An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies

Prospects of Translating Terminology for Plot Devices in Fiction Writing from English into Arabic

By
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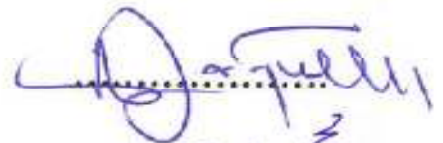
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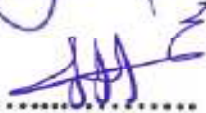
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Dedication

To my family and friends and to whoever taught me a thing.

Acknowledgements

In the name of Allah, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and to my mother whose words of wisdom and guidance I live by.

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الإقرار

أنا الموقع أدناه، مقدم الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

Prospects of Translating Terminology for Plot Devices in Fiction Writing from English into Arabic

أقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة، لم يكن سوى نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما أشرت إليه حيث ورد، وأن هذه الرسالة لم تقدم من قبل: كلها أو بعضها؛ لنيل أي درجة أو لقب علمي، أو بحثي، إلى أي مؤسسة تعليمية، أو بحثية أخرى.

Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification .

Student's name: اسم الطالب: تسنيم طالب عبد الله عمر

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Date: التاريخ: ٢٨/١٤/٢٠

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Abstract

Amidst this boom in narrative fiction production currently overtaking the Arab region, perplexing is the fact that one must struggle to find official Arabic terminologies for some literary terms key to understanding, analyzing, and critiquing said literary production. This study focused on the terminology for plot devices in terms of the challenges that face Arab translators in translating them, some of the reasons that could have been the culprits in this shortcoming, and consequently, the overall prospects of having a standardized terminology for plot devices across Arab literary and critical circles. One cannot overstate the importance of plot devices to narratives. In fact, without them, there is no narrative to speak of; hence, it is imperative that the subject is given due attention, which is also what this study is set to do. To that end, a historical review of Arabic fiction in the context of the Arab world was briefly presented. Then, a core number of terms used to describe plot devices was chosen to be examined. After that, a semantic field analysis was carried out where each term in the ST was decomposed into different sense components and was then fitted against the sense components of its TT counterpart to check for compatibility of meaning. If the two sets of sense components were deemed compatible in meaning, the rendering was thereafter deemed successful. Special attention

was also given to Vinay & Darbelnet's seminal work on direct and oblique translation (1954) as their exposition provides important insights and some powerful tools to deal with terminology like calques, borrowing and others. This was done while keeping in the back of the mind, as an overall objective, the maintaining of an adequate measure of equivalent effect in the TT. The study finds that a critical factor and a major challenge to reaching at a standardized Arabic terminology for plot devices, amongst others, could be the state of fragmentation and lack of coordination permeating the interactions between different Arab language academies and institutions. The study, nonetheless, shows that Arabic proves to be as versatile a medium as English in producing the needed renderings with a similar equivalent effect to the source language terms and that a set terminology for plot devices can therefore be achieved with relative ease knowing that the technical and linguistic hurdles are surmountable. Finally, this study is a preliminary work, further studies and discussions within literary circles are needed to expand on the topic in order to reach a standardized and agreed-upon terminology for plot devices in Arabic.

Chapter One

Introduction

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since time immemorial, the craft of writing as an artistic practice has been an ever growing industry and fiction has provided the perfect milieu for that creative output. From the epic of Gilgamesh to Beowulf all the way to the level of sophistication we find in modern day fiction writing. Now, although such a practice has spanned across millennia and numerous cultures, there are some fundamental elements to any form of fiction writing that tells a story, like plot devices which, according to some of the most basic dictionary definitions, are elements introduced into a story to advance its plot. In this respect, one can start to appreciate just how indispensable they really are to storytelling and, therefore, how important, the need to translate them professionally is.

With the massive growth of the entertainment industrial complex worldwide especially the type of entertainment which bases itself on writing; growth that is largely attributed to the advent of new technologies mind you, it was only natural for discussions around this craft to grow as well. New terminologies were also introduced in such discussions as critics were busying themselves with critiquing and evaluating the ever evolving textual strategies. Nay, one would even venture as much as to say that knowledge of such terminologies was and still is essential to any meaningful and serious discussion of any form of fiction be it film, books, drama etc. Thus, the study will focus on the topic of translating the

terminology for said plot devices in fiction writing. If done properly, this should prove to be of paramount importance as the translation scholarship in the Arab world seems to be lacking in this regard so much so that the researcher couldn't, despite his best efforts, find an Arab scholar, researcher, compiler, classifier, let alone a translator who tackled this very topic professionally. So, for the purposes of this study, the researcher will be investigating a core number of these plot devices that are most in circulation and can provide an opener for further future research on the topic.

Virtually every written book-long piece of narrative fiction in any language whatsoever contains at least a bundle of such plot devices, and to not find even one formal Arabic source that has undertaken the job of introducing them to the Arab world underscores the need for conducting this study. With that being said, this research will also be dedicated to exploring the reasons behind this glaring deficiency, exploring the challenges of transferring these terms from English to Arabic, some translation strategies for doing so, and perhaps providing suggested alternative renderings for them. To that end, the study will make use of models of translation and theories on terminology as set by Eugene Nida as well as Vinay & Darbelnet plus others.

Now, one cannot study the developments of the Arab literary scene that might have contributed to the aforementioned deficiency in isolation from the many changes ushered in by outside influences, western influences in

particular, and as Tawfiq Yousef (1995) maintains regarding this point: "To a large extent, the Arabic novel as a modern art form had its origin in the western tradition. Starting in Lebanon and Egypt". (p. 3) He then goes on to say that in the beginning of the 20th century more than 10,000 novels had already been translated into Arabic before 1950. He also tries to substantiate his claims by stating that a good number of Arab novelists had their education in the West and modeled their novels largely on European and American ones. (Yousef, 1995. 4). One of the big Western names that had a profound impact on the Arab literary scene was William Falkner for example. Mahmoud Alherthani (2018) suggests that Jabra's translation of Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) contributed to introducing new narrative configurations to the Arabic novel particularly the stream of consciousness technique amongst others. (Alhirthani, 2018: 5). Many other names have had similar influences such as: James Joyce, who just like Faulkner, was a prominent writer from the modern period, one can of course also mention Defoe and Conrad from earlier periods and many others and the list can go on.

Critical theories like, structuralism, deconstruction, formalism as well as others had also had profound impacts on criticism and critical analysis approach in the Arab region as well. For example, formalism which still casts a large shadow on Arab Critics as Ian Campbell suggests in his book *Studies in Global Science Fiction* (2018) as he ascribes Arab critics with having more tendency for "concerning themselves with formal qualities

and formalism in literature than their western counterparts" (Campbell, 2018: 101).

This was but a glimpse into the deep-rooted influence of the West on the Arab literary scene in general. Then, one can only imagine the transformation processes and developments that took place gradually and over relatively extended periods of time to truly appreciate said influence which opened up a world of theories and provided the needed impetus for critical approaches to literature in the Arab region resulting in a more nuanced and sophisticated literary movement with the accompanying ideas, nuances and naturally, the occasional terminology associated with all of that; Terminology that need to be translated professionally for its importance in understanding these ideas and nuances and for providing the tools for professional literary analysis to any given work of fiction.

The literary scene in the Arab world is, without a doubt, experiencing a phase of revival so to speak. On the one hand, new and young writers are experimenting with relatively new genres of fiction (new, in the region that is). And on the other, the cinema industry in the Arab region seems to be, more than ever, keen on adapting some of the most successful books into films and TV series. Thus, literacy in literary criticism and literary analysis is much needed nowadays more than ever consequently making such a study also particularly relevant for today's entertainment industry in the region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As alluded to, artistic narrative writing as an integral part of the creative sector has recently been booming in the Arab region. Young writers are exploring every facet of this growing industry; from scriptwriting to fiction to what have you; all of which share some fundamental underlying similarities including plot devices used to weave the plot of any story. The researcher believes there is a serious gap in the literature pertaining to the terminology for different plot devices in Arabic as one cannot find readily accessible equivalences for such terms in the Arabic language. This was initially surmised after watching many internet videos of people reviewing fiction like films and novels over years and observing the linguistic behavior of the reviewers when they refer to plot devices in the fiction they are reviewing wherein they would persistently use code-switching This pointed out a potential lack in the terminology in Arabic. Despite this, Arab writers, just by virtue of being writers mind you, use such devices constantly and in most every writing project they undertake knowingly or not. Addressing issues of this sort would draw attention to new and exciting discussions and perhaps could help elevate the literary scene in general by adding more nuance to the field of literary analysis within Arab literary circles.

1.3 Significance of the study

The problem the researcher is trying to address and/or make sense of is explaining why, despite the aforementioned growth of the creative sector in

general (creative writing in particular), the critical jargon for plot devices in Arabic is still not up-to-date sufficiently enough when it comes to some of these terminologies needed to engage in discussions of most every work of fiction. This study will focus on the terminology for plot devices, exploring the challenges of translating it into Arabic.

The main contributions of this research might be compiling a number of plot device terms as a starter for further work on the topic in the future and in general, to draw the needed attention to them within the literary community. The study should also help add more nuance to this field of study and provide additional tools to the arsenal of the literary critic. Finally, such a study should serve as an incentive to do further research on the topic as well as other similar topics. All in all, the study hopes to contribute to increasing literacy in literary criticism and analysis in this area of study.

1.4 Research Questions

Perhaps the main questions that make up the crux of the research can be summarized as follows:

- What challenges do translators face when attempting to translate such terms from English into Arabic and what strategies of translation can be used to overcome those challenges?

- Can we hope to bring about compelling, standardized renderings for such terms within Arab literary circles to begin with?

- If we are to presume that since the cinema industry, fiction writing and scriptwriting in the Arab region are by and large influenced by an already established Western tradition –if so to speak. What implications does this have on any serious attempt at translating those terms that are steeped in a Western tradition of this sort?

1.5 Methodology

The methods used to obtain the data are qualitative in nature. The researcher has consulted many sources including dictionaries, thesauruses, and other online as well as face-to-face sources to gather as many translations as possible for each and every term for particular plot devices. The researcher conducted a few interviews with reputed Arab writers, professors and critics to gauge their understanding of such terms and perhaps elicit some renderings of said terms which they might have to offer. Then, the translations gathered were juxtaposed each with its set term in English to be analyzed separately by referring to Vinay & Darbelnet's model on direct and oblique translation with a focus on Eugene Nida's exposition on equivalence and equivalent effect (2001). The researcher analyzed the quality of the renderings to determine whether or not they carry on with the "same" equivalent effect in the TT (Arabic). This was determined after a quick and brief semantic field analysis was conducted where terms both in the ST as well as TT were broken down into different sense components to assess compatibility between the two sets of sense components.

The study also touched on the prospects of standardizing a set terminology for plot devices in Arabic and what could hinder such a process. The study also sought to offer alternative renderings for the terms under study.

Here, a word on the data collection process is due. To begin with, the researcher, naturally and as mentioned, used qualitative data that he gathered from books on criticism, dictionaries, thesauruses, personal interviews and so on. Now, one must comment on such interviews as they proved to be a critical source that advanced a crucial piece of the puzzle; namely that of confirming that indeed, the terms under study are by and large neglected by Arab writers and literary critics. To this, one might say, surely this could have been confirmed by printed and online sources. However, the best that one can say about such sources is that they are silent on the matter in the sense that they do not make active claims about the absence or neglect of the terms; they either have them or not, that is it. By interviewing experts on the matter we can confirm the neglect by eliciting clear active responses from expert respondents, the word *active* here being the operative word.

The researcher met with Arabic language professors at An-Najah University, local writers, and critics. Like Dr. Nadir Qasim, Dr. Udwan Udwan, abdel-Khaliq Issa, Adel Al-Osta, and others. The responses to whether they knew of the terms' existence were overall in the negative.

