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“[S]ome vicious mole of nature”: Hamlet’s Erratic Behaviour and Brain Neurotransmitter Imbalance

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to investigate, from a neuroscientific perspective, the complex but still unravelled mystery of Hamlet’s inconsistent conduct in Shakespeare’s classic tragedy. Adopting the ‘medical diagnosis’ method, the paper contends that such manifestations of Hamlet’s eccentric comportment as depression, social isolation, impulsiveness, sleep disorder, aversion to women, and procrastination, are all salient symptoms of low levels of dopamine, a vital brain neurotransmitter responsible for reward and motivation. The paper concludes that ‘dopamine deficiency’ in Hamlet’s brain has a devastating impact on his mood and outlook on life. It aggravates his depression, adversely affects his disposition, focus, cognition, and motivation and subsequently deprives him of the incentive to act. The significance of this study is that it identifies the reason for Hamlet’s hesitation, enhances understanding of the play and enriches representations of the leading role in the play on stage. Shakespeare portrays Hamlet as severely afflicted with such an intricate neural illness (not identified in Elizabethan England then), expertly dramatizing the devastating impact on his protagonist of the acute clash between will and inability. Hamlet’s hamartia is, consequently, not a fault of his making, not a commonplace Aristotelian tragic error of judgment, or a psychological personality flaw, but - as Hamlet intuitively prophesies – a birth defect, the result of ‘some vicious mole of nature.’

Keywords: Delay, depression, dopamine, hesitation, motivation, neuroscience, procrastination, Shakespeare’s Hamlet

Introduction
The topic of Hamlet’s bewildering behaviour has incessantly haunted the realm of Shakespearean scholarship for centuries. Academics and psychologists have sought to explain the signs of Hamlet’s strange conduct, such as anhedonia, indecision, delay, madness, and misogyny. The various hermeneutic schools, including the psychoanalytic theory, employed to unravel Hamlet’s enigma, have proved, nevertheless, inadequate and inconclusive. Consequently, readers and audiences of Shakespeare’s best-known play have been so endlessly and tantalizingly confounded by Hamlet’s ‘problem’ that they, in their wild fancy, would desperately wish the Prince of Denmark disclosed what precisely made him delay his revenge against his murderous uncle. Hamlet, perplexed by his inactivity and dullness, lamentably, has no better answer to disclose than the disappointing revelation he gives in his last (i.e., seventh) soliloquy: ‘I do not know / Why yet I live to say, ‘This thing’s to do’” (IV.4.44-456). The present paper seeks to answer the question, “What is the origin of Hamlet’s erratic behaviour” that twists the action and leads it to the tragic conclusion?” The paper contends that the answer to this central question in Hamlet lies within the realm of neuroscience.

Literature Review
The cause of Hamlet’s delay in Shakespeare’s most famous play has been a challenge for a great number of critics and researchers since the play had its initial performance in the early 1600s. The large number of studies conducted to identify the cause of Hamlet’s baffling hesitation have, nevertheless, not been conclusive. The present paper, therefore, attempts to explore the issue from a new perspective. It will use available research findings in the field of neuroscience to corroborate the premise that Hamlet’s problem is pathological not psychological.

Critical opinions on the causes of Hamlet’s indecision diverge broadly into two major categories: objective and subjective. On the one hand, a small number of critics, like F. W. Ziegler, L. Klein, and K. Werder, ascribe objective reasons, attributing Hamlet’s delay to external difficulties (Furness, 1877; McClure, 1992;). They argue that Claudius is a cunning and ruthless ruler surrounded by competent bodyguards; any attempt by Hamlet to kill him would entail the Prince’s inevitable doom. Hamlet’s uncertainty about the Ghost is another reason those scholars cite. In contrast, most interpretive opinions of the other category relate Hamlet’s indecisiveness to personal, inner conflicts. Accordingly, Hamlet experiences an internal conflict between his moral scruples and the sinful nature of revenge. In that vein, Goethe, in Wilhelm Meister (1795), presents his ‘sentimental’ theory of Hamlet’s delay, arguing that the Elizabethan bard assigns a challenging task upon a soul unequal to perform it. Nineteenth-century Romantic German critic Schlegel and English poet Samuel T. Coleridge see Hamlet’s deferment of Claudius’ murder until the last act as evidence of a flawed personality. Schlegel (1809) views Hamlet as “a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-satisfied meditation on human destiny and the dark perplexity of the events of the world” (Cited in Tredell, 2015, p. 19). S. T. Coleridge aptly gives credit to “Shakespeare’s deep and accurate science in mental philosophy” (. Coleridge interestingly remarks, “if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action” (Cited in Han, 2001, p. 181). However, this view is arguably not strictly accurate in Hamlet’s case.
One of the most notable and detailed scholarly analyses of Hamlet’s problem is A. C. Bradley’s seminal study. In his extensive interpretation of this Shakespearean tragedy, Bradley (1904) refutes Goethe’s ‘sentimental’ as well as the Klein-Werder interpretations, rejecting any theory that places the cause of Hamlet’s delay ‘in external difficulties’ (p. 74). Bradley protests, “From beginning to end of the play, “Hamlet never makes the slightest reference to any external difficulty […] but he always assumes that he can obey the Ghost” (p. 75). Bradley harps, instead, on Hamlet’s psychological dilemma and relates it to the protagonist’s deep melancholy, which, in Bradley’s opinion, is pathological but does not amount to madness. “Melancholy,” he declares, is the essence of Hamlet’s inactivity and, consequently, his suffering. Bradley does not pinpoint the source of Hamlet’s problem but urges fellow critics to continue the mission. He calls, intuitively, upon ‘the pathologist’ to examine Hamlet’s “melancholia” and “determine its species.” Coleridge adds, the critic would be “grateful to [the pathologist] for emphasizing the fact that Hamlet’s melancholy was no mere common depression of spirits” (p. 96). The present paper humbly intends to navigate towards that destination.

Arguably, the origin of Hamlet’s problem is, not psychiatric but pathological, particularly neurological.

Neuroscience has had a huge impact on psychiatry. Mental illness is now recognized to be the consequence of pathological modifications of the brain, and psychiatric treatments today are focused on correcting these changes […] Mental illnesses today are recognized as diseases of the body, just like cancer or diabetes. (Bear, Connors & Paradiso, 2007, p. 684)

An opposite viewpoint of the Prince is G. W. Knight’s, considering Hamlet “a spirit of penetrating intellect and cynicism and misery.” In The Wheel of Fire (1930), Knight sees Hamlet as a villain, “without faith in himself or anyone else, […] taking delight in cruelty, […] a poison in the midst of the healthy bustle of the court” (pp. 41-42). Knight’s is an unwarranted and unfair evaluation of Hamlet’s dilemma since the Prince’s ‘poison’, it will be demonstrated, furtively and tragically gnaws into his brain before it seeps outside to affect others.

Conceivably, the most popular and predominant interpretation of Hamlet’s dilemma for the latter half of the twentieth century, though now on the wane, has been the Freudian psychoanalytic approach. According to the school’s mouthpiece Ernest Jones (1910), a disciple of Sigmund Freud’s, the young Prince is unconsciously self-inhibited from avenging his father’s murder because he must have been deeply grateful to his uncle who allegedly enacted Hamlet’s ‘repressed’ psychosexual impulses. Ernest Jones’s interpretation is arguably overstated and at variance with ample textual evidence. Hamlet abounds in lines that demonstrate the protagonist’s great love and admiration for his father, on the one hand, and his disdain and repulsion of his inconstant unfaithful mother, on the other.

Since Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of Hamlet emerged, only a few books and articles have been published to shed some new light on the nature of Hamlet’s dilemma. In The Hamlet Doctrine (2013), Critchley & Webster re-examine Hamlet and conclude it is about “nothing” (p. 15), a play in which the true hero emerges to be Ophelia: “Arguably, Ophelia is not just the main
casualty in *Hamlet* but its true tragic hero” (p.113). Having relied on prominent philosophers and psychoanalysts such as Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin, Hegel, Freud, Lacan and Nietzsche, they see Hamlet’s problem as resulting from “a significant disconnection between thought and action” (p. 13). Thought and action “seem to pull against each other, the former annulling the possibility of the other” (p. 13; 14). Hamlet can close the gap between thought and action, Critchley & Webster argue, “through the ultimate conceit, that is, through theater, through play” (p. 15).

Moreover, the last two decades have witnessed sporadic studies that attribute Hamlet’s delay broadly to neural reasons (Egnor, 2018; Podrug, 2005; Shaw, 2002). Much like their predecessors, such studies have not pinpointed the cause of Hamlet’s delay; they merely reiterate the psychiatric interpretation of Hamlet’s delay resulting from depression. The overall critical opinions reviewed above are each partly correct in describing the nature of Hamlet’s behaviour; however, they all fall short of identifying the real cause of Hamlet’s delay and eccentric behaviour convincingly.

**Discussion**

Interpretive injustice done to Hamlet, like Knight’s view quoted above, reveals a critical tendency to judge the Danish Prince by what he should do, not by what – due to his supposed defect – he could do. Upon close inspection, Hamlet - intellectual, righteous, brave, and honour-bound- proves to be more burdened with and weakened by brain disorders than his detractors would have realised. His hesitation is only one manifestation, among many, of a severe hidden neurological ailment that hinders him from taking the desired action promptly and meaningfully. As the objective, ‘outer-difficulties theory’ and the psychoanalytic approach to interpreting Hamlet’s delay have proved critically inadequate, a neuroscientific approach towards understanding Hamlet’s ‘problem’ may prove worthwhile.

In Shakespeare’s classic tragedy of delay, the dramatic ‘battle’ is fought and lost in Hamlet’s brain. The Prince of Denmark is usually criticized for taking thinking to an extreme at the expense of urgent action, failing to “sweep” to avenge his murdered father, as he passionately undertakes. Initially, to understand Hamlet’s delay, it is crucial to comprehend how the human brain functions and how it transfers thoughts into action. The brain comprises numerous nerve cells (neurons), each of which releases neurotransmitters to another nerve cell to transmit information at a site of contact, called a synapsis, making action possible (Bear et al., 2007). These brain neurotransmitters regulate various functions in the body, such as mood, behaviour, attention, sleep cycles, and muscle movement (Berry, 2022). One of these vital neurotransmitters is ‘dopamine.’ The brain sends this neurotransmitter from one cell to another in response to any kind of reward-stimulating thoughts (Olguín, Guzmán, Garcia & Mejía2016). The chief role of dopamine is to encourage one to act, either to perform a good deed or to avoid a bad one, which means the brain releases it before a reward is imminent. Moreover, dopamine, together with another brain hormone, serotonin, is responsible for pleasure and serves to regulate emotions, tune the mood, and encourage one to take action to achieve specific rewards (Bear et al.).

If the dopamine in the brain is insufficient, the nerve cells will not function effectively. Hence, action will fail to occur or take more time (Wender & Tomb, 2017). ‘Dopamine deficiency’
symptoms include depression, impulsiveness, muscle tremors and stiffness, restless legs syndrome, procrastination, poor attention levels, and low sex drive (Kwatra, Khan, Quadri & Cook, 2018; Swaim, 2017; Villines, 2019). Other cardinal symptoms include feelings of worthlessness and guilt, suicidal thoughts, insomnia, fatigue and feeling demotivated, mood swings, and delusions (Bear et al.). Upon close analysis of his behaviour, Hamlet displays most signs of this brain impairment.

The primary sign of ‘low dopamine’ in humans is depression, accompanied by apathy, lack of motivation, and lack of enthusiasm (Schmidt & Reith, 2005). In a chapter titled “Dopamine and Depression,” Skolnick (2005) underscores that “The contribution of anhedonia to depressive symptomatology, and the recognition that dopaminergic transmission is critical to reward and motivational processes, refocused attention on the role of the dopaminergic synapse in MDD [i.e., Major Depressive Disorder]” (p. 199). From his initial entry on stage, Hamlet displays distinctive signs of social and physical anhedonia, undue melancholy, desperation, suicidal thoughts and, later, suspicion in almost everyone around him (except Horatio). These are manifestations of a neurological symptom, known as First Episode Psychosis (FEP), caused by ‘dopamine deficiency’ in the brain (Cadman, 2018). Several neuroscientific studies have provided evidence that links psychosis to disturbances in the production of ‘dopamine’ (Tost, Alam & Andreas2010). FEP is characterized as having the following signs: ‘a worrisome drop in grades’ for students, ‘a decline in self-care or personal hygiene,’ difficulty in thinking, feeling suspicious or uneasy with others, spending more time than is usual in isolation, and, finally, experiencing solid and inappropriate emotions (NAMI, 2020). According to Belujon and Grace (2017), dopamine plays a crucial role in the hedonic deficits described in anhedonia, and is the main symptom of Major Depressive Disorder.

Hamlet exposes signs of MDD well before the Ghost appears and tells him a tale of a “foul and most unnatural murder” (I.5.25). His initial appearance on stage shows a listless young man without natural pleasure or enthusiasm. His early exchanges with Claudius and Gertrude reveal salient signs of psychosis, anhedonia, depression, social exclusion, suicidal intentions and hint, arguably, at possible weak academic performance. When Gertrude asks Hamlet to “cast [his] nighted colour off,” he cynically retorts that his ‘inky cloak, […] customary suits of solemn black,’ and other ‘shows of grief’ are minor signs of mourning compared with ‘that within which passeth show’ (I.2.68; 77; 78; 82; 85). No sooner is Hamlet alone on stage than he externalizes his overwhelming inner depression, pondering on suicide (I.2.129-132). The worries that Hamlet houses in his conscience surpass the typical anguish resulting merely from his father’s death and his mother’s second marriage. Claudius’ seemingly gentle admonition to Hamlet that “the clouds still hang on you” (I.2.66) emphasises not only the nephew’s sad mood but also the social exclusion that has become the norm of his life. Besides, Claudius (I.2.) draws attention to “Hamlet’s transformation” and how “nor th’ exterior nor the inward man / Resembles that it was” (ll. 5; 6-7). Hamlet’s link with reality, moreover, seems shaken; he sees life as “an unweeded garden / That grows to seed,” and “all the uses of this world” are to him repulsively “weary, flat, and unprofitable” (I.2.135-136; 134; 133). Whatever Claudius’ moral reality is, his words to Hamlet (I.2.87-108) -that the latter is practising his “mourning duties” to an extreme and that Hamlet’s “unprevailing woe” is “a fault to nature” (l. 101) - are prophetic, common sense.

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Suspicion in others is another symptom of ‘psychosis’ (Carey, 2021), a sign of low dopamine that Hamlet reveals in his early appearance. As soon as Horatio tells Hamlet of the Ghost’s disturbing appearance, the Prince expresses his doubt about how his father died, “All is not well; / I doubt some foul play” (I.2.253-254). Soon after the Ghost narrates the harrowing “tale” of a fratricide (I.5), Hamlet readily bursts with “O my prophetic soul! / My uncle!” (ll. 40-41). Hamlet’s suspicion also extends beyond his mother to encompass all women: “Frailty, thy name is woman!” (I.2.146). Likewise is Hamlet’s suspicion in Ophelia, in his two friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and even in the Ghost: “The spirit that I have seen / May be the devil” (I.2.573-74). Moreover, the “mad” role Hamlet allegedly plans to play in public is not only a means of confirming his suspicion of his uncle but also perhaps a stratagem to cover his uncontrollable unhealthy conduct. Hamlet is not the balanced response of an adult, simply mourning his father’s death and expressing his shock at his mother’s marriage to his uncle. Hamlet is in despair, one who has lost all ordinary healthy pleasure in “the uses of the world.”

At certain turns in the dramatic action, Hamlet’s impulsiveness and aggression may be attributed to the dysfunction in his brain of both the serotonin and dopamine chemicals. Several research studies have indicated a link between impulsive aggressions with the imbalance of the functions of these two neurochemical systems, as impairment of the serotonin system function can lead to dysfunction of the dopaminergic system (Seo, Patrick & Kenneal, 2008). The dopaminergic system, in particular, “is involved in behavioral activation, motivated behavior, and reward processing” and “also plays an active role in the modulation of aggressive behaviors” (p. 4). Impulsiveness is a distinctive feature of Hamlet’s demeanour throughout the play; it is also a major symptom of ‘dopamine deficiency’ (Magana, 2019, p. 48). Although thoughtful by nature, Hamlet has a noticeable excitable streak. At times, he is erratic, nervous and unpredictable. Examples of his hot temper and impulsiveness permeate the play. The first time Hamlet seems to act without logical thinking is in (I.4), when he, despite warnings by his companions, hastily follows the Ghost without questioning its identity. His instant decision to trail the Ghost combines recklessness and impulsiveness (ll. 65-67). No sooner does the Ghost begin to tell its story than Hamlet rashly offers to act in a manner that reflects more ostentation than genuine bravery: “Haste me to know’t, that I, with wings as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love, / May sweep to my revenge.” (I.v.29-31). As the action unfolds, it becomes clear how farfetched Hamlet’s readiness to act is. When his resolve to fulfill the Apparition’s command is tested, he begins to question the Ghost’s identity. Hamlet’s impulsiveness is also obvious in (III.4), when he carelessly stabs Polonius behind the arras, presuming him to be Claudius. Hamlet’s leap into Ophelia’s grave in (V.1) -giving out his hyperbolic “Forty thousand brothers / Could not, with all their quantity of love, / Make up my sum (ll. 254-256) - is more an unwary act than rational behaviour. Moreover, when Hamlet kills Claudius at the end of the play, he seems to do so as a reaction to Laertes’ revelation to him that Claudius had poisoned the drink that Gertrude drank.

Another intriguing impact of ‘low dopamine,’ reflected in Hamlet’s, is his presumed low academic achievement. Recent studies have linked disorder in the dopamine production with disturbance of cognition and lack of motivation. Neuroscience News website quotes a study lead author as providing “a new theoretical account for how dopamine affects learning […] and motivation […] simultaneously” (Role of Dopamine, 2015, para. 4). The issue of Hamlet’s
university study and academic performance in the play has surprisingly received little scholarly attention. Although the text sheds little light on Hamlet’s university level or progress, it is reasonable to presume that a thirty-year-old philosophy student (V.1.146), who has not yet completed his degree, has profound learning difficulties—which would also cause him further frustration and depression. At the outset of the action, Hamlet is in Denmark, back from University in Germany, to attend his father’s funeral and, to his subsequent dismay, his mother’s second marriage. In (I.2), both Claudius (ll. 112-117) and Gertrude (ll. 118-119) beseech Hamlet to “remain / Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye” (ll. 115-116) and “go not to Wittenberg” (l.119). If Claudius and Gertrude had been sure that King Hamlet’s death was the cause of Hamlet’s melancholy, they would have probably recommended him to go back to Wittenberg, as focusing on his studies would soon distract him from his sad thoughts. In contrast, Claudius tells Hamlet forthright, “For your intent / In going back to school in Wittenberg, / It is most retrograde to our desire” (ll. 112-114). Claudius and Gertrude would not try to dissuade Hamlet from going back to university unless they were concerned by the slow academic progress he had been making. This could be one reason, among others, safely harbored in their minds. Nor does Hamlet hesitate to comply: “I shall in all my best obey you, madam” (l. 120). The Learning Disability Association of America (2020) informs that learning disabilities are caused by “neurobiological factors that alter brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more cognitive processes related to learning” (para. 1). It adds, “These processing problems can [...] interfere with higher level skills” such as study organization, time management, critical thinking, memory, and attention (Types of Learning Disabilities, para. 1.  Hardly can a reader of the play miss the relevance of this association to the protagonist’s peculiar conduct. Hamlet’s intellect and education are indeed not questionable, but his academic progress as a university student is. In Hamlet, Shakespeare gives the impression that the protagonist’s learning is more the result of his witty observations of life than of book knowledge: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,” Hamlet remarks, “Than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (I.5.166-167).

One of the striking symptoms of ‘low dopamine,’ apparent in Hamlet’s conduct, is ‘restless leg syndrome (RSL)’ (Johns Hopkins Medicine, n.d. para. 1-5). As dopamine is responsible for motor movement, ‘low dopamine’ may result in general body fatigue and muscle shaking (Kwatra et al., 2018). This condition, mentions WebMD, “can also happen in other areas like the arms, chest, or head” (Dunkin, 2022, para. 5). Mayo Clinic (2020) notes, “Researchers suspect the condition may be caused by an imbalance of the brain chemical dopamine, which sends messages to control muscle movement” (para. 4). Shakespeare’s tragedy has a hint about Hamlet suffering from this syndrome. In (I.2), Ophelia reports to her father a frightening encounter in her closet with Hamlet, “his knees knocking each other” (l. 80), “And thrice his head thus waving up and down” (l. 92; emphasis added). Ophelia’s description of Hamlet’s untidy clothes and apparent neglect of his appearance and hygiene reveals the Prince’s early phase of psychosis (II.1.77-79). This is more than Hamlet simply putting on an “antic disposition” to confuse his uncle and associates. This behaviour confuses Polonius, who believes it is madness, yet admits it is too perfect to be feigned, “Though this be madness, yet there is method in’t” (II. 2. 205).

Another fundamental tenet of ‘dopamine deficiency’ that Hamlet manifestly displays is his anhedonia and loss of pleasure in social relations and meaningful activities (Lamontagne, Melendez & Olmstead, 2018). As already indicated, dopamine is the brain hormone “released
during pleasurable situations and stimulates one to seek out the pleasurable activity or occupation” (Mandal, 2019, para. 6). Hamlet’s unusual loss of pleasure in relationships and activities is most evident in his speech to his Wittenberg university mates, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz:

I have of late–but wherefore I know not–lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, [...] it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. (II.2.289-296; emphasis added)

Likewise, humankind, though “noble in reason [...] infinite in faculty,” and “in apprehension [...] like a god” to Hamlet, is not more than “this quintessence of dust” (II.2.297; 299; 300-1). That Hamlet’s speech above is part of role-playing to deceive his prying ‘friends’ is unlikely since the essence of the speech is also reiterated in Hamlet’s speeches with Horatio and the soliloquies.

Alongside the existing anhedonia from which Hamlet markedly suffers, the Ghost’s revelation fails to trigger enough dopamine to motivate the gloomy Prince. At best, Hamlet’s brain releases unhappy chemicals to warn him of the intended action of revenge. Thus, Hamlet realises he is not sufficiently motivated to take revenge. Instead, he begins the lengthy process of finding excuses to delay his action. A reasoning cycle begins in Hamlet’s prefrontal cortex, the part of his brain that is intact and effective. Hamlet feigns madness as a disguise tactic and perhaps a cover to hide his increasingly distinct and embarrassing mental illness. Shakespeare’s original audience would have seen Hamlet’s pretended madness as a conventional ingredient of the popular revenge tragedy. However, playacting is one of Hamlet’s dominant passions. When Hamlet devises the mousetrap (II.2), as when he feigns madness, he does so eagerly, with his brain cells presumably spurting an abundance of dopamine as he expects rewards in terms of pleasure as a result. Hamlet relishes acting under the guise of madness and masters the role so well that it becomes hard for the audience to tell if his ‘madness’ is feigned or real. Hamlet enjoys role-playing and attracting the attention of the audience (i.e., characters on stage and the audience in the theatre), which may arouse the suspicion that Hamlet, like Iago, is a histrionic personality disordered person who arguably suffers from Cluster B personality disorders (Alyo, 2019). That Hamlet awes his audience with the dexterity of playing mad is evident in Polonius’ unmistakable admiration of the Prince’s performance (II.2.205). When Polonius asks his daughter if she thinks Hamlet is mad, she retorts, “My lord, I do not know; / But, truly, I do fear it” (II.2. 83-84).

Hamlet’s inexplicable, misogynistic attitude towards Ophelia, another controversial aspect of the protagonist’s morbid behaviour, may be associated with the symptoms of deficient dopamine in the Prince’s brain. Low-level dopamine causes the dulling of pleasure and the inability to feel gratification and, consequently, a weakening of libido (Hull, Muschamp & Sato. 2004). “Known as the motivation molecule,” exposes Kancel (2016), “Dopamine helps to increase the sex drive of an individual” (p. 16). The brain uses happy chemicals to reward what biologists call “reproductive success;” sex and romance stimulate the brain to release happy chemicals as a reward (Breuning, 2012, p. 17). Love triggers vast neurochemicals and causes one to be happy, while lost love prompts an enormous flow of unhappy chemicals and causes one to be despondent. Hamlet’s suddenly troubled relationship with Ophelia, unjustified logically in the play, may be
taken as another symptom that the Prince is afflicted with dopamine deficiency. In the famous scene with Ophelia (III.1), Hamlet, turned misogynist, rebuffs the once-lover Hamlet; “I never gave you aught” (l.97). He unashamedly announces himself anti-marriage and anti-women. Low dopamine levels in the brain, according to a specialized website, “can lead to an inability to feel pleasure from activities we previously enjoyed” (Saeed, n.d. para.4). Hamlet has already told Rosencrantz categorically, “Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither […]” (II.2.301-2; emphasis added). A scientific study has shown that “dopamine was active in areas of the brain known as the basal ganglia, the same region where it has been observed to respond to positive stimuli, such as food or sex” (ScienceDaily).

Looked at in this perspective, Hamlet is then a man who has lost delight and interest in almost everything in which an ordinary man is interested – striving, focusing, and finding things interesting. Therefore, when his subsequent encounter with Ophelia occurs, not only is Prince Hamlet the moralist, preaching his once-beloved, now suspected of spying on him, to “get … to a nunnery” (II.2.121) so that there would not be another “breeder of sinners”; he is also a man who has little sexual desire that average men have. His “get-thee-to-a-nunnery” speech hides underneath the lack of sexual drive which he is suffering, although he finds occasions to make one or two sexual jokes (Ophelia remarks: “you are keen, my lord, you are keen” to which Hamlet retorts: “It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge” (III.2.231-232)). Hamlet’s misogynistic attitude towards Gertrude and Ophelia cannot be taken as part of his plan to avenge his father’s murder; perhaps the dramatist plans to embody the protagonist’s suspicion of both women. Although Hamlet nicknames “women” frailty, the text offers little evidence that either woman deserves such vociferous censure.

Procrastination, the central problem Hamlet must grapple with throughout the play, is the outcome of his lack of motivation, a prominent sign of low dopamine in the brain (Magana, 2019). Magana refers to a gene that “helps control the level of dopamine between neurons” and plays a role in “regulating procrastination behaviour” (p. 48). When a person meets a challenge and is ready for meaningful action, dopamine is released in response to a reward or reinforcement. “When deciding to act, the neurotransmitter dopamine,” explain Michely et al. (2020), “is implicated in a valuation of prospective effort and reward” (p. 1448). The motivation to act is essentially associated with the energizing impact that rewards have on behaviour to engage in specific actions to obtain such rewards. Therefore, individuals are likely to engage inactivities that provide them with pleasure and promise them potential, satisfactory rewards. ‘Dopamine deficiency’ is thus responsible for reducing the willingness to choose action options or even to initiate actions that fail to maximize reward (Michely et al., 2020). Hamlet, the philosophy student, evidently finds little reward in having to kill a reigning King, with the warrant to kill being merely an apparition of whose reality the sceptical Prince will spend considerable time questioning.

The deficient dopamine transmission seems to dull Hamlet’s resolve and weaken his concentration on his lackluster task. Nowell (2012), from Intrinsic Motivation and Magical Unicorn, observes something intriguing about low dopamine level. Because dopamine is responsible for reward and motivation, individuals suffering from low dopamine subsequently “engage in (a) high-risk or sensation-seeking behaviour, and (b) demonstrate a greater than typical
struggle with the boring task” (para. 1) For a person suffering from low dopamine, Nowell (2012) remarks, some tasks are neither attractive nor easy to do. Therefore, when such individuals approach a tedious or unrewarding task, they “begin to scan the environment for something – anything- more immediately and intrinsically rewarding” (para. 4). When a person sees that reward is close and clear, the task requires little mental effort to link the task with the reward. Conversely, if the task is uninteresting, indistinct, and unrewarding, there is difficulty in making a close link between the task and the reward expected.

Hamlet is a case in point. His mission is surrounded by considerable uncertainty, difficulty, and repulsion. The desired reward related to the tasks or activities humans usually do is either missing or blurred in Hamlet’s case. Therefore, as he finds the job arduous and tedious, it is, in Nowell’s words, “challenging to visualize and anticipate the long-term payoff” (para. 2). This fact may explain why Hamlet looks for tasks in which the reward is immediate and evident to him, such as playacting, devising the Mousetrap playlet, and moralizing and attacking corruption around him - tasks he has the talent for and passion for performing. The clear, immediate, and rewarding activities he opts to perform at the expense of the complex, uncertain, and ugly task of murder make the meditative Prince and student of philosophy surrender to the impact of procrastination throughout the action.

Hamlet’s prolonged inactivity and notorious delay are perhaps most distinct in his last soliloquy, which can demonstrate the cause of his problem. As Fortinbras leads his troops to Poland “to gain a little patch of ground / That hath in it no profit but the name” (IV.4.18-19), the Danish Prince belittles himself when juxtaposed with his Norwegian counterpart: “How all occasions do inform against me, / And spur my dull revenge!” (IV.4.32-33). It is intriguing how Hamlet uses the metaphor of circumstances (“occasions”), bringing charges against him (“do inform against me”) for his inactivity. He realises the disastrous impact of his inaction on himself and on society about which he claims to care. The following few lines externalise the intense conflict raging in the mind of an intellectual moralist, trying to rationalise, or perhaps justify, his hesitation by aligning it with God-granted thinking and reasoning:

Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused. (IV.4.36-39)

Hamlet knows he hides his indecision behind the thin screen of ‘reasoning.’ However, he soon goes from the one extreme of attributing his hesitation to overthinking to the other extreme of ascribing it to “bestial oblivion” or cowardice (Ll. 40-43). Considering these two excesses, Hamlet admits that the cause of his hesitation is neither. He wonders why he cannot act though he seems to have all the requirements for action: “I do not know / Why yet I live to say, ‘This thing’s to do’,  
/Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means / To do’i” (IV.4.45-46, emphasis added).

Hamlet has the cause to avenge his father’s honour or redeem his mother’s integrity. Hamlet equally has the will and determination to perform the act. Strength (both mental and
physical) is also available to Hamlet as a prerequisite for action. Finally, the young Prince says he acquires the means to punish Claudius. However, what Hamlet lacks to act is the most vital component of acting - motivation. He is unaware of this problem, though, indirectly and repeatedly, he blames himself for not being as efficient as the First Player and tries to charge his will with enough vigour to push himself into acting meaningfully. Now Hamlet realises that the First Player has power that he (Hamlet) lacks. In his third soliloquy, Hamlet returns to accusing himself of cowardice (II.2.545-546) as he compares his inactivity with the First Player’s passionate speech of Hecuba (II.2.532-539). His ironic reference to his ranting as “most brave” (l. 557) and his self-reproach for unpacking his heart with words, not actions, is confirmation of his acute mental anguish because of his idleness and lack of enthusiasm. To invigorate his resolve towards action, Hamlet resorts instead to a new (but interesting) plan to be sure his uncle is guilty – the play-within-the-play (II.2.579-80). Prince Hamlet is confused and bewildered. His problem lies not in the lack of motivation per se, but in what should spark his motivation.

Shakespeare’s Hamlet displays other secondary signs and symptoms of low dopamine in his brain that cause his indecision. One sign is sleep disorder (MedicalNewsToday). Hamlet refers to his inability to sleep; “Sir my heart,” he tells Horatio, “there was a kind of fighting / That would not let me sleep” (V.2.4-5). Another sign of imbalanced dopamine is guilt-ridden feelings and self-blame (MedicalNewsToday). Soliloquising in (II.2), Hamlet calls himself “a rogue and peasant slave” (l. 523) and “A dull and muddy-mettled rascal” (l. 540) for failing to avenge his father’s murder. As he chides Ophelia in the “get-thee-to-a-nunnery” scene, he proceeds to blame himself as a sinner: “I could accuse me of things that I were better my mother had not borne me” (III. 1. 122-125). It is curious that such a moral, righteous and honourable philosophy student feels guilt-ridden unless that is due to an impairment he unwittingly suffers.

Shakespeare’s Hamlet is not a traditional Aristotelian tragic hero who fails and falls because of a weak personality trait or an error of judgment. As a protagonist, Hamlet, is a victim of unusual nature, perhaps of genetics or a neural disturbance. The character that offers the most pertinent description of Hamlet’s misfortune is Ophelia. After Hamlet has voiced his misogynistic views to her, she eloquently sums up the dichotomy in Prince Hamlet, the courtier-soldier-scholar: “O’ what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!” Using the metaphor of great music gone out of tune, Ophelia regrets seeing the sad transformation of “The expectancy and rose of the fair state, / The glass of fashion and the mould of form” into “That unmatched form and feature of blown youth / Blasted with ecstasy” (III.1.149; 151-52; 158-59).

The celebrated Elizabethan dramatist creates in Hamlet a personality far more convoluted and conspicuously unhealthy and disordered than has been previously critically conceived. ‘Dopamine deficiency’ may explain the cause of Hamlet’s extreme pathological depression and may account for the psychological disorders from which he seems to suffer. Most of the symptoms of “dopamine deficiency” mentioned above indeed intersect with those of ‘attention deficit hyperactivity disorder’ (ADHD), which results from the low level of dopamine in the brain (Bear et al.).
Conclusion

The central image in Hamlet, Yorick’s skull, as a head empty of its brain, may be viewed as symbolising Hamlet’s imperfect brain: it is ineffective because of its neurotransmitters imbalance. The play’s protagonist is a profound moral thinker who faces many intricate issues about existence, corruption, right and wrong, death, and after-life. However, his will to “take arms against a sea of troubles” (III.1.58) is thwarted by man’s limited intellectual abilities and by the mysterious workings of a divine power that ironically singles him out in a world ‘out of joint,’ but deprives him of the ability “to set it right” (I.5.189; 190). Hamlet stands firm heroically in the face of “troubles,” although he knows that “to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand” (II.2.179-180). Rather than committing suicide to end his pain, Hamlet opts to bear “the whips and scorns of time” (III.1.70), only to come to the bitter conclusion that, as he tells Horatio, “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will” (V.2.10-11).

Endnote

[1] This and all subsequent references to Shakespeare’s Hamlet will henceforward be to Bernard Lott’s 1968 edition. All citations from the play will follow the pattern ‘Act. scene. line number(s).’

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The impact of landscape on the emotional shift in Tayo's Character: A Study of memory and displacement in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

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Abstract:
This paper examines the decolonizing methods used by Leslie Marmon Silko in her novel Ceremony (1977) to heal the indigenous people from the patriarchal traditions of the white hegemony. This study aims to emphasize the vulnerable responses of the Pueblo people to the memories of the clan and to highlight Silko’s methods to sustain the history and lifestyle of the indigenous people. Therefore, Silko’s novel can be situated historically and culturally within memory-studies. To analyze the contrasting behaviors of characters, this paper projects the relationship between the collective patriarchal doctrines and that of the individual within the framework of memory studies. Theories of Jan and Aleida Assmann are used here to explore the chronicle struggle of the indigenous people and to maintain the memory and tradition of the clan. Memory studies can best describe this novel since Silko believes there is a systematic shift in dislocating the memories of the place. This cultural displacement, the Pueblo people are specifically facing, happens when the young people lose their memories of the tribe and forget their traditions. The memory-studies then establish an intersection not only between the collective and the individual but also between the white hegemony and the Indigenous culture. The paper concludes that memories of the clan can be regained through specific forms of ceremonies, narratives, or any institutional formation. Therefore, Silko’s novel has entertained the possibility of cultural and historical communication- within memory studies- that may succeed in stimulating the attention of the young generation.

Keywords: Assmann, Ceremony, Indigenous studies, memory theories, Laguna Indians, Leslie Marmon Silko, Pueblo people

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Introduction

Leslie Marmon Silko, in her novel *Ceremony*, suggests that salvation is attained through recognizing the spirit of the clan and memorizing the ancestor’s stories of nature and the landscape. Salvation here is granted when accepting the “cultural memory” of the Native American and the Pueblo people. In comparing the life of the Pueblo people to that of the Euro-American, Silko offers redemption through returning to the clan. This is because Silko identifies herself with nature, the traditions, and the stories of her Native American heritages and therefore, she offers her characters salvation if they are willing to accept their culture as it is. This paper argues that the character of Tayo lies at an intersection of an individual and a collective—search-for-identity, especially after distinctive practices of displacement. The idea of displacement in this paper is better shown collectively through Tayo’s relation to the young generation of Native Americans veterans and individually through Tayo’s connection to his past and the landscape. Performing the ceremony and reviving the memory of the clan become then an inevitable act if Tayo seeks salvation for himself and his reservation. This paper does not intend to discuss racial or ethnic identity, it aims at highlighting the approaches used by Native Americans, as suggested by Silko, to revive their memory and consequently, attain salvation. The purpose of this paper is to underline these practices through the lens of memory studies.

Literature Review

Capturing the Memory of the Native American

The study of Native American literature maintains strong relations to nature and the landscape. Besides, it revives the memories of the tribe and the Indian culture, and rejects, at the same time, colonization, the cultural, and political dominance of the white people. Instead, it celebrates the Native American culture and highlights its traditions, memories and practices. Commemorating the culture in such a way is called “cultural memory” and is defined by Assmann (2008) as an institutional formation of memory in the shape of ceremonies, songs, narration, and communicative memory from one generation to another through institutionalized performances. Assmann also proposes a fluidity of the ‘transition of memory’ from an individual to the collective and vice versa.

One of the remarkable writers is Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, who influenced the development of Indigenous studies after establishing her academic journal *Wicazo Sa Review*. In this journal, she establishes a platform for, yet to come, studies and theories related to the history and sovereignty of the American Indian writings (Hernandez, 2016). One of the significant studies about the hybrid identity of Tayo is *Hybridity in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony* by NS. Essa (2021). Also, another detailed study about the relation of the three main novels of Silko is *Leslie Marmon Silko: Ceremony, Almanac of the Dead, Gardens in the Dunes* was written by David L. Moore (2021). Indigenous studies are still considered an emerging academic discipline that needs many theorization and methodology.

The Landscape as a Therapy

Silko is one of the most important indigenous writers who reinforces the importance of rituals and the need to go back to Native American heritage. The eighties of the previous century featured a prolific publication of Native American fiction and non-fiction writings to the extent that this
period was called by Kenneth (1986) Native American Renaissance which in return created the need to establish theories about the Indigenous people. Despite this fact, Champagne (2007) suggests that the heritage of Indigenous people lacks the appropriate theoretical ideology that may organize it as an ‘academic discipline’. He attributes the absence of their literature in the literary canon to political and organizational approaches besides a conflict of power. Therefore, indigenous studies become interdisciplinary because it is a fragmented literature that is mainly related to ethnic and racial studies. Silko is considered one of the first wave of writers who defended the voices of the Native Americans and the legacy of the ancestors. Her books reflect upon the idea of coping and healing. Therefore, her writings feature a wide reception and are included in many university syllabi (Weaver, 2008).

In her novel, Leslie Marmon Silko concentrates on the rhizomatic relationship between humans and landscape, represented by flora and fauna. In her book, *Yellow Woman and A Beauty of the Spirit*, Silko (1996) displays the Laguna Pueblo people's perspective, who believe the earth is the Mother Creator and everything, animate or inanimate, has a spirit initiated by the land. Everything to the Pueblo people is connected spiritually, "the landscape resonates the spiritual, or mythic, dimension of the Pueblo world" (p. 36). Silko translates this idea into a fictional theme in her novel *Ceremony* to describe, Tayo, the protagonist who has been disconnected from his Mother Nature. His identity is lost because of assimilating to the white culture, a culture that could not provide salvation when needed. Like most of his fellow Indian American young generation, Tayo is a victim of colonization, white culture orientation, and Americanization. His method to recuperate and get salvation initiates a journey to return to his clan’s traditions and revive their memories through performing a particular ceremony that could save his spirit.

This paper traces the decolonizing methods to heal the indigenous people from the control of the white hegemony. The writer suggests that salvation comes from recognizing the spirit of the clan and memorizing the ancestor’s stories of nature and the landscape. Thus, the novel begins with three poems by the three witches summarizing the global spiritual connection and celebrating the doctrine of the ancestors and those who respect the landscape. In one of these poems, the witches state the aim of the writer: “The only cure I know is a good ceremony” (p. 23). From the beginning, Silko offers the cure for the lost generation; in fact, what the ceremony delivers, as Silko suggests, is repairing the damages inflicted by cultural acculturation and white hegemony. As a result, the character of Tayo gets salvation after she acquires the old identity of the tribe. However, Tayo mirrors the sufferings of his generation and the drought of his reservation in a way that leads Betonie, a medicine man living on the reservation, to believe that the ceremony will save not only Tayo but also the Pueblo people. Performing the ceremony and reviving the memory of the clan become then an inevitable act if Tayo seeks salvation for himself and his reservation. Thus, the author argues that the character of Tayo lies at an intersection of an individual and collective victimhood of various forms of displacement. The idea of displacement in this paper is better shown collectively through Tayo’s relation to his fellow, the young generation of Native Americans, and individually through Tayo’s connection to the landscape. This cultural displacement happens when the young people lose their memories of the tribe and forget their traditions; hence need cultural communication to trigger their memory of the ancestor and consequently be saved from the influence of the white culture. This is called cultural memory and
Assmann (2008) declares that “Cultural memory reaches back into the past only so far as the past can be reclaimed as ‘ours’” (p. 113). Assmann (2013) also explained cultural memory further:

> It exists in forms of narratives, songs, dances, rituals, masks and symbols, specialists such as narrators, bards, mask-carvers and others are organized in guilds and have to undergo long periods of initiation, instruction and examination. Moreover, it requires for its actualization certain occasions when the community comes together for some celebration or other (p.38).

Like Assmann, Silko (2006) claims that a ceremony can revive the cultural memory of the clan and save them from any influence. Assmann’s approach to memory theories serves the aim of this paper in retaining Silko’s idea about memory and displacement. At the beginning of Silko’s story (2006), the witch also states:

> their [white-people civilization] evil is mighty but it can’t stand up to our stories. So they try to destroy the stories and let the stories be confused or forgotten. They would like that. They would be happy because we would be defenseless then (p. 23).

Stories, as Silko suggests, protect the Native Americans from the harms of the white culture, stories examining their past, and stories about the universe. Stories of the ancestors here act like a bond that connects the Pueblo people with their past and the land. Therefore, she suggests that the white culture is trying to destroy the stories so the history and the reality of the Pueblo people would be ruined: “He [Tayo] knew what white people thought about the stories. In school, the science teacher had explained what superstition was and then held the science textbook up for the class to see the true source of explanations” (p. 93). Silko reclaims that this systematic paradigm of the white culture to erase the oral history of the Native Americans can be defeated through a ceremony that helps Tayo re-identify with the spirit. By the end of the ceremony, Tayo realizes the collective formation of all the souls around the globe and how all creations are connected in a way or another. Subsequently, when he condemns the rain forest in the Philippines, his reservation seems to suffer draught. He also notices that the rocks of the reservation bear toxic uranium as the rocks in a nearby nuclear site, which reminds him of the atomic bomb that blasted Japan in WWII. As a result, all elements in nature and the landscape are connected in a supernatural power. This connection resonated in the spiritual dimension of the Pueblo people, a connection which Tayo has experienced regularly after returning from war. Therefore, performing the ceremony of the ancestors is a necessity to purify Tayo’s spirit and save his soul and his reservation. In this sense, Silko proclaims that all creatures, humans and non-humans, are interconnected in one unseparated inclusive spirit. However, this spirit is damaged by the patriarchal society of white people.

In the novel, Silko (2006) criticizes the assimilation of the Indian American into the white civilization besides raising many questions of acculturation and adaptation that the Indian-American young-men face. She juxtaposes indigenous problems against white group hegemony. This is represented by Tayo’s collective and individual relations, or to put it in Assmann’s words (2008): “the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level. Identity, in its turn, is related to time” (p. 109). This synchrony of time and identity, Assmann assumes, “is effectuated by memory.” Therefore, memory becomes
the principal motive for human action. Assmann (2013) also believes that the past is a “sedimentation of relics, traces and personal memories on the one hand, and as a social construction on the other” (p.36). This idea supports Silko’s opinion about the importance of memory. Both writers concentrate on memory as a self-reclamation, as a social identity, and as a collective construction. Thus, this paper argues that Assmann’s memory theory best describes Silko’s approach to the clan’s memory and the Pueblo people.

In this novel, Silko (2006) offers reconciliation through returning to nature and celebrating the memory of the clan through reviving the stories of the ancestors. Silko projects how the young generation of the Pueblo people displaces themselves from their roots and forgets about their traditions. Tayo then functions as a transitional symbol between the social memory of his age and the need to fulfill an individual reformation away from the white civilization. He represents what Assmann adopts as the “fluid transition of memory from the individual to the collective level and vice versa” (Heinrich & Weyland, 2016, p.27). Like the young people in his generation, Tayo is lost because of colonialization and the memories of war, but, personally, because of his hybrid identity, which means he is a mixture of a Native American woman and a white man. On the same level, Assmann (1995) thinks cultural memory is “The specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture [which] is not seen to maintain itself for generations as a result of phylogenetic evolution, but rather as a result of socialization and customs”(p. 125). This revival of cultural memory through socialization is what Tayo intends to establish. The ceremony he performs re-enforces the social attitude, the custom, the past, and the tradition of his ancestors. Assmann (2013) believes that “the past conveys a kind of connective structure or diachronic identity to societies, groups, and individuals, both in the social and in the temporal dimension” (p. 36). Thus, one may think that Tayo’s memory projects the basis of the hardships of displacement and assimilation felt by his Pueblo community. His journey to salvation is a journey to the past and towards a revival of the Native American identity. As a result, Tayo’s character signifies the memory construction of his community and the rhetoric of pain that labels the sufferings of the Native American people. This is assured by emphasizing that the power of storytelling is to recuperate the identity of the self and, consequently, of the culture.

Silko (2006) depicts all of the men of the young Native American generation as WW II veterans. The shock of war affects those young men, so they “share a collective memory and an identity that is socially demonstrated” (Hadla, 2021, p. 21). On returning to their reservation, they suffer war fatigue and resort to liquor as a means either to forget about the war or to show off what they had done during the war. Silko (2006) says: "reports note that since the Second World War a pattern of drinking and violence, not previously seen before, is emerging among Indian veterans" (p. 60). This decline is deeply rooted in this generation because they feel the rupture of their identity. To those young men, it is crucial to integrate with the white civilization since, as those young men believe, assimilation grants power even at the expense of forgetting about their traditions. During the war, the uniform of the army empowers these young men. When this uniform was taken from them after being released, they were psychologically lost and thus resorted to drinking. Consequently, choosing to be within the restrictions of the white-people-culture means abandoning the traditions of the Pueblo people. This cultural acculturation is especially shown when Rocky refuses the reservation and mocks the rituals, made by Tayo, after killing the deer.
Rocky prefers to leave for war than to stay at home. He is encouraged to leave the reservation by everyone, even his mother, who "wanted him to be a success" (p. 51). Thus, she inspires her son to play football to get out of the reservation; otherwise, staying home entails no success which means, he might lose his chance of assimilating to the white hegemony: "She could see what white people wanted in an Indian, and she believed this was his only chance" (p. 51), but his failure to get in one of the football teams makes him this of war as a suitable place just to leave the reservation. Chavkin (2006) supposes that the only thing with which the Indian Americans are left, after the war, is 'despair', 'which is the general notion of the whole generation since they face the dilemma of reviving the memory and identity of their people or simply seeking the approval of the white civilization.

All the young men in Silko’ story (2006) share the same feelings with Rocky. Emo, one of the Indian veteran characters, brags about having sex with white women or being given a medal like white men. Silko highlights the motive of the Native young people to be enlisted in the army is either as a revenge against all the miseries lived because of marginalization or an envy because of all the privileges of the white people's civilization. Emo tells his friends, "They [the white people] took our land, they took everything! So let's get our hands on white women!" (p. 55). Those young men replace the dignity of reserving their history with trivial materials offered by the material world of the white culture. Tayo's generation never realized the importance of the interrelationship between humans and the landscape to the existence of the Native Americans, and thus lost their connection to the land, and their inner peace.

The Native Americans dignify nature and the Landscape, while the white culture treats nature as inferior. The Pueblo group assumes an equal relationship between humans and the landscape, believing that everything has a spirit. This connection creates an egalitarian relationship connecting all humans and non-humans. While the white culture, in contrast, celebrates the dominance of humans over the landscape. They assume that humans are at the top of a hierarchy and that all other creatures serve humans’ needs (Stein, 2002). The new generation senses this inferiority and knows deep inside that only the uniform of the army helps them blend in with the influential white culture: “The dilemma of identity here is the disparity between…[their] external uniform and the interior figure” (Hadla, 2021, p,54). Once they lose the uniform, they attempt to accommodate through drinking and violence:

Here they were, trying to bring back that old feeling, that feeling they belonged to America the way they felt during the war. They blamed themselves for losing the new feeling; they never talked about it, but they blamed themselves just like they blamed themselves for losing the Land the white people took. (Silko, 2006 p. 43)

Living on the margin of tribal Laguna life and the white civilization compromises their identity and challenges their sense of belonging, "belonging was drinking and laughing with the platoon" (p. 43). Though Tayo drinks as much as they do, Tayo senses the problem his generation faces and thus bursts out into crying one day, "They go on with their old times. Tayo starts crying. They think maybe he's crying about what the Jap did to Rocky…they don't know he is crying for them” (p. 43). The difference between Tayo and his fellows enables him to refuse their illusions of the faked victories. The story suggests that Tayo discovers the false culture of the white civilization because
it is a culture of “dead objects: the plastic and neon, the concrete and steel. Hollow and lifeless as a witchery clay figure” (p. 181). Except for Tayo, the young generation of the Native Americans seems to have lost their identity and thus cannot be saved. Tayo hates his hybridity because it takes away his sense of belonging. Because these old veterans seek no remedy, they end up miserable. Emo kills his friend, Pinkie, and runs away from the reservation. Leroy and Harley are found dead in their truck. Silko describes their crushed car as ironically sealed coffins. She labels their vehicle as "the shiny metal coffin the Veterans office bought for each of them. In that way, it was not much different than if they died at Wake Island or Iwo Jima” (p. 224). In this image, Silko is ridiculing the dreams of those men that they would be respected and treated like white soldiers. Their memory dimension is shifted from nature, the land, and the ancestors’ stories to stories about war and the uniform. They are torn between the culture of the clan and the culture of the white people because they could not develop their communicative and cultural memory. This disorientation in identity makes Tayo reject the community of the young Native veterans and saves his soul. He also takes a personal responsibility to save the reservation from the drought. The dramatic sphere of unsuccessful endings of these young men is deliberate since they never accepted their Laguna tradition which is why they are wasted as they have already wasted their Land.

