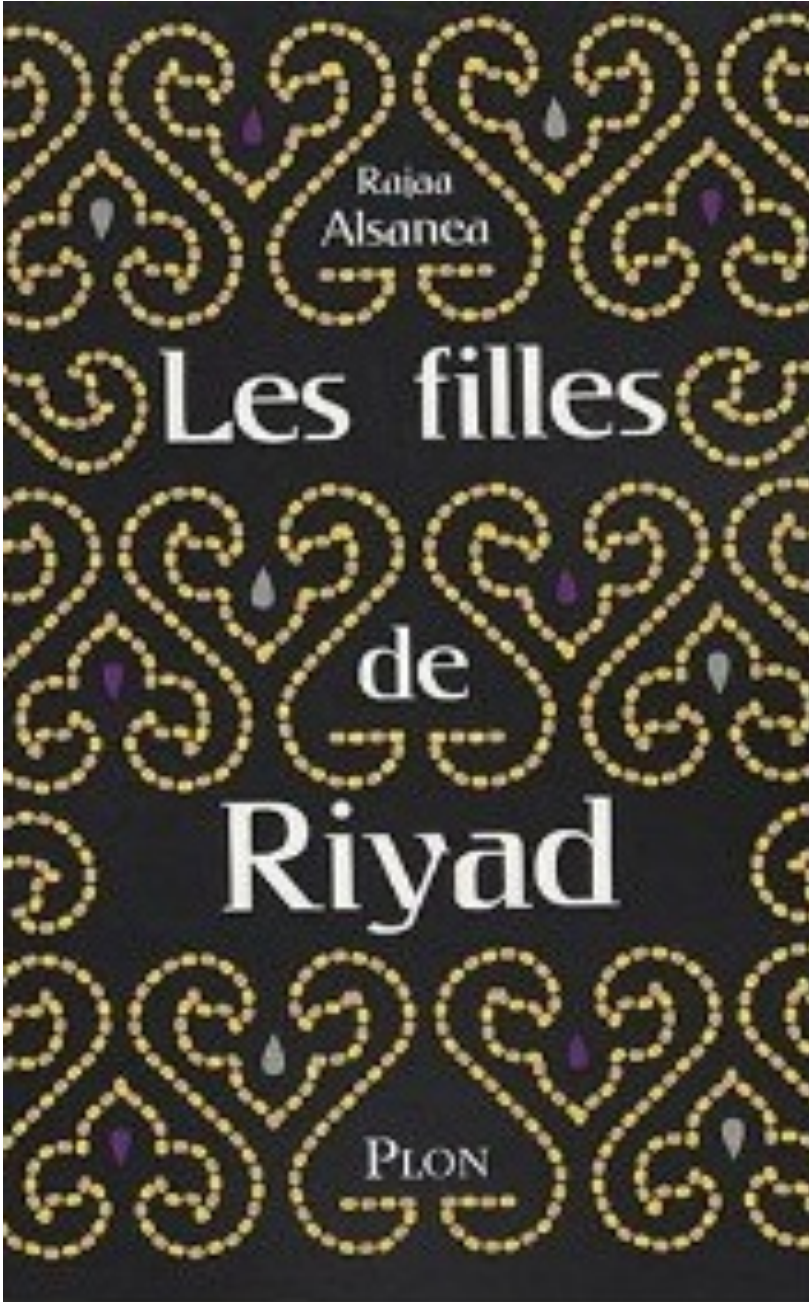


ROMAN TRADUIT DE L'ARABE (LIBAN) PAR RANIA SAMARA



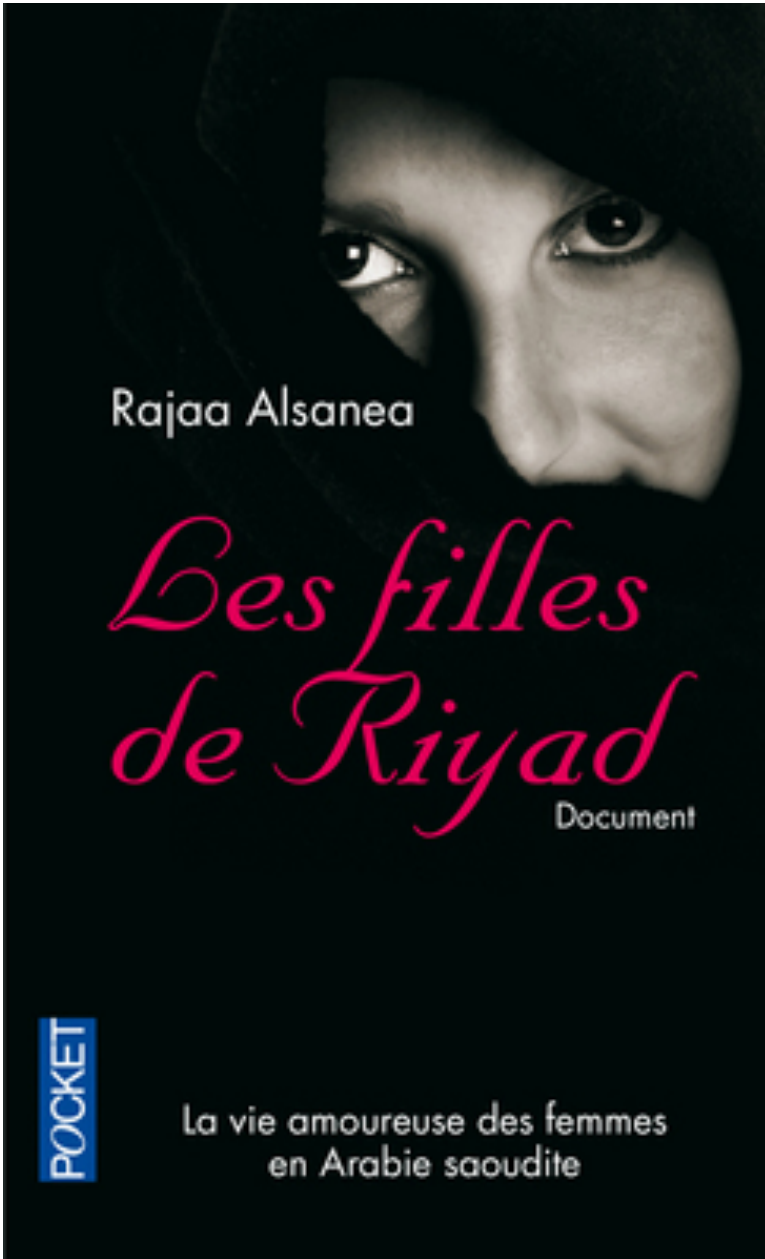
Appendix 9:

Les filles de Riyad (2007, Plon edition)



Appendix 10:

Les filles de Riyad (2012, Presses Pocket edition)



Appendix 11:

Analysis of transitivity in Booth (2008a)

Activation of author	Passivation of author
... although it is what the author and the publisher have chosen (p. 200)	Alsanea's novel has perhaps enjoyed stunning success (p. 198)
... the author objected and requested (p. 201)	Alsanea's is an imaginative attempt to criticize prevailing understandings (p. 198)
... the author added certain (p. 209)	The author's choosing to minimize these (p. 204)
... the author of the Arabic text, in her origins and the tradition from which she writes, is not "Western"; and yet in her interventions in the translation, with a major transnational corporation behind her, she is. (p. 209)	Alsanea's use of language suggests (p. 205)
... the author (of the original) is powerful to define the translation as the translator is not empowered to do. Deep-rooted Euro- American conceptions of the author-ity of the origin mute the translator's voice. (p. 209)	The result was not well received by the publisher and original author (p. 201)
Perhaps the novel will be luckier in languages that the author cannot read and control. (p. 209)	... she be permitted to revise (p. 201)
Alsanea and Penguin have "challenged" my version (p. 209)	... author's and/or publisher's dissatisfaction (p. 2010)
	The revised and published version of <i>Girls of Riyadh</i> emphasizes (p. 201)
	The author's/publisher's version assimilates to... (p. 201)
	... this translation mutes ambiguity... (p. 201)
	... the version produced by the author... (p. 202)
	Omitting "girls" and neutralizing the narrator's voice... (p. 203)
	The published version deletes... (p. 203)
	... the author's input provided some needed (p. 209)