Adel Al-Osta was an interesting case, he was one of the few who told the researcher outright that he didn't hear of these terms in Arabic despite his

40+ year eventful career as a writer and literary critic. That alone should be proof enough for any researcher to confirm that such terms are indeed, if not totally absent, are unjustifiably and utterly neglected in Arab literary circles. He (i.e. Al-Osta) also advanced a critical piece of information. He said that literary criticism in the Arab world as it is today is quite a recent phenomenon; 1993 is the year he marked for its emergence in its current form (Al-Osta, A, personal communication, Jan 9, 2022) This is surprisingly in line with the hypothesis the researcher has posited; namely concerning a potential delay between new ideas and concepts and their arrival to the Arab world. This shows that it is not far-fetched to think that since the discipline is fairly new, that it may had not yet developed enough to have absorbed such new ideas and concepts in the field.

Now to turn to Arabic books on literary criticism that we've mentioned which talk about narrative fiction. As anticipated, the books make copious remarks on things like epiphany, climax, complication, and so on with virtually no mention of the terms that we are examining in this study; plot devices.

One final remark to make concerns videos on the internet of people reviewing and/or analyzing films, shows and novels. The researcher has watched many such videos over the years. It is safe to say that the overwhelmingly predominant method that Arab reviewers resort to is code-switching when they want to talk about cliffhangers, plot twists, flash-backs and others. This is in fact one primary reason as to why the

researcher wanted to study this particular topic. The lack of any equivalence in Arabic seems to make these reviewers code-switch.

1.6 Limitations of the study

A study of this sort, the researcher believes, faces many limitations, the most prominent of which might be the scarcity of accredited sources due the scarcity of research exploring this particular issue within Arabic academia circles and/or institutions. Besides, and consistent with its professed purpose as a discussion-opener, this thesis will only be exploring a limited number of terms for different plot devices. And, as the title of the thesis might have suggested, we will be operating only within the boundaries of two language systems: Arabic and English.

1.7 Some Important Parameters

Before delving into the actual discussion of the main thesis, some parameters need to be set and definitions clarified. First and foremost, from what I gather, the line between literary criticism and literary analysis seems, to me at least, too fuzzy to pinpoint exactly where one starts and the other ends with many areas of overlap in between. Having said this, and against my better judgment, I might be using those concepts interchangeably sometimes.

Another important parameter that is important to point out is perhaps defining the kind of fiction we are talking about, which is evidently modern fiction with vibrant, fully-fledged characters and plotlines as opposed to

earlier forms of writing and storytelling like the *Thousand and One Nights* which portrayed somewhat shallow plotlines and distinct character types. In this regard Matti Moosa (1997) warns against confusing the pre-Islamic or Islamic tale or Romance with the novel and the short story. He also states that Arabs, like other peoples, have of course produced prose narratives. However, these do not approach the complex layers of much of the Western fiction as we know it today. For example, he points out that the narrative in the *Thousand and One Nights* is an episodic sequence whereas the plot in the western story, although it can be described as a narrative sequence sometimes, is nonetheless primarily ordered by causality where events contribute more fundamentally to the plot.

As for characters, he maintains that these older forms of narrative portrayed characters as types where you have the clever, lucky hero, the beautiful princess, the wise Caliph, the cunning old woman and the gullible daydreamer. In the Western story, he suggests, the characters tend to be individuals at first with well-defined personalities (Moosa, 1997: 6).

Chapter Two

A Review of Related Literature

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2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher lays out the groundwork for further chapters by presenting a review of the related literature on the topic at hand. This will be done by giving a historical overview expounding on the early developments of modern fiction and the relevance of realism for Arabic fiction in the Arab region followed by some important remarks on the Arab literary scene of today regarding fiction, then the researcher will move on to explore more technical subjects that have to do with terminology and terms in general and literary terms in particular which is the crux of the discussion.

2.2 An Outlook on Narratives

Telling stories is engrained in our nature as human beings. It is our way of making sense of the world around us, our tool for 'capturing' time and place in language. No recorded creature has this ability but us. In other words, telling stories is uniquely human. People have been doing it since the beginning of time and we have become very sophisticated in the ways we tell stories and present them, today, there is a gigantic worldwide entertainment industry revolving around this one particular skill, from books all the way to video games that are recently seeing fully-fledged narratives with compelling plotlines and character development which is a massive departure from the linear, action-packed, narratively-shallow

games of before. However, these sobering facts can come with a melancholy for the creative writer as he/she can argue that there is nothing left to explore. Every story has been told and retold many times and in many different places. Regardless, this brings to view the fact that there is also something universal not only in the actual act of storytelling, but also in the method of it.

According to the French Novelist Grillet, the themes found in stories are universal for the most part, so are the plots and by extension, the plot devices utilized to construe them. Grillet (1965) remarks: "Literature and by extension fiction is universal in many ways. He argues 'there is nothing new under the sun' emphasizing 'the 'eternal' human heart and that we came 'too late to the scene'. (Grillet, 1965: 16). He maintains that a novel, for most readers—and critics—is primarily a "story." A true novelist is one who knows HOW to tell a story. The "felicity of telling, which sustains him from one end of his work to the other, is identified for a New Novel with his vocation as a writer. To invent thrilling, moving, dramatic vicissitudes constitutes both his delight and his justification". (p .29)

This is why the plot, our main interest here, is of such unparalleled importance, it is the method in which you tell your story and to criticize a novel, according to Grillet (1965):

> often comes down to reporting its anecdote, more or less briefly,
> depending on whether one has six columns or two to fill, with
> more or less emphasis on the essential passages: the climaxes
> and denouements of the plot. The judgment made on the book

will consist chiefly in an appreciation of this plot, of its gradual
development, its equilibrium, the expectations or surprises it
affords the panting reader. A loophole in the narrative, a
clumsily introduced episode, a lag in interest will be the major
defects of the book; vivacity and spontaneity its highest virtues.
The writing itself will never be in question. The novelist will
merely be praised for expressing himself in correct language, in
an agreeable, striking, evocative manner. . . . Thus the style will
be no more than a means, a manner; the basis of the novel, its
raison d'etre, what is inside it, is simply the story it tells. (p .30)

This quote eloquently highlights that indeed; the writing style will not
determine whether a story is good or not; however, the plot will. The final
verdict on any story will most definitely concern the progression of the plot
while the writing itself needs only to be 'correct'.

2.3 Defining a Story's Plot

And thus, in order to grasp the inner workings of plot devices in fiction so
as to expound on their translations thereafter, we need to define what a plot
is. Forester (1956) says elegantly in this regard:

Let us define a plot. We have defined a story as a narrative of
events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative
of events, the emphasis falling on causality. "The king died and
then the queen died," is a story. "The king died, and then the
queen died of grief" is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved,
but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: "The queen
died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was
through grief at the death of the king." This is a plot with a
mystery in it, a form capable of high development. It suspends
the time-sequence. (p. 61)

The main difference between a story of narrative events arranged in their set time-sequence and a plot, according to Forester, is that the latter emphasizes causality. Of course, the time-sequence is kept intact in a plot; however, the presence of causality is felt more by the reader especially when the plot is masterfully-crafted and capable of development. This sense of causality 'suspends' the time-sequence until further information is given, until further data is surrendered to the reader by the novelist. This suspension of the time-sequence is only possible by way of withholding the causes leading to the outcomes presented by the plot, it is the 'mystery' that keeps the audience wanting to learn more which again demands 'intelligence and memory' on the part of the reader.

2.4 Historical Overview

2.4.1 Early Developments of Arabic Fiction

To try to understand why, as we've said earlier, the Arab world is seemingly not sufficiently informed concerning certain literary terminologies, one must give a brief historical rundown of early developments of the literary scene in the region. This will help triangulate when and where the genesis of modern Arabic fiction took place which in turn will secure a solid point of departure from which to proceed with the discussion of the main topic. It will also help shed light on a few postulations relevant to our discussion.

It is also important to consider that we ought to factor in historical precedency in the equation. In other words, how does the fact that modern

fiction in the West predates its counterpart in the Arab world by a considerable margin affect the tackling of the thesis at hand?

In that capacity, if we are to trace the earliest beginnings of modern Arabic fiction, it wouldn't be much of a hyperbole to say that fiction in the Arab world had had extremely humble beginnings as Salma Khadra (2008) likes to emphasize when she maintains that early-twentieth-century books on Arab literary history were rife with 'voices of complaint' that there was no genuine Arabic fictional history and that up until the sixties, 'dearth and paucity' in modes of fiction permeated the thinking of Arab critics. She also goes on to say that fiction was one of the major genres said to have had feeble roots in the classical Arabic tradition. However, she is then quick to override some of these claims by stating that such claims were later on acknowledged to be based on a lack of research and rigorous thinking. In any case, according to her, the novel as an established mode of fiction first appeared in the Arab world as early as the last decades of the nineteenth century. It is worth noting that a number of attempts at translating Western novels had preceded this event. This new art form in its modern configuration (i.e. the novel) was new to the Arab literary experience thus far, and writers of fiction were working without the guiding spirit of an acknowledged tradition. (Jayyusi, 2008: 13).

This idea of lacking guidance for Arab writers is further supported by other critics and observers. For instance, Abdul Rahman Munif, prominent Arab novelist is quoted by Roger Allen (1982) to have said:

"The Arabic novel has no heritage. Thus, any contemporary Arab novelist has to look for a means of expression for himself, with hardly any guidance to aid him. It is thus inevitable that he will make some mistakes and display shortcomings". He then continues to point out that the Arab willingness to acknowledge a debt on the west has in no way inhibited the creativity of Arab writers and the basic question has been of 'catching up' as Naguib Mahfouz and Jabra had famously stated (Allen, 1982: 7).

From the above testimonies, we can surmise that indeed, since famous and critically-acclaimed Arab writers perceived the Arab experience with modern fiction as a process of "catching up" with the West, it then follows that the West had had an established and naturally more sophisticated fiction tradition. It also follows that any Arab attempt at modern fiction is by definition, a form of imitation/emulation (as we've already given evidence for earlier) where Arab writers might be bound to be retrospective in that sense. In other words, there will most likely be a delay between new fiction configurations, ideas, genres, and most definitely terminologies arising in the West and their arrival to the Arab world. This is significant in the sense that it implicitly states that perhaps the Arab modern critical scene is yet to reach a level of sophistication of literary analysis as to proliferate the use of certain terminologies needed in literary analysis to a level where professional translations for them become a real and genuine need.

2.4.2 A Relevant Remark on the Arab Literary Scene of Today

Upon examination, one might conclude, and rightly so, that many fiction genres are still somewhat in experimental stages in the Arab world. The proliferation of said genres is a fairly recent phenomenon here, genres like: urban fantasy, postmodern gothic, magical realism and even sci-fi can be considered recent in the Arab region. It is not that farfetched, then, to think that there is indeed a delay between new emergent ideas and genres in the West and their arrival to the Arab region given the retroactive dynamic we've mentioned.

2.5 The Market for fiction… or the lack thereof

It is important to study the market for fiction in the Arab world and compare it with other places to see where this particular region stands. This will also help us track what genres of fiction are most recurring there, which in turn will give us an idea as to what terminologies that most accompany said genres. It is not surprising that the Arab book market suffers from some major challenges reflecting the political, social, and cultural situation in the region. For instance, it would seem that, indeed, there are some major problems that face Arab book publishing according to Tonkin (2011) some of which he summarizes as follows:

> arbitrary censorship across the 22 Arab states; the habits of book piracy, which have often turned the region into literary quicksand for unwary incomers; and the fragile production and bookshop networks in a part of the world where state-run, Soviet-style dinosaur firms often dominate the publishing scene.

Even major authors may have to pay for publication or else simply wait in line, and a local bestseller may just about hit a peak of 5,000 to 6,000 copies sold. (p. 4)

As is shown, a slew of problems unique to the Arab publishing industry plague fiction writing and we are only scratching the surface here. Regardless, a quick investigation of the Arabic fiction market will show that the overwhelmingly predominant mode of writing for Arab writers falls within the realm of realism as we shall explore in a coming segment. As for now, we shall talk about terms and terminology.