Undoubtedly, Tayo faces the same historical and political marginalization and identity crisis as his generation and, just like all the young people in his reservation, he starts drinking in an attempt to find salvation. However, resorting to drinking intensifies the alienated feeling Tayo senses. Nonetheless, what distinguishes Tayo from others is his choice to leave the white civilization and go back to the Land of his ancestor. The journey he makes helps him abandon addiction. Gradually, he starts rejecting the synthetic patriarchal cultural fluctuations that are substituting the Pueblo’s tradition: "Silko underscores her assumption that traditional tribal solutions are relevant to the problems of Tayo and the other despairing veterans"(Chavkin, 2002, p.7), which means the best solution for defying the spirit of evil with which all the young generation of the Pueblo people are possessed is through returning to the motherland and the clan.

This tradition can be reserved through specific rituals that maintain the identity and memory of the ancestors, an acknowledgment that is realized through storytelling. In these stories, the image of the land is a striking element as an aside to the rituals of the Pueblo people. Silko (1996) says, "Think of the land; the earth, as the center of a spider's web. Human identity, imagination, and storytelling were inextricably linked to the Land, Mother Earth, just as the strands of the spider's web radiate from the center of the web"(p. 21). Therefore, the image of the land becomes a unifying figure in all the story’s event. The reader explores the aesthetic connectivity of humans with that of nature, a bond that is mutual in an action/ reaction behavior; for example, the wind blows rigorously when Tayo and Rocky are recruited, which reflects a bad omen, and also it blows so severely when Tayo injures Emo with a broken glass after the latter provoked him. Likewise, the sky rains heavily at the death of Rocky, covering the tears of Tayo, who becomes depressed and, therefore, curses the rain and the forest. Silko suggests this might be the reason for the drought in Tayo’s reservation thousands of miles away from him. Later, Tayo feels miserable and holds himself responsible for the lack of rain and the curse that strikes his clan.

Recovering the relation with the landscape makes Tayo appreciate all creatures, even the insects:
He [Tayo] looked down at the weeds and grass. He stepped carefully, pushing the toe of his boot into the weeds first to make sure the grasshoppers were gone before he set his foot down into the crackling leathery stalks of dead sunflowers” (Silko, 2006, 140).

This relationship of Tayo to animals is elevated after Betonie helps him discover the spiritual connection between all animate and inanimate creatures: “Tayo's respect for animals is his increasing awareness of them in the world around him... He begins to observe the world about him in terms of animal images” (Beidler, 2002, p.20). Tayo’s awareness of the world includes using his senses to observe, hear, touch and see all the colors and movements of the surrounding insects and animals like the yellow snake, the shining beetles, the green frog, the sound of bees, the buzzing of grasshopper, the gentle dead deer, the beautiful horses, and the cattle of his uncle. In fact, Tayo connects this awareness of the surrounding souls and spirits to the memory of his grandmother’s stories about the importance of animals, insects, and plants which, in previous lives, saved the world. Therefore, resisting the world of the white people and integrating with nature and the natural initiates the shift into salvation. Tayo remembers his feelings when his grandmother used to describe the old days:

[She says] “Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened.” He [Tayo] never lost the feeling he had in his chest when she spoke those words, as she did each time she told them stories; and he still felt it was true, despite all they had taught him in school—that long, long ago things had been different, and human beings could understand what the animals said. (Silko, 2006, p.93)

To be conscious of the landscape and nature in the same way as his grandmother implies his acceptance to make the journey to bring back the Mexican Cattle which belonged to his deceased uncle, Josiah. The journey itself is a physical as well as a psychological journey to retrieve Tayo’s inner peace.

Tayo has negotiated his identity since childhood. He has lost what Assmann (2013) calls “connective structure both to persons and societies” (p. 36). This means that alluding to his past has always been painful to him. One day, a fight broke out where he and his mother lived, and the police came and dragged everyone to the police station, even the children. Tayo managed to hide in a tree and observed unpleasant interactions between the cops and drunken men and women:

He hid in the tamarics, breathing hard, his heart pounding, smelling the shit on his bare feet. The summer heat descended as the sun went higher in the sky, and he watched them, lying flat on his belly in the dry leaves of tamaric that began to make him itch. (p.107).

The recurrence of such violent images resides in the memory of Tayo, who carries such intolerable memories even when he becomes a grownup. He does not know his father, and his mother abandoned him as a child with her brother and therefore, Tayo has been raised up by his uncle, Josiah, who passed away while Tayo was at war. Afterward, Tayo stayed with his uncles’ wife, Auntie, and his same-age cousin, Rocky.
Tayo never appreciated the land and the clan before because he never wholly belonged to the tribe. When Laguna people discuss the clan's matters, he is never considered an insider because of his hybrid identity. Emo tells Tayo, "you drink like an Indian, and you're crazy like one too—but you aren't shit, white trash. You love Jap the way your mother loved to screw white men" (p. 67). He holds a grudge against Tayo because, he assumes, the light color of Tayo's skin allows him to mingle perfectly with the white people. Emo misses the point that as they—the Laguna veterans—treat Tayo as an outsider, the white people discriminate against him in the same way because he is not entirely white blood. Moreover, Tayo is blamed for his mother's behaviors and is consequently reminded of her multiple affairs:

Since he could remember, he had known Auntie's shame for what his mother had done, and Auntie's shame for him. He remembered how the white men … pointed at him. They had elbowed each other and winked. He never forgot that, and finally, years later, he understood what it was about white men and Indian women: the disgrace of Indian women who went with them. (p. 57)

Tayo has always been disgraced for his mother’s actions and, accordingly, no one wants to befriend him. Nonetheless, when he grows up, Rocky becomes the only person who loves and defends him because Rocky is the only person who understands Tayo’s inner conflict. Consequently, Tayo finds his sense of stability around Rocky, especially when Rocky claims him as a brother and asks the recruiter to let them stay together in the army. To prove his strength and ability to take responsibility, Tayo makes himself and Auntie promise to bring back Rocky safely. Rocky then acts like a land, to which Tayo clings because he belongs to his brotherhood.

As a child, Tayo felt he was rejected by everyone, even his aunt: "she could maintain a distance between Rocky, who was her pride, and this other, unwanted child. If nobody else ever knew about this distance, she and Tayo did" (p. 69). When Tayo and Rocky grow up, Rocky disobey's his mother’s orders to neglect Tayo. Instead, he maintains a strong relationship with Tayo. Therefore, once Rocky decides to go to war, Tayo simply follows because Rocky acts as a cornerstone which helps Tayo overcome his estrangement and detachment from a place or a group. Rocky embraces Tayo as a brother. and thus, Tayo identifies himself with Rocky until the death of Rocky. The moment of death reminds Tayo of his mixed-race and inability to mingle or belong. He starts mistrusting his feelings and abilities to do things correctly. In addition, Tayo's failure to keep his promise, to his aunt, of bringing Rocky home safely destabilizes Tayo’s personality even more. The moment of Rocky's death crushes Tayo physically and emotionally because he realizes he has lost his only hope to overcome his sufferings from a painful past. He suffers severe depression, and his memories wander confusedly around the battles he had:

Tayo had to sweat through those nights when thoughts became entangled; he had to sweat to think of something that wasn’t unraveled or tied in knots to the past—something that existed by itself, standing alone like a deer. And if he could hold that image of the deer in his mind long enough. (2006, p. 25)
This image goes side by side with the idea of war inside his head “That memory would unwind into the last day when they had sat together, oiling their rifles in the jungle of some nameless Pacific island (p. 25). These contrasting images explain the conflict between his mind and mental suffering “as sedimentation of relics” that stymies his mental and physical health.

It is time to find a cure to help him get through his crisis. The rituals seem the best alternatives for the medicine of the white people. The rituals of the ceremony play an essential role in his life and the clan’s prosperity. He needs them to re-identify himself through reconciling the past with the present and the future. Though people suppose, as his Auntie tells him, that the rituals will not be effective for him because "he is not full blood" (p. 33), the rituals prove to be valuable after all because Betonie succeeds in helping him recover from the painful past and recognize his mission as an achiever of the ceremony. The first thing Tayo does is to reunite with the land. Silko (1996) assumes, "The ancient Pueblos believed the Earth and the Sky were sisters…as long as food-family relations are maintained, then the Sky will continue to bless her sister, the Earth, with rain, and the Earth's children will continue to survive"(p.29). She also says, "Human identity is linked with all the elements of creation through the clan"(p.28). Being aware of this connection because of the rituals, Tayo maintains good relations with the family and the clan and consequently with the land. He reserves the memories, identity, and tradition of the Pueblo people, the memories that resonate and connect souls to the landscape. Thus, rituals become the remedy for Tayo as an individual and the Pueblo clan as a group.

The ceremony implies a way to escape the witches who are manipulating the basic structures of life, such as, controlling white culture, destroying Tayo’s reservation, and making him struggle spiritually. Betonie and Tayo head for the mountain to start the performances of the ceremony and destroy the spell of witches. During the journey, Tayo feels the unity between all the nature surrounding the hills, green trees, and all the creatures. The ceremony takes the shape of a couple of steps and procedures that need to be done. Still even after the first one, Tayo experiences a purified feeling away from the materiality of the world:

He was thinking about the ceremony the medicine man had performed over him, testing it against the old feeling, the sick hollow in his belly formed by the memories of Rocky and Josiah, and all the years of Auntie’s eyes and her teeth set hard on edge. He could feel the ceremony like the rawhide thongs of the medicine pouch, straining to hold back the voices, the dreams, faces in the jungle (Silko, 2006, p. 137)

Upon their return from the mountain, Tayo feels he is pure from the sickness of the witchery and understands the need to complete the ceremony and be fully saved. In the second step and during the ceremony, Tayo remembers the promise he has made to Josiah to bring back the Mexican strayed cattle. He keeps thinking of this promise even when he is performing his ceremony. The cattle become a point of resistance against colonization and Americanization because these animals: "are adaptable, resourceful, and survivors, much like the Native people in the area" (Rice, 2005, p. 131). Tayo integrates his drive to survivor to that of the cattle and thus, he starts tracing them without really understanding the reason. He just wants to save them:
They trust their own instinct, drift to the south, and survive by their own native an natural abilities. By the end of the novel Tayo has learned his lesson from them...Tayo survives by maintaining closer to the natural world of the Pueblo and others around him are destroyed because they are separated from that world...the cattle provides him with a symbolic model for his survival. (p. 131)

The lesson Tayo learns when bringing the cattle home is related to the performance of his ceremony. To find the cattle means Tayo has succeeded in finding his own inner peace and, for the first time, keeping his promise:

He had been so intent on finding the cattle that he had forgotten all the events of the past days and past years. Hunting the cattle was good for that. Old Betonie was right. It was cure for that, and maybe for other things too. The spotted cattle wouldn’t be lost any more, scattered through his dreams, driven by his hesitation to admit they had been stolen, that the land—all of it—had been stolen from them (p.171).

The strength of the cattle and the urge to resist the hardships and lack of water inspires Tayo to connect with these animals and try to imitate them. Silko implies that these animals teach Tayo a lesson of survival because they symbolize the land and nature. Being connected to the landscape just as the Pueblo people, these animals’ journey to go back home is reflected spiritually on Tayo. The dilemma is that Tayo has stolen and brought back the cattle from a farm of a white person. This white person had stolen the cattle earlier and kept them in his possession. The cut he makes into the wire to release the cattle comes after a hard decision and an inner realization of ‘the lie’ that only Native American people “were thieves; white people didn’t steal” (p.170). This lie leads Tayo to realize the truth about the influence of witches. Witches inflicted prejudice and intolerance on people separating them from each other and creating supremacies. These supremacies are created between humans and animals in the same way it is created between humans. This is obvious since the old days were marked by good relations between animate and inanimate creatures, a fact that does not exist anymore. Subsequently, freeing the cattle from the imprisonment of the whites becomes another step toward salvation.

The final step to get his salvation comes when Tayo visits the mine where the nuclear bomb has been first tested. He feels weak because of the power of witches inflicted on him to prevent him from completing the ceremony. Standing in front of the mine is crossroads between celebrating the death imposed by the whites with their atomic bomb and celebrating life offered by the Laguna people by returning to the clan’s traditions. The irony lies in the choice Tayo makes. The mine splits the Landscape and Tayo’s character into two: he must either surrender to his whiteness and accept the destruction offered by the whites or get the salvation he is seeking through connecting with the land and the spirit of his ancestor. Once again, Silko confirms the importance of interconnectedness offered by the Laguna heritage, which is finally recognized by Tayo. Consequently, the moment of weakness and collapse becomes the moment of realization, an awakening, and salvation:

He recognized why the Japanese voices had merged with the Laguna voices, with Josiah's voice and Rocky's voice; the lines of cultures and worlds were drawn in flat dark lines on fine light sand, covering in the middle of witchery's final ceremonial sand painting. From
that time on, human beings were one clan again...united by the circle of death that
devoured people in cities twelve thousands miles away (p. 171).
This final recognition of the merging of spirits helps Tayo understand the connection of the Pueblo
people to the land, accordingly, to all the spirits around the world. Silko (1996) says, "We have
always been able to stay with the land. Our stories cannot be separated from their geographical
location, from the actual physical places of the land" (p. 58). Such reuniting to the Land and to
ancestor’s stories grant Tayo a spiritual wholeness and salvation. Besides this, Tayo succeeds in
saving his reservation from the drought. The narrative ends with a poem explaining how Tayo
successfully defends himself and the land, at least for a while: “It is dead for now.” (p. 226).

Conclusion
In Ceremony, Leslie Marmon Silko (2006) sends a message for the young generation to heal
from the materiality of the white-people civilization through returning to the clan, the stories of the
ancestors, and the landscape. This paper has endeavored to explain the connections governing such
relations with a particular focus on the responses of the lost generation of the young American
Native. Those young people lost their identity and memory because of colonization, assimilation,
and acculturation. Tayo’s memories are the memories of all the Native American veterans. Thus,
he represents the individual and the collective search for identity. The final outcomes indicate that
Silko displays Tayo’s journey to retrieve the memories of the clan as a rational solution to the
problems of those young men. Tayo’s journey towards salvation becomes a journey towards self-
realization and a search for identity. His ceremony saved him and his reservation because he is
placed at an intersection between his own individual need and the need to protect his land. Hereby,
the novel provides a spiritual understanding of the Indigenous people culture and highlights the
importance of the ‘cultural memory’, as defined by Jan and Aleida Assmann, to revive the traditions
and heritage of the ancestors.

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The Impact of Elizabeth Bishop's Tragic Experiences on her Poetry

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Abstract
Elizabeth Bishop is one of the most renowned modern American female poets. Her early life was characterized by some tragic events. However, she overcame all such saddening happenings and established herself as a major twentieth-century American writer. The paper investigates how some of the important topics handled in the author's poetry can be traced back to her biographical background. The significance of the study is that it brings to light the role played by the tragic incidents in the poet's life in the formation of her poetic production; which could enable her readers to understand some of her most famous poems better and enjoy them more. The method applied is the Biographical Critical Approach. By applying this approach, the researcher aims to indicate how the poet depended on her memories of actual events which took place in her life to author a number of her well-known poems. The study reaches some significant findings through the analysis of the selected literary texts. The researcher, for instance, draws attention to the way Bishop tackled the idea of death when she encountered it for the first time in her life. Moreover, the effect of the loss of the literary figure's parents, especially the mother, on the under-discussion literary works is illustrated. Further, the study demonstrates how the writer expressed a lot of wisdom and stoicism in the face of destiny after reaching maturity. The analyzed literary texts evidently immortalize certain tragic events in Bishop's life.

Keywords: Biographical Critical approach, Elizabeth Bishop, First Death in Nova Scotia, In the Waiting Room, Lota de Macedo Soares, Manners, One Art, Sestina

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Introduction
Throughout the analysis of some of Elizabeth Bishop's famous poems, the researcher attempts to illustrate the effect of a series of sorrow-laden events which took place in the poet's life on her poetic production. From the very beginning and up to almost the end of her life, the renowned writer went through several tragic happenings, which she was keen on handling in her literary production. Many of the great literary figures in the history of the world literature, in general, and English literature, in particular, showed the influence of certain events in their own lives on their literary production. The English war poet 'Wilfred Owen' (1893-1918), the modern American poet 'Robert Frost' (1874-1963) and the modern Egyptian novelist 'Taha Hussein' (1889-1973) are good examples of this fact. Like them, Bishop was profoundly affected by major incidents that befell her in her life. The traces of such an effect can be clearly found in some of her literary works. The poems that are to be analyzed in the study are "First Death in Nova Scotia," "In the Waiting Room," "Sestina," "Manners," and "One Art." All these texts deal with specific saddening happenings which took place in the author's life. The method applied in the analysis of these literary works is the Biographical Critical approach.

The present study aims to point out how certain significant sorrowful events which befell Bishop in her life were thematically reflected in her poetry. For instance, the theme of the profound grief resulting from the loss of parents actually sprang from the poet's biographical background. Besides, the idea of the anguish and sorrow caused by the writer's lover's suicide was resonated in her literature. Then, later in her life and due to maturity, she began to express her submission to fate and accept her life as it was. The paper is meant to handle a number of Bishop's poems from a biographical perspective. Like many of great literary works, the under-discussion poems were written mainly to echo the author's feelings stemming from the grief-laden happenings she faced in her life. The researcher brings to light the role played by the tragic incidents in the poet's life in the formation of her poetic production. The aim is to enable her readers to understand some of her well-known poems better and enjoy them more.

The paper is divided into a number of sections. The literature review, which follows the introduction, handles Bishop's sublime literary position and her prominent poetic production. Also, some of the terrible events which the poet witnessed in her life and that were reflected in her poetry are elucidated. Furthermore, the Biographical Critical approach applied in the study is elaborated. Then, the analysis section focuses on some of Bishop's famous poems, which sprang from specific incidents in her life. The strong connection between these happenings and the selected poems is emphasized.

Literature Review
Elizabeth Bishop could be undoubtedly regarded as one of the most remarkable twentieth-century American poets and short story writers. Despite her limited production of poetry, which included just five slender books of verse, Bishop was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1956 as well as the National Book Award in 1970. The most noticeable feature of her verse was her accuracy in depicting both the physical and emotional contexts of the events she went through in her life. Therefore, she managed to use her memories about the different stages of her life, especially that
of childhood, to illustrate her attempts to escape from the depressing feelings resulting from the tragic experiences she underwent as a child and to submit to destiny as an adult.

Bishop's life actually witnessed a lot of tragic happenings as well as ceaseless attempts to survive and rise to the heights of glory. This distinguished poet was born in the American city of Worcester, MS, in 1911. When she was just one year old, her father passed away. Left alone with an only baby, the mother was inflicted by deep grief and depression. Due to such destructive feelings, the mother began to suffer from symptoms of insanity and psychological disorder (Fountain & Brazeau, 1994). One day, Bishop herself mentioned an incident in which “her mother had once been discovered holding a knife while sleeping with her, although it was not clear to anyone that she intended her daughter any harm” (Fountain & Brazeau, 1994, p. 3). Therefore, the parent’s admission to a mental hospital was the only procedure which had to be taken for her own safety and that of her five-year-old child. The mother was kept there until her death. Many years later, specifically in 1967, the prominent writer lost her lover.

The most difficult time in Bishop's life was her childhood years. After losing her father through death and her mother through hospitalization, Bishop had to move from one house to another. Norton (2016) describes the orphaned girl’s feelings by explaining that “she …[was] left motherless, and … [was] tormented by homelessness, as well as a longing for home” (p. 10). The girl had first to live with her maternal grandparents in the region of Nova Scotia in Canada. The child enjoyed living on her grandparents' farm there. Fountain and Brazeau (1994) point out, “By all accounts, the Boomers were kind, loving grandparents” (p. 6). Tóibín (2015) emphasizes this idea by stating that “The house of Bishop’s grandparents, later an artists’ retreat, has an air of comfort and ease and warmth” (p. 15). Unfortunately, this short-term settlement did not last long for the child had to move again to live with her parental grandparents in Massachusetts, USA. Commenting on these biographical facts, Gill (2020) argues:

By way of background with regard to Bishop's childhood story, she was born in 1911 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her father died later the same year and Bishop spent her early years between Boston and Great Village, Nova Scotia (home of her mother’s family). Bishop’s mother was institutionalized in 1916 and Bishop was taken in by her paternal grandparents in Massachusetts. (p. 150)

Moving to Worcester where she was going to live with her paternal grandparents, “Elizabeth felt as if she were … kidnapped by people whom she hardly knew” (Fountain & Brezeau, 1994, p. 12). Anderson (2013) stresses this view when she argues that “Bishop underwent …[a] major trauma when she was taken away from her beloved maternal grandparents …to be brought up by her paternal grandparents” (p. 1). Yet, her new guardians were wealthy, and they cared a lot about her education. They provided the money needed for her education fees. Hence, under their care, Elizabeth joined the Vassar College. There, she got acquainted with Marianne Moore (1887-1972) who became one of her friends (Besner, 2000). Bishop used to communicate with this friend through correspondence to tell her about her feelings and what she faced in life. In a letter, the poet told Moore about the death of the psychiatrist whose name was Ruth Foster and who never stopped helping her to overcome her psychological problems, and how this loss was horrible (Bishop,
Despite all the hardships she encountered at the early stage of her life, Bishop's graduation in 1934 marked the beginning of a new stage with both new aspirations and frustrations.

A year after her graduation, Bishop became financially independent and she embarked on a period marked by traveling. She traveled to many countries such as Spain, Italy, France and Brazil. These travels widened her vision about life and provided her with various ideas to discuss in her literary works. The last of these countries represented the favorite place for Bishop where she settled "for sixteen years" (Arditi, 2002, p. 77). There she had a close relationship with Lota de Macedo Soares, who was one of the aristocrats and who became “her Brazilian lover” (Zeiger, 2019, p. 49). Adding more information about this intimate friend, Fortuny (2003) elucidates, "Bishop’s companion … [was] a landed but cash-poor Brazilian aristocrat and social activist" (p. 21). So, the writer's worldwide tours provided her with a lot of scenery which represented the raw materials for her distinctive poems in which she proved her ability in portraying the physical world. The journey of her life came to an end with her death in the American city of Boston in 1979.

In the period from 1946 to 1977, Bishop was able to raise readers' admiration for her noteworthy poetry production. She managed to publish five volumes of verse which secured her a distinctive position among preeminent modern American poets. She started her career with the publication of North and South in 1946. Then, it took her nine years to publish her second volume, Poems: North and South – A Cold Spring. Her third book of poetry, Questions of Travel, came to light in 1965. Four years later, her book of verse, The Complete Poems, was published. At last, the year 1977 witnessed the emergence of her volume of poetry Geography III. However small-sized these books were, they placed her among the noted modern poets in the English-speaking nations.

Bishop evidently tended to resort to her memories of suffering during her life and use them as a source of inspiration to display her creative power in producing remarkable literary works. This is the reason why Inhoff (2019) describes the famous American poet's verse as a "Heaped-up Autobiography" (p. 90). In brief, Bishop was able to use her personal life events, especially the tragic ones, in a constructive way by turning her memories into masterpieces. Norton (2016) supports this view:

[Bishop] writes out her pain to embrace tragic memory as muse. As a poet … [she] uses the subjective language of loss as a frame of reference. She immerses herself in the psychic forces of the underworld to gain metaphoric ascendancy from personal tragedy. …. Bishop responds to her own psychological abductions by reworking episodes of childhood neglect into poetry and prose to expose the very essence of experience. (p. 11)

Anderson (2013) adds, “Bishop returned several times to the facts of her early life” (p. 2). As illustrated above, the poet underwent several tragic experiences in her life which left their effect on her verse. Most of the time, Bishop portrayed herself specifically as a child who tended to escape one way or another from focusing on such unfortunate happenings. Nonetheless, late in her life and due to the wisdom coming with age, the writer as an adult preferred to accept tragic events as something doomed by destiny. Thus, she pointed out reconciliation with life and submission to fate.
Relying on the use of the Biographical Critical Approach, the present paper aims to demonstrate the impact of Elizabeth Bishop's harrowing experiences in life, especially those of her childhood days, on her poetry. This critical method indicates the influence of the personal experiences in a writer's life on his or her literary production and how s/he responds to them. Guerin, Labor, Morgan, Reesman, and Willingham (2005) emphasize that “this approach sees a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author's life and times” (p. 51). According to Pugh and Johnson (2014), this critical method is part of what is known as "Extrinsic criticism [which] looks outside a text to consider its relationship to its author, history, and sources" (p. 224). In this way, this approach is meant to help the reader to have an idea about the living conditions as well as the experiences that a writer went through and which triggered off his or her work of art. However, this critical method should carry out a two-sided function. First, it should relate the literary text to an event which led to the composition of this work. Second, the approach is expected to draw attention to certain linguistic or poetic aspects in the under-discussion text which support the revealed connection between the biographical events and the ideas tackled in the literary work. Tyson (2006) sums up this view:

some critics do choose to talk about the author's intention, and they shoulder the burden of providing biographical arguments to try to convince us that they are right. …. [Nonetheless] we still must provide evidence from the text to support our view. (p. 8)

Accordingly, to analyze the selected poems, the researcher is to connect the theme tackled in each of them with a sorrowful event which took place in Bishop's life, and support the discussion with textual linguistic or poetic aspects. This approach of analyzing literary texts is needed to connect the intrinsic critical elements and the extrinsic ones in a meaningful manner so as to help interpret the selected poems of Bishop in a more profound and meaningful way and enhance readers' enjoyment.

Analysis

Evidently, Bishop wrote several poems in which she recalled memories of unhappy experiences she suffered from in her childhood, especially in her maternal grandparents' house. Biele (2009) emphasizes that Bishop was keen on drawing "on childhood memories of Great Village, Nova Scotia" (p. 69). "First Death in Nova Scotia" is a good example of such poems. This literary work first appeared in the volume Questions of Travel. The poem was based on a real event which happened to Bishop when she was still a little child living with her mother. When the author was less than five years old, her mother took her to a relative's house in Nova Scotia to say goodbye to her cousin who had recently passed away.

The setting described in the poem manages to concretize the experience discussed. The place is a regular house in Nova Scotia. It is important to refer to the fact that this Canadian area's name means in the Latin language 'New Scotland' (O'Grady, 2021). This region was historically part of the British colonies. People living there have English origins, and most of them show loyalty to Britain and its royal figures (Moody, 2021). Lakes usually become frozen in winter. Also, shooting birds like loons is a famous hobby practiced by the inhabitants. All these aspects of life in that place are vividly depicted in Bishop's poem.
Thus, the speaker in the poem is Bishop herself as a child. She is narrating a painful experience in which she had to pay farewell to her deceased cousin “little Arthur (whom she was later surprised to discover had actually been named ‘Frank’)” (Millier, 1993, p. 4). She remembers how her mother lifted her up to have a final look at the face and the body of the dead child in the coffin. Biele (2009) clarifies, "Looking at the coffin, the speaker understands… that her playmate is 'shut … inside it forever'” (p. 73). This is why, as Axelrod (2001) comments, the speaker in the poem "is a suffering witness” (p. 294). It is evident that this was the first time for Bishop to go through such an experience connected with death. The mother was keen on making her daughter face this situation as a social custom she had to be familiar with:

"Come," said my mother,  
"come and say good-bye  
to your little cousin Arthur."  
I was lifted up and given  
one lily of the valley  
to put in Arthur's hand. (Bishop, 2011, lines 21-26)

The experience of confronting death for the first time was very harrowing for the little child. Consequently, the unfortunate event was engraved in the writer's mind. She found herself suddenly face to face with death. This early terrible confrontation made her very confused. Therefore, she, out of curiosity, sometimes attempted to think about the nature of humans' invincible enemy represented in death. Yet, other times the child sought to divert her attention to the surrounding physical aspects of the mourning house to escape from the catastrophic event. In the above extract, the repetition of the word 'come' hints at the little Bishop's fear of looking at the dead child. Also, the lexical items 'was lifted up' allude to the idea that the speaker was still so little that she had to be lifted up to reach the upper surface of the coffin. The verse lines crystalize the critical moment at which the speaker had to face death for the first time.

Bishop's first encounter with death in her early years of childhood caused her a lot of fear and aimlessness. Through the above-mentioned poem, she emphasizes that everything around her felt cold. When she came into the house of the deceased cousin, Bishop, as a little child, felt that the parlor where the body of the dead boy was kept in a coffin was cold. There was a preserved body of a dead bird. This bird was placed on a table whose upper surface was made of marble. This piece of marble was likened to a frozen lake. Consequently, the bird seemed to be floating on the surface of a frozen pool. Additionally, the coffin looked like a frozen cake. Also, the dead child himself was compared to a white doll. It is noteworthy that the feeling of cold and the white color dominate the scene. Whereas the feeling of cold suggests the speaker's fear, the white color hints at her aimlessness and disorientation in a boundless white world:

Arthur was very small.  
He was all white  
that hadn't been painted yet.  
Jack Frost had started to paint him  
the way he always painted
the Maple Leaf (forever),
He had just begun on his hair,
a few red strokes, and then
Jack Frost had dropped the brush
and left him white, forever. (Bishop, 2011, lines 31-40)

Like many of her other remarkable verse lines, those above reflect “Bishop's very method - that of careful description” (Epstein, 1995, p. 51). The extract is also imbued with a number of significant figures of speech.

The rhetorical aspects used in the above verse lines contribute a lot to the explanation of the ideas handled. For instance, there is a simile in which Arthur is compared to a little doll. This image indicates how death changed the lively body of the boy into a lifeless white doll. Due to death, the body of the dead boy became a helpless object. Emphasizing the small size of the deceased child could refer to his premature death. The white color of the body may suggest the child's innocence. Moreover, the cold weather is compared to an artist called Jack Frost. This artist started to draw the boy but never completed the picture. This man colored the child's hair but did not do the same with the rest of the body. Hence, it was left in the white color. This personification suggests the lifelessness of the dead body of Arthur. Besides, the use of an epistrophe represented in the repetition of the word 'forever' at the end of the sixth and seventh lines is meaningful. This technical device draws attention to the similarity between the dead yellow Maple leaf covered partially with snow and the cold corpse of the child. To escape from these horrifying and depressing ideas, Bishop turns away from these scary memories to other acceptable ones.

Throughout the same poem, Bishop expresses her earnest attempts to escape from the fearful and bewildering confrontation with death. Accordingly, she states how her eyes tried to avoid looking at the scary cold body of her dead cousin and were directed to concentrate on the portraits of the English royal figures fixed on the walls of the parlor. She begins to describe them. Another attempt to run away from facing death was represented in the description of the red and shining eyes of the preserved loon. Axelrod (2001) sees that “the immobilized loon” is a symbol which enhances the gloomy effect of the child’s death (p. 290). However, unlike most of the things in the place whose color was white, the eyes of the loon were depicted as shining pieces of red glass. The speaker liked these eyes which seemed to be like valuable gems. These eyes tried to pull her from the lifeless world dominated by the white color. A third attempt was clarified when Bishop, as a child, tried to go back to the description of the portraits of the English royalties. They seemed to be warm in their red and white clothes. The pictures were very lively. Then, the speaker tried to reassure herself by imagining that her cousin would join these figures in the world after death:

The gracious royal couples
Were warm in red and ermine;
their feet were well wrapped up
in the ladies' ermine trains.
They invited Arthur to be
the smallest page at court.
But how could Arthur go,  
clutching his tiny lily,  
with his eyes shut up so tight  
and the roads deep in snow? (Bishop, 2011, lines 41-46)

However, the speaker's feeling of reassurance did not last long because she quickly began to express her skepticism. She skeptically wonders how the dead boy could reach the apparently attractive kingdom of the world after death where the royal figures exist whereas the child's eyes are firmly closed and his body seems to be buried in deep snow. Such a question suggests the speaker's bewilderment and her inability to have clear beliefs about the nature of death. Further, it is noticeable that two royal couples are mentioned. These were Prince Edward and Princess Alexandra together with King George and Queen Mary. This point could hint at two valuable ideas. First, the author may allude to the fact that death reaps the souls of both males and females. Second, the writer may allude to the idea that, due to his premature death, Bishop's cousin would never have the chance to grow up and enjoy life as a young man with a wife. In this manner, the poem ends with a note of hopelessness and frustration.

Similarly, another poem authored by Elizabeth Bishop and titled "In the Waiting Room" has a clear autobiographical element. It discusses a memory based on an event which happened in the poet's childhood days when “one February afternoon she …[had to sit] in the waiting room of the dentist's office while her Aunt Florence was inside for her appointment” (Fountain & Brezeau, 1994, p. 15). Through the poem, the writer tackles a personal experience meditatively. Accordingly, Wilson (2017) describes this narrative text as a “meditative lyric” (p. 17). The literary work was published in 1969. It was set during the First World War, specifically in 1918. One winter afternoon, Bishop's aunt Florence took her when she was about to be seven years old to a dentist's clinic in Worcester, MS. Bishop, who used to avoid “direct personal references in most of her poetry,” calls her aunt ‘Consuelo’ in the poem (Fast, 1988, p. 16). The aunt had an appointment in the clinic. So, the child had to stay in the waiting room until her aunt was done with her visit to the dentist. While waiting for the aunt, the little girl went through a group of negative feelings including fear and anxiety. Through the poem, the speaker tries to escape from these bad feelings.

As elucidated in the poem, the little girl's feeling of restlessness was triggered off by her fear of the immediate future stage in her life. This is the reason why Pickard (2004) thinks that this literary work is an 'epiphany' for it represents a moment of perceiving a real situation in life. Hence, she got aware that she was growing up, and that she was gradually leaving the world of childhood. She felt that she was rolling fast towards the stage of adulthood. She would become an adult person similar to those around her in the clinic. Millier (1998) explains that the poem shows the terrible anxiety that six-year-old Elizabeth … [felt] at the dentist's with her aunt [and how it was] … explicitly associated with a rush to maturity, represented … by her aunt and by the 'awful hanging breasts' she sees in National Geographic. (p. 56)
Unlike most children, the girl was not eager to grow up and become an adult. This idea seemed to her like falling off the earth and plunging into a scary cold and dark blue space. She could not imagine herself becoming like the other women who were in the waiting room. She even abhorred the idea that one day she would become just like her aunt:

I said to myself: three days
and you'll be seven years old.
I was saying it to stop
the sensation of falling off
the round, turning world
into cold, blue-black space.
But I felt you are an I,
you are an Elizabeth,
you are one of them. (Bishop, 2011, lines 54-62)

These verse lines demonstrate how "the conversational tone" strengthens the narrative technique used in the poem (Biele, 2009, p. 84). The speaker obviously likens her feeling of apprehension resulting from her fear of growing up to falling off the planet earth and drowning in an endless dark space. The image suggests how the child felt insecure and lacked stability in her life especially when moving from one stage to another. The speaker’s dilemma started with the loss of her father and then her mother. Girls at such a stage of life like that of Elizabeth Bishop are usually in bad need of their mothers; they usually guide them to grow up safely and to understand the nature of every stage in their lives. Unfortunately, Bishop was deprived of the great privilege of having a mother near her at this critical transitional stage in her life. The little girl had to move from one house to another until she lost the real meaning of having a home. She became unable to understand the nature of biological change in her life and consequently became afraid of the vague future.

To pass the time of waiting for Ms. Florence and to flee from her apprehension and anxiety, the little niece took a copy of the National Geographic Magazine and began to go through it. Unluckily, reading the magazine and seeing the pictures in it enhanced the child's negative feelings (Tóibín, 2015). The child saw a horrible photo of a volcano eruption. The crater of the volcano was full of fire and lava. She also looked at a picture of a dead man hanging on a pole. This man was likely a meal for some cannibals. The photo displayed how some human beings changed into ferocious animals eating one another:

…while I waited I read
the National Geographic
(I could read) and carefully
studied the photographs:
the inside of a volcano,
black, and full of ashes;
then it was spilling over
in rivulets of fire
A dead man slung on a pole
- "Long Pig," the caption said. (Bishop, 2011, lines 13-25)

The poet creates a very significant metaphor when she compares the volcano to a legendary monster or a dragon-like creature producing horrific fire through its mouth. Volcanoes are one of the dangers threatening human life. Roman (2001) elucidates that the above-mentioned image “seems closely connected to” the First World War with all its catastrophic outcomes (p. 43). In addition, the term 'long pig' is used to refer to the human flesh eaten by cannibals. Hence, the little girl did not want to be part of the human race.

In the fourth stanza in "In the Waiting Room,' Bishop reaches the climax of her feeling of fear and anxiety. Due to the horrible ideas that dawned upon the child's mind, she began to fall into the abyss of panic and apprehension. Accordingly, she started to feel that the whole waiting room became excessively hot. It plunged into a bottomless dark hole:

The waiting room was bright and hot. It was sliding beneath a big black wave, another, and another. (Bishop, 2011, lines 90-93)

The speaker's feelings of fear and restlessness are compared to a terribly deep and dark ocean full of mighty and ruinous waves which keep striking the waiting room and pushing it towards a dreadful depth. The last line suggests how the waves of apprehension are endless. This description paves the way to the depressing end of the literary work.

The poem ends in a very frustrating and gloomy manner. Bishop, as a child, remembered that the First World War was still going on. Adult people were killing one another. Thus, she could not imagine growing up and becoming one of such adults who were similar to man-eaters and that never ceased destroying human life mercilessly:

Then I was back in it.
The War was on. Outside in Worcester, Massachusetts, were night and slush and cold. (Bishop, 2011, lines 94-97)

The last two lines above shed light on the depressing and cold atmosphere which wraps the last part of the poem. The reader is left with a note of pessimism. The little girl emphasizes her feeling of hopelessness. The cyclic structure of the text is overt for it ends where it started (Spivack, 2005). The repetition of the name of the place where the event narrated took place, and which was the city of Worcester, MS, proves to be meaningful. This reiteration alludes to the cyclic structure of life. In the case of the speaker, passive feelings such as fear and frustration have no end.

In addition, Bishop's famous poem "Sestina" introduces another example of the agonizing experiences she suffered from in her childhood. The poem was published in 1965. The word
'sestina' is a poetic term which refers to a certain type of highly repetitive poems which appeared in the 12th century. Milne (2018) points out, “Sestinas are tightly structured poems with intricate patterns of repetition. The sestina dates back to the twelfth century, was widely used by the troubadours, and is rooted in the tradition of courtly love” (p. 91). This poetic mold is highly musical depending on the excessive use of repetition. A sestina has seven stanzas: six sestets and a final triplet. The lexical items used at the end of lines are repeated according to a certain order in the first six stanzas. Then the same words are repeated freely in the triplet. Milne (2018) adds, “Traditionally, the sestina has often taken the form of a complaint against unrequited love, injustice, immorality, or other matters” (p. 92). Consequently, despite the noticeable musical quality of Bishop's "Sestina," the tone is depressing and gloomy. The work displays a child’s complaint against the loss of parents and the inability to express the triggered feeling of sadness. The discrepancy between the musicality of the form and the depressing content is apparently intended by the author to attract attention to a significant idea. Though there are various features which may imply that the event discussed is about a normal attempt to catch up with life and to feel happy, there is something saddening and somber hidden under the surface of the daily routine affairs described.

"Sestina" obviously narrates a pessimistic event which befell Bishop when she was still a child. Logan (2006) points out that this literary work, “with its mournful old woman and trusting granddaughter, … appears painfully autobiographical” (p. 5). The setting is one rainy afternoon in autumn inside the author’s maternal grandmother's house. The speaker is the poet herself telling about this harrowing experience she went through in that place. Due to the loss of both her parents, as stated above, Bishop, as a child, had to live with her maternal grandparents in Nova Scotia. In spite of their kindness and tenderness, they could not compensate the child for the loss of her parents. At that time, the child failed “to properly grieve the loss of her parents, and …[needed] encouragement to talk about loss, to accept and acknowledge its reality” (Norton, 2016, p. 16). So, the poem describes how the grandmother failed to communicate with her granddaughter appropriately. As shown through the poem, the old woman could not conceal her profound grief ensuing from the devastation of her daughter's family. Fast (1988) sees that this poem is meant to indicate the writer’s “reaction, and her maternal grand-mother's, to the mother's absence” (p. 17). The literary work also elucidates how the child had to adapt herself to the gloomy atmosphere in the house.

The failure of the grandmother and the child to communicate in a way which could help in dispersing the depression-laden atmosphere is the pivotal idea in "Sestina." Consequently, one dark rainy afternoon, the old lady and her grandchild were busy working inside the kitchen in their house. They were preparing tea. While they were waiting for the tea to get ready, they entertained themselves by reading the almanac. This book is a calendar presenting information about the weather together with significant dates. The grandmother was crying silently. She was doing her best to hide her tears. She felt deep sadness as a result of an agonizing event which she could never forget. The old woman was attempting to hide her feeling of grief from her granddaughter. Gradually, the two characters got emotionally separated from each other although they were physically in the same place. Each of them began to delve deep into her own imaginative world.
The major idea permeating the poem "Sestina" is mainly connected with the word 'tears' reiterated in all the stanzas. Accordingly, the first stanza ends with the grandmother's attempt to hide her tears from the child by pretending to be cheerful. She is depicted as a happy person "reading the jokes from the almanac, laughing and talking to hide her tears" (Bishop, 2011, lines 5-6). Even the sky itself, out of sympathy for the old woman, seems to be shedding tears in the form of rains. The integration of both the human and natural aspects helps to consolidate the idea discussed. Huang (2010) writes, “She [Bishop] often casually juxtaposes or incorporates human and non-human objects into her poems” (p. 4). Besides, light, which is a source of joy and merriment, starts to fade away paving the way for the descent of darkness. Thus, the elements of nature help in building the bleak atmosphere in the poem.

Furthermore, the idea of the overwhelming existence of the tears caused by sadness is concretely present in the second stanza in "Sestina." When the child notices the tears in her grandmother's eyes, she wonders why the old woman has them. The old lady lies to her and says that the tears have been caused by the effect of the weather. Just like the rains falling on the roof of the house, the woman's tears are the result of the effect of the weather. The grandmother could even read them in the almanac:

She thinks that her equinoctial tears and the rain that beats on the roof of the house were both foretold by the almanac but only known to a grandmother. (Bishop, 2011, lines 7-10)

The old woman extends her attempt to conceal her sadness by making the child indulge in the routine daily work in the kitchen. The grandparent asks the little girl to get ready for the afternoon tea. The personification used by the author in 'the iron kettle sings' is significant. The kettle is likened to a kind-hearted person who is singing so as to help the old lady hide her profound feeling of melancholy. The same cause lurks behind the second personification in which the almanac is compared to a human being who agrees with the old woman and foretells that the rains and the tears will happen as a result of the weather. Norton (2016) argues, “The image of shedding tears provides an emotive release… where the residue of pain, as a bitter enemy, leaves a salty trace on the skin” (p. 13). In this way, both the kettle and the almanac seem to empathize with the grandmother and help her cover the real reason why she is crying.

The next four stanzas in "Sestina" draw attention to the most painful aspect in the experience to which Bishop had to adapt herself throughout all her childhood. She had to make herself believe that sadness, gloominess and pessimism were natural parts of her life as a child. All these negative feelings are symbolized in the poem with the lexical item 'tears.' In this manner, the drops of water condensed on the kettle are 'small hard tears.' So, while shedding tears, the kettle can dance just like the rains dancing on the roof:

... but the child is watching the teakettle's small hard tears dance like mad on the hot black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the house. (Bishop, 2011, lines 13-16)

In her isolation, the little girl begins to plunge into a fantasy world. The personification in which the condensed drops of water on the kettle and the rains falling on the roof are depicted as dancing human beings suggests how the child was trying to escape to an imaginative and happy realm created by herself.

Creating a realm of imagination continues when the grandchild begins fantasizing about the almanac hanging with a string fixed to a wall in the kitchen. Accordingly, she imagines the book as a bird flying over the child, the woman and even her cup of tea. Yet, once again, the lexical item 'tears' appears when the girl compares tea in the cup to dark brown tears. This depiction emphasizes how the features of grief and depression became an integral part of the child's normal life:

. . . Birdlike, the almanac
    hovers half open above the child,
    hovers above the old grandmother
    and her teacup full of dark brown tears. (Bishop, 2011, lines 19-22)

The use of an anaphora in the above extract through repeating the word 'hovers' at the beginning of the second and third lines is meaningful. It alludes to the idea that, although the characters mentioned share the same place which is the kitchen, they are isolated from each other. Their unity is superficial. Despite the fact that the anaphora unites the two lines formally, the persons talked about in both lines have two different attitudes. The old woman is hiding her sadness from the child, and the latter has to live in her own unreal world.

Consequently, whereas the old lady and her grandchild share the same house, each lives in isolation. This was part of the tragedy of Elizabeth Bishop who, as a child, had to live almost as a stranger in some of her relatives' houses. As illustrated in the poem "Sestina," the two characters introduced could not communicate successfully. The narrator states that the grandmother, who is under the effect of melancholy and dejection, feels that it is getting cold. So, she inserts more wood in the stove. Simultaneously, the girl delves deeper and deeper into her imaginative world:

She [the grandmother] shivers and says she thinks the house
    Feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.
    *It was to be*, says the Marvel Stove.
    *I know what I know*, says the almanac.
    with crayons the child draws a rigid house
    and a winding pathway. (Bishop, 2011, lines 23-28)

Both the stove and the almanac are once more personified in the above verse lines. They turn into human beings communicating in the fantasy world of the child. They seem to be talking about the weather which has grown very cold. What is strange is that while such inanimate objects could speak to each other, the human beings living in the house lack this privilege. As a result, the girl has to personify objects in her isolated world because she lacks successful communication with
the real people around her. She even describes her grandparents' house as a 'rigid' place simply because of the harshness of life in it.

The end of the poem "Sestina" proves to be very pessimistic. The granddaughter now apparently believes that grief and hopelessness are going to be the dominant elements in her whole life. To explain this viewpoint, the word 'tears' is used again in this section of the literary work. The poet writes, "Time to plant tears, says the almanac,/ The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove/ and the child draws another inscrutable house" (Bishop, 2011, lines 37-39). Through the act of drawing, the girl tries to escape from her gloomy world. Logan (2006) thinks that the child's “despair is half-suppressed beneath her playful manner” (p. 7). In a compound metaphor, the grandchild's life is compared to a field where tears, which are likened to plants, can grow. This image gives the impression that melancholy will be part and parcel of the child's future life. The lack of communication between the old lady and the child continues. While the former is singing to her stove, the latter begins to draw another mysterious house. This place could refer to the new house she may be obliged to move to in the future. This prophecy is simply uttered by the oracle-like almanac.

Likewise, Bishop's poem "Manners," published in 1965, was most likely based on a personal experience taken from the author's life. She wrote this work as a "tribute to her grandfather"(Carson, 2004, p. 181). Fountain and Brezeau (1994) comment:

According to her poem "Manners,” when Elizabeth and her maternal grandfather rode in his wagon, he instructed her to greet everyone they passed on the road, to offer anybody a ride, and to walk up hills to give the horse a rest. (p. 6)

The time of the story told was the era of the First World War. The writer narrates what happened between herself as a child and her grandfather during one of their journeys on an old-fashioned wagon drawn by a horse. On their way, the old man begins teaching his granddaughter a lesson about good manners in dealing with people. "Manners" implicitly alludes to one of the problems which faced Bishop while she was still a little girl living with her maternal grandparents. There was a wide gap between the old generation of the grandparents and the new one to which Bishop belonged. During the time of the first global struggle, tremendous change was taking place in the whole world. This change in politics, industry and social affairs required the emergence of new views about life. However, the old man insisted on teaching his grandchild outdated manners which were becoming improper for the new age. Looking back at the time she spent with her old folks in Nova Scotia, the poet evaluates the experience mentioned above and deals with it sarcastically in "Manners."

In a narrative way, "Manners" reflects the author's satirical viewpoint about the grandfather's keenness on teaching his granddaughter an outworn code of etiquette. Spaide (2019) emphasizes the point that “The speaker of “Manners,” subtitled “for a Child of 1918,” carries her grandfather’s etiquette lessons to absurd, ebullient lengths” (p. 59). The poem starts with the scene in which the two characters are seated on a wagon during a journey. The old man decides to take
advantage of the trip in order to teach the child a lesson about his concepts about good social manners:

My grandfather said to me
as we sat on the wagon seat,
"Be sure to remember to always
speak to everyone you meet". (Bishop, 1965, lines 1-4)

Thus, the poem begins in a dramatic way. The writer presents two characters belonging to two different generations. While the old man represented the past, the child belonged to the future. The present represented the time of transition from the outdated manners to the new code of etiquette which was to dominate the post-war era in the western world. Furthermore, the direct speech mode used to convey the grandfather's advice to the girl clearly enhances the dramatic effect of the poem. The choice of the words uttered by the old man is significant. The lexical items 'Be sure' and 'always' emphasize the speaker's keenness on making the listener follow his advice strictly.

The wagon is symbolically used. This old means of transportation refers to the past time. It belonged to the pre-war era which was fading away with its old values and views. Besides, the advice given above is displayed ironically just like all other views expressed by the old man.

The satirical treatment of the grandfather’s advice to the girl is quite evident through the literary work. Carson (2004) points out that, despite "the speaker's deferential tone" aiming to "patronize" the old man, the poem displays "a feeling that her grandfather's manners are not worthy of the moral respect he implicitly claims for them" (p. 181). In the above verse lines, for instance, the old man emphasizes the need of his granddaughter to speak to everyone they meet. Hoff (2008) comments, “It is a hard bit of advice for the bashful young speaker” (p. 577). Therefore, this piece of advice sounds to be somewhat absurd. It would be understandable if he asked her to greet the people whom they met. What is more ironic is that when both characters greeted a stranger and spoke to him, no sign of response on the part of that person was indicated.