... the published version changes my translation (p. 203)
This has become... (p 203)
... is similarly minimized in the published version (p. 203)
... was a miscalculation on the part of the author (p. 204)
... levels of language are collapsed (p. 205)
... colloquial English wordings are neutralized. (p. 205)
My retention of Arabic idioms, literally translated, is often deleted. (p 205)
With this effacement of radical language practices (p. 206)
Perhaps it was felt that such a commentary was irrelevant (p. 206)
... the novel's (often hilarious) metafictional commentary on the Arabic literary canon and pressures to write in conformity to it are mostly deleted. (p. 206)
Other omissions concern extended references to local knowledges and literary discourses through which gender politics are shaped, contested and reworked. (p. 206)
The published English version excises this passage. (p. 206)
... has been changed in the published version, to Allah (p. 208)
Deleting some of them, as the final version does, is probably sensible (p. 208)
One made-up poem which is a word game from one lover to another—and which I translated as a parallel word game—is gone. (p. 208)
Culturally specific references in the form of proper names recognized region-wide (for example, of singers) are omitted. (p. 208)
To omit names of Arab singers while leaving in those of European designers alters the text's politics of cultural consumption. (p. 208)

The point is that young Saudi bourgeois subjects are consuming both “the local” and “the globalized.” (p. 209)
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Substituting a smooth, cliché-ridden language for the “unevenness” of colloquialism and punning perhaps indicates a desire to create a style □ and a work □ that is both “more serious” and easier to read for an Anglophone reader. (p. 209)

In the published translation, it is a globalized language rather than one laden with local particularities that matters. (p. 210)