2.6 The Issue of Terminology

In today's ever growing knowledge and proliferation of fields of study, the need for specialized terms is becoming rather self-evident and commonplace to say the least. And as Olga Jeczmyk (2016) puts it, "Nobody even flinches anymore when they hear technicalities in medicine, jurisdiction or other fields of similar importance and honour in today's world". (p.2) she proceeds to explain that the relationship between all of these technical fields and terminology is a relationship of nurturing and co-existence and she calls it 'symbiosis to create new concepts'. (Jeczmyk, 2016: 3)

As stated earlier, virtually every discipline has its terminology. Medical terms, physics, astrology, mathematics, environmental studies, economy just to name a few, and of course you have terminologies that have to do with literature, which are referred to as literary terminologies. For instance,

things like literary devices (allegory, simile, alliteration and so on) need to have their own terms to facilitate an easier communication of ideas for those interested in literature and literary analysis. To ask why does it matter to know terminology is becoming an absurd question to say the least.

To illustrate the importance of terms and terminology, Laura Calzada (2018) wonders: 'Have you ever come across a nonsensical manual or incomprehensible instructions? Have you ever been angry because a text regarding your field didn't use the right words or read confusing terms?'

To which she answers with an emphatic 'yes', we all have been and according to her, this is why terminology is so important. She maintains that specialized texts are very important in that they are highly informative as well as educational in nature. She concludes her statements in a categorical manner by saying that 'the audience must understand the text. It is imperative'. (Calzada, 2001: 4)

When it comes to literary terms, it shouldn't be any different. People have concerned themselves with literature since ancient times. And today, literature, fiction included, has become a booming industry worth billions of dollars across the globe. So, it is only natural that people working in that industry should have to resort to terminology to get their nuanced, abstract ideas communicated efficiently and effectively within the field. Another point is that literary analysis is/has become a standing field on its own. To the question of who should care? One might answer that ideally, everyone

should care, one way or another, about terminology as it is imposing itself more and more in every walk of life and more rapidly than ever before.

2.7 Some Terminology-related Problems

Perhaps one of the major problems that can manifest itself in front of translators might be the problem of inconsistency of terms between any given two language mediums. This problem seems to be more pronounced when it comes to Arabic-English translation due to the many issues regarding the standardization of terms in the Arab world some of which as Saraireh likes to emphasize are, the falling behind of Arabic institutions and Arabic Language Academies in dealing with the influx of new terms in 'proper time and ways' and the lack of coordination between them. He also maintains that what is meant by the aforementioned inconsistency is the lack of signifier-concept correspondence, which again, goes against the process of standardization. He also warns against confusing inconsistency with stylistic variation which is a well-known device used to make texts less monotonous (Saraireh, 2011: 19).

Regina Walsh (2005) asserts that there is no greater challenge to the profession of translation than inconsistent and inappropriate terms. She goes on to say that no one person or group will ever be able to prescribe a set of words and dictate how the profession will use them, as this evolves through the actual use of such words (Walsh, 2005: 106). This is a crucial remark one might argue, as one cannot accurately predict the reaction of the profession to a certain term that was coined in an academic setting until

it is used in a 'useful' way within said profession. In an article, Alan G. Kamhi (2004) suggests that usefulness is the main determiner of whether a term will succeed or fail; usefulness to the people to whom the terms matter. Kamhi presses on (Kamhi, 2004: 36).

2.7.1 Realism in Literature or Literary Realism

Realism has been, for a long time, the go-to mode of writing for Arab writers, the de facto genre if you will, and this has been the case for a plethora of reasons that will not be discussed here. However, it is interesting to dwell on the fact that Arab writers still cling to realism with such unyielding resolute whereas other writers have 'moved on' according to George J. Becker (2016) who also suggests that it would be a pity for writers not to attempt something new specially since they are, as he says, third and fourth generation writers since the high tide of European realism. Now, not to digress any further, what is realism to begin with? According to dictionary definitions, realism in the arts and literature is a "literary genre that attempts to represent the subject-matter truthfully, avoiding speculative fiction and supernatural elements". (Becker, 2016: 3)

2.7.2 Realism in Arabic literature

The question of what realism for the Arab writer, according to Samah Selim (2003), is neglected by both nationalist as well as orientalist critics, she argues that 'realism is taken for granted as the natural apogee of modern narrative fiction and a point of departure for "postmodern"

narrative production'. (Selim, 2003: 2) this is because, as she claims, it is representative of human reality in all its minutes and detail. She also maintains that realism in Arabic literature is more or less, a blueprint of an existing European model. This is significant in that it serves to direct this thesis to focus on realism and the terms associated with it in literature.

Realism as Samah presses on, is not simply a technique of representation but rather a very powerful tool of constructing the very elements of the narrative fiction like: time, place, character, and plot in a manner that reflects the social, political and cultural reality (waqi'). The words 'reality' and 'realism' for the Arab critic conjures up images of nationalism which comes with issues like: colonialism, anti-colonial struggles, class struggle etc. as a package. (Selim, 2003: 3)

Although there was a prolific Arabic fiction production from the late eighteenth to the early ninetieth centuries. However, many scholars, including Samah, regard it as 'illegitimate fiction' saying that most literary historians tend to dismiss it as "imperfect experiments in an evolving process of adaptation and assimilation of an imported genre" this was followed by a phase of apprenticeship steadily evolving in the Arabic novel to its mature state culminating in Naguib Mahfuz". (Selim, 2003: 115)

This apprenticeship mentioned above is primarily referring to the vibrant translation movement during the Nahada period were many English, French, Italian and other novels were both translated as well as loosely adapted by Arab writers excluding those that were written to be read for

amusement rather than social or historical value which prompted some scholars to dub them 'recreational novels'. (Badr, 122). There is an anecdote by Matti Moosa (1997) that highlights this (i.e. the fervent translation movement) when he maintains that the prolific and colourful Tanius 'Abduh "carried with him sheets of paper in one pocket and a French novel in the other. He would then read a few lines, put the novel back in his pocket, and begin to scratch in a fine script whatever he could remember of the few lines he had read. He wrote all day long without striking out a word or rereading a line" (Moosa, 1997: 107). Clearly, this method raises important historical and theoretical questions about the relationship between translation, adaptation and authorship.

The canonical, "artistic" novel in Egypt acquires its legitimacy precisely because it inscribes a new ideology of the individual in relation to place. Badr also distinguishes between the old role of the writer as an "illusionist" and his modern role as a realist: "the goal of the artistic novel is to express the writer's perception of the world that surrounds him. For this reason, he turns his attention to reality rather than relying on deception (al-iham)" (p.198). The "realistic" representation of place, and of the individual self's experience of place, merge to create the proper narrative space of modern fiction.

The main takeaway here is to internalize the fact that most of the Arabic fiction production falls within realism which should come with its terminology as a package. The political situation that the Arab region found

itself in greatly contributed to this outcome. Moreover, as Edward Said has shown as quoted by Samah Selim (2010), "the power to represent was the power to order, administer and colonize. Thus the histories of capitalist modernity, imperialism, the expansion of the nation-state and of realism as an aesthetic philosophy are inextricably linked" (Selim & Selim, 2010: 11). However, there has been recent Arabic experiments with newer modes of writing and genres that should not be neglected like urban fantasy, science fiction, postmodern gothic, magical realism and others that we will not exclude from our analysis as we tackle the terms in question later on.

Chapter Three

Realism, Strategies of Translation and Assessment Criteria

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3.1 Realism

Tracing the genesis and early developments of Arabic fiction naturally leads us to zero in on realism. Having already established that it was (and for the most part still is) the apogee of Arabic literary production, it is imperative that we take a deeper dive into this mode of writing. This chapter will start with an introduction to literary realism in Arabic literature and how it became so pervasive among Arab writers as well as why it still persists to be as such till today. This chapter will also touch on translation, namely the translation movement that introduced realism to Arab writers and what strategies did translators and writers utilize to that end, which in turn will be the launching pad for the next chapter that will focus solely on the translation of the terminology for plot devices most used in Arabic fiction.

To begin with, realism under any dictionary entry would give you the rough meaning of a 'concern for fact or reality' and the 'rejection of the impractical or visionary'. Now, in literature and according to Merriam-Webster dictionary; literary realism is "the theory or practice of fidelity in art and literature to nature or to real life and to accurate representation without idealization". (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). It is hard to pinpoint an exact stage in which the shift happened when Arab writers took wind of this emerging genre in the West and started emulating and modelling their literary works on it for it was a gradual transitioning and maturation

process. We do know, none the less, that the change came recently or at least its effects were felt only recently as Sabry Hafez (1994) points out when he suggests that the pace of change has been rapid and sweeping through the Arab world affecting its writers only in the last few decades. He starts his work emphasizing the vital interaction between the novel and its socio-cultural context suggesting that novels 'encode' in their very structure, many elements of the social reality in which they are born. (Hafez, 1994: 94).

And of course, one would be remiss not mentioning the impact of Russian/Soviet literature on Arab literature acknowledged by many Arab writers, researchers and literary critics, for instance, A.N Staif emphasizes the role played by the Soviet socialist realism in the arts and literature in influencing and even shaping the Arab socialist realism movement in most every walk of life especially in literature, he says: "the experience of Soviet writers was rich because it had been co-extensive with a fertile era in the life of the Soviet people. Hence the necessity for Arab realist writers to study what they had to say about realism". (Staif, 1984: 156)

Hafez then continues, expounding on the origins of Arabic literary realism, he argues that the 'national self' was at its most cohesive (that is before the aforementioned change), when it defined itself in collective and monolithic terms which provided a strong sense of group identity where everybody knew their place in the social space with little mobility. However, access to education changed that as it granted social mobility and maneuverability to

individuals within the social structure. (p. 94) on the national and political front, the struggle for independence overshadowed any other struggle. The issue was about national survival and of existential magnitude where the number one priority was to achieve independence from colonial forces, this sentiment reverberated across the Arab collective consciousness. (p. 95) Now, the following period (i.e. 1960s onwards) is a markedly different phase, it even stands in stark contrast to its previous phases according to Hafez; he puts forth that this phase was that of "loss of traditional stability which followed independence" as the unifying enemy disappeared leaving a power vacuum for different social classes and visions to vie for, ushering yet another bloody episode, at times even bloodier than what colonialist powers brought upon the region. (p. 95)

We have already alluded to the remark that the Arab modern literary experience was hallmarked by a sense of wanting to keep up with the rapid developments in the West, while that may be true to an extent. However, a closer examination would give a somewhat different synopsis of the situation which seems to have been a case of invasion more than anything, modernism came hard and fast to the Arab world giving it little time to adapt. Miriam Cooke (1987) says describing that: "The modern world had invaded the Arab world so violently that it was too late for adjustment. Arab writers and artists were forced to view their societies through the lenses of Western literary thought and genres" (Cooke, 1987: 278). Cooke also maintains that Western models provided the Arab world with a criterion for determining what constituted literature; she says "if literature

did not respond to reality, whether in mimesis or in mythic construction, it was not good literature" (p. 279). She then moves on to talk about an arguably more relevant discussion (that is relevant to our topic) which is the linguistic aspect of the matter, she puts forth that some critics tried to approach Arabic literature from a linguistic angle pointing out some of the challenges to this, namely concerning the Fusha-Colloquial dynamic which is not insignificant in the least. However, what is more important in her remarks is her mentioning of the lack of research rigor despite the 'prolific national production' of narrative fiction. She explains that most critics of Arabic literature concern themselves with the larger picture disregarding the finer details and rarely do they apply contemporary critical methodologies in their analysis. (P. 285). This is in line with what has been said already in this research and might be a key culprit linked to the aforementioned lagging behind of the Arab literary production concerning new modes of writing, genres, concepts and ideas which come with their own standing terminologies as a package.

And then there is the issue of being a third world area subject to Western hegemony but not quite assimilated/integrated into it. Frederic Jameson (2016) points out in an article that the third world exists as a response to, and at the mercy of Western multinational capitalism and that the preoccupations of the Arab intelligentsia of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have grown to be almost identical to those of an international elite of the late 20th century (Jameson, 2016: 77) again highlighting the delay in

the transfer of ideas in this power dynamic between the West and the East, the periphery and the centre.

