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The Notion of Otherness between Resistance and Prestige in Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk*

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorat in Comparative Literature

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Statement of Originality

I hereby confirm that this doctoral thesis is my own work and I did my utmost to ensure originality. Also, I attest that the research conforms to the required criteria of ethics and contains no plagiarism whatsoever. All materials taken from other sources - through direct/indirect quotation or paraphrasing- have been referenced according to MLA 8.

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Sara Mehadar

Dedications

To everyone who is compelled to be the Other

To all nostalgic citizens of the world

To my intricate homeland

And to my mother

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Abstract

Identity has been the preoccupation of many scholars and writers in postcolonial studies. In postcolonial context, the appropriation of identity related issues implies resistance and writing back. Excessive appropriation, however, raises questions as regards authenticity. The present thesis probes into the appropriation of the other -colonized or migrant- in postcolonial literature and tries to discern whether or not readership and circulation of literary works are considered. This doctoral thesis is mostly interested in Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) and Saud Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015). The thesis argues that the postcolonial condition is subject to commodity and it takes evidence from the analysis of the narratives in question. Mosteghanemi's French translation *Mémoires de la Chair* is scrutinized due to its pertinence as regards identity crisis and linguistic trauma in postcolonial Algeria. It also underscores literary prizes and transformation/adjustment of translations to meet the needs of Western markets at the expense of the original. The thesis concludes that representation has been efficaciously done in the Arabic original. Nevertheless, the adjustments (in translation) coupled with omissions and paratexts corroborate that readership and reception in the West have had substantial impact on the translated versions.

Keywords: Identity, prestige, resistance, translation, *the Bamboo Stalk*, *the Bridges of Constantine*.

List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

FLN: Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Army)

IPAF: The International prize for Arabic Fiction

WWI: The first World War

WWII: The second World War

Note on Translation and Transliteration

Unavailable English translations of some pertinent Arabic texts are translated by me. Other than that, Arabic and French translations are not mine unless otherwise noted. In the case of Al-Dufairi's *Caliska*, however, it is available in English but not accessible by any means due to many a reason. Thus, I translated the part relevant to my research by myself.

As regards to the transliteration of authors' names, titles and Arabic words are transliterated according to IJMES Transliteration Guide (International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies).

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General Introduction

At the heart of this research are questions of otherness, identity crisis, discourse and counter-discourse, centre and margin, original and translated texts, cultural value and cultural loss, resistance and prestige. Incontestably, there is a plethora of literary writings on identity in Arabic literature. Nevertheless, what matters for this thesis is: What matters for a postcolonial novelist, writing/translating one's story as a mechanism of resistance or for the circulation of works and recognition? Writing on behalf of the colonized to reclaim the narrative is *per se* a sensitive, daunting task. One might ask: Is this not another way –albeit less exclusionary and more considerate than the Western narratives- to silence the voiceless and deny them the right to speak? Questions as such, among others, in conjunction with recurrent misrepresentations of the marginalized both in literary and non-literary texts –mostly Western renditions- have been thought-provoking and appealing enough to conduct a "Doctorat" on the motives behind the appropriation of identity related issues (the other and the hybrid) in postcolonial context with emphasis on resistance/commodity and market/cultural value.

For the scientific rationale, there is discernible overlap of value and commodity. In reality, the existing scholarship has not covered this overlap sufficiently and thoroughly in English translations of Arabic literature. In other words, the research attempts to study the literature dealing with otherness and identity crisis through the juxtaposition of the Arabic original with the French/English translations. In so doing, it tries to determine whether postcolonial writers consider the market at the expense of the native culture or not, and if external influences -which guarantee consumption and circulation of literary works- are intentional portions of a marketing process or not. The research also attempts to prove/disprove that Ahlem Mosteghanemi's French/English translations of *Dhakirat al-Jasad* (1993) and Saud Alsanousi's English translation *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) have gone through a conscious journey from resistance to consumption. Furthermore, reception and authenticity are discussed, being of the highest

distinction in postcolonial studies. As for the reception of the two narratives –original and translations-, it is scrutinized in two settings: the Arab world and the West.

As far as the choice of Mosteghanemi's narrative is concerned, it is the representation of the colonized other in postcolonial Algerian context that makes the novel appealing and convenient. Its dedication -which has not been considered as a paratextual device worthy of analysis at first- has presented itself as the ultimate expression of resistance through the unapologetic appropriation of the mother tongue. Reading the original has been an emotional experience –an intense postcolonial text that explicitly speaks of an important, recondite portion of Algeria's tumultuous history, written in Standard Arabic by an Algerian woman and from a male's perspective. This remarkable combination could not be unnoticed or overlooked. Thenceforth, resistance through the mother tongue in a country whose language is hybridized has become a haunting thought. The French translation, the market and the effects of the Naguib Mahfouz Prize have not been considered forthwith. It is Mosteghanemi's award-winning speech and the exaggeration sensed in her words that have made the shift from resistance through language to the commodification of language, resistance and postcolonialism.

As regards Alsanousi's novel, the daring nature of a narrative from a Gulf country known for conservatism and values is in itself a reason to study it. Besides, the comparison between a colonized other and a different other –migrant and *bedoon*- is challenging. It is noteworthy that -unlike Alsanousi's Booker Prize- I have not been aware of the Naguib Mahfouz Prize in Mosteghanemi's case. Until novels' selection there is no correlation between the award and the concerns of the thesis. Notwithstanding, the text-based paratexts on the cover have been catchy and have reminded me of Mosteghanemi's eye-catching book cover -Both original and English translation. Afterwards, the idea of reading and analyzing the two English translations with reference to the original narratives –whenever needed- and in association with resistance and prestige has come to light. This being said, the thesis attempts to determine whether the notion

of otherness is appropriated for authentic representation and resistance or for readership and circulation of the narratives in the Arab world and the West. It is worthy of mention that the main objective of the research has been the study of the Arabic original then the focus has shifted to include the translations given their paramount significance to the research questions.

The abstruse relation between the original text and its translation in cultural studies and postcolonial context necessitates the incorporation of Translation Studies. Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's narratives are originally written in Arabic as *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (1993) and *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) translated respectively by Raphael Cohen and Jonathan Wright as *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013 and *the Bamboo Stalk* in 2015. Translation Studies and Comparative Literature are interconnected by reason of their complementary and interdisciplinary natures which render them interdependent. Comparatists address material irrespective of culture, history and genre. They study that material either in the original language or through translation and the latter comes to the aid of comparatists and comparative literature students. Additionally, Translation Studies is deployed as a theoretical concept to investigate the manners in which faithfulness, subversion, resistance and commodity of translated postcolonial texts -which dovetail in the receiving culture and, most probably, devalue the native one- are of vital importance. It is plausible to mention that the French translation of Mosteghanemi's narrative titled *Mémoires de la Chair* (2002) by Mohamed Mokaddem serves part of the research. On the whole, the rationale for including Translation Studies in the first chapter is based on the discipline's colossal contribution in the making of internationally known literary and non-literary works, its inseparability from comparative literature and its *cross-ability*. For this end, it is necessary to have a close look at Translation Studies and its principles and then juxtapose the original works in question with their English translations -English and French in the case of Mosteghanemi's novel.

Despite Gayatri Spivak's anticipation of the downfall of postcolonial discipline on account of its exhaustion and paucity of auspicious innovation, postcolonial issues –such as otherness, hybridity and identity crisis- continue to be contentious, critical concerns in contemporary times. The conspicuous, hysteric emergence of literary prizes, however, makes writers by and large rivals in pursuit of awards, fame and recognition. Furthermore, the phenomenon of commodification in the literary scene reduces literary works to saleable products irrespective of what is lost in the process. Indeed, the writer becomes a producer and the reader becomes a consumer. Otherness, marginalization and difference that have been the precursor of the antediluvian are currently marketable and popularized. This commodification of otherness for commercial purposes, however, calls into question 'representation' by some committed writers.

For a variety of reasons, the literary scene is saturated with contradictions. Since the advent of globalization, cultural values and diversity are in peril. The overlap of values and commodity makes the genuine purpose of certain acts hardly identifiable. For example, there are issues of paramount significance -like the notion of identity- that cannot, or at least should not, be used and appropriated merely for materialistic grounds. One's identity is not to be commodified or adjusted to suit a given market. Notwithstanding, authenticity is often put into question once the circulation of works becomes a priority. This does not necessarily entail the total absence of cultural value within literary works; it just demonstrates the weight attributed to readership irrespective of transformation and adjustment. Some writers appropriate the other for the circulation of works and readership. As regards Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad*, staunch commitment -in the original- is transmuted into a transformed version. Resistance discourse and postcolonial awareness in the original are obliterated and obscured in the French translation *Mémoires de la Chair*. On a similar note, Alsanousi's English translation of *Sāq al-Bāmbū* contains omissions and adjustments that meet the Western reader's taste.

In order to prove/disprove Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's conscious oscillation between resistance and commodity, primary and secondary sources are exploited and closely examined to guarantee a solid grasp of the authors' initial intents and the transmutations that occur along the process of translation. Both authors, one must accentuate, account for the afflictions of the marginalized in an engaging, beguiling manner for representation and empowerment. Their aesthetic and linguistic merits are acknowledged as both authors have the capacity to arouse readers' curiosity and imagination. By the same token, the two works compel readers to re-think some notions such as migration, citizenship, colonialism and postcolonial challenges. In light of this, the research is primarily interested in the controversial appropriation of the other[1] in *Dhākirat al-Jasad* and *Sāq al-Bāmbū* as well the unwarranted consideration of the Western market at the expense of the native culture.

Previous scholarship -Arabic and English- has prolifically and critically covered the issues of identity crisis and otherness in postcolonial context in African and Asian narratives. Mosteghanemi's narrative *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (Translated by Baria Ahmar Sreih as *Memory in the Flesh* in 2000 and re-translated by Raphael Cohen as *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013) and Saud Alsanousi's novel *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) translated by Jonathan Wright as *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) have been under scrutiny by a number of scholars, critics and researchers who are interested in the history of Algeria, and otherness and hybridity in the Gulf countries. The two narratives have gained much attention and fame in the Arab world, especially after winning prestigious prizes. Although referring to the French translation of Mosteghanemi's novel in chapter three, the thesis is also interested in Cohen's English translation and the corpus written in English. In reality, the literature presented in this section has handled the novels –albeit separately- from different perspectives, including postcolonialism and feminism.

[1] Having been compelled to be 'other' by the West, the term other is used throughout the thesis to refer either to the Algerian colonized or the half-Kuwaiti half-Filipino migrant.

As far as *Dhākirat al-Jasad* is concerned, there is a plethora of critical works conducted in Arabic and French. There are very few works in English on Mosteghanemi's narrative, which is surprising given its popularity in the West. It appears that Mosteghanemi scholars are by and large Arabophone and Francophone researchers from the Maghreb region in addition to few non-Arab scholars who are not in mastery of Arabic and French. In this case, the non-Arab scholars are compelled to entirely rely on the English translation(s) of the novel. It is worth mentioning that complete dependence on the translation without reading the original may stand in the way of accurate construal and comprehension of the mood of the original because what is captured through the translated text is not necessarily as authentic and as the original.

The thesis innovates in the existing scholarship not only by analyzing Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's narratives together in a comparative study, but rather through the study of the effect of prizes on the reception of the narratives in question. The two literary works have not been studied together with reference to resistance, prestige and commodity. Resistance and prestige stand in opposite contrast yet they go hand in hand in the analysis of the works in question. Mosteghanemi and Alsanousi are both committed, postcolonial writers dealing with a condition and a cause, postcolonial reality and the other's situation, that drastically impact people's lives. Although the settings are different, Algeria and Kuwait are bound by their convoluted histories. Displacement, corruption and disillusionment are prevailing and the political scene incarnates the cruelty of the ruling systems, which imply different modes of internal colonialism (Algeria) and collective class-consciousness (Kuwait).

This research also probes into the commodification of the postcolonial condition for the circulation of works and adjustments which are traced in the translation(s). This makes the postcolonial other an exotic, sought-after product ready for sale, irrespective of cultural loss. Commodifying the other's story is not merely possible in original texts but in translation as well. Although much has been written on *Sāq al-Bāmbū,* there is no research that touches upon

the role of the International Prize for Arabic Literature and the English translation in the reception of the novel in Kuwait and abroad. Intentionally or not, Alsanousi has not laid much emphasis on paratextual devices. In reality, the title itself can be part of paratextual apparatus but it too is fitting for the themes of the narrative. Perhaps the dedication and the translator's word are the paratextual elements which arouse readers' curiosity and make them eager to read.

The thesis is guided by the following questions:

1/ How is the other –notably colonized and migrant - presented in theory and (mis)represented in postcolonial literature?

2/ Does the translation of postcolonial texts consider the other or the market?

3/ Is translating as authentic as writing the other?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the upcoming hypotheses are proposed:

1/ The other is well represented by postcolonial writers.

2/ Translation of postcolonial texts is part of a writing back project and it serves the original culture. Mosteghanemi's novel considers the other more than the market.

3/ Writing the other is more authentic than translating the other. However, in the case of *Sāq al-Bāmbū*, Jonathan Wright's translation is faithful.

The eclectic nature of the topic requires an interdisciplinary approach to address the issues from relevant perspectives. The two works in question are contemporary Arabic novels set in postcolonial Algeria and Kuwait/the Philippines, detailing the postcolonial reality and the (im) possible encounter with the colonizer. With this being taken into account, the thesis is primarily informed by postcolonial theory which is prerequisite to situate the novels within their contexts. Otherness, identity crisis and hybridity are central issues in Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad* and Alsanousi's *Sāq al-Bāmbū*. Yet, the appropriation of such issues of high sensibility is contentious given the fact that they can be appropriated for different reasons. Similar to the master-slave dichotomy, the oppositive attributes as regards the colonizer-colonized binary pictures two poles which are –purportedly- disinclined to coexist. This reluctance connotes both sides' awareness that recognizing one means, by necessity, denying the other. Thus, none of

them seems accordant with the idea of ceasing to be the central and embracing the realm of the peripheral, and the quest for the all-important position becomes –whether explicitly or implicitly- an obsession.

As far as structure is concerned, the thesis is divided into four chapters which attempt to address the research questions. The chapters are designed for the construal of otherness and identity crisis in postcolonial context. Chapter one: *"Theoretical and Conceptual Framework"* is purported to introduce the theories and the concepts utilized in the thesis to corroborate or invalidate the proposed hypotheses. The rationale for including a whole chapter for theoretical concepts is based upon the nature of the research question and its need of an interdisciplinary approach. The narratives in question require the inclusion of postcolonial theory, Translation Studies and concepts such as commodification, resistance and hybridity. Upon close reading of Mosteghanemi's novel is, perceptibly, semi-autobiographical. Autobiography, however, won't be the focus of the research. The chapter also offers an account on Translation Studies being the channel between the original texts and the translations.

The second chapter "*Towards a Contextual Understanding of Mosteghanemi's the Bridges of Constantine (*2013*)* and *Alsanousi's the Bamboo Stalk (2015)"* is dedicated to both background and contextualization of the narratives in question. It is an extension to the first chapter in a sense that it gives an account of the environments in which the novels have been written, mainly for a better understanding of the importance of identity in the Arab world in particular. The migrant other of Kuwait and the colonized other of Algeria are both broken by a force majeure they cannot escape or bring to an end. Thus, the protagonists' search for identity in two fragmented societies is wrought by challenges which –if understood within context- somewhat justify their conduct and thinking. The chapter also contextualizes the English translations of the two novels.

The third chapter: *"What Matters the Most: The Other or the Market?"* probes into complexities and realities of postcolonial Algeria through close reading of *the Bridges of Constantine*. Perceptibly, decolonization has brought about bigger issues for African countries -among which is the unavoidable reality of being in the shadow of the West. In postcolonial Algeria, for instance, people developed contradictory attitudes as regards their stance towards France. The other's fragmentation is triggered by compelled duality and irrevocable identity crisis. The bilingual anxiety in post-independence Algeria is represented through the male protagonist Khālid and the female antagonist Hayat who are often split between Arabic and French. Mosteghanemi's narrative is analyzed as a novel which holds oppositive attributes: Resistance and prestige, colonial and postcolonial Algeria, Constantine and Paris, Arabic and French. The protagonist's trauma, nostalgia, dislocation and identity crisis are also examined in juxtaposition with his therapeutic method.