Another example to show the meaninglessness of the outworn code of etiquette adopted by the grandparent is clarified in the third stanza. Advising his grandchild, the old man says, "Always offer everyone a ride;/ don't forget that when you get older" (Bishop, 1965, lines 11-12). Such a piece of advice is apparently inadequate. Even during the pre-war era, it could have been reasonable if the man advised the child to allow people whom she knew or old or handicapped persons to get into her vehicle. Yet, as pointed out in his words, the old man advised the girl to allow everyone to join her in her vehicle.

A third instance of the ridiculed vision of the grandfather about the good manners is shown in the sixth stanza. Bishop's grandparent expressed his admiration when Willy, the boy whom he picked up on his wagon, called back his crew by whistling and the bird flew back to him promptly. The old man commented by saying, "A fine bird,".../ "and he's well brought up. See, he answers/nicely when he's spoken to" (Bishop, 1965, lines 20-22). This reaction explains how the grandfather admired the mechanical response of the bird. He even compared the bird to a human being. These views clarify how the old man wanted the girl to obey others automatically and
blindly without using her critical judgment. To him, blind obedience was a feature of good manners. Moreover, the personification of the bird in this situation hints at the inability of the grandfather to differentiate between the case of a bird and that of a human being as regards obeying orders. The doomed destiny of such outdated manners is clarified in the next stanza.

Because change is the ruling nature of time, the pre-war code of etiquette had to give way to the new set of manners belonging to the post-war period. Accordingly, there was no place for the grandfather's wagon which was a symbol of the old time. The period of the First World War witnessed the invention of automobiles which depended on engines. Such vehicles are symbolically used by the author to refer to the advent of the new age which had its own visions and manners:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>when automobiles went by,</th>
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<tr>
<td>the dust hid the people's faces,</td>
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<tr>
<td>but we shouted &quot;Good day! Good day! Fine day!&quot; at the top of our voices. (Bishop, 1965, lines 25-28)</td>
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This part of the poem elucidates how the changes happening as a result of the time progression represent an invincible power which often uproots the norms and customs of the past. The speaker states that automobiles surpassed the old man's wagon and threw a lot of dust on the faces of people in the street. Hence, passers-by became invisible to the girl and her grandparent. Dust separated the two characters from the world of reality just as the old man's views about manners made him unable to communicate with the real world of the post-war period. The iteration of the grandfather's words 'Good day!' in a loud voice despite his inability to see people around him ironically hints at his insistence on sticking to manners however meaningless they proved to be. To Eastman (2019), this situation displays that what is mentioned here is actually embarrassing. This point satirically refers to the futility of all the old man's views about the outdated manners of the past.

A year before her own death, specifically in 1976, Bishop published one of her most famous poems titled "One Art." This literary work represented her “well-known villanelle” (Cook, 2016, p. 27). Vendler (2010) illustrates, “The villanelle grimly describes a life punctuated by a series of losses from the trivial to the tragic, a life devoid … of any compensating gain” (pp. 107-108). Just as it is commonly said, wisdom comes with age. Consequently, this literary work sheds light on the author's wise reaction to the tragic events of her life as well as her submission to destiny. "One Art" obviously demonstrates the poet's belief in the inability of man to avoid the loss experiences in life with the ensuing feelings of melancholy and frustration. She actually reached the conclusion that human beings' losses had been predestined and unavoidable. She also saw that there was no need to feel that a loss in man's life could ruin it as a whole. Graf (2005) believes that this “elegy … does not try to subsume loss but figures it as an enabling quality of experience” (p. 88). Therefore, the poem emphasizes the view that no matter what tragic losses man may suffer from, life will go on.

Bishop herself was actually a clear example which proved her view about the inevitability of losing loved people or even valuable things in life as well as the necessity of overcoming the grief resulting from such dismal experiences. The biographic information about Bishop, indicated
above, clarifies that early in her life, she lost both her father and mother. The last loved person she lost in her mature life was her own partner who committed “suicide in 1967” (Norton, 2016, p. 16). In addition, the poet had to move from house to house most of her life. Despite all these tragic events, her life never stopped.

The idea that the poem "One Art" was written in the villanelle form was successfully used to sustain the theme discussed. This poetic mold was “inherited from the troubadours of the late Renaissance” (Benfey, 2008, p. 41). This kind of poems consists of five tercets (three-line stanzas rhyming ABA) followed by a final quatrain (a four-line stanza) rhyming ABAA. A villanelle should have two refrains but in Bishop’s poem there is only one refrain. The first line in the first stanza is used as a refrain in the next four stanzas. The same refrain is also employed in the last line but one in the final stanza. Shedding light on this point, Vendler (2010) explains, “The classic villanelle exhibits two recurrent lines, but Bishop repeats merely one line in its entirety” (p. 109). Through this traditional poetic form the poet attempts to give the impression that the tragic experiences of losing people's valuable things and loved ones are part of the nature of human life. Man should accept this fact as the act of loss has been doomed by destiny. Such saddening events will never interrupt the continuity of life. Besides, the noticeable form-related repetitions like the refrain, the regular rhyme scheme and the iterated tercets produce a lot of musical effects. This type of musicality coincides with poet's affirmation of submitting to fate and accepting contently whatever tragic events life may encounter. In this way, the harmony between the form and the content in the poem is obvious.

Therewithal, in “One Art,” Bishop attempts to prove her viewpoint about the inescapability of loss by giving examples taken from her own life. For instance, she begins by speaking about losing some of her personal belongings. She mentions the loss of her mother's watch. She also refers to the idea that she had to suffer from the lack of leading a stable life in one house after losing her parents. She even traveled from one country to another:

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
Next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster. (Bishop, 1976, lines 10-15)

Still, all these lost items could not be considered as a catastrophe.

In the above two stanzas, there are several significant artistic aspects. First, the choice of the word 'art' to allude to the ability of accepting loss and yielding to fate is meaningful. Art needs developing pertinent skills. The development of the needed skills, in its turn, requires a lot of practice. The ability to restrain the grief triggered by losing something or someone is compared to a kind of art. This metaphor encourages people to practice this sort of restraint because simply life will continue in spite of whatever saddening losses which may occur in their lives. Second, Vendler (2010) comments on the usage of the lexical item ‘disaster’ in the poem by stating that “For Bishop,
using the word “disaster” is conclusive, and she has … disdained to apply this hyperbolic noun to her life’s losses” (p. 108). Third, referring to Bishop's mother's watch is symbolical. The watch is a symbol of time. This point indicates how sad the speaker feels when she remembers the lost time she could have spent with her mother. As a child, she was deprived of the enjoyment of spending time with the mother. Fourth, the refrain used above emphasizes the message conveyed by the writer. She stresses that man needs to know how to control his or her passive feelings after losing precious objects or loved persons in life. These events will never make life stop no matter how tragic they are. Fifth, the lexical item 'realms' is metaphorically used. The poet compares what she lost in her life to realms or kingdoms. This image implies how big and tragic her losses were. Sixth, the use of the anaphora represented in repeating the words ‘I lost’ at the beginning of each of the fore-mentioned stanzas is significant. This linguistic aspect attracts attention to the idea that the speaker has started to count the items which she lost in her life in a way that seems to be similar to reading an inventory list. Seventh, there is an alternate use of the words ‘master’ and ‘disaster’ to end the above stanzas as well as all the other stanzas except the last one where the two vocabulary items are used to end the last two lines in the poem. This form-related feature is significant as it gives the impression that there is a struggle between the tragic events in the poet's life and her endeavors to fight against the destructive and depressing feelings which may be triggered inside her. Vendler (2010) argues, “the whole poem is, in fact, a duel between the verb ‘master’ and the noun ‘disaster’” (p. 109). Thus, the above-stated stanzas pave the way for the speaker to move to the next stage at which she begins to deal with the loss of much more valuable items embodied in the loved people in her life.

Accordingly, the last stanza in the poem includes the author's reference to a recent event through which she lost a cherished person, namely her partner. Bishop lived in Brazil for several years. There, she got acquainted with her lover, Lota de Macedo Soares who "was a brilliant, passionate and generous woman" (Costello, 2004, p. 603). The reason why the poet preferred to mention the loss of that person and not her father or mother in the under-discussion literary work could probably be that Lota's death was a recent case and the ensuing feeling of grief needed more effort to restrain. In this manner, Bishop points out that although her lover's suicide could appear to be a disaster, the writer was sure that she would overcome her sorrow:

-Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it,) like disaster. (Bishop, 1976, lines 16-19)

The usage of the dash to start the aforementioned extract is meaningful. Sircy (2005) argues, "This dash …[signifies] a sigh" (p. 243). This sigh serves to pave the way for discussing the writer's most depressing loss represented in her lover's death. It is noticeable that Bishop directs her speech in this stanza to her dead partner using the pronoun 'you.' This lexical choice creates what is known as an apostrophe. This figure of speech suggests that the memories about the dead person were still fresh in the author's mind. She found considerable difficulty in forgetting this kind of loss. This idea is strengthened in two ways. First, the speaker mentions one of the features of her partner which she certainly loved, namely, the joking voice of that person. Bishop (1976) places this
remark in brackets. Second, the speaker states that this loss could possibly seem to be a real disaster. Third, Fan (2005) stresses that the usage of “the exclusive unnamed ‘you’… underlines an intimate experience of pain” (p. 47). Nonetheless, the use of the noun phrase ‘the joking voice’ is significant for it hints at the speaker’s attempt to mix a happy memory with a sad one so as to have the power to overcome her grief. It seems that Bishop is trying here to attract attention to the double-sidedness of life and how sadness and happiness replace each other continuously in life. Trousdale (2019) elucidates, “The ‘joking voice’ Bishop adopts in "One Art" shows how pain and joy… are not just simultaneous but mutually constitutive” (p. 78). Sircy (2005) supports this view by illustrating that, in the poem, "Bishop appears … to have constructed an admittedly bittersweet,, philosophy of survival" (p. 242). Hence, she has the firm intention of forgetting her losses and letting life go on.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, Bishop's life witnessed several tragic events which affected the themes handled in her poetry. Although her poetic production was not noticeably abundant, the poet published many remarkable poems which drew readers' attention and made her a noted literary figure. Through her poetry, the author succeeded in making good use of her works to reflect on the saddening experiences she underwent either as a child or an adult. Using the Biographical critical approach, the researcher attempted to shed light on the connection between these events and a number of important poems written by Bishop. Actually, the poet managed to immortalize the unhappy events she went through in her poetry.

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**References**


Google Translate in Massive Open Online Courses: Evaluation of Accuracy and Comprehensibility among Female Users

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Abstract
The increasing production of audiovisual texts online has led to the growing use of Machine Translation (MT) in its raw form to facilitate multilingual access. In this study, we examine the accuracy of Google Translate’s English–Arabic subtitles and their comprehensibility among female users through a case analysis of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). We also seek to contribute to the research on MT by providing empirical evidence on the use of MT in audiovisual contexts, which is a relatively new and under-researched study area. The research questions considered in this study are: (i) What types of accuracy errors can be identified in Google Translate’s English–Arabic translation of MOOC subtitles? (ii) What effects do machine-translated MOOC subtitles have on female users’ comprehension? The study used a mixed-methods approach. First, 147 machine-translated subtitles of five MOOC videos were annotated by six evaluators based on five accuracy error types: mistranslation, terminology, omission, addition, and untranslated-segment errors. Second, the comprehensibility of the machine-translated subtitles was examined through a quasi-experiment. Sixty-two female participants were divided into two groups. Each group was presented with MOOC videos with either machine- or human-translated subtitles. Then, the participants completed a comprehension test. The qualitative analysis of the accuracy errors showed the occurrence of all five accuracy error types. The quantitative analysis of users’ comprehension revealed a lack of statistically significant differences between the examined groups. The study’s results suggested that MT can be useful in facilitating users’ access to MOOC video content.

Keywords: Accuracy, audiovisual translation, comprehensibility, content understanding, evaluation, Google Translate, machine translation, manual error annotation, massive open online courses, subtitles

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Introduction

Language barriers can present a significant challenge for internet users worldwide since more than half of the content online is in English (Baur et al., 2020). They are especially relevant to Arabic speakers since today’s internet is enormously lacking in Arabic content (Abubaker et al., 2015). These barriers can prevent users from accessing online written content and video materials. Many online platforms offer Machine Translation (MT) to eliminate these obstacles. MT in Massive Open Online Courses (henceforth MOOCs) is a prime example of how MT can enable multilingual access in written and video forms.

The use of MT to translate video subtitles is an example of multimodal MT, which involves translating sentences situated in a visual context (Elliott, 2018). It is an interesting area of study, especially in terms of accuracy and comprehensibility. One reason for this is that, unlike written MT, the quality of multimodal MT depends not only on the linguistic elements in the Source Text (ST) but also on the semiotic elements in the image or scene. The different semiotic layers in audiovisual material (e.g., images, gestures, music, and noise) can add more complexity to the translation task.

The present study seeks to contribute to the research on MT by providing empirical evidence on the use of MT in audiovisual contexts, which is a relatively new and under-researched study area. Although the quality of MT has always been a concern for researchers, many studies conducted on this subject focus on written texts (Klubička, Toral, & Sánchez-Cartagena, 2018; Stasimioti & Sosoni, 2019; Carl & Báez, 2019; Castilho et al., 2017; Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2022). Thus, we aim to fill this gap by conducting a qualitative analysis of MT when used for the translation of audiovisual texts. Additionally, we provide a better understanding of MT by examining female users’ comprehension of the produced output, as research on users’ comprehension of MT outputs is significantly limited (Koehn, 2020).

The purpose of this study is twofold: (i) to evaluate the accuracy of Google Translate when used for the translation of MOOC subtitles through error annotation and (ii) to examine the comprehensibility of the selected machine-translated MOOC subtitles among female users through a quasi-experiment. Using a mixed methods approach, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What types of accuracy errors can be identified in Google Translate’s English–Arabic translation of MOOC subtitles?
RQ2: What effects do machine-translated MOOC subtitles have on female users’ comprehension?

This paper is structured as follows: first, we review the literature on MT in MOOCs, MT evaluation, and Google Translate’s efficiency with Arabic texts. Afterward, we outline the
methodology by presenting the method, participants, research instruments, and research procedures. We then present the results, followed by a discussion of the major themes in the qualitative and quantitative analyses. Finally, we present the conclusions drawn from this paper.

Literature Review

Machine Translation in Massive Open Online Courses

E-learning platforms, including MOOCs, have gained considerable attention worldwide due to their increased availability and access. The term “Massive Open Online Course” was coined in 2008 to refer to “an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web” (Faizuddin & Azeeza, 2015, p. 1). Many elite universities and organizations offer MOOCs to anyone willing to enroll. However, several recognized MOOC platforms adopt English as their language of instruction, which could be challenging for learners who speak foreign languages.

To overcome this issue and enhance learners’ access to MOOC content, many initiatives have been introduced to provide MT services for online courses, including the European Commission-funded TraMOOC project, the European Multiple MOOC Aggregator (EMMA) project, and the Qatar Computing Research Institute Educational Domain Corpus.

The aim of the TraMOOC project was to make MOOCs more accessible by developing a high-quality translation tool (Bethge et al., 2021). The project established a neural MT (NMT) platform to translate MOOCs into 11 languages: Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian (Castilho, Gaspari, Moorkens, & Way, 2017). According to Bethge et al. (2021), the translation quality provided by this project was generally perceived well by course participants and instructors.

Another effort to broaden the accessibility of MOOC content is the EMMA project. The project provided a system for delivering free MOOCs from various European universities with integrated automatic translation systems (Miró, Baquero-Arnal, Civera, Turró, & Juan, 2018). Its website provides automatic transcription in seven languages: Dutch, English, Estonian, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. It also offers MT in three languages: English, Italian, and Spanish (Hu, 2020). Lecturers and learners review the transcriptions and translations to ensure that they are of publishable quality (Miró et al., 2018).

Similarly, the Qatar Computing Research Institute made online educational content accessible in over 20 languages, including Arabic, by introducing the Educational Domain Corpus. According to Abdelali, Guzman, Sajjad, and Vogel (2014), this corpus is an open multilingual collection of subtitles for educational videos and lectures collaboratively transcribed and translated over the AMARA web-based platform. It was built using statistical MT (SMT) and manual translations.
In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, many well-known platforms, such as Udacity and Khan Academy, adopt Google Translate to enable learners to view content in their native languages. Google Translate is a free online service and a neural-based translation tool; thus, it relies on predictive algorithms that use complex neural networks to produce the translated output (Wu et al., 2016). Although Google Translate can serve as a practical translation tool in many MOOC platforms, many questions are still raised about its quality. The issue of quality is especially pertinent to Arabic and English due to the distinct differences in their semantic and syntactic structures. Hence, evaluating Google Translate’s English–Arabic MOOC subtitles is paramount.

**Machine Translation Evaluation**

Translation quality assessment is one of the key issues in translation studies. As stated by Saldanha and O’Brien (2014), “it allows us to measure the impact and effect of different variables on the translation product and process and to subsequently change our techniques, training, or tools in order to better meet quality requirements” (p. 96). However, the concept of quality is difficult to measure or define precisely. As a result, scholars have adopted varying approaches to describe and investigate the quality of translation.

MTs are usually evaluated based on three main approaches: manual evaluation, automatic evaluation, and task-based evaluation (Koehn, 2020). Generally, MT evaluation is often performed within the borders of computer science (Hu, 2020). In other words, evaluation tests and metrics are conducted by specialists examining the performance of MT engines. However, more connections have recently been made between MT research and translation studies. These connections have been established by examining some aspects of MT related to translation research, such as the impact translation tools have on the translated product, translation process, and translators' workflow (O'Brien, 2013).

**Automatic Machine Translation Evaluation**

Automatic evaluation metrics (AEMs) use “an explicit and formalised set of linguistic criteria to evaluate the MT output, typically against a human reference translation” (Doherty, 2017, p. 4). Although there are numerous AEMs, the most notable are word error rate (WER), translation error rate (TER), and the bilingual evaluation understudy (BLEU) metrics.

The WER metric is a simple automatic metric commonly used in automatic speech recognition (Díaz-Munio, 2020). It was one of the first AEMs used in MT evaluation (Castilho et al., 2018). Despite its simplicity, the WER is fundamental to understanding several AEMs (Díaz-Munio, 2020). In simple terms, WER expresses the ratio of the required word-level editing operations for the MT output to match the human translation reference (Castilho et al., 2018). It computes the number of insertions, deletions, and substitutions divided by the length of the human
translation reference, which results in a score between zero and one, represented as a percentage (Díaz-Munío, 2020).

Another well-known metric is the TER introduced by Global Autonomous Language Exploitation (Snover, Dorr, Schwartz, Micciulla, & Makhoul, 2006). Similar to WER, TER expresses the ratio of the required word-level editing operations used for the MT output to match the human translation reference. It accounts for the same errors as the WER metric: the number of insertions, deletions, and substitutions, in addition to word order. In other words, the number of required editing operations is divided by the length of the human translation reference translation. It often results in a score between zero and one, expressed as a percentage (Díaz-Munío, 2020).

In addition to the previously mentioned metrics, the BLEU metric is also one of the most recognized AEMs (Papineni et al., 2002). As with most AEMs, this method determines translation quality by computing the MT output’s closeness to the human translation reference. It measures the degree of overlap between the machine-translated output and the human reference translation by comparing isolated words and sequences of words. In essence, BLEU computes an n-gram precision, that is, the percentage of n-grams from the MT that match the human translation reference (Al-Kabi, Hailat, Shawakfa, & Alsmadi, 2013). An n-gram is a sequence of n items; in the case of MT, it refers to word sequences. The BLEU metric provides a score from zero to one, expressed as a percentage. Scores closer to one indicate a high n-gram precision (Al-Kabi et al., 2013).

AEMs are widely utilized in research for their simplicity and practicality. However, in a critique of these metrics, Doherty (2017) observed that because they mostly focus on a narrow range of formal linguistic features, they are not sophisticated enough to address the issues of fluency and accuracy. Marín Buj (2017) also suggested that automatic metrics often require additional human contribution.

Manual Machine Translation Evaluation

In manual evaluation metrics, the quality of the output is judged by a human evaluator. Most manual metrics are based on two main categories: fluency and accuracy, with the latter also known as adequacy (Lommel, Uszkoreit, & Burchardt, 2014; Maučec & Donaj, 2019). Koehn (2020) defined fluency as the syntactic correctness of the MT output in terms of grammatical structures and idiomatic word choices. He also explained that accuracy refers to conveying the semantic meaning of the ST and deals explicitly with loss, gain, or distortion in meaning.

Many manual evaluation taxonomies have been proposed. These taxonomies aim to provide quantifiable evaluation criteria. They often involve counting, classifying, and weighing errors according to their severity (Castilho et al., 2018).
The Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)’s quality assurance (QA) model, developed in 1995, was one of the first manual error-based metrics (Martínez, 2014). It sought to optimize translation and localization methods for the software and hardware industries (Görög, 2017). The first LISA QA model was based on pre-existing quality metrics used by many companies, such as Microsoft and Oracle (Sprung & Jaroniec, 2000). Since 2011, the LISA QA has no longer been active, although the organization’s standardization methods are still widely used in translation quality evaluation (Görög, 2017).

The dynamic quality framework (DQF) is another notable error-based metric. It was developed in 2011 by the Translation Automation User Society. It was designed primarily based on pre-existing metrics, with the LISA QA playing a central role in its development (Görög, 2014). However, unlike the static checklist of the LISA QA and previous error-based metrics, the DQF is implemented in a dashboard, which serves as a translation quality and assessment knowledge base (Marín Buj, 2017).

More recently, the multidimensional quality metric (MQM) was developed in 2015 as part of the European QTLaunchPad project (Lommel et al., 2014). Like the above-mentioned error-based metrics, it is considered an extension of pre-existing evaluation frameworks. However, the MQM provides a wide range of error categories that enable flexibility and customization. As asserted by Lommel et al. (2014), researchers are not expected to utilize all the categories in the metric and should instead make relevant selections according to the text intended for evaluation.

Several studies have adopted manual evaluation metrics to evaluate the quality of MT. Castilho et al. (2017) conducted a comparative evaluation of phrase-based SMT and NMT for four language pairs. They used a corpus of machine-translated MOOC material in German, Greek, Portuguese and Russian. The evaluation included a variety of metrics: automatic evaluation, human rankings of adequacy and fluency, error-type annotation, and post-editing. Human evaluation was performed by professional translators. For the error-type annotation task, the annotators were asked to annotate the errors based on a simple error taxonomy comprising inflectional morphology, word order, omission, addition, and mistranslation errors. The results of the ranking task showed moderate inter-annotator agreement among the annotators and a preference for NMT for all language pairs. NMT was also perceived to have better fluency and fewer annotated errors across all languages. However, the results were mixed for perceived adequacy and omission, addition, and mistranslation errors. Inflectional morphology, word order, and mistranslation were the most frequent error types in both MT systems.

Klubička et al. (2018) conducted a case study to compare the output of three MT systems: pure phrase-based, factored phrase-based, and NMT systems. They examined the translation of 100 randomly selected sentences from various publicly available corpora of English–Croatian
translations. The data were presented to two annotators who were asked to annotate the errors according to a tailored MQM error taxonomy. The researchers concluded that the NMT system contained the smallest number of errors. They found that the most common error type in the NMT output was mistranslation, followed by grammar and word form errors. They also noted a striking drop in agreement scores for the NMT system. The researchers attributed the low agreement to the increased fluency of the NMT, which made error detection challenging for the annotators.

Similarly, Stasimioti and Sosoni (2019) compared the performance of different MT systems using various evaluation methods. They examined four short, semi-specialized texts about the 2019 EU elections selected from the Guardian newspaper. The articles were translated from English into Greek using three MT systems: Google Translate SMT system, Google Translate NMT system, and a tailored-NMT system. The comparison was performed following a mixed-methods approach consisting of automatic evaluation metrics, manual ranking, error classification, and post-editing effort. The error classification task was based on a combination of the subsets of the DQF and MQM error taxonomies. The findings revealed that both the generic NMT and the tailored NMT outputs scored higher on the human evaluation metrics. As for the error-type classification, grammar errors were the most prevalent in all MT systems, followed by mistranslation and style errors. The inter-annotator agreement showed fair agreement among the annotators for fluency and slight agreement for accuracy.

In addition, Carl and Báez (2019) investigated the manual error annotation and post-editing effort of English–Spanish and English–simplified Chinese MT output generated by Google Translate. The STs were collected from previous studies based on Google Translate’s output. Sixteen Chinese translation students and eight professional Spanish translators were asked to annotate the outputs of the same English STs based on an MQM-derived error taxonomy. Each annotated error was marked as either critical or minor. The findings suggested that the English–Spanish MT contained more accuracy errors and fewer fluency errors than the English–simplified Chinese MT.

Guerberof-Arenas and Toral (2022) also used manual evaluation methods to examine creativity in three modalities: MT, post-edited MT, and human translation. The collected data included the translations of a short story by Kurt Vonnegut from English to Catalan and Dutch. The analysis relied on two criteria: novelty and acceptability. To measure the translations’ acceptability, the researchers used the DQF–MQM error typology. The results revealed that human translation had the highest creativity score, followed by post-edited MT and MT. For the error analysis, the researchers concluded that MTs are often too literal and rife with mistranslations, causing them to become impractical.
Task-based Machine Translation Evaluation

Given that MT is utilized by a large audience of diverse languages, backgrounds, and age groups, it is imperative to address the receivers’ role in judging the quality of the output. Information on how users perceive the quality of the output can be obtained through various empirical task-based evaluation metrics. What distinguishes task-based metrics from automatic and manual methods is that they often go a step further from linguistic analysis to measure the extent to which the MT output fulfills its intended purpose in real-life settings (Koehn, 2020).

Free online MT engines are widely used to serve a variety of purposes. Hutchins (2007) briefly summarised the different applications of MT as assimilation (to roughly understand the text in another language), dissemination (to publish a text in several languages for a wide audience), and communication (to facilitate interactions between people who speak different languages). Overall, MT is not expected to provide a well-translated output. Instead, it is often used to produce an instant translation that conveys the message of the original text, however imperfect or linguistically awkward (Hutchins, 2007).

Koehn (2020) suggested two main task-based metrics: translator productivity and content understanding. Translator productivity is often measured by the effort required for post-editing, whereas content understanding is measured by how well the user of an MT system understands the translated text.

MT can be used to increase the productivity of professional translators by producing the first draft for post-editing and publication. Post-editing is the correction of raw machine-translated output by a human translator according to specific guidelines and quality criteria (O’Brien, 2011). To measure the success of MT in increasing translator productivity, researchers often examine how much time professional translators spend on post-editing the MT output. Generally, translator productivity metrics seek to determine whether specific MT systems can save time, effort, and cost by providing an instantaneous translation that requires few corrections.

Content understanding metrics are used to measure users’ understanding of the essential information in the MT output. If the MT output permits a complete understanding of the presented information, it is considered to be of high quality. If it only enables an understanding of the general topic, it is considered to be of poor quality. Overall, the aim of content understanding metrics is to examine whether a monolingual target language speaker can answer questions about a presented MT output (Koehn, 2020). Although task-based MT evaluation is not recent, research on content understanding is limited. These evaluation metrics are especially worthy of further exploration, considering that there have not been many large-scale studies in which they are addressed (Koehn, 2020).
Scarton and Specia (2016) explored users’ understanding of MT. The researchers’ main aim was to create a corpus that included translated German reading comprehension texts and exercises. To evaluate the corpus, they conducted a study to assess the scores of participants who were presented with German machine-translated documents. They examined the scores obtained from 19 sets of either machine-translated or human-translated documents. Each document was given to each participant. The comprehension questionnaire included both open- and closed-ended questions. The researchers concluded that the scores varied among the test-takers, and the agreement rate was low; therefore, they stated that drawing significant conclusions was difficult.

Forcada, Scarton, Specia, Haddow, and Birch (2018) used the same corpus discussed in Scarton and Specia’s (2016) study to examine users’ understanding of MT. In Forcada et al.’s (2018) work, 30 participants were given a set of six documents, either machine or human translated, and asked to answer three to five questions per document in their native language. The documents were translated using four MT systems: Google Translate, Bing, Homebrew, and Systran. The reading comprehension questions included both objective and inference questions. The results showed that the users' scores obtained with professional human- and machine-translated documents were not statistically different. Among the MT systems, Google Translate had the highest user scores. However, as the research examined MT from English to German, the results may differ for other language pairs.

Castilho and Guerberof-Arenas (2018) carried out a pilot experiment to compare users’ reading comprehension of SMT and NMT in different languages. To collect the data, they first presented three machine-translated IELTS General Training reading texts to six native speakers of English, Spanish and simplified Chinese. Afterward, they asked the users to answer the respective comprehension questions and rank their satisfaction with each text on a three-point scale. The researchers also used an eye tracker to gather quantitative data on the users’ reading habits and conducted post-task interviews. The findings suggest that the users completed more tasks in less time, with a higher level of satisfaction when using the NMT system. However, given the small number of participants, and as stated by the researchers, the study focused on verifying the used methods rather than obtaining significant results.

Hu (2020) undertook a similar experiment by examining the comprehension of machine-translated subtitles on MOOC platforms. She used a mixed-methods approach consisting of eye tracking, translation quality assessment, and questionnaires. The study included 60 participants who were native speakers of Chinese. The participants were divided into three groups. Each group was presented with either human-translated, machine-translated, or post-edited machine-translated subtitles. The researcher used a comprehension questionnaire that included multiple-choice and true/false questions. The results of the comprehension questionnaire showed that the performance...
of the participants who were given post-edited MT and human-translated subtitles was better than that of the groups that were given machine-translated subtitles.

Fantinuoli and Prandi (2021) adopted a different methodology to examine MT comprehensibility. They compared the English–Italian MT and the transcription of the translations produced by human interpreters based on two dimensions: intelligibility (i.e., target-text comprehensibility) and informativeness. Six participants with a background in interpreting and translation were asked to rate the translations according to these dimensions on a six-point Likert scale. The researchers observed that human interpreters often intervene in the translation to improve the comprehensibility of the text. In general, the study revealed better performance by human interpreters in terms of intelligibility and slightly better performance by the MT engine in terms of informativeness. However, a clear limitation of this study is its reliance on text analysis rather than on the reception of actual MT users.

**Google Translate’s Efficiency with Arabic Texts**

Google Translate was introduced in 2006 and is considered one of the most popular machine translation systems (Sabtan, Hussein, Ethelb, & Omar, 2021). It has become widely used worldwide, serving approximately 200 million users daily (Habeeb, 2020). It may be preferred in many cases where there is a need for inexpensive and fast translations. However, translations between distinct languages, such as English and Arabic, can be challenging for machines. Therefore, assessing Google Translate’s output when dealing with Arabic texts is crucial.

There have been several small-scale studies on Google Translate’s English–Arabic translation. Diab (2021) compared the quality of Google Translate's Arabic NMT and SMT using manual evaluation methods to identify and classify errors generated by each MT model. The analysis was guided by the DQF–MQM error typology, and the data used in the study comprised a corpus of six English WikiHow articles on cybersecurity, cryptocurrency, and healthcare. The results showed that the NMT engine reduced the number of errors in the Arabic output by almost 80% compared to the SMT. Thus, Google Translate's NMT can be regarded as being more efficient and reliable with Arabic texts.

In terms of NMT systems, Abu-Ayyash (2017) compared the Arabic MT outputs of three NMT systems: Systran's Pure NMT, Google Translate, and Microsoft Bing Translator. The analysis included the evaluation of errors in the translation of gender-bound constructs (i.e., subject-verb agreement, adjectival-noun agreement, and pronoun-antecedent agreement) in four selected technical texts that were machine-translated from English to Arabic. The study indicated that Systran's Pure NMT performed better than the other two MT systems. However, the researcher concluded that these results could not be generalized due to the limited sample.
Similar to Abu-Ayyash’s (2017) study, Al-Jarf (2021) examined the accuracy of Google Translate’s Arabic translation of English technical terms and discussed the semantic, contextual, syntactic, morphological, and orthographic deficiencies in the output. The study included a sample of technical terms with different Greek and Latin roots and affixes. The results suggested that Google Translate provided Arabic equivalents to some terms but is inconsistent in translating terms with varying affixes, compounds, and blends.

Furthermore, Almahasees (2017) addressed the adequacy and fluency of Google Translate's output compared to Microsoft Bing Translator using the BLEU AEM. The researcher examined the English translation of Khalil Gibran's Arabic literary work, "The Prophet," and the analysis showed that the MTs of both systems were inaccurate in translating literary texts due to the difficulty of literary language. Literary texts often include metaphors, cultural specifications, sophisticated lexical terms, and syntactic structures that can be difficult to render. The author also found that both systems provided similar translations for the same input.

Moreover, Abdelaal and Alazzawie (2020) analyzed the errors in Google Translate’s English output of Arabic informative news texts. The aim of the research was to measure the translation quality to determine the extent to which human post-editing is needed. The error analysis was based on the MQM metric, in addition to the following error categories: orthographic, morphological, lexical, semantic, and syntactic errors. The study revealed that omissions and inappropriate lexical choices were the most common. The researchers concluded that although MT could help expedite the translation process, the accuracy of the translated text could be compromised.

Jabak (2019) also examined Google Translate’s Arabic–English output by assessing a sample of translations from a book entitled "Thinking Arabic Translation" against model translations. The researcher developed a qualitative error analysis method to categorize the identified errors into different themes based on their nature and recurrence. The findings indicated that Google Translate made lexical and syntactic errors, which affected the quality of the translated text and made it incomprehensible.

**Methods**

One of the major criticisms of earlier audiovisual translation research is its limited and partial focus on linguistic and cultural matters, despite the multifaceted nature of audiovisual translation (Gambier, 2009). From this standpoint, this research integrates various theoretical perspectives, specifically manual and task-based evaluation metrics, to provide a comprehensive insight into Google Translate’s translation of subtitles through case study analysis. More specifically, this research adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative content analysis to determine accuracy errors in Google Translate's machine-translated subtitles and statistical tests.
to compare differences in female users' comprehension of machine- versus human-translated subtitles.

**Participants**

The main weakness of manual evaluation metrics is their high level of subjectivity (Koehn, 2020). Although researchers in the field of MT have attempted to define the evaluation criteria and categories of manual metrics, they are often difficult to put into practice because clear-cut boundaries may not be apparent between each category. To overcome this issue in the present study, translation experts examined the machine-translated output of each video twice. The participants consisted of Saudi female postgraduate students in translation studies (n = 6). They were chosen through convenience sampling for their expertise in and knowledge of translation, including translation quality assessment.

For the quantitative experiment on content understanding, the sample consisted of first-year Saudi female university students (n = 62). The participants' ages ranged from 19 years to 23 years, and they were all native speakers of Arabic. Initially, the participants were selected randomly through convenience sampling to reach a more diverse population. However, considering that the command of foreign languages can affect the reception of translated subtitles (Gambier, 2009), the sample was further stratified through an English proficiency test and distributed equally into an experimental and a control group according to the participants' proficiency levels.

**Research Instruments**

Many recognized MOOC platforms offer machine-translated subtitles to facilitate multilingual access. In the present work, MOOCs were chosen for the case study because of their growing popularity and increased availability. Furthermore, they are often informative in nature; thus, investigating the accuracy of the translated information, especially in relation to users' comprehension, may be of particular importance. The course selected for this study consisted of eight short videos (i.e., 1–3 min each). It focuses on a general skill-based topic. The course is available for free on Udacity and was produced by the Grow with Google initiative (Udacity, n.d.). As the participants were expected to watch the videos and complete a comprehension test in one sitting, the first three introductory videos were not included, and only five videos were used in this research. The selected videos were 12:15 min in total. The machine-translated subtitles of the videos were produced by Google Translate. The subtitles were used for both the qualitative annotation of accuracy errors and the quantitative quasi-experiment on content understanding. Additionally, the researchers provided professional human-translated subtitles for the quasi-experiment.
For manual error annotation, five evaluation forms were created as Microsoft Word documents to facilitate the evaluators’ tasks. The forms contained a description of the accuracy error types (Table one), in addition to a table showing the original English subtitles and their corresponding MTs. Each form included subtitles for one video.

Table 1. Definitions of the accuracy error types in the MQM model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy Error</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistranslation</td>
<td>The TT content does not accurately represent the ST content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>Terminology issues relate to the use of domain- or organization-specific terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>Content that is present in the ST is missing from the TT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>The TT includes text not present in the ST.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untranslated-segment</td>
<td>Inaccurate direct transference of segments from the ST into the TT without any change in their form is present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note 1.* Adapted from Hu (2020, p. 333)

The comprehension test for the quasi-experiment was designed to cover both factual and inference questions and consisted of 15 items. These items were related to the content of the presented videos and covered a range of difficulty levels. More specifically, the test included true-or-false and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire was initially developed in English by the researchers to ensure that the questions matched the presented information in its original language. Considering that most participants had low to intermediate levels of English proficiency, the test was translated by the researchers into Arabic and presented to the participants in their native language. Google Forms was used to present both the videos and the comprehension test.

**Research Procedures**

Data were collected during the spring 2021 semester. For the evaluation task, the evaluators (n = 6) were given a form detailing the evaluation criteria and the original English subtitles with their corresponding MTs. The error annotation process was explained in detail, and the participants’ questions were addressed through discussion. The videos selected for this research ranged in length from one to two minutes. Each participant was given subtitles to two short videos (i.e., 1 min each) or one longer video (i.e., 2 min), as shown in Table two. Error annotation was performed segment by segment using Microsoft Word. The evaluation forms were intentionally distributed so that each evaluator would not be with the same person twice to ensure the reliability of the evaluations (Mariana, Cox, & Melby, 2014). As the machine-translated subtitles of each video were presented to two evaluators, the interrater agreement percentage was also measured for further analysis. The agreement percentage was measured as the number of times the evaluators agreed on an error type divided by the total number of errors and then multiplied by 100.
For the comprehension test, the participants (n = 62) were randomly selected through convenience sampling. The sample was then stratified using a shorter version of the Cambridge General English Test (i.e., consisting of 25 questions) to eliminate any significant differences in English proficiency between the participants of the control and experimental groups. The participants were met online via Zoom. Those in the control group were given a form that included the selected MOOC videos with human-translated subtitles, whereas those in the experimental group were given another form that included the same videos with machine-translated subtitles. The participants in both groups completed the same comprehension test.

The data collected through the comprehension test were then analyzed statistically using SPSS version 28.0. A Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test (Table three) indicated that the scores of the experimental group were not normally distributed. Thus, an independent samples $t$-test was considered inapplicable. Alternatively, a Mann–Whitney $U$ test was implemented in this study to compare the mean ranks rather than medians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis showed 131 accuracy errors in the 147 subtitle segments analyzed. The most prevalent error type was mistranslation, which accounted for 74% of all translation errors, as depicted in Figure one. Terminology errors were the second most common, although they accounted for only 14% of the errors. Omission and addition errors were less frequent; each comprised 5% of all errors. Untranslated-segment errors occurred in only two instances, accounting for 2% of the identified errors.

Figure 1. Percentages of identified accuracy errors
An error annotation of each video subtitle was carried out by more than one evaluator to limit the subjectivity of manual evaluation by offering multiple assessments of the same texts. However, considering that manual evaluations are highly subjective (Klubička et al., 2018), an additional analysis was carried out by the researchers to measure interrater agreement among the evaluators. The data presented in Table four reveal that the two instances of untranslated-segment errors had the highest agreement percentage (100%) among the evaluators. Terminology errors had the second-highest agreement percentage (42%). Mistranslation and addition errors, however, had low agreement percentages of 26% and 14%, respectively. The evaluators did not agree on any omission errors. Overall, the agreement percentage across all error types was approximately 27%.

Table 4. Frequencies and percentages of agreement on identified accuracy errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy Error Type</th>
<th>Error Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Agreement Frequency</th>
<th>Agreement Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistranslation</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>74.04</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untranslated-segment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Analysis

To explore the differences in the scores of the control and experimental groups, we implemented a Mann–Whitney $U$ test. An alpha level of 0.05 was used. The results indicated no statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups; $U = 471.000$, $z = -0.136$, and $p > .05$ (Table five). The mean ranks of the control and experimental groups were 31.81 and 31.19, respectively. This suggests that the ranks of the scores were similar for both
groups. Thus, users’ comprehension was not negatively affected by differences in the level of accuracy of human-translated subtitles and Google Translate’s machine-translated subtitles.

Table 5. Results of the Mann–Whitney U Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.81</td>
<td>986.00</td>
<td>471.00</td>
<td>−.136</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.19</td>
<td>967.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Qualitative Analysis

The first research question of this paper is as follows:

RQ1: What types of accuracy errors can be identified in Google Translate’s English–Arabic translation of MOOC subtitles?

To answer this question, six evaluators annotated the accuracy errors in the machine-translated outputs according to the following error types in the MQM model: mistranslation, terminology, omission, addition, and untranslated-segment errors. The results of the qualitative analysis showed the occurrence of all five accuracy error types in the MQM model: mistranslation, terminology, omission, addition, and untranslated-segment errors. Mistranslation errors were the most common. This result supports Klubička et al.’s (2018) finding that mistranslation errors are the most frequent, comprising most of the identified errors in the examined outputs that are translated from English into Croatian using an NMT engine. Likewise, Castilho et al. (2017) found that mistranslation errors were more common than other types of accuracy errors in the examined corpus, which comprised NMTs in German, Greek, Portuguese and Russian. Carl and Báez (2019) also suggested that mistranslation errors are more common than other types of errors in both English–Spanish and English–simplified Chinese MT outputs generated by Google Translate.

In the current study, terminology errors were the second most common. However, similar to Hu's (2020) findings, these errors were less frequent because the analyzed material was not specialized. Most of the identified terminology errors were related to over-literal translation, which is expected in MT outputs. Omission and addition errors infrequently occurred in the examined data, which was also expected because MTs often depended solely on linguistic input. As evident in this study, Google Translate's engine rarely omitted any part of the text, compensated for any omissions in the ST, or added any new information. Untranslated-segment errors were the least frequent. They occurred in the translation of only two proper nouns. This finding was also expected and is in line with that of Klubička et al. (2018), which indicated the rare occurrence of untranslated-segment errors. In summary, the findings of the present study regarding the frequency of error types are consistent with those of the reviewed literature.
The overall agreement percentage among the evaluators was nearly 27%, which was expected to be low. Manual evaluation metrics are expected to be subjective. If given more time, the evaluators themselves may perceive errors differently than they had previously annotated (Klubička et al., 2018). Hu (2020) argued that, even in cases in which evaluators are trained professionally, intra- and inter-rater agreement can still be low. A review of studies that used manual evaluation showed that Stasimioti and Sosoni’s (2019) findings have slight agreement on accuracy errors. Similarly, Klubička et al. (2018) noted strikingly low agreement in the annotation of errors in NMT outputs.

**Quantitative Analysis**

The second research question of this paper is as follows:

RQ2: What effect do machine-translated MOOC subtitles have on female users’ comprehension?

To explore this question, we implemented a quasi-experimental comparison using a Mann-Whitney U test. The results indicated no significant differences between the two examined groups. Evidently, the machine-translated subtitles were successful in conveying some of the presented information to the participants. The findings of the quantitative analysis are consistent with those of Forcada et al. (2018), who reported a lack of any significant differences in reading comprehension between participants who were provided with different MT outputs and those who were provided with human translations. The researchers stated that this result is a clear indication of the usefulness of raw MT output in assimilating the gist of the presented information. This statement holds true in the case of this research, as the participants in the experimental group understood the MT output almost equally as well as the control group. The researchers also stated that the participants who were presented with Google Translate translations performed best among the other participants who were presented with the outputs of different MT engines, which further supported the findings of this study.

By contrast, Hu (2020) suggested that the performance of participants who were given raw MT was worse compared with that of the participants who were given post-edited MT and human-translated subtitles. Hence, we can assume that the accuracy of the machine-translated output can be lower with certain language pairs. As Callison-Burch et al. (2010) highlighted, the content understanding of MT can be affected by the output’s language. Carl and Báez (2019) also suggested that the frequency of accuracy and fluency errors in MT can vary according to the examined language pairs, which may affect users’ comprehension. As stated by Guerberoof-Arenas and Toral (2022), a high number of errors can cause the translation to be impractical.

Castilho and Guerberoof Arenas (2018) found that users who were given texts that were translated using NMT completed more reading comprehension tasks in less time and had a higher level of satisfaction compared with users who were given texts that were translated using SMT.
Interestingly, their study also indicated that users who were provided with MTs produced by an NMT system in Spanish and simplified Chinese scored slightly higher than native English speakers who were provided with the original STs. Scarton and Specia (2016) also noted that the scores of users who were given human-translated documents showed lower agreement compared with the scores of users who were presented with the outputs of different MT systems. These results suggest that NMT systems can produce outputs that have an acceptable level of accuracy compared with texts written in their original language. This can be the case, as Diab (2021) noted that NMT systems have significantly higher accuracy with Arabic texts compared to SMT systems.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the accuracy of Google Translate’s English–Arabic subtitles and the subtitles’ comprehensibility among female users through a case analysis of MOOCs. The findings indicated that Google Translate's English–Arabic translation of MOOC subtitles could be accurate and well received by users. The results of the qualitative content analysis highlighted the low number of accuracy errors in the subtitle segments examined, with a frequency of one error per subtitle segment. They also showed that most of the identified errors were related to mistranslation and stemmed from the over-literal translation of some words and phrases. In the quantitative analysis of the quasi-experimental comparison, the results indicate the lack of any significant differences in female users' comprehension of machine- and human-translated subtitles. Overall, the use of MT in audiovisual contexts is not explored in sufficient depth, especially for certain language pairs, such as English–Arabic. Thus, further investigation into the quality of machine-translated subtitles is recommended.

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The Outsider: A Feminist Study of Susan Glaspell’s *The Outside*

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**Abstract**  
The American dramatist, Susan Glaspell, in her literary work, addresses the assigned position of women in a male-dominated society to promote gender equality and woman’s empowerment. She negotiates the plight of women and gender roles by situating the female characters in confined and unlikely settings. This study is primarily concerned with the position of women in her controversial play, *The Outside* (1917). It focuses on the female characters' positions as outsiders and strangers in their society and how they have become outsiders and aliens in their community as a result of being non-conformists to the prescribed rules. It also demonstrates that women are forced to choose between conforming to the societal norm and being shunned and rejected as insane by society. Using feminist theories, the position of female characters as outsiders and detached from the social activity is analyzed. It concludes with the point that the writer defends the right of non-conformist women who want to have their own space and role that is not confined by masculine principles.

*Keywords*: feminist reading, gender roles, non-conformist women, Susan Glaspell’s *The Outside*, the Outsider

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol6no3.5
Introduction

Female characters and issues of gender are an ongoing concern in different literary works. Various writers have portrayed the life and struggle of the woman from different perspectives. The role and depiction of a female’s life within a society are shown differently in literary works by man and woman writers in different periods. Susan Glaspell, a female American writer, examines the issue of women in modern drama. She uses her plays to raise awareness of women’s rights and gender equality.

This study concentrates on the plight of revolutionary women and the challenges they face when attempting to be transgressive. It delineates the position of nonconformist women in society by focusing on the notion of the outside in the play. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the feminist message in a better and more profound way. It might lead to awareness of the dilemma of women and promote the improvement of the woman’s position in society.

The author uses a qualitative approach with feminist theories of gender roles, especially the ideas of Luce Irigaray and Virginia Woolf. It is essential to mention that the contextual evidence and critic’s insight are of great importance in approaching the notion of gender roles in this play. The data are collected through the close reading of the primary text, *The Outside*, and observing and searching for patterns within the text, then the patterns are explored in the light of feminist theories.

It seeks to identify these two female characters’ conditions, desires, and duties to provide a comprehensive understanding of the notion of the outsider in this one-act play. It tries to find out the hidden meaning behind placing the two female characters in an abandoned station after the death of their husbands.

The current paper consists of two main sections. The first section is an introductory section that introduces the reader to the author and her play, *The Outside*. The second section analyzes the women characters within the play as outsiders and strangers. It further highlights the main reasons that turn them into strangers within their society. Finally, the study ends with a conclusion that summarizes the study’s main findings. It shows how social convention and values have confined the woman. Moreover, women are torn between two options: either live according to society’s traditional rules, or there is no space for them within that society.

Literature Review

Susan Glaspell, in her play, *The Outside*, approaches the issue of gender roles in a highly symbolic language. The play was first performed in 1917, but it received little critical attention then; later, critics provided different interpretations of it. For example, Hinz-Bode (2006) has
described the play as a play showing the struggle between life and death through the symbolic description of the setting Ozieblo (2000) has acclaimed this play as seminal work that influenced Eugene O’Neil’s *The Emperor Jones*. They only differ from each other in the aspect of surrendering to destiny. “O’Neil’s protagonists submit to the destiny the sea imposes on them, but Glaspell’s women, though wounded by the sensitivity of man, are close enough to the life force to reassert their voices and claim a victory” (p. 114). Noelia Hernando-Real (2017) has compared *The Outside* with *Exorcism* by Eugene O’Neil. She clarifies the similarity between them and shows the influence of Susan Glaspell on O’Neil. Linda Ben-Zvi, Comparing this play to *Trifles*, another play by Susan Glaspell, has remarked that *The Outside* is about how women help each other in enhancing their lives because they share the same painful experience (qtd. in Makowsky, 1993). Accordingly, Darwesh (2019), has analyzed this play through the lens of feminist theory. She has recognized the play’s negative feminist message and criticizes Glaspell for portraying men as a life-saver and women as hostile. However, this research paper focuses on the description and depiction of the female characters as outsiders and non-members of the society. It clarifies how the women in the play are driven into the margin of society. They live at the edge of death because of the role society has attributed to them. Their lives are encircling into a small spot outside the mainstream of social activities because they are women.

**Analysis**

**Female Characters as Outsiders**

Susan Glaspell dedicated a significant portion of her writing to promoting gender equality at the beginning of the 20th century. She addresses the issues of gender roles and oppression of women along with the limited space allotted to them in society. She approaches woman’s social issues through a rebellious portrayal of thwarted, isolated, detached, confined, and trapped lives in a rural and specific geographical setting. In *The Outsider*, she depicts woman’s plight by portraying female characters as outsiders. By setting the female characters in an abandoned life-saving station, detached from society, she discerns how women are deprived of the ability to decide about their lives. Either woman must accept social and conventional gender roles, or there is no space for them inside the society.