3.2 Domestication VS Foreignization

This was in a nutshell a very quick and brief rundown of the socio-political situation that birthed literary realism as well as other modes of writing in the region which are recently gaining more and more ground. Much has been said in that regard and so as to avoid both redundancy and monotony, I will move on to discuss a more pertinent topic to this thesis, namely regarding translation and the translation strategies utilized generally and across the board when translating Arabic literature in particular. This would naturally lead us to discuss the age-old dichotomy of domestication versus foreignization. Now, historically speaking, Arabic literary translation production boasts a rich heritage of domesticated works of literature from across the modern world. In fact, and according to the Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, the very first French novel translated into Arabic by Al-Tahtawi (*Fenelon's Les aventures de Telemaquewas*) was highly domesticated to cater for an Arab readership and has thereafter been religiously followed as a paradigm by later translators who translated into Arabic from different languages. Needless to say, many criticisms have been leveled at this strategy (i.e. domestication) chiefly that it is accused of masquerading as an original text or, for our purposes, a SL text while hiding and/or eroding any trace of the culture of the original translated text. It is, none the less, noteworthy to mention that Venuti

(1995) took notice of a growing trend among English readers of appreciating domesticated novels as they are perceived to have fluency as well as transparency which, for all intents and purposes, promote a sense of familiarity and closeness between the reader and the novel. However, Venuti seems to have based these assertions merely on the positive criticism by the readership consuming domesticated works of literature. In any case, this is what is often referred to as the invisibility of the translator or in other words, this invisibility is a bi-product of domestication. Here, I want to reemphasize the pertinence of this strategy to the Arab translation community as it is the go-to method or strategy when tackling literature in particular as numerous Arab translators during what came to be known by historians as Nahda (revival, mostly in literature) or the 'renaissance' utilized it to its fullest potential following the example of Al-Tahtawi as mentioned earlier. This should be enough reason to consider this strategy/method more thoroughly and in fact, as the number one candidate method to look for when examining renderings for the terminology that this paper is addressing. However, it should be known that this is the researcher's intuition speaking, albeit based on the evidence above, so, in order to avoid bias towards any one strategy, multiple strategies shall be scrutinized based on their efficacy in rendering said terminology. This is not to say that each strategy is totally distinct from the others as there will most definitely be overlap between them.

3.3 Discussion of the Strategies

There is, without a doubt, a huge library of books, articles, journals and what have you that make translation strategies and techniques their main subject of inquiry. Thus, it would make little sense to start the discussion of these techniques that have become classics in the literature from an embryonic starting point, instead, the researcher has opted for immediately beginning to compare these techniques to one another in such a way that serves the purposes of this paper. Now, it goes without saying of course, that by doing so, the researcher assumes that the reader is at some level of expertise in the field of translation studies and that he/she has adequate understanding of the different translation techniques. To begin with, there are known techniques that are often referred to when addressing terminology in specific, these include: calques, borrowing, literal translation, transposition, compensation and more. While we'll be looking at these no doubt; we, none the less, will place more emphasis on the larger picture (i.e. the overall strategies of translation mentioned before). One thus should view these niche techniques (niche to terminology that is) as the tactics whereas, say, achieving an equivalent effect, for instance, on a certain translation as an overall strategy. The reasons why we shall place more emphasis on the overall strategy could be self-explanatory, at least for our intents and purposes in this thesis, for we are interested in the ultimate outcome, the final product if you will, whatever the 'tactics' that get us there, however crucial they maybe, will have marginal exposition in our

discussion as they are the subject of a different paper altogether. Yet, that is not to say that they shall be ignored completely.

With that being said, and having done due diligence in terms of research, one must come to certain conclusions regarding the translation of the text being examined (in our case, literary terms), perhaps the most notable of which was that the single most important concept to grasp is that of equivalence and that our evaluation of the renderings ought to reflect this understanding and indeed, that our ultimate objective/strategy for the translations is for them to yield an equivalent effect in the target text reader approximating that which the original text had on its readers as much as possible, this will be determined after a brief semantic field analysis of both the ST and TT terms and a review of the compatibility between their different sense components has been done. Now, each and every big name in the field of translation studies has dedicated a sizable portion of his/her work to this very concept of equivalence, many of whom even had their own typologies of equivalence distinct from the others and had important remarks on the importance of equivalence to the practice of translation. For example, Jeremy Munday submits that equivalence is one of the principal issues in the realm of translation which he also describes as 'essential' to the practice (Munday, 2008: 49) another one is House (1977) who saw equivalence as the relation between a source text and its translation, her philosophy is to deal with equivalence case by case as she believes that an absolute equivalence is an impossibility, hence, her overt- covert translation approach. And there is of course Nida's seminal work on

equivalence and equivalent effect which may have birthed Catford's dynamic versus formal equivalence dichotomy. You also have Nwemark (1988), Jakobson (1959), Larson, (1998), Baker also (2004) in another seminal work "*in other words*" and the list goes on and on of names who recognized the need to achieve equivalence at various levels.

Now, the very concept of equivalence is a slippery one no doubt. Some, like Munday even called it a "thorny" issue in the world of translation, hence the many strategies concocted to tackle it by many a linguist and the occasional overlap between those strategies and techniques. In any case, if we're to take the standard textbook definition of equivalent effect in translation studies that would be something along the lines of; the effect generated in the audience being as close as possible to that of the original text on *its* audience. Of course many definitions are more complex or nuanced but the general idea holds, and, as we stated already, we shan't be dwelling long on definitions and whatnot. Instead, we shall begin our exposition immediately assuming that the reader is aware of the concepts being tossed about.

What the researcher finds interesting is the fact that the words "equivalence" and "concept" are frequently found together in one sentence or paragraph since ultimately speaking, equivalence (in the field of translation studies that is) is a concept about decoding and encoding concepts in and out between two (or more) distinct language systems (or even within the boundaries of one language system for that matter, depending on your definitions and parameters).

3.4 Direct and Oblique Translation

In the methodology section of this research, it has been stated that we will be looking at Direct and Oblique translation as discussed by Vinay & Darblnet as well as Nida's ideas on equivalence and equivalent effect which also led to a discussion on domestication and foreignization as the overlap between these strategies/methods is stark. Furthermore, one cannot overlook the techniques that have been used to deal with terminology such as: borrowing and calques. Said Faiq (2004) in his paper "The Cultural Encounters in Translating from Arabic" speaks of a vibrant history of domestication in Arabic literature especially in the 1980s and 1990s, he maintains that even higher-end literature is still prisoner to this trend of domestication among Arab translators (Faiq. 2004:11) hence our focus on such strategies.

Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) recognize that sometimes, translators have to alter the syntactic composition of the ST in the TT in order to transpose certain stylistic elements of the ST, these changes were dubbed (by Vinay & Darbelnet themselves) oblique translation. However, they also recognize that sometimes, such changes are not necessary by the translator due to an apparent structural parallelism between the ST and the TT and that the 'message' of the ST can be transposed with the least possible alteration. This is what they called direct translation. At any rate, those strategies (i.e. oblique and direct) were further subdivided into seven techniques or procedures three of which are for direct translation while the remaining

four are for oblique translation. Those for direct translation are: calque, borrowing and literal translation. As for direct translation, we have transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. Now, we must briefly touch on each of these procedures as they constitute some really powerful concepts for this particular research and again, we'll be defining those concepts in simple terms looking at standard easy-to-follow textbook definitions not lingering much on them.

1-Borrowing: as the name might suggest, borrowing happens when one language system 'borrows' a word from another language system, in other words, when a SL word is transferred to the TT to fill a semantic gap in the TL. Lily Ni (2009) suggests that this method not only keeps the original connotations of the ST but also preserves the flavour of the SL culture in the TL. Examples of borrowed items between different language systems are innumerable and many of them have come to constitute a good portion of the lexicon repertoire of said language systems such as: alcohol, algebra, سوبر ماركتetc.

2-Calque: a calque is sometimes considered a unique form of borrowing; it happens when a SL expression/ structure is transferred to a TL with little to no adaptation. It is worth noting (and indeed important for our analysis) to mention that Vinay & Darbelenet have further subdivided calques into two distinct categories, these are:

Lexical calques: when SL lexis get transferred into a TT with minimal disturbance to the syntax of the expression like translating the words *general manager* into the Arabic مدير عام

And then we have structural calques that introduce a completely new structure to the TL albeit translating the individual *lexis* of the SL literally.

All in all, although lexical calques between English and Arabic are not particularly that common since the two languages are from two diametrically different language families. However, structural calques evidently are. The researcher has found that such a technique (i.e. calquing) has been used to render a number of terms for plot devices as we shall observe when analyzing the renderings in the very next chapter. This maybe the case because many of these terms take up the form of an expression and indeed are, in many cases, used as expressions in the English language, for instance, the plot device/expression 'red herring' is not specific to literature but can be used in many other settings to denote any ruse or ploy by someone. This is where calquing shines being a method mostly for translating expressions in particular.

3-Literal translation: the third tool we have for direct translation is literal translation which is, in short, referring to the process of translating a ST word for word. An example of literal translation might be translating the sentence: I caught a big fish into أنا اصطدت سمكة كبيرة.

Now, Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) suggest that if these methods of direct translation were exhausted yet they did not bring about what they called

'acceptable' translations, then the translator is advised to resort to oblique translation methods. But before doing that, we must ask what makes any rendering acceptable or not? Well, according to them, four criteria need to be looked at with the message conveyed:

- Does it give another meaning than what is intended? If yes, the translation is unacceptable?

- Is it meaningless, or does it give a non-meaning?

- Is it structurally implausible or even impossible?

- Does it have metalinguistic correspondence in the TL in terms of expressions?

These criteria should be of significant import when we start evaluating the renderings of the terms for plot devices in the next chapter.

Now, if a certain rendering did not pass those given criteria, we turn to Vinay & Darbelnets' oblique procedures of translation, of which there are four, these are: Transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

1. Transposition: Which, for all intents and purposes, entails altering a part of speech such as a word class for instance with little to no change to the meaning.

2. Modulation: This method involves changes in the semantics and/or point of view of the ST; it is best utilized when literal translation produces unidiomatic texts in the TL culture. Vinay & Darbelnet

(2004) also speak of obligatory versus optional modulation methods. However, those finer distinctions bear little value for this particular research and will only unnecessarily complicate the discussion. A general example they give of modulation might be translating the English phrase: 'Lend me your ears!' into the Arabic "أعرني انتباهــك"or the English Phrase 'a piece of cake' into the Arabic "أمر هين".

3. Equivalence: Not to be confused with Nida's notion of equivalence and equivalent effect. Here, equivalence denotes another oblique translation method by Vinay & Darbelnet mainly used for idioms and proverbs and involves changes in the style and structure of the SL. They give the example of onomatopoeia of animal sounds being different across different languages and cultures.

4. Adaptation: The last strategy Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) have proposed. This strategy involves changing and/or 'explaining' cultural differences between two (or more) language systems and cultures, in other words, mediating those differences. For instance, a simple greeting in English like 'hi!' or 'hello!' can be translated (or rather adapted) into the Arabic phrase السـلام علـيكم as well as the adaptation of multiple English swearwords into lighter Arabic words to suit an Arab audience temperament.

These seven strategies should be of paramount usefulness in the next chapter when we start evaluating and analyzing the renderings for different terms of plot devices and; combined with the five criteria for acceptable

translation presented above, we should have a set of some powerful tools to press on ahead. However, we should mention that Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) stressed the fact that the overlap between their strategies is abundant and unavoidable. An example of this according to them is the translation of the English word 'private' (as in written on a door) to the French 'défense d'entrer' which can be simultaneously considered a case of transposition, modulation, and equivalence at the same time.