The fourth chapter *"(In) Authentic Narration: Writing and Translating the Other With (Out) Transformation"* is dedicated to Saud Alsanousi's *Sāq al-Bāmbū.* It is purported to answer the question whether the other can speak for himself properly (In Kuwait) or he loses his voice in the way for materialistic and/or non-materialistic grounds. It also attempts to scrutinize if translating the other is as authentic as writing the other. It attempts an analysis of the protagonist's -José/Isa- two-ness and how it affects his psychology and his life in general. The chapter manifests how writing from the other's perspective of the otherer –Kuwait in this case- offers a more faithful rendition of the narration. In reality, the shift of narrative control from centre to margin, from self to other or from oppressor to oppressed is a brilliant way to condemn a whole society of prejudice, maltreatment, class-consciousness and othering. The chapter concludes with a look at Jonathan Wright's translation and the effect of literary prizes on the reception of Arabic literature in the West.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Introduction

Ostensibly, theories are of utility when it comes to the comprehension, contextualization and analysis of a certain period of time or a given literary work. Throughout the years, scholars in different areas of research have made use of theories such as Marxism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism, to name a few, in order to situate both periods and novels within their appropriate context. Given the fact that chapter three and four are focused on the analyses of Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (*the Bridges of Constantine)* and Saud Alsanousi's *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (*the Bamboo Stalk*), this chapter is first and foremost dedicated to the investigation of relevant theories and concepts utilized throughout the thesis. As mentioned in the general introduction, the interdisciplinary nature of the topic requires more than one theory and concept. Hence, the current research cannot be accomplished without relating to postcolonialism and Karl Marx's commodification. Relevant concepts such as commodity, resistance and nostalgia are incorporated in this chapter to be explained in postcolonial context. Each of the aforementioned theories and concepts serves a different portion of the thesis. The rationale for devoting a whole chapter to theoretical framework and concepts is the nature of the present research. Its interdisciplinarity demands the move from one concept to another. Resistance and prestige, for instance, go hand-in-hand in the analysis of the two narratives in question. What is more, commodity is of import as a concept that delineates the materialistic and commercial façade of certain practices.

1.2. Comparative Literature: A Brief Overview

Perceptibly, the humanities have had a vital role in intercultural interchange. German poet and writer Goethe who liked to "keep informed about foreign productions" (qtd. In Bassnett 02) labelled the field *Weltliteratur,* which literally translates to World Literature. A question presents itself here: What makes world literature different from national literature? Simply put, world literature, in its search for universality, is *per se* national literature circulated beyond its

country of origin. While comparative literature is based on differences, world literature is rather concerned with the commonalities between national literatures. It is worthy of mention that comparative literature is often used interchangeably with world literature. Both comparative literature and world literature are close in nature and even some comparatists consider Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as the foundation of the discipline. Literature is now a means for exchange and influence and it is seen as "a precondition and a cultural horizon for recognizing differences and establishing connections" (Bedjaoui, Femininity 38) and its ability to cross borders "has gradually been transformed into the notion of *otherness* to be recognized" (38).

Comparative Literature, or *Littérature Comparée*, is an interdisciplinary discipline which concerns itself with the study of literature across epochs, genres, languages and even the other arts. It is concerned with literature in relation with philosophy, history, science, etc. One of the shortest yet most accurate definitions is that it is the study of "literature without borders" (Dominguez et al. xv). The discipline made its first appearance in France in the 19th century and it has had many obstructions and challenges since the beginning. In foreword to *Littérature Comparée*, French author and professor Jean-Marie Carré describes comparative literature as "a branch of literary history, for it tackles the international spiritual affinities" (Guyard 05). Among the major schools of comparative literature are the French School[2] and the American School. The French School considers comparative literature as a field dealing with two -or more- texts whose language and home are different. This, however, excludes folklore, which is oral, and other genres. This school of comparative literature demands evidence of *influence*.

The American School of comparative literature, founded by Henry Remak, adopts two theories: Intertextuality and Parallelism. Through intertextuality Julia Kristeva, pioneer of intertextuality theory, refers to the belief that each text is created based upon other existing texts. According to Kristeva, the text has already existed in a former text and it is through those

[2] Check *Theories of Comparative Literature* pp. 12-38

old texts that authors create the new ones. In the same way, the newly created texts are "are superposed on old texts" (Sangia 09) and this triggers writers' anxiety of originality. In criticism of the French School of comparative literature, Ihab Hassan, an Egyptian-born American critic, staunchly criticizes the comparative literary study based on the principle of 'influence', for it is ambiguous. Among other American critics, Hassan is in favour of 'parallelism' as an alternative to 'influence' (Enani 42). Parallelism[3] proclaims that there are "affinities" between different literatures, irrespective of the (in) existence of "mutual influence" (42).

1.3. An Account on Translation Studies

Communication –be it in its written or spoken form- is bedrock in interhuman relations and exchanges. However, the disparity of languages, cultures and beliefs necessitates a third party –translation- to overcome all the existing differences. The study of translation is, like that of language and culture, a daunting task demanding intensive research by reason of its diversity in terms of theories and works. For this reason, the focus is placed upon James S. Holmes and Susan Bassnett, with a fleeting reference to other prominent leading figures such as Lawrence Venuti and Eugene Nida. In reality, both Holmes and Bassnett are prominent figures as regards Translation Studies thanks to their colossal contributions through theoretical works that delineate the nomenclature of the discipline.

Translation is among the most practical disciplines. It informs other disciplines through the transmission of works into other languages. These translations introduce cultural traits, beliefs and ideologies of a native culture to an audience that is most likely unfamiliar with the specificities of the native culture -which can be approached differently by translators. Thus, the translated text can either be a faithful rendition or a transformed version, depending on the translators' expertise, authenticity and experience. In this regard, it is widely acknowledged that for translation to reach a certain level of faithfulness or near-faithfulness, the translator must be

[3] For more on Intertextuality and Parallelism check *Theories of Comparative Literature* pp. 41-49.

bilingual and bicultural altogether. In addition to bilingualism and biculturalism, the thesis presumes that translators are supposed to be conscientious to faithfully translate the original text without deformities and irrespective of personal orientations. As a matter of fact, the contractual relationship between writers and translators should not be diminished. Writers are still responsible for their thoughts and beliefs being translated into other languages. With this being taken into account, the writers' task is beyond the writing process when translation is considered. They are supposed, not to say compelled, to interfere if there is any possibility of transforming through translation, particularly for cultural or political grounds.

Some of the questions the thesis raises have already been raised in *Translation, History, Culture.* In the introduction, the author poses a number of preliminary questions, among which are: "Why is it necessary to represent a foreign text in one's own culture?" "Who translates, why, and with what aim in mind?" (Bassnett and Lefevere). Afterwards, the author attempts to provide the reader with possible answers for the raised questions. This book is fundamental for understanding the nature and the scopes of translation. It is also applicable when it comes to the construal of pertinent translated novels such as *Mémoires de la Chair*. The above-mentioned questions require answers which are suitable for the environment in which Mosteghanemi's novel has been written and translated.

Undeniably, literary translators are supposed to be in full mastery of both theoretical and practical knowledge of the target text. Their familiarity with source and target language is not enough if they were not mindful of their use in context. Literary translation in particular demands much expertise given the literariness of the texts, the divergence of culture and the linguistic structures of the target text. In reality, postcolonial literary translations can be said to transform versions of the source texts. In *the Task of the Translator: Cultural Translation or Cultural Transformation?* It is said that postcolonial literary translations are conducted, for the most part, to meet the taste of the receiving audience (Nazir). In the same article, the author

further states that postcolonial cultural translation has rather become "cultural transformation" (Nazir). Ostensibly, the transformations brought to the original culture serve the target one. To guarantee consumption, some postcolonial writers find themselves compelled to transform their culture to suit the receiving one. In this case, postcolonial translated texts are, according to Nazir's statement, transformed versions. Instead of intentional/unintentional mistranslation, postcolonial literature aims at doing justice to the marginalized. Therefore, postcolonial writers have to keep abreast of the translators to guarantee accuracy given the delicacy of postcolonial writings and what consequences transformation or adjustment can have.

In *Translation Tensions*, Rao highlights Gayatri Spivak's emphasis on the importance of both translator and text simply because the translator is a "vector of power influencing the translation" (141). Therefore, the translator is not a passive agent but rather a bringer of new insights and connotations to the original text. This corroborates Bassnett's idea of subverting and changing the text through external factors. In this case, however, the translator cannot be seen as an external influence. He/she is involved, and thus, the transformation or enrichment comes from within. One may ask: Who is responsible for mistranslation and transformation author or translator? In reality, the two must be collaborators in a mission to create a new text out of the original without any transformations, especially in case of clash between original and target cultures. The author's contribution lies in keeping the mood of the original in the translated one while the translator is supposed to faithfully and skilfully translate a text –and its mood- into the target language. As mentioned previously, the relationship between author and translator is consequential. As far as postcolonial literature is concerned, the collaboration between the two becomes a prerequisite to prevent cultural loss. In one way or another, the translator's mood is sensed in the translated text. Therefore, it is the author's responsibility to interfere and preserve the mood of the original.

Masterpieces of excellent writers and poets are known worldwide thanks to the existence of translation which facilitates access to works in foreign languages. Prior to the coinage of the term Translation Studies by the American-Dutch translation scholar Holmes, the field was merely a sub-branch subsidiary to didactics. Yet, the diverse scopes of the field exceed its being just a sub-branch and call for the creation of an entire discipline whose main focus is translation itself. The peculiarity of this filed lies also in its being an amalgamation which informs other disciplines such as literature, communication studies and comparative literature. The circulation of books from one country to another through translation is *per se* a genius move that overcomes linguistic and cultural barriers. Well-known works translated into English include Albert Camus's *the Stranger* written originally in French as *L'Étranger,* Fyodor Dostoevsky's well-known philosophical novel *Crime and Punishment* as well as his philosophical fiction *Notes from Underground* originally written in Russian, Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* Translated from Russian, Dante Alighieri's *the Inferno* originally written in Italian. Not only has translation served the Western world but it has also played a consequential role in the transmittal of non-Western literature to the West. Non-Western works that gained momentum in the West through translation include Ngugi's *Matigari*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, Kahlil Gibran's *the Prophet* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Palace Walk* originally written in Arabic.

As a matter of fact, the proliferation in the field of translation is, for the most part, due to its correlation with other disciplines. Influential works of prominent figures in the field such as Eugene Albert Nida's *Contexts in Translating*, Lawrence Venuti's *the Translation Studies Reader* and *the Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Mona Baker's *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* and *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, Susan Bassnett's *Translation Studies* as well as her *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. Nonetheless, Holmes's contribution to the field is unparalleled as he coined the term Translation Studies after unproductive attempts to give it a self-contained appellation. In 1972, Holmes's

paper, presented in the Translation Section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, under the title of *the Name and Nature of Translation Studies* has discussed the nomenclature of the discipline and the reasons behind the appellation. The paper demonstrates the different attempts to come up with a name to create a self-contained discipline. Holmes maintains that throughout the history of translation "diverse terms have been used in writings dealing with translating and translations" (68). Among the terms Holmes referred to are "the craft of translation […] the principles of translation, the 'fundamentals or the philosophy" (69). In the same paper, Holmes makes reference to Roger Goffin's suggestion "translatology" which takes its suffix from Greek and he refers to the fact that "purists reject a contamination of this kind" (69).

In the same manner, Holmes continues to examine the prospective names of the emerging discipline. The appellation "translation theory" has been, according to him, "a productive designation" (Holmes 69). Its inapplicability, however, lies in its limitative nature i.e., there are researches conducted in the field that are not necessarily classified under the category of theory. He also refers to Eugene Nida's *Towards a science of translating*; clarifying that Nida had no intention whatsoever to name the whole field as such. Afterwards, the paper probes into "bold" suggestions such as translation science (70). The aforementioned designations display the limitability of the designated field. Eventually, Holmes presents his appellation "Translation Studies" and explains its applicability *vis-à-vis* the previously proposed terms. Thenceforth, Translation Studies has emerged as a self-contained discipline that enriches academia in general and comparative literature in particular, and Holmes's paper is considered as a substratum in the new-fangled discipline.

The interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies makes it ubiquitous in manifold fields such as history, communication studies, multilingualism studies and comparative literature. *Border Crossings: Translation Studies and Other Disciplines* is a mini-encyclopedia which

thoroughly underscores the inter-relatedness of disciplines. McFarlane's article under the title of *Modes of Translation* published in 1953 raised the standards of the debate around translation in English. His article has been described as the first publication in the West to deal with translation and translations from a modern, interdisciplinary view and to set out a program of research for scholars concerned with them as an object of study. In Comparative literature, for example, Translation Studies has become central –both theory and practice- starting from 1980's. Traditionally, the discipline devoted itself merely to European languages and demanded all texts need to be read in the original language. This implies the exclusionary nature of the discipline. After the inclusion of non-Western literature in the canon, scholars and researchers highlighted the necessity of translation both in teaching and research.

Alongside Holmes's contributory paper, André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett's avant-garde sourcebook *Translation, History, Culture* has been an attempt to determine the nomenclature of Translation Studies. This sourcebook is a preamble to what they labelled "Culture Turn". The incorporation of culture-based discourse in Translation Studies and the deviation from the erstwhile theories -which mostly highlighted the linguistic surface- enrich and improve the discipline. When culture is considered in translation, there is a possibility of doing justice to the original texts. Context is amongst the most pertinent elements in reaching faithfulness in translation. In reality, the term culture cannot be strictly limited or reduced to a specific definition. Its nomenclature remains imprecise and it is still among the concepts which are open to many interpretations. In the first chapter of *Primitive Culture*, for instance, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 01). According to Edward Tylor's words, it is an umbrella term encircling sub-elements that make culture what it is. Hofstede, on the other hand, contends that culture is "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (05).

To translate to and from two languages whose discrepant historical encounter, at least in a postcolonial context, is sensible and subjective. The history of both colonizer and colonized is involved, and thus, it is not easy to maintain the required level of objectivity. This is the case of Algeria and France when it comes to the translation of Algerian literature into French. The two countries share a history that not everyone could understand and the translation of novels to the colonizer cannot be conducted with the same depth and sensibility as the original. In this sense, it turns out to be that "one should convey in a language that is not one's own a spirit that is once own" (Rao). Nevertheless, this statement is challenged when put into practice, at least in the Franco-Algerian case because it is heavy to convey what Algerians have gone through in Arabic; let alone doing it through translation into the colonizer's language.

In Algeria's case, the historical trauma seems beyond repair. This is why it is recurrently reflected in literature as well as Algerians' daily life. The Algerian postcolonial identity is hybrid and splintered between two cultures and languages which must constantly find a way to reach concurrence. In this context, Roland Barthes contends that "It is language which speaks, not the author" (143). Such words lead one to the conclusion that language -which is shaped and enriched within a certain milieu and whose cultural locality cannot be denied- does not denounce its own home. If the words articulated by Barthes are to be adopted as an accurate statement, French then stands for France and cannot condemn its history. In this case, even if the author is the one who writes and controls the writing process, he is still controlled by the language in which he/she writes. This thesis, however, argues that such a statement –that of Barthes- is applicable when translation is involved, not necessarily in a text written originally in the colonizer's language. For instance, an Algerian author who writes directly in French is emphatically not the same as one who writes in Arabic and translates into French.

The (un) translatability of culture opens the horizons for critical discussions and continual debates in Translation Studies. Culture itself is not easily definitional, let alone translating it to

another language. After Susan Bassnett's revolutionary works that contribute colossally to the formation and comprehension of translation, the cultural manifestations and the (im) possibility of translating culture-bound texts have become a focal point for translators. On one hand, the untranslatability of culture demonstrates the limitation of translation as a discipline in front of cultural attributes that supposedly have no equivalence. On the other hand, the bicultural translator is one who ponders upon the target culture and comes out with the closest cultural equivalent in the original culture. As mentioned previously, the incorporation of culture in translation studies is discussed in *Translation, Culture, History* which is an introduction to the cultural turn meant to enlarge the scope of translation studies through moving from translation as text to translation as culture and politics (Bassnett and Lefevere 4-8). That said, the word-for-word translation is not preferable anymore as the connotations lying behind the linguistic surface are most likely to be lost. Translators' task is, in this case, more than one imagines. They plunge into the source and target language as well as the source and target culture for them to bring or create faithful translations. All this does not necessarily guarantee the quality or the perfection of the translated version. The debate over the (im) possibility of translating culture is ongoing and Newmark interestingly argues that "everything without exception is translatable" (06). This implies that culture is translatable.