The play starts with the author’s description of the setting: “a room in a house which was once a life-saving station. Since ceasing to be that it has taken on no other character, except that of a place which no one cares either to preserve or change” (Glaspell, 1987, p. 48). The description of the setting conveys the position and identity of a woman. The main female characters live in a situation that no one cares either to preserve or change. The setting hints at the position and status of women in a patriarchal society. The description of the woman’s status also highlights that no one understands and cares about what a woman wants. As the title suggests, “The Outside” can mean what a woman wants. What is their position, and what kind of position do they want? Hernando-Real sees the outside space as a symbol denoting “individuality and freedom” (p. 88).
Therefore, the word outside indicates the notion of selfhood, individual freedom, and self-determination, and the action of moving toward the outside can suggest her freedom and autonomy. Being set on the outdoor landscape alludes to the notion that a specific social milieu powerfully subjugates women. It also embodies that women need to escape those social forces that cripple them, to be their true selves.

Moreover, “the station is located on the outside shore of Cape Cod” (Glaspell 1987, p. 48). The station’s location between the sea and woods, outside the community, reflects the status of women in society. They are dehumanized, inferior, other, and not equal to men. As Irigaray (1985) argues in her book *Speculum of the Other Woman*, women are destined to be others in a male-dominant society where men are the “subject” and women are seen as the “objects of the subject’s desire” (p. 133). For instance, Mrs. Patrick and Allie Mayo are turned into strangers from the day they ceased to live with a man. They are outsiders because they no longer follow the social rules that govern women’s lives. They are doomed to the vacuum of a non-member of the society because they have ceased to be a subject of man’s desire. As Bradford, the mouthpiece of the patriarchal outlook, describes them, “This Patrick woman used to be all right. She and her husband were summer folks over in town. They used to picnic over here on the outside” (pp. 50-51). After the death of her husband, she moved here. Then she needed someone to work for her. Allie Mayo comes to live with her because she has lost her husband.

They have no active role within society except for becoming wives and household managers. They live by depending on the man and performing the role assigned to them by social norms and conventions. According to the traditional gender roles, men are “rational, strong, protective, and decisive” while women are, on the contrary, “emotional, irrational, weak, nurturing and submissive” (Tyson, 2006, p. 85). Based on these assumptions, specific roles were assigned to women. They were not allowed to run their own business like men. They were not able to work outside and take a position of leadership. They were not free and independent because they were inherently weak and inferior to men. Therefore, they cannot live without depending on a man. They did not have the same equal rights and opportunities as men to build their own lives. Whenever they deviate or stand against those roles, there is no position or room for them. They turn into crazy mindless creatures not regarded as ordinary women. Likewise, these two women are described as crazy. They are belittled and degraded into a state of insane, unfriendly, hostile creatures. As Bradford describes them, “But the sea (calling it into the CAPTAIN) is friendly as a kitten alongside the woman that lives here. Allie Mayo _they are both crazy” (Glaspell, 1987, p. 48). They are described as crazy because they differ from others in their belief and outlook. The position and role ascribed to them are internalized in the mind of people. When a woman like Mrs. Patrick and Allie Mayo ventures to leave their old self and seek renewal, this step and behavior sound strange. It denotes that women, like everything else, are defined from a male perspective. They are characterized through the lens of man. Bradford reaffirms the truthfulness of his opinion.
by repeating that they are crazy because women are not like that. They should be like what man expects them to be. He states:

In my opinion the woman’s crazy_ sittin’ over on the sand- (a gesture towards the dunes) what’s she lookin’ at? There ain’t not nothin’ to see. And I know the woman that works for her’s crazy- Allie Mayo, …. She was all right once, but-. (p. 49)

They have held that position because of having different outlooks and beliefs. Additionally, Mrs. Patrick is described as “a sophisticated person who has been caught into something unlike the old life as the dunes are unlike a meadow. At the moment, she is excited and angry” (Glaspell, 1987, p.49). She is a sophisticated woman. Sophisticated means someone knowledgeable and experienced about different things in the world. It is the opposite of naïve. However, it is used here to denote that people do not understand her because she is no longer like other women. She is “unlike the old life” a life familiar to every woman in society. She has created a new life for herself that looks strange since it differs from the mainstream view of patriarchal society. She is both “excited and angry”( p. 49). She is excited to initiate her new life in which she establishes a world of her own and lives as she wants, not following others’ wishes or desires. But, at the same time, she is angry because society has imposed on her a particular life that restrains her from having a room for her own, as described by Virginia Woolf. Because she is female, there is no room or chance for her to complete her education, establish her own business, to be economically independent. There is no chance for her to show her talent and ability (Bressler, 2011). There is no chance for her to define herself and her life. Likewise, Mrs. Patrick is angry because they don’t let her have her own space.

She protests and raises her voice to ask about her right. By saying, “you have no right here. This is not the life–saving station anymore. Just because it used to be- I don’t see why you should think- This is my house! And- I want my house to myself!”(Glaspell, 1987, p. 49). She repeatedly asks for her rights saying “I must have my house to myself!” But her demand does not make any difference for the men. The captain answers her by saying I will bring any more man to be saved here regardless of what you say. What you say makes “no damn bit of difference to me!” The answer to her demand is “Hell with such a woman”(p. 50). It indirectly suggests that no one care about women’s issue, their voices are not heard. They are marginalized, suppressed, and silenced by men. That is demonstrated in Mrs. Patrick’s broken speech when she wants to express her need. She is silenced before she can finish her sentence, “I – I don’t want them here! I must_” (p.50). The dashes here show that she is suppressed by men. She is finally obliged to retreat.

After she quarrels with the life-savers, she turns towards the dunes. Dunes is a hill of sand near the beach. It is a bare space like a desert that can be described as a symbol of having no choice, no chance to depend on yourself. Stepping towards their only option, the two women start to speak
with each other. They negotiate their own identities and selfhood. Allie Mayo reveals that she has experienced the same pain as Mrs. Patrick and affirms that she is not the only one; this implies that they discuss woman’s dilemma in general. They speak in a highly symbolic language. This type of poetic conversation exposes that only women know and understand each other’s suffering and struggle. Their understanding, unity, and support for one another show the hostility of their conditions and their struggle to survive (Hernando-Real, 2017, p. 169). They describe dunes as outside. They assert that they have named it outside because they were born and will die there. Mrs. Patrick states that “I am… on the dunes, land not life”(Glaspell, 1987, p. 53). In this way, dunes can symbolize the life of a girl and woman in a patriarchal society. Dune is a room that is allotted for them. Dune is also described as “the edge of life”(p. 53). When life is spoiled to the point where it no longer requires a name to be called a life. The edge of life implies that they are caught in a societal situation that is not their choice but imposed on them. They are obliged to lead a life full of distress because of their gender. As Mrs. Patrick states, “What do you know about it? About me? I did not go to the Outside. I was left there. I am only _ trying to get along. Everything that can hurt me I want buried- buried deep” (p. 54). She is compelled to live a life of distress, misery, and psychological torture. Being stranded among various forces that cripple them and render them powerless to effect change, what would be there for them except outside? She expresses the lifestyle of the woman by asking rhetorical questions. What would there be for me but the outside? What was there for you? What did you ever find after you lose the thing you wanted?” the author herself answers her argument with Allie’s reply, “I found- what I find now I know. The edge of life- to hold the life behind me_” (p. 54).

The issue of gender is described as a complex problem that no one understands except females. The writer highlights that gender roles and female issues are complicated matters to approach and change, but not impossible. Their suffering is not considered to be suffering because gender roles are normal. It has been internalized and programmed into the characters' minds. It is implied by the male characters' descriptions of the struggle of these two ladies as aggressive, inhumane, and hostile. Their apprehension and comments on these two women denote that they have their rights. No one is held responsible for their miserable condition, or they are not in the miserable condition. They are themselves behaving like insane women. Therefore, their problems are discussed by the two female characters in a language that only they know it. It denotes that no one is ready to give a voice to their problems. Only the woman is aware of the other woman’s plight. Allie Mayo, who has remained silent for twenty years, understands Mrs. Patrick. She starts to say “I know” repeatedly After being silent for twenty years. “I know” suggests that she is aware of the difficulties that women face in patriarchal societies. It denotes that she can readily envision and realize the harsh experience of the woman that others cannot see and even give a thought to. When she discusses the miserable condition and hardship of life with Mrs. Patrick, she repeatedly states, “I know” like “I know why are you doing that.” “I know where are you going!” “I know why you came here”. “I know what holds you on these dunes”(Glaspell, 1987, pp. 52-53). It
denotes that they are passive, and giving voice to their issues is a tough challenge. Any woman who wants to deviate from the social norm and initiate a new role for the woman will end up in the sand and dunes where these two women live. As observed by Linda Ben Zvi “the image of pioneering is a recurrent one in all Glaspell’s plays, it shapes all her writing” (qtd. in Makowsky, 1993, p. 66). These two women are similarly pioneers in breaking social norms. The writer depicts them as outsiders who are leading a bohemian lifestyle. She addresses the dilemma of the woman in general and bohemian women in particular. She indirectly asks for their rights.

In addition to mentioning the difficulties one faces when asking for change and reform in society, the play is filled with optimism that transformation will occur one day. As Allie Mayo points out that since we are women, we should bury and suppress our free will and desires. Because of their gender, they are not allowed to lead the life that they want. They cannot shape their own life. Their lives are programmed for them in advance. “Bury it. The life in you. Bury it” (Glaspell, 1987, p. 53). It means that you have to bury your dreams. You have to give up your needs and goals because you are a woman; there is no room for you to fulfill the desired life. When they contemplate the sand and the woods, Allie Mayo notices that sand destroys and dries up the woods. The word “sand” can symbolize any evil force that confines progress and reform. It can be any devastating force. The woods can be a symbol of society and social members, such as a woman. As she says: “Bury it_ watching the sand bury the woods. But I’ll tell you something! They fight too. The woods! They fight for life the way that Captain fought for life in there!” (p. 53). The word “They” that is italicized and used as a pronoun for woods suggests that woods means women in general. The women will fight for their rights. Furthermore, the word "too" denotes that women will be equal to men and fight for their equality, as shown in the word caption. The world captain hints at the male. The writer wants to say that one day the woman will lead the same life as the man. They continue arguing on this topic of the struggle to establish a new space for the woman. The argument is contradictory; it shows that those ladies who are nonconformist as far as social values are concerned will end up in the dunes. They also argue that their effort is futile. Mrs. Patrick says even if they try, they will lose. Allie Mayo, on the other hand, states that “vines will grow over the sand”(p. 53). It implies that they will win. The definition of the female’s struggle is conveyed through the image of the vine. Vine is a climbing plant that moves upward tremendously and covers other things. It can symbolize different meanings. Its nature to climb and stretch over unlikely places show determination, endurance, gradual progress, regeneration, and survival in a most unlikely place. The ability of this plant to cling to things can symbolize the woman’s instance to adhere to their ideal beliefs and lifestyle. The expansion and moving toward different directions show that the notion of feminism will move forward, and new ideas will spring concerning gender roles. In early medieval art and Christianity vine is used as a symbol of life. Jesus Christ is described as a “true vine” (Ross, 1996, p. 97). Similarly, here vine can symbolize the woman and her continuous struggle to find a place or opportunity to climb and determine her own identity. As Allie Mayo asserts, the vine will reach an almost impossible spot. They will one day reach a new
location. They will get out of dunes, their bare, confined, fruitless situation. She says “strange little things” (Glaspell, 1987, p. 53) continue to grow despite opposition in the face of dunes that endeavor to bury them in the sand.

The play ends with Mrs. Patrick’s speech in which she ironically describes men as savers. This denotes that she refutes the conventional concept of regarding man as a saver, as they are portrayed in the classical stories. A man saves a woman and alters her life into a happily ever after. She, with a bitter and exultant feeling, says: “savers of life! ... Meeting the outside!” (Glaspell, 1987, p. 54). She mockingly states savers of life. The repetition of meeting the outside affirms the establishment of new space as the play ends with taking further steps forwards, a step toward making change. Besides, her feeling of resentment and anger against the existence of unfair conditions shows that she is held in a position or entrapped and realizes that she needs to get out of that space. The two women are shown “in transition, not fixation” (qtd. in Jouve, 2017, p. 185). This transition will happen in the future. They transform from being an outsider to an active member of the social mainstream. Moreover, Susan Glaspell, in her plays, mainly depicts women as a character who are detached from society. They are also conscious of such existence. Thus being aware of their miserable condition leads to the ability to change it (Hinz-Bode, 2006).

**Conclusion**

Throughout studying the two female characters' conditions, positions, desires, and duties, certain points have been concluded. The study has pointed out that Susan Glaspell defies the social norms that condemn the bohemian woman. She shows how those women who want to be themselves are abused psychologically. How they are shunned, dismissed, and degraded as strangers and outsiders. It also clarifies the difficulty of establishing a space for the woman where she can define herself and have her own identity detached from the one assigned to her based on her gender; on the one hand, it also depicts the struggle of the woman to overcome their gender role and malignant environment to become true to themselves.

**About the Author**

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**References**


Cultural Mediation in Tourism Translation: Saudi Arabia as a Case Study

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Abstract
Part of the recent Saudi National Transformation program Vision 2030 is the significant growth of the tourism sector. Opening up the country to international tourists means facilitating access to Saudi culture through translation, where the role of translators as cultural mediators is salient. In the Saudi context, cultural mediation in tourism translation is an under-researched topic. This paper addresses the following question: What is interventionist role of translators as cultural mediators and where do they position the tourist against Arabic-English translated Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) in Saudi-related tourism articles? Drawing on Kwieciński’s (2001) adaption of Venuti’s domestication and foreignization (1995), this study adopts a descriptive approach to analyze the translation strategies in a parallel corpus of Arabic and English articles published on the official website of Saudi tourism Visit Saudi. The findings reveal the active role of translators in providing access to the Saudi culture by extensively adopting the exoticization and explanation strategies in tourism texts to foreignize CSIs, especially in the contexts of traditions and food. This paper, thus, bridges the scholarly gap in Translation Studies by examining cultural mediation in translating tourism texts about Saudi Arabia, focusing on translators’ strategies and how they position Saudi CSIs in the international tourism industry.

Keywords: Culture-Specific Items, cultural mediation, exoticization, Saudi Arabia, tourism translation

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Introduction

On 27 September 2019, Saudi Arabia announced that the number of tourist visas was extended to include visitors from 49 countries. The additional permits are expected to generate a 5.6% increase in international arrivals to reach 25 million tourists in 2023 (Mansour & Mumuni, 2019). This significant step is part of a broader national transformation plan entitled Vision 2030, which was previously announced in early 2016, aiming to diversify the Saudi economy and reduce the country’s reliance on oil. The tourism sector is a significant aspect of this reforming plan (Jawadi & Ftiti, 2019), representing an active non-oil economic sector. Besides the internationally recognized touristic elements of historical sites and cultural traditions, Saudi Arabia is characterized by annual religious tourism of Hajj and Umrah to the two holy mosques in Mecca and Medina that is expected to remain at the core of the sector, aiming to attract 30 million pilgrims to Saudi Arabia by 2030 (ATM Team, 2019). The reforming plan also involves diversifying other tourist activities, for instance, ecotourism, geo-tourism, and cultural tourism.

The expansion and progress of the sector mean facilitating wider access to the Saudi culture through multiple processes of translation from Arabic, mainly commissioned by the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) and disseminated through its official website Visit Saudi. This website was launched to provide an official counterpoint to collating tourism-related content from other unofficial sources, such as personal blogs of travelers and international travel platforms. Before launching Visit Saudi, fragmented tourism content on Saudi Arabia has been subject to repeated representations of stereotypical topoi (e.g., camels and campfires), and “unchanged” images of Bedouins received by the Western audience (see, for example, Feighery, 2017). Such constructed representations neglect the tribal, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the Saudi nation. For instance, Saudi-related televised travelogues do not necessarily reflect the diverse Saudi culture (Yoo & Buzinde, 2012). Repeated tourist representations foreground the broader image of Arabia and background cultural diversity and inheritances within the Kingdom.

Visit Saudi comprises over 50,000 words corpus and represents a varied distribution of themes that allow for the examination of the dynamic role of tourism translators and their cultural mediatory position in Saudi Arabia, which is overlooked in the literature of Translation Studies (henceforth TS). The only available publications to date are either within the field of Linguistics (see, for example, Al-Jarf, 2021a, 2021b) or limited to a particular region in Saudi Arabia (Mahjoub, 2019). The work of Al-Jarf (2021) addresses tourism translation in the contexts of linguistic analysis and university teaching. On the other hand, Mahjoub’s work analyses the heritage element of tourism translation within the Saudi region of Tabuk, concluding that translation contributes to promoting cultural heritage. Mahjoub’s call for the professionalization of tourism translation is limited to the specific context of Tabuk rather than the wider scope of Saudi Arabia. To bridge this scholarly gap, this paper constructs the foundation for studying cultural mediation in translating contemporary tourism texts in Saudi Arabia by establishing the extent to which Saudi-related Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) are exoticized in the translations of Visit Saudi from Arabic into English. The paper responds to the following question: What is interventionist role of translators as cultural mediators and where do they position the tourist against Arabic-English translated CSIs in Saudi-related tourism articles? It represents the first attempt at scholarly engagement with translated contemporary tourism texts in the digital context and
analyzes mediation across multiple layers of multimodality. The focus on the Saudi tourism context is driven by the specific discourse conventions in the religious and cultural domains within Saudi Arabia. In doing so, the researcher also explores the intervening strategies of translators in culturally mediating tourism texts from Arabic into English and the themes where cultural mediation is most salient.

Literature Review

Translators are continually confronted with the need for mediation, a concept that was first introduced to TS by Hatim and Mason (1997) as “the extent to which translators intervene in the transfer process, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of a text” (p. 147). In the case of tourism translation, mediation becomes more vital as the translated product must respond to the needs of the target audience (Kelly, 1997). Mediation requires translators to adopt different approaches to translation, aiming to enhance or reduce cultural differences according to their specific contexts (Agorni, 2012). Federici (2018) identifies four stages of tourism translation: bottom-up text analysis (examining and coding the source text), contrastive analysis (comparing linguistic and cultural elements), reformulation (materializing the target text), and re-editing (correcting and revising the target text). During these four stages, tourism translators add an extra element of mediation to their translations, especially in themes related to tourist attractions and traditional food, which the researcher discusses in the analysis. The mediation processes of tourism translation characterize tourism translators as intercultural experts.

Cultural Mediation in Tourism Translation

Tourism translation is a dynamic process that “involves the direct contact between cultures and all that this includes (folklore, customs, gastronomy, etc.),” as defined by Muñoz (2011, p.31). This communicative role makes the language of tourism a channel between foreign tourists and the culture of the place they are visiting. In this paper, culture refers to the visible level, which involves the observable reality surrounding individuals, namely language, gestures, food, and artistic practices (Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019). In the dataset, visible culture includes elements that UNESCO (no date) classifies as both tangible culture (food) and intangible culture (traditions, history, and heritage). Tangible and intangible elements of the Saudi culture are represented in textual manifestations that translators should transfer to the target culture, i.e., the Western, with extreme care. As far as translation is concerned, the question is where translated products are positioned between the domestication and the foreignization ends of the translation process. The following parts define culture-related words in the literature of TS, and examine the role played by translators in processing them.

Culture-Specific Items

Since the early 1990s, scholars in TS have regularly defined and debated the definition of the linguistic markers that manifest the source culture in its specific context (Agorni, 2012). For instance, culture-bound words and phrases are labeled as “cultural terms” (Newmark, 1991) and “culture-specific concepts” (Baker, 1995). More recently, in the 2000s, scholars have developed their labels of culture-bound terms, including “realia” (Leppihalme, 2001) and “extralinguistic
cultural references” (Pedersen, 2007). The scholarly discussion has also expanded to describe the cases where culture-bound terms create translation problems due to their unique nature and exclusivity to the source culture; for example, Leppihalme (1997) coins the term “culture bumps,” and Ivir (2003) opts for calling them “unmatched elements of culture.”

In this paper, CSIs are conceptualized as cultural micro-linguistic manifestations by adopting the label “culture-specific items.” The term was introduced by Aixelà (1996), which is the most applicable concept to the cases in the dataset. In particular, the term highlights the cultural references of tangible and intangible elements of the terms rather than their linguistic structures. Thus, CSIs, as unique elements to the source culture (i.e., the Saudi culture), are defined in the context of this paper as:

Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text. (Aixelà, 1996, p.58)

The extent to which CSIs, as cultural micro-linguistic manifestations, are adapted reflects the complexity of cultural communication and where translated texts are positioned against the source and target cultures. This is mainly attributed to the fact that CSIs do not exist in isolation but rather result from “a conflict arising from any linguistically represented reference in a source text” (p.57), which, in turn, creates a translation challenge due to the lack of equivalence in the target culture. The problematic lack of cultural equivalence has been encouraging scholars in TS to develop various taxonomies of translation strategies to tackle it since the 1970s (Narváez & Zambrana, 2014), which will be discussed in the methods below.

Methods

This part discusses the processes of data collection and methodology design used in this research. The paper draws on a corpus of 27,250 words derived from parallel English and Arabic online articles collected from the official Saudi tourism website Visit Saudi. The website was chosen as the primary source of data because it is the official Saudi provider of tourist content in 7 languages besides Arabic: Chinese, Dutch, French, Spanish, English, Japanese and Russian. The website was launched in 2019 to provide a unified platform for online tourist information. The focus on the digital format of tourism content is motivated by the contemporary nature of tourism texts in Saudi Arabia, which have been regularly developed in the forms of websites and smartphone apps, especially in the era of Covid-19, where print content is significantly reduced and switched to digital.

Criteria of Data Collection

Given the aim of this paper, which is to explore the role of translators as cultural mediators and their intervening strategies, it was vital to focus on themes where the Saudi culture is most visible. Thus, the compiled digital articles belong to the most culturally related categories of texts: history and heritage, traditions, and food. The thematical categories in the dataset were coded according to the classifications by the website of Visit Saudi to analyze articles in their original
context. The sub-corpus of history and heritage involves all the published articles, encompassing 9,435 words across English and Arabic articles. Similarly, the traditions category involves 9372 words in English and Arabic articles, while the food category includes a sub-corpus of 8,446 words.

**Taxonomies for CSIs**

The cultural turn in TS during the 1990s (Munday, 2016) involved various developments of existing taxonomies to CSIs, assessing, for example, the degree of cultural transposition (Hervey & Higgins, 1992) and the degree of universalization (Aixelà, 1996). Among the available taxonomies of cultural translation is Venuti’s (1995) seminal distinction between domestication (reducing the visibility of cultural differences) and foreignization (highlighting cultural differences and moving the reader towards the source culture). Although TS scholars have not agreed on a specific label, definition, or taxonomy to approach CSIs (Ramière, 2016), Venuti’s taxonomy of domestication and foreignization has been the basis for multiple methodologies that position CSIs between the poles of source and target cultures. Various scholars in TS have revisited Venuti’s dichotomy: for instance, Aixelà (1996) measures the degree of cultural manipulation by introducing conservation and substitution, Katan (1999) suggests generalization, deletion, and distortion, whereas Olk (2012) argues for a taxonomy between transference of cultural terms and substitution. More recently, Marco (2019) combines the two criteria of foreignization and domestication with translator intervention. It is evident from the classifications outlined above that there is a significant overlap between the available taxonomies, as Davies (2012) also highlights, which is illustrated in the analysis below.

To answer the paper’s research questions on the extent to which CSIs are exoticized and the intervening strategies of translators, the chosen methodological framework is Kwieciński’s (2001) distinction between strategies of exoticization and assimilation within the poles of source and target cultures. Kwieciński narrows down Venuti’s (1995) taxonomy of foreignization and domesticating to four sub-strategies below, arguing that foreignization and domesticating “tend to be used rather loosely and to refer to different phenomena potentially leading to terminological gaps and inconsistencies” (Kwieciński, 2001, p.13). In Kwieciński’s view, domestication is the result of “accommodation of the target text to the established [target language/culture] TL/TC concepts, norms and conventions,” and foreignization, on the other hand, involves “the introduction into the target text of concepts and language forms that are alien and/or obscure in the target language and culture” (Kwieciński, 2001, pp. 13-14). Given the nature of CSIs in the dataset, the classification suggested by Kwieciński (2001) is the most applicable as it gives attention to detailing exoticization and highlighting otherness between the East (Saudi Arabia) and the West (Western tourists) (Said, 1978). In particular, myths and mythical language exist in the tourist interaction with non-Western cultures (Selwyn, 1993), inviting tourists to explore the otherness of the oriental destinations. Such interaction is explained in the framework of Kwieciński (2001), which includes the following four categories:

**Exoticizing Procedures**

This category involves translation procedures highlighting the foreignness of the CSIs when transferred to the target text (Kwieciński, 2001). This procedure, which corresponds to
Venuti’s foreignization, characterizes the translated product with a “local color,” as Newmark (1988, p.82) phrases it. In the context of the examples in the dataset, this category can be narrowed down to translation procedures arranged according to their closeness to the source culture: from pure exoticization to exoticization combined with deletion. Exoticizing procedures occur in the dataset in the form of transliteration of Saudi-related CSIs from Arabic, which are not necessarily familiar to the target reader (e.g., the word “dallah” to translate “coffee pot” in Arabic).

**Recognized Exoticizing Procedures**

In this sub-category of exoticization, translators use previously established geographical and personal names and titles that are accepted translations in a given language rather than creating new ones, as in the previous category. Recognition of exoticized words is constantly changing as new terms develop, continually requiring translators to assess the extent of exoticization applied to CSIs. This category includes retention procedures of well-known names and titles from the source culture, such as the Islamic CSIs “zakat” and “Hijri” to transliterate "زكاة"[back translation: charity] and "هجري" [back translation: the Islamic calendar].

**Rich Explicatory Procedures**

In this category, translation procedures transfer the semantic meaning of the CSIs, aiming to adapt it to the expectations and familiarity of the target audiences. Procedures usually entail adding extra words to explain the context to the reader by, for instance, providing local analogies for illustrative purposes (Kwieciński, 2001). For example, the description “a porridge-like dish” is added to illustrate the texture of the transliterated Saudi dish “Jareesh.” Similar to exoticization, this category involves sub-procedures ranging from pure explanation to hyphenated explanation and adjectivized explanation.

**Assimilative Procedures**

This group of procedures is oriented towards the target culture pole and entails substituting CSIs with corresponding cultural references in the target culture (Kwieciński, 2001). The category involves more processes of rewriting according to the new setting of the target culture with an informative function. The category includes sub-procedures of pure assimilation and partial assimilation, such as translating the Arabic word "قصر"[back translation: palace] literally into “palace” rather than using the transliterated form “Qasr.” The following analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the results arranged in a thematical order, showing the applicability of the above procedures to the cases in the dataset.

**Analysis and Results**

Following the researcher’s discussion on the corpus and methodology, this analysis exhibits the identified translation strategies in the selected three themes of history and heritage, traditions, and food. Examples in each category are numbered according to their appearance in the appendix at the end of this paper.

**History and Heritage**

In the 9435-words sub-corpus of history and heritage, four translation strategies are identified (see table one) that range from retention, transliteration, addition to literal translation.
As the source texts include multiple exoticization processes, retention of recognized source culture elements is the most frequent procedure that features 40% of the procedures identified in this theme.

Table 1. The translation procedures adopted in the theme of history and heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation procedure</th>
<th>Sub-procedures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognized exoticization</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>15 examples (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exoticization</td>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>11 examples (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>8 examples (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Literal translation</td>
<td>3 examples (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first group of translated CSIs includes cultural references to places, such as “the bride of the Red Sea”:

ST (source text): "فَذَرتُ جَدَّةً [the bride of the Red Sea]" (2)
Back translation: “Jeddah has been ‘the bride of the Red Sea,’ which still welcomes its residents and visitors”
TT (target text): “Known as ‘the Bride of the Red Sea,’ Jeddah was welcoming visitors” (1)

In the above example, the beauty attributed to the Saudi city of Jeddah in the Arabic epithet is retained in the English translation. The second group of retained items encompasses additional descriptions and references of CSIs, for instance:

ST: "قصص ألف ليلة وليلة [The famous stories about one thousand and one night, also known as ‘the Arabian nights’]" (3)
Back translation: “The famous stories about one thousand and one night, also known as ‘the Arabian nights’”
TT: “One Thousand and One Nights” (also known as “Arabian Nights”) (4)

By transferring all the associated descriptions and references with a CSI, the translator invites tourists to engage with the original context of the cultural item and provides them with various references for cultural navigation. Transliteration follows retention in frequency, highlighting the greater exoticization of CSIs. For example, the Arabic CSI "موسم الحج [Hajj seasons]" (2) [Back translation: Hajj seasons] is transferred by transliteration into “Month of Dhu'l Hijjah” (1), replacing the more familiar concept to the target reader “Hajj” with the position of the month on the Hijri calendar. Similarly, the Islamic-related terms "فوائد " (2) [Back translation: crier], "إفطار " (3) [Back translation: breakfast], "حجاب " (10) [Back translation: pilgrimage], and "محراب " (10) [Back translation: niche] are transliterated from Arabic as “muezzin” (1), “iftar” (4), “hajj” (6) and “mihrab” (6), foregrounding the key characteristics of the holy month of Ramadan. By adopting transliteration, the above CSIs are kept as “borrowings” that reflect the form, meaning, and phonetic structure of the foreign words (Zaro and Truman, 1998, p.42), which appeals to tourists.
by retaining the linguistic and phonetic features of the transliterated CSIs. The procedure of addition is the third most frequent method, following retention and transliteration, that is applied to 8 CSIs in the contexts of:

**Historical events:**

ST: “سقطت الدرعية أواخر عام 1818 وعُدّت فيما بعد مركزًا للرياض ولل kaps في السعودية” (11)

Back translation: “Diriyah fell in late 1818 and was succeeded by Riyadh as the capital of the country”

TT: “Diriyah fell in late 1818 at the end of the Wahhabi war and was succeeded as the nation’s capital by the nearby settlement of Riyadh” (11)

**Historical sites:**

ST: (11) “لمدخل الدرعية التاريخ كأحد أهم معالم المملكة التراثية المعترف بها في اليونسكو عام 2010”

Back translation: “Diriyah entered as one of the most important Saudi heritage sites listed by UNESCO in 2010”

TT: “The ruins of At-Turaif were designated a UNESCO Heritage Site in 2010” (11)

**Islamic rituals:**

ST: (11) “يوجد مصلى خشبي معلق فوق القاعة الرئيسية مخصص للنساء. وبرعى جلبي، هناك كافة خدمات المسجد الأساسية موجودة داخل المسجد”

Back translation: “There is a wooden prayer space hanging above the main hall designated for women. For the comfort of prayers, all of the mosque’s basic services are located within the mosque”

TT: “Men’s prayer takes place in the main hall, while women are invited to pray in the wooden musalla (prayer hall) that hangs above the main anteroom” (11)

All the additions above share a pattern of bracketed explanation that involves providing extra information between round brackets to signal their extralinguistic and intercultural features. The addition in the third example replaces the part “all of the mosque’s basic services are located within the mosque,” assuming that the reader is more interested in learning about the separation of men and women at Islamic mosques. The following discussion positions the above translation strategies against the strategies applied in the second tourism theme: Saudi traditions.

**Traditions**

Compared with the theme of history and heritage, the sub-corpus of traditions is characterized by a higher tendency to apply transliteration, which constitutes 64% of the translation instances in this group (see Table two). This theme also involves more examples of addition and fewer retention instances, suggesting more intervention by translators than in the above theme of history and heritage.

Table 2. *The translation procedures adopted in the theme of traditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation procedure</th>
<th>Sub-procedures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognized exoticization</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>4 examples (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The traditions sub-corpus encompasses a combination of tangible and intangible cultural elements, which are defined by UNESCO (see the literature review). Examples of the tangible CSIs can be noticed in descriptions of traditional Saudi clothing, such as “دقلة” (11) [Back translation: long male coat], “مرودن” (11) [Back translation: male dress with long sleeves], “عباية” (13) [Back translation: long female dress], and “حجاب” (13) [Back translation: female head cover], and “ثوب” (13) [Back translation: long male dress]. These terms are transliterated and kept in the texts as borrowings to highlight their local identity: “daghla” (11), “murowdin” (11), “abaya” (14), “hijab” (14), and “thobe” (14). The same procedure of transliteration from Arabic is also applied to CSIs that represent Saudi social places, which are listed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage (2015a). An example of these CSIs is the word “bastas” (16):

ST: "أكشاك جدة التقليدية، المشهورة باسم البسطات" (15) Back translation: "Jeddah’s famous stalls, known as bastas” (16)

“istiraha” (18):

ST: "كل والشرب ولكي يلعبوا لى استرحا، أي شاليه مستأجر يجتمعون فيه لتتناول الاكل والشراب ويلعبون ألعاباً" (17) Back translation: “Lounge, any rented chalet to gather people for food, drink, and play] TT: “istiraha; rented chalets where friends congregate to eat, drink, and play games” (18)

And “majlis” (14):

ST: "مبيحة تتم أحياناً في مبيحة للقصة، وتُسمى مبيحة للاحتفال بالمجمعة" (13) Back translation: “a space called majlis to welcome guests” TT: “a majlis that is dedicated to entertaining guests” (14)

Transliteration also extends to a significant number of Islamic-related CSIs, namely “الشهادة” (19) [Back translation: declaration of faith], “الصلاة” (17) [Back translation: prayer], “الزكاة” (19) [donations] and “الصوم” (19) [fasting]. These terms are transliterated into “declaration of faith (shahada)” (20), “prayer or worship (salat)” (20), “almsgiving (zakat), or giving money or food to the less fortunate” (20), and “fasting (sawm)” (20). All the above transliterations appear in the texts after their English equivalents. The addition procedure follows transliteration in frequency, which is characterized by guiding keywords, such as “known as,” “meaning,” and “which means.” Instances of explained CSIs from both the Saudi and Islamic cultures are “الغدير” (17) [Back translation: pre-dawn meal], “القُوّة” (15) [Back translation: Isha prayer], “القرآن الكريم” (21) [Back translation: Hijri Calendar], “الله يأجركم” (21) [Back translation: the national day] and “الهجرة الهجريّة” (13) [Greetings]. The five phrases are translated by adding explanatory descriptions, including “pre-dawn meal known aSuhoor” (18), “Isha, the final prayer of the day” (16), “the Hijri, the Islamic lunar calendar” (22), “Al Yom Al Watany, as Saudi National Day is known in Arabic” (22), and “‘Salam Alaykum,’ which means ‘peace be upon you’” (14). Similar to the cases of addition, there is a
common pattern of directly addressing the reader by providing illustrative descriptions, especially in the case of the Islamic greeting “‘Salam Alaykum,’ which means ‘peace be upon you’ (14).

**Food**

Food-related CSIs are prominent cultural elements that are “for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture” (Newmark, 1988, p. 97). It is an area where “banal globalization” (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011) can be noticed through tourists’ tendency to use the same food-related CSIs to connect with the locals of their host country. In the third sub-corporus of food, translators show their awareness of this banality by using translation strategies that bring the tourist closer to the Saudi culture compared with the themes of history and heritage, and traditions. Food-related CSIs entail details that translators should maintain and further expand, aiming to enable the tourist to experience the local Saudi food themselves. All the identified strategies are oriented more towards the categories of exoticization and explanation rather than assimilation. Table three shows a significant increase in the use of transliteration by comparison with addition and retention. The tendency to employ transliteration first and foremost is a common pattern in this theme and the theme of traditions, which is also associated with decreased percentages of literal translation strategies that drop from 5% to 0% in this theme, see table three.

Table 3. **The translation procedures adopted in the theme of food**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation procedure</th>
<th>Translation sub-procedures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognized exoticization</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>4 examples (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exoticization</td>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>38 examples (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>21 examples (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Literal translation</td>
<td>0 examples (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transliteration procedure is used to translate 38 CSIs related to traditional Saudi dishes, for instance, “thareed” (24), “jareesh” (24), and “kabsa” (24), which originate from different parts of Saudi Arabia, reflecting the variety of regional gastronomy. The following examples are accompanied by their photos used in both STs and TTs to show how each CSI is translated in its multimodal context (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2011).

**Thareed:**

ST: "لاة
الثريد: هو أقدم من الجريش، ويقال أنه يعود لحقبة ما قبل اسالم وكان الطبق المفضل للنبي عليه الصوله وسلم، ولكل للطبق الغضن للله، لكل الصلاة ("23)

Back translation: “Thareed is older than Jareesh. It is said that it can be traced back to pre-Islam and was the favorite dish of the passenger peace be upon him; it is made of cooked meat with vegetables served with a thin slice of bread”

TT:
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Figure 1. A photo of the Saudi traditional dish “thareed” accompanied by a description of the ingredients (VisitSaudi, 2022)

Thareed: Even older than jareesh, thareed is said to date back to pre-Islamic times and to have been a favorite dish of the Prophet Muhammad. Similar to a lamb stew with a kick of spice, thareed is made by stewing halal meats and vegetables and is served over a thin piece of bread.

Jareesh:

ST: “رز أطباق السعودية، ويعرف أيضاً بالهرès، يتكون من القمح المطحون ويسلق مع الأرز، البصل والمرق مع إضافة التوابل مثل الكمون والبقدونس والكزبرة”

Back translation: “Jareesh is the oldest Saudi dish, which is also known as hares, consisting of oats that are steamed with rice, onions, stew with the additions of herbs, such as cumin, coriander, and parsley”

TT:

Figure 2. A photo of the Saudi traditional dish “jareesh” accompanied by a description of the ingredients (VisitSaudi, 2022)

Jareesh: One of the oldest dishes in Saudi Arabia, jareesh (also known as hares) consists of boiled crushed wheat, onion, rice, meat, peas and spices, such as parsley, cumin, and coriander. The final product, which is especially popular during the month of Ramadan, has a consistency somewhere between porridge and a dumpling.

Kabsa:

ST: “الكبسة: مشتقة من كلمة “كبس” وهي المكونات المطبوخة أو المضغوطة في قدر خاص مع الأرز، وهو الطبق الأشهر والفريد في لوائدة، في المطبخ السعودي، عن طريق مجموعة من اللحوم، والصويا، وجبنة الأرز، والخضروات”

(23) “بالدجاج وصويا، بطريقة شهيرة أو الدجاج والبصل والخضروات”

(23) “جاهزنز من اللحم والخضروات”

(23) “الحلوم من اللحم والخضروات”
Back translation: “Kabsa is derived from the word ‘kbs,’ which means the cooked ingredients in a special pot with rice, which is the most popular dish on the table. It can be prepared using a variety of ingredients, but rice, vegetables, and meat, whether lamb or chicken, remain the primary ingredient”

TT:

Figure 3. A photo of the Saudi traditional dish “kabsa” accompanied by a description of the ingredients (VisitSaudi, 2022)

The above CSIs belong to what Montanari (2004) classifies as ST foodstuffs that do not exist in the TL, which are transliterated and further mediated with additional descriptions. A prominent example of this is providing the roots of the transliterated item “kabsa” (24) as “stemming from the Arabic word ‘kbs’ which means ‘pressed.’” In addition, transliteration is significantly associated with descriptions of “dates,” a UNESCO inscribed icon of Saudi generosity (2019), featuring multiple CSIs in the ST. Remarkable examples are the Arabic terms

“الرطب (رطب آكلة الفاكهة) (25) ‘the food that is soft towards the fruit’” and “العنب (عنب آكلة الفاكهة) (25) ‘the fruit that is soft towards the food.’” These are transliterated into “kimri (unripe, green)” (26), “khalal (full-size, crunchy, yellow)” (26), “rutab (ripe, soft)” (26), and “tamr (ripe, sun-dried, dark)” (26), featuring additional descriptions to the dates. The addition procedure, as the second most frequent in this sub-corpus, is assigned to core elements of Saudi gastronomy. For instance, Arabic coffee, which is a prominent cultural element classified as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (2015b), is transliterated multiply as “qahwa” (26) and followed by descriptions of related items, such as “Arabic coffee” (26), “a coffee pot called a dallah” (28), and “the bottom of the coffee cup (which is called a finjal)” (28). Not only is coffee highlighted as a cultural element through transliteration but is also linked to other sub-elements of “dallah” and “finjal,” as shown in the previous examples. This procedure corresponds to Montanari’s (2004) classification of polysemous CSIs that involve different types of food in both cultures.

The addition procedure is also utilized to adapt the previously mentioned national Saudi dishes to the tourists by adding imported equivalent CSIs from the Western culture, including the loan phrase “a porridge-like dish” (30):

ST: (29) "الجيش: وصف تجارة الإجاثي. جيش: وصف دمة خلاف فصل للشبيهة”

Back translation: “Jareesh: an inherited recipe as it is considered a fatty meal in winter”
TT: “Jareesh is a porridge-like dish” (30)
and “shortbread-like exterior” (24):

ST: “المعمول: عجينة من القمح المخبوز بالفرن والمحشو بالفستق أو التمر” (23)
Back translation: “ma’amoul: an oven-baked dough stuffed with pistachios or dates”
TT: “ma’amoul has a crumbly, shortbread-like exterior” (24)

The overall translation procedure in mediating food-related CSIs tends to involve significant “simplification or clarification” (Inggs, 2003, p. 288). The increased exoticization of CSIs in food-related articles reflects their vital role in shaping the experience of foreign tourists in Saudi Arabia as well as constructing the image of the country as a gastronomic tourism destination. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (especially DHA by Reisigl and Wodak, 2008), the identified translation procedures in this paper establish links between the micro level of textual CSIs and the broader representation of Saudi tourism discourse. This mediatory role of tourism translation contributes to moving Saudi Arabia as a tourist destination from being domesticated to a foreignized, culturally diverse, and modern country. Unlike the excessive domestication of Saudi-related tourism CSIs by foreign institutions, before launching Vision 2030, exoticization and explanation by Visit Saudi provide wider access to the local Saudi culture and its discursive conventions.

Conclusion

This paper has aimed at exploring cultural mediation in Saudi-related tourism texts and where the translators position their audience between the exoticized and domesticated poles of the Saudi culture. The analysis of how translation procedures position the tourist against translated CSIs in a corpus of Saudi-related tourism articles has clearly shown a significant tendency to adopt exoticization and explanation, especially in the themes of traditions and food. Exoticization and explanation include various translation procedures of retention, transliteration, and addition, bringing the tourists closer to the conventions of the Saudi culture. Assimilation, on the other hand, is used significantly less frequently than the other two strategies, making only between 1% and 5% of the applied procedures. Incorporating both exoticization and explanation, the category of food functions as an area of considerable interventionist simplification and clarification due to the cultural indexicality of food-related CSIs and the prominent position they occupy in the Saudi culture. The extent of exoticization and explanation varies according to the tourist context, which means that traditions and food categories involve more transliteration and addition when compared with history and heritage. These two procedures, thus, invite tourists to contribute to the website’s content by reviewing how source-oriented translation from Arabic improve their tourist experience in Saudi Arabia, which can be further examined in future research from the perspective of reception studies.

Endnotes

1 In the tourism literature, pilgrims have been categorized as tourists who represent the first type of religious tourism (see, for example, Chang et al., 2020).

1 Scholars in TS have been providing various descriptions to manifest the crucial mediatory role of translators: for example, “experts in intercultural communication” (Gentzler, 2001, p.71), experts with a “bicultural vision” (Hatim and Mason, 2014, p.223), “cultural operators” (Hewson and Martin, 1991, p.133), and “cultural mediators” (Katan, 1999, p.12). In this paper, the role of translators is mainly associated with “intercultural communication,” including,
but not limited to, roles of “professional intercultures” (Pym, 2004, p.17), “agents of intercultural communication” (Davies, 2012, p.373) and “cultural informers” (Katan, 2016, p.83).

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Appendices

Appendix A

A List of Articles Used in the Analysis

1. [A journey through the history of Jeddah]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/ar/see-do/itineraries/a-journey-through-jeddah-s-past
2. [Explore the sights of this historic city: Journey through Jeddah’s past]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/en/see-do/itineraries/a-journey-through-jeddah-s-past
7. [Historical Diriyah]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/ar/see/highlights/historical-Dir-iyah
8. [See the future through Saudi Arabia’s past: Historical Diriyah]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/en/see/highlights/historical-Dir-iyah
15. [Ramadan in Jeddah]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/ar/do/culture/ramadan-in-jeddah
17. [Ramadan in Riyadh]: https://www.visitsaudi.com/ar/do/culture/ramadan-in-riyadh
In the tourism literature, pilgrims have been categorized as tourists who represent the first type of religious tourism (see, for example, Chang et al., 2020).
The Phenomenon of (Un)translatability Dilemma of Translating the Qur’anic Heart Words into English in (Repentance) Sūrat Al-tawbah

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Abstract
Translating the Qur’anic heart words into English has always been a strenuous and immense challenging task. Being the most rhetorical text, the Quranic heart words operate with clear-cut intent and cannot be replaced by what may be reflected as the corresponding word. The recent research paper mainly studies the (un)translatability phenomenon and the dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah (Repentance) and investigates their rendition losses. The key significance of this study is how the translators had attempted to attain cultural equivalence when rendering implied meaning and hidden meaning of Quranic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah. The main question of this study is: what is the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah? Moreover, three selected English translations of the Holy Qur’an are used by the researcher to accomplish this purpose: Marmaduke Pickthall’s (1996), Muhammad Muhsin Khan's, Muhammad Taqiqudin Al Hilali’s (1996), and M. A. S Abdul Haleem's (2004). Furthermore, the research purports to identify the apt translation procedures and methods manipulated in translating these intended words. The study evinces that persistent, existing challenges and untranslatability dilemma, and translation loss were found. The study also reveals that translation of untranslatable Qur’anic heart words into English may cause translation losses which is a common occurrence and prevalent in the English translation of the Holy Quran in general and Sūrat Al-tawbah in particular.

Keywords: English, dilemma, Sūrat Al-tawbah, Qur'anic heart words, (un) translatability

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Introduction

The translation is a communication channel as it breaks down barriers between any two languages and bridges linguistic barriers and the cultural gap. Nevertheless, to attain a successful connection between any two different interpretive codes of language, the entire command of the two texts is needed: the Source Texts (ST) and the Target Text (TT). The lack of understanding of either the Arabic language or English language would give rise to semantic, and syntactic problems in rendering the intended meaning from one Source Language (SL) to a Target Language (TL); accordingly, unavoidable inadequacy in rendering could come to pass.

The process of rendering Qur'anic implications into English is regarded to be the most difficult challenge ascribed to the translators. The complication of rendering the Qur'anic text is to some extent, not an easy task, because of its significance, whose ultimate purpose is to disseminate the Message of Islam and to enhance the creed and religious belief in some ways resulting from the sort of language which this holy book expects.

The Holy Quran is the ancientest and most rare and unique book of the Arabic language. In this context. The Holy Quran affects the historical advancement of the Arabic language. Since the principal source of the Arabic language is the Holy Quran. The text of the Holy Quran has been and remains the touchstone of greatness in modern standard disputations. During more than thirteen centuries, this criterion of merit never allowed any divergence in literary Arabic at any time. (Chejne, 1968; Mattson, 2012). As a consequence of this exceptional uniformity, literary Arabic has been connected with the standard of the Holy Qur'an.

Linguistically speaking, it was well-known that the translators working on Arabic–English, and English–Arabic. (Kashgary, 2011), and the text of the Holy Quran experienced many language problems and impediments in translating Arabic Qur'anic verses into English. One of these involved matters and obstacles is how to render fixed meanings of the Qur'anic heart words into English. Hence, when an attempt is made to render fixed implications of the Qur'anic heart words into English, its primary sense could be lost. (Abdelaal, & Rashid, 2015, Alhaj, 2020). The rendering of Arabic 'heart' words in the Holy Qur'an as an (SL) may lead, in some Qur'anic ayahs, to a semantic loss in conveying their embedded meanings in the (TL).

Concerning the current research paper, a plethora of previous research was carried out to address the issues of the (un)translatability in the Holy Quran (Al dahesh, 2014; Al-Hamad, & Salman, 2013; Alhaj, 2020; Ma'shumah & Sajarwa, 2022). Even so, such previous studies cast light on the (Un) translatability of the Holy in particular. Until now, minor is recognized about the (un)translatability of the fixed meaning of the Qur'anic words 'heart'. Therefore, there is a need for conducting further research on the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English and Sūrat Al-tawbah as a model.

The number-one purpose of this research paper is to study the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah. The number-two purpose is to find out the reasons for the revealed translation losses. The
number-three goal is to determine the appropriate translation methods and procedures exploited in translating the implied meaning and hidden meaning of Quranic heart words into English.

The recent study underlines the significance of utilizing apt translation strategies in addressing the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma to reduce the translation losses when rendering the Qur’an-specific lexicon into English, simultaneously, exploring how the translators had attempted to attain cultural equivalence when rendering implied meaning and hidden meaning of Quranic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah.

To meet the aims of the recent study, the following research questions were set up:

**RQ1:** What is the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah?

**RQ2:** In what way does rendering the Quranic heart words into English give rise to challenges for translators of the Holy Quran?

**RQ3:** How can these problems be resolved from theoretical and pragmatic standpoints?

**RQ4:** What is the effect of utilizing apt translation strategies on addressing these issues to reduce the translation losses when rendering the fixed meaning of the Qur’anic heart words into English?

The core structure of the recent research paper is the sequence of sections. The introduction is devoted to the purposes, questions, and significance of the current study. The section of the review of literature surveys a spectrum of issues related to the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’an-specific lexicon into English and the section concludes with the related previous studies in the fields of translating the meaning of the Qur’anic heart words into English and some related issues. The section on research methods casts light on the approach followed by the researcher to collect the data. Regarding the analysis of the collected data, some Quranic ayahs have been selected by the researcher. The selected ayahs contain the (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words. Section of data analysis is confined to the co-text analysis based on linguistic-based-exegeses and linguists’ analysis of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’an-specific lexicon into English in general and the Qur’anic heart words in particular.