3.5 A Word on Equivalence

Now, we turn to equivalence as discussed by Eugene Nida in particular as his exposition is arguably the most comprehensive and, if one might add, transformative out of all other linguists/ researchers who tackled equivalence. Nida's insights on equivalence have shifted the focus from the classic free versus literal translation discussions that neglected the receptor to a more receptor-oriented approach. Dohun Kim (1970) states that Nida's concept of Dynamic Equivalence (1964) "changed the landscape of the translation practice and theory" and had had a significant role in elevating translation studies into the realm of science as well as demonstrating the importance of linguists in the practice of translation and research. (Stine, 2004 as cited by Kim).

To highlight Nida's contributions, Kim (1970) puts forward the dichotomy of traditional versus new focus; he argues that previously, the focus has always been on the form of the message (this, Nida referred to as formal correspondence). However, Nida was a champion of the new focus in

which the response of the receptor is key whereas the form is marginalized in relative terms (that is, relative to the receptor's response). This approach has been dubbed 'dynamic equivalence' by Nida (1964). He maintains, for instance, that "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida 1969: 12), and that "there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose" (Nida 1969: 24).

Kim (1970) believes that what Nida is saying is that a text is ought to have what he called "an immediate meaning or intelligibility" and that an equivalent receptor response must be elicited from the target text. Now, this tangent on intelligibility is crucial for our analysis as it adds to our toolkit yet another potent tool to keep in mind when measuring the equivalent effect of the terms at hand. So, what do we exactly mean when we talk about intelligibility? According to Nida (1969) , "intelligibility is not to be measured merely in terms of whether the words are understandable and the sentences grammatically constructed, but in terms of the total impact the message has on the one who receives it" (Nida 1969: 22). This is what we will be seeking in the target texts that we are going to be evaluating, namely the total impact of the message on the receptor culture (i.e. Arabic culture in our case) notwithstanding the many criticisms leveled on Nida's methods and how measurable or not these abstract concepts of equivalence actually are, the reader should be made aware that this paper is but a preliminary research aimed at introducing some fairly new concepts into an

established canon and perhaps understanding some of the reasons why such classic literary concepts are still seldom explored by the Arab writer and critic.

Kim (1970) says that "for Nida, meaning is context-dependent, and receptors from disparate historical-cultural contexts may arrive at different meanings and will probably display non-equivalent responses" (Kim, 1970: 62). To overcome such hurdles, it is evident that Nida places more emphasis and prioritizes dynamic equivalence over formal correspondence stressing that the main focus of any translation ought to shift from the message of the text to the response of the receptor.

Dynamic equivalence in a nutshell, and according to Nida (1969) means, "Dynamic Equivalence is to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language (Nida 1969: 24). He then goes on to assert the importance of having a substantial degree of equivalent response between receptors which dynamic equivalence excels at, noting that dynamic equivalence enables translators to make alterations and adjustments to deal with idioms, slang terms, colloquial terms, different culture-specific expressions and what have you. Such insights have contributed tremendously to the shift (to the response rather than the form of the message, that is) and highlighted the need to tend to aspects that were otherwise marginalized at best, neglected at worst. Such as the importance of the expressive function of the TT as Nida says:

"one of the most essential, and yet often neglected, elements is the expressive factor, for people must also feel as well as understand what is said" (Nida 1969: 25).

Nida's analysis of dynamic equivalence should play a major role in our own analysis here as we will be looking at each term and trying to vaguely "quantify", for lack of a better word, the equivalence response of the receptor upon hearing a given translation of the terms at hand.

Chapter Four

Analyzing the Data

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Analyzing the Data

In this section, the researcher intends to do a run-down of key terms/expressions for plot devices that are most in use, their translations into Arabic and analyze the data gathered on them. Now, we should keep in mind that this research is by no means a comprehensive analysis of the terms and their translations nor does it claim to be, this thesis as a whole is primarily meant as a starting point to hopefully start a bigger discussion into this issue. To that end, we will be looking at a handful of some of the most frequently used plot devices and commenting on their proper translations (or lack thereof) into Arabic.

Plot devices are, in essence, narrative devices that keep the plot of a story in motion. Over time, some of these plot devices have been used so very often that now they constitute literary tropes and have thus warranted their own standing terminology in the field of literary analysis. Examples are: plot armour, foreshadowing, cliffhanger, Deus ex machina, Chekhov's gun and many others. If we are to randomly choose one to analyze first, say, Deus ex machina for instance, we would find that the Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines this term as: a god introduced by means of a crane (hence the word "machina") in ancient Greek and Roman Drama to decide the final outcome (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). However, in modern-day fiction this particular term has come to denote any plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable conflict is suddenly resolved by an unexpected event that had little to no relevance to the story so far. A plot device that is also

quite commonly used in resolving the conflict in Romance novels. With that being said, what more can we learn about this particular plot device and its relevance to our analysis? What about other plot devices as well? Here, we will be looking at a few as stated earlier.

4.1 Deus Ex Machina Plot Device

An easy-to-digest definition of the term comes from Lit Charts webpage by senior lecturer at Drexel University Chelsea Hogue; she defines it as "a plot device whereby an unsolvable conflict or point of tension is suddenly resolved by the unexpected appearance of an implausible character, object, action, ability, or event" (Hogue, 2017: 1). As one might imagine, many criticisms are levelled against this particular plot device, especially with the advent of 19th- century more realistic mode of representation; in fact, this very plot device could be by far the most controversial out of all others as it is often seen as an easy, cheap and perhaps, as some might say, childish way out of every debacle and tight plot. It is thus sometimes seen by many as a major flaw in the narrative and a failure on the part of the author.

Hogue (2017) stresses two main criticisms namely that a Deus Ex Machina is inherently an evidence of a weak plot since, according to her, a good, well-thought-out, more complex plot does not need an outside intervention to resolve its conflicts but rather leaves this role to evolve from the internal circumstances and events of the narrative itself. Another criticism according to her is that a Deus Ex Machina distorts the "messiness" of reality as in real settings one cannot expect outside influences to neatly

resolve all loose ends, making it less believable from a narrative standpoint and in stark contrast to the doctrine of the school of realism in literature. However, Hogue also highlights the fact that there are also many proponents of Deus Ex Machina in literature and that it can be used in more thoughtful and meaningful ways without looking too absurd. She gives multiple examples of it being used like that in great literary classics, for instance, in William Golding's 1954 *Lord of the Flies* where the protagonist is about to be killed on the Island when suddenly a ship sailing nearby detects the stranded children and brings them back to civilization which is not, by any means far-fetched or out of touch with reality.

Perhaps one of the most vivid, classic as well as more recent examples of Deus Ex Machina that comes to mind from the fantasy genre was from The Lord of the Rings franchise (2001 – 2003). It happens when the armies of good and evil are locked in a deadly final showdown and the situation seems extremely dire for the protagonists when all of a sudden, a swarm of giant eagles descends upon the evil army turning the tide of the battle in favour of the heroes who eventually emerge victorious.

So, how does this term fair in translation? As stated earlier, the researcher has consulted many sources and dictionaries to gather translations for these terms, and between either an utter lack of translation by one source for this particular term (i.e. Deus ex machina) to a host of completely erroneous translations by others as many of which translated the term too literally like saying الاله في الماكنة or and things like that which do not convey the intended

message to the TL reader in the slightest. Others as we shall see in a moment do not belong in any distinguishable literary jargon and are completely unintelligible to the TL readership. However, one obscure online context dictionary caught my attention. One rendering it offered was: المـــدد الغيبـــي (Context Reverso, n.d.) which one might find to be arguably compelling. Yet, as is the case with most every transaction between two language mediums, a loss in meaning must incur which is a hard fact that cannot be avoided. However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher will be weighing different options based on the analysis of the semantic field and the SL words' conformity with those of the TL ones producing an adequate effect on the target language reader coupling it (field analysis) with Vinay & Darbelnet's exposition on direct and oblique translation. Here, and in all fairness, one is perfectly justified in thinking that indeed, this particular rendering does generate, in the target reader, a measure of equivalent effect adequate to hold its merit. As we shall observe in a moment after looking at the sense components of both the SL and TL words.

First, to decompose the term into different sense components. First, we analyze the term into individual lexical items. The lexical item Deus is the Latin word for God, while Ex Machina means from the machine. This makes the whole meaning of the expression "God from the machine". Now, we already touched on the etymology of the term rooted in Hellenistic Drama and what it now has come to denote in literature in general. The semantic field (or the sense components) that might be associated with the

term in the sense we're exploring here could be things like: fate, ultimate power, intervention, supernatural and benevolence. As for the Arabic TL translation المـــدد الغيبــــي one can say that indeed this rendering entails intervention, power (albeit not necessarily ultimate as there is nothing in the Arabic term to suggest that) and supernatural to an extent as the word غيبــــي might imply something of the sort. However, benevolence as associated with the ST word "God" does not find correspondence in the TT word "الغيبــــي" for instance. Thus, one main objection on this particular attempt, might be on this particular lexical item.

As stated, one main objection to this particular attempt, might be on the lexical item الغيبــــي as it does seem to be, I wouldn't say neutral, but maybe unspecified on a spectrum of good & evil. For all intents and purposes, demons and evil spirits are part of الغيــــب and as such, it might be better to replace it with something like: المدد الإلهــــي or المدد السماوي giving it an air of benevolence as well as increasing its functional utility (or functional equivalence) since we know for a fact that the sole function of a Deus Ex Machina plot device, narratively speaking, is mainly to save the protagonist/s exclusively, the protagonist/s who are typically associated with heroism and good deeds making it a force for good not a random, unspecified occurrence.

In any case, and as instructed by Vinay and Darbelnet (2004) a translator must sometimes resort to altering the syntactic structure of the ST in the TT in order to transpose certain stylistic elements (oblique translation) which seems to be the case in this instance.

As observed المدد الغيبي as a TT does not correspond to the ST, that is, Deus Ex Machina in its structural composition. Thus, the translator/s seem to have, whether consciously or not, opted for oblique translation techniques. Now, as foretold by Vinay and Darbelenet themselves, there is likely going to be an overlap between the different techniques for oblique translation. In this case, three such techniques seem to have played a role in the translation process, these are: Modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

As for modulation, it is quite apparent that the translator/s made changes in the semantic composition of the ST to avoid producing an unidiomatic TT which is the main idea behind this method. Thus, an expression that would mean literally: God from the machine becomes something to the effect of 'aid/reinforcements from the unseen' or 'supernatural reinforcements/support' that is المدد الغيبي. Now, in the case of equivalence, (not to be confused with Nida's Equivalence), we see a consorted effort on the part of the translator/s in trying to change the style and structure of the ST that is characteristic with this translation technique which, as stated before, is often the go-to method when translating proverbs and idiomatic expressions in order to make the final outcome more so 'domesticated' as opposed to a more 'foreignized' rendering. This ties closely to the third and final method which is Adaptation that entails, according to Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) 'explaining' and 'mediating' the cultural differences between the ST and the TT coming from two different language systems and therefore cultures. This is perhaps the most important method in this particular translation as it is clear that the TT (i.e. المدد الغيبـــي) appeals to

an Arab audience as the word مدد for instance, is often invoked in many prayers especially by Shiite Muslims making it a familiar word and in high currency amongst an Arab Muslim readership that could definitely bring the meaning closer to home (i.e. domesticate it) which is the desired effect here and is our main end goal as evaluators in this research.

4.2 Chekhov's Gun

The second term that we will examine is the Chekhov's Gun plot device, a fairly common plot device that comes from the Chekhovian dictum supposedly from the 1880s which proclaims: "If in Act I you have a pistol hanging on the wall, then it must fire in the last act.". Anton Pavlovich Chekhov is one of the all-time masters of the short story. He also was the one to bring to light this writing principle which was later named after him. Writer and Editor Danielle Adams (2020) says: "Chekhov's gun is about writing with intention. It means that we shouldn't be throwing things into our stories that serve no purpose". (Adams, 2020: 1). Adams asserts that while there is little to no contention concerning the definitions of a Chekhov's Gun; however, she states, that the contention might be regarding whether or not a Chekhov's Gun should be considered a writing rule/guideline or an actual literary/plot device. But then again, she is quick to dismiss such a concern by stating that this is "not an important distinction, practically speaking". (Adams, 2020: 2)

In essence, the main idea behind this plot device is that if something can be removed from the story without seriously affecting the overall narrative it

ought to be removed. If you as a writer have mentioned that there is a loaded gun hanging on the wall, that gun ought to be used later on or otherwise you should not have mentioned it in the first place. In other words, don't make promises to your reader only to have them not pay off in the end. Every non-essential element should be eliminated. So, based on the above, a simple off-the-shelf definition of a Chekhov's gun according to Writer and Editor Bridget McNutly is as follows: "a concept that describes how every element of a story should contribute to the whole". (McNulty, 2021: 4)

Now, it is important to note that Arab writers and translators were familiar with Russian literature as it resonated with many Arab voices struggling against imperialism and striving for liberation and independence. We have previously touched on the impact of Russian literature on Arabic literature. Seigneurie et al (2020) emphasize a key trait that attracted Arab translators and writers to Russian literature which is its ability to convey a moral point about social justice, they present Chekhov and Tolstoy as prime examples of this. Chekhov's short story "*Student*" for instance, as well as other short stories appeared in Arabic periodicals like: *al-Funun*. Such short stories seemed to have appealed greatly to Arab writers of Mahjar and elsewhere (Seigneurie et al., 2020: 5)

This goes to show that Arab writers and translators were familiar with Chekhov from an early formative stage at least in the development of the short story in the Arab world. Abu Tahir Mahmood of the Nabin Chandra

College, India suggests (2014) for instance that one of the pioneers of the Arabic short story, Mahmood Taimur, was greatly influenced by Chekhov's short stories (amongst others of course) which informed his experience as well as other Arab writers. (Mahmood, 2014)

In any case, when examining the translations for this Chekhovian concept, it becomes abundantly clear that this is perhaps one of the rare instances where we will be mostly dealing with a case of direct rather than oblique translation in this examination. As we can see, the term/expression consists of two components: A proper noun/ name, 'Chekhov' that is, and a word denoting a well-known object 'gun' leaving little room (or need for that matter) for maneuverability. Vinay & Darbelnet (2004) have famously suggested that due to certain structural and metalinguistic parallelisms occurring between two languages, it is possible, then, to transpose a ST message into a TT piecemeal using the direct translation procedures that they have prescribed, those are: Borrowing, calques and literal translation. Here, the translator/s could translate the term literally as such: بندقية تشيكوف or مسدس تشيكوف this is in fact the case with the 'official' translations we examined. First borrowing the name 'Chekhov' then literally translating the word 'gun' into its correct and expected corresponding Arabic word مسدس or بندقية.Notwithstanding that for this particular term, the researcher has managed to gather a few translations that can fall under two categories; those that can be seen as more direct simply like: بندقية تشيكوف or any variant of which like: مسدس تشيخوف and so on as previously mentioned. Then you have less direct, albeit non-official translations like الورقة الخفية e.g. لقد لعب

... عندما الكاتب ورقته الخفية في الوقت المناسب. Now, based on the definitions of the term, the semantic field for the term (i.e. Chekhov's gun) comprises of things like: hidden, surprise and suspense. As observed both Arabic translations can have the same sense components albeit for different reasons and for different audiences. First, renderings like: بندقية تشـــيكوف or any similar variant may find currency amongst a more specialized readership while renderings like: الورقـــة الخفيـــة can appeal to a wider, more general readership. Again, both attempts may include in their semantic field shared sense elements like: suspense, surprise and hidden even if different renderings may appeal to different audiences. Thus, one can argue that both the direct and the less direct approaches to translating the term proved successful to a decent degree of success. However, the second attempt (i.e. الورقة الخفية) produces a generic non-jargon expression thus will be eliminated here. All in all, such terms could potentially present real challenges for the translator as they don't have readily accessible equivalences in the Arabic language making the best course of action is to use direct translation procedures even if it meant prioritizing a foreignized outcome over a more domesticated one.

4.3 Cliffhanger

The third plot device is Cliffhanger; a very common one used in almost all fiction genres. This particular plot device is what keeps the reader invested in the story wanting to know what happens next. The term basically denotes the narrative technique whereby the author leaves the reader 'hanging' on to an unresolved, high tension point.

One definition of Cliffhanger is: "When a story or plotline ends suddenly and abruptly or when a plot twist occurs and is left unresolved leaving the reader with unanswered questions". The idea behind the phrase comes from the idea of "hanging off a cliff" which is crucial for good storytelling. Another textbook definition for a *cliffhanger* is "a plot device in a book, movie, or TV show that leaves the audience in suspense at the end of a scene or episode". The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines it as "A dramatic and exciting ending to an episode of a serial, leaving the audience in suspense and anxious not to miss the next episode". (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary n.d.)

Key to a cliffhanger is a lead character in a risky situation where the threat level is real. This keeps the excitement going and almost guarantees that the audience would keep coming back to see how said character will get themselves out of the situation. In the case of a novel, a cliffhanger keeps the reader turning the pages which is perhaps why an exciting book that keeps you turning the pages is often called 'a page-turner'.

A plot device like the cliffhanger is heavily used in fiction nowadays. This is especially true when ample research is suggesting that in this age of rapid development in technologies, social media and whatnot human attention span is evermore shrinking as time goes by making this plot device needed more than ever and surely enough, writers have been using it to good effect most of the time for there must be constant suspense keeping the audience on the edge of their seats, invested in the show/ book. However, this plot

device seems to be criminally underused as a critical term in the Arabic literary jargon. Just the fact that one struggles to find any sort of Arabic translation for the term is evidence enough let alone an official one.

Authors cannot expect the reader to be as much invested in their work of fiction as they themselves are, this is fallacious. Jerry Jenkins, a best-selling, prolific author has famously stated (2018) that a writer cannot just "survive" the writing process but that he/she must "thrive" in it because "the reader is right there with you, if it seems boring to you, your reader is asleep" (Jenkins, 2018).

Perhaps one of the all-time classic examples of cliffhangers and how potent they can be comes from the Arab-Islamic culture in the form of *Arabian Nights* or *the 1001 nights* depending on your sources. A whole conglomeration of tales revolving around the cliffhanger as a plot element in tying up together the stories Scheherazade (the protagonist) is telling in what can be deemed a meta-examination of the idea of the cliffhanger. In the narrative, her life is literally dependent on a well-executed cliffhanger. That said, it would be a bit ironic if the Arab literary jargon of today has no concept of a cliffhanger while having such a legacy concerning cliffhangers in such classics as the *Arabian Nights*.

Cliffhangers, by definition, concern themselves with endings. After all, they occur at the end of chapters/ episodes. Ending things is as important as starting them and powerful beginnings predict and/or require powerful endings to leave a lasting impression in the reader, or in the case of

cliffhangers, to keep the reader invested. How does Arabic literature fair in this department? Bilal Orfali from the American University of Beirut (2021) suggests that indeed while introductions and prefaces to literary works have been a research interest for some time now for Arab researchers and writers, ending things is quite the uncharted territory in Arabic studies. He also seems to imply that endings for Arab writers have been a tool to start a hermeneutic process leaving many open questions for the reader (Orfali, 2021: 2). Now, while this is but one classic function of an ending. However, such a reductionist view doesn't give justice to the full potential of an ending when done correctly and with a well-executed cliffhanger which again, keeps the suspense and the interest of the reader throughout. Yet, this is not to say that Arab writers are particularly guilty of this (i.e. not properly using cliffhangers or not using them sufficiently per se) or that change isn't happening because, evidently it is, as recent years have seen an upsurge improvement in the quality of fiction, drama, and film in the Arab region in general where plot devices such as the cliffhanger are being put to very good use especially in the drama and cinema sectors.

Now, before we digress any further, let's turn to some of the technicalities involved with the translation process of the renderings that the researcher has managed to gather. First of all, it is abundantly clear that the translator/s have opted for oblique translation methods as the changes to the style and form of the message are undeniable.

Some of the translations that the researcher has managed to gather for this particular term were: نهاية مشـــوقة or نهاية تحبس الأنفاس or محابسة الأنفاس which totally miss the 'cliff' part. However, the desired effect is there as all of these renderings denote a state of suspense in the reader as if left on a cliff. As one can observe, perhaps the common denominator between the translations is the emphasis on two oblique translation procedures in particular: Modulation and equivalence which is sometimes referred to as reformulation. The translator/s seem/s to have been aware that including anything cliff-related in the final outcome would have felt awkward and unidiomatic in the TL culture (i.e. Arabic). Thus, it was changed altogether both in style and form of the message to give off an equivalent effect to an Arab reader similar to the response of an English reader of the ST. It is obvious that the ST has been reformulated to appeal to an Arab readership and culture. However, the translator/s could have done a better job at handling that as there are expressions deep-rooted in Arabic/Islamic culture that, one might presume, would give off a better equivalent effect to that of the above renderings such as for instance: (على الحافــة /على شفا (حفرة in the sentence"لقد تركنا الكاتب على شفا حفــرة" this could be a translation for : ''The author left us on a cliffhanger'' such an expression is in high currency amongst Arab readers as it is a Quranic reference and thus can present a more readily available intelligibility amongst them which is what we are looking for, for our purposes here in the very least. The semantic field for the term could include things like: suspense, tension… If we turn to the Arabic translations for the term نهاية مشوقة or نهايــة تحــبس الأنفــاس we might

agree that such attempts do convey the intended message of suspense and high tension technically speaking. However, the imagery of hanging off a cliff as suggested by the ST term is completely lost in the TT term rendering it significantly lacking in emotiveness. Thus, one would opt for an alternative translation with meaning components that portray the imagery of hanging like:على شفا حفرة or على الحافة that has sense components more attune with those of the ST term plus preserving the emotiveness as an added value. Another point of contention that one may raise based on the semantic field of the term and regarding the previous attempts at translation, namely نهاية تحـبس الأنفـاس or نهايــة مشـوقة is the fact that such renderings give off a sense of finality as نهايــة means ending. It is true that cliffhangers typically happen at the end of a chapter or episode but they do not necessarily happen at the end of the show/book making such renderings dubious at best, outright erroneous at worst for that sense of finality suggested by the word نهاية.

4.4 Plot Twist

We've mentioned plot twists earlier. These are surprising turns in the plotline that radically change the reader's perspective on the story. In other words; when the plot leads toward an inevitable conclusion, then, at the last possible minute, we throw something in that changes everything. Oxford dictionary defines a plot twist as follows: "An unexpected development in a book, film, television programme, etc." (Oxford Dictionary n.d.). This is also a common plot device and it is used to subvert our expectations as

readers. The famous Agatha Christie (who was also a prolific author) is known for using plot twists in her mystery and crime novels.

In order to emphasize the importance of plot twists in a narrative, the website Literary Terms (n.d.) suggests, through its platform, that plot twists are "invaluable" and that they will "never go out of style" and without them, stories will be "predictable" and quite "boring". They even believe that plot twists can be everything in a story and can determine its success or failure.

As for Arabic translations of the term 'plot twist', you have translations that verge on being too literal like: التواءة الحبكة or الحبكـــة الملتويــة which are questionable from an equivalence standpoint but might still pass with a reasonable degree of success as TTs. On the other hand, you have renderings that are more liberal if so to speak like نهاية مفاجئة or نهاية غير متوقعة which is arguably erroneous since plot twists can happen at any given time in the story whereas such renderings imply that the twists happen only at the end of the story/plotline which is evidently incorrect (again نهايـــة means ending). This error in translation is perhaps the result of confusing the term 'plot twist' with another term used to describe another plot device which is the 'twist ending'. A twist ending plot device, as the name suggests, does indeed happen strictly at the end of a story. Now, confusing those two literary devices is understandable given the similarity they share. However, it will still produce an erroneous translation and therefore should be noted. To further elaborate on the translations at hand, we will look at

the sense components of the given renderings. We can associate a few sense components with the term plot twist like: reveal, sudden, unexpected, perspective-changing and so on. Now, We have the Arabic translations: نهايـــة مفاجئـــة or نهايـــة غيـــر متوقعـــة for a back translation to the effect of something like: "unexpected ending" or "surprising ending. Now, though words like unexpected and surprising are included in the semantic field of the English term, it is nonetheless very problematic to use the word نهايـــة meaning ending in the TT since plot twists can happen at any given time in the narrative with nothing to suggest that they only happen at the end as touched on earlier.