Traditionally, however, it is acknowledged that culture cannot be translated because of the disparity of cultural traits and the inexistence of some cultural practices in the target culture. In *Translating Culture*, Ghazala states that there is always a way to translate culture-bound expressions no matter how difficult they might seem (11). This is a challenging viewpoint. For Ghazala, the translatability of culture is intricate, yet feasible. It means that one cannot and should not take the untranslatability of culture for granted. Language, after all, is cultural in part, which means that culture is not the mere component of a given language. In the same book, Ghazala offers an elongated list of Arabic cultural manifestations in juxtaposition with their

equivalence in English. For him, translators must make extra efforts in order to come up with convenient ways to translate the most sophisticated culture-bound expressions. Then, it is among the translator's tasks to delve into source and target culture to overcome the existing obstructions which are the result of lack of equivalence.

1.4. Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism is an umbrella concept which encompasses manifold subsequent terms such as otherness, hybridity and identity. The state of imbalance, hybridity, identity crisis, and unbelonging in postcolonial countries are all internal residues resultant from the external interventions of former colonial powers. Yet, the postcolonial discipline has gained scholarly recognition due to its newness, difference, and exoticism. The centre and the margin have both become visible under the spectrum of postcolonialism which attempts to correct misconceptions in regard to the (mis) representation of ex-colonies and tries to understand, or coexist with, the legacy of the colonial hegemony as well as the paralyzed situation over which the colonized have neither control nor timely solutions. Conspicuously, the concept postcolonialism consists of the prefix 'post' –which is often misleading and perplexing- and the word colonialism. Not only is the 'post' confusing but some postcolonial concepts seem to be contradictory. The prefix 'post' might seem as an end to the past colonialism but it, in reality, stands for another type of colonialism. In light of this, the physical, military colonial rule is replaced with another form of colonialism. Therefore, the term postcolonial denotes the treatment of the aftermath as well as the continuum of a colonial hegemony which has been transformed into a different type of colonization. Taking a moment back to the emergence of postcolonial theory, Edward Said is considered to be the founding father through his *magnum opus Orientalism*. His contribution to the discipline cannot be denied.

In its broad sense, postcolonialism is a discipline that has emerged in the 1980's as a space for the ex-colonies to re-define the East and correct the falsifications circulated by the West. It

offers an account on the previously colonized other that has been denied the right to express himself. It is worthy to mention, however, that there is not a clear, agreed-upon definition of the term postcolonialism. A throng of leading figures in the postcolonial field –scholars, writers, and researchers- propose theories and concepts which facilitate the comprehension of the newly emergent discipline, its premises and purpose. Among those scholars and writers who have shaped postcolonial theory with their workings are Gayatri Spivak, Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Jean Rhys, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Leela Gandhi, and others. Pertinent scholars and writers to this thesis, however, include Spivak, Fanon, Ngugi and Bhabha. Unquestionably, the major contributions to the field of postcolonial criticism are Spivak's *in Other Worlds* in 1987, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's *"the Empire Writes Back"* written in 1989 and which summarizes the objectives of postcolonial writing, Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* in 1990 and Said's *Culture and Imperialism* in 1993.

Prior to these four fundamental works, however, there were earlier attempts to draw attention to postcolonialism by Fanon and Said but they were not popular by then. Fanon's well-known, substantial work *the Wretched of the Earth* –which did not gain much attention by the time of its publication- demonstrates that "Imperialism […] leaves in its wake here and there tinctures of decay which we must search out and mercilessly expel from our land and our spirits" (249). It is this tincture of rot that prevents concrete decolonization of postcolonial countries. Once the mind is colonized, it is a necessity -albeit near-impossible- to decolonize it. Consequently, the colonized individual is alienated from the pillars of his own identity. He does not know if he should reclaim his *native-ness* or embrace foreignness, and thus, he remains in-between.

Fanon then calls people to reject colonial forces and reclaim their own voice and culture. In *the Wretched of the Earth,* he contends that colonialism leads people to ask themselves existential questions such as "In reality, who am I?" (Fanon 250). Indeed, this happens when assimilation is the primordial objective of the colonizer. In the case of France's invasion of

Algeria -from 1830 until 1962- there is not an escape from cultural assimilation when France launches laws against the use of Arabic in colonial Algeria. Subsequently, individuals' sense of belonging is shaken and the existentialist crisis comes into being. The psychological aspect of colonialism explains a whole portion of Algeria's torment which is still echoed in today's society. In light of this, Fanon's interest in the psychological dimension and aftermath of colonialism is brilliant. It is being aware of the different sides of the violence –colonialism in this case- that paves the way to healing.

In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon offers a literary, political and philosophical account on colonialism and its perpetual effect on the colonized. It also underscores the psychological damage caused by colonial powers. Fanon argues that the inculcated inferiority complex of the colonized makes them desire the Western other. In doing so, they wish to assimilate and embrace the other's culture and language to compensate for their inferiority. Algerians, for instance, appropriate the other's language because it is admirable and desirable for them. On the other hand, the black man "seeks to be like the superior race" (Fanon 167). This way, the black man devalues and deprecates his identity and values to adopt and embrace the white man's. It is Africans' attitude towards themselves that, in reality, makes whiteness what it is. This acceptance and acknowledgment of inferior/superior races make the colonized seem weak and dependent.

Years after Fanon's above-mentioned work, Said's work has come into prominence with its Self/Other and East/West divides. It is worthy to mention that Said's account is, first and foremost, based upon the concept of Orientalism wherein he suggests that the East/West duality is of reciprocal formation. The West stands in opposition to the East, and thus, it defines itself accordingly. For him, the Orientalist literary works are Eurocentric and portray non-European -namely Arabs- as exotic and backward. These preconceptions that the Western world has adapted and promoted have shaped and nurtured the superior, Eurocentric attitudes towards the

non-Western world. As a matter of fact, a closer look at this so-called 'other' would clear up misconceptions and display that there is no Self without Other. Simone De Beauvoir's concept of "alterity" exquisitely explicates the prerequisite of mutuality as regards the existence of Self. The latter exists merely in juxtaposition with the other. Thus, the Self is "other" from the latter's frame of reference. In reality, the dominance of the West is due to many factors, one of which is the monopoly of means of production. In other words, the West speaks for the East in a manner that manifests the civility of Western societies as opposed to the exoticism and backwardness of Eastern societies.

Malek Bennabi propounds that the existing civilizational and cultural crises in the Islamic world need to be critically addressed, and overcome. According to him, previous experiences of building a civilization are, of course, important to learn from. Planning, however, "loses all its technical meaning once its major idea is brought from abroad" (qtd. In Ghennam 152). For Bennabi, it is essential to do away with the idea of "colonisability" which makes individuals easily colonizable. In the case of Algeria, France succeeded in the psychological colonization of Algerians. In *Shurūt al-Nahda* (*The Conditions of the Renaissance*), Bennabi maintains that "colonialism is not the main reason for the present situation in the Muslim world, but it is one of the many secondary factors. The primary factor is colonisability, that is, our vulnerability to be colonized" (152-153). Indeed, once the mind and the spirit are colonized, it is near-impossible for a nation to build itself and develop.

A number of theorists and writers –including the above-mentioned- approach postcolonial discourse differently. Spivak uses concepts such as subaltern and essentialism in her treatment of the postcolonial. The former refers to groups of people who have been subjugated and left without a voice or authority while the latter connotes the threat presented by the resuscitation of subaltern voices in subversive manner, and thus, being subject to stereotypes. Spivak's influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" offers an unconventional, revolutionary account

on the voiceless, marginalized individuals. Drawing her evidence from Indian women who have had no voice, Spivak argues that the subaltern people are denied the capacity to speak because they have no voice in the first place. In the case of the colonized, colonial rules have established policies of oppression and subjugation that disallow the colonized to speak. Over the course of colonialism, the subaltern –women, specifically- are not only seen and treated as *different* but less than that, they are not recognized at all. In reality, the notion of subaltern has already been established before the publication of Spivak's essay. It originally means 'a junior military officer' (Merriam-Webster). The Italian Marxist Antonio Francesco Gramsci is the first to have used 'subaltern' to refer to subordination and hegemony.

Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o wrote *Weep Not, Child, the River Between* and few other novels in English. Ngugi was detained in 1977 because of the subliminal, political messages conveyed in his play *Ngaahika Ndeenda*[4]. Thereafter, he stopped writing fiction in the colonizer's language and started writing in his native language -*Gikuyu.* His novel *Matigari* is his first narrative to detail the African story in his own language. Nonfiction writings, however, remained in English. Being a novelist, playwright and a postcolonial theorist, his collection of essays "Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature" promotes native African languages and calls for a linguistic decolonization for African countries to overcome the colonial past and its legacies, and to rebuild Africa without Western presence through native culture and language. Similar to Fanon, Ngugi calls for the decolonization of people's minds in order for countries to truly overcome colonialism.

In *Post-colonial Drama: Theory, practice, politics*, the term post-colonialism is defined as "an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies" (Gilbert and Tompkins 02). In this regard, the colonized is at variance with the colonizer's accounts, and postcolonialism emerges as a counterpart. In the same book, Gilbert

[4] Gikuyu for "I Will Marry When I Want"

and Tompkins argue that the agenda of the theory "is more specifically political: to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power based on binary oppositions" (03). The political dimension and the dismantling process are patent; the Self/Other, the white/black and similar binaries consecrate the colonizer on account of authority and ascendancy. The West's expansionist mindset, after all, reflects its need to practice hegemony and the East is somewhat cooperative. Therefore, the previously colonized people need to stop seeing themselves as less superior others through their attitude, conformity and subordination.

Postcolonial theory –in its critique of Eurocentric hegemony- is at the centre of this research which is mostly informed by postcolonial scholars. While Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* offers an account on the psychology of the colonized –which is applicable to Algerian literature- the thesis draws upon Fanonian thought as regards the inculcated inferiority complex in postcolonial Algeria through examinations of cultural and linguistic assimilation and subordination to France. Alongside Fanon, whose thought is primarily used to analyse literature, Graham Huggan's *the Postcolonial Exotic* and James English's *the Economy of Prestige* are utilized. While the aforementioned theoretical workings are of utility to the study of postcolonial literature, the thesis especially draws on English's *the Economy of Prestige* and Huggan's *the Postcolonial Exotic*, being of direct relation to the purpose of the thesis. When postcolonialism and resistance are *per se* commodified for recognition and international readership, the incorporation of concepts as such is indispensable as they discern and distinguish the line between resistance and commodity. This being said, English's and Graham's concepts are of import in the analysis of the –transformational- journeys of *the Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk* from one market –the original- to another –the international.

The West told stories on behalf of the East, and thus, the world perceived the Orient from the frame of reference of the Occident. In this respect, postcolonial literature emerged as a writing back project in which writers from the margin devoted their pens to reclaim their voice and authority through counter-discourse. In African literature, Ngugi's ideology is reflected in his literary works especially in *Matigari* which is written in Gikuyu, not English. Chinua Achebe's narrative *Things Fall Apart* is another masterpiece which depicts the postcolonial disenchantment. In Caribbean literature, Jean Rhys "writes back" in reaction to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Charlotte Bronté's *Jane Eyre* in her *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, respectively. These are only few accounts on postcolonial texts that "write back" to the centre.

The agenda of postcolonial Algerian literature is, for the most part, political as any other postcolonial literature according to the definition of Gilbert and Tompkins. It is concerned with colonial and postcolonial discourses, and it denotes Algeria's resistance and its struggle for independence for over a century. Literary works such as Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night*, Taher Ouettar's *the Earthquake* and Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* are tour-de-force novels, detailing Algeria's longstanding struggle for liberation and disillusionment after independence. Taking a moment back to the term "postcolonial", which whether hyphenated or not, replaces old appellations such as *third world* countries. In this sense, postcolonialism implies the replacement of two superior/inferior binaries created by the West. On a similar vein, the term postcolonial connotes rejection of Eurocentrism. It is a manner of resistance and reclaiming one's voice, memory, past and narrative. In its literal sense, it means the period following colonialism but it mainly investigates the longstanding effects of colonialism and the fact that the allegedly decolonized countries are still colonized in different ways.

The postcolonial is "the product of human experience, but human experience of the kind that has not typically been registered or represented at any institutional level" (Young 13). Indeed, the postcolonial represents the experience excluded from the canon, an experience deserving narration and attention. Postcolonial theorists are those scholars who have shaped, informed and contributed to the formation of postcolonialism. Significant works of leading figures in the postcolonial sphere serve as a reference to understanding postcolonialism. The writings of postcolonial theorists such as Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Ania Loomba, Partha Chaterjee, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, among others, remain a cornerstone for the construal of this convolute discipline. Edward Said, however, is considered to be the founding father of postcolonial theory by reason of the composition of his masterpiece *Orientalism* in 1978. Thus, Said is esteemed to have set the stage for the emergence of postcolonialism through *Orientalism*, wherein he propounds that the Orient is deliberately, and falsely, misrepresented by the misinterpretations of the Occident that deems itself as civilized and superior. Said further argues that the construal of the Orient/Occident dichotomy depends, first and foremost, on the interpreter's perception. Hence, the interpreters' background, social status, and standpoint impact their analysis regarding the "what-ness" of the East.

Alongside Said, there are other thinkers who have brought it upon themselves to stand for the marginalized and "write back" to the centre in an endeavour to correct the misconceptions circulated by some imperialist writers. Spivak who is best known for concepts such as the subaltern and essentialism, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin who are known for *the Empire Writes Back*, and Franz Fanon who is famed for his support to the colonized, are, among others, promoters of postcolonialism. Although these intellectuals descend from different backgrounds, they share the same historical wound which compelled them to probe into debatable issues under the spectrum of postcolonialism.

Europe is the first responsible colonial intervention in many parts of the world. Perceptibly, colonialism is an imposed interruption to the history of the allegedly inferior Orient. Accordingly, postcolonialism can be considered as an approach whose major concern is the permanent, inevitable aftermaths of that interruption both during and after colonization. Conspicuously, former colonizers have made a twist through playing with words to minimize the atrocities of colonialism, which they repeatedly called culture sharing. The enlightenment and the *mission civilizatrice* are no more than a pretext to justify colonization. If the West's intervention had been merely for the sake of democracy, there would have been no genocides across the world.

1.5. Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial literature and resistance literature are similar in terms of motives and themes. The two have emerged as a reaction to and rejection of certain hegemony. While the former is not limited to the Arab world, the latter is coined by Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani whose literary writings have shaped this genre as a rejection of Israeli invasion. Resistance literature is defined as a literature of any community or group of people who fight for their own freedom and identity. The words awareness, freedom and collectiveness are to the core of resistance discourse. Resistance then implies being aware of one's identity and culture as well as the need to fight for the freedom of the community without being engrossed in individual interests. In the Arab world, Algeria and Palestine are well-known for literature of resistance due to the painful invasions by France and Israel, respectively.

As remuneration for all the misconceptions and the misrepresentations narrated on behalf of the marginalized other in many parts of the world, postcolonial literature comes into being and presents itself as a mechanism for the marginalized to decenter the centre and dismantle the Eurocentric worldview. Many third world writers and scholars have taken it upon themselves to write back to the centre to reclaim their beingness and identity. Contributions in the field

include "Can the Subaltern Speak?", "Decolonizing the Mind", and *the Empire Writes Back* written by Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, respectively. Novels such as *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys are also writings from the margin, precisely from the Caribbean. Franz Fanon and Leela Gandhi are also among those who reclaimed their own identity and the equal importance of the subjugated nations.

Postcolonial literature is a category of literary works composed by authors who have been colonized by British or French colonizers. Its focal points are the political, the cultural arenas and the aftermaths of colonialism. Major concerns of postcolonial literature include –but are not limited to- identity crisis, otherness, hybridity and anxiety. Postcolonial literary writings connote a writing back project that displays the disarray brought by colonial forces, and which continues to influence ex-colonies. Postcolonial intellectuals and writers are in a mission to debunk the myths about their cultures. In this matter, the externalities such as the Western stance are no longer cornerstone for assessment regarding the "what-ness" of Africans or any ex-colonies. In light of this, what makes the West what it claims to be and what makes the Rest what it is claimed or rather compelled to be? It is, most and foremost, the control of narration that makes the West dominant.