**Review of Literature**

Using the literal rendering in translating Qur’an-specific lexicon into English may not convey their implied meaning to (TL), because some of the glossaries are distinguished by their very particular sense of the role and have no equivalence in the target language, hence, using a literal translation may not thoroughly carry the deliberate purpose. (Abdul-Raof, 2005).

The semantic, stylistic, and grammatical problems and inconsistencies between the Arabic source text and the English target language text challenge the translator's potential and competence in general and the Holy Quran translators in particular when rendering the Qur’anic words heart into English. The proof that rendering is not simply a process of language conveyance but also implies a shift from one culture to another influenced the problems of finding the close equivalent. (Culler, 1976). Because of this, translators of the Holy Quran, for example, are always encountered underlying linguistic problems when rendering the Qur’anic words 'heart' into English.
The Concept of Translatability and Untranslatability

The concept of translatability is as old as the age of translation itself and at the very core of the potential of translation. The idea of translatability is a well-used basis but still, stays core to translation studies and exceeds. Translatability is supposed to be possessed by the vision of untranslatability, which provides and determines the limits of translatability. Translatability can be realized to relate to the possibility of illustrating the (TL) into (SL). This is associated with translatability with commutability. In the cases of senses being, conveyable translation entails if the translator select to do so, minimal support or exploitation. Consequently, translation becomes a comparatively effortless task. But actually, conveying meaning is full of drawbacks and difficulties.

The notion of translatability is identified as the potential for some type of sense to be conveyed from one language to another without experiencing fundamental change (Alhaj, 2020, Pym, & Turk, 2001). According to Hermans (2009), translatability is always attainable because of an essential common individual experience across the globe. This shared experience can be conveyed through various languages; the difference is only in the way languages to communicate information. The tongue has two folds of structures, a surface and deep. Meanings are created from the latter and transferred through various forms of the former. Rendition communicates sense by replacing the conveyor, that is, the source surface structure of this meaning with another carrier, namely, the target language surface structure.

Untranslatability raises an issue about the use of appropriate translation. Since languages have different syntactic and semantic structures, they denote meanings contrastingly (Hermans, 2009). Catford (1996) adverted to untranslatability as the quality of a source text or utterance which has no equivalent in the TL. However, the difficulty of rendering any term pivots on its nature, as well as on the translator's capabilities to translate it. When a translator faces this type of difficulty, the general point regarding the translatability of the text is posed. Consequently, two kinds of untranslatability can be identified: linguistical and cultural untranslatability. The former occurs when there is no lexical or syntactical replacement for a source text element in the translated text. The latter happens if there is a lack of the translated language of a positive factor or concept that is part of the actual culture (Ibrahim, 2018; Hermans, 2009; Catford, 1990).

The Concept of the Quranic Heart Words

The Arabic Qur'anic word "heart' qalb' قَلْب " is mentioned one hundred and thirty-two times in the Holy Quran. The origin of the word heart' qalb' قَلْب "adverters to changing fast and frequently (Al-Mandour, 2017) The Messenger of Allah( SAW) said " the heart owes its name to its ongoing changes".The heart is connected with more than mere feeling, passion, and affection in the Islamic context. Moreover, the heart is a place of intellecctual and cognitive, perceiving capabilities and knowledge, choice, and aspiration. (Haque,1998). It is also, the seat of faith or îmān. “Allah, the Almighty said:(لاَذَّنَّ بِإِيمَانَ الْإِلَهَيْنَىَۡ عَلَى هُمْ الْإِلَهَيْنَىَا قُلْبَهُمْ عَلَى هُمْ مَلِكَةٞ "For such He has written Faith in their hearts," ulaa'ika kataba fee quloobihi mul eemaana " Surah Al-Mujadilah:22).

The human heart plays a significant part in human nature, as indicated in the Prophetic tradition (Hadith). It is not only a human organ that beats, supplies, and circulates blood; it is also,
a salient sacred rule. If it is healthy, the rest of the human body will be beneficial (Haque, 2004; Utz, 2011). The ailing heart will cause a frail body and evil acts. There are three types of hearts. These types are (A) the healthy hearts which are divided into eleven kinds according to the Quranic perspective. (B) the dead hearts which are divided into nine types according to the Quranic perspective (c) the sick hearts, which are divided into twelve types according to the Quranic perspective.

Previous Studies

There have been partially few studies investigating the Quranic 'heart' words in Arabic still there is not an independent study that explores the (un) translatability of fixed meanings of the Qur’anic heart words into English. Therefore, there are limitations in their studies because these researchers have been confined to the denotative and connotative meanings of the Quranic heart words in Arabic and have not studied the translation problems of the (un) translatability of fixed meanings of these words into English. For example, Badawi (2020) explored the concepts of heart words in the Holy Quran in the Arabic language. The study expounds that the word heart has a unique position in the Holy Qur’an, and what is meant by that is the esoteric and occult meaning to which humankind is connected (Badawi, 2020).

Abdul (2019) studies the kinds of hearts in the Nobel Qur’an. The study takes up the meaning of the heart in the Arabic language and sorts out its sense and functional role in the Holy Book. Also, the study investigates the bond between the true meaning of the heart (the medical term) and the symbolic meaning of the heart.

Bai (2016) conducted a study in the Arabic language. The study intends to probe the function of the disembodied heart in the human body, by exploring the relationships of the nature of the heart to the mind and thought in the Holy Quran, and then its role in contemporary and current science. The results of the study indicated that the heart works and shares with the mind in the mental aspects, and meanwhile, it is regarding the emotional side alone.

Abas (2019) carried out a study in the Arabic language on the rhetorical image of the heart in the Holy Quran. The study exposed that the heart has unique qualities concerned by the Holy Quran in various forms and varying from each other as to the nature of the believer characteristics and conceptions, and the heart of the unbeliever attributes and other idols, and all this in accordance with the context of the text and consistent with the incident. To conclude, this study aims to bridge the research gap by exploring the (un)translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Surat Al-twaba. Moreover, this study will pave the way for the researchers and translators to probe studies on the problems of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English because it is discovered that linguistic and exegetical analyses of the Qur’an-specific lexicon into English in general and Un(translatability dilemma of translating the Qur’anic heart words into English, in particular, were not given appropriate attention and comprehensive account in translation studies.
Methods

In this paper, the researcher applied the qualitative method research, which proposes to explore the (un) translatability of embedded meanings of the Qur’anic heart words into English with particular reference to Sūrat Al-tawbah, that is, in the three selected English translations. Furthermore, the researcher will analyze the Qur’anic heart words in English in Sūrat Al-tawbah including translation problems based on Catford's approaches to translatability and untranslatability.

Research Procedures

The crucial research tool in studying, exploring, and contrasting the rendered text of selected Qur’anic ayahs in selected three English which have been chosen by the researcher to mold the collection of the comparative analysis of the translation of a choice of the Quranic heart words. Moreover, five selected Qur’ānic ayahs from Sūrat AL-tawbah have been analyzed to identify the translatability and untranslatability problems encountered in rendering the Quranic heart words into English.

The researcher followed the below procedures:


b. Examining each Qur’ānic ayah containing the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma met in rendering Arabic Quranic heart words into English in Sūrat l-tawbah.

c. Scrutinizing the three selected English translations above to identify the three translators’ adequateness and adequateness in rendering Quranic heart words into English.

d. Identifying the proper translation methods and procedures utilized by the three translators in tackling the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the embedded meanings of the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat I-tawbah to curtail the translation losses when translating the Qur’anic heart words into English.

Research Instruments

An instrument of the research is a crucial tool in gathering, measuring, and analyzing data of a study, the researcher is the primary tool of the present study. Furthermore, researcher spent considerable time studying and exploring the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma encountered by the three translators

Analysis

The data of the current research paper consists of five Quranic verses containing translatability and untranslatability problems when translating the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah.

Example One

Source Surrah: Repentance, Al-Taubah (التوبة) verse 8,

ST ١٨٨:َٰ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاس قُونَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَتَأْبَى يُرْضُونَكُم ب أَفْوَاه ه مْ
Target Text:
(1) *Abdelhaleem*: They please you with their tongues, but their hearts are against you, and most of them are lawbreakers. (Haleem, 2005, p.189)

(2) *Khan and Al-Hilali*: They satisfy you, but their hearts are averse to you, and most of them are Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah) (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1996, p.244).

(3) *Pickthall*: They satisfy you with their mouths while their hearts refuse. And most of them are wrongdoers. (Pickthall, 2001, p.146).

In this verse, Allah the Almighty urges the believers and states that they (non-believers) do not deserve to enjoy a peace treaty with you (Muslims) because they associate others in worship with Allah and in His Messenger, (PBUH). They disbelieve; in addition to the fact that the moment they have the upper hand, none of you (Muslims), they will leave to breathe, nor will they regard the ties of kinship or their covenant with you. (Ibn Kathir, Vol.2).

The Phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of the Translation

Abdelhaleem, Khan and Al-Hilali, and Pickthall employed the literal translation method to render the Quranic heart word "وتأبى قلوبهم" into "against", "averse", and "refuse" respectively. Abdelhaleem rendered the lexeme "وتأبى" into "against" which is confusing for the target language receptor and untranslatable because it lacks the specified cultural connotations of the Quranic heart word (Lynne, 2005, Abdul Raof, 2005). Khan and Al-Hilali rendered the word "وتأبى" into "averse" which denotes 'against' or oppose to" does not mean "وتأبى". Hence, it lacks cultural equivalence. It appears that Khan and Al-Hilali were unable to render the Quranic heart word "وتأبى" because of a lack of artistic circles, for this reason, their rendering seems awkward and confusing concerning its cultural context and acceptable to the target language receptor. Pickthall rendered the lexeme "وتأبى" into "refuse " which denotes 'reject' and means "أبى", in the Arabic cultural context. Therefore, Pickthall is adequate in rendering the intended connotative meaning "وتأبى" when he renders it as (refuse). Hence, his translation has a strong connotation of the lexeme "وتأبى".

Table 1. The semantic connotation of (وتأبى was ta'baa)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Text</th>
<th>Strong connotation</th>
<th>Weak connotation</th>
<th>Non-connotation (denotations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (1) &quot;Against&quot;</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (2) &quot;Averse&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (3) &quot;Refuse &quot;</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example Two

Source Surrah: Repentance, Al-Taubah (التوبة) verse 15,
ST: ۗ15: غيظ قلوبهم (التوبة) ويذبح
Target Text:
(1) *Abdelhaleem*: and remove the rage, from their hearts. (Haleem, 2005, p.190)
(2) **Khan and Al-Hilali**: And remove the anger of their (believers') hearts. (Al-Hilali, & Khan, 1996, p.45).

(3) **Pickthall**: And He will remove the anger of their hearts. (Pickthall, 2001, p.146).

Narrated Ibn 'Asakir that 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with him). Said, "when she got angry (in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), he used to hold my nose and say,' O 'Uwaish! Say O Lord of Prophet Mohammed! Forgive my sins; remove the anger of my heart and save me from misleading temptations (Ibn Kathir, 2002; Tafsir al-jalalayn, 2008).

**The Phenomenon of (un)translatability Dilemma of the Translation**

To approach the tenor of the Quranic heart ghazalhaiza quloobihim; غَيْظَ قُلُوب ه مْ. Khan and Al-Hilali used couplet translation (an amalgam of literal translation and translation between brackets) (Newmark, 1988) which refer to the word'' believers' heart". Khan and Hilali are adequate in translating embedded meanings of the Qur'anic heart words ghaiza quloobihim; غَيْظَ قُلُوب ه مْ. Hence, their rendering has a strong connotation. Abdelhaleem used literal translation when he rendered it into '' rage" which does not connote " anger" in the cultural context and may not be grasped by the receptor in the target language because it loses the sense of the embedded meaning of the Quranic heart word ghaiza quloobihim; غَيْظَ قُلُوب ه مْ. Hence, his rendering has a weak connotation. Pickthall's usage of dynamic equivalence, that is,' the anger of their hearts", gives a proper sense of the intended embedded meaning of the Qur'anic heart words ghaiza quloobihim; غَيْظَ قُلُوب ه مْ, therefore, his rendering has a strong connotation.

Table 2. **Semantic connotation of quloobihim غَيْظَ قُلُوب ه مْ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Text</th>
<th>Strong connotation</th>
<th>Weak connotation</th>
<th>Non-connotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (1) the rage, from their hearts</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (2) the anger of their (believers') hearts</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (3) the anger of their hearts.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To conclude, the noun'' the anger" used by Khan and Al-Hilali, and Pickthall is more suitable and reasonable given the cultural context and situational context, whereas Abdelhaleem's rendering may be taken entirely out of the two cultural and situational contexts.

**Example Three**

**Source Surrah**: Repentance, Al-Taubah التوبة, verse 45,

ST: 45: دُونَ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ

**Target Text:**

(1) **Abdelhaleem**: they doubt in their hearts, and so they waver (Haleem,2005, p.195)

(2) **Khan and Al-Hilali**: whose hearts are in doubt, so in their doubts, they linger. (Al-Hilali, & Khan, 1996, p.252).

(3) **Pickthall**: and whose hearts feel doubt, so, in their doubt, they waver (Pickthall, 2001,p.149).
"whose hearts are in doubt" meaning, about the validity of what you brought them, "So, in their doubts, they waver." To the fact that they are so perplexed that they take one step forward and one step back. Therefore, they are not steadfast in anything. Verily, they are bewildered and doomed to deterioration, neither belonging to these nor those (Ibn Kathir, 2002; Tafsir al-jalalayn, 2008).

The Phenomenon of (un)translatability Dilemma of the Translation

To translate the Quranic heart word وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ, Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall used the word-for-word translation and rendered it into "have doubt in their hearts," and whose hearts are in doubt," and whose hearts feel doubt", respectively. It is noticeable here that the three translators attempt to give the genuine sense of the embedded meaning of the Quranic heart word وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ, but they confronted by the phenomenon of (un)translatability problem, and this untranslatable Quranic lexeme may lead to grammatical ambiguity. As discussed earlier, the cultural gap and lexical equivalence are the problems of translating the Quranic heart words into English. Literal translation, as in Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's could be the best option. However, literal rendering has bound on dynamic equivalence regarding semotatic aptness, for instance, Abdelhaleem, Khan, and Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's word-for-word rendition. Rendering of the Quranic heart word وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ through word-for-word translation ruins the real sense of the Holy Quran. Hence, the three translations have non-connotations because the three translators resorted to literal rendering which has not been appreciated as it does not communicate the sense of the meaning (Alhaj, 2020).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Text</th>
<th>Strong connotation</th>
<th>Weak connotation</th>
<th>Non-connotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they doubt in their hearts and so they waver. (Haleem, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and whose hearts are in doubt, so in their doubts, they waver. (Hilali, &amp; Khan, 1996).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and whose hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt, they waver. (Pickthall, 2001).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example Four

Source Surrah: Repentance, Al-Taubah

Target Text:

(1) Abdelhaleem: He made hypocrisy settle in their hearts until the day they met. (Haleem, 2005, p.200)

(2) Khan and Al-Hilali: So, He punished them by putting hypocrisy into their hearts till the day whereon they shall meet Him (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1996, p.258).
(3) Pickthall: So, He hath made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him (Pickthall, 2001, p.152).

The Phenomenon of (un)translatability Dilemma of the Translation

Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall rendered the lexeme نَفَاقَةً into hypocrisy which, according to English-English dictionaries, means: "a situation in which someone pretends to believe something that they do not believe, or that is the opposite of what they do or say at another time."


There is no difficulty in the three translations of the Quranic heart words فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نَفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبَهُمْ from Arabic into English and vice-versa because the denotative and connotative meanings of these lexemes are approximatively the same thing in English and Arabic languages when it collocates with the heart in particular. Hence, the three translators' renditions of the Quranic heart words Fa a'qabahum nifaaqan fee quloobi him are accurate and adequate. Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's renderings rank the best and leave no chance of lexical ambiguity. The three translators used the third person singular and the pronoun" He" (Allah, the Almighty) to keep an anaphoric reference to the ayah.

To sum up, Abdelhaleem, Khan, Al-Hilali, and Pickthall's renderings carry semantic comprehensibility and have strong connotative meanings. Furthermore, the three translators employ this style to maintain the cultural context.

Table 4. Semantic connotation of فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نَفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبَهُمْ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Text</th>
<th>Strong connotation</th>
<th>Weak connotation</th>
<th>Non-connotation (denotations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (1) He made hypocrisy settle in their hearts. (Haleem,2005)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran. (2) So, He punished them by putting hypocrisy into their hearts. (Hilali, &amp; Khan, 1996).</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tran. (3) So, He hath made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts. (Pickthall, 2001).</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Example Five
Source Surrah:Repentance. Al-Taubah التوبة, verse 127, ST127

Target Text:
(1) Abdelhaleem: God has turned their hearts away because they are people who do not use their reason. (Haleem,2005, p.2008)
(2) Khan and Al-Hilali: Allah has turned their hearts (from the light) (Al-Hilali, & Khan, 1996,p.268)

(3) Pickthall: Allah turneth away their hearts because they are folk who understand not. (Pickthall, 2001,p.156).

This is also to inform the hypocrites when a chapter of the Quran is revealed to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), They shunned the truth they forsook. This is their state in the life of this world; as they neither keep where the fact is being declared, nor accept nor comprehend it.

**The Phenomenon of (un)translatability Dilemma of the Translation**

To approach the meaning of the Quranic heart wordsُ قُلُوبَهُمُ اللََّلَّصَرَفَ sarafal laahu quloobahum Khan and Hilali used a couplet rendering, whereas. Pickthall and Abdelhaleem used straight translation which targets using the denotative meaning. This implies the three translators rendered the Quranic heart wordsُ قُلُوبَهُمُ اللََّلَّصَرَفَ sarafal laahu quloobahum from Arabic text as the source text into a syntactically and idiomatically appropriate English as target language utterance their tasks are restricted. Khan, and Al-Hilali resort to using a couplet translation strategy (literal translation and translation between bracket strategy). Using literal translation produces appropriateness in rendering the embedded meanings of the Qur’anic heart words as it can be innovative by transferring the style of the source text.

To sum up, all three translators produced a literal translation, still, Khan and Al-Hilali successfully utilized the practical method of couplet translation to communicate the embedded meaning of the Quranic heart wordsُ قُلُوبَهُمُ اللََّلَّصَرَفَ sarafal laahu quloobahum, It can be argued here that by inserting an extra explanation between rounded brackets, Khan and Al-Hilali mainly aimed at avoiding any translation loss in the target language because of the phenomenon of (un)translatability dilemma of translating the embedded meanings of the Qur’anic heart words into English. Pickthall's rendering of the Quranic heart wordsُ قُلُوبَهُمُ اللََّلَّصَرَفَ has semotactic simplicity which gives easier decodability but archaic words such as "turneth" used by him may cause difficulty, especially for the young receptor of the Quranic Message. Hence, his rendering has a weak connotation. Abdelhaleem, Khan, and Hilali also used beautiful and straightforward language. Their adequate and appropriate translation fulfilled the receptor's expectation of the English language, which resulted in better communication and comprehension on the part of the translators of the Holy Quran and the reader respectively. Hence, their renderings have a strong connotation.

| Table 5. Semantic connotation ofُ قُلُوبَهُمُ اللََّلَّصَرَفَ sarafal laahu quloobahum |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| **Target Text**                 | **Strong connotation** | **Weak connotation** | **Non-connotation (denotations)** |
| Tran. (1)                       | +          |          |                 |
| God has turned their hearts away because they are people who do not use their reason Haleem,2005) | | | |

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### Conclusion

The recent study intends to investigate the (un)translatability dilemma of translating the embedded meanings of the Qur’anic heart words into English in Sūrat Al-tawbah. Moreover, the study aspired to identify the relevant translation strategies employed. The results of the survey revealed that adopted various translation strategies such as literal translation, and couplet translation to render the Qur’anic heart words into English. Moreover, the study also indicated that both literal translation and couplet translation are not always adequate for translating the Qur’anic heart words into English because they have not effectively retained the meaning of the Qur’anic Arabic language (ST) into the Qur’anic English version (TT). Furthermore, the study indicated rendering the Qur’anic heart words into English and the equivalence of this Arabic lexis is difficult and precarious. (See examples 1-5). Finally, the study suggests that better rendering of the Qur’anic heart words into English should bear intelligibility in terms of the overall effect of the Message on the language receptor.

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A Non-Western Representation of the Third World Women in Nadia Hashimi’s *A House without Windows*

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**Abstract**

Third-world women in western literature have often been depicted as submissive, illiterate, vulnerable, and having no identity. They are cast from the outside discourses, always entangled in the gaze of the west as being primitive. Yet the world is open to change with viable feminist female practices to enhance the accurate and exact image of third-world women. Nadia Hashimi’s *A House Without Windows* is a manifestation of deconstructing the false stereotyped image created by the West writers through skillfully presenting the real pressing contemporary issues of Afghan women in their society with diverse forms of ordeals. This paper aims to reflect upon the significant differences between stereotypical western depictions of third world women— are portrayed in mainstream western discourses as weak and in need of help—and their representation by Non-Western writers. It further explores how the female characters can cope with life hardships and pass the closures with no fear despite the difficulties of living within the nonwestern codes of patriarchy and culture. Investigating Hashmi's novel is significant because it presents an accurate depiction of third-world women together with a variety of their inspirational tales, correcting and changing the stereotyped western representation. This study elucidates the Transnational Feminist Theory as a remarkable framework for comprehending the gap between the global north and south to address the representation of third-world women. Consequently, dismantling the stereotypical images of women in the third world and the phony universalization of global sisterhood is investigated by reflecting upon the vivid pictures of strong women.

**Keywords:** Activisim, Hashimi’s *A House Without Windows*, non-western literature, third-world women, and transnational Feminism

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol6no3.8
Introduction

Third-world women are often assessed according to several political, local, and social standards, which western feminists believe are essential in attaining a power balance between men and women. Because social context norms are disregarded, all Third World women are viewed as passive, non-resistant, and living in patriarchal environments where they are equally devastated, tenuous, and hibernate in their dullness. This anthropological totality results from the disregarding for social context norms (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). Furthermore, by elevating a single group's status as the “norm or referent,” as with the west, the distinction (binarism) between western feminists Vs. Third-world women are established (Mohanty, 2003).

Western feminist discourse characterizes third-world women as “subjects outside social relations” (Mohanty et al., 1991, p.72). The structures of law, economy, religion and family are regarded as phenomena to be assessed according to western norms. These structures are identified in terms of under-developed and developed by which women are positioned amid them. Consequently, the stereotypical image of third-world women appears in all western writings and discourses, for this the ethnocentric universality can thus be read and witnessed. Western feminists’ focus on gender is fixed as the core element of women’s oppression, transforming what is called “oppressed woman into the oppressed third world woman” (p.72). Universality is, therefore “universalizing the white condition across the board” (Hegde, 1998, p.275). Depicting the third-world women, a category is described as “Religious (not progressive) … legal minors (they are still not conscious of their rights), illiterate (ignorant), domestic (backward) and sometimes revolutionary (their country is in a state of war; they must fight!).” (Mohanty et al., 1991, p.72).

Transnational as a term has been engendered out of the particular historical periods in The United States and Canadian academia, comparable to concepts of “women of color feminisms, third world feminisms, multicultural feminisms, international feminisms, and global feminisms” (Swarr& Nagar, 2010, p.3). Likewise, the term Transnational as Grewal and Kaplan (2001) argue, “has become so ubiquitous in cultural, literary and critical studies that much of its political valence seems to have become evacuated” (p.664). Transnational Feminism as a theory was first developed in 1994 by Inderpal Grewal, and Caren Kaplan in their book Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices, which is “viewed as canonical in defining and conceptualizing transnational feminisms” (Swarr & Nagar, 2010, p. 9) and positioned Transnational Feminism as a theory among other feminists, modernity and postmodernity studies (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

The Term Transnational is effective when it draws attention “to uneven and dissimilar circuits of culture and capital” (Grewal et al., 2002, p.73). Such a profound understanding of the connections between racism, colonialism, patriarchies, and Feminism become increasingly visible and open to critique. Transnational Feminist knowledge is unlike the humanist concept of comparative study; they are distinct. As; the cultures, locales, and nations being compared are created by colonial episteme, it becomes imperative to examine such frameworks (Grewal et al., 2002). Putting the perspective of linkage instead of comparison empowers scholars to criticize “a
reductionist and mystified world systems model of center and periphery, a model that deploys notions such as authenticity and tradition” (p.76).

Constructing a theory of “hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender” is incorrect as it engenders differences between women and results in the exploitation and suppression of most women (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, pp.17-18). This is where transnational Feminism must be acknowledged to grasp the material conditions that construct the lives of women in various locations. Thus, developing an efficient opposition to the existing cultural and economic hegemonies is one way to restrict the aforementioned strategy (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). Likewise, diversity and difference are essential values here to be respected and acknowledged, not erased in building alliances (Mohanty, 2003).

The Transnational feminist movements endeavor to enable women in various places across borders to define the diverse forms of oppression, and the social frameworks of patriarchy, and distort “white western feminists” practices, as a discursive process to articulate transnational coalitions and solidarities (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). To grasp feminist practices in global contexts, would entail changing the analysis course from national, regional, and local culture to cross-cultural connections (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997). Transnational feminist networks bridge the dimensions through the production of assistance and sources, raising awareness of regional and local forms of suppression and integrating them into international discourses (Cited in Dempsey et al., 2011). Further, revealing white global feminism’s unwarranted universalization of gender that “has stood for a kind of western cultural imperialism” and “elided the diversity of women’s agency” is the main impetus of transnational feminism, as stated by Grewal and Kaplan (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 17).

Transnational Feminism, which is a radical framework that can address the differences and linkages between the Global North and South is often connected to authors like Mohanty (1986), Lazreg (1988), and Trinh (1991). Writings by these authors and others like them have emerged to challenge the predominance of the dogmatic idea of "Third-World Women" as victims, highlighting the necessity of showcasing their participation, activism, and agency as well as reframing the idea of Third World Women as fragile in order to seek various forms of transnational collaborations and solidarities (Swarr & Nagar, 2010). Further, more Non-western writers like Spivak, and her fellow Edward Said, have maintained in their literary writing the diverse forms of Western hegemonic agency over the third world. They invest their position and knowledge to protest against the mainstream of the west universalization. Besides, how these native representations are problematic (Kapoor, 2004). Nadia Hashimi is one of those feminist writers who present the viable ingredients of her country (heritage). Also disclosed the distortion of the west concerning third-world women along with their universalization of women’s issues.

Nadia Hashimi, the author of *A House Without Windows*, is an Afghan-American pediatrician and writer who lives in the Washington suburbs. Due to the environment Hashimi was raised in, and the family members were surrounding her, supported her in obtaining higher education. Her aunts worked in all areas of professional domains, in the airlines for the United Nations. Nadia grew up with the knowledge and awareness of that picture of Afghanistan in her mind, a place where women could accomplish many things (Library of Congress, 2016, 1:52). Her
Writings lean heavily on the truth. Hashimi depicted the reality and the situation of women in Afghanistan. Though she was not raised in the homeland of her parents (Afghanistan) since Hashimi was born and raised in America, she is still aware of many of the cultural expectations, values, and the notion of a reputation for a girl in her Afghan community (Better Reading, 2016, 5:22). Hashimi is a prolific writer. She owns the credit for her international bestselling novels like *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*, *When the Moon is Low*, *A House Without Windows* (Salman et al., 2020), *One Half from the East*, *The Sky at Our Feet*, and *Sparks Like Stars* (Goodreads). In all of her novels, she is highly concerned about Afghanistan and has a lot of compassion for the Afghan women who are the nation's constant victims (Vincily, 2020). She seems to create a distinct voice, highlighting Afghan women’s struggles that are considerably overlooked by the government and society. Similarly, she works to raise awareness about the violence committed against women in Afghanistan’s patriarchal environment (Salman et al., 2020).

Women’s challenges remain a problem in Afghanistan (Wahab & Youngerman 2007). In Afghanistan society, violence against women “is considered a widespread and undeniable reality.” The types of violence vary from economic, physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological. Nevertheless, the increasing number of assaults shows that violence against women is not only pervasive but also promoted the growing awareness of women's rights, which led to more instances and cases to be reported (Hasrat & pfefferle, 2002). Afghan women resisted and fought the power systems imposed upon them. During the period (1996-2001) under the Taliban, women established secret organizations and schools for women and girls for such institutes were not allowed. They; converted their homes into underground networks, and risked their lives to foster communal cohesiveness. Afghan; women aspire to participate in the construction of their country, which is contrary to the west’s depiction as passive, victims of violence, war, and political oppression, and accordingly, need to be liberated by the west’s intervention (Povey, 2007). Hence Afghan women must be acknowledged as change agents (Cited in Povey, 2007).

Third-world women are disregarded by their peers in the west. The discourses of western feminists deformed third-world women images and experiences as uneducated, savage, weak, having no identity, and subordinated to patriarchy authority. The aim of this study is to tackle the problem as mentioned earlier, how the western feminists perceived third-world women, and to achieve this aim, the study relies upon fulfilling the following objectives:

1. Re-represent third-world women, depicting their actual realities and experiences as strong women capable of accomplishing a lot of achievements and conquering the chains and restraints of their societies.
2. Offering the various ordeals third-world women suffer on a daily basis along with their strength to encounter those obstacles.
3. Drawing on Transnational Feminist theory as a framework to present an original analysis of Hashimi’s *A House Without Windows*.

1. How the western feminists perceived their peers in other parts of the world is the main focus to be disclosed and re-represented the actual identities of third-world women.
2. How western feminists generalized their problems and aims.
3. How western feminists disregard third-world women achievements and ordeals.
4.

Literature Review

Nadia Hashimi’s A House Without Windows (2016) has earned considerable acclaim for its significant role in reflecting upon the actual image of Afghan women and Afghanistan culture, the compelling thematic concerns, and its exciting details of norms and traditions. Few scholars and students analyzed the novel from different aspects with different approaches, in this respect, Salman, Butt, and Mahmood (2020) have concentrated on violence against women in Afghan patriarchal society in the light of Sylvia Walby’s insight of violence as a theoretical framework. Vincily (2020) highlights the injustices, discrimination, and exploitation Afghan women experience in society and the difficulties they confront in jail. Further, the article sheds light on the burden of being a woman in a country where a woman is always perceived to be a subordinate member.

Fauzia and Rahayu, in their article (2019) Women’s Struggle against Patriarchy: An Analysis of Radical Feminism Through Nadia Hashimi’s A House Without Windows, embrace radical Feminism to examine the oppression of women (third world women) in Afghanistan by focusing on the female characters and describing the struggles and ordeals women encounter in a restricted patriarchal environment as well as shedding light on their exceptional resistance. Additionally, Jahan’s (2018) thesis focuses on Pashtunwali, the unwritten code of life followed by the Pashtuns of Afghanistan for generations where the Pashtun people who dwell in Afghanistan and North-West Pakistan adhere rigorously to this code.

In the light of what has been mentioned above, it is undoubtedly clear that fewer researchers have tackled this contemporary novel in respect of adopting new literary methods which were generally qualitative. Contrariwise, linguistics analysis was not shown. Studies that explored Hashimi’s A House Without Windows from a feminist perspective resulted in only one discussion, which is far from the Transnational feminist theory that the researcher intends to adopt to fill the gap in the literature. The approach is used to understand and reveal the unfavorable attitudes of western feminists against their peers in the third world. Grewal and Kaplan (1994) detailed the significance of Transnational feminism, and presented the continuity of the binary visions of the inequalities that kept to define the world as center/periphery. Moreover, they were “looking for ways to broaden and deepen the analysis of gender in relation to multiplicity of issues that effect women’s lives.” (p.1). Mohanty (2003), critiques the racial, sexual, and class-based presumptions of Western feminist studies as well as Eurocentric and Western developmentalist discourses. In his book, Mohanty reflects upon the relationships between feminists in both hemispheres; the unstable ones and emphasized that, “Diversity and difference are central values here—to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances.” (p.7). Mohanty, Russo, Torres, and Lourdes (1991) deepen readers understanding of Third World women's difficulties and offer thought-provoking analysis of race, class, gender, and sexuality, as well as the part that imperialism plays in the creation of knowledge and of people. The book is made up of essays, most of them concentrated on the way western feminists perceived third-world women, and how their discourses produce the “image of an ‘average third world woman.’ This average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually
constrained) and her being ‘third world’ (read: ignorant, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized).” Grewal, Kaplan and Wiegman (2002) evaluate the women’s field past, present, and prospects while showcasing how institutionalisation has given a new generation of academics and students access to an important, continuing intellectual endeavour. Further, look at how different knowledge divisions—racial, sexual, disciplinary, geopolitical, and economic—have an impact on education.

Swarr and Nagar (2010) examine the philosophy and use of Transnational feminist scholarly and activist methods. In their book, they continue to grapple with issues of power and representation while staying steadfastly devoted to radical criticisms and objectives of postcolonial and Transnational feminisms. Grewal and Kaplan (2001) manifest how Transnational sexualities insists on acknowledging the numerous processes involved in globalization—such as political economies of state, capitalism, diasporic movements, and the disjunctive flow of meanings produced across these sites—that contribute to the formation of specific genders and sexualities. Alexander and Mohanty (1997) explore sexual and gender politics, economic and cultural marginalisation, as well as anti-racist and anti-colonial acts in both the ‘West’ and the ‘Third-World’ from a feminist perspective. Dempsey, Parker, and Krone (2011) investigate the contentious impression of feminist transnationalism by examining the ways in which transnational feminist networks deal with socio-spatial disparities in their individual practices and as a larger social movement.

These studies criticised the predominance of the stereotype of ‘Third-World women’ as helpless victims and highlighted the need to emphasise Third-World women's activity and agency as well as to reframe the narrative. Since Transnational feminism is not used before in Hashimi’s work, this study assures the uniqueness of the current discussion that aims to represent the real image of the strong women of third-world throughout Hashimi’s novel by using the support of the aforementioned works. The study is original in that it will deepen the idea of women’s resistance with their various ordeals against the mainstream universalization of first-world women in a transnational feminist lens. Therefore, the current study provides a new understanding of Hashimi’s novel. The significance of the study is that it contributes to the enrichment of third-world women’s literature.

**Methodology**

This study falls within the broad category of thematic analysis in literature as it focuses on the ideology of third-world women, portraying their real struggles, varied experiences, and actual image. Transnational feminist theory was used as the study's framework since it perfectly matches the themes of Nadia Hashimi's novel. The main objective of this approach is to challenge widespread stereotypes that contrast white, classist, and western feminists against their counterparts in the developing world. It also refutes the idea that people from different places have the same subjectivities and experiences. Transnational feminism resists unrealistic ideals of global sisterhood while simultaneously working to provide the groundwork for more beneficial and equitable relationships between women across borders and cultural settings. Hashimi’s *A House Without Windows* is appropriate to be utilized as data to be analyzed in the light of transnational feminism. In addition, the discussion concentrates on the stories told by the female characters in...
Hashimi’s novel to demonstrate their influential roles, varied experiences, and ordeals. This was done to create a new image of these women as a response to the passive characterization of their western sisters.

Analysis

*A House Without Windows* (2016) is full of female characters fighting against cultural norms (Jahan, 2018). Through Hashimi’s concentration on female prisoners in her novel, she brings these problems to light. The author has admitted that though it is a fictional work, it is a genuine representation of Afghanistan’s procedural and penal laws. Her story opens the windows to the world to see how the legal system oppresses Afghan women without even a fair trial (Jahan, 2018). *A House Without Windows* is the third novel for Hashimi, she ornamented it with exciting bits and stories from her culture (Library of Congress, 2016, 16:42). The struggle for independence, autonomy, and how we fit in and connect to the world around us is a prominent theme (PolitySA, 2016, 4:59). *A House Without Windows* is about a female character named Zeba. The latter stands for all women in Afghanistan; she is a simple, ordinary woman who lives in Afghanistan. One day, a commotion happened in their tiny house. Neighbors rushed to fill their courtyard upon her scream, they found her husband murdered with a hatchet in the back of his head, and Zeba resides beside him with stains of blood on her hands. Zeba was shocked that she did not say much in her defense when the accusing fingers were directed toward her. She was then arrested by the police and drawn to prison, where she met a variety of women; those in her cell and others were imprisoned for crimes of immorality and other different accusations (Better Reading, 2016, 00:27).

Zeba embodies the essence of an Afghan woman who had suffered much for the sake of her family and endured her drunken husband who became a monster and abusive over time. Well, nothing is ordinary for Zeba when her husband is found murdered with a hatchet “in the back of his neck” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 22); while she was waiting for her children to come back from school on that day before the incident. Doing the everyday chores, as usual, Zeba heard a sound in her courtyard, a horrible sound that when she went to see, the deadly incident happened within seconds. As the murder took place, she could not defend herself, and in this horrible situation, Zeba was thinking of her children “go back into the house…your sisters, your sisters” (p. 11). This speech shows that Zeba is strong. However, she is unaware of her surroundings due to the impact of the scene of her husband’s murder, yet she can direct her children and protect them from enduring the agony of seeing their father killed in their house, and at the same time, she does not want them to see her (their mother) in this horrible state; weeping and about to be arrested by the police. Zeba reflects the idea of the family as a basic social unit, which the West lacks. El Saadawi believes that the cultural differences (traditions, codes, laws) between third-world countries and Western cultures make it difficult for women from across all cultures, specifically western feminists, to adopt the same feminism and react in the same manner to oppressive causes. “We, in Third World countries are facing life and death issues. We cannot speak about equality for women.” (As Cited in Zairi, 2003, p.77). Women’s status in Afghanistan is intricate; they could be simply accused of a crime they did not commit.
Gulnaz, Zeba’s mother, was not an ordinary woman; she was a sorceress who was not driven by what others wanted her to do. She takes charge of her own decisions, even in the matter of children. Gulnaz decided not to get pregnant due to the chaos the country was going through, the economic and security situation. It was an ill time to bear more children into this world. This thinking engendered a sense of responsibility towards her children. She is wise enough to think before taking a step in this anarchy “Imagine a home led by three different patriarchs in one year, she thought to herself. No, this kind of home could not survive, nor could a country. We will have no more children” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 27). The western feminists passive depiction of third-world women is neither accurate nor true, their aim is, “removing agency from Third World women, often seeing them as passive victims of barbaric and primitive practices… that women are passive, apolitical and conservative,” (Cited in Afshar, 1996, pp. 10-11). Hashimi challenges these prevailing ill-ideas in her novel.

Zeba was growing up as an individual human being. She hated the way people were looking at her as an extension or a copy of Gulnaz, who the latter was full of tricks and black magic, “I am nothing like my mother” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 112). The emphasis in her words places the diversion of her thoughts and personality away from the life her mother chose. Zeba will not be looked at as a witch like Gulnaz. Grewal and Kaplan (1994) state that “in supporting the agendas of modernity, feminists misrecognize and fail to resist Western hegemonies.” (p. 2). Hashimi’s feminist practices resist and question the modernity of the girl that she must be docile and obedient.

Zeba was arrested and drawn right away to Chil Mahtab prison. Charges are no longer accounted for the criminals, but innocent people. Getting to know the cellmates, Nafisa, a woman in her mid-thirties, was reported to her family by a relative who falsely accused her of having an inappropriate relationship with a stranger, a blacksmith widower. “Nafisa had been convicted of attempted Zina, or sex outside of marriage. She’d been sentenced to three years” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 41). Despite her sentence and her family’s repudiation, she stood firm in defending herself; she was not afraid, saying that she did nothing wrong to be sentenced. With an unwavering voice:

I’m not a child. I should be able to eat in the park when I want. And anyway, we weren’t doing anything wrong. We were just eating. My mother had made some bulanee [a kind of pies in Afghanistan] and I wanted to share it with him (p. 42).

Nafisa is not a fragile woman who trembles in front of the judge for having mercy. On the contrary, her “defiant manner had won her no mercy from the judge” (p. 41), which should not be a plea as there is no case at all, but since she is in Afghanistan, she has to defend herself. Using the pronoun I in the forenamed speech shows her individuality, a woman who has the right to be accessible without imposing control over her; the domination of her patriarch makes her steps plod. Hashimi points throughout Nafisa’s words to the sense of feminism of a third-world woman, to her sturdiness and intensity as a woman who can manage her issues and need no help from her western peers or the false speeches they give on behalf of her. Bulkin (1984), the American writer, points...
out that Arab Women are depicted as “They have no true understanding of feminism. They are pawns of Arab men” (p. 168). Hashimi defies the stereotypical views of third-world women.

Latifa is another cellmate where Zeba resides now in prison. She is an example of a brave woman who does not allow anyone, even her family, to abuse her. Latifa was tortured by her father and brothers, but she could not bear this anguish more, so she decided to put an end to the domestic violence she was facing; “She’d been beaten and cursed at until the day she’d decided she could take no more” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 42). She has “a seven-year sentence for running away from home, kidnapping, and attempted prostitution” (p. 43). They thought she had the intention of prostituting her sister as she took her when she eloped. Latifa's rebellious nature led her to reject legal representation and insist on representing herself in front of the court. She asserts that, “It was all my doing, she’d said, tapping her hand over her breastbone and nodding affirmatively. I decided to flee that miserable home. I wanted to save myself and my sister” (pp. 42-43). Being a strong and stubborn woman, Latifa did not allow anyone, including her family, to oppress and persecute her. She is not the submissive woman who confirms the false patriarch’s authority. Latifa tried to bear the responsibility of her plan as an independent individual with the right to decide and live freely. She attempted to figure out justice on her own and ran away from the house since laws would not be by her side if she went to the police office to submit a charge against her family. Latifa was wild and rebellious enough to call for and set her rightful freedom by fleeing to rescue herself. Moreover, she feels respected and worthy, and others must behave according to this. Hashimi shakes the west look of third-world women through the character of Latifa, for western feminists consider third-world women as suppressed, liable to the patriarchal system, and having no agency to determine who they want to be, as shown by this quote in the magazine *Time* on the twenty-four of December 2001, by Katherine Ryan:

> But in the Middle East, there is little chance for women to shape their destinies. They have had to put up with terror their entire lives in their very homes and societies. Perhaps the war on terrorism will have beneficial results for a long-forgotten, oppressed people: not the men of Islam, but their wives, mothers, and sisters (Cited in Zairi, 2003, p. 35).

Throughout this quote, the author emphasizes how western feminists disregard third-world women, and perceive them as subjects, not human beings, who must incur the horror of wars as they are used to suppression for living in a patriarchal domain. Hashimi deconstructs the passive portrayal of Latifa’s character as a stubborn woman who refuses to be dominated by anyone.

It is significant to highlight those women who have been charged with honor crimes and committed ‘Zina’ (adultery) —either fleeing their homes, or engaging in illicit relationships—, must take a virginity test after being dragged to jail to confirm that they are still virgins. Because marriage is the only legal union between a man and a woman and anything outside this frame will result in a severe sentence. Zeba is confused when she hears the guard telling Nafisa to be prepared for the test. Latifa turned to Nafisa and explained to her what would happen in doing the test as she had experienced it:
You’ll have to take your underpants off and lift your skirt. The doctor’s going to use a flashlight to look at every hole in your body to see if a man’s been near it. Oh, yes, your backside is part of the exam. But the front is the main story. He’ll poke around looking to make sure your woman part still has its modesty veil. (Hashimi, 2016, pp. 68-69)

Latifa describes the humiliating virginity test performed on their bodies to see whether they were innocent and still upheld their families’ dignity with rage and sarcasm since she had seen it done before. Latifa was not telling a joke in the previous sentences; it was her own experience and the rest of those women in Chil Mahtab jail where their honor was detected in that tiny room where doctors were checking specific areas in their bodies. Latifa is exposing the baseless, meager laws constructed to impede their rights as human beings, what a woman may feel when her body is no longer her own, violated by strangers to reach a result of her innocence, which most of them confirmed to be not guilty, like Nafisa and Latifa. Those women in prison are armed with patience to pass this operation. Hashimi presents those women in Chil Mahtab to say that women in the feminist framework who do not accept unjust treatment can react differently and exist in different environments. They must not only be in positions, give speeches, and demand women or gender equality. Hashimi depicts the utopian vision of the westerners who regard themselves and their culture as the norm (notably the American culture) via those strong women of third-world, and various forms of struggles, “The history of that cultural practice in Europe and the United States carries within it as a major constitutive element, the unequal relationship of force between the outside Western ethnographer-observer and a primitive, or at least different but certainly weaker and less developed, non-Western society.” (Said, 1989, p. 217). The distinction is clear here; the west, non-west, superior, inferior.

Tamima, Kamal’s sister, where Zeba’s kids after the murder stayed with her, did not say much about her brother’s murder, that even her husband’s outrage about the death of her brother was more than her. Tamima had such a heroic heart when she was only half Fareed’s size; her cousin, she stood firmly facing him with outstretched hands to protect her dead brother’s son Basir, as Fareed intended to hit him. Tamima shows boundless courage, “You will not touch him!” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 154); her tone contains an imperative urge to leave him, “I’m not going to let a drunk torture my nephew” (p. 155). She feels the surge of vigor to prevent her cousin from abusing her verbally for he was cursing her, as well as to stop his assault to her nephew, who was a child. With such genuine rife images the novel depicted as Tamima, Hashimi poses a severe challenge to the “First World women and Western-trained women” and their “contributing to the continued ‘degradation’ of Third World women.” For western feminists whom attempt to represent third-world women without real understanding of their hardships and daily life misères which utterly differ from that of the western women. as Gayatri C. Spivak has stated (Cited in Lazreg, 2019, p. 10) by mirroring the ordinary sturdy woman, able to defeat the restraints.

Aneesaa, Yousif’s colleague in the office and “the head of the legal aid group” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 124), is a daring woman in her early forties who had lived abroad (Australia) for the war’s worst years. After the Taliban’s fall, Aneesaa returned to her country, and endeavored to use her foreign law degree for sound only. “Yusuf-Jan,” (Yousif is Zeba’s attorney), Aneesaa started, telling Yusuf about Afghanistan justice system “the justice system, if you can even call it that, is as twisted
as a mullah’s turban. There are ways to work with what we have, but it takes creativity and patience” (p. 124). She is a stout woman, fearless of confessing the truth and reality of what Afghan people were living. Throughout the real-sad audacious words in this speech, Hashimi strikes the readers with woman’s role in politics. She is aware of the mess and the policies to denote that woman’s place is not only in the house taking care of her family and the homely chores, likewise, but able to participate in setting the rules and laws, helping and supporting others besides her family’s duties, the perfect example of a sturdy woman. Thus, Hashimi manages to decenter and break the passive image of the third-world women in this country by presenting this positive image of Aneesa, who fights to change the rusted laws in her country. Likewise, mocking the current justice system using the method simile to convey the idea that the justice system is like the twisted turban of the Mulla, which means it is intricate and complicated as things intertwined with each other to show how the situation is absurd. For this, Third World women find in

Transnational feminism is an answer to their misgivings about their place in academic feminism; the economic and cultural homogenizing power of ‘globalization’; and their capacity to bring about change in the lives of women locally or transform the terms of the academic feminist discourse. (Lazreg, 2019, p. 11)

The reason for Kamal’s murder is that he was trying to rape a young girl the age of his daughters Shabnam and Kareema. There are many ways to end one’s life, and this is what Kamal did to Zeba, his children, and that little girl, Laylee. For this, Zeba sacrificed herself to protect that girl since “It was all about honor. Honor was a boulder that men placed on the shoulders of their daughters, their sisters, and their wives” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 197). The honor of that little girl was lost in Zeba’s courtyard. She took her space to banish the fallacy of killing her husband while she did not. She told her mother what had happened that day. When Zeba saw the little girl Laylee hidden beneath Kamal, who attempted to violate her, she managed to knock him over but slipped by Kareema’s plastic doll to fall to the ground. Within these minutes, Kamal leaped into Zeba, trying to suffocate her, and that was when Laylee struck the fatal hit to the back of his head to rescue the woman who wanted to save her. Narayan (1997) said, “Third-World feminists are rooted in and responsive to the problems women face within their national context; and to argue that they are not simpleminded emulations of Western feminist political- concerns.” (p.4). Here Hashimi wants to convey that third-world women cannot be judged from the position of English women since the latter will not understand them, as their cultures, conditions, and lives are different.

Zeba spent nineteen days in the shrine to test her mindset as people believe in shrines more than hospitals, “She’s back! Ladies, ladies, Malika Zeba has come back to us” (Hashimi, 2016, p.280). The result is that there was nothing wrong with Zeba; she was not insane. The time she spent at the shrine helped her to get back to her balance again. Zeba assisted many women in prison, solved as much as possible from the problems that kept them up at night and prayed for them even in the shrine. Now Zeba is their queen, and they are celebrating her arrival in the prison again. Those women in jail were waiting for her eagerly, praying for her to return safe and sound from the shrine. They missed her company and words whenever they visited her in the cell. She was listening to them and solving as much as possible of their issues, if there was nothing to do for them; she prayed for their comfort, which created a physical and psychological sense of unity.
Reflecting upon their solidarity, those women cast a feeling of frustration by being together. Ultimately, this shakes the “Universal Sisterhood as a cross-culturally singular, homogeneous group with the same interests, perspectives and goals, and similar experiences” (Barrett, 1992, p.78). Moreover, Hashimi points to their resistance, and revolution shattering the epistemological realm. Thus, “In the context of feminist research and practice, feminist activists crossed national borders to produce transnational forms of women’s organizing, and feminist researchers produced a rich scholarship on gender, globalization, and transnationalism.” (Fernandes, 2013, p. 102).

As Hashmi’s goal is to correct the misrepresentation of her countrywomen in this novel, she deliberately employs a woman to defend Zeba. Sultana was interested in covering Zeba’s case. She contacted Yousif to get some information, but he was surprised, expecting the reporter to be a man, not a woman. Detecting the astonishment throughout their conversation, thinking she studied abroad, “I graduated from Kabul University… We do have an educational system here, you know. You don’t have to go to the United States to learn something” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 294). Hashimi wanted to emphasize that women in Afghanistan occupy different jobs and positions. They follow their passion just like Sultana. She became a journalist because she liked to know the truth. With her family’s support, she achieved her goal and is now the only female journalist willing to make a report about a prisoner in Chil Mahtab. Furthermore, the author hinted at the westerner’s look at the easterners, how the latter was left on the outside debates alienated when the “Westerners see themselves alone as the ones that sort, differentiate,” (Grewal & Grewal, 1994, p. 7). Those westerners think that third-world women will always need their support and assistance, and they cannot study in their countries for they have nothing, and if they do study abroad, they will only imitate their western sisters. Minces described third-world women as, “those few Arab women who had the privilege of studying in Western universities and coming in touch with “civilization” which allowed them —once back home— to copy Western feminists” (Cited in Zairi, 2003, pp. 24-25), Minces’ claim indicates that third-world women have no civilization, and if they get the credit to study abroad, they will only imitate their peers for they have nothing special. Yet, Hashimi shatters this claim by the character of Sultana.