To return to the above mentioned translation for the term: التواءة الحبكة which could be seen as literal translation for the English term since the word التواءة literally means twist while حبكـــة means plot. This is arguably a safer route to take for translating the term in the sense that conceptual errors as seen above are effectively eliminated. However, a major sense component is lost in both translations that of the perspective-changing or view-changing aspect associated with the English term. In Arabic, those translations don't give off that aspect as does the English term. Since this is a preliminary topic in Arabic with most of these terms being in low frequency and circulation, the term doesn't seem to be charged with that meaning component (i.e. view-changing). It is important to stress that a plot twist entails a radical change that makes you rethink the whole narrative from the beginning. Thus, an alternative translation could be انقــلاب الأحـــداث for instance, the word انقــلاب does indeed give off the meaning of a view-

changing turn of events. To emphasize how crucial that sense component is to the meaning we can invoke an example of a classic plot twist. The (1968) film Planet of the Apes where the protagonists who are supposedly stranded on an alien planet with ape-like humanoids, finally discover the remains of the statue of liberty thus realizing that they were on planet earth this whole time apparently long after an apocalyptic nuclear catastrophe. Thereupon, one of the main characters, Tylor, falls to his knees in despair condemning humanity for the destruction of the world. This is the view-changing sense component that makes one rethink the entire narrative and should be taken into consideration when translating the term.

4.5 The MacGuffin Plot Device

According to Meriam-Webster (n.d.), the MacGuffin plot device means: **"an object, event, or character in a film or story that serves to set and keep the plot in motion despite usually lacking intrinsic importance"** (MacGuffin, n.d.). The same source points out that the term was first coined by Alfred Hitchcock who apparently appreciated the fact that a mysterious object of little to no relevance to the narrative as a whole, can potentially be used to hook the audience and keep them interested even if this initial 'interest-grabber' turns out to be irrelevant.

To better understand the concept behind a MacGuffin, writer and film critic Anmol Ahuja (2018) posits the following rhetorical question:

"How many times have you watched a movie wherein a certain person, object or a set of motives have been hailed as something incredibly important, as if the only thing that mattered in the film was the object under discussion, only to find out by the end that it was alluding to something completely different?" (Ahuja, 2018)

To which he answers that probably a 'number of times'. He maintains that in fact, a basic narrative structure could be a villain and a hero going after the same thing (which is made to be very important at first) with no concrete explanation as to why it is so important. Then, after many encounters, chases and confrontations, it is revealed that the object in question is either non-existent in the first place or that it does exist but is much less important than previously thought or even that it exists and is very important but in the end neither party can get a hold of it making it much less significant to the overall story. (Ahuja, 2018)

Examples of McGuffins are plenty, for instance, the 1997 film Titanic which is hailed by many as a world-wide sensation and a cinematic masterpiece, uses a MacGuffin in the form of the necklace that belongs to protagonist Rose Dewitt. At the start of the story, the importance of the necklace (which is called The Heart of the Ocean necklace) is established early on as the search team is collecting items from the wreckage of the ship. However, as the now-old protagonist starts recounting what had happened in the ship to the search party, the focus shifts completely from the necklace to her romance with another protagonist, Jack and the sinking

of the ship while the value of the necklace decreases dramatically (narrative-wise) until it is revealed to the audience that Rose had had it (i.e. the necklace) with her the entire time only to throw it back into the ocean at the very end of the film rendering it unimportant, for the narrative at least in the sense that it only serves as an initial interest-grabber whose value diminishes as the plot progresses until it no longer contributes to its development (which is the very definition of a MacGuffin).

Another example of a MacGuffin put to good use, again comes from The Lord of the Rings book series turned to film (2001 - 2003). The very ring itself constitutes a classic example of a MacGuffin as the whole plot revolves around it; both the protagonists and the antagonists are eager to secure possession over it for its mysterious powers (that are left neither described nor shown). In the end, the ring is destroyed in the fires of Mount Doom where it was forged even though it was the prime motivator to the events of the story.

Similar to the translation of Chekhov's Gun previously, the translation of the term MacGuffin seems to have been conducted via direct translation procedures, namely transliteration. Most sources online translate it like so: ماكغـــافن which is arguably the most reasonable course of action even if it meant sacrificing that initial intelligibility and equivalent effect.

Some sources give an interpretive translation like: الغرض أو الحدث الذي يحفز الحبكة في فيلم أو كتـــاب apart from that the only translation one could find is in fact transliteration. According to which, MacGuffin would be transliterated

as: ماكغـــافن. If we're to define a semantic field for the term in English, this could include sense components such as: an object, event or hook. Knowing beforehand that there are currently no official translations for this term should justify using transliteration. Noting also that translations like الغرض الذي يحفز الحبكة are non-jargon expressions making them of little value to this research. Thus, sticking with transliteration seems the best course of action.

4.6 Foreshadowing, Flash-forward & Flashback

Those three literary devices can be seen as opposites in the sense that two of them refer to future events in the story, foreshadowing and flash-forward, while the third brings back events from the past, flashback.

Now, the difference between a flash-forward and a foreshadowing is that a flash-forward literary device means, as per Meriam-Webster: "interruption of chronological sequence (as in a film or novel) by interjection of events of future occurrence" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) while the same source defines foreshadowing simply as: "an indication of what is to come" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) as we can see, while the former means the outright narration of future occurrences before they take place, the latter only refers to hints and indications placed carefully by the author to give a glimpse of future events.

A flashback on the other hand is defined, by the website Literary Terms as" a device that moves an audience from the present moment in a

chronological narrative to a scene in the past. Often, flashbacks are abrupt interjections that further explain a story or character with background information and memories". (Literary Terms, n.d.)

As for some of the Arabic translations for these literary devices, there are a few for each. For instance, the term flashback is sometimes translated in Arabic sources as ارتجاع فنـــي which sounds rather awkward and clumsy in Arabic to say the least as a back translation of it would sound something like 'technical backtracking', while the term flash-forward is sometimes translated into لفتة للمســتقبل which sounds much less awkward and better at conveying the message from a reader's response standpoint (i.e. a better-suited equivalent effect is likely generated). Thus, it would probably make more sense to translate those two terms as: الالتفاتة للماضي and الالتفاتـــة للمســـتقبل given the similarity they share.

Now, the term foreshadowing is translated in many Arabic sources as a derivative of the verb: ينذر like: انذار or أنذر and so on. While there could be a valid reasoning behind such a word choice in normal day-to-day settings. However, in literary settings and for our research purposes, it is questionable at best, erroneous at worst. The Arabic word ينـــذر literally means to warn and warnings entail negative connotations. One cannot <u>warn</u> someone about a pleasant outcome for instance. So, this crucial aspect of neutrality that comes with the English word foreshadowing is completely lost in an Arabic translation that involves a derivative of: ينذر since it is not, by any means, neutral and thus needs to be further

reviewed and scrutinized. If one is to give a more neutral translation for foreshadowing, this might be something like: أَذن or دلل or even مهَــد like لقد مهد الكاتب لهذه النتيجة فــي كــذا وكــذا موضــع saying which is arguably the better of the three at conveying the message to an Arab audience. Truth be told, these were unofficial translations for the terms. Thus, they will not be further examined here. The researcher has found official translations for these three terms in the Dictionary of Narratology by Gerald Prince (2003). We will have a look at those translations and break down the semantic field for each.

One should note that these three terms are the exception to the rule. Contrary to every other term, the researcher was indeed able to find official translations for these terms as found in Gerald Prince's Dictionary of Narratology (2003) this should give us a clear reference point to engage with for a change. So, let us analyze those translations from a semantic field point of view. To begin with, under the entry Flashback, the translation اللقطة الاســترجاعية is given while under the entry Flash-forward, you will find اللقطة الاستباقية. (Prince, 2003) given the similarity between the two terms, the semantic field will be similar somewhat. Some sense components shared by the two might be: brief, interlude, temporal… the Arabic translations also present with sense components similar to these. The word لقطة can give the meaning of brevity while the words اســترجاعية and اســتباقيةgive meanings pertaining to time (temporal). All in all, this would make such translations successful to a descent degree in conveying the intended message. However, there is room for improvement. For

instance, the word لقطـــة is mostly exclusive to cinema and T.V. excluding

books (novels, short stories etc.). A back-translation for it could be 'a shot'.

Thus, it could be better to replace with something like لفتة or التفاتـــة to make

the term more inclusive of different forms of literature like novels and short

stories.

Under the entry 'Foreshadowing' found in the same source (see above),

you will find the translation الارهاص. Foreshadowing as a literary term can

be broken down into sense components such as: beforehand, hinting,

suspense, reveal… the Arabic translation of the term does provide meaning

components very similar to these and as such should be deemed successful.

Alternative translations could be things like: تلميح or تمهيـــد. However, sense

components associated with the word ارهـــاص fit the sense components

mentioned above more accurately.

4.7 The Red Herring

In literature, this term refers to a plot device the author uses to mislead and

misdirect his/her audience from the main issue usually in order achieve an

element of surprise and to subvert the expectations of the readers. The

etymology of the term comes from the practice of placing fresh red

herrings by fugitives on a trail to mislead and confuse search dogs. As per

Meriam-Webster; a red herring is "something that distracts attention from

the real issue" (Merriam-Webster n.d.)

This is a very common plot device to use especially in writing mysteries

and thrillers. Agatha Christie is known to heavily utilize this literary device

in her murder mystery novels where all the clues lead the reader to a certain conclusion only to surprise them with a completely unexpected one at the end, this is achieved by strategically placing false clues (red herrings) along the way. Journalist and Editor Emily Petsko (2019) sees red herring in fiction as a popular ploy by writers to draw the reader into an incorrect conclusion in order to elicit a shock reaction in them. She says that this common literary device is used by storytellers of all stripes. (Petsko, 2019)

Arabic translations for this literary device range from the most direct to the oblique according to the source. Some of the more direct ones include: سمكة الرنجة الحمراء or سمكة الرنك and so on which transpose the form and style of the message with minimal to no alteration. Then there are translations that are less direct like: المضــــلل الأمر or شيء مضلل which are non-jargon words thus bear little relevance to our discussion as they evidently do not qualify as critical terms. And finally, you have renderings that focus on reader's response therefore generating an adequate equivalent effect in them like using the Arabic expression: ذر الرماد في العيـــون which is arguably the best one especially in tackling and overcoming any potential idiomatic barriers. This rendering is deemed by the researcher and for our purposes in this paper as the more successful one due to the clever use, on the part of the translator, of oblique translation procedures, most prominently, modulation and adaptation. Besides, if we were to decompose the TT term into its sense components, these could be: mislead, divert, deceive and so on. These are very compatible with sense components associated with the

Arabic expression ذر الرمــاد فــي العيــون which denotes the active act of misleading, deceiving and diverting for instance.

Now and as a tangent, the reason as to why there is such an unusual wide spectrum of Arabic translations, as opposed to other terms, for this particular term/expression is probably because of the versatility of term/expression itself, not only does it denote the actual literal thing (a type of fish) as well as the literary device as we've mentioned, but it also denotes what is called a logical fallacy often used in logical argumentations and debates which, in recent years have seen more and more prominence in the Arab region especially in debates concerning religious and political issues where you would hear this term/expression used a lot.

4.8 Plot Armour

Yet another controversial plot device, the plot armour, also known as the character shield. This literary device, as its name might have suggested, means the author's intent on keeping a specific character(s) alive even against impossible odds for plot considerations. This is often seen as a drawback and lazy writing on the part of the author. Hence, its controversy. The online Urban Dictionary website defines a plot armour in fiction as follows: "a plot device in films and television shows that prevents important characters from dying or being seriously injured at dramatically inconvenient moments. It often denotes a situation in which it strains credibility". (Urban Dictionary, n.d.)

From the definition above we can surmise that indeed a plot armour literary device can be detrimental to the credibility and believability of the story and usually to the frustration of readers. So why do authors continue to use such a literary device despite potentially damaging the overall quality of their stories? Well, one explanation put forth by Wordsverse website is that authors use this literary device to maintain narrative tension. Narrative tension refers to the state of suspense the events on the story can induce in the readers by constantly raising the stakes higher and higher. They state that "This cannot be done by putting minor, unimportant characters in danger because the readers have no connection with them. You make the readers interested by putting the main characters in danger. And this is where the problem starts". (Wordsverse, n.d.)

The website suggests that putting the main character(s) in a tight spot is easy enough. However, getting them out is quite the challenge. The author must give a detailed, consistent explanation as to how that happened, failure to do so results in a plot armour.

Innumerable examples of plot armour in popular fiction spring to mind such as in the critically acclaimed *Harry Potter* book series by JK. Rowling where the main trio (and some other major characters) can never die or get seriously injured despite constantly finding themselves in death-defying situations throughout the entire series. Another stark example ironically comes from a book series known for its disregard for main characters' safety, everyone could die at any time which kept the narrative tension high

and the audience interested, *A Song of Ice and Fire* book series by John R.R. Martin (later adapted into popular show Game of Thrones). Both fans and critics took note of one particular main character, Arya Stark, who survived multiple stab wounds to the torso, drowning, poisoning, kidnapping, and a host of extremely dangerous encounters while other less important characters die left and right for far lesser reasons.

Interestingly enough, the researcher hasn't been able to find Any translation for this term in Arabic except for only one coming from the official designated Egyptian translator for the above mentioned book series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Hisham Fahmi when he said, as quoted by Marian Said to Al-Watan News (2019):

"وأضاف فهمي أن فكرة موت الأبطال بسهولة بناء على اختياراتهم وقراراتهم الغلط، ســـاعدت على التعلق بالمسلسل لأننا اعتدنا أغلب الوقت أن الأعمال الدرامية تحيط البطل بـــــ"البطـــل" بــ"درع الحبكة" أي أنه محمي دائما"

First of all, the scarcity of Arabic translations for such important literary terms again, is indicative of a lack of research and can be a contributing factor to the lower quality –overall- of Arabic cinema, drama and fiction in general. as compared to its Western counterpart since plot devices are an integral part of the writing process, not properly understanding and therefore using them will most definitely result in poor writing.

In any case, this rendering is quite direct in that it transposes the form and style of the message from the SL into the TL using the correct and expected

lexical counterpart for each lexical item in the term/expression: Plot becomes حبكة while armour becomes درع. However, this choice of wording clearly sacrifices a measure of that initial intelligibility as the expression درع الحبكة is not, by any means, readily available to an Arab reader. This is perhaps why the quote by Fahmi above makes efforts to explain what a plot armour is (see above), expecting that the term is not accessible to your average Arabic reader. Now, one might protest saying that it is not directed to your average layman reader to begin with, but to a more specialized one. Well, the answer to this is precisely one of the main theses of this research. The problem is with the proliferation of such terms to include a wider population than just the specialized lot. If you are to listen to any English speaker (let alone a more specialized one) reviewing a film, drama or a book you'll hear these terms for plot devices casually being tossed about. On the other hand, even with a specialized Arabic reviewer or critic, you will seldom hear mention of those plot devices.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

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Conclusion

The professed aim of this thesis is to hopefully act as a starting point for a larger discussion that should be had amongst Arab literary circles. The topic of the thesis, being somewhat avant-garde, should prove eye-catching for interested researchers and critics, thought-provoking as well as attracting to an otherwise neglected, yet an important area of the writing process and the scholarship associated with that process. A few research questions were posited by the researcher; the exposition has given them answers to varying but fair degrees of success.

To begin with, it would seem that a conglomeration of a myriad of sociopolitical, linguistic as well as literary-criticism related factors have contributed to the hindering of a true literary Nahda to grow organically so to speak,. This, naturally and by extension, bleeds into literature. New Ideas, concepts, writing techniques, terms or what have you will, by definition, emerge first in the West, then, traffic to the Arab world when the latter eventually catches wind of these new emerging concepts and starts to adopt and use them which could take time. The findings of this research indicate that this could be a factor in delaying or sometimes halting altogether the traffic of these concepts to the Arab world in real-time and that more research or indeed an outright overhaul and rethinking of the approach to writing by Arab writers needs to happen. This is not, by any means, a stretch considering the evidence we have gathered. For

instance, knowing that modern literary criticism as it is today is quite a recent discipline in the Arab world should put this in perspective.

Corroborating previous data, meeting with a few experts in the field did indeed give a similar account of modern literary criticism and analysis in the Arab region.

Now, as for the translation of the terms themselves, a few challenges face translators in the Arab region; most notably, the standardization of terms in general. Many sources speak of a serious lack of coordination between relevant Arabic language academies, universities and other institutions in the face of the huge influx of terms in today's reality of rapid development and change and the fragmentation of the Arab world augments and compounds such a problem. Then you have issues of usefulness and acceptability of terms in different literary circles. This is not to say that such challenges are insurmountable, evidently, they are not. A few strategies and translation procedures can be utilized to bring about fairly compelling renderings for said terms, renderings that, one would argue, could have the potential to circulate at a large scale; this is primarily due to their efficacy in conveying the message behind each term with adequate equivalent effect generated in the reader as they seem to share many sense components with their SL counterparts.

While there may be other useful translation procedures that can definitely prove useful, the researcher has narrowed down his analysis to include Vinay & Darbelnet's Direct and Oblique translation procedures coupling it

with a semantic field analysis for each term in order to determine compatibility between sense components of both the ST and its TT renderings; keeping in the background Nida's equivalence and equivalent effect as a larger goal to be achieved. This was done both for considerations of economy as well as their suitability for our purposes in this research as the researcher had anticipated beforehand -and rightly so- that these renderings and the translation process that produced them will have heavily depended on direct and oblique translation procedures as prescribed by Vinay & Darbelnet and that the renderings, being jargon words themselves, will fall rather neatly and in a clear-cut manner under one of those two classifications (i.e. either direct or oblique).

Despite some of the renderings being downright erroneous while a few others, awkward and clumsy. Yet, one can confidently say that a fair number was compelling to say the least. This indicates that, indeed, it is possible to bring about translations compelling enough to be standardized, the onus remains on the institutions responsible for carrying that out.

Our examination concludes that even if the novel, the cinema industry, screenwriting and so on are all Western phenomena in the first place with virtually little to no roots in the Arabic Islamic culture. There is nonetheless potential for real genuine integration where emerging concepts and ideas in the West can be adapted, modulated and reformulated to cater for an Arab audience. Arabic proves a versatile milieu that can incorporate new terminologies with profound efficacy.

Before taking on this research, the researcher had anticipated that since the topic of inquiry is, by all considerations, under-researched in the Arab region, there is going to be a shortage of sources. However, and for our main objective here as a discussion-starter so to speak, the sources at hand with the exposition given proved fairly sufficient to perform the intended goal.

Now that we've provided evidence that Arabic can adapt to new changes in the literary scene if it needed to, will there be change? Will relevant institutions make the effort to enhance coordination to standardize such terms? Will we see widespread proliferation of the terms amongst a wider population as opposed to a highly specialized one if any?

Based on insights arising from this research, academics and literary critics should definitely consider doing more research and keep up to date with new and emerging concepts as there are plenty and can prove overwhelming at times which is why the interested researcher, writer, translator and critic ought to remain vigilant and constantly on the lookout for such new concepts and not let them fly under their radar. Writers should also be encouraged to make more effort in acquiring the needed knowledge of such terms in order to better use them with intent and purpose.

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كليّة الدراسات العليا

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دراسة في إمكانية ترجمة مصطلحات محركات الحبكة السردية

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الملخص

مما يبعث على الحيرة، أنه وفي خضم الانتعاشة الأدبية في الكتابة الروائية والقصصية التي يشهدها الوسط العربي حاليا لا يألو المرء جهدا وهو يبحث عن مصطلحات رسمية متداولة باللغة العربية للدلالة على مفاهيم أدبية مهمة للغاية في فهم ودراسة ونقد النتاج الأدبي المذكور ومع ذلك لا يكاد يجد لبعضها أي وجود. تناولت هذه الدراسة بالتحديد مسألة مصطلحات أدوات الحبكة السردية من حيث العوائق التي قد تقف بوجه المترجمين أثناء محاولة تعريب مثل هذه المصطلحات، وبعض مسببات القصور الحاصل في ذلك، وبالتالي فحص إمكانية الاتيان بمصطلحات لأدوات الحبكة السردية بحيث تكون متداولة ومستخدمة في الأوساط الأدبية النقدية في العالم العربي. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن أدوات الحبكة لا يمكن الاستغناء عنها قطعيا في أي عمل سردي، بل لا نبالغ حين نقول أن وجود العمل السردي من أساسه مرتبط بوجود هذه الأدوات وبانعدامها لا توجد سردية ولا قصة أصلا، الأمر الذي يحتّم علينا أخذ القضية على محمل الجد وايلاءها الاهتمام اللازم وهذا أيضا مما تسعى هذه الدراسة لتحقيقه. لإنجاز ذلك، تم استعراض مراجعة لأهم المحطات التاريخية للكتابة الروائية في سياق الوطن العربي، ثم تم انتخاب عدد أساسي من هذه المصطلحات الدالة على أدوات الحبكة السردية ليتم النظر فيها حيث قام الباحث بتحليل المصطلحات من حيث المجال الدلالي لكل مصطلح في لغته الأصلية (الإنجليزية) اذ تم تفكيك كل مصطلح الى مكوناته الدلالية المختلفة ومن ثم مقارنة تلك المكونات الدلالية مع نظيراتها في اللغة المترجم اليها (العربية) لفحص توافقية المعنيين التي ان وجدت بين المكونات الدلالية للمصطلحين العربي والانجليزي، فان تعريب المصطلح يعتبر ناجحا ومقبولا في هذه الحالة. اهتمت الدراسة بنموذج فيني و داربلني المهم عن الترجمة المباشرة

وغير المباشرة (1954) حيث قدم الباحثان أفكارا مهمة و أساليب ذات أهمية بالغة في التعامل مع ترجمة المصطلحات مثل الاقتراض والنقل وغيرها. تم هذا مع الأخذ بعين الإعتبار ضرورة الإبقاء على تأثير مكافئ في الترجمات بعد تعريبها. خلُصت الدراسة إلى أن أحد أهم العوامل والمعيقات التى يمكن أن تحول دون تــأتّي وجود مصطلحات عربية موحــدة لأدوات الحبكــة السردية هو حالة التشرذم وانعدام التنسيق المهيمنة علـــى تعـــاملات مجـــامع اللغـــة العربيـــة والمؤسسات الأخرى المعنية بالموضوع مع بعضها البعض، بالإضافة إلى عوامل أخرى. على كل حال، أظهرت الدراسة أيضا أن اللغة العربية لغة مرنة قادرة على التكيف والإتيان بتعريبات للمصطلحات وبتأثير مكافئ للمصطلحات بلغتها الأم وبالتالي فإن الإتيان بمجموعة متكاملة مـــن المصطلحات المتداولة عربيا لا ينبغي أن يكون أمرا صعبا خصوصا في ضوء معرفتنـــا بـــأن العقبات التقنية واللغوية يمكن تجاوزها. عودا على بدء، هذه الدراسة ما هي إلا عمل تمهيدي لما بعدها من دراسات فالحاجة للتوسع في هكذا مواضيع مهم إذا أردنا الحصول على مصـــطلحات عربية موحدة لأدوات الحبكة السردية.