The misrepresentation of the Orient prompted anti-colonialists to dethrone the centre (the Occident) and shed light on the Orient. This occurs when the East controls the narration. For this end, postcolonialism emerged in the late 1970's and has been appropriated by a number of scholars and thinkers across the world. Colonial and postcolonial literatures are like the ebb and the flow. The former, however, takes its power from the canon while the latter remains weak by reason of exclusion. In reality, colonial literature saw halcyon days where it reached its peak through works such as *Jane Eyre* and *Heart of Darkness*. In response, Chinua Achebe "writes back" to the West in order to debunk the myths about Africa. In *things Fall Apart*, he offers the

international audience an African version of the story being circulated on behalf of the other. The narrative does not embellish Africa, it rather tells of both Africa's perfections and imperfections. Africa is not a utopia, nor is it a dystopia. It is, in reality, an unfortunate continent captured by French and British conquests.

Postcolonial discourse, however, probes into colonial discourse and the consequences of colonialism in post-independence countries. The formerly silenced, subjugated nations have found space for their suppression with the emergence of postcolonial theory. In this respect, it is worthy to mention how postcolonial literature has heralded a complete change in authority, allowing authors from the margin to reclaim their right to speak for themselves. Nonetheless, the notion of "writing back" to the centre has often been exploited and commodified. Writing back is at the heart of this research. Both novelists in question -Mosteghanemi and Alsanousi- are writing back through their protagonists. *The Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk* cannot be dissociated from the writing back project. Through the narrative, Mosteghanemi is writing back to the francophone literary tradition that monopolized the Algerian literary scene. Writing in Arabic, she conveys a cultural heritage and a political stance. Similarly, Alsanousi's protagonist José/Isa writes back to his father's society –Kuwait- which others and rejects him.

Throughout history, the misconceptions have been progressively instilled within the spirits of the Western audiences who might have never encountered any person from the East. As a matter of fact, it is this binary itself –East/West- which further nurtures animosity, tension and misunderstanding. It encourages the rise of superiority/inferiority discourse. The West is supposedly superior, and thus, the East is involuntarily and by definition inferior. On which basis is it claimed to be, or rather compelled to be, inferior? The reason is that the West controls narration. As long as the East is not allowed to narrate its story, the narrative is still incomplete and colonized. Over the course of history, scholars and writers have exploited their literary and non-literary works to picture the other as inferior and backward. Therefore, peoples' minds

have been filled with such misconceptions as mentioned previously. Western writers such as Jane Austen and Ruyard Kippling have somewhat stood for and justified imperialism if one is allowed to say.

On the aesthetic level, admittedly and discernibly, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a spellbinding, tour-de-force work which is widely read. Prior to the publication of Chinua Achebe's accusatory essay "An Image of Africa", many critics affirmed that *Heart of Darkness* was not only delicately written but atmospheric as well. None of them brought about racism and denigration. Edward Garnett, however, brought up the issue of race and Conrad himself approved of that. The darkishness, narrow-mindedness and incivility of Africans are seen and reflected through the whiteness, open-mindedness and civility of the West. Marlow's rendering of the happenings propounds that Africa is nothing but an unfathomable place. Yet, strangely, the race-thinking within the novella remained peculiarly disregarded, and many critics concurred that the work is far from being racist. Besides the issue of racism, Conrad was said to be misogynist as women were more or less invisible. This absence, however, can be justified on the grounds that the setting and the nature of the work suit men more than women.

As a response to *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe expounded in "An Image of Africa" that Conrad is a racist, and thus, it is incumbent on him to "write back" to Europeans to manifest the concealed truths and debunk the myths about Africa. His novel *things Fall Apart* is an authentic rendition of the African version of the story. The narrative can be a cornerstone for assessment in its being an amalgamation of both Africa's perfections and imperfections. Achebe does not picture Africa as Utopia or a city upon a hill; he rather offers a truthful portrayal of it. The killing of twins, for instance, is a discernible facet in Igbo culture and Achebe does not conceal this. The oppression of women, which makes black women doubly alienated in a white-oriented, phallocentric society, is also manifested in the novel. Polygamy which is forbidden in Christianity is also displayed. Achebe's rendition is indisputable, for it propounds accuracy.

Edward Said's concept of contrapuntal reading is of colossal utility as regards West/Other construal. White people have never known what it means to be othered, and black people have never known what it means to be the colonizer. Each pole serves as a looking-glass through which the hostility of the other is disclosed. Said, then, called for the contextualization of the text and contrapuntality for an accurate interpretation. Renditions of any type of writing is first and foremost informed and influenced by the author's standpoint, which requires objective tools for assessment. Conrad, for instance, is now regarded as racist, at least for Achebe, due to the manner in which he describes Africans. Without bias, who knows what Conrad witnessed in Africa in that period of time? Probably *difference* was misrepresented but it might hold truths in it. In other words, He regarded their exotic behaviour that did not exist in his own culture as primitive.

1.6. Hybridity

At the mention of the term hybridity, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Stuart Hall come to mind. Simply put, hybridity means mixture and its original discipline is Biology. The term has been adopted into discourse on postcolonialism, globalization, multiculturalism by one of the most influential theorists of postcolonial criticism -Bhabha. In their works, Bhabha, Said and Spivak have shaped various theoretical concepts that support and inform discussion and debate on multiculturalism. Hybridity is "the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture" (Bhabha 38). Belonging to two nations, speaking two languages, having two cultures and religions –which is the case of Alsanousi's protagonist- exacerbates feelings of unbelonging and confusion. After studying Fanon's and Said's works on postcolonialism thoroughly, Bhabha presented a number of concepts that delineate colonial discourse. According to his work, Hybridity does not entail conciliation with the colonial legacy, it is rather a negative viewpoint to disclose the Western, forced interference in the cultures of the other nations. In *the Location of Culture*, a hallmark of hybridity theory, Bhabha discusses

writers like Joseph Conrad, Nadine Gordimer, and Toni Morrison. The book is re-thinking identity and social agency. Bhabha stresses the necessity for the culture of Western modernity to be relocated from a postcolonial frame of reference.

In *the Bamboo Stalk,* Alsanousi introduces three hybrid characters: José/Isa, Merla and Ghassan. Their hybrid identities are a source of discomfort in a society that alienates and rejects to see them. José/Isa is lost between who he is in the Philippines and what his mother has entrenched within his mind. His constant oscillation between two homes –none of which completely accepts him- burdens him. Being raised in the Philippines does not make him comfortable or at home there. He is constantly referred to as "Arabo". In Kuwait, however, he is not considered Arab for his facial appearance. José/Isa is neither Kuwaiti nor Filipino in the eyes of society, he is a hybrid. Merla's hybridity comes from her mother's affair with an unknown European man. She looks like a European woman but with a Filipina soul. In other words, her inner struggle over her identity is ongoing. She doesn't accept her European half because of the conquest, which she resembles to her father's conquest of her mother's body. While José/Isa is splintered between two identities, Merla between the conqueror and the conquered, Ghassan's situation is different. Being *bedoon*, without nationality, is the ultimate expression of uncertainty, unbelonging and hybridity.

1.7. Commodity

Commodity can be defined as a "thing that can be bought or sold" (Oxford Dictionary 303). According to Oxford's basic definition, everything that is saleable or purchasable falls under the category of commodity. In a globalized world, any cultural practices that people merchandise are subject to cultural loss. Once the value is removed or erased and replaced by materiality, there is no culture-bound value left. This is applicable to arts, relationships, literary works and so on. Karl Marx's view of commodity is of import in the analysis of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* in chapter three. Irrespective of authenticity and

quality, people are predisposed to consume whatever comes their way and communication itself is commodified. In the same way, postcolonial texts are equally commodified by some writers who are in pursuit of recognition and fame after many years of marginalization.

Beside globalization, which threatens cultural diversity, the acts of commodifying culture, language, postcolonial conditions and resistance further damage the image of the other, not re-construct it. To commodify means to reduce that which is non-commercial to a commercial practice. Commodifying entails the removal of the valuable, cultural features and replacing or transforming them into marketable practices that please international audiences. Undoubtedly, some products are meant for the market and cannot be culturalized. In the same manner, some practices cannot, or at least should not, be commodified. The postcolonial literary scene, the focus of this research, is one that defends, reclaims, stands against colonialism and colonial narrations. It is not an industry of materiality, but rather a discipline of cultural resistance.

As a matter of fact, postcolonialism is commodified. The term is now wrought by doubts and contradictions that put authenticity into question. Postcolonial writers had no voice in the past; merely canonical, Eurocentric writings would be circulated and distributed to wide audiences. The West constantly promoted imperialism and justified atrocities through pretexts such as the white man's burden and the civilizing mission. As a reaction, marginalized writers embraced the postcolonial field to speak and re-tell the story from the other's frame of reference. Paradoxically, many postcolonial writers were victims, so to speak, of hysteria of reception, recognition, fame and awards. Therefore, even postcolonial writings should be read –consumed- with caution.

To take a close, realistic look into commodity in a literary context, one must not overlook the fact that writers are humans in want of pecuniary motives. With this being taken into consideration, it is untenable to entirely dissociate commodity from writing books. In this respect in particular, commodity is emphatically not a negative or a positive attribute. Even

those who write for the sake of art are in need of financial support, especially when writing is their full-time profession. Therefore, the economy behind writing is well-substantiated. The thesis by no means condemns the economy behind writing itself but rather the ascendancy of commercialization and marketplace over cultural values. When appellations such as bestseller and prize-winner are staunchly pursued and appreciated by some postcolonial writers, fame becomes the new hysteria.

Ironically, there is no opposition to bestseller and prize-winner appellations as though they were not part of a categorization and limitation process. Over the last decades, one of the authors' anxieties has been the limitation or categorization according to their literary works. Female writers who recurrently advocate and empower women in the Arab or the non-Arab world, for instance, have rejected being labelled, restricted and reduced to feminist writers. Other writers have concealed their female identities and have written under male pseudonyms just to escape categorization and subterfuge patriarchal systems. Famous examples of women writers who have found refuge in male pseudonyms include Amantine Lucile Aurore writing under the name George Sand, Mary Ann Evans who has written under the pen name George Eliot and Nora Roberts who embraces J.D. Robb as a pseudonym that keeps her undercover. Surprisingly, there are many male authors who have written under female pen names for different reasons. The Algerian novelist Yasmina Khadra or Mohamed Moulessehoul, who has revealed his real identity in 2001, has chosen a female pseudonym to evade censorship because he was a military officer in that period. Other writers include Jennifer Wilde, Beatrice Parker and Edwina Marlow who are all Tom Elmer Huff's pen names.

1.8. Resistance vs. Prestige

The term resistance is indicative of a state of opposition and/or a sign of rejection. Both understanding and interpretation of the concept depend primarily on the discipline in question. The term is used in psychology to signify the defence mechanism a patient adopts to push back

against any suggestion or therapy. Father of psychoanalytical theory Sigmund Freud argues that the resistance of the ego is articulated through transference and repression while that of the superego presents itself as an urgent need for self-punishment and feelings of guilt. The id's resistance is in charge of the work-through process (1937). Besides psychology, the concept of resistance exists in other fields of study –Such as physics and sociology- to denote different meanings.

From a postcolonial frame of reference, resistance refers to a practice of struggle against compelled hegemony, past or present. For instance, one may show resistance to the other's language and culture after independence. Strangely, resistance can also involve the opposition to and the refusal of independence. This type of resistance occurred in Algeria when many francophone Algerians opposed France's departure. In her book under the title of *Resistance Literature*, Barbara Harlow proclaims that the concept of resistance first appeared in Ghassan Kanafani's resistance literature that advocates the Palestinian question (02). Marlow considers literature of resistance as a "struggle for liberation"

Indeed, taking its cues from many a decade of torments caused by occupation, literature of resistance emulates a reality which is painful beyond words, to say the least. In Kanafani's case, for instance, his works are his instrument of political activism and resistance (through art) against the Israeli colonizer. In an occupied, wounded homeland –Palestine- literature cannot be dissociated from politics. In this sense, Kanafani contends:

> My political position springs from my being a novelist. Insofar as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I was a novelist, not the opposite […] I do not find any duality between my commitment and the writing of novels because I feel something very important would be missing if I were not politically involved

> and I would feel greatly diminished if I had not been a novelist at the same time.
>
> (qtd. In Coffin 98)

Undoubtedly, these words are announced by Kanafani to corroborate his staunch engagement with the Palestinian cause as well as the interrelated relations of literature and politics.

In the Algerian and the Kuwaiti contexts, both Mosteghanemi and Alsanousi write with resistance in the background. The two authors write back as a mechanism of resistance. For Mosteghanemi, the colonizer's language is to be resisted and rejected for manifold reasons. By appropriating her mother tongue –Arabic- she sends a subliminal message to other Algerian writers of French expression. In reality, the Algerian literary scene appears to be monopolized by French language at face value. Nevertheless, it is the brutal condition that has coerced authors to embrace the colonizer's language. Some of them preferred silence —which is a political stance not only a literary choice- to writing in French. Malek Haddad who sees French as his 'exile' is one prominent example of such writers.

As far as Alsanousi is concerned, his narrative *the Bamboo Stalk,* which is a critique to Kuwaiti society, can be read as a novel of resistance as it objects a different type of oppression. In this unconventional literary work, the author opposes the way in which the other is treated in Kuwait. It also rejects illogical superstitions and rigid traditions. Throughout the narrative, the writer's voice is reflected through the protagonist. In fact, resistance does not only present itself in the writing of such a novel that debunks truths and discloses the dark side of Kuwait, but also through the empowerment of José/Isa. This protagonist is marginalized, voiceless, and thus, weak. In order for him to speak and resist, he needs a voice. On a different note, the notion of prestige is suggestive of social standing and titles. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, prestige is "standing or estimation in the eyes of people: weight or credit in general opinion". Other words that are somewhat associated with prestige include status, reputation,

prominence and dignity. In the literary arena, prestige is seen through the importance given to some novels.

1.9. Nostalgia

In the 17th century, precisely in1688, a Swiss medical student called Johannes Hofer coined the term nostalgia and considered it as a neurological disease whose symptoms include anxiety, relentless thought of home, sleeplessness and lack of appetite. (Wildschut et al. 975). Nostalgia, thus, remained under the scope of neurological trouble until the 19th century when the perception of nostalgia began to take on a different connotation; it went from being a neurological affliction to a manner of depression or melancholy (Rosen 349). Etymologically speaking, however, the term nostalgia derives from the Greek word *nostos* which literally means "to return home" and *algos* which means "pain". Thus, the term nostalgia connotes homesickness and pain for being away from one's home.

Surprisingly, nostalgia is studied under other fields, including psychology, and does not comprise a self-contained discipline. As mentioned above, nostalgia was thought to be limited only to neurological issues until the 19th century. Thus, it had been informed by astronomical psychological research whose assumptions were based upon Hofer's premise. In *Nostalgia: A forgotten psychological disorder*, nostalgia which was considered as "a psychopathological condition affecting people who are uprooted […] and alienated" (Rosen 340) disappeared in the 20th century and reappeared under a different nomenclature.

A throng of contemporary theorists, including the frequently cited nostalgia critic Svetlana Boym, argue that nostalgia and time go hand in hand. In other words, one cannot think of the notion of nostalgia without associating it with time. Nostalgia scholars and critics approach the concept differently. Scholars such as Kaplan, Holak and Havlena, Davis, Batcho and Gabriel regard the concept as positive. For them, it connotes a positive remembrance of past experiences. Other theorists, however, draw attention to nostalgia's negative aspect. Ortony,

Clore and Collins, Best and Nelson, Hertz, Peters, see that nostalgia connotes a lost past. In addition to that, some scholars are in-between as they think that "Nostalgia is usually associated with bittersweet reflections on an irretrievable past" (Kaplan 468). The positive affect promoters believe that the concept of nostalgia cannot trigger emotions of pain and anxiety; rather they bring about sentiments of a pleasurable remembrance.

Scholarly attention in the humanities has been perceptibly directed towards crucial contemporary concerns such as identity and otherness which are among the hallmarks of postcolonial studies. This conundrum of identity is excessively scrutinized by some writers and scholars due to the past subjugation, misrepresentation and marginalization. After the departure of colonial forces, authors and intellectuals such as Gayatri Spivak (India), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenya), Tayeb Saleh (Sudan), and Assia Djebar (Algeria) have written back to the centre and proclaimed their voice to tell their own version of the story. The inseparability of language and culture, however, has constantly triggered a sense of ambiguity and contention in the postcolonial scene as regard to the appropriation and the abrogation of the colonizer's language. In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon argues that "every colonized… finds himself face to face with the language of the colonizing nation" (9) and Ngugi propounds that "language carries culture" (16). Djebar, however, adopts the French language to narrate the happenings from an Algerian frame of reference.