Zeba’s family, her lawyer, Yousif, and the rest of her surroundings; the journalist, relatives, her cellmates, and neighbors did everything to defend her and prove her innocence. The women in Chil Mahtab prison, whose stories ranged from tragic to absurd, showed magnificent solidarity to Zeba, sitting in a semicircle around her a few hours before her sentence, attempting to comfort her. With their words of support and compassion, they made the last few hours unforgettable, “No matter what happens, your name will be painted on the walls of this jail, in our blood if that’s what it comes down to, for as long as each of us stays here” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 330), taking into account the Testimonies and the true story of Zeba, who was trying to “prevent her home from becoming a den of sin” (p.333). The judge acquitted Zeba of the crime of murdering her husband, making her sentence the time she spent in Chil Mahtab and a fine of one thousand Afghans. After Zeba’s release, her children are delivered to her by Tamina. Zeba spent months at her house and “used the time to recover” (p.339). Well, it is the best Scenario ever as women need a break, and it is simply the usual thing they do to pass the problematic phase by isolating themselves from the external world. She took her time at the house with her children, who she had
not seen for months, to breathe and recover, take care of them and get back to life. She started to live again, setting peace of mind norms.

Hashimi elaborated on Laylee’s struggle, who was raped by Kamal and suffered much at a young age, “kill me” (p.342) when she pleaded with her parents, especially her mother, to put an end to her suffering after the incident. What the author tried to convey is that Afghanistan society does not only construct in one direction as depicted by the west; not everything is based on honor for some families. In the case of Laylee’s family, they did everything possible to bring her back to life. Being realistic, Hashimi shed light on many aspects to demonstrate the various experiences lived by women and girls in different forms of families. This is what she successfully wanted to accomplish, women and girls are not oppressed, subjugated, and violated; contrarily, they may have supportive families, and when they do not, they forge their zone, fight, and achieve the brightest victory ever. This idea is simply assured by the words the novel ended with “I am more than fine” (p. 342); Zeba confirmed that every woman could start a new beginning with refreshing breezes forward without locking back. Hashimi proves that “Feminist scholars have increasingly sought to develop transnational perspectives to break from national narratives and decenter U.S.-oriented approaches.” (Fernandes, 2013, p.2). Furthermore, she grounded the affairs of women and girls in Afghanistan by constructing a terrain of coalition and solidarity.

Conclusion

Third-world women have long been stereotyped by western feminists’ discourses in their pervasive depiction. The study aimed and succeeded in revealing the false generalization and sisterhood of those feminists in the west, since they embraced superiority in their attitudes towards their peers. Deconstructing the passive image of third-world women, which is constructed by the Western feminists, and representing them again as equal members to their counterparts, is what Hashimi has done accurately throughout her novel. Nadia Hashimi’s A House Without Windows centers on the female heroines struggling with vigor in a country based on unjust norms and laws where women’s rights stand in nothing but a vacuum. Throughout the distinct author’s voice, Hashimi successfully depicts how those women have been brave enough to fight for their rights and freedom to change the worn system in the light of Transnational Feminist theory. The novel manages to shed light on the diverse forms of oppression women encounter in their lives and show how those women are connected and assist each other in coping with the persecution of the patriarchal society. Thereupon avoiding the fallacy that third-world women have to endure from their western counterparts.

About the Author

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Derivation between English and Arabic with Reference to Translation: A Contrastive Analysis Study

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Abstract

The current study aimed to explore derivation as a linguistic phenomenon between the English and Arabic languages and to identify its most prominent characteristics and divisions. It also sought to deduce the main similarities and differences between the two languages in this regard from both typological and contrastive perspectives. To achieve the main aim, this study adopted a descriptive analytical approach. In fact, the analysis of morphological phenomenon across disparate languages is of linguistic value, as it enriches the linguistic repertoire with some insights from comparative studies, which are considered scarce in this field. Findings of this study shows that the common features between the Arabic and English languages is that they derive new forms of words from a single root word with an association in meaning between the produced words. However, the derivation process in Arabic is more complex and diverse compared with English, in which derivation can mainly be archived through affixation. Additionally, this study revealed that the distinction between the two languages may result in some translation problems, as some derived words in Arabic have no equivalent in the English language. Accordingly, some solutions to this dilemma were suggested throughout this research, including the application of established translation techniques proposed by Newmark (1988) and other translation scholars, such as paraphrasing, transference, notes, and synonymy. Finally, it is worth noting that exploring the similarities and differences between languages has important pedagogical implications, as this might contribute to facilitating the learning and teaching process of a foreign language.

Keywords: Arabic, contrastive analysis, derivation, English, translation problems

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Introduction

Studying linguistic phenomena across languages is a fascinating area of research that has attracted linguists for decades. As a matter of fact, natural languages share many commonalities, but there still exist numerous differences even between closely related languages. However, it is possible to investigate phenomena of the same kind in non-related languages such as English and Arabic on the basis of contrastive and typological analyses. While typology is a linguistics discipline concerned with the study of similarities and differences that exist among languages, contrastive analysis is an area of research that aims to identify, analyze, and contrast linguistic phenomena among languages.

Derivation, on the other hand, is a word-formation process which is generally used by linguists to refer to extracting a new word from another. In the English language, the term refers to a sub-field of morphology that focuses on the principles governing the construction of new words. Similarly, derivation in Arabic refers to the generation of new word forms from an original root word.

However, English and Arabic are two distinct languages that differ from each other genealogically, typologically and linguistically. English is one of the most widely spoken Indo-European languages in the world. According to the morphological classification, the English language is highly inflectional, and characterized by the presence of clear signs of analytical system. On the other hand, the Arabic language belongs to the Semitic languages (one of the branches of the Afro-Asian Semitic language family). Arabic is an inflectional language as well, with elements of fusion and agglutination. A number of structural and lexical difficulties arise to learners who learn one of the two languages or translators who transmit meaning between them due to the fact that English and Arabic are unrelated languages. In addition, the two languages have unique linguistic systems, reflecting the characteristics of both tongues and their cultures, and even the same linguistic phenomena could be interpreted differently in them.

Many linguistic aspects have been heavily researched by language scholars. Nonetheless, a few aspects, such as derivation, still warrant further investigation and inquiry. The originality of this inquiry lies in the fact that there are a few papers that examine derivation in the English and Arabic languages, and so this research aims to elucidate the term and offer a holistic description of derivation in both languages.

Further, finding equivalents of some derived words can be problematic for translators as some derivatives or language forms have no equivalent in the other language. In fact, achieving perfect equivalence in rendering a source language term into a target language one is not possible, as each language has its unique grammatical, lexical, and textual systems that distinguish one from the other. As Arabic and English are incongruent languages, linguistically and culturally, a translator is bound to face challenges in the process of translation. These challenges are likely to compound, especially if the text features new terms, neologisms, a lack of equivalence, and other linguistic and cultural discrepancies.

Hence, the present study is an attempt to reveal the possible universals of the two languages pertaining to derivation, and to determine as much as possible the similarities and differences between them. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:
1. What is derivation in Arabic?

2. What is derivation in English?

3. To what extent are English and Arabic similar or divergent from each other in terms of derivation?

4. How to resolve translation problems related to derivation between the English and Arabic languages?

The results obtained from this research are significant not only because they contribute to the development of the linguistic field but also help establish the characteristics of both languages in relation to the phenomenon in question. Additionally, these findings can be of significant practical value, as they can be used for language learning and teaching purposes.

Finally, this paper is organized as follows: the first section provides a brief overview of the subject matter along with the definitions of the main terms used in this research. The second section presents a review of previous studies in this field, with a focus on a detailed description of derivation in the two languages. The next section examines research methods, and the last two sections are devoted for reporting the main findings and drawing some conclusions and implications.

**Literature Review**

The review of literature focuses on three elements: (1) a survey of previous studies on the subject; (2) describing derivation in the English language; and (3) describing derivation in the Arabic language.

**Previous Studies**

Reviewing the available literature about derivation between English and Arabic, it has been found that there is little research that deals with the issue in depth and with detailed explanation. Most of the studies at hand tackled the issue from a larger morphological angle such as word formation processes and affixation processes in the two languages. Following is an overview of the main findings of these studies:

A number of studies discussed the common word formation processes between the English and Arabic languages. For example, Giaber (2017) investigated the subject and found that English and Arabic have differences in word formation. While English relies heavily on affixation, Arabic relies on the combination of roots with morphological patterns. On the other hand, Nasser (2008) addressed the same issue and found that there are different types of these processes. In English, there are eleven processes of word formation; they are acronymy, blending, borrowing, antonomasia, conversion, backformation, compounding, derivation, clipping, folk etymology, and coinage. In Arabic, there are nine processes of word formation; they include acronymy, blending, borrowing, antonomasia, conversion, backformation, compounding, derivation, and clipping. Moreover, Ibrahim (2010) discussed noun formation processes between English and Arabic and reported that both English and Arabic share common linguistic phenomena in noun-formation processes as well as their exploitation of the language by forming productive rules and patterns.
The similarities are found in some general universals, such as affixation, compounding, blending, onomatopoeia, borrowing, diminutives, conversion and acronyms.

With regard to verb creation processes in the two languages, Farkhaeva et al (2018) compared and contrasted verb formation procedures in English and Arabic and revealed that affixation is the most productive means of verb derivation in English and one of the main ways of morphological derivation in Arabic, along with inner inflection and compounding. Furthermore, agentive forms construction was investigated by Hamed and Ali (2020) who pointed out the two languages are similar in the derivation process which both undergo in terms of agent forms construction. In addition, they indicated that English incorporates a large number of suffixes, some quasi suffixes and few morphological processes. In Arabic, this derivation is strictly associated with two patterns determined by the morphological structure of the verb which is the sole source of derivation.

A few studies dealt specifically with certain aspects pertaining to the main theme, such as affixation. Igaab and Kareem (2018) described and analyzed affixation in English and Arabic and found that this phenomenon exists in both languages. However, while English is concerned with the types of affixes through the process of affixation, Arabic is interested in the idea of al-wazn in the process of affixation and it does not pay much attention to the types of affixes. In addition, Al-foadi (2018) investigated derivation as the main way of adapting new terms to Arabic. The analysis revealed that derivation is the safest and the most effective way to adapt and assimilate foreign terms to Arabic, which he described as "the trusted keeper" of Arabic. With regard to the derivation of nouns between English and Arabic, Al-Akkam and Hashim (2009) examined the issue to draw some insights about noun derivation in the two languages. They pointed out that, in Arabic, derivation of noun depends on what such nouns function in the sentences in which they appear, whereas, in English the derivation of nouns depends on the sources from which they derived. In other words, the difficulty of derivation of nouns in English exists due to arbitrariness of derivational affixes whereas, in Arabic, the derivation of nouns is wider and more salient than in English.

**Derivation in English**

Derivation in the English language is primarily achieved by adding an affix to a base word. Affixes are of two types: prefixes (particles that are added to the beginning of the word) and suffixes (particles that are added to the end of the word). Al-Jarf (1994) classified English affixation system as follows:

**Prefixes**

Most of prefixes in English can be added to base forms of different classes of words (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc). They are divided into the following categories:
- **Class-changing prefixes**: those that change the part of speech of a word. Examples: enact, enlarge, befriend, becalm, ablaze, ashore.
- **Class-maintaining prefixes**: prefixes that do not change the class of a word. Example: unjust, incomplete, rewrite, misunderstand, discomfort, overdo.
Suffixes
Unlike prefixes, most of suffixes change the part of speech of the word to which it is added.

Class-changing suffixes: they can be divided into the following sub-categories:

Verb-forming suffixes: as in (beatify, strengthen, utilize, fabricate).
Noun-forming suffixes: as in (writer, trainee, approval, pleasure, happiness).
Adjective-forming suffixes: as in (logical, comfortable, comprehensible, cheerful, competitive).
Adverb-forming suffixes: mostly (ly), as in (quickly, slowly,) and (clockwise, moneywise, backward).

Derivation in Arabic
Derivation in Arabic was defined by Arab linguists as follows: "forming a new word from another word which is similar in meaning but different in form" (Algorjani, 1983, p. 18). It was also defined by Alshokani (2000), as: "To find an association between two words in meaning and structure, so you can relate one to the other" (p. 117).

Types of Derivation in Arabic
Derivation in Arabic can be divided into four main types: simple derivation, metathesis, root modification, and blending.

Simple Derivation
It is the most common type of derivation in the Arabic language; and defined as: "a word formation process that involves forming a new word from a root word consisting of three sounds" (Alsuti, 1968, p. 346).

Examples of this derivation type includes the words "Daraba" (to beat), and "katab" (to write) as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Some examples of the derivatives of the root word "Daraba"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ضَرَبََ</td>
<td>Daraba</td>
<td>to beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ضاربَ</td>
<td>Darib</td>
<td>beater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مضرربَ</td>
<td>maDroob</td>
<td>beaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يضرربَ</td>
<td>yaDrib</td>
<td>to beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أضرربَ</td>
<td>eDrib</td>
<td>beat &quot;imperative&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another common example of simple derivation is the verb "kataba". Look at table 2.
Table 2. *The derivations of the root word "kataba"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>كَتَبََ</td>
<td>Kataba</td>
<td>to write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>كاتِبَ</td>
<td>Katib</td>
<td>writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مكتوبَ</td>
<td>maktoob</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>كِتَابَ</td>
<td>kitab</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اكتبََ</td>
<td>oktob</td>
<td>write &quot;imperative&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Metathesis**

A process of creating new words by shifting the order of a root word sounds to produce word forms that are relevant in meaning (Almagrabi, 1908).

Table 3. *Examples of Arabic metathesis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>بَرَسََ</td>
<td>Barasa</td>
<td>to be hard on one's opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سَرَبََ</td>
<td>Saraba</td>
<td>to go away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>رَسَبََ</td>
<td>Rasaba</td>
<td>to fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بَسَرََ</td>
<td>Basara</td>
<td>to frown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>رَبَسََ</td>
<td>Rabasa</td>
<td>to hit with a hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سَبَرََ</td>
<td>Sabara</td>
<td>to probe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Root Modification**

It involves an alternation of the position of the root word sounds and the retention of the original meaning (Alsuti, 1968). Examples are shown below:

Table 4. *Examples of Root Modification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>صَرِيرََ،ََصريفَ</td>
<td>Sareer, Sareef</td>
<td>squeak, sound of winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خَرَبََ،َخرقَ</td>
<td>Kharab, kharq</td>
<td>destroy, violate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>هَدِئَ،َهدَرَ</td>
<td>Hadeel, hadeer</td>
<td>sound of pigeon, sound of water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blending**

It is a word formation process that is rarely used in the Arabic language. It refers to the coinage of new words by merging two or more words to form a new item that signifies a relevant meaning (Almagrabi, 1908).
Table 5. Examples of blending in Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>برمائي</td>
<td>barmaie</td>
<td>This word means &quot;amphibious&quot; (formed by combining the words: barr &quot;land&quot; and ma'a &quot;water&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ليوهديوني</td>
<td>kahrooDawie</td>
<td>This word means &quot;photoelectric&quot; (formed by combining the words: kahraba'a &quot;electricity&quot; and Daw'e &quot;light&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abstract Nouns of Quality

Another category of derivation that can be added to the list of Arabic derivation is known as "abstract nouns of quality", which is often utilized to translate newly emerging abstract, scientific and technical terms into the Arabic language. It involves adding a final "yaa" and "the feminine ta'a" to the end of a foreign borrowed word (Wafi, 2004). So, in essence, it is a systematic adaptation or a naturalization process, such as the following examples:

Table 6. Examples of the adaptation of abstract nouns of quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>الأيديولوجية</td>
<td>alideologiah</td>
<td>adapted from &quot;ideology&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الفيزيائية</td>
<td>alfezia'yah</td>
<td>adapted from &quot;physical&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الفيزيائية</td>
<td>alSaydalanyah</td>
<td>adapted from &quot;pharmaceutical&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ألوتوتوقراطية</td>
<td>alotoqrateeh</td>
<td>adapted from &quot;autocracy&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important terms used in this paper are defined below based on Merriam-Webster dictionary's definitions of these words:

Definition of Terms

Derivation
The formation of a word from another word or base (as by the addition of a usually noninflectional affix)"Strategize" was formed by derivation from "strategy."

Stem
The base form of a word or verb (e.g., write).
Affix
A bound inflectional or derivational element, as a prefix, infix, or suffix, added to a base or stem to form a new stem or a word. The affix in the word "attendance" is "-ance."

Prefix
An affix attached to the beginning of a word, base, or phrase and serving to produce a derivative word or an inflectional form.

Suffix
An affix occurring at the end of a word, base, or phrase.

Methods
Design
This research employs the descriptive approach to study derivation in the Arabic and English languages. Moreover, the contrastive analysis research paradigm has been selected for this study.

The descriptive design is a research method that relies on extrapolation and collection of previous data, and then displaying it according to a specific pattern.

The analytical approach is also utilized to draw some similarities and differences between the two languages in this field and to shed light on some translation problems resulting from variations in the two languages.

Procedure
Data for this research were collected from authentic resources such as trusted dictionaries, encyclopedias, scholarly books and language corpora. Then, some conclusions and findings were drawn based on the questions under investigation.

At first, the researcher collected the data about derivation in Arabic from reliable sources, including Arabic references composed by Arab linguists, and then translated the piled data into English. Arabic examples provided in the text were transcribed using Latin scripts and an Arabic transliteration system is included in the last section (Appendix A).

In addition, all information related to the subject matter in English was collected from credible published sources. Then, after providing a complete description of derivation in the two languages, some conclusions were drawn regarding the similarities and differences between the two languages. Lastly, some related translation problems were highlighted and reviewed, and a number of solutions to these problems were suggested based on established arguments retrieved from solid sources in the field of translation.

Findings
Comparison and Contrast between Derivation in English and Arabic
After reviewing derivation in the English language and the Arabic language separately, it is critical to clarify the main similarities and differences between the two languages in this regard, which are as follows:
Similarities

- Both languages generate new words from a single original word known as the "root" word.
- There is an association in meaning between the generated words and the original word.
- Affixes can be derivational and inflectional in both languages.
- In both languages, derivation can maintain or change the class of the word.

Differences

- Derivation in Arabic is more complex than English derivation. In English, derivation is more straightforward as it is mainly achieved through affixation.
- Derivation in the English language involves an "addition" relation to the original word, while in the Arabic language, in addition to "addition" other processes are involved to create new words such as alternation of sound positions, blending and shift of sound order.
- English and Arabic do not share affixes that show common origin or meaning.
- English derivational suffixes do not close off a word, that is, after a suffix one can sometimes add another derivational suffix and other inflections (e.g., write, writers). The same processes can be achieved in Arabic by altering sound positions of a word or throw diacritics (e.g., كاتب (writer), كتاب (book), كتاب (writers)).
- English lists the meanings expressed by each affix but in Arabic there is no clear indication of the meanings that Arabic affixes express.
- English details some constraints on affixation within a word phonologically, syntactically and semantically while Arabic does not refer to such constrains of affixation within words.
- There is no patternization for derivations in the English language, while in the Arabic language there are fixed patterns for nouns and verbs.
- The new forms can be hyphenated in English but there is no hyphenation in the orthographical system of the Arabic language.

Translation Problems Related to Derivation

The morphology of the Arabic language allows several forms of the same word according to the well-established patterns of nouns and verbs in the Arabic language. One of the most common noun patterns in the Arabic language are: كتاب, كتاب, كتاب, كتاب. These derivatives do not necessarily have corresponding words for each of them in the target language, such as English. Consider the following example:

The word (Sidq: truthfulness) as a root word will normally produce: (Sadiq: truthful), (Sadoeq (male): extremely honest), (Sadoeqah/ sidqeeh (female): extremely honest), (miSdqan) and (moSadiq: attester).

Moreover, the opposite root word (kaTHib: lying) will produce: (kaTHab: liar), (kaTHoob (M): extremely liar), (kaTHoobah (F): extremely liar), etc.

As can be seen in the examples above, not all derivatives have a single one-to-one equivalent.

In addition, some of these forms are marked by gender, as being feminine or masculine.
nouns, which constitutes another problem. English, unlike Arabic, does not have inflections that can be attached to nouns to mark gender such as the Arabic (feminine ta'a) in words like (Sadooq (M)/ Sadooqah (F)). As in following example:


She is an extremely truthful girl.

As can be seen in the example above, the word (صدوقة) has no direct equivalent in English. Therefore, it is rendered into "extremely truthful" by adding an adverb with a gradable adjective to denote the intended meaning. In addition, there is no marker to signal gender that can be attached to an English word. Yet, the gender of the subject is indicated by using the third person feminine singular pronoun "she".

Suggested Solutions

It is a convention among translators community to resort to the well-known translation strategies as a solution to confront any translation problem. A selection of these strategies was applied in this research.

There are many translation strategies developed by scholars throughout the ages and categorized into different taxonomies to solve translation dilemmas. The most popular paradigms of which are: Newmark's (1988), Vinay and Darbelent's (1995), Hervey and Higgins's (2002), Holmes's (1988), among others.

The most appropriate techniques from the wide array of techniques were selected to be applied in this research. Following are some of the translation procedures illustrated by Newmark (2006):

Paraphrase

It is a common writing and translation procedure that involves providing an explanation of the meaning of a text or segment of a text in the writers' own words. Such as translating the cultural word "tayamum" into "dry ablution".

Synonymy

This technique involves using a near TL equivalent to an SL word in a context where a precise equivalent may or may not exist. A synonymy is only appropriate where literal translation is not possible, and the word is not important enough for componential analysis. For example, there are several names for the word "lion" in Arabic such as "gadanfar, layth, qaswarah, etc.". All these forms are rendered into English as "lion". Another example involves translating the cultural word "hijab" into "veil".

Transference

A technique in which an SL word is transferred to the TL using the TL alphabets. It is commonly associated with cultural words such as translating the Islamic word "_face ظه، Kiblah" (the direction of prayer) into "Kibla".

Descriptive Equivalence

A procedure in which the translator describes the meaning of a term in several words. It is
commonly used for translating culture-specific words. Such as translating the word "Sadoooq" in Arabic into "extremely truthful", and the word "kholaالخُلعََ" in Arabic into "divorce initiated by the wife".

**Functional Equivalence**

A procedure that requires the use of a cultural free word to neutralize or generalize an SL word when there is no equivalent for an SL word. Such as translating the word "hodoodالحدود" in Arabic, as an adjudication, into "penalty".

**Notes, Additions, Glosses**

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) suggested that a translator can supply additional information in the form of notes, glosses to clarify the meaning of a given word (cited in Newmark, 2006).

Additional information in the translation may take various forms:

- Within the text as an alternative to the translated word included between round brackets, or as an adjectival clause, or a noun in apposition. It can be also included in brackets for a literal translation of a word, or as a clarifying phrase in parenthesis.
- Notes at the bottom of the page.
- Notes at the end of the chapter.
- Notes or glossary at the end of the book.
- 

**Couplets**

Couplets, triplets, quadruplets are translation procedures that involve the use of more than one technique conjointly to deal with a single problem. Such as the use of transference together with paraphrasing and notes.

**Discussion**

The current analysis of derivation in English and Arabic revealed some interesting findings. The most remarkable result is that this phenomenon exists in both languages supporting the universality of some aspects among world languages. However, the two languages are contrasted in that derivation is more varied and branched in Arabic than in English. While the process relies mainly on affixation in English, Arabic relies on the combination of roots with morphological patterns. This finding confirms with the study of Giaber (2017) who came up with the same conclusion. It is also consistent with the findings of the study by Al-Hamidi, et al (2020) and Ibrahim (2010) who concluded that there are universal similarities between the Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic language families. If the two languages are considered representatives of the two families. This might support the evidence of the monogenesis hypothesis, which assumes the existence of one origin for all languages, a single proto-language.

The current study also revealed that affixation is the essential method for deriving new words in English while Arabic adopts ready patterns (awzan) as a main derivation process. This confirms with the findings of Hamid and Ali (2020) who asserted that in English, the derivation process incorporates a large number of suffixes, while in Arabic, the process is associated with patterns determined by the morphological structure of the verb, the sole source of derivation. It is also consistent with Igaab and Kareem's conclusion (2018) who found that English is concerned with the types of affixes through the process of affixation. On the other hand, Arabic
is interested in the idea of al-wazn in the process of affixation and it does not pay much attention to the types of affixes though both of the two languages have similar ways of classifying affixes. Finally, this study concluded that the derivation process in Arabic is more complex compared with English. This finding is also in line with Al-Akkam and Hashim's (2009) who indicated that while derivation in English is characterized by arbitrariness of derivational affixes, Arabic derivational system is wider and more varied than English.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore linguistic derivation in the English and Arabic languages and to draw some similarities and differences between the two languages in this regard. It also sought to shed light on a few translation problems resulting from the difference between the two languages pertaining to derivation, and to propose some solutions to such problems. The originality of this research lies in the fact that it is the first of its kind to address these issues in a holistic manner.

One of the common features between the Arabic and English languages is that both languages derive new forms of words from a single root word with an association in meaning between the produced words. On the other hand, it was found that the derivation process in Arabic is more complex than derivation in English which can be mainly achieved through affixation. In addition, the Arabic language is characterized by a morphological system that allows the generation of several words from one root according to the fixed noun and verb patterns of Arabic. However, it is not straightforward to find equivalents for each of these generated words in the target language, which ultimately creates a translation problem.

One of the main strategies to tackle translation dilemmas of this kind is to apply the established translation techniques laid out by translation scholars, as is the case with other translation complexities. These techniques include, for example, paraphrasing, notes, transference and synonym.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the descriptive study of languages and the analysis of the common and contrasting phenomena between them have positive pedagogical implications, as this can contribute to enhancing the learning and teaching process of a foreign language.

Practical Implications

The current study provides some practical implications which can be summed up as follows:

- The descriptive study of a language helps provide a deeper understanding of the language in question and its distinct characteristics.
- Exploring the common phenomena between languages facilitates the process of learning and positive transfer of shared language elements.
- It can predict the potential learning problems and difficulties that learners of either language may encounter in the process of learning.
- It also assists teachers to enrich their educational content and develop effective teaching methods.
• It helps explore new research gaps which are of importance to researchers who are interested in this field of study.
• It enhances the understanding of the nature of foreign languages and contributes to the enrichment of linguistic studies.
• Comparative analytical studies are particularly important for linguists to help identify universal among natural languages.

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References


Appendices
Appendix A
Arabic Transliteration System
Throughout this work, the following transliteration system was adopted to spell out the pronunciation of the Arabic words used in this research:

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The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of “the Other” in Robert Warren’s *Blackberry Winter*

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Abstract
Robert Warren’s *Blackberry Winter* is popular for its distinction in depicting a variety of critical issues from the perspective of a 9-year-old protagonist. Set in a small village in the United States after World War II, *Blackberry Winter* tells the story of Seth, the hero, when he was nine years old, in which the deconstruction and reconstruction of the image of “the Other” are widely indicated. The novel reveals the author’s profound insights towards society, history as well as human beings by creating various images of “the Other” worth discussing. The purpose of this paper is to interpret the deconstruction and reconstruction of the human “the Other” image and non-human “the Other” image in Robert Warren’s *Blackberry Winter* from three levels—gender, race, and natural poetic. Based on the previous research related to imagery, alienation and ecological thinking, this paper will shed new light on the textual significance of “the Other” in *Blackberry Winter* by manifesting how human “the Other” image and non-human “the Other” image are deconstructed and reconstructed throughout the novel. The analysis of the novel is unfolded by close reading and comparison. It is found that the novel challenges the binary opposition between “the Self” and “the Other” through deconstructing and reconstructing marginalized and stereotyped images of human “the Other” and non-human “the Other”.

Keywords: *Blackberry Winter*, deconstruction, reconstruction, image; the Other; binary opposition

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Introduction

Robert Warren is one of the most influential writers in the United States in the 20th century. He has written a lot with his literary creation began in the 1920s and has gone through more than six decades. He is a literary critic, poet, novelist, biographer and literature professor. He was the leading advocate of the New Criticism as well as a physiocrat. His pastoral life during his childhood had a significant impact on his literary creation. Most of his works were against the erosion of the North’s science and technology and industrial civilization on the agricultural South, nostalgic for the agrarian society, longing for pastoral life and ancient traditional virtues. During the ten years from 1943 to 1953, he did not write any poetry, but mainly engaged in novel writing, and Blackberry Winter was created during this period. As one of Robert Warren’s classical novels, Blackberry Winter is famous for its unique perspective of childhood narration through which profound changes in politics, history and culture have taken in American society after the Second World War.

Previous studies have explored the symbolic meaning of the natural images, the cognitive growth process of the protagonist and the environmental awareness in Blackberry Winter. However, few have paid attention to the theme of “the Other”. The Other is a concept opposite to the Self, which refers to all people and things other than the Self (Koritar, 2017). The Other is essential to the definition, construction, and perfection of the Self; and the formation of the Self depends on the difference between the Self and the Other, and on the Self successfully distinguishing itself from the Other (Fenneke, 2017). The Other implies the status of the marginal, the subordinate, the inferior, the oppressed, and the excluded (Hart, 2015). It is of great significance to Western literary theories which pursue justice, equality, freedom and liberation, and it becomes an essential tool for the theoretical construction and literary criticism. Thus this paper aims to expound how the novel questions the traditional binary opposition between “the Self” and “the Other” through unusual characterization of the image of woman, the black as well as nature. To be more specific, from the perspective of gender, the female image, as traditional “the Other” opposite to the male image, is deconstructed and reconstructed with the description of Seth’s mother, Sallie; from the perspective of race, the black image, as traditional “the Other” opposite to the white image, is deconstructed and reconstructed with the description of Old Jebb; and from the perspective of natural poetic, nature, as traditional “the Other” opposite to humans, is deconstructed and reconstructed with the description of a series of natural scenes, such as woods, poultry, and floods. It is expected to find that the unique perspective of deconstruction and reconstruction of the image of human “the Other” and non-human “the Other” in Blackberry Winter endow the novel with more significant literary values.

Literature Review

The concept of the Other was first applied by feminism to the criticism of patriarchal society, that is, to criticize the patriarchy’s construction of women as the Other (Ulanov, 1973). Since World War II, the concept of the Other has emerged one after another in cultural and political criticism. Postcolonial critics use related theories to emphasize equality, difference and pluralism, opposing racial discrimination and highlighting the great practical significance of the theory of “the Other”. As Said (1979) explained in Orientalism, imperialism is not only aggression and conquest by force, but also a discourse construction of Western superiority theory. Later, the concept of the Other was widely used by postcolonial criticism to analyze imperialism and the
oppressive relationship between empire and colony (Minkkinen, 1992). The deconstructionist theorist Derrida (2002) fundamentally criticizes the ontology that divides the binary opposition, and advocates that “the Self” should respect “the Other” in an ethically asymmetric relationship. In the Western philosophical tradition, when dividing the Self and the Other, it is accustomed to advocating the subjectivity of the Self, emphasizing the understanding and testing of external things from a subjective perspective (Hu & Xiao, 2013). This mode of thinking implies the intention of transforming and assimilating “the Other”. In this tendentious contrast, “the Other” is often on the disadvantaged side, and its subjectivity is ignored (Marchesini, 2015).

With the emergence of new problems such as ethnic conflicts, religious disputes and geopolitical conflicts in today’s world, “the Other” has also been interpreted differently or even diametrically in the postmodern context due to its inherent self-deconstruction (Ye, 2019). *Blackberry Winter* is set in a post-WWII context in a rural area in the American South, in which the author depicts the characters of different genders, races and classes from a unique perspective and describes the natural scenes of the rural South of the United States with delicate and sophisticated language. Previous scholars have done some significant research on *Blackberry Winter*, mainly including interpretation of mythological archetypes, interpretation of images, the image of the South in children’s eyes, the theme of uncertainty, Seth’s cognitive growth, etc. So far no studies on the deconstruction and reconstruction of “the Other” image in *Blackberry Winter* has been dealt with. As a matter of fact, “the Other” is a prominent element in this narrative. And the novel presents human “the Other” as well as non-human “the Other”, where human “the Other” includes women and the blacks while non-human “the Other” includes animals and plants in nature. Through close reading and comparison with traditional writing of the image of “the Other”, the study on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the image of “the Other”, including woman, the blacks and nature, is another critical interpretation of this novel.

### Analysis

**Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Female Image in Blackberry Winter**

The novel creates the marginalized situation of the female “the Other” under the rotten foundation of patriarchy, deconstructing and reconstructing the traditional female image. There have been two large-scale feminist waves in the history of Western women’s liberation. The first wave of the feminist movement that emerged in the mid-19th century ended with women gaining universal suffrage. After the 1920s, the feminist movement fell silent. The rise of World War II, especially the upsurge of social movements in the 1960s, provided a favorable social environment for the revival of the feminist movement. The second wave of the feminist movement aimed to fight for legal and social equality for women. The enlargement of the connotation of feminist consciousness has accelerated the extension of the feminist movement to social economy, politics, and culture. This trend not only affects the political life of Western countries but also greatly influences the entire Western culture, bringing about a huge shift in women individuals’ way of thinking (Van Den Wijngaard, 1994). And the change of consciousness has great impact on literary creation during that period, which shapes later literary tradition of feminism. In traditional literary works, the presentation of women’s image is more or less distorted, either intentionally or unintentionally, mainly reflecting the imagination of men, conforming to social norms and shaped by the power of the patriarchal social system. On the one hand, the shaping of female characters...
is either women who are beautiful and gentle or those who have a unique maternal brilliance, which is an absolute attraction for men. Women of this type are all ideal matches in the minds of men because they satisfy the original imagination and emotional desires of men. On the other hand, women with rebellious and deviant personalities against men also appear in a minority of literary works. The depiction of their vicious, sinister, scheming traits is actually a kind of demonization and exaggeration of women who are threatening or who are more capable than men and do not obey the rules of patriarchal society.

The portrayal of Seth’s mother in *Blackberry Winter* is quite different from the traditional portrayal of women’s image, which reflects the deconstruction and reconstruction of the female image. The author’s characterization of Seth’s mother in *Blackberry Winter* did not go to those two extremes. Instead, the description of Seth’s mother in the novel mainly focuses on the scene where she urged Seth to put on shoes, the scene of communicating with the tramp as well as Seth’s memory and evaluation. The narrative plot and author’s creative concept tend to shape an ordinary woman with a charismatic personality. Seth’s mother, an ordinary housewife and the hostess of the entire farm, is independent and strong-willed and can properly handle the affairs of both the family and the farm, which is entirely different from the traditional image of women in a patriarchal society. This unusual mode of character setting makes women, who are regarded as the marginal group, have new individual values. The author describes Seth’s mother in the text like this:

> “Many women would have been afraid with the strange man who they knew had that knife in his pocket. That is, if they were alone in the house with nobody but a nine-year-old boy. And my mom was alone, for my father had gone off and Dellie the cook was down at her cabin because she wasn’t feeling well. But my mom wasn’t afraid. She wasn’t a big woman, but she clear and brisk about everything she did, and looked everybody and everything right in the eye from her own blue eyes in her tanned face. She had been the first woman in the county to ride a horse astride (that was back when she was a girl and long before I was born), and I’ve seen her snatch up a pump gun and go out and knock a chicken hawk out of air like a busted skeet when he came over her chicken yard. She was a steady and self-reliant woman.” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 365)

It can be concluded from the above quotation that Seth’s mother is a rational, independent, brave and strong woman, who can be calm and orderly and manages to resolve the uncertain danger when facing an unacquainted tramp alone. The novel ends with Seth’s mother selling the farm and moving to the city to live with her sister after his father died of lockjaw. Seth recalled, “But she never took hold after my father’s death, and she died within three years, right in strong middle life. My aunt always said, ‘Sallie just died of a broken heart, she was so devoted’” (Brooks & Warren, 2006, p. 377). According to Seth’s recollection, “when I think of her now after all the years she has been dead, I think of her brown hands, not big but somewhat square for a woman’s hands, with square-cut nails. They looked, as a matter of fact, more like a young boy’s hands than a grown woman’s. But back then it never crossed my mind that she would ever be dead” (Brooks & Warren, 2006, p. 365). It is easy to know that Seth’s mother has been physically strong since she was young. Her early death was caused by the broken family after her husband’s death, making her a lonely, heartbroken widow suffering from profound misery and sorrow. The above discussion shed light
on the concept presented in the novel that women can be independent of men’s control and deal with their life alone, and the relationship between men and women is interdependence rather than binary opposition.

In general, the portrayal of the unique personality of Seth’s mother deviates from traditional secular concepts, subverts the traditional female stereotype and deconstructs the meaning of women’s existence in conventional society, thus reconstructing a new female image. However, the author does not express a strong sense of feminism, for the portrayal of the independent and self-reliant personality of Seth’s mother is moderate. Instead of creating an absolute gender binary opposition, the author reconstructs a relatively non-normative woman image that does not strictly practice the traditional gender relationship but has her own objectivity, which shows that women are not entirely subordinate to men. This gender consciousness does not essentially break the relationship between men and women under the patriarchal hierarchy, nor does it fall into extreme feminism.

The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of the Black Image in Blackberry Winter

The marginalized situation of the black “the Other” in the historical background of the remnants of slavery also has a new interpretation in the novel. Although the novel was written at the end of World War II, its author Warren also incorporates reflections on a series of wars, such as the American Civil War. Although the Old South, along with its political, economic system and agricultural lifestyle, disappeared forever with the end of the Civil War, the cultural traditions and regional characteristics of the Old South were deeply ingrained in the hearts of southerners, lingering and forming a southern historical myth arena on which southerners retreat to escape reality and seek spiritual sustenance (Watkins, 1985). Warren was greatly influenced by Southern physiocrats such as Ransom and Alan Tate, from whom he inherited a shared sense of history, trying to reconcile the contradiction between ideal and reality into a belief system. In 1925, Warren left his homeland in the South to study at Berkeley University in the North, beginning a third critical phase in his early life experience. In 1928, Warren went to Oxford University as a Lutheran scholar to further his studies. Later, at the invitation of the president of Louisiana State University, he co-founded the famous magazine Southern Review with Collins Brooks. However, after the Southern Review ceased publication in 1942, Warren was forced to teach at a northern university and settled in the North. Since then, Warren has become a true southern exile, and he just returned to his hometown as a hurried passer-by. In fact, from the moment he left the South, his hometown became memory and entered Warren’s personal history. At the same time, the huge contrast between the past and the present in the South also deepened Warren’s understanding and insight into the history of the South, making him continually explore in his literary work the interplay between self-experience and the history of the South (Davison, 1968). This life experience away from home gave Warren a new perspective, which enabled him to examine the unique historical and cultural traditions of the South as an outsider from a distance, to analyze the in-depth root which causes poverty, conservatism, and backwardness in the South and to critically look at the remaining aftermath of the slavery in the South, thus integrating his insightful thinking into his literary creation (Wu, 2013). Following the victory of World War II, Blackberry Winter, created in 1946 is the author’s reflection on the society, history and nature of the American South as well as his nostalgia and childhood life, revealing his complex and sincere emotions. Influenced by
Western centrism, white people use their racial and political advantages to degrade and vilify the image of black people in order to achieve the goal of “othering” the black group. The majority of white writers’ images of black people, affected by their racist emotional attitudes, are savage, stupid, morbid, inferior, sordid and violent.

Warren’s images of black people, however, are different and distinct, not all negative and stereotyped as traditional white writers create. Old Jebb and Dellie, intelligent and quick-witted, were often referred to as “white folks’ niggers”. The old couple were the longest-running black couple on the farm, having been together for 25 years. The two of them kept the house in good order, neat and beautiful, and kept the flower garden and vegetable garden in a decent manner. Because the old couple was diligent and kind, Seth’s father also specially repaired their house so that there was no leakage. In stark contrast, the other black slaves on the farm were very lazy, and they were idle and didn’t bother to take care of their homes, which also led Seth’s father to keep threatening to kick them out of the hut. Afflicted by the dull days, they had to go to other places to continue to make a living. The author seems to be deliberately highlighting the image of Old Jebb, and he has a lot of detailed portrayal of Old Jebb in the novel. In Seth’s eyes, Old Jebb “has the kindest and wisest old face in the world, the blunt, sad, wise face of an old animal peering tolerantly out on the going-ons of the merely human creatures before him” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 374). Seth spoke highly of Old Jebb and expressed his admiration for him: “He was a good man, and I loved him next to my mother and father” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 374). From his explanation of “Blackberry Winter”, it is not difficult to find that Old Jebb was by no means shallow-brained and lacking common sense although he had no formal education and was just an uneducated old man in the eyes of others. He was such a wise older man that he was highly respected and favored by Seth’s family. The discussion between Old Jebb and Seth on “Blackberry Winter” reflects Old Jebb’s deep love for the land on which he lived and his hope for the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. Disregarding the laws of nature, human beings blindly demand from the land, which has squeezed the productivity of the land, and human beings will eventually pay a heavy price for this conduct. Old Jebb knew this consequence long before, and tried to dissuade the ignorant farmer, “I been tellen folks. Sayen, maybe this year, hit is the time. But they doan listen to me, how the yearth is tahrd. Maybe this year they find out” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 375), unfortunately there is nothing he can do to deal with people blinded by immediate interests. Warren shaped Old Jebb as a rational, open-minded, visionary, and ecologically conscious wise man, skeptical of the southern traditional agricultural lifestyle and values with the hope that human beings would love the land, revere and respect nature. This new way of shaping black image formed a strong contrast to the stereotyped image of black people shaped by the contemporaneous white writers, deconstructing the marginalized image of black people in the social environment at that time and reconstructing the image of wise and positive black people.

The way of black image characterization reflects Warren’s profound and unique view of history. Warren believes that history is a complete and continuous process, a systematic movement that is eternally unfolding in the dimension of time. No one can escape from history as history determines his present and future. Based on this view of historical continuation, Warren believes that modern people trapped in self-splitting situations are able to rebuild a complete self and own
their present and future only if they recognize the historical continuity of self, reflect on their previous mistakes, accept the imperfection and the dual nature, i.e., good and evil, of human beings, reach a compromise with history and assume the responsibility of survival. Therefore, in his literary works, Warren always emphasizes the need to bear the burden of history, critically inherit the unique cultural traditions of the South, and deeply reflect on the history of the Civil War between the North and the South, which has an impact on the establishment of contemporary southern group identities and on the reconstruction integral self of southern individuals (Wu, 2013). This view of historical continuation runs through Warren’s literary creations, many of which are set in the Civil War and the historical background of slavery, expressing his profound reflections on history, his critique on the racial discrimination and segregation brought about by slavery as well as a strong desire for the construction of black people’s ethnic identity.

Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Non-human Natural Images

In the face of the realistic dilemma of the survival and development of human society, Warren’s ecological thought of holistic construction inspires the ecological wisdom of human beings in the cross-evolution of ideal harmony and realistic crisis, in order to realize true harmony between man and nature. He deconstructs and reconstructs non-human natural images such as plants, animals and floods in Blackberry Winter. As is known to us all, homeland consciousness centered on land and nature is deeply rooted in the southern American society, and the agricultural culture centered on plantations has a long history, which arouses the love for natural life among southerners who yearn for the unity of man and nature and pursue the inner fusion between the spiritual world and the natural environment (Waghid & Smeyers, 2010). Warren highly recognizes the power and potential of all things in nature, emphasizes the power of nature, and believes that human beings must remain a heart of awe towards the unknown natural world, listening to the voice from the interior of the earth and truly achieving harmony and coexistence with nature (Wu, 2013).

The internal interaction between humans and nature is reconstructed with the binary opposition between humans and nature broken to a certain extent and the boundary between human and non-human nature disintegrated in Blackberry Winter. At the beginning of the novel, Seth saw a tramp emerge from the woods and then had a beautiful imagination of the wild forest that he had never set foot in:

“I suddenly had vision of him moving up the grassy path in the woods, in the green twilight under the big trees, not making any sound on the path, while now and then, like drops off the eaves, a big drop of water would fall from a leaf or bough and strike a stiff oak leaf lower down with a small, hollow sound like a drop of water hitting tin. That sound, in the silence of the woods, would be very significant” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 363).

This forest is rarely inhabited, and usually except for going to the swamp to fork frogs and going fishing in the river or hunting in the woods, people never go there. And after the storm, the woods were in a mess, and it seemed even more remote and mysterious. Nine-year-old Seth, under the care and protection of his parents, hardly ever leaves his farm, let alone enters the woods. And he has no fear of such a mysterious and terrifying wild jungle, but entertains beautiful imagination,
eager to go deep into the external natural world to find out the unknown mystery, to quietly listen to the sound of water dripping on leaves, to personally feel the sound of bare feet stepping on the soft grass and to leisurely enjoy the endless green twilight. The description of the wild jungle in the novel is no longer attached to the desolate and lonely tone, but in the imagery of “silent woods”, “green dawn”, “bare foot”, “soil”, “leaf”, “water drop” and so on. The author’s arrangement and combination create a quiet and beautiful poetic picture, which reflects the vitality and energetic power of nature, thus it is a deconstruction of nature’s marginalized image of “the Other”. The beautiful rural scenery has been transformed into a hazy and pleasant memory of Warren, and obviously the beautiful and tranquil natural environment and rural scenery in the South have inspired his inseparable poetic feelings, on which he deconstructs the otherness of nature and reconstructs the poetic image of nature.

The close and harmonious relationship between humans and animals manifested in Blackberry Winter deconstructs and reconstructs the marginalized image of animals. In the novel, the tramp went to the chicken farm to pick up the drowned chicks with “a fastidious, not quite finicking motion” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 367). In the tramp’s eyes, poultry, as inferior animals, were not worth the effort to bury them. In Seth’s eyes, however,

“instead of looking plump and fluffy, the body is stringy and limp with the fluff plastered to it, and the neck is long and loose like a little string of rag. And the eyes have that bluish membrane over them which makes you think of a very old man who is sick about to die” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 367).

It was apparently that Seth loved the poultry and he was very upset to see the chickens killed in flood. When turning to the side of the bridge, people saw a cow rolled down with the river upstream and were talking about who owns the cow. However, Seth showed sympathy for the unfortunate cow: “It bobbed and heaved on its side there in a slow, grinding, uneasy fashion” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 369). The author pays special attention to poultry from Seth’s perspective, and the anthropomorphic depiction of chicks and cows endows these animals with human emotions, which embodies the close relationship between humans and animals, thus deconstructing and reconstructing the marginal image of the animal “the Other”.

The description of the flood in the novel is also different from the traditional one. People crowded the swollen river to watch the flood. The description of the flood was as follows:

“The creak ran in a deep bed with limestone bluffs along both sides until it got within three quarters of a mile of the bridge, and when it came out in flood from between those bluffs it was boiling and hissing and steaming like water from a fire hose” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 368).

People seem to ignore that the flood destroys houses, drowns crops, and drowns poultry; instead, they view the flood as a wonderful sight which should not be missed: “Whenever there was a flood, people from half the county would come down to see the sight” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 368). And they thought “it made life something different from the run of days”, “Everybody always
knew what it would be like when he got down to the bridge, but people always came. It was like church or a funeral” (Brooks & Warren, 1979, p. 368). According to the author’s description, the flood is no longer frightening, but a flavoring agent for people’s ordinary life. The description of the flood is utterly different from traditional cognition, thus reconstructing the image of this natural scene.

Based on the above analysis, the images of wild forests, chickens, cows, and floods depicted in the novel subvert the traditional binary opposition between humans and nature, affirming the internal interaction and harmonious coexistence of humans and nature. Warren’s creation strives to explore the holistic construction of man, nature and society, emphasizing that nature is the starting point to awaken the true heart, goodness and beauty of human beings, so as to put natural humanity in the central position of human subjectivity, thus building a harmonious integration of man, nature and society (Chen, 2010). Returning to the title of the novel, the special seasonal change of “Blackberry Winter” also reveals the long-standing ecological crisis, reflecting the author’s profound reflection on human behavior hidden behind the crisis of modernity and the ultimate concern for human living conditions.

**Conclusion**

“The Other” is an essential element in the narrative of *Blackberry Winter*, and the deconstruction and reconstruction of “the Other” image is an essential theme in *Blackberry Winter*. This paper intends to explore how human “the Other” image and non-human “the Other” image are deconstructed and reconstructed in this novel from three levels—gender, race, and natural poetic. It is revealed that the author deconstructs and reconstructs marginalized and stereotyped images of human “the Other”, including women and the blacks, and non-human “the Other”, including woods, poultry and floods, which challenges the binary opposition between the subject and “the Other”, manifesting his profound reflections on society, history, and human living conditions.

**About the Author**

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**References**


Abstract
The wanderlust spirit of the Russo-Swiss Muslim convert Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904), who lived a nomadic lifestyle in Algeria, has always disclosed a metaphysical vision that is persistently echoed in her literary works. She opted for a linguistic immersion that left many prints on her diaries. She was systematically accused by the French colonial regime of being a turncoat, and this is precisely why publishers of that time refused to disseminate (via publications or translations) what they considered to be ‘unorthodox’ and ‘threatening’ thoughts. Fortunately, things have changed for the better since then, as many scholars/translators are now trying to decipher Eberhardt’s moral fiber. A case in point would be Steele’s (2011) English translation of Eberhardt’s “Silhouettes d’Afrique” (1898). Steele set herself the task – after a blatant shortage of scholarly contributions valuing Eberhardt’s literary creations – to play the role of an advocate who would restore the biased positions taken against the author’s motives/works on account of her pro-Arabo-Islamic and anti-colonial views. This paper argues for a better appreciation of otherness through Steele’s ‘historiographic’ rendering, which reflects Eberhardt’s position vis-à-vis some orientalists’ vision which she was not to follow; even if there appear to be parallels between both. Finally, I come to conclude that the translator’s confessions as regards her deliberate choice to confront English-speaking readers with local Arabic terms (Burnous, tolba, Haik, mueddine, etc.) highlight the existence of a more affable audit.