In regard to language use in a postcolonial atmosphere, it is not a coincidence that Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* is originally written in Arabic. More, it is not a happenstance that the author hopes her father finds someone who masters Arabic to read the book for him. The book is originally written in a language for which the martyrs died during the Algerian war for Independence. This abrogation from the colonizer's language connotes political awareness and divorce from the shadows of the colonizer. The translation of the novel

from Arabic into English is a conscious endeavour to accentuate the writer's own standpoint regarding language.

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted theories and concepts without which the analysis of the literary works in question would not be feasible. The chapter has attempted an introduction to the theoretical framework which paves the way to the essence of the current research and upon which the analysis of chapters three and four will be based. Given that Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (*the Bridges of* Constantine) and Saud Alsanousi's *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (*the Bamboo Stalk*) belong to commitment literature, *Adab al Iltizām* or *littérature engagé,* they require serious treatment. For this end, postcolonial theory and relevant concepts such as hybridity, commodity and otherness have been appropriated. The next chapter puts the two narratives into their context. In other words, it demonstrates the environment in which they have been written, as well as the journeys of translation they have undergone.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF MOSTEGHANEMI'S *THE BRIDGES OF CONSTANTINE* (2013) AND ALSANOUSI'S *THE BAMBOO STALK (*2015*)*

Chapter Two **Towards a Contextual Understanding of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) and Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015)**

2.1. Introduction

Throughout history, much has been chronicled on different subjects that are of pertinence to humankind. National/international happenings, for instance, have recurrently been written and narrated in history textbooks and literary narratives. Nevertheless, the parochial frame of reference in conjunction with the imposed marginalization -or subjugation so to speak- of the previously colonized nations have left the literary/non-literary scenes somewhat incomplete and inaccurate. Colonial writings have perennially been the preoccupation of many thinkers who have taken it upon themselves to address and contextualize historical events. Colonialism itself has for long been scrutinized, and scholars have split between allies and opponents. The conquests of the ex-colonizers –namely Great Britain and France- have been excessively transmitted and thoroughly examined in history books, literary and non-literary writings. Nevertheless, those colonial writings have mostly reflected a period of time wherein the West preponderated. Subsequently, the records have perceptibly highlighted the grandeur of those in power given that the compositions have been written by cosmopolitan writers and scholars who are more or less in favour of imperialism.

In the last few decades, however, the parameters of power and domination have altered mostly thanks to the rise of postcolonial studies which seeks the equilibrium between what the West has been narrating and what the East has to narrate. As a matter of fact, postcolonialism has compelled scholarly attention to drastically shift from the centre to the margin in an attempt to present that side of the story which has been told, or rather obscured, by the West. Hence, the other that has once been marginalized, subjugated and silenced is gaining a momentous rallying point and is playing a vital role in the contemporary era. In light of this, the current chapter provides a contextual understanding for the study cases in chapters three and four to be understood according to their contexts. This chapter then is purported to offer the background and the contextualization of *the Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk*

in order for readers to fathom the different dimensions of the compositions under scrutiny. Given that translation is of undeniable importance in making these two works accessible for international readers, the chapter also proffers an overview on Translation Studies with reference to the narratives in question, being translated from Arabic to English. In reality, translation is also employed to discern –in chapters three and four- the (in)authenticity and (lack of) transforming/subverting when the works are translated into Western languages, namely French and English.

2.2. Modern Arabic Novel

The emergence of Modern Arabic literature in its developed form is oftentimes associated with the Nobel Prize Winner Naguib Mahfouz. Yet, the birth of the Arabic novel is attributed to Egyptian writer, journalist and Minister of Education Mohammed Hussein Haykal whose renowned novel *Zaynab*[5] -published in 1913- revolutionized the literary scene. However, in *Nash'at al Naqd al-Riwā'ī fī al-Adab al'Arabī al-Hadīth* (*the Emergence of Criticism Novelist in Modern Arabic Literature*), 'Alī Shalash contends that around two hundred and fifty novels have been written in the period between 1870 and 1914 (Moradi, et al. 106). Considering this, *Zaynab* is not the first Arabic novel but probably the first one to meet the criteria of the novel as produced and perceived in the West. There are other modern novelists who have had a substantial impact on the development of the Arabic novel. The Lebanese-American, bilingual Kahlil Gibran, best known for *the Prophet*, is one of those novelists. On the other hand, literature of the Maghreb region has not been as prolific as that of the Mashriq. On Algerian literature, Moradi et al make reference –albeit in passing- to frenchified attempts of Algerian

[5] The novel is known as Zaynab but its complete title is *Zaynab: Manazir wa Akhlāk Rīfiyya* (Zaynab: Country Scenes and Morals)

authors as well as Reda Houhou and Taher Ouettar's Arabic-language writings. (109-110). In reality, literature cannot be entirely distanced from its environment. Thus, the Maghrebian novel -Algerian in particular- is tormented by a Francophone historical past and a linguistic duality. Such duality is imposed and it better not be addressed in passing without putting it into its context.

In 1988, the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was the first Arab writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Thenceforth, Arabic literature made its way to the Western audience and became known. Again, the role of Arabic-English translation is undeniable in the circulation of Arabic works across the world. Unmistakably, the Egyptian novel is the one that informed and influenced other Arabic novels. What is more, the translation of Arabic literature into English made its popularity in the West possible and made known the concerns of the Arabs. As far as the common themes of the Arabic novel are concerned, Self/Other and the conflicts with the colonizer were and still are at the heart of Arabic literature.

The East/West binary is not a new issue in Arabic literature. It has been adopted in literary works to chart the division between the Self and the Other, being two opposite parties. Tawfīk al Hakīm's '*Usfūr Mina al-Sharq* (*Bird from the East*) and Tayeb Salih's *Mawsim al-Hijra ilā al-Shamāl* (*Season of Migration to the North*) present themselves as consummate texts that exemplify Eastern writers' concern with the Self/Other dichotomy. For the East, the West is advanced and desirable. Thus, the sensibility of formerly oppressed/colonized individuals in front of the ex-colonizer remains as a hallmark of inferiority/superiority attitude. Sexuality is one of the most sensitive issues in such Arabic literary works since it proves the masculinity of the East, as opposed to the femininity of the West. In Mosteghanemi's novel -like in Salih's- the protagonist –consciously or otherwise- wishes to demonstrate his masculinity and overcome his inferiority complex through sexual encounter with the Western, feminine other.

Known for its duality, Algerian literature is peculiar because of the two languages in which it is represented. As for Arabophone Algerian literature, Abd al-Hamid Benhadouga –author of *Rīh al-Ganūb*- is considered to be the father of Modern Algerian Novel. Surprisingly, there exists a forgotten 'mother' of Arabic-language Algerian literature. In an introduction entitled "Breaking the Silence on Algerian Literature", Waciny Laaredj, who considers Zoulikha Saoudi to be the greatest Algerian Arabophone female writer, deplores that Saoudi has been entirely forgotten from the Algerian literary canon, and that instead of talking about 'the father of the Algerian novel in Arabic', we should all be discussing 'the mother of the Algerian novel'. (qtd. In Ghanem). A number of researchers and critics have mistakenly considered Ahlem Mosteghanemi to be the pioneer of Algerian Arabophone novel. Born in 1943 and deceased in 1972, Saoudi turns out to be the first Algerian woman to write in Arabic. It is her exclusion from the Algerian literary canon that made her forgotten in the literary scene.

2.3. Colonial/Postcolonial Algeria

Atrocious afflictions such as slavery and colonization require obstinate concord, rigorous resistance and stringent action. In Algeria's case, it is colonialism that dehumanized Algerians during the ghastly French conquest from 1830 until 1962. Unfortunately, the decolonization phase was not a period of prosperity for the newly independent country. The aftermath of French conquest presented itself as new challenges and obstructions in the way of nation-building. There arose dissensions over which language to appropriate and the government's strategy for nation-building was not clear. It was Sir Walter Scott –Founding father of the historical novel- who first inserted historical insights in narratives. Such insights are seen as the keystone to the complete understanding of individuals within their historical context. Both profound understanding and rational construal of individuals or nations require, for the most part, understanding of their past and its impact on their present and future. In view of this, Algeria's history, -indisputably emblematic of miscellaneous displacements- demands to be

meticulously examined and entirely understood to understand Algeria's identity crisis which is an inevitable outcome of a series of occupations.

Upon Pierre Deval's[6] refusal to discuss debts matters with Dey Hussein[7], the latter lost his temper and stuck Deval with a whisk. The incident, which was called the Fly Whisk Incident, infuriated French officials and induced France to blockade Algeria. Three years later, exactly in June 1830, French military forces landed in Sīdī Fraj. In order to justify France's conquest of Algeria, it all began under the veil of the civilizing mission and the white man's burden. In defense of French imperialism, Jules Ferry[8] justified imperialism under the pretext of the civilizing mission and the white man's burden. Then, it was incumbent on France to civilize Algeria given its superiority. However, France's mission to civilize the uncivilized nations was unwarranted. No country would accept military presence of another country in order to civilize it. Such futile words and acts -the *soi-disant* civilizing mission- are a way to promote and normalize France's imperialist and expansionist mindset. In reality, it was not civilization they wished to bring but the opposite: violence. A question demandingly presents itself: What made France assume it was superior, and what made Algeria what it was claimed or rather compelled to be? A question as such might not be accurately answered but the humanitarian mission was nothing but an alleged reason to justify the invasion which was planned even before the Fly Whisk Incident.

The interpretation of imperialism through the prism of the West's culture makes it difficult to admit that former colonizers aimed to assimilate, eradicate and annihilate the natives' identities. Given that the French massacres in Algeria are nothing but a cultural exchange, what are Algerians to make of the Martyrs then? The ongoing humiliation and France's refusal to

[6] Pierre Deval is the French Consul-General in Algeria from 1814 to 1827.
[7] Hussein Dey (Also Hassan Basha) is the last Ottoman ruler of the Regency of Algiers.
[8] Jules François Camille Ferry is a former president of the French Senate.

assume the atrocities of the colonial past are quite implausible from a civilized, humanitarian country whose first and foremost intent was the sharing of its culture. Nonetheless, there is evidence for all the crimes executed in Algeria to exterminate the Algerian identity. In *Letters of a Soldier*, a French Colonel propounds:

> This is how […] we must conduct war against Arabs: Kill all over the age of fifteen, take all their women and children, load them onto naval vessels, send them to the Marquesas Islands or elsewhere. In one word, annihilate all what will not crawl beneath our feet like dogs. (qtd. In Benrabah 24)

Oppression towards women and children is against the standards of humanity but French soldiers confess having committed atrocious misdeeds against Algerian women and children. As explicitly put de Montagnac's letter, France's inhumane occupation of Algeria was beyond human comprehension. His use of the word Arab is indicative of racism and disparagement as though being European was a privilege to deprecate anyone who was not from Europe.

On a similar note, there are other testimonies from French militants condemning France and censuring its atrocities in colonial Algeria. In 1957, the year of Great Confessions, Jean Muller -a French soldier- had left a number of letters that were later compiled and published posthumously in *Témoignage Chrétien* (Christian Testimony). Alongside Muller, the French author Daniel Guérin wrote *Pitié Pour le Maghrib* (Pity for the Maghreb) against the French invasion of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Algeria provided France with goods, capital and men to fight on behalf of its people during WWI. In reality, France launched obligatory military service upon Algerians by 1912. Therefore, Algerians had to fight in a war that was not theirs in order to gain independence as promised. Indeed, Algerians fought WWI and WWII in which they were exploited as human shields. In the wake of WWII, France executed

massacres in the Algerian East, namely in Guelma and Setif, upon the protests of pro-independence Algerians. The 1945 demonstrations resulted in the killing of 45.000 Algerians.

In 2005, France's Ambassador Hubert Colin de Verdière apologized and admitted that it was an "inexcusable tragedy" (qtd. In Schofield) and in 2017, the candidate for presidency called the French conquest of Algeria as "a crime against humanity"[9] (Emmanuel Macron) due to the manifold massacres and the traumas that still haunt Algerian people. His comment sparked much indignation in France. Macron, the first French president to ever allude to the possibility of offering an apology to Algeria, outraged many parties through such thoughtless words. Some even considered the statement as an insult to the country's history. With this being said, the past domination in Algeria, the destructions, the slaughters, the extermination of identity, the confiscation of the lands, the desecration of the mosques, and the pillage of rights must have been an honour for French history.

Unmistakably, the history of Algeria is characterized by violence and trauma, which are inevitable results of a number of past occupations starting from the 8th century. During the many decades of colonization, the eradication of a whole nation was the ultimate purpose of France. The French conquest, which is the focus of part of the thesis, succeeded in leaving its footsteps on manifold levels, two of which are the linguistic and the cultural levels. Algerians who received a poignantly inequitable treatment under the veil of the civilizing mission met colonizer's ferociousness with resistance and determination to topple it down. However, they could not escape assimilation which still presents itself in many forms in present-day Algerian society. After eight years of ongoing combat, Algeria's struggle for independence paid off and colonialism came to an end upon heroic triumph on the 2nd of July 1962. Celebrations took place all over the country because a victory as such cost Algerians much blood.

[9] In an interview with Echourouk News TV, Emmanuelle Macron referred to France's colonial history in Algeria as *un crime contre l'humanité.*

In the wake of independence, like other newly independent African countries, Algeria found itself in urgent need of nation building. It was necessary to achieve unity and dovetail Algerians. The aftermath of the longstanding conquest, however, was still discernible and recurrently presented itself in many ways. The country could not overcome its past overnight. In other words, the physical departure of colonial forces did not mean the total abrogation of French and France's other legacies in Algeria. This caused anxiety and identity crisis. Instead of unifying the people, they were further splintered between a painful past and an unknown future. Some wished the erasure of France's legacy while others wanted to maintain the same French style. Be it in daily life or literature, people were divided into two groups: Those who wanted to reclaim an Arab heritage and those who wished to continue with the French education they had acquired.

In post-independence Algeria, language continues to be bedevilling in politics, education, literature and elsewhere. Much has been written on the controversy of language in Algeria but what the thesis has considered is the inevitability of Algeria's linguistic trauma as an outcome of a barbaric, French colonialism. The assimilation policy employed by France to frenchify Algerians cannot be neglected in the analysis of Algeria's sociolinguistic situation. If France compelled Algerians to learn French beside their Arabic language, they would be bilingual. What France has done, however, is an imposition of its language at the expense of the native language. In this regard, Mehadar and Bedjaoui (2020) see that France "succeeded in the creation of a hybrid tongue which is neither Arabic nor French" (236). Indeed, the longstanding conquest coupled with France's assimilation policy wrought linguistic trauma in postcolonial Algeria. Algerians' speech is a mixture of *Darija* and French. As shown in the third chapter, Algerians' encounter with the other –France- through the appropriation of its language and culture corroborate Fanonian thoughts on the inferiority complex of the colonized. The ties with

France could not be cut off from the roots by reason of intermarriage and the number of Franco-Algerians which is on the rise.

In the main, the few first years of post-independence Algeria were phases of confusion, dissension and volatility. Disillusionment, uncertainty and despair began to predominate in the political and cultural and literary scenes. During France's invasion, the combat was over the homeland and by its departure; the fight was over positions. In the first instance, it was a matter of dignity whereas in the second instance, it was a matter of dominance. In light of this, the *Mujāhidīn* –freedom fighters- felt a sense of betrayal and exclusion from the new phase. In consideration of the focus of the thesis, the literature of the period is exemplary of the country's duality and ambiguity. The impossibility of a monolingual, postcolonial Algeria is echoed in Algerian literature which is splintered between Arabic and French.

2.3.1. Dialecticism in Algerian Literature

The writing back project –or the dismantling of the Eurocentric worldview- has served as a motive to reclaim the other's voice. During the 1980s, postcolonial writings began to come into prominence and re-narrate stories which had for long been altered and subverted mostly to justify imperialism under 'the white man's burden' and 'the civilizing mission' pretexts. From the 1980's onwards, advocates of postcolonial thought –writers and scholars- have appropriated different approaches and mechanisms of resistance. Nevertheless, the objectives are the same: The decolonization of the other and re-thinking otherness from the other's frame of reference. Incontrovertibly, in which language to write is one of the unavoidable complexities and challenges for postcolonial writers due to the assimilation policy employed by colonial forces. However, as stated above, it is 'who writes' that matters the most in the case of postcolonial writing. In reality, the colonizer's language imposes itself as an instrument of expression and it cannot be eradicated overnight –at least in Algeria's case.

Writing in postcolonial context bears connotations –cultural, political and linguistic- and contradictions. Some authors resist the other's culture but write in the other's language, others simply embrace the native culture and advocate the colonized other. While the agenda of postcolonial literature is unquestionably political, the intentions of the authors are not always apparent. Being excluded from the literary canon, many writers have found an opportunity to make their voices heard, as well as their nations' voices, through writing back to the centre. This centre is the West which has obliterated the identity of the East. Intentions, as stated earlier, differ from one writer to another. Undeniably, the postcolonial writers are human beings and citizens who are wounded and burdened by a history of colonialism. It is worth mentioning that authors born after the decolonization period are not excluded from re-writing past traumas. Trauma, after all, is intergenerational. In reality, resistance appears as the initial motive behind writing literary works through which novelists confront and condemn the ex-colonizer. It is not only a past wound that urges this type of writing, but the ongoing colonial legacy which repeatedly presents itself in culture, language, architecture, etc.

What is more, the language issue continues to be a debateful subject in post-independence countries even after decades of decolonization. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe so famously proffer two opposing views on language use in postcolonial African countries. One is aware of the ideology of language in postcolonial context, but is it rational to overlook the essence of writing and judge the language in which a text is written? What if one subverts the other's story in the mother tongue or through translation to the colonizer's language to meet the market's need? This hysterical wave of postcolonial commodification threatens more than language itself. Once reception and consumption in the Western world interfere as a force majeure that influences the authors' choice of subject and its treatment, it becomes a sought-after, marketable product that is intentionally removed from its context to please international audiences. In this case, only bilingual and –ideally- bicultural readers would trace subversive

translations. Rabindranath Tagore who has translated his own poems with consideration of the dominating culture presents a perfect example of subversive translation as will be exemplified in chapter three.

The language issue is not exclusive to Algeria; Indian writers of English expression are also confronted with perplexity and contradiction. Salman Rushdie and Raja Rao are among the Indian writers who re-tell the Indian experience in English. The Irish poet Yeats was split between Ireland and England. He did not speak Celtic. Algerian writers, too, find themselves compelled to write in the other's language. This vacillation between mother tongue and the colonizer's language remains, according to Fanon, no more than attachment to that which is thought to be superior, and thus, desirable. Fanon's statement demonstrates the psychological aspect accountable for unwarrantedly excessive attachment to the colonizer's language and culture. In the Algerian context, Fanon's words are to be challenged in a sense that Algeria's overexposure to the colonizer's language in conjunction with its tumultuous history explain, without any justification, people's oscillation between Arabic and French, Algeria and France.

Incontestably, the departure of France did not mark the end of chaos in Algeria which found itself stuck between two cultures and languages that are politically opposing. The Arabophone/Francophone dialecticism began to divide Algerians into two contradictory parts. Postcolonial Algeria seems more like a continuation to France's hegemony i.e. corruption and disillusionment prevailed. For this reason, the Algerian literature of that period reflected anxiety, uncertainty, perplexity and disenchantment with the hectic situation. Throughout the history of Algeria, foreign interventions have had considerable influences on the country. The Romans settled in Algeria for more than two hundred years, the Vandals for a century, the Carthaginians for more than seven hundred years, the Turks for three centuries and the French for one hundred and thirty-two years. It is crucial then to incorporate historical insights in order to grasp the sensibility of the Algerian past and how it shaped both of its present and future. By

the same token, it is essential for the understanding of Algerian literature which is split between two divergent cultures and languages.

After the decolonization of the land by 1962, Algeria attempted to decolonize the Algerian tongue through Arabization policy. Unfortunately, the consequences of this decision were not positive. It only created more dissention between the ones who are pro and those who are against Arabization. As far as literature is concerned, identity crisis in Algerian postcolonial literature is instantly recognizable. It is seen in authors and characters alike. In reality, the first issue a postcolonial writer is confronted with is that of language. Whether a writer should appropriate or abrogate the colonizer's language is an ancient debate that remains open to different interpretations and analyses.

The ongoing clash between Arabic and French in postcolonial literature is proof that both parties are still in denial. In other words, Arabophone writers cannot accept the fact that Arabic is marginalized in Algeria and Francophone authors are not certain in which language to write after France's departure. What matters for Ngugi and Achebe is not supposed to matter for Algerian writers. Put differently, the longstanding colonial period of Algeria in conjunction with the atrocious crimes, which sought the extermination of identity, should not necessarily be likened or compared to other African colonial experiences. The shades of Algeria's past still haunt its people in different ways. Painful massacres reside in collective memory and they dovetail Algerians who cannot forget their past. Algerians' subordination to the French language cannot be dissociated from what Fanon calls 'the inferiority complex'.

In regard to language appropriation/abrogation in postcolonial Algeria, it is no coincidence that Ahlem Mosteghanemi's first narrative –*the Bridges of Constantine*- is written in Arabic. It is not a happenstance either that she hopes her father finds someone who masters Arabic to read the book for him. The book is originally written in a language for which the martyrs died during the Algerian war of Independence. This abrogation of the colonizer's language connotes

political awareness and divorce from the shadows of the colonizer. The translation of the novel from Arabic into English is a conscious endeavour to accentuate the writer's own standpoint regarding language.

On one hand, Algerian writers of French expression such as Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Feraoun, Malek Haddad, Mohammed Dib, Assia Djebar and the like prefer to confront the Western other and condemn it in its language. Their anxiety as regards the appropriation of the colonizer's language, however, is inescapable. Belonging to the colonized and writing back in the colonizer's language would not be received positively by many Algerians who consider this act one of betrayal to one's homeland. Although the telling remains purely Algerian and uncontaminated by French perspective, it is still debateful in postcolonial Algeria. In the eyes of society, *Francophonie* connotes a Western-like lifestyle and mindset, which might affect the narration. In reality, however, it depends on the author and the agenda in the first place not necessarily the language. One can subvert the narration in Arabic if one pleases.

On the other hand, authors who write in Arabic –Ahmed Reda Houhou, Abd al-Hamid Ben Haddouga, Taher Ouettar, Waciny Laaredj, Ahlem Mosteghanemi- not only artistically express themselves, but also demonstrate a political stance through the abrogation of French. Writing about Algeria's identity crisis and France's crimes is a common theme amongst writers of French expression. For these Arabophone writers, it is language that speaks of the Algerian experience. While for the abovementioned authors, it is the memory that speaks not language alone. Mosteghanemi follows Ngugi who abrogates English to promote his own mother tongue. In doing so, she maintains her identity and refuses the other voice that does not represent Algeria. In reality, this dialecticism between Arabophone and Francophone Algerian literature is an old one and it takes different shapes and dimensions. The erasure of French is not easy for writers and people, it is rather a political decision that even Algerian government cannot take due to the Evian agreement.

2.3.2. *The Bridges of Constantine* in Context

Algerian narratives, whether of Arabic or French expression, are reflections on the diverse realities which foster both construction and deconstruction of the Algerian society. Many a novel delves into what makes Algeria what it is, detailing the convoluted nature of the country that underwent cultural assimilation and historical interventions. More often than not, Ahlem Mosteghanemi is considered the first Algerian woman to write a novel in Arabic. Her narrative *the Bridges of Constantine* is published concurrently in Algeria and Lebanon in 1993. The novel is a multifaceted page-turner whose linguistic, aesthetic and stylistic merits speak volumes of the writer's creativity and talent. Winning the Naguib Mahfouz Prize in 1998 is nothing but a confirmation of its magnificence. Thenceforward, the novel gained momentum in the Arab world, selling 50,000 copies. In 1999, the novel was translated into English as *Memory in the Flesh* (2000) by Baria Ahmar Sreih and it "enter[ed] the world of *Francophony* through translation" (Holt 125) as *Mémoires de la Chair* translated by Mohamed Mokaddem in 2002. In 2013, the narrative was re-translated into English as *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) by Raphael Cohen –the version being studied in this research.

The Algerian Revolution, which started on November 1, 1954, is central in *the Bridges of Constantine* by reason of its weight in the course of the liberation of Algeria. In the first chapter of the narrative, the protagonist Khālid Ben Tobal decides to start writing his novel on November 1. This displays the sacredness of the revolution for Khālid as well as the impossibility of forgetting whence he came. There are Algerian narratives of French expression by female authors detailing Algeria's complexities and challenges during and after colonialism. Maissa Bey, Leila Sebbar, Assia Djebar have enriched Algerian literature written in French. Split between Arabic and French, the literary scene in postcolonial Algeria was as contradictory and unstable as the country which found itself in front of two opposing cultures in the wake of decolonization.

Mosteghanemi's societal engagement is conspicuously reflected in her works in general and in *the Bridges of Constantine* in particular. The narrative takes its weight from the environment in which it is composed. Its history, culture and social traits manifest Algeria's convolute structure on historical, cultural and linguistic levels. As Mosteghanemi herself maintains in an interview, the narrative starts:

> During the WWII, the French people used Algerians as human shields to fight their war for them, convincing them that they would get independence when they returned. Unfortunately, when they returned, they discovered that there was no change. As a result, the 1945 revolution started and the first demonstrations began on May 8, 1945 in three Algerian cities. Forty-five thousand Algerians, seven of whom belonged to my family, were killed during this uprising. (Baaqeel 150)

Perceptibly, Mosteghanemi is affected by the history of Algeria and the novel is informed by her personal experiences. By dint of her patriotic entourage, especially her father, ideas of the (post)colonial reality and despondency have, perhaps involuntarily, made their way through her literary writings. The historical manifestations in the novel start with the demonstrations of May 1945 and end in postcolonial time.

The intricate, historical setting of *the Bridges of Constantine* is of sensibility to Algerian readers. Set in colonial and postcolonial Algeria, it opens with the 1945 massacres and ends in postcolonial times. Its events occur mostly in two cities: Constantine and Paris. Constantine is the Algerian city through which Khālid remembers and narrates the stories of the revolution. Paris is the French city that accepts his art, albeit historical distance. Six months after joining the FLN, the protagonist loses his arm. At that time, injuries were signs of heroism, dignity, pride and patriotism. In post-independence Algeria, everything changed. Hamad rightly discerns how perception changes over time and how the body which was considered as an honourable servant in the collective memory of people is transformed into an individual

memory that concerns none but the disabled person (19). The logic of time –postcolonial time- compels the collective memory to become a personal suffering. It is this change which fills Khālid with despair. The shift from being a revered Mujāhid to a disabled person in the eyes of Algeria is unbearable. The old days of Si Taher are gone and it is people like Si Cherif who are going to take over.

Historical trauma operates on individual and collective levels. On the individual level, the weight of the past as well as the realization of its irretrievability consume Khālid's mind. His relationship with postcolonial Algeria is one of sheer disappointment and his suffering, which was a collective issue, is no longer important to others who favour normality. Participation in the war of independence and the feelings of patriotism dwell in Khālid's spirits through recurrent remembrances of certain details and happenings. The past is omnipresent throughout Khālid's journey. Over the course of his stay in Paris, he recalls the days of the revolution and the company of Si Taher. On the collective level, the people are bound by a bloody, turbulent past that cannot be erased from their memories. Almost all of them experienced being part of or having a family member in the battlefield against France. Those remembrances of a shared wounded past filled with torture, as well as its ongoing effect on their present exacerbate their wounds and foster their collective memory.

Unmistakably, Mosteghanemi's novels are dedicated to Algerian history. Her commitment is conspicuous throughout *Dhākirat al-Jasad* which is imbued with historical, political, psychological, social and cultural insights. The setting of this narrative is captivating because of the oppositive, sophisticated nature of the milieu *vis-à-vis* the painful history being chronicled. Colonial and postcolonial Algeria, Constantine and Paris, Hayat and Catherine are poles apart that are equally and delicately present in the novel. As expounded in *A Literature Born from Wounds*, the novel is "much more than a love story; it is an allegory about the tortured fate of Algeria" (Jensen). The love story between Khālid and Hayat is but a metaphor reflecting

his belonging and nostalgia for his beloved city Constantine. Khālid's incontestable attachment to Algeria is displayed from the very first pages of the narrative wherein, through remembrance, his enthusiasm and determination to join the Algerian Revolution are too evident. Prior to his adhesion, he speaks to himself in introspection, wondering how the homeland resembles a mother and how it endows him with a staunch sense of belonging (Mosteghanemi 15). Assertively, the presence of the venerated militant Si Taher has immeasurably affected and empowered Khālid.

For Khālid, the postcolonial reality is nothing but a state of corruption and deception. Now Algeria represents a past infused with contradictions of longing and disenchantment. The mere thought of a lived past that has -seemingly- been soon forgotten by the people and the corrupt government stimulates Khālid's trauma, anxiety and nostalgia to the homeland -now merely imagined- he once belonged to. Belonging to the colonized and being in the colonizer's country after independence intensify Khālid's sense of alienation, disenchantment and in-betweenness. The two countries which are, at least historically, opposing are both part of him now. Howsoever, none of them fully accepts him. In this respect, Khālid maintains:

> I was confronted with a strange contradiction: I lived in a country that respected my talents but rejected my wounds, and belonged to a nation that respected my wounds but rejected me. Which one to choose when I was the person and the wound at the same time? When I was the disabled memory of which this disabled body was only a façade? (Mosteghanemi 49)

Khālid's reflection on him being accepted and rejected showcases the inner vortex created by diametrical mismatch between the homeland and the place of residence. Algeria knows the wound but does not contain the wounded. It unapologetically disremembers the sacrifice and favours normality. This passage corroborates that Khālid's psychological disarray is, for the

most part, triggered by his traumatic past not by his physical disability. Thus, what is seen at face value is nothing but a 'façade'.

The traumatic war experience is a first-hand rendition experienced by the narrator himself. Throughout the novel, Khālid's memory reconnects present-day Algeria to the past, leaving readers with a cathartic effect. The author's choice of a male narrator is no coincidence. Khālid is the most appropriate to tell history as opposed to a female who might not be convincing, authentic or reliable. As Mosteghanemi professes, she is distributed among her heroes, which means she is present in Hayat, Khālid, Ziyad, etc. Mosteghanemi's portrayal of postcolonial Algeria proffers a critique of the system, the corruption and the inequality. In the first chapter, the protagonist is enthusiastic about joining the revolution. His patriotism and his devotion to Si Taher make him dream of a free Algeria. After independence, however, the disenchantment diffused by the protagonist speaks of ingratitude towards the martyrs and militants. The country is now in favour of those who take over. They make money and take seats while Khālid is traumatized.

Another painful truth for Khālid -for Algerians altogether- is that in the wake of Algeria's independence it is France that rejected Algerians in its country. History changed and getting a visa to visit France is now the untenable wish (Mosteghanemi 238). France which was once a nightmare has become the Algerian dream. In this sense, Algeria becomes the new nightmare for Algerian youth who no longer trust their government. This situation is indicative of turmoil, disillusionment and chaos. While corruption, poverty, joblessness and injustice prevail, France appears to be a Utopian place with promises. Undeniably, the dream to move to France is applicable to present-day Algeria. November 1st, 2017 confirms Mosteghanemi's statement. On that day, thousands of Algerians have been standing by France's council in Algiers, waiting for a visa appointment. The questions that demandingly present themselves are: Did France choose November 1st to humiliate Algerians or was it an innocent coincidence? Did Algerians not know

what November 1st stand for? The picture[10] of thousands of Algerians waiting for visa on a day as precious as that one is in itself disappointing. It is not certain whether France is the one to blame, the Algerian government or the people who contaminated a day as sacred as that.

As far as scholarship on Mosteghanemi's narrative is concerned, it has mostly studied it in association with feminism and postcolonialism without reference to the authenticity sensed in the original *vis-à-vis* the translations –notably the French translation. By referring to the cultural loss, adjustments and omissions observed in the translations, the thesis does not accuse the translators or doubt their mastery of both language and culture of the original texts. It rather contests the way in which (partly) commodified renditions of postcolonial, committed texts impact the native culture and further stereotype the other. In this view, Mosteghanemi's narrative has to be read and critiqued in relation to its unique manner of circulation and mobility inside and outside its original environment. Additionally, the popularity of this work in particular cannot be dissociated from the prestigious literary prize (The Naguib Mahfouz Prize).