Keywords: historicization, Isabelle Eberhardt, literary translation, Mara Steele, orientalists, otherness

Translating Isabelle Eberhardt: A Historiographic Adventure

Il va sans dire que c’est sous le signe de la rencontre avec une altérité […] et de l’écoute attentive des différentes formes d’échanges qui peuvent en découler… qu’il faut analyser la démarche complexe d’Isabelle Eberhardt (Bourcillier 2012, p. 64)

Introduction

Isabelle Wilhelmine Marie Eberhardt was born in Meyrin (Geneva) on the 17th of February 1877 to aristocratic Russian parents. Not happy with the sedentary life she was leading, she chose (after her first trip to Algeria with her mother) to settle in the southwestern Algerian desert in 1897. There, she worked as a writer and journalist, reporting, among other things, on the alarming situation of North African people in general under French colonization. She dressed as a man, and named herself Si Mahmoud Essadi to overcome social obstacles imposed on women at that time. She sympathized with the colonized, learned Arabic, and converted to Islam when she was 18. Eberhardt lived as a Sufi and followed the Qadiriyya order till her life tragically ended at the age of 27 in a flash flood at Ain Séfra (Naâma Province, Algeria) on the 21st of October 1904.

Her prolific literary productions (more than 2000 pages), were published posthumously thanks to scholars such as Errera (1950-), an Egyptian writer who had worked on the manuscripts retrieved from Eberhardt’s home after her death by General Louis Lyautey (1854-1934), and who presented a sequential order of her works. A couple of years later, a two-volume edition of her complete writings appeared in France, edited by Delacour & Huleu (1989). Additionally, three plays and a movie have already fictionalized her life, namely L’Esclave errante (The Wandering Slave, 1924), Isabelle d’Afrique (Isabelle of Africa, 1939), Isabelle 100 visages (Isabelle 100 faces, 2015), and Isabelle Eberhardt (an Australian-French drama film directed by Ian Pringle in 1991) respectively. Still, though translations as those of Kobak (1988), Hamdy & Rice (1994), Bowles (2001), Bononno (2002), and De Voogd (2003) have fostered an English version of Eberhardt’s muse and concerns, these remain selective. All of the works above reflect the most important pieces of her life. I am looking at Steele’s translation, in this paper, because it tackles a less famous text.

Nine years ago, Steele, a Ph.D. American scholar at the department of English, the University of Iowa who is interested in French West African studies of drum language, and aspects related to ethics, psychoanalysis, and translation studies, among others, became interested in Isabelle Eberhardt’s story, resulting in the translation of her “Silhouettes d’Afrique” (1898) into English. Reading her translation made me realize how vital Eberhardt’s texts are in a present-day world marked by material covetousness and fanaticism. Part of the texts’ merit (the SLT and the TL one) is that they confront readers with an ambiance of inconstancy that needs to be superseded by a spiritual exploration of the self. Moreover, they act as icebreakers between the East and the
West, demonstrating how intercultural encounters are but a matter of will. A conversation with the translator (See appendix) strengthened my belief in Eberhardt’s pioneering role in disseminating cultural forbearance and Vivre ensemble when it was not fashionable to do so. Relevant to this, Steele could capture many of the linguistic/cultural variations punctuating the SLT to unfold them on the other side of the fence eventually.

Hence, the aim of this paper is to introduce Eberhardt’s genuine depictions of the Algerian landscape and its people in non-conformity with orientalists’ creed, while trying to understand the connotations of her cross-dressing. It also attempts to depict her unsettled identity due to the different journeys she made between the Orient and the Occident to, finally, expound Steele’s motives in translating Eberhardt and the choices she made in rendering “Silhouettes d’Afrique”.

**Isabelle Eberhardt: Orientalist? Feminist?**

The French dramatist Brieux (1858-1932) was among Eberhardt’s rare friends who proposed to sponsor her financially to help her propel her writings to a larger audience. Yet, as mentioned earlier, no publisher agreed to endorse the pro-Arab views she held. Besides, the strong words she used to portray indigenous viewpoints against the roumi (French/European) are still causing controversy. Bononno (2002), as translator, openly reveals the difficulties he faced in finding a publisher that would show some recognition for Eberhardt’s works.

With this grant (by the National Endowment for the Arts), I will finish a project begun nearly 14 years ago. Over the years, I have had selections from my translation published in literary magazines, and many publishers have shown interest in the work, but none was willing to risk publishing it…In many ways this has been the most difficult project I have worked on, not because of the inherent difficulty of the text but because of my personal investment in trying to bring it to life and the many failures and disappointments that have entailed. While the grant is no guarantee of publication, it is a validation of my belief in the importance of Isabelle Eberhardt the writer… https://www.arts.gov/writers-corner/bio/robert-bononno

Bononno (2002) goes on to state that:

…her work is largely unknown in English. Eberhardt's writing has languished, virtually unknown for nearly a century…Previous editions of Eberhardt's work, especially those published in the years after her death, were heavily edited by Barrucand, who thought it prudent to excise passages critical of the French government's colonial policies as well as anything that might shock the sensibilities of his readers. In some cases, he amended or simply rewrote parts of the text. https://www.arts.gov/writers-corner/bio/robert-bononno

Eberhardt’s works still meet with some resistance because of the voice she gave at that time to an unprivileged Other by faithfully recording their malaise, misery, and way of thinking:

Isabelle allait livrer de nombreux écrits qui témoignent d’une observation minutieuse et d’une compréhension intime du pays, écrits dans lesquels les descriptions sont alertes car
elles alternent avec des incidents, des précisions historiques, des faits toujours révélateurs de l’atmosphère du lieu, de la pensée et de la vie des hommes qui y vivaient. (Rochd, 1992, p. 108)
(Isabelle was going to deliver numerous writings that give evidence to a careful observation and an intimate understanding of the country, writings in which the descriptions are alert because they alternate with incidents, historical details and facts always revealing the atmosphere of the place, as well as the thought and life of the men who lived there.)

This was also due to her explicit denunciation of the actions undertaken by the colonial regime. Rochd explains how authors like the French writer and biographer Sauvat (2004) occulted passages from Eberhardt’s *Mes journaliers du 8 juin 1902* in her *Isabelle ou le Rêve du desert* (Rochd, 2007). Sauvat deleted many of Eberhardt’s controversial passages. She took the excerpt « à Alger la foule dense, forcément bruyante qui finit par ne plus savoir trouver son propre souffle d’apaisement… » (p.53) (In Algiers, the dense crowd, inevitably noisy ends up not knowing how to find its own breath of appeasement…) and omits the subsequent lines « De plus en plus, je hais férocement, aveuglement, la foule, cette ennemie née du rêve et de la pensée. C’est elle qui m’empêche de vivre à Alger, comme j’ai vécu ailleurs.» (Eberhardt 1989, p. 445) (More and more, I hate the crowd fiercely, blindly, this enemy born of dream and thought. It is she who prevents me from living in Algiers, as I lived elsewhere)

Another deleted passage is attested further when Sauvat (2004) censored « Ce qui m’écoeure ici, c’est l’odieuse conduite des Européens envers les Arabes, ce peuple que j’aime et qui, Inch’Allah (my italics), sera mon peuple à moi.» (Stoll-Simon, p.20) (What annoys me here is the odious behaviour of the Europeans towards the Arabs, the people I love and who, God willing, will be my own people.)

Taking up on this last example, what typifies Eberhardt’s texts also is the abundant use she made of Arabic terms. Even so, she stands in contradistinction with Orientalists who resorted to local linguistic ‘flavors’ just to mark the exotic side of their stories which conflate people and their actions into fictionalized narratives. A telling instance could be the French orientalist Malingoud’s (1924) *Contes Bédouins* in which he reflects upon Arab characters’ cunning and acquisitive nature. Here are some excerpts that showcase replicas very much on a par with *The Thousand and One Nights*:
« Peut-être en cette ville, y a-t-il un *chikh* qui nous donnera de quoi vivre.» (p.541) (Maybe in this city, there is an old man who will help us survive)
« Certain jour que le *Sultan*, déguisé en *derviche*, faisait, accompagné de son *vizir*, une tournée aux environs de sa ville,… » (p. 542) (Some day that the king, disguised as a fool, made a tour of his city with his minister,…)
« Il était un *émir* qui… » (p. 544) (There was a prince who…)
« un certain *Hmoud*, charlatan impudent et fécond en ruses… » (p. 544) (a named *Hmoud*, an impudent charlatan fertile in tricks…)
« Il se trouva que celui-ci était parti en *ghezou* » (p.544) (It turned out that he had gone on a conquest).
Likewise, Eberhardt used Arab words as evidenced in the original versions of her stories. Yet, these had been mainly deployed to bequeath the texts with an authentic semantic load and an original reflection of her thoughts and those of her characters, especially if we consider the number of untranslated Arabic scripts punctuating her works (Abdel Jaouad, 1993). In passages where Arabic words are transliterated, the depictions are fiction-free as opposed to Malingoud’s case, or even to those of 19th-century French orientalist Fromentin’s use of the sound produced by the *mueeddine*. Eberhardt referred to this religious attribute in her works (with a different spelling), too, but the inherent value allocated to the actor performing the call for prayers is distinct. In his *Un été dans le Sahara*, Fromentin (1857) wrote:

> En même temps un Muezzin, qu’on ne voyait pas, se mit à chanter la prière du soir, la répétant quatre fois aux quatre points de l’horizon, et sur un mode si passionné, avec de tels accents, que tout semblait se taire pour l’écouter. (p.10)
> (At the same time a *mueeddine*, whom one did not see, began to sing the evening prayer, repeating it four times at the four corners of the horizon, and in such a passionate manner, with such accents, that everything seemed silenced to listen to him)

Fromentin’s portrayal sounds very quixotic because the author highlights the invisibility of the *Muezzin* and the impossibility of tracing his exact location. Furthermore, the depiction likens the call for prayer to a song that reaches the four points of the horizon in a passionate way, to finally get back to the notion of invisibility where everyone will respect some moments of silence and hide their words behind those of the *Muezzin*; as if we were watching a magical moment orchestrated by an invisible man.

The same appreciation of the voice of the *Muezzin* is found in Eberhardt’s novella *Le Major* (1903) as reported by Ruscio (1996), a French historian who has long been interested in colonial studies. However, this is accompanied by a historiographic recording of matter-of-fact descriptions that familiarize the reader with the whole *Maghrebi* environment. This goes as follows:

> Alors, du grand minaret de Sidi Salem et de petites terrasses des autres mosquées délabrées, la voix des *mueeddine* montait, bien rauque et bien sauvage déjà, traînante. Avec cette voix de rêve, les dernières rumeurs humaines de la ville sans pavés, sans voitures, se taisaient […]. (p.144)
> (Then, from the great minaret of *Sidi Salem* and the little terraces of the other dilapidated mosques, the voice of the *mueeddine* rose, very hoarse and already wild, dragging. With this dream voice, the last human rumors of the city without cobblestones, without cars, were silent […]*")

Interestingly, Eberhardt’s writings afford us with two important elements. The first one is that there is an avalanche of genuine data about the Algerian society of that time that allows a better perception and understanding of it in words like *minaret de Sidi Salem*, *mosquées délabrées*, *ville sans pavés*, and *sans voitures*. We now know that at the time Eberhardt wrote in El Oued (North-East of the Algerian Sahara) there was a minaret called *Sidi Salem* (which still exists), that the mosques were dilapidated, and that the city had no cobblestones, hence no cars. In fact, there are
first-hand depictions of the places, the people, their customs and traditions that contribute to broadening Westerners’ vision and modeling their uneasiness vis-à-vis a community long seen through biased lenses. Her critics even claim that she did an ethnographic work par excellence. Such is the view of Henry & Martini (1999) for whom:

(…) le regard d’I. Eberhardt est un regard ethnographique et tous ses écrits révèlent un souci constant de systématisation de ses observations. Même si celles-ci sont centrées sur elle-même ou sur des personnes singulières, ce n’est pas tant la particularité des expériences qui l’intéresse que leur universalité. (p. 111)

(…The look of I. Eberhardt is an ethnographic one, and all her writings reveal a constant concern for systematizing these observations. Even if they are centered on themselves or on singular persons, it is not so much the particularity of the experiences that interests her as their universality.)

The second feature is that all of the local terms integrated into her writings did not detract from the literary significance of her texts. They rather created a hospitable linguistic atmosphere that would defy ‘Babel’s curse’. They also offered a smooth running and down-to-earth representation of the writer’s inspirations. As Eberhardt (in Delacour & Huleu, 1989) argued:

Pour l’étranger profane, les burnous sales sur la tenue européenne en loques, les chechiya sans gland et fanées…sont la couleur locale. Pour celui qui sait, c’est là justement ce qui enlève à Alger son caractère arabe, parce que ce n’est pas conforme aux mœurs arabes. Encore, le profane trouve très africain le dédale des rues vieilles d’Alger. Médiéval, turc, maure, tout ce que l’on voudra, mais ni arabe, ni africain surtout! (pp. 444-5)

(For the profane stranger, dirty burnouses put on the European dress as rags, the faded chechiyas without tassels…are the local colors. For he who knows, this is precisely what strips Algiers from its Arab character, because it is not in conformity with Arab customs. Again, the layman finds the maze of the old streets of Algiers very African. Medieval, Turkish, Moorish, everything you want, but neither Arabic nor African mainly!)

It has been claimed (Kempf-Rochd, 2000 & Ouhibi Aitsiselmi, 2014) that Eberhardt was inspired by French Orientalists such as Fromentin (1820-1976) and Loti (1850-1923), whose writings were very much based on observation. But I argue that her vision was quite distinct from theirs. Orientalists used to look at the Orient from the perspective/fantasy of the Occident (Said, 1978). Yet, Eberhardt presented a more compelling representation of it. She tried to assimilate with the people and not the reverse. Again, she did not judge the oddities she was exposed to, but instead tried to value and better understand them in her Sud Oranais (1903), Lettres et journaliers (1900-1903), etc., where linguistic and cultural minutiae of the Algerian people and landscape had been meticulously drafted (See Steiciuc 2014, p.71). This is what gained her the title of a non-Orientalist writer stricto sensu. This argument remains debatable, though. For, her action of classifying and locating Algerian tribes in alphabetical order, for instance, enters into that of cataloging the Orient following 19th-century anthropological categorization of race and plants, which maps well with Said’s vision of an imperialist Occident (Bennett, 2013).
As to her feminist penchant, she had none (at least an explicit one). This is because as a European, she could enjoy more freedom than African or Middle Eastern women could at that time. In reality, she was privileged by pursuing non-conventional female careers and was liberated from the stifling life led by what Spivak (1988) would call the subaltern. Paradoxically, Eberhardt often depicted all types of women in her writings (the saint, the worker, the prostitute, the peasant, etc.) towards whom she was very critical. She was more interested in discerning prostitutes’ motives and justifying them than in defending working women. She scarcely wrote about women’s unhappiness, and she exceptionally made the effort of physically meeting them. Claycomb (2012), an American scholar interested in Gender Studies, reports that when a potential female lover approached Eberhardt, she used to assert “I am not a woman, I’m Si Mahmoud. I like men.” (p.178)

In fact, Eberhardt chose to wear male attire not because she wanted to make an avowal about feminism but for practical reasons. Her dress enabled her to live among Arab men and enjoy the same rights as theirs; even if her friends knew she was a woman! Also, while exploring the significance of the transvestite, Garber (2012) averred that: “Cross-dressing for Isabelle Eberhardt thus became… a way of obeying the paternal and patriarchal law, ([her father] permitted her to go into Geneva only if she dressed as a boy)…” (p.325) (Italics in the original)

The renowned French writer and journalist Auclert (1848-1914) empathized with the colonized female population in Algeria, too. But as opposed to Eberhardt, Auclert was a fervent feminist who heralded women’s right for better life conditions and who believed in the bonds that need to be formed with the indigenous. Eberhardt mostly observed them from afar in an attempt to reposition “…the harem on the road” (Zayzafoon 2005, p. 33) as her personal way of freeing women without avowing any form of feminism.

Eberhardt’s Territorial Affinities

People’s identity and sense of belonging is likely to be shaped by the places/territories they had been in. Among the many definitions attributed to the notion of territory is that area delineated by constant ‘isoglosses’. These are defined in dialectology as geographical lines marking out regions that have different linguistic traits. This fact allows a split in people’s realities; insiders enjoying a geopolitical recognition and outsiders pertaining to an outer/hosting space. Stability and order are the resultant elements. Moreover, these two entities are indispensable in shaping individuals’ identity and sense of belonging. The inclusion-exclusion dialectic is seen through different lenses by Deleuze & Guattari (1987) who consider subjectivity as a key factor in the formation of territory. This one is closely intermeshed with those of possession and property. When we possess a ‘place’, we choose to either protect it or expand it. This reveals our power over it. Hence, subjectivity results from what we do with a territory. This manoeuver also reveals much of the individual’s personality. It shows how the semiotics of distance is at stake when moving from one territory to another.

In the same line of thought, Eberhardt’s ambiguous personality was predictably refracted in her mode of life. She was an insider for the Algerian community when she embraced Islam, put on traditional clothes, and conversed in Arabic. Yet, she was admittedly an outsider through her
libertine/non-conservative lifestyle. She worked as a docker, smoked, had sexual relationships with those who courted her, used drugs and drank alcohol. This ambivalence is in a sense a personal quest for recognition animated by a desire to find a fatherland (knowing that she is an illegitimate daughter, Bennett 2013). She used to move from Switzerland to Algeria via France. All of these spaces were valued since she was born in the first, lived in the second, and married in the third. The objective of cultural translation as a practice championing cultural differences would be to follow this movement of people through different spaces and not to cling to that of texts. Furthermore, while for some people cultural encounters may lead to anxiety, uncertainty, and fear from losing one’s identity, for Eberhardt this is but a natural outcome that people have inherited since ancient times. Her openness to the world’s cultural diversity allowed her to learn ten languages and protest social injustice, all at a very early age.

**Translating “Silhouettes d’Afrique”**

Intercultural attitudes (Byram, 1997), in the Bhabhaian sense, include curiosity and readiness to inhibit incredulity toward other cultures. It is a term that is very much on a par with translation which champions mediation between two or more unrelated languages/cultures. In what follows, I shall try to point out the different cultural assets present in Eberhardt’s “Silhouettes d’Afrique” and the role of translation in legitimizing and historicizing them.

Eberhardt wrote this short story only one year after she landed with her mother in Annaba (Northeast of the Algerian coast). The work was first published by the French journal *L’Athénée* in 1898; here she recounts her adhesion to Islam under the name of *Si Mahmoud el Mouskouby* (The Muscovite). The minutiae she fosters of the mosques, trees, doors, people, etc., are all so authentic and full of devoutness and mysticism that Arabs in general and Algerians in particular could quickly identify with them. The descriptions end in nostalgic notes produced by the flute of an enamored man named *Abdesselim* who longs for his beloved whom he has not seen for a long time. The story is laden with Arabic terms that add to the precision of her feelings.

It is worth reiterating that Steele made the choice of translating Eberhardt’s “Silhouettes d’Afrique” into English because “Having read a few texts of Eberhardt in English translation, [she] wished to read more, only to find that the majority of her work remained untranslated at that time (though much more has since been done).” This move was largely motivated by her studies: Steele averred: “I had been studying a great deal about the religion and cultures—particularly Islamic—of the Maghreb and West Africa.” Then, “…as a woman, I had long been intrigued by female explorers and writers such as Eberhardt, who overcame many obstacles and lived a life worthy of fiction. I was 27 at the time, and Eberhardt was 27 when she died; I think this is partly why I first identified with and admired her.” Therefore, Eberhardt’s exploratory spirit and unexplored literature made Steele curious to ‘plow’ this field.

Expectantly, laboring in this direction gave some fruitful results from an intercultural perspective. This is because Steele could shun many of the prejudices scarring the Islamic faith since 9/11. Inspired by Eberhardt’s ‘transcendental’ Sufism, in which she tried to spread her contemplations and adoration of the Creator within every line she wrote, Steele understood that “The Sufi-influenced Islam that [she] was learning about in graduate school…was far more
multivalent, diverse, and tolerant than the post-9/11 stereotypes pervasive in the United States.” Even more, she explains her choice of taking on the project “Silhouettes d’Afrique” as follows: “…primarily because…it is a very poignant story of unrequited desire that I feel serves as a subtle Sufi parable. Also, while a very short and semi-fictional story, it deploys a number of the signature tropes and linguistic/cultural practices that she has become associated with in posthumous scholarship.” To quote her introduction to the piece:

[Her] writing defies the authoritative and teleological project of Orientalism, replacing it with anti-colonialist sentiment and an insecure and troubled place of enunciation…Instead, as a multilingual, cross-dressing, Russo-Swiss Muslim convert, she offers a rich multiplicity of voices: ethnic, gendered, and linguistic…she incorporates many other transliterated Arabic words into her published writing…(Steele 2013, p. 86)

For a smooth reading of the text, Steele had to make some linguistic choices. One of these was to do away with “what [she] perceived to be an excessive, inexplicable use of the ellipsis…” The fuzziness of its rhetorical value was what motivated this “arrogant decision” as she depicts it. A less intrusive move was that of respecting a rugged foreignization strategy regarded as being “…so essential to [Eberhardt’s] project…”She “…certainly wouldn’t consider removing or replacing [Arabic terms]. If they happen to disorient, it is well-suited to the text and a meaningful experience for the reader.”

This was Steele’s ‘ethical’ position toward the use of the local terms that she would have never thought of domesticating or adapting. Thus, agreeing with Venuti (1995/1998), she worked on her TLT from the prism of the SL one and tasked herself to reduce from total subservience to the cultural traits she inherited from her own environment; much like what Eberhardt did. Interestingly, the number of transliterated Arabic words contributed to placing Eberhardt as the first European person to use the term Maghreb instead of the colonially-designated regional term “North Africa” hitherto. We owe her this appellation as we owe her translator the train of cultural terms and historical ‘truths’ that had been exported to the Western world after the publishing ‘embargo’ imposed on some of Eberhardt’s excerpts. Among these, I shall mention (as they appear in Steele’s translation of “Silhouettes d’Afrique”):

1. Zawiya [School in North Africa for mystical Sufi learning, often built close to a holy place such as the tomb of a Saint.] (Steele 2013, p. 88)
2. Aissaouas [Sufi fraternity known for its members’ abilities to attain states of unusually heightened ecstasy.] (Steele 2013, p. 89)
3. Talib [A student of theology]
4. Djema [Literally, “place of assembly”–usually refers to a mosque on Fridays.]
5. Mleyaferrachia [Regional types of traditional head and face coverings worn by the Muslim women of the neighborhood.] (Steele 2013, p. 90)
6. Haik [Light scarf or veil.]
7. Kanoun [Stove]
8. Gandoura [Long tunic of light material.] (Steele 2013, p. 91)
9. …the cabéha, the Maghreb.
10. ...drapped in our burnous [Large wool cloak.] (Steele 2013, p. 93)
11. Tolba [Students of theology at the zawiya.] (Steele 2013, p. 95)
12. Senoussya [Sufi fraternity]
13. Khouan [Members of a religious fraternity.] (Steele 2013, p. 96)

This way of approaching texts allows the TL readers to be au fait with the existence and pronunciation of these context-sensitive words, then to get their semantic load in the TL. In a sentence like “An'am ya oummi Fatima!” Yes, oh mother Fatima – Never, in any circumstance of life, did one of them depart from this well-observed politeness, which excluded neither the passion of youth, nor the close friendship of their tranquil old age. (Steele 2013, p. 92)”, the translator explains to the TL readers that “mother [is] a formula of affectionate respect” which permits a better engagement in the development of the story. I would go further by claiming that some Arabic terms are very much in circulation in some areas of Algeria and not in others. Admittedly, Khouan, for instance, could well be misconstrued by some Algerians for whom this word may stand for ‘thief’. Consequently, this intercultural move which is usually ensured by translators might even be of help ‘at home’ for the natives of the SL. What is more, it gives us an idea about the way these cultural assets are identified in the West as it reveals the efforts made by the translator in capturing them. In the same vein, the historicizing aspect is manifested in other excerpts:

It was a time long ago, a time already distant, when I was a student at the zawiya of the kind Shaykh Abderrahamene, in Anneba, the old Maghrebian city dozing in its azure gulf... I recall these times as a dream of youth, like something sweetly melancholic that passed in a sunny morning of my life, it would have been so long ago, alas! It was also in this era of my life that Islam cast upon me its deep and powerful charm which, by the most mysterious fibers of my being, attached itself to me forever in the strange land of Dar-el-Islam. (Steele 2013, p. 88)

When casting her contemplations on the coastal city of Annaba (situated in the northeastern side of Algeria, usually spelled with ‘a’), she is recording real names and real places. The zawiya of Shaykh Abderrhamene is a religious school that existed but which is no more known by the new generation. There are other zwiyy (pl. zawiya) with which the people of Annaba are now more familiar like the zawiya Alawiya.

Only sometimes, this fierce door would give passage to veiled shadows appearing under the white ferrachia of the wealthy or the blue mléya of the working class women. This, only after nightfall, and very clandestinely, so that no one could give a name to these impersonal phantoms... There were four rooms within, whose doors and little windows all opened on the courtyard, in the midst of which, at the foot of the hundred-year old fig tree, was a stone well in the form of a sculpted vase.(Steele 2013, p. 90)

Two societal aspects are highlighted in this passage. The first has to do with the veiled working women who had to leave their home after dusk in order not to be stared at or even detected by men. The second is a testimony of the (even currently) existing patios in Algeria. The fig tree is a
symbol of wealth in the *Maghrebi* region. It fosters well-being and longevity; even its central position is rightly portrayed.

In the steep and poorly paved road, hardly any vehicle traffic. Only the occasional rhythmic noise of some Negress’ or Jew’s wooden sandals or the singing cries of traveling merchants or morning milkmen... Then, the silence would fall again, heavy and deeply lulling. In this old neighborhood, the time-clock seemed to be thirty centuries slow, arrested in the last years of the caliphates...(Steele 2013, pp. 90-1)

For Eberhardt, it seems as if time has stopped at the Caliphates’ reign. If compared to European modernity, everything looks archaic and slow-moving. An interesting historical aspect lies in the hitherto coexistence between Jews and Muslims. Their wandering in the poorly paved road was, as we can notice, without any surprise for the author.

Invariably, I found Lella Fatima engaged in lighting her charcoal fire in a smoking kanoun. Crouched with her little braided fan in hand, careful and dignified, she was entirely preoccupied by her task. Tall, slender, and shapely under her long-sleeved shirt of patterned muslin, pulled and attached in the back, her long gandoura of yellow calico tied at the waist by a red kerchief, a little tiara of velvet trimming her handsome black headscarf […] Ceremoniously, we exchanged long salutations and the kissing of hands, with many questions regarding each others’ health, our dreams, and all this during five wonderful minutes, interrupting our conversations with numerous staunch alhamdulillah’s (Praise to God). Then, sitting myself on the trunk of the fig tree, next to the deep cistern, we would chat familiarly until Lella Fatima placed three minuscule cups filled with very sweet coffee on the little deep meida. In the middle, she placed an unleavened bread of her own making, and a blue pot full of strawberries candied in honey. (Steele 2013, p. 91)

At a time where it was almost heretical to address an indigenous, Eberhardt faithfually reported the good-natured encounters between a European woman and an Algerian one. There is a minute description of *Lella Fatima*’s dress, food, utensils, and even details of how both women run the conversation.

Then, sometimes, Sidi Mohammed and I would go down to the djema el Bey, the mosque of Annaba, for the morning prayer, the cabéha. Grave, and majestically draped in our burnous, we went out in the street, still full of cool shadows and peaceful silence, increasingly noisy and hurried the closer we came to Armes, the center of Moorish life. We spoke learnedly, with the great reflective calm of Muslims, of ancient things, of religion and of its poetic aspect mainly, because Sidi Djeridi, like all tolba, was passionate about ancient literature and poetry. Immersed in these tranquil and inoffensive conversations, we arrived at the narrow and silent street whereupon opened the small rear door of the great djema, at the foot of the minaret, at the very moment when Hassene began to cry: “Allahu Akbar!” (God is Greater!) (Steele 2013, pp. 92-93)
This passage explains why Eberhardt was compelled to disguise herself as a man; her intermingling with men could not have been possible otherwise. The place d’armes (currently called place du 19 août 1956) still exists at the heart of the old town Annaba.

Among us—there were approximately twenty—were the mischievous and the mystics (these latter of small number, as elsewhere), the mutes and the dwarves, the voluptuous and the indolent; all entirely preoccupied with love and poetry, the only tastes intense and common to all. In small groups, according to the affinities of our souls, we climbed our poorly paved street, with the grave leisure of Muslims, talking without raising our voices, nearly without gesture, very calmly, as befits tolba concerned for their dignity. Discussion sometimes playful, sometimes melancholy, in these groups of poets and dreamers, where Love and Death returned frequently…discussions of the young scholars of the Middle Ages, embellished with citations from the great poet-philosophers of Islam. My two intimate friends, Abdesselim ould Esseny and Essalah ben Zerrouk Elerarby, and myself, we were closely linked, despite great differences of character, by the commonality of our thoughts, and a shared taste for silence, contemplation and indolent dreaming. Sons of illustrious Moorish families, issued from austere and rigid races, Abdesselim and Essalah were both very handsome, of that Moorish beauty at once masculine and very slender…they were very young and very enamored of freedom, while still observing family traditions of respect and submission. (Steele 2013, pp. 95-96)

This is a hymn to love and peace, I believe. The three friends, despite their gender and character divergences, share a common desire for freedom and an equal interest in poetry. The author talks about a very smooth give and take of conversation that needs neither disputes nor shouting.

That our Islam, instead of assimilating the lies and impure forgeries of the Occident, return to the purity of the first centuries of the Hedjira in its original simplicity, above all! Then, that nothing more be changed or modified across the centuries. When the Sage has achieved that which may accrue happiness to the son of Adam, he does not search, like a madman, to change his condition and he does not abandon the real for Chimera…the insatiable are the ones who starve, and the ungrateful to God are the evil ones.” Such were the discourses of Abdesselim, enthusiastic believer, beyond any superstition, and affiliated with the powerful fraternity of the Senoussya. Abdesselim was consumed with love for a beautiful Moorish woman glimpsed by chance on a terrace. He never saw her again, and employed his leisure time composing melancholy kacides, singing in harmonious verse of his passion and the beauty of his beloved. Of her, after numerous and ardent researches, he knew only her name, Mannoubia, and the impassioned taste of the young woman for the music—infinitely sad—of the Bedouin reed flute. Every evening, very late, Abdesselim went to sit on the steps of an old, lowlying door, always shut, that of an ancient zawiya abandoned for years, whose khouan were all dead or long ago departed... It was in his old neighborhood, which had been hers. There, to the echoes of the dead streets, in the silence of the night perfumed with vague scents, he told of his ardent dreams and his sadnesses, through the sobs and sighs of the little enchanted flute.(Steele 2013, p. 96)
What could be deduced from this excerpt is that the colonized, like any other free man, may have his own ideas. He may talk about politics and be aware of what is happening around him, as he may endure the same accelerated heartbeats generated by a charming girl next door. The mind and the heart are at interplay here, and they are the sole terrains that cannot be encaged. Note also that the translation of all the aforementioned societal values and geographical realities buttresses the recovery of a long-lost visibility.

Conclusion

The present paper aimed at recounting, through the prism of Steele’s English translation, the atypical life of a “Rimbaud-type woman” (to use Abdel Jaouad’s 1993 terms) who wandered in the Algerian Sahara to eventually espouse Algerians’ lifestyle. It was again an attempt at disclosing her linguistic choices as well as those of her translator. Eberhardt was one of a kind; she easily forsook her European belongingness for a Maghrebi/mystical one by, thus, destroying the ‘myth’ of alterity. Also, this journey into the rendering of Eberhardt’s “Silhouettes d’Afrique” attempted to underline translation as a posthumous historicizing tool aimed at stressing the translator’s role in boosting intercultural disclosure and discussion. Eberhardt made the first step when she decided to merge into the Algerian culture, she did not submerge the local inhabitants with exotic ideas and foreign values. For her, nothing was worth combating for, except cultural diversity, forbearance, exaltation and freedom of thought or, say, freedom tout court. Preserving the soul of her texts was doing justice to her loyal commitment to Islam, the people, and landscapes she depicted. Steele’s foreignizing translation contributed to finding Eberhardt’s experience a new home in a new language and culture. The energy deployed in this vein will, I trust, positively contribute in maximizing TL readers’ intercultural construal as well as avidity for cosmopolitan intellectual encounters.

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About the Author:
Souâd Hamerlain is full Professor at the Department of English (University of Mostaganem-Algeria) interested in Linguistics, Translation, and Didactics. She participated in a number of inter/national conferences, organized some, and published a number of articles and book chapters. Her last contributions in Translation are a book review published by Meta (The Canadian Translators’ Journal, 2016) and an article issued by Gülnar Bildiriler Kitabı (Turkey, 2018). ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3814-7991

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Appendix
Mara Steele in conversation with Souâd Hamerlain (26/10/2016)

After an exchange of e-mails with Mara Steele enquiring about some issues related to her translation choices, aims, difficulties, and the feedback she got from her readers, I received the following answers:

At the time—six years ago—that I decided to translate “Silhouettes d’Afrique,” I had been studying a great deal about the religion and cultures—particularly Islamic—of the Maghreb and West Africa. The Sufi-influenced Islam that I was learning about in graduate school, I quickly realized, was far more multivalent, diverse, and tolerant than the post-9/11 stereotypes pervasive in the United States. Furthermore, as a woman, I had long been intrigued by female explorers and writers such as Eberhardt, who overcame many obstacles and lived a life worthy of fiction. I was 27 at the time, and Eberhardt was 27 when she died; I think this is partly why I first identified with and admired her. In her life and work I recognized a charismatic and eccentric subject through whom I would be able to uniquely explore in greater depth the questions of colonialism/decolonization, Orientalism, and Islam that had occupied much of my graduate coursework. Having read a few texts of Eberhardt in English translation, I wished to read more, only to find that the majority of her work remained untranslated at that time (though much more has since been done). With several years of university French behind me, I ordered the complete set of her works in French and continued to read scholarly works about her. I was attracted to take on the project of “Silhouettes d’Afrique” primarily because, as I note in my preface in Lights: The MESSA Journal (2013), it is a very poignant story of unrequited desire that I feel serves as a subtle Sufi parable. Also, while a very short and semi-fictional story, it deploys a number of the signature tropes and linguistic/cultural practices that she has become associated with in posthumous scholarship: namely—to quote my introduction to the piece in Lights— [Her] writing defies the authoritative and teleological project of Orientalism, replacing it with anti-colonialist sentiment and an insecure and troubled place of enunciation. Abdel-Jouad invokes Eberhardt’s polyglottal plurivocity, her inability to settle on a unary identity, or speech. Instead, as a multilingual, cross-dressing, Russo-Swiss Muslim convert, she offers a rich multiplicity of voices: ethnic, gendered, and linguistic. As the first writer in the French language to use the native term “Maghreb” in reference to the region at the time only known in Europe as North Africa, she incorporates many other transliterated Arabic words into her published writing… (Steele 2013) While translating, I often felt myself carried away by the atmosphere and language—as enchanted as a lover, perhaps. At times while I worked, I felt that Eberhardt was with me during this time, pleased
to see me bring her words to life. This admittedly imaginative yet uncanny experience was rousing, if slightly disorienting, and inspired keen loyalty and dedication to do justice to her Romantic mysticism and insight. As you’ll note in my introduction to the piece, I also felt that she had been unfairly characterized as a dilettante by a number of critics and translators; I felt that she deserved my well-reasoned defense, which you are encouraged to cite. The primary ethical concern and difficulty I have with this translation is the compulsion I felt in those days to eliminate what I perceived to be an excessive, inexplicable use of the ellipsis in her original text rather than have faith that the author used these to convey a certain affective code, however obscure to me at the time. In the original (French) version of the story, these ellipsis occur frequently, both within and between paragraphs, and I failed to comprehend their rhetorical value, so I made what I feel to be the rather arrogant decision to eliminate them rather than undertaking a more careful analysis—for example asking how the figure of aposiopesis might have functioned within the story... You asked about domestication; I’m not sure how I would further domesticate a text which was written for European audiences to begin with. Her use of Arabic/local languages and terms is so essential to her project that I certainly wouldn’t consider removing or replacing them. If they happen to disorient, it is well-suited to the text and a meaningful experience for the reader. Please see my text’s bibliography for an edition of the volume in which the French version of this essay was published. You have full permission to reproduce any of my words, with proper context and citation, in your own scholarly work. I thank you for inviting me to collaborate on your project, and please let me know if I can be of any further help. Keep me updated on publications, as well.

Sincerely yours,
Mara Steele
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The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Notes:

1 It goes without saying that it is under the sign of meeting with otherness [...] and the attentive listening of the different forms of exchanges that can result from it ... that it is necessary to analyze the complex step of Isabelle Eberhardt (This, and all English translations are mine).

2 A Sufi order named after Abdul-Qadir al Gilani (1077-1166), whose disciples rely fervently on applying the fundamentals of Islam.
Unveiling Double Consciousness and Unsettling Hegemonic Economies in the Iraqi Free Verse Poetry of Badr Shaker al-Sayyāb’s *The Blind Prostitute*

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**Abstract**
This paper seeks to explore DuBois’ concept of double consciousness as it applies to colonized Iraq, using Badr Shaker al-Sayyab’s poem, *The Blind Prostitute*, as an example. When viewed as an allegory of Iraq after the colonization of Great Britain, the poem gives the reader a significant sense of how double consciousness affects the Iraqi mindset and economy. In *The Blind Prostitute*, the main character is exploited like the colonial oppressors who exploited Iraq and its resources. The prostitute’s name is Salima, but when she becomes blind, her name changes to Sabah, which reflects the double consciousness of the main character as well as the nation of Iraq, whose people see themselves through their own eyes but also the lenses of their oppressors. This paper brings awareness to the plight of Iraq and its capitalistic exploitation by exploring the concept of double consciousness by analyzing *The Blind Prostitute*.

**Keywords**: Al-Sayyab, allegory, colonization, double consciousness, exploitation, economics

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Introduction

Since the 1958 revolution that saw the defeat of its colonial oppressors, Iraq has continued to struggle to find its own cultural identity. In response to colonization, the Iraqi poet, Badr Shaker al-Sayyāb (1926–1964), a key founder of the Arabic Free Verse Movement, wrote the poem, “The Blind Prostitute.” This paper argues that an important effect of the ongoing interference and manipulation of Iraq’s national and economic interests by Western hegemonic forces has been the development of a form of Iraqi Arabic free verse poetry that both reveals and critiques a problematic Du Boisian double consciousness as an expression of Iraqi identity. Through the lens of decolonization read as a form of neo-colonization, as well as its idiosyncratic use of the Arabic language, al-Sayyāb’s poem, The Blind Prostitute, expresses a form of Iraqi double consciousness in ways that critique the tenuous bridges between the lingering invisibility of colonial powers and the neocolonial nation of Iraq. The poem further reveals that this emergence of Iraqi double consciousness as national identity is deeply embedded within the effects of global capitalism that continue to subordinate the Iraqi nation and oppress the people of Iraq. To these conditions of double consciousness and continuing oppression, al-Sayyāb’s poem not only brings awareness but ultimately also works to incite resistance.

As part of the poem’s historical background, al-Sayyāb’s poetry was influenced by the political and economic ramifications of the first and second Anglo-Iraqi treaties, written in 1922 and 1930, that removed Iraq from the British mandate (Jackson, 2006). Even after Iraq signed the second Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Support in 1930, Britain nevertheless remained the primary power that controlled Iraq’s external and militaristic affairs (Jackson, 2006). In particular, al-Sayyāb was writing during the rule of the monarchical state that came after the end of the Ottoman Empire, which had been precipitated by the First World War. Thereafter, Britain retained control of Iraq, as the League of Nations had given Britain a mandate over Iraq in 1920.

The Iraqi people soon realized that Britain was keen to retain its influence in Iraq to exploit local oil resources while excluding Iraqi citizens from actively participating in the rule of their own country. This, coupled with the League of Nations mandate and the appointment of Faysal ibn Al-Husayn made Iraqi citizens feel as if they had been subjected to alien rule on two fronts (Saeed & O’Sullivan, 2006).

In 1936, Iraq became the first Arab nation to experience a coup d’état, known as the Bakr Sidqi coup (Scott, 1995). Ultimately, however, the coup led to increased Western influence in Iraq as well as the reassertion of neo-colonial rule. During the Second World War, instability in Iraq meant that America was also forced to intervene in Iraqi affairs, despite its wish to stay out of that arena (Thorpe, 1971). This ongoing foreign influence and resentment over British exploitation of Iraqi oil resources eventually culminated in the 1958 revolution, in which the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown and replaced with a republic (Saeed & O’Sullivan, 2006). This brief historical review of the waxing and waning of British and American influence over Iraq in the mid-and late-twentieth century and the resulting nationalist movements in reaction to foreign dominance over Iraqi affairs provides background for the expression of strong nationalistic sentiments and the desire to experience true Iraqi independence found in al-Sayyāb’s poetry.
Literature Review

The argument of this paper recognizes al-Sayyāb’s poem, *The Blind Prostitute*, as aligned with Iraq’s identity as a postcolonial nation, while being both similar to and different from previous interpretations of al-Sayyāb’s work by other critics. Overall, an argument that al-Sayyāb’s poem is a national allegory of Iraq is not universally supported by critics. According to Jameson’s definition of the relation of allegory and third-world literature (1986), and with *The Blind Prostitute* having been written in what was, at the time, a so-called colonized “third-world country,” the poem can be interpreted as a national allegory. This paper argues that this is the case, although not necessarily for the reasons outlined by Jameson. As Ahmad suggests, “the he social and political forces that shape the third world are also shared by the first world countries” (1987). Ahmad further asserts that, as he is himself a writer from a third-world, post-colonial country, he felt Jameson's argument was inauthentic, as it did not align with Ahmad’s own experience.

Other critics have also recognized the political content of *The Blind Prostitute*. For instance, Bahoora (2015) notes that all of al-Sayyāb’s work is politically “engaged” (p. 58). Jones (2013) also states that the prominent Iraqi poets of the time had a huge popularity among certain sections of the community, which included workers, students, and farmers, and indeed, the poet’s work was designed to appeal to all of them. The effect of this popularity of al-Sayyāb’s poem, *The Blind Prostitute*, was to energize and give voice to these classes, often collectively, for both political and social aims.

As a way of reading national allegory as a “global form,” and therefore ultimately evacuating “the subset of Third World allegory,” Coopan (2005) argues that W. E. B. Du Bois’ theory of double consciousness opens up a new way of reading allegory because it is always the thing it represents on its face as well as its “dialectical double.” According to Coopan (2005), as Benjamin and de Man suggest, “allegory makes its meaning through its movement,” both as a “species of historical consciousness” (Benjamin) or “méconnaissance” (de Man), thus revealing allegory as a “rhetoric of temporality.” Therefore, this paper’s argument is further aligned with the theory of “allegory’s temporal movement,” because it “underwrites [allegory’s] capacity to narrate spatial movement, in particular the movement between the national and the global” (Coopan, 2005, p. 315).

First theorized by W.E. B. Du Bois in his work *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), “double consciousness” describes the act of simultaneously inhabiting two conflicting cultures and/or identities. Double consciousness, in general, can be described as the profound internal conflict suffered by subordinated groups in an oppressive society as the oppressor’s gaze that is projected upon its subjects creates a sense of not only a racialized otherness but also one that is inauthentic to the subject’s own language and interior experience. The focus of Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) notably expands Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness and “the plight of black men under colonialism” (James, 2013).

This paper’s argument asserts that a double consciousness also lies at the core of Iraqi national identity. As such, it is therefore important to discuss the applicability of double consciousness to the Iraqi national context as well as consider how it can be applied to an analysis
of The Blind Prostitute in ways that reveal how the poet deploys his use of poetic language to represent a particular form of double consciousness that is intertwined with a global form of national allegory.

In terms of the postcolonial context, Walter Mignolo asserts that double consciousness arises as a way of understanding the emergence of national identities (Gordon, 2007). Therefore, a form of double consciousness can arise in any situation where the goals and culture of the oppressed or colonized differ from those of the colonizer or oppressor. In terms of Iraq, Majeed (2018) argues that a sense of double consciousness or internal conflict is at the core of Iraqi national identity. While the Western standpoint informs postcolonial existence, it also leads to “double vision” in the sense that it forces the colonial subject to experience a “peripheral existence” when referring to indigenous cultural values (Quayson, 2000).

In his work, The Writer in Politics, the Kenyan writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, explains “that the intellectual and artistic situation for the postcolonial African writer is essentially one of exile” (Ngugi, 1987, p. 107). Such exile is not a physical exile, but rather the “cultural and linguistic alienation that the African writer experiences not just regarding Western culture (double consciousness),” but also in regard to his or her own culture, from which he or she has become alienated through a Western-style education (Ni Loingsigh, 2005, p. 185). In Moving to the Centre: The Structure for Cultural Freedoms, Ngugi insists that the writer’s emotional and intellectual exile the individual African writer cannot be separated from the collective exile of his or her people: “For if the writer has been in a state of exile—whether it be physical or spiritual—the people themselves have been in exile in relation to their economic and political landscape” (Ngugi, 1993). The work of Fanon makes further comparisons between the African American psyche as described by Du Bois and its creation of inner cognitive dissonance in terms of identity, in addition to Fanon’s consideration of the Other in relation to capitalist ideology.

Analysis

To understand the double consciousness in The Blind Prostitute it is, of course, important to consider its subject. The main theme of this poem is Iraq, at a time when outside forces had invaded it and eroded its sense of national identity. In terms of economics, in addition to Britain’s continued influence, Iraq was further denied full control over its petroleum industry and national wealth. Inevitably, many Iraqi poets, including al-Sayyāb, concluded that the British Mandate had led Iraq to be a slave to British interests. Al-Sayyāb’s aim when writing The Blind Prostitute was therefore to consider the sense of nationhood that had emerged in Iraq following the collapse of colonialism in the 1940s and the emergence of capitalist globalization. On the one hand, The Blind Prostitute can be understood as a poem that represents the divided national consciousness of Iraq at that time. On the other hand, The Blind Prostitute can be understood as a poem that encapsulates a sense of double consciousness through exploring the economic relationships between colonial powers and the colonized nation, as well as the relations between the status quo and those who were against it.

Al-Sayyāb’s poem, The Blind Prostitute, tells the story of a young woman forced into prostitution due to paternal neglect and her economic disenfranchisement. Her condition as a
prostitute is made even more desperate in that she is not only poor but also physically handicapped by her blindness. *The Blind Prostitute* as a national allegory thus expresses double oppressions, both internal and external, as the Iraqi nation found itself subjected to two oppressive powers on two fronts: 1) the British government, and 2) the Hashemite monarchy. While no longer officially colonized, the Iraqi experiences of personal and national identity are still influenced by the vestiges of colonialism as neocolonialism.

Despite the blind prostitute’s oppression and humiliation, the poem tells the story of her efforts to uphold her dignity (Jones, 2013). The poem’s progression provides a critical interpretation of the inner battle, or conflict, that the blind prostitute undergoes existing in a world of corruption, poverty, national and foreign exploitation, and colonization. As Salima has lost her independence and had her rights torn from her, the Iraqi nation has also lost its own sovereignty and self-determination, viewing itself as a pawn to be used by those who have the power to exploit it.

In contrast to the seductive woman, al-Sayyāb uses the allegorical figure of the prostitute instead as a symbol of social evil to express how prostitution is a matter of victimhood within an immoral system, as well as to contradict his culture’s values to show how Iraq, through its reliance on traditional cultural and colonial oppression, was complicit in such social evils. While the people who suffer are, certainly, within the scope of his concern, al-Sayyāb’s drawing attention to their conditions is a call for reform without his being explicit. The poem reinforces the notion that his prostitute is also an allegory for the nation that does not see or speak for itself:

> . . . You sleep with a man  
> But there is no fruit but tears, and you eat  
> And your eyes are open all night but you cannot see, and you cry out but you have no lips. (DeYoung, Lines 438–440, 1998, pp. 249)\(^1\)

She “sleeps with men,” just as the Iraqi government and elites oppress the country with foreign powers; however, there is no natural product of this unholy liaison, only tears and humiliation. Nothing will come from this prostitution that will be able to sustain the country, even though she prostitutes herself because of hunger and poverty. Like the blind woman, the country of Iraq’s eyes are “open” but “unable to see” or make sense of anything concerning their relationship and conduct with the colonizers, and therefore the future of Iraq. Al Sayyāb’s drawing the reader’s attention to the injustices supports arguments arising from Neo-Marxist literary theory that the foundation of the poem is a reaction to the social, economic, and political injustices inflicted upon the Iraqi people as they are made to suffer. Addressing her father and brother, Salima cries:

> “Father . . . help me!” but you will not listen to her cries.  
> If you were just the blood and sweat to spray upon her forehead  
> And change her into a real woman and not just a commodity for sale,  
> [Then] you would have crowned her brow with glory and heroic deeds. (DeYoung, Lines 97-100, p.237)
The speaker of the poem places the blame on Salima’s father and brother. However, if they fight with their “blood” and “sweat” to protect her, then they will then be proud of her, “with glory and heroic deeds.” They have had opportunities to give her dignity; however, they chose not to because of their own misguided sense of what that “honor” meant. In other words, they prefer instead to have her resort to prostitution for the colonizer’s economic gain.