Although France's crimes in Algeria are acknowledged worldwide, France did not apologize officially. In the case of Libya, Italy offered an official apology for all the crimes during the colonial era. It offered five billion US dollars as a compensation for the losses. In 2008, the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and the Libyan President Muhammar Gaddafi signed a treaty of friendship and partnership. In reality, Italy's apology was the first of its kind in history. In Algeria, the apologetic statement Emmanuel Macron offered was not official, and it was not even an apology. He recognized French crimes in colonial Algeria in an unprecedented declaration. In an interview with El chourouk News TV, he declared that French colonialism was a "crime contre l'humanité"[11] (Emmanuel Macron). The statement is emphatically not enough for Algerians to accept an apology France never made publicly and officially.

[10] See appendix p.195
[11] A crime against humanity.

2.4. Different Shades of *Other* in Kuwait

More often than not, the other is, fallaciously and inaccurately, depicted from a biased – often Western- frame of reference. Those who are different -Arabs, Muslims, black people, and other minority groups- are constantly, albeit unreasonably, oppressed and misrepresented. The inaccurate renditions being circulated in the complete absence of the other's version of the narration somewhat explicate the stereotypes and the misconceptions chronicled by the West on behalf of the East. The latter has for long been oppressed, obscured and, above all, silenced. As a result, misrepresentation through literary/non-literary works has misinformed different audiences and entrenched fallacies within their psyche. As long as the allegedly inferior other is silenced, the narration is still controlled by those who are seen superior. This imposed inferiority and marginalization compelled periphery writers to "write back" to the centre in an attempt to *de-other* the other. The other is not always a colonized, a woman or a migrant. In Gulf countries, the other can also be a *without,* a *bedoon*

Otherness is not exclusive to Algerian literature. In Algeria, it is the colonized other that is studied over and over again. Also, the Western other –France in Algeria's case- is examined thoroughly. In the Gulf region, otherness is a central issue in literature, but there are others different to those of Algeria. There is a considerable community of migrants from the Philippines, India, etc. These migrants often escape dearth and poverty in their countries. Thus, the Gulf countries appear to be their dream. Furthermore, women are often othered by men and society –this exists in most countries across the world. Strangely, there is another marginalized, psychologically oppressed community labelled the *bedoon.*

Noticeably, Gulf countries are appealing to migrants from many parts of the world mostly because of their oil wealth. According to United Nations, Saudi Arabia is the second-biggest destination for migrants. Alongside migrants, there are different oppressed 'others' in the gulf region. Marginalized communities such as the *bedoon*, for instance, reflect the complexity of

such societies. Although born in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia or another gulf country, an individual can still be considered to be *Bedoon Jinsiya* or 'without' which means without nationality of citizenship. In cases as such, individuals are marginalized more than migrants themselves and have no rights. The without cannot travel abroad freely and without complicated conditions. Women, too, are deprecated compared to men in Kuwaiti society which still considers women less important than men and excludes them from decision-making positions.

Kuwait possesses peculiar cultural traits and the uniqueness of its culture lies in its two-pronged facet. Paradoxically, the first aspect is conservative at heart whereas the second one is Western-like. Migrants who reside in Kuwait mostly come from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India and Bangladesh. Compared to other Arab countries, gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates are known for their conservatism. Paradoxically, Kuwait both is conservative and Western-like at the same time. It is also undeniably class-conscious. At the face of it, Kuwaiti people staunchly stick to their ancestors' culture, customs and traditions being part and parcel of their identity. Surprisingly, however, the country is divided into social classes and people are, oftentimes, class-conscious. Social stratum and status are of vital importance to well-known families and this is echoed in the gatherings. Such families often diminish people –notably migrants- from lower classes.

Incontestably, literary writing is an aesthetic way of self-expression even though literature is created for multifarious reasons. It can be done under the 'art for art's sake' premise as it can be devoted to a cause. In another instance, writing can, intentionally or not, be therapeutic – Virginia Woolf could not overcome her mother's death until writing her narrative *To the Lighthouse*. *Adab al-Iltizām* or literature of commitment is another genre of literature which advocates different causes in the world and committed writers seek the betterment of societies through their literary compositions. The value of literature lies in its being an amalgamation of aestheticism, entertainment and commitment. Commitment, however, does not imply the

inexistence of a commercial aspect surrounding the narrative –Paratexts, prizes, reviews, and so on. Such aspects might influence reception, augment readership and enable circulation irrespective of merit.

As far as *the Bamboo Stalk* is concerned, the protagonist and his mother, Joséphine, are migrants who are othered in Kuwait. Through Joséphine's rendition, José/Isa is eager to visit his father's home country because, according to his mother's story, is paradise on earth. Economically, Kuwait is the best place for him. But, Joséphine ignores the fact that migrants are maltreated. Ostensibly, she presumed that Rashid's mother, Ghanima, would feel nostalgic when meeting her grandson. Thus, she would welcome him and accept him as part of El Tarouf family. Unfortunately, he is still the other from his grandmother's perspective. She would not risk her family's reputation and name for him. José/Isa, Merla, and Ghassan are othered in different ways as will be exemplified in detail in chapter four.

2.5. *The Bamboo Stalk*: Contextual Background

Arabic literature is replete with works on colonialism, migration, identity crisis, otherness, etc. However, the marginalized have not been granted the permission to tell their own stories; they have mostly been narrated on their behalf. Surprisingly, *the Bamboo Stalk* deviates from the conventional Kuwaiti novel and gives the other a voice to speak for himself. Substantially owing to its experimental approach of the other, the novel is influential and cathartic. The protagonist, José, informs us about his father's exclusionary, class-conscious society throughout his experience there. Through Ghanima, José's paternal grandmother, the author underlines an entire class-conscious society wherein materiality surpasses humanity and traditions precede all considerations.

The society in which *the Bamboo Stalk* is written offers an in-depth understanding of the characters' actions and inclinations vis-à-vis their status. Among other gulf countries, Kuwait is the destination of migrants whose socio-economic situation is, often, deplorable due to the

demise in their homelands. In reality, many of them are othered, maltreated and excluded by class-conscious citizens. José's mother, a Filipina maid, is one of those migrants. Her east-to-east migration is the embodiment of migrants' struggle in Kuwait, especially females'. In doing so, Alsanousi daringly condemns Kuwait and explicitly accentuates its exclusionary nature. His journey starts with topophilia and results in topophobia. By the end of his search for one identity, José reaches mature hybridity and accepts his duality.

There are many Josés in Kuwait and other Gulf countries. Likewise, there are many Isas in the Philippines. Nonetheless, they remain in the dark, ignored for political grounds and other restrictions. The openness and daring nature of the author is what distinguishes the Bamboo Stalk and makes it revolutionary, cathartic and thought-provoking. Whenever the Philippines s mentioned, it is intentionally used to mean "homeland" and whenever Kuwait is mentioned, it is seen and referred to as "country". In the former, the protagonist is surrounded by his mother, who can compensate for his self-division, while in the latter, he is met with rejection and maltreatment. For this, the mother's land is considered a little better than the father's.

José/Isa was born in Kuwait to a Kuwaiti bourgeois and a Filipina maid. His hybrid origin is not accepted in his father's country, and thus, he is ostracized since, even prior to, his birth for reasons beyond his control. His father, Rachid El Tarouf, is disposed to give José/Isa recognition as one of the family members but fails to convince his authoritative mother, Ghanima. In this case, Rachid sends Joséphine and their son back to the Philippines and promises her to bring him back to live in paradise, referring to Kuwait. Both mother and son live in the Philippines where poverty prevails their quotidian life. At the age of eighteen, José/Isa returns back to Kuwait to be received with contempt dismissal, deprecation and disparagement. Only his half-sister, Khawla, accepts him without reservation or question. As readers, her stance is taken as the new generation's willingness to include and embrace the

other. But, no wonder that Ghanima still rejects him after eighteen years of absence, after all, she represents the custom-oriented, illogical Kuwaiti society.

The society in which the narrative is written offers a clear assumption of the characters' conduct, status and inclinations. Kuwait is a place for migrants from different countries. These migrants are servants, drivers, cooks, etc. and their socio-economic situation is, oftentimes, deplorable. Moreover, they are maltreated by class-conscious people who oppress the other. Ghanima, José/Isa's paternal grandmother, represents society through her conservative attitude and superstitious beliefs. Accordingly, the protagonist is preordained to rejection before his birth. Traditions, in this case, are built upon irrational principles. Rachid El Tarouf, Ghanima's sole son, is secretly married to Josephine, their Filipina maid; she gets pregnant and delivers José/Isa in Kuwait. This marriage is regarded as an act of disgrace and shame by Ghanima. For her, society and its customs matter more than her feelings. At some point, readers expect a change of heart on Ghanima's part, especially after Rashid's -her son- death. Yet, she betrays no emotion and the reader is shaken by her steadfast rejection throughout the narrative. This technique to shock readers about their own reality from the other's standpoint in order to make a change in society is effective. Yet, it may be temporary and it guarantees no action.

History is equally important in the analysis of literary works. A look at a nation's past renders the present somewhat understandable. Iraq's conquest of Kuwait in 1990 is infused in the text without making it a historical one. The author uses historical implications as happenings that take place within the chronological paradigm of the text. The death of Emir is correlated with Joséphine's arrival and this is seen as bad omen by Ghanima. Cultural traits and beliefs are usually incorporated for the mood of the novel's society or simply to make them known to the world. Kuwait, the focus of the current thesis, is among the conservative, class-conscious countries whose maltreatment of and attitude toward migrants and others are scarcely investigated in literary works by Kuwaiti novelists. Alsanousi's unconventional narrative

debunks societal duplicity, intolerance and discrimination. The novel is an explicit criticism of society, people's mindset and superstitions.

Through the reading of Khālid's and José/Isa's journeys, one comes to understand the main *personas'* identity crises and one fathoms the alienation from the mother tongue. One feels the Self/Other divide and how social hypocrisy prevails in Kuwait, just like Algeria. In January 2019, a wave of anger appeared on Algerian social media criticizing Miss Algeria for being "black" as described by many an Algerian commentator. Miss Algeria represents part of the Algerian South, but Algeria's diversity is, unfortunately, beyond grasp. In spite of the dark skin, the South is Algerian and Southerners are supposed to be first-class citizens who enjoy all rights like any other Algerian. Nonetheless, reality manifests racism, marginalization and hatred. The historical and social backgrounds render Alsanousi's narrative of peculiar pertinence to Algerians' reality. The concerns addressed by the author exist in Algerian society, and the mentality of people displays ongoing discrepancy and duplicity. In literature, José/Isa is othered in his father's country but Miss Algeria is discriminated in her own homeland.

Paradoxically, race-thinking is repulsed by most, if not all, individuals and practiced by many at the same time. At face value, one is left with the impression that most people staunchly oppose racial discrimination. Reality, however, presents itself through contradictory actions of exclusion, deprecation, marginalization and hostility. This leads one to question: How can one consider Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* a racist novella on account of its portrayal of Africans as "black" and "backward" when some Algerians are, in any real sense of the word, alike? The answer is simple: Social hypocrisy prevails in Arab countries which, in the case of Kuwait and Algeria, explicitly consecrate the Islamic principles of equality and implicitly violate them.

Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's narratives are both written by the protagonists whose sense of belonging is shattered for different reasons. Corrupt postcolonial Algeria and class-conscious

exclusionary Kuwait are portrayed with exactitude and bravery. The two raconteurs -Khālid and José/Isa- managed to remain objective throughout the narrations even though they are at the centre of the stories. Being pictured from the perspective of marginalized people, these novels in particular contain intense truths which have for long been, deliberately or otherwise, distorted and/or falsified. Albeit autobiographical traits in both narratives, autobiography is not among the concerns of the thesis. Nevertheless, first-hand narration has undeniably contributed to the authenticity sensed in both novels as well as its utility for the profundity of characterization.

2.6. Cohen's and Wright's Translations

"*Habent sua fata libelli"*[12]. Indeed, this is true even for translations. Once literary texts are translated, they make their ways through to the audience of the receiving culture. When they enter the literature of the receiving culture, literary translations develop relations of exchange and influence with it. The two texts become related to two cultures, languages and literature, and thus, read by two different audiences that do not necessarily master the two cultures and languages. Arabic-French translations are laden with a history of colonialism, and thus, there is sensibility and responsibility. In this case, the fate of the original –or the native culture- is at the hand of the translator. In other words, the book is at the hand of readers who interpret it differently whereas the translation is at the hand of the translator –possibly the editor and the publisher as well- who is in a position to preserve, enrich or subvert it. This being said, one has to attempt a close reading of any text in its original form, as well as its translation in order to ensure the authenticity of the journey from original to receiving culture.

Given that the two literary works being studied are bestsellers dealing with serious issues in the Arab world, the translations then must be accurate, authentic and faithful. The faithfulness

[12] A Latin proverb meaning: "Books have their destiny".

of transmission of politics, history, culture and beliefs from one language to another must be controlled by the author, most strikingly when any kind of lash is involved. In this case, the choice of translator is not, and should not, be done haphazardly. The latter must have the "most intimate knowledge" of culture (Spivak 13). Any transformation, intentional or otherwise, irretrievably affects the source culture and privileges the receiving culture. In this way, what is lost in translation cannot be retrieved irrespective of authors' and translators' intents. Adjustments in the translations of the already ambivalent, postcolonial texts perplexes bilingual readers who are aware of the text's voyage of cultural metamorphosis through translation.

Susan Bassnett's *Translation, History, Culture,* published in 1992 and edited by André Lefevere, is substratum for an accurate understanding of the nature of translation. It offers insights on the discipline and draws on its importance. According to that book, translation is "a channel opened, often not without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it, and even contribute to subverting it." (Bassnett and Lefevere). Drawing on Bassnett and Lefevere's thoughts on 'foreign influences', the thesis delves into the close reading of the narratives in question relating to the translations which either preserve or transform the native culture. Bilingualism is of import in such investigation in a sense that it enables the identification of (un)faithfulness. Alongside bilingualism, cultural background is also of vital importance. In reality, the relation between the original and the translation is one of relativity. Translation can be a plus for the original as it can subvert it, and thus, destroy it.

In view of this, it is difficult to entrust random translators with texts with the anticipation of faithful translations. The 'foreign influences' added to or imposed upon some texts might contravene the original culture. In this context, *Mémoires de la Chair* will be examined to discern the (un)faithfulness of the translation as well as the author's consent. The real issue with this translation in particular has historical roots. Roland Barthes, as mentioned previously, sees

that language affects the text (143). He, most probably, means that language imposes itself on text and, in postcolonial context, cannot condemn its nation's past invasions. Nevertheless, in the French translation of Mosteghanemi's narrative -whose polemic is rather connotative- language is not necessarily the *force majeure* that influences the native culture. It is rather the change of tone which is loosened in the French version that concerns the research. In other words, the French market is conspicuously considered at the expense of the native culture and the tension created from the dedication page in the original is diluted in the translation. This loose treatment of the French translation –among other factors- creates indeterminacy which cannot be overlooked.

Ostensibly, the translation of literary/non-literary works is their passport to international readership. Nonetheless, accuracy and authenticity of text -form and content- are of vital importance, notably in postcolonial literature as will be discussed in chapter three. In this case, any subversion that occurs in the postcolonial text -intentional or otherwise- results in cultural loss and other unwarranted outcomes. Sometimes even the omissions of connotative, significant details which, at face value, seem trivial are done consciously in order to please the international audience. Ahlem Mosteghanemi's first novel *the Bridges of Constantine* has gained much success in the Arab world and even though its translations are not as successful as the original, they have been circulated in the West. In the same way, Saud Alsanousi's third narrative *Sāq al-Bāmbū* has gained much attention and praise in Arab-speaking countries. What is more, its English translation has won the Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation in 2016.

Whether in Algeria or in the Arab world, Mosteghanemi is widely taken as one of the most politically aware female writers. Her entourage positions her as an intellectual writer whose peculiar background plays a vanguard role in informing and shaping her literary writings. Laden with her wounded homeland, Mosteghanemi plunges into the realities and deceptions of

postcolonial Algeria. In respect with her literary masterpiece *The Bridges of Constantine*, there has been a controversy over its authorship. An important portion of history, according to some critics, cannot and is not supposed to be narrated by women. The reception of a man's version of the narrative is more acceptable and plausible than that of a woman. Some have even attributed its authorship to one of the most renowned poets of the Arab world Nizar Qabbani. The latter's appraisal of the novel, however, has presented itself as a confirmation of Mosteghanemi's authorship. She has, most probably, chosen to place Qabbani's words on the book cover as a response to such accusations.

As mentioned previously, *Dhākirat al-Jasad* is written by Ahlem Mosteghanemi in 1993 and translated into English as *Memory of the Flesh* by Baria Ahmar Sreir in 1999. Three years later, it was translated into French as *Mémoires de la Chair* by Mohammed Mokaddem. Finally, the narrative was re-translated by Raphael Cohen as *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013. As a matter of fact, the voyage of literary works across the world through translation can either enhance and enrich or empty and diminish the original. Pertaining to the cultural traits in the translations of Mosteghanemi's novel, for instance, both translators -Cohen and Mokaddem- have made efforts to maintain content and form of the Algerian cultural expressions. The narrative would not have been widely spread and read without the existence of the English translations *Memory in the Flesh* and *the Bridges of Constantine*. Nevertheless, the translator is not supposed to possess excellent linguistic skills only. Language carries culture and the two cannot be separated from each other. The word for word translation is certainly an incomplete rendition of the original since it lacks the cultural traits. In this context, a good translator is someone who is both bilingual and bicultural in order to delve into both realms and find the equivalents. In this regard, Mosteghanemi contends that the task of finding a translator that distances his/her own mood from the text is problematic (Baaqeel 146). This is what made her want "the translator to be a poet." (146). The author's fear of cultural loss and conveying

different meanings is conspicuous in her meticulous attention to choosing a translator who builds linguistic and semantic connections with her text.

In the same interview, Mosteghanemi proclaims that Cohen's translation does more justice to *the Bridges of Constantine* than *Memory in the Flesh* because "it was translated by an experienced translator who is a native speaker of English" (Baaqeel 147). Cohen could have effortlessly translated the whole novel in his own way but he made efforts to keep the Algerian mood through the preservation of both form and content. The non-Algerian reader is able to envision the scenes of cultural and social events through the Algerians' lifestyle. This is applicable even to the historical portion wherein the Algerian struggle for independence is portrayed. The European or American readers cannot identify themselves within the Algerian realm unless the translator utilizes global words such as "bread" for the word *kesra*[13] or "bracelet" for the word *khalkhāl*.

From a postcolonial frame of reference, the English language is historically neutral -unlike French- yet it fails in providing an in-depth portrayal of Algeria's deep-seated collective trauma, and this presents itself in the translation of core passages of the novel in question. Algeria's historical wounds and its collective memory necessitate objective tools of translation that completely recognize the depth of the Other's torment and explicitly condemn the colonizer without any subversion or denigration of Algeria's suffering during and after the French conquest. Also, the translator must be in mastery of Algeria's language(s), culture and history in order to faithfully translate Algeria's story. Cohen's translation of passages related to history and memory, I argue, are bereft of depth, exactitude. In conclusion, the thesis corroborates, through the analysis of original and translation, that Algeria's trauma is so recondite for a

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language that is not *traumatized* enough to translate into words the depth of the Algerian collective trauma.

Selection criteria for translation seem to be controlled by many factors. Those who write about ordinary matters are unlikely to be translated. Those who divulge Algeria's darkish side are most likely translated. Does the content -that which is considered for translation- serve the West or not? It most probably does. Authority is controlled according to what appeals to the West. What they have in mind about Algeria is what others have written, not Algerians. It is now Algerians' duty to enrich the corpus of Algerian literature and deliver it to international audiences through faithful translations.

In a similar vein, Saud Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* is a Booker Prize Winning novel written by the Kuwaiti journalist and writer Saud Alsanousi. As mentioned previously, the novel is originally written in Arabic and it is published in 2012 by the Arab Scientific Press. After winning the IPAF in 2013, the novel has been translated into English by Jonathan Wright in 2015. A year later, the translation itself, which is published by the Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing, wins the Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation. The novel's merits lie in its being a straightforward rendering of the discrimination executed in the Kuwaiti society. No Arab writer, particularly in the gulf countries, has so overtly and profoundly given voice to the other and condemned his society as Alsanousi in this narrative.

The disabled other, Khālid Ben Tobal, and the migrant other, José/Isa, are in voyages beyond the borders of their countries, cultures, histories, religions and pasts. Although the two novels are set in different milieu and timing, there are similarities between the narratives, protagonists and societies. *The Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk* are bestsellers translated into English. Likewise, both novels and aforementioned translations won International Awards. Apropos the content, they both tackle the issue of the other even if it were studied from different standpoints. For the protagonists, they are both in search of identity in "other" places, people

or memories. Khālid perceives his mother as a homeland. Then, Hayat becomes his home. In France (after Algeria's independence), he is nostalgic to Algeria of the Revolution and Si Taher. Those memories of the past, his mother and Hayat render him the vulnerable man he is. His vulnerability entails no weakness; it rather suggests tiredness and struggle.

Through the unique discussion of otherness in Kuwait, the original and translated version of Alsanousi's narrative have colossally contributed to the emancipation of the other through giving him a voice and space to re-narrate the story from his perspective. For Arab readers, the protagonist's fluctuation between a judgmental society with superstitious beliefs and identity crisis is –at times- relatable or at least understandable. What the translation introduces to the West, however, might be new images which attract the Western readers to know more and further stereotype Arabs. A novel as honest as *Sāq al-Bāmbū* appears to aim at giving voice to the voiceless regardless of what the world would say about it. It is noteworthy that the English translation has introduced the situation of the *bedoon* to the rest of the world. It has underscored the dark side of Kuwait and other gulf countries.

Sāq al-Bāmbū and *Dhākirat al-Jasad* have been translated by two American poets who are in full mastery of the Arabic language and the Arab culture. The two translators, Cohen and Wright, have enough knowledge about the source culture, which is reflected in the translated texts. As regards the translation of Mosteghanemi's narrative, Cohen makes extra efforts to do justice to the original. Indeed, he could preserve form and content compared with the previous translation (*Memory of the Flesh*). In a similar vein, the English translation of Alsanousi's novel maintains the mood of the original. Although the Kuwaiti society is somewhat impenetrable, Wright could transfer the atmosphere of the convoluted country.

Linguistic and cultural exchanges between native and receiving cultures require a bilingual, bicultural translator who is not willing to subvert the mood of the original for the sake of pleasing the international audiences. What is lost in the translation of postcolonial literature is

emphatically not as what is lost in another literature. The political agenda of postcolonial literary works and the history involved are enough reasons to maintain one's culture because cultural loss puts postcolonial texts into question. Many questions on this matter demandingly present themselves: Who preserves the original, author or translator? How is a text be translated in light of cultural, historical, religious or political clash? Is the translator "a vector of power" (Spivak) or just a passive agent? How can authors and translators become collaborators? All these questions were addressed relying on prominent figures' works in Translation Studies. James Holmes, Susan Bassnett, Gayatri Spivak, André Lefevere and Lawrence Venuti are among the revolutionary scholars who shaped and enriched the discipline through their theoretical working.

2.7. Conclusion

On the whole, the chapter offered contextual background of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk*. It underscored the fragmented identity and the ambivalent atmosphere of Algerian literature in light of Algeria's post-independence period. The duality of Algerian literature, which is due to the two opposing tools of expression, is brought into the discussion by reason of its import to Algeria's identity crisis and linguistic trauma. The ongoing tension between literary production of Arabic expression and that of French expression is discernible and inevitable. The examination and analysis of the entire portion on Algerian literature and history cannot be detached from Arabophone/Francophone, Arabic/French, Algeria/France, colonial/postcolonial binaries. On the other hand, the chapter put Alsanousi's narrative in context to fathom Kuwaiti society and Kuwaitis conduct. It also demonstrated Kuwait's dark side as regards migrants and the *bedoon* (the without). The chapter finally offered an account on Translation, being part and parcel of the current research as will be shown in chapters three and four. As to the next chapter, it analyses Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) in juxtaposition with the original Dhākirat al-Jasad (1993).

It also brings into focus the issue of commodifying otherness and subverting (or omitting) part of the story to meet the market's needs.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT MATTERS THE MOST: THE OTHER OR THE MARKET?

> "Colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: In reality, who am I?" (Fanon 250)

> "The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling" (hooks 44)

> "Writers are free to choose between pleasing the West and reforming the East through their ideas […] I choose to serve my nation and Arabism as the first priority" (Baaqeel 122)[14]

[14] Ahlem Mosteghanemi's words in an interview with Baaqeel

3.1. Introduction

"Writing back" and re-telling the story from a first-hand, more pertinent point of reference offer more valid renditions and correct the falsifications circulated by the West. The exoticism of the other, however, can be a passport to the circulation of literary and non-literary works. Thus, some writers tend to appropriate the notion of otherness for the circulation of works, access to wider readership, recognition and fame. This puts the authenticity of some writings into question. In this case, the resistance discourse is to be juxtaposed with prestige in order to appraise the manifold possibilities that lie behind the composition of the narrative in question. In other words, does Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine*, as well as its French and English translations, offer a genuine narration that favours merely the other or does it take into account the requirements of the market? Initially, the "writing back" meant giving a voice to those who are voiceless. Afterwards, the reception of works in the West and the approval of the Western audience have become of considerable importance for some writers. The present chapter attends to the contradictions of wanting to reclaim the other's voice through re-telling the story from his/her point of view and simultaneously subverting parts, or part, of the story -even through translation- and commodifying the postcolonial condition.

3.2. Duality in *the Bridges of Constantine*

It seems that Algeria is preordained to duality. Its split between two languages -Arabic and French- two periods –colonial and postcolonial- and two cultures demands attentive screening of its historical and political scenes. Because of France's longstanding conquest of Algeria, as mentioned in the first chapter, the two countries have not fully overcome the past, which only compounds the problem and adds to the sensibility of the situation even after fifty-nine years of independence. Algerians, consciously or otherwise, make constant comparisons with France as though it were the only point of reference. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Franz Fanon distinctively elucidates that:

> Every colonized people- in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of his local cultural originality- finds himself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation. (9)

As the quote indicates, this internalization of subordination and inferiority within the spirit of the colonized is the colonizer's foremost aspiration. As long as the mind is still colonized, the departure of the colonizer is merely physical and the latter controls in different ways. The incessant vacillation between past and present, native and colonizer's culture and language distorts the natives' identity and they no longer belong anywhere.

Duality is instantly recognizable in the narrative and the writer's concentration on certain binaries is unmistakable. The contradictory set of dualities –Algeria/France, Arabic/French (omni) presence, colonial/postcolonial Algeria, male/female voices- is proof of the inevitable diversity –and dissention- of the Algerian society and the impossibility of monophony in the Algerian society. Over the course of the narration, the tension between two opposites which are unwilling, or unable, to meet half-way becomes conspicuous. Put differently, the Algerian collective memory cannot –and should not- disremember what happened between 1830 and 1962. On this basis, the relation with France will always be wrought with sensibility and distance unless France offers an official apology. What is more, language in present-day Algeria is colonized. It is a hybrid mixture of Arabic and French. Officially, it is Arabic that the country considers but the reality is different. It must be noted that what is lost in Algeria between its colonial and postcolonial periods is not to be returned overnight. Its identity crisis is manifested in many ways and it is ongoing.

3.2.1. Algeria/France

The history of nations is a decisive criterion in the nature of future relationships between countries. Therefore, the past cannot and should not be underestimated or overlooked. Any past tension, war or sensibility of any kind between two or more countries would affect the official

relations and the peoples' perceptions to some extent. The dissension between Korea and Japan, for instance, is the result of Japan's aspiration to obliterate Korea and its culture through the annexation of Korea in 1910. As regards the Arab world, Iraq's abrupt invasion of Kuwait in 1990 is still present in Kuwaitis' collective memory. Also, Algeria's 132 years of French occupation is still tangible in many forms and ways in today's society. In the case of Algeria, France tortured Algerians, raped women, killed children, exterminated whole tribes and villages, aimed at the extermination of the Arab-Muslim identity, nuclear weapon tests, etc. These atrocities and massacres are behind the turbulent Franco-Algerian relations that are still wrought with tension and hatred, at least on the Algerian part.

Algeria's history with the colonizer –France- is central to Mosteghanemi's narrative. This duality presents the East and the West, the Self and the Other. The tensional Franco-Algerian relationship is represented throughout the narrative. Set in both colonial and postcolonial Algeria, *the Bridges of Constantine* shows the difference between Algerians' attitude towards France during and after colonization. In other words, the resistance shown by Algerian freedom fighters is somewhat compared to Algerians' impatience to be in France in postcolonial time. The narrator's frustration is unmistakable when he states that "France now rejected us, and obtaining a visa […] was the impossible desire" (Mosteghanemi 238). In reality, it is both narrator's and writer's deception that readers, sense. This passage displays the vicissitude of life, that is, France which did everything to remain in Algeria no longer wanted Algerians in France. On the other hand, Algerians who did everything to reject all that is French are now doing their best to go to France.

The Maghreb region -Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia- shares the same colonial past. Colonized by France, the three countries find themselves in front of a European language that seeks to end the presence of their language. The inexplicable omnipresence of French in these postcolonial countries demonstrates the colonizer's ongoing authority in the Maghreb region.

France's colonization of these Islamic countries began with the conquest of Algeria in 1830, Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912. Algeria, however, was the most targeted colony. As accurately expounded in *Language Conflict in Algeria*:

> Algeria was the most 'French' of France's overseas possessions. The French considered Algeria as a territorial extension of France itself, and they implemented a deliberate policy of European settlement, cultural assimilation and attendant linguistic Frenchification. (Benrabah xii)

The French colonizer's insistence on the assimilation of Algeria culturally, linguistically and religiously was part of the annexation of Algeria as a French property. France's civilizing mission and settlement in the Maghreb region -forty-four years in Morocco, seventy-five years in Tunisia, and one hundred thirty-two years in Algeria- spread the beliefs of the colonizer and instilled French as a supreme language within the minds of these colonized nations.

Efforts and strategies of post-independence Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria to preclude the omnipresence of French after France's departure have failed to contain the discrepant sides. People from the three countries are known for their constant, involuntary code-switching between Arabic and French, but Algeria's linguistic trauma takes precedence. In Algeria, the clash of colonizer/colonized and Arabophone/Francophone has marked, and still marks, the Algerian reality. In this context, Benrabah explains that the ubiquity and supremacy of the colonizer's language was "part of the deal to end France's colonial presence in Algeria" (37). Therefore, the linguistic postcolonial clash in Algeria is a lost cause for Arabic. This being said, Mokrane's proclamation that -after France- Algeria is the largest French speaking nation (45) makes sense. It manifests Algeria's linguistic subordination which makes it francophone par excellence.

France's linguistic assimilation policy created a hybrid tongue. An Algerian citizen is most likely to start a conversation in Algerian Arabic (Darija), code-switch to French then return to *Darija*. The following random conversation is frequent amongst Algerians:

Person 1 : *Sbah el khir* ça va? *Washik, labess*?

Person 2 : Bonjour, labess el hamdoullah et toi?

Person 1 : *Kech jdid*?

Person 2 : Rien de spécial, enta *kesh jdid*?[15]

This unconscious switch between the two languages repeatedly presents itself in Algerian speech, especially in informal instances. The inclusion of French words is either done out of habit or to seem well-educated. In the first case, it connotes identity fracture and inability to pursue a conversation in one language. In the second case, it is a manifestation of prestige and linguistic power. Had the conversation been in Arabic and English, there would not be any sensibility or tension. English is historically neutral for Algerians. But, the thing with French is that it reminds them of the ghastly, colonial past. Withal, its ubiquity stands in the way of Arabic. The latter's situation in post-independence Algeria can, in reality, be described as a deliberate othering process. Mainly by reason of some people's inferiority complex, the use of French is a sign of prestige, power and education. It is the language of the elite as opposed to Arabic, the language of common people.

In "the Syndrome of the French Language in Algeria", Maamri rightly states that French remains the language of business and job market compared to Arabic (86). In spite of its absence in the constitution, the ubiquity of French is a reality known to all Algerians. In the job market, for instance, the Arabic language is of little, or no, value. It is French that meets the criteria of administrative positions. Those who master it are the ones with higher chances of appointment.

[15] Person 1: Good morning, you're good? How's everything?
Person 2: Good morning, I'm good, thank God and you?
Person 1: What's new?
Person 2: Nothing special, you? What's new?

The others either remain jobless or search for jobs that require no language skills -if available. Many aspects of life are affected by the language dilemma. Algerian literature, for instance, is splintered between two irreconcilable languages. The Arabophone writers are seen as patriotic writers who use language as a means of resistance. Through the appropriation of