The poem then offers an even more severe criticism by comparing the beauty of Arab women to the economic attraction of Iraq for the colonizers:

O Daughter of the Arabs, like the dawn between the grape arbors
Like the surface of the Euphrates reflecting
The mildness of the earth and the rapacity of gold. (Jones, Lines 386-390, p. 320)

In this last line, the poem extols the beauty of Arab women who are hard to resist, just as the rapacious colonizers cannot resist the attractiveness of the countries they invade. In Iraq’s case, it was the country’s strategic geo-political position and abundance of oil deposits. The richness of the land and the apparent ease with which it could be taken made it a prize too good for the greedy capitalist colonizers to resist. This remembrance of her beauty contrasted with her current degradation suspends the figure of Salima, as a metonym for the Iraqi nation, in a constant state of double consciousness, characterized by ongoing abuse from her colonizers:

You drunkards, I won’t refuse any customer at all
Except guests without money.
I am a flower of the swamps, I gulp mud and clay
And shine with the light of morning. (DeYoung, Lines 405-408, p. 248)

Here, the use of oxymoronic language illustrates Salima’s double consciousness as she is “a flower,” she declares, but “of the swamps.” She “gulps mud and clay,” as she now lives off the baseness of others. Nevertheless, Salima welcomes the defilement that they bring, thus revealing Iraq’s willingness to defile itself by collaborating with the invader, or colonizer, for “money.” For these reasons, The Blind Prostitute can be understood as a poem that encapsulates a sense of a particularized double consciousness through its exploration of the economic relationship between colonial powers and the colonized nation of Iraq.

Throughout the poem, al-Sayyāb is making the following point exceedingly clear—there is no way to dignify what the nation (Salima’s father) has allowed the people in its care (Salima) to become and has forced them to endure. It is a disgrace, a stain on the whole nation that should not be tolerated or accepted. By raising this awareness of Iraq’s true condition and its identity that is bound up in a problematic double consciousness, al-Sayyāb not only raises awareness but also calls for resistance.

This resistance is characterized by the prospect of salvation: Perhaps her father can intercede for her to God? In the Islamic tradition, intercession can be made on a sinner’s behalf by someone righteous. Could it be possible that her father could come to Salima’s aid? One of the
“whispers,” or voices inside her, explores this idea: “Then you will cry out ‘Father!’ and he will shake the dust from his hands / And hasten to you, shouting ‘I have come to you, Salima!’” (DeYoung, Lines 216–218, p. 242). Her father is indeed willing and keen to help his beloved daughter; he rushes to her aid, shouting to her to reassure her that help is coming. However, a bitter, ironic disappointment is waiting: “She has lost even her name, concealed by another, borrowed one, / Ever since she became blind, she has been Sabah. What a bitter irony!” (DeYoung, lines 219–220, p. 24). Here, the irony illustrates Salima’s double consciousness, as she now has two different names/identities. Since blindness has afflicted her, and during her life as a prostitute, Salima has been known as Sabah. The irony of this naming is that her father, speeding to her side, is looking for the pure, beloved, and honorable daughter that he used to know, but, of course, there is no longer such a daughter there. He finds instead Sabah, the prostitute who has lived on “honor,” who now needs him. And there is a double irony, as “Sabah” in the Arabic language means “morning, dawn, or light,” references that are all now completely inappropriate as she is instead physically blind, living and working at night.

The poem also includes a song, in which Salima dreams that “If only there were some porter who would marry her, returning in the evening / With bread in his left hand and love in his right” (Lines. 182–183), while he is singing “songs describing wheat ears, girls, and flowers” (line 198). These lines show the intricate use of imagery in a lyric dream and how the speaker expresses her deep desire to have a decent social life as a wife, but instead, she is a prostitute.

According to Boullata (1971), al-Sayyāb “sometimes wavered between hope and despair” (p. 114). The paradox between what Salima/Sabah desires to be and what she really is expresses her sense of double consciousness as being trapped in a lived identity that she nevertheless hopes to escape. In The Blind Prostitute, al-Sayyāb both exposes and interrogates the contradictions of Iraqi double consciousness under the neocolonial rule and its accompanying pain and degradation. In remedy, he calls for Iraqi citizens to turn away from Iraqi complicities with colonialist oppression to love and respect for the nation of Iraq and its people. A marriage of these contradictions of double consciousness will, in turn, bring a sense of wholeness, decency, and economic integrity to the Iraqi nation. The poem thus beckons the Iraqi people to look to their future and resist neocolonialism and global capitalist oppression in exchange for a decent life with an authentic sense of both individual and national self-identity.

Conclusion

The poet uses DuBois’s theory of double consciousness to explore the mindset of colonized Iraq in depth. The Blind Prostitute is an allegorical poem which features a young woman who is neglected by society and becomes exploited by people who wish to use her for her resources and then cast her aside, in the way that Western powers exploit Iraq’s resources. She becomes blind as if the double consciousness causes her to have such extreme double vision that it completely obscures her sight. In the same way, the people of Iraq have been blinded by the colonizing powers in contrast to the way they see themselves. The poem is a warning to people and a way to shine a light on this psychological distress that can either be personal or indicative of the whole country. Al-Sayyāb’s blind prostitute generates a sympathetic emotional response in the reader as if the
poet is attempting to alleviate the double consciousness that oppresses Salima/Sabah and undermines Iraq’s autonomy by illuminating the West’s abuses of capitalistic power.

Endnotes
1 What follows are lines in translation from Terri DeYoung, Placing the Poet: Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab and Postcolonial Iraq, 1998, by Terri DeYoung. (All quotes from the poem in this study are from this source unless otherwise stated).
2 The poet painted a picture of her father as far from righteous. However, Salima’s father is far from righteous (upon social standers) as he didn’t agree to make her marry. Also, he is oppressed (according to Islamic standards) was murdered and died due to poverty and hunger. This fundamental contradiction in al-Sayyāb characterization, works well with a kind of cognitive dissonance.
3 Author’s translation.

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References


Significance of Performative Speech Acts for the Translation of Nahjul Balagha from Arabic into English

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Abstract
The current study investigates the significance of performative speech acts for translating Nahjul Balagha. Attempting to accredit the claim that performatives are essential for understanding the intended meaning of a text is, speech act theory is employed to show that the different functions of performative acts must be considered in translation. For the elucidation of the potential of this theory, this study employs Searle’s taxonomy. The main question of this study is: How does Imam Ali (A.S) employs performatives in his letters? In relation to this, the present study aims to see how Imam Ali’s performative acts in Nahjul Balagha are interpreted and then translated into English. To achieve this aim, the study qualitatively analyzes five selected letters from Nahjul Balagha with their English translation by Reza (2003) by comparing the performative function in the source text with the English target text. The results of this study attested the significance of performatives for translating Nahjul Balagha. It has been shown that Imam usually uses various performatives, mainly directives, to effect change in his addressee(s).

Keywords: Directives, Imam Ali, Nahjul Balagha, pragmatics, performative utterances, performativity, speech acts theory, translation from Arabic into English

Introduction

Being the most effective tool for conveying intentions, points of view, ideas, feelings, etc., language has always proven to be an excellent means by which people can make statements in communication with each other or describe the world around them. But language does not restrict itself to this mission; instead, it can be used to perform different actions to affect others (Pérez-Hernández, 2021). According to Witzczak-Plisiecka (2013), language has always shown the power to “influence, alter and create reality” (p. 5). This means that through language, people can “do things with words”; i.e., they can use it to perform specific actions such as promising, commanding, greeting, threatening, etc. (Austin, 1962, p. 6). This ‘performative’ aspect of language has urged scholars of translation to consider the many paths it has taken to accomplish its task. One of these paths is pragmatics, namely, speech act theory (SAT). Accordingly, Hatim & Mason (1990) consider pragmatics (especially SAT) a primary component for translation, not only for spoken communication, but also for the textual (i.e., written). This textual aspect is also emphasized by Lovejoy (2013), who argues that “when the movement of speech is not translated, a significant part of the text can be easily lost" (p. 238). The “movement of speech” can be explained as being the pragmatic element essential for comprehending the source text (ST) before being conveyed to the target text (TT). When missing this ‘movement’, mistranslation may result. This fact becomes a necessity when dealing with a high-status text as Nahjul Balagha (NB). This study, therefore, is mainly concerned with investigating the significance of performative acts for the translation of selected letters in NB.

Based on Morini’s (2012) statement that all the choices available to translators are of “a pragmatic nature” (p. 11), this study will strive, among other things, to scrutinize the significance of performatives in NB and investigate the manner through which performatives in NB are translated into English. Thus, a thorough account of these acts within SAT will be offered to shed some light on their primary aspects, classifications and current relevance and application in translation studies. Moreover, an overview of the notion of pragmatics and how it made its way into translation will be provided.

The significance of the current study can be revealed by the fact that it is about the translation of a text which is invaluable to both Muslim and Non-Muslim English readers. It contributes to translation studies by investigating a vital element in pragmatics in a manner that helps translators and students of translation to get some insights into the effectiveness of performative acts in the translation of NB. Such a task cannot be deemed accessible as speech acts (SAs), from Pérez-Hernández (2021)’s view, are “complex, interactive, and multifaceted” (p.5). The aims of the current study are thus presented in the form of the following questions: How does Imam Ali (A.S.) (henceforth Imam) employs performatives in his letters to address his audience in an age which was in turmoil and chaos? To what extent it is necessary for the translator to be well-equipped with pragmatic knowledge to render the text effectively? Does the TT have the same performative acts as in the ST? The study will address these issues based on an analysis of selected data. So, this study demands going through the theoretical foundations of pragmatics and translation to consider the significance of the notion of ‘performativity’ fully.
Theoretical Background

Based on Gambier & Gottlieb’s (2001, p. 34) viewpoint, it is “unrealistic” to ask a translator to “create an easily comprehensible text” without using any pragmatic aspects, the theoretical framework of the present study provides an overview of Austin’s (1962) SAT and its later Searle’s (1969) development. The aim is to have adequate knowledge about the concept of performatives in a manner that sets the view upon which the study will be built. As performativity is a fundamental element in pragmatics, it is necessary, then, to start with the notion of pragmatics itself.

What is Pragmatics?

Originally presented as the relationship between signs and their interpreters (Morris, 1938), pragmatics examines meaning within the use of language in a particular context. Many scholars have tried to define this branch of linguistics which studies language in use. One of the most common definitions is given by Levinson (1983) by saying that it is “meaning minus semantics” (p. 32). Levinson’s definition is highly criticized by Verschueren (1999) as it does not draw a clear distinction between pragmatics and other areas in linguistics such as conversation analysis or sociolinguistics. He, instead, defines pragmatics as a “general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena concerning their usage in forms of behaviour” (Verschueren, 1999, p. 7). In this definition, the importance of language from the point of its function within particular “forms of behaviour” is emphasized in Crystal’s (1985, as cited in Barron, 2003, p. 7) definition. He concentrates on language but from the perspectives of the users’ choices by affirming that it is the study of “the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effect of our choice on others” (p. 120). Users’ choices are studied within particular linguistic transactions, their constraints when facing a social situation and the implications of their language use on other users. In other words, this definition focuses on the pragmatic meaning of words used by people in their social interactions within a specific context. This means that the study of language in entirely linguistic terms could not accurately account for the nature of language-in-use (Garfinkel, 1967, as cited in Abbas, 2020, p. 1252).

In the above definitions context occupies a vital position as it leads to discovering the literal meaning, as opposed to implied, or intended meaning, for people to achieve communication and perform different actions (Stalnaker, 1972, as cited in Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 9). To be more specific, in pragmatics, some factors that determine the choice of specific utterances in a given context are to be taken into account (Majeed, 2021, as cited in Qassim, 2021, p.522). So, pragmatics is more concerned with detecting what people mean by their utterances than with the ‘literal meaning of the utterances to achieve communication. This means pragmatics is concerned with “the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society” (Mey, 2000, p. 6).

House (2015, as cited in Baker & Saldanha, 2020, p. 432) combines the themes of the above definitions by defining pragmatics as the study of all the “correlation[s] between linguistic units and their user(s) in a given communicative situation.” This perspective is formerly pinpointed by Hatim & Mason (1990) in their definition of pragmatics as “the study of the purpose for which sentences are used, of the real world conditions under which a sentence may be
appropriately used as an utterance” (p. 59). It is clear then that pragmatics is not concerned with texts in isolation but rather their meaning within contexts.

It is possible to conclude this section with Morini (2012) who summarizes pragmatics as being concerned with “what people ‘do’ to each other and the world when they speak” (p. 13).

**Speech Act Theory**

**Austin’s Speech Act Theory**

Austin (1962) is considered the founder of what became known as the standard SAT as he studied the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic factors in a particular context by concentrating on the difference between saying and doing (Blum-Kulka, 1981). Convinced that language can be used in any act of communication, instead of being only concerned with “true” or “false” statements, he was the first to introduce his SAT by drawing a distinction between constatives and performatives; the two main acts of an utterance. He defines constatives as statements that can be judged in terms of truth and falsity; i.e., they do not cause actions, and performatives are statements that aim at doing something and can be successful or unsuccessful, felicitous or infelicitous, rather than true or false (Austin 1962, p. 7).

After rejecting the constatives-performatives distinction, Austin (1962) favored a general SAT focusing on the performative force of an utterance (Cutting, 2002). As a result, Austin (1962, p. 109) classifies the elements of a communicative act of an utterance into three major types, namely, locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary which can be performed simultaneously.

**The locutionary act**

It is the linguistic form of an utterance, being a statement, a question or an imperative (Cutting, 2002). For Austin (1962), the meaning of such an act can be easily detected. To put it another way, what is said by the speaker does need any interpretation by the translator.

**The Illocutionary Act**

This is the core of SAT as it represents the actual actions performed when producing communicative actions, such as promising, apologizing, offering, etc., (Yule, 1996). In other words, the locutionary act represents the performative part of an utterance in which a speaker expresses the intention or purpose behind producing an utterance. It refers to the intended function (or force) of an utterance. Within this act, language users do not say words only, but also perform communicative actions (Austin, 1962). In the SAT, the locutionary act It receives a vital place because it makes interlocutors establish connections between utterances and their functions.

While meaning in the locutionary act is understood literally, it is in this act formed by the illocutionary force embedded within various actions, such as arguing, promising, advising, etc. An utterance such as, “I will be there” can be understood as a threat, a promise, etc., because of its communicative force (Yule, 1996).
The Perlocutionary Act

It is the act performed by a speaker to cause a particular effect on the hearer when making an utterance (Cutting, 2002). It affects the receiver’s feelings, thoughts, or actions in a manner that is inspiring, persuading, or even discouraging. In Austin’s (1962) words, it refers to what is achieved by “saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading” (p.109).

For an utterance to be regarded as performative, Austin (1962, pp.14-15), uses the term felicity conditions. They represent a group of rules which must be recognized by all parties as entailing that:

i. A performative is a convention – based act.
ii. The speaker (writer) must enjoy some power to perform that act.
iii. The hearer (reader) must have the ability to understand the speaker’s (writer’s) intention.
iv. Both (i) and (ii) must be done entirely.
v. The utterance should reveal clearly its consequences.

If any of these conditions is violated, a performative would be infelicitous.

To accomplish these conditions, any SA will be ‘felicitous’ otherwise, it will be considered as ‘infelicitous,’ or a misfire when violated (Austin, 1962, p.18).

Speech Act Theory

Classification of Performatives

Austin (1962, p. 150-151) categorized performatives into the following classification:

Verdictives

They are concerned with giving some verdict, official or unofficial, by someone in a position of power. They are connected with some actions such as acquitting, reckoning, assessing, describing, and diagnosing.

Exercitives

They are related to the exercise of power through which their hidden meaning is practiced by the speaker. They are connected with particular actions, such as appointing, urging, voting, ordering, and warning.

Commissives

They denote that a speaker is committed to performing a specific action, such as declarations of taking some side. They are connected with particular actions, such as promising, opposing, betting, etc., which commit the hearer to do something.

Expositives

They are used within the contexts of conducting arguments, expounding of views and clarifying usages. They are connected with particular actions, such as affirming, denying, stating, asking, etc.
Behabitives
This category is related to the context social behavior among people and the manner by which they express their attitudes. They are connected with particular actions, such as apologizing, congratulating, commending, cursing, condoling, etc.

Searle’s Speech Act Theory
Inspired by Austin’s insights, Searle is led to the conviction that “speaking or writing in a language consists in performing speech acts of a quite special kind called ‘illocutionary acts’” (Searle, 1979, p.58). He developed Austin’s categories as they don’t entail clear-cut dimensions that make it possible to draw a distinction between a performative and another (Fotion, 2000). For Searle (1969), an illocutionary act is any utterance that denotes a particular action and serves a particular function in communication. As a result, Searle (1976, as cited in Levinson, 1983, p. 240) presented a new classification of SAs to prevent any possible confusion in Austin’s theory.

Classification of Performatives
It is essential to note that a theoretical account of SAs also requires a distinctive classification of performatives as basically laid by Searle (1969).

Table 1. Searle’s (1969) taxonomy of performatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Performatives</th>
<th>Main Features</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Expressive            | - It expresses the psychological states of the speaker; i.e., the speaker’s sentiments or feelings towards the receiver | - complaining  
- welcoming  
- blaming  
- congratulating  
- thanking |
| Assertive             | - It commits the speaker to the truth of a proposition.  
- It reflects the speaker’s view to assert credibility of something | - demanding  
- affirming  
- witnessing  
- concluding |
| Declarative           | - It affects immediate changes in an official state of affairs, such as declaring war. | - announcing  
- declaring  
- appointing |
| Commissive            | - It commits the speaker to make some future course of action. | - swearing  
- warranting  
- pledging  
- threatening  
- refusing |
| Directive             | - It urges the receiver to perform an action. | - requesting  
- recommending  
- authorizing  
- ordering |

Furthermore, Searle (1979) stresses that people, when communicating, produce meaning by performing SAs directly and indirectly. If a speaker, during the process of communication, conveys to the receiver one meaning only, no indirect SA is involved in this utterance. When a
speaker conveys to the receiver more than one meaning with various implications, depending on their linguistic and non-linguistic background, an indirect SA is produced. It is essential to mention that these performatives are subject to felicity conditions. In Searle’s perspective, these conditions are not meant to check what goes wrong, as in Austin’s. Instead, they are central to the illocutionary force of an utterance. In other words, felicity conditions are needed for the success or achievement of a performative.

The Notion of Performatives

Originally, the term “performative” in philosophy is used to mean “expressing beliefs by means other than arguments” (Reiner, 2009, as cited in Witczak-Plisiecka, 2013, p. 48). In SAT, it is first introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969) to refer to an act that is considered a sheer announcement of the speaker’s (writer’s) intention by which s/he orders others to perform that intention in the form of a promise, a threat, an apology, a warning, an invitation, a request, etc. In doing so, the speaker (writer) does not report or describe the world; instead, s/he aims to effect change. In other words, in using a performative utterance, a language user is not just saying something but is doing something. This conviction constitutes the core of Austin’s (1969) theory through which any SA is, accordingly, performed by a speaker when producing an utterance within a chain of communicative acts related to the speaker’s intentions and their effects on the receiver. For Searle (1965), the performance of SAs is regarded as the basic unit of linguistic communication. Therefore, Searle (2002) argues that the concept of a performative is considered one of the essential notions “philosophers and linguists are so comfortable with that one gets the impression that somebody must have a satisfactory theory” (p. 535).

A remarkable point here is that meaning appears as an integral part in the process of communication in general and translation in particular to the extent that the “preservation of ‘meaning’ across two different languages” is deemed a prerequisite for translation (House, 1977, p. 25). This in turn leads to the fact that pragmatics in translation is mainly concerned with the manner through which the translator interprets the SL meaning before rendering it to the TL. This same fact is stressed by Austin (1962), who considers meaning the fruit of saying and doing, starting from the conviction that "to say something may be to do something, or in saying something we do something" (p. 91).

Before proceeding to the next section, it seems essential to distinguish between two types of performatives; explicit and (primary) implicit. The former happens in direct orders or requests, for instance, when the speaker has the full intention to “define his act as belonging to a particular category” (Leech, 1983, p.181). For Austin (1962), this type can be recognized by “verbs in the first person singular present indicative active” (p. 56). Implicit performatives, on the other hand, happen when the utterances are presented without any performative expressions (Cruse, 2006). The difference between these two types of performatives is not confined to meaning, but to the context in which meaning is produced.
Performatives and Translation

As the term “performative acts” is synonymous with SAs (Witczak-Plisiecka, 2013, p. 48), the present section will investigate its relationship with translation. Based upon the proposition that translation is essentially a communicative act for conveying meanings from one language into another within a particular (Hatim & Mason, 1990), the point of departure for this section is Gutt’s (2000) idea that translation is not communicated only by linguistic aspects, but also non-linguistic ones. Being also concerned with non-linguistic factors, pragmatics has enjoyed a key position in translation study.

Bariki (2019, p. 605) describes the relationship between pragmatics and translation as an “interesting” relationship. Different translation scholars have paid attention to such a relationship (cf. Hatim & Mason, 1990, 1997; Baker, 1992; Fawcett, 1998; Hickey, 1998; Gutt, 2000; Morini, 2012; Liddicoat, 2014). It seems necessary to first detect the connection between translation and pragmatics, namely, performatives. The start is from Baker and Saldanha (2020), who consider pragmatics “central to the study of translation” (p. 432). Abdel-Hafiz (2003, as cited in Hassan, 2011) affirms that disregarding pragmatic aspects in translation may distort translation and does not fully convey the pleasure of ST to the target reader. Morini (2012) finds it “awkward for a practice-based discipline like translation studies to lack a practice-based theory by which practice can be illuminated.” (p. 9). Farghal & Almanna (2014) consider performatives as an essential part of translation by stressing that they denote “the intended meaning (the illocutionary force) rather than the literal meaning (the locutionary force) of utterances in communication” (p. 97). The pragmatic approach to translation, then, is significant as it is “neither purely theoretical nor relevant merely to specific translation problems, but rather which is common to all translation” (Hickey, 1998, p. 5).

The main weight, accordingly, should be given to the fact that by performative acts, translation cannot be understood as simply “passing of information between a speaker and a hearer”, but instead, as “the consequential and mutual acting of participants upon each other” (Collavin, 2011, p. 373). This, in Blum-Kulka’s (1981) perspective, will make the act of translation itself to be “viewed as an attempt at the successful performance of speech acts” (p.89).

To wrap up this section, one can say that translation shares common features with pragmatics as they both appear as communicative acts with the aim of reaching meaning. Furthermore, they both place great importance on what words perform not only say to the extent that Fawcett (1997/2014) stresses that “the act being performed by a particular sentence is not necessarily given by its form alone but requires contextual information” (p. 127). So, this close relationship between performatives and translation can be represented in Figure 1:
Review of Related Studies

Recently, different researches in translation studies have paid much attention to the significance of pragmatics for translating any text. The text under focus in this study is NB. Given the sporadic literature on its translation into English, the present study is an enhancement to other studies that have attempted to examine the significance of performative speech acts for their translation. As a research object based on pragmatics, it is noticed that despite the many studies, there is also a shortage of research regarding the translation of NB. Most of the available studies deal with pragmatic issues in translation in different types of texts other than NB.

Jawad (2011) has studied illocutionary speech acts in Imam’s letter to Malik Al-Ashter, the new ruler of Egypt then. He found that most speech acts were directives because of the instructive nature of the letter. Van Dijk (1977) model was adopted to analyze minor speech acts.

Mirza (2017) has investigated the manner through which Imam makes specific alignments between being authoritative and polite at the same time when addressing his co-ordinate rulers. Analysis shows that all types of politeness strategies were utilized by Imam. The study concludes that this letter employs a descending scale of politeness starting with the use of impersonal devices to establish rapport and equality and ending with presenting reasoned explanations that play a secondary role.

Al-Hindawi & Mohammed (2018) have investigated how presupposition is conceptualized in the translation of the ‘Shiite discourse’ and the way it affects the translated version in terms of clarity and comprehensiveness. The researchers’ data are “instances,” (as they call it), from NB. Presupposition is considered as a pragmatic notion defined in terms of background knowledge between the text and its users. They concluded that translation has a pragmatic element at one level or another to the extent that the translator who utilizes his knowledge of pragmatics may produce a more appropriate comprehensive translated version.

Al-Ameedi & Abd (2021) have analyzed (16) texts, eight texts for each. The theme of these texts deals with social justice in the New Testament and Nahjul-Balagha. They adopted Leech’s
(1983) model of politeness to detect the politeness maxims in the New Testament and NB in social justice texts. The study revealed some similarities and differences between these two books in their politeness maxims. Besides, politeness maxims that are scrutinized in the selected texts show marks of social justice, such as generosity, modesty, approbation, agreement, and sympathy.

From what has been mentioned above, it is found that the previous studies reviewed in this section show no sign of similarity or resemblance with the present study. The essence of this study is different from theirs.

The Analytical Framework

Methodology of the Study

A methodology, in Saldanha & O’Brien’s (2013) view, is “a general approach to studying a phenomenon” (p. 13). The current section, therefore, is devoted to the general approach to study performatives as translated in NB. More explicitly, it attempts to shed some light on the research method, data collection, model of analysis and data analysis, pragmatically and in terms of translation.

Data Collection

Simply defined, Nahjul Balagha, or The Peak of Eloquence, is a collection of 241 sermons, 79 letters and 480 aphorisms left by Imam and collected by ar-Radhi (d. 406/1016). Shabbar (2012) cites the Arab historian Masoodi, known as the “Herodotus of the Arabs”, as saying that the number of Imam’s sermons which have been preserved by various people are more than 480. Still, ar-Radhi did not compile in NB only 241 sermons. Ar-Radhi’s goal is not to collect Imam’s words only, but also to establish his “legitimacy in the moral, if not necessarily political, leadership of the Islamic Ummah” (Stetkevych, 2019, p. 231).

NB shows an extreme rhetorical elegance with richness of meaning in a manner that makes it a “veritable model of Arabic balāgha (eloquence) down through the ages to the present day” (Shah-Kazemi, 2006, p. 1). In this book, Imam provides his noble and universal message to humanity delivered eloquently. It is, therefore, “can be called the ‘book of life” (Tian & Pho, 2019, p. 881).

One may notice that despite the importance enjoyed by this book, it has been neglected and received “so little” attention by Western scholars due to the controversial issue of its authenticity (Shah-Kazemi, 2006, p. 1). This fact was confirmed by Hassan (1979) who states that “of all the major works of Islamic scholarship, only Nahj al-Balagha seems to have received scant attention from Western scholars” (p. 5). So, the data of study are chosen from this book to have an insight of what Imam’s moral and spiritual message.

As the scope of the present study does not allow for an elaborate discussion of NB, the focus, therefore, will be on randomly selected data of five letters. It is worth noting that letters can be considered a distinguished genre. A genre, according to Swales (1993), is a “class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58).
To achieve these communicative purposes, a genre must have particular features that characterize the style of its users, as well as being organized in a specific structure, with a certain content to address the intended audience. For this reason it is given a particular importance in Hatim & Mason’s (1990) view by arguing that it is “a conceptual framework which enables us to classify texts in terms of communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purpose” (p.140). It is interesting to note that as rhetoric, in Abdul-Raof’s (2006) view, "is the flesh and blood of the Arabic language" (p. 1), discerning a genre in such a way will make it easier for the current study to deal with Imam’s letters. Besides, Reza’s (2003) translation of NB is chosen for the analysis as this version is considered by Shah-Kazemi (2006) “the best available complete translation of the text in English” (p. 8).

**Model of Analysis**

Based on the theorization of the current study and its aims, this section mainly presents the suggested analysis model, as shown in Figure 2. It takes its departure from the intimate relationship between pragmatics, namely performatives, and translation. The first layer of this model, therefore, presents ‘interpretation’ as the element common to both as pragmatics is defined by Sperber & Wilson (1995) as "the study of the interpretation of utterances" (p. 10), and translation is presented as an act of interpretation (Schulte, 1979). For this reason, it is presented as a central element to arrive at the intended meaning, which constitutes the basis of SAT. Searle’s (1969) classification of SAs, as shown in Table 1, is chosen for the linguistic analysis of data.

![Figure 2. The analytical framework of the study](image-url)
**Data Analysis**

As the study is mainly concerned with the analysis of translation, the research design follows a qualitative method to explore and understand how meaning is ascribed by people. It is to be noted here that the aim is not to assess the quality of translation; instead, the translation will be tackled as a means of understanding the significance of performatives for translation.

Despite the many methods for classifying performatives (cf. Pratt, 1977; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Briggs, 2001, Ward, 2002), the whole corpus of data will be scrutinized according to Searle’s (1969) categories, than Austin’s, as the latter’s categories show great overlapping from within (Searle, 1979). Besides, Searle’s categories are chosen for their convenience and because they provide translators with valuable insights and useful analytic tools to understand “what kind of text is produced, how, and the relation it entertains with its source” (Morini, 2012, p. 202). Hickey (1998), therefore, regards the work of Searle (1969), as an outstanding achievement within the scope of interdisciplinarity as it proves an apparent effectiveness for understanding and translating the selected data.

Based on Searle's categories in Table 1, performatives in the selected data are identified and then analyzed, first in the ST and then in the TT. The selected letters are not uniform in length and number of utterances, the unit of analysis, therefore, is the utterance (*extracts*). This analysis adopts a thorough interpretation of the performative acts in ST.

By adopting the above model, the TT will be divided into translation units to be matched with the ST. It is to be noted that Sorvali (1994, as cited in Thunes, 2017) affirms that a translation unit is a “part of the text on which the translator concentrates at one time before going on to translate the next, similar unit” (p. 242).

**Table 2. Letter No. 4: to a General of Imam’s Army**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract No.</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT: (Reza, 2003, p. 494)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>شفَقْ فِي سِيَانِ اطِعَانِهِ لِيٌّ مَنْ عَصَاهُ</td>
<td>Taking with you those who obey you, you must rush against those who disobey you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>وَفَزِّعْ بَينَ هَذَيْنِ مَعَكَ عَنْكَ</td>
<td>While you have those with you who follow you, do not worry about those who hold back from you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By reflecting on war practices by Imam, it is possible to realize that with the aim of defending Islam and confronting tyranny, he pays a great attention to the issues of rallying the ranks of his army to even the slightest detail. In this letter to a general of his army, he sets the tactics of a disciplined and well-organized war. So, in extracts (1) and (2), it is evident that he issues direct commands to his generals to achieve victory by depending on the people who are considered faithful and obedient and to abandon those who don’t have a legitimate pretext to stop fighting. Directive acts of command are therefore used in a way that shows the power of ordering someone to perform something. As indicated in these utterances, it is intended to gather the addressee’s attention to what the addressee is talking about. The message is presented as an explicit performative to make the addressee do the assigned task.
Table 3. Letter No. 5: to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, Governor of Azerbaijan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract No.</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT: (Reza, 2003, p. 494)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>تَيسَ لَكَ بِطُعمَة</td>
<td>Your assignment is not a morsel for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>تَيسَ لَكَ أَن تَقتَاتَ فِي رَعِيّة</td>
<td>It is not for you to be oppressive towards the subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>وَلَاتَخَاطِبُ السَّوْقَةَ</td>
<td>Nor to put your life at risk save on strong grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>تَأْخِذِيَ لِيَوْنَاء</td>
<td>You hold its charge till you pass it on to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>فَكَيْنِي أَن لا أَدَعْيَرُ وَلَكُنْ تَأْخِذِي</td>
<td>Probably I will not be one of the bad rulers for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>وَلَتَسْلَمْهُ إلِيَّ</td>
<td>And this is the end of the matter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This letter reveals the main characteristics of a just and honest ruler. According to Reza (2003, p. 495), Imam has sent this letter to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays asking him not to keep the revenues and levies of Azerbaijan. This letter contains various performatives. Both extracts (3) and (4) use the negative marker “ليس” to report obligations. Al-Makhzumi (2005, as cited in Farghal, 2018) defines negation as “a linguistic category which is opposed to affirmation and intended to disprove or deny the truth value of a proposition” (p. 562). Pragmatically speaking, Al-Makhzumi’s definition does not fit well in these texts as negation is employed as a performative act denoting the function of ordering, i.e., as an indirect command to the governor to behave honestly. Besides, negation in Arabic, if used semantically, aims to affirm that a proposition is not true. But Horn (2001) stresses that negation must be explained in relation to a pragmatically driven disavowal of some assertion given by a speaker. It should be made clear, however, that the context of this letter despite its indirectness, has a direct force employed in a manner that can be regarded as a strong prohibition that cautions the addressee to be honest, keep trust and abstain from corruption. So, this form of negation can be considered prohibitive.

On the other hand, as one of the main characteristics of a leader is to have the ability to perform various performatives (Langton, 1993), in extract (5), this ability is stated with the use of the "prohibitive لَ (لَعْلَيْنِي)". It is mainly intended to warn the addressee of performing something. The use of the imperative verb, "لَتَخَاطِبُ السَّوْقَةَ" clearly performs a direct performative as a pure command in a manner that shows Imam’s power over his addressee. Such a command obliges the addressee to perform the intended actions indicated in the message not to be in bad consequences. Performativity then is expressed in the form of advice or guidance from the addressee to the addressee as the latter is supposed to take full advantage of the consequences.

Extract (6) shows that Imam is not forcing his addressee directly but wisely and politely requesting him with the aim of not casting any doubt on his demeanor. It is to be noted, however, that "by making a request, the speaker impinges on the hearer's claim to freedom of action and freedom of imposition” (Blum - Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). Even though a clear directive is given from the superior to the inferior, the direct function of this request is ‘advice’ while the indirect function is ‘warning’ as Imam is so keen to prevent anyone to be disloyal to Muslims.

In extract (7), it is clear that Imam’s politeness is shown at the beginning of this extract by addresses his governor wisely with the optative, "لَعْلَيْنِي" as an indirect act of alarming the governor despite the full power he enjoys to address him directly. The performative here is directive in the form of a praying act as it implies the process of asking the addressee to do something, a special
note to be mentioned here as regards the function of praying. The distance, in this text, between the addressee and addressee does not appear as huge since the former intends to send his message politely. So, it is performed to stand on an equal footing of honesty between the two, where the latter is supposed to accept what is indicated to him by the performative.

With a declarative performative, the letter is indirectly concluded in extract (8). Imam performs this act giving the impression that the addressee has got the real message of what is said. The function therefore is presented to Ibn Qays as a warning to perform what is told along this letter, namely, be honest and trustworthy.

Table 4. Letter No. 45: to Othman ibn Hunayf al-Ansari, Imam’s Governor of Basra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract No.</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT: (Reza, 2003, p. 545-546)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ابْنُ هُنَيْف</td>
<td>O son of Hunayf!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>فَانْظُرْ إِلَى مَا تَقْضَمُهُ مِنْ هذَا الْـمَقْضَم</td>
<td>Look at the morsels which you take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>فَمَا اشْتَبَهَ عَلَيْكَ عِلْمُهُ فَالْفِظْهُ</td>
<td>Leave out that about which you are in doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>وَمَا أَيْقَنْتَ بِطِيبِ وُجُوهِهِ فَنَلْ مِنْهُ</td>
<td>Take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>أَعِينُوني بِوَرَع وَسَدَاد وَاجْتِهَاد</td>
<td>support me in piety, exertion, chastity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>يَابْنَ حُنَيْفِيْنَكَ</td>
<td>It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>فَلْتَكْفُفْ أَقْرَاصُكَ</td>
<td>Be content with your own loaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>لَوْلَئِكَ مِنْ ذَيْنَارِ خَالِد</td>
<td>So that you may escape Hell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The context of this letter shows that it was written when Imam heard that Ibn Hunayf was invited to a luxurious feast by a rich man of Basra. By starting with extract (9), the addresser, i.e., Imam, declares the beginning of his letter in an attempt to notify his addressee that he wants him to do something. Then Imam moves in extract (10) to a new directive that combines two performatives: an invitation and advice. By saying “ف انْظُرْ إِلَى مَا تَقْضَمُهُ”, Imam is asking Ibn Hunayf to seek for what is lawful (halal) and avoid prohibited (haram). This same performative is repeated in extract (13) in which Imam is addressing his subjects with advice to be pious hard workers who follow lawful practices and avoid the prohibited ones. It is interesting to note that For Hsieh (2009), repetitions from the pragmatic point of view, can be employed “to double up the illocutionary force, i.e., to do emphasis or to do persuasion, employing repeating the linguistic form” (p. 163). So, the intended advice can be extracted from Imam’s words in which he invites his audience to help him by being pious, and at the same time, advises them to work hard and to fear the punishment of Allah to effect a change that improves the situation.

Furthermore, Imam, in extract (14), uses a poetic verse starting with “جَنُّكَ” as a direct commissive act of threat. Threat is defined by Davies (1986) as an act that entails an imperative suggesting a punishment represented by the explicit performative. It is possible to take context for analyzing this extract. This text can be considered a social directive as the topic does not concern governance directly, even though it addresses the governor. It concerns polite behavior in the Islamic culture in which people are not supposed to follow their food lust.
It should be made clear, however, that in any communicative activity, addressers use directives to attract the attention of their audience, to add some power to their message and to remove any misunderstanding. In extracts (15, 16, 17), Imam uses different imperative utterances with the function of prohibition to get his addressee to perform something, namely, to care about his people. As Imam cares about the poor so much and vigorously fights the poverty of his people, he prohibits Ibn Hunayf’s from feasting with the wealthy while the poor have no place in it. So, by the act of a direct threat, Imam removes any sign of misunderstanding the performative of his letter by the addressee, i.e., Ibn Hunayf. Besides, he is indirectly asking his representative in Basra to follow suit and care about the poor to establish the rules of good governance.

Table 5. *Letter No. 11: To His army*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ST:</th>
<th>TT: (Reza, 2003, p. 501-502)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>﴿لْيَكُنْ مُع سْك رُكُمْ فِي قُبُلِ ا لْجِب الِ فِّي ا لْمِعْتَرِفَاتِ﴾</td>
<td>the position of your force should be on the approaches high ground or on the edges of mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>﴿لْتَكُنْ مُق ات ل تُكُمْ مِنْ و جْهٍ و اِحِدٍ أ وِ اِثْن يْنِ﴾</td>
<td>so that it may serve you as a help and a place to return to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>﴿فِي سِف احِ لْ ف لْي كُنْ مُع سْك رُكُمْ فِي قُبُلِ ا لْجِب الِ﴾</td>
<td>Your encounter should be from one side or two sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>﴿أَلْسَنِي فِي صِيْفِي لِلْجَالَ وَقِلْبِكِ لِتُدْرَابٍ﴾</td>
<td>Place watchers on the peaks of mountains and the raised sides of the high ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>﴿أَلْسَنِي فِي أَجْرَدَنِ مِنْ لِبَدْانِ مِهِدَةٍ أ و أَنْ﴾</td>
<td>so that the enemy may not approach you from any place, whether of danger or safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>﴿مِقَمُّهُمْ وَأَلْسَنِي﴾</td>
<td>And know that the vanguard of an army serves as their eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>﴿فِي صِرْطٍ وَبَلْدُ﴾</td>
<td>Beware of dispersal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>﴿فِي قِمُّهُمْ وَأَلْسَنِي﴾</td>
<td>when you halt do so together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>﴿وِإِذَا أَرْتُمْ فِي نَفَاسٍ﴾</td>
<td>when you move, you should move together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>﴿وَإِذَا أَرْتُمْ قَدْ بَلَغَتْ حَرَائِفٌ﴾</td>
<td>when night comes, fix your spears in a circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>﴿وَلَدِينَاءُو أَلْسَنِي﴾</td>
<td>do not sleep except for dozing or napping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many instructions are included in this letter which is issued by the leader to his army in case they are confronted by the enemy. Accordingly, Imam sets for them a war plan and establishes his military institution. However, these instructions, performed as directives, are not issued in the form of commands or orders. Instead, they indirectly function as requests or advice. In this letter, indirectness is performed politely to persuade the addressees to respond positively. So, in extracts (18) and (20), by using "لْيَكُنْ" and "لْتَكُنْ" in an imperative sense (Wright, 1974), Imam advises his army to choose a proper military location. This function is indicated by the use of specific words, mountains for instance, as an appropriate location. In extracts (19) and (22), expressive acts, also called evaluative, are performed by Imam in a manner that comes as an evaluation of the situation.

In extract (23), a direct declarative is performed by Imam with the illocutionary force of warning which can be indicated by the use of “eyes”, meaning that they have to use guardsmen. The main reason behind using this act is to warn his army against any ploys by the enemy. Even though the fact that this performative act has a warning force, its primary purpose is to get the
military not to leave their position least be attacked by the enemy. This act, therefore, directs the military to perform what their leader says and he, at the same time, warns them of the harmful consequences of not performing what is said. So, in this extract, both explicit and implicit performatives are employed.

Within the same line of thought, Levinson (1985) affirms that a performative utterance is appropriate when it is issued at the right moment by an addresser with the full power and trust to do so to be positively received by the addressee. Accordingly, Imam performs his acts at the right time by producing a series of other direct acts to effect change.

Politically speaking, the addresser can use different acts to make his audience contemplate the issue discussed from different angles intending to reach an agreement. So, in extract (24), a commissive act is used as a warning that the act places some obligations over the addressees. To avoid the misinterpretation of these acts by the addressees, Imam uses directness to achieve this warning force, although he intends to alarm them. Indirectness is also used in extracts (25, 26, 27 and 28) with the directive performative in the form of advice.

To sum up, this letter as a whole performs a recommending function as it instructs the army of the war plan.

Table 6. Letter No. 20: To Ziyad Ibn Abih

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT: (Reza, 2003, p. 511)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>ﻓِﯾِرِبَ ﺔُوُقُمُ ﻲِصَدَأَا ﺔُقْسِمُ بِا</td>
<td>I truthfully swear by Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>ﻦَلْزَوُنَ ﻲِفِي ﻲِسُدَادَ ﻦَداً</td>
<td>I shall inflict upon you such punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>ﻦَدُوُكَ ﻲِفِي ﻲِنَدُوُنَ ﻲِفِي ﻲِنَدُوُنَ ﻲِفِي ﻲِنَدُوُنَ ﻲِفِي ﻲِنَدُوُنَ</td>
<td>would leave you empty-handed, heavy backed and humiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>وَلِيِنَ لَم ﺔِمْرَ ﻦَداً ﻲِندُوُنَ ﻲِندُوُنَ ﻲِندُوُنَ ﻲِندُوُنَ</td>
<td>that is the end of the matter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This letter is sent by Imam to Ziyad who was appointed as the commissioner of Basra by Abdullah bin Abbas. Ziyad was widely known as a dishonest and corrupt man. In an attempt to give him a chance to abandon evil deeds, Imam accepted his nomination. But his behavior did not change, so Imam angrily addresses him in this letter.

It is deemed significant to start with Searle (1979) who believes that in a commissive, the addresser expresses his clear intention regarding a particular future action by uttering something such as threatening, promising, refusing, swearing or warning to convince the addressee that what is said is totally true. This letter is expressed in a continuum of commissives. Extract (29) starts as a commissive in the form of swearing to perform the function of threatening. Since Imam has the power to perform the act of threat, he directly uses a swear word to show how serious the situation is. The direct performative, therefore, makes his intention well-understood. It is worth noting that threatening is deemed problematic in pragmatic analysis because it is not performed explicitly. So, Parker & Riley (2005) consider this performative act implicit as it does not contain a proper verb for threat. In other words, Imam does not use the expression, I threaten you. It also indicates that
Imam intends to severely punish Ziyad Ibn Abih if the latter takes something from the funds of the Muslims. So, this act imposes an obligation on the addressee to take full responsibility of his deeds.

A remarkable point here is that despite Imam’s adherence to mercy and compassion, he is severe with corrupt people and inflicts a severe penalty on the wrongdoers when found guilty. So, he addresses Ziyad Ibn Abih unkindly, intending to prevent him from engaging in any corrupt act. The threat in this letter is performed as a way of warning him not to do such acts. This function is made clear later by extract (30) that reflects the action of the addresser and the consequences of not doing it by the addressee. Extract (31), therefore, is an expressive act. It reflects Imam’s anger of the addressee in a manner described by (Searle, 1976) as expressing “the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (p. 12).

By indirectly concluding the letter with a declarative act in extract (32), Imam performs his commissives in a manner that is supposed to effect change; i.e., Ziyad Ibn Abih is to perform Imam’s will of achieving an equal distribution of wealth among Muslims.

Translation Analysis

The starting point for this section is the fact that translation is a complicated and challenging task, or in Sontag’s (2013, p. 67) view, “basically an impossible task, if what is meant is that the translator can take up the text of an author written in one language, and deliver it, intact, without loss, into another language.” In this section, the researcher will focus on how Sayyed Ali Reza, the translator of Nahjul Balagha (2003), chooses the aspects of the ST that must be given priority in the TT in terms of pragmatics. To put it differently, how does he interpret the ST from a pragmatic point of view?

As far as translation analysis is concerned, it achieves an essential role as it gives the reader a chance to delve into how translation works. Even though the fact that it is almost impossible to detect the writer’s intention (Wales, 1989, p. 254), translation analysis will shed some light on the way translators recognize the writer’s purposes. Accordingly, translators of a pragmatic text must be aware that utterances can reflect the exact message of its speakers or they may express something hidden or intentional. This means that finding meaning is not easy since "meaning is a complicated, many-leveled, a network of relations" (Chesterman, 1989, as cited in Tisgam, 2014, p. 32). The intentional meaning of an utterance is, therefore, disguised behind the literal one; i.e., the locutionary force, in a manner that may lead to “added effects such as those associated with, say, a request or admonition” (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p.179).

Considering translation, as shown in Table 2, the translator succeeded in rendering most of the SL performative into the TL, especially the directives. But, as context is deemed a vital means to interpret the intentional meaning is emphasized in Imam’s letters, in the examples noted above, some extracts are translated out of context. In extract (3) and (4), for instance, negation is deemed problematic because it is sometimes hard to say which elements of the utterance are subject to it. So, it poses a challenge to translators because it is, according to Horn (2001, p. 203), “harder and more loaded”. It necessitates, therefore, a translation choice that explains the intended meaning.
pragmatically. The translator should have carefully concluded that using negative words may show how critical a situation can be.

Based on Morini’s (2012, p. 14) view, the main task of a translator is to understand what the ST “does or should do,” as it is the main condition for determining the choices of translation. It is noted that the two performatives in extract (10) are not directly expressed in translation. The performative act is shifted to a statement that does not reflect the real function of the utterance. In the same vein, by focusing on the translation of extract (7), it is pretty clear that the translator did not recognize the function of this performatives.

Molina & Albir (2002, p. 499), on the other hand, affirm that the translator’s choices reveal the techniques s/he adopts in interpreting the text. In extract (14), the translator uses a literal technique in rendering this poetic line, for he takes the word “بطنه” as meaning “a disease”. Literal translation, for Newmark (1988, p.46), is a translation procedure in which the SL is translated out of context. Imam warns his addressee not to be glutted while his subjects are starving.

To sum up, this section has provided a thorough analysis of performatives in translation. It is illustrated in Table 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract No.</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Commissive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Expressive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Commissive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Commissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Expressive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Expressive/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Declarative/ Explicit</td>
<td>Declarative/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Commissive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Commissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Directive/ Implicit</td>
<td>Directive/ Explicit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significance of Performative Speech Acts for the Translation of Nahjul Balagha

Tisgam & alGhazalli

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commissive</th>
<th>Commissive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Fawcett's (1997/2014, p. 126) conclusion that there is a close relationship between performative acts and translation can be taken as a starting point to this section. By applying the SAT to the selected data, an attempt is made in the current study to attest the significance of performatives for the translation of Nahjul Balagha. It has been shown that Imam usually employs various performatives to effect change in his addressee(s). The correspondence between performatives and Imam’s wisdom and politeness have been strongly observed across these data. This conclusion provides a clear perspective to understand how Imam addresses his audience in his letters which expose a genre of valuable insights and attitudes towards different issues.

Even though the data of the study may not seem so big, yet, the study has shown that they can constitute a solid foundation for analysis. An analysis model, therefore, is built based on Searle’s taxonomy, in which pragmatics has proven to be a valuable tool to interpret the many acts performed by Imam. After analyzing the data, the findings reveal that the significance of performatives is realized in Imam’s letters. Most of the performatives are of the directive category, which shows their weight and significance in Imam’s words. The directives change according to context or, more specifically, letter's occasion. For instance, when Imam requests in extract (6), this request is likely issued indirectly. In a prohibitive letter to Ziyad, who violates the Islamic law, in extract (30) for example, Imam directly addresses him to give the impression of firmness and to add some emphasis to his act.

It is revealed that performatives in the selected data are more realized implicitly than explicitly. The extensive use of directives in the data, in comparison to the other performatives, attests the significance of this performative and carries a pragmatic value, namely, to effect change either by directing the addressee to perform a specific action, or to be inhibited from doing a particular action, as it obliges the addressee to accomplish the action. In addition, this performative is a powerful means to influence and persuade the audience that urges them to perform what is told to them.

It is interesting to note that performatives in the data do not enjoy the same illocutionary force; some of them, commissives for instance, are much stronger in effect than others, namely, declaratives. Even within the same performative, a directive, for instance, the strength of an order or a command is more than that of a request. One performative can do different functions depending on the context, performatives in Imam Ali’s words need careful interpretation by the translator as they take the form of advice on a specific occasion, for instance, or a prohibition in another. To put it differently, a particular utterance should never be literally translated as an expression of the surface meaning. Instead, the intentional meaning should be extracted to get the proper function.
In terms of translation, performatives constitute a severe problem as there are acts that must be well interpreted and not translated literally. In extract (14), for instance, the translator literally renders the word “بطْن ةٍ” as meaning “a disease” in a performative (a commissive) act of threat. He does not recognize that such an act depends on the context of the utterance. Imam warns his addressee not to be glutted while his subjects are starving. Therefore, this study has shown some changes in the TT performatives. Besides, some performatives implicit in the ST are explicit in TT. The pragmatic approach, then, seems useful for translators as it supplies them with a complete understanding of the many functions of a performative. This means that when the translator aims to produce a TT that is almost similar in function to the TT, the pragmatic approach will pave the way for fulfilling this task. Accordingly, this pragmatic approach to translation necessitates that the translator demonstrates mastery of pragmatic aspects. Equally essential, context must be given a vital role in the translator's choice and the translation practice of NB as it leads the translator to recognize the performative act in the ST and scrutinize its function to convey it to the TL.

This study is hoped to contribute to the literature on the significance of performatives for the translation of a book that displays the richness of themes in the thought of Imam Ali (A.S.). By taking into consideration the intimate relationship between translation and pragmatics, the central question of whether performatives are significant for the translation of NB or not is made explicit in this study. The answer is positive.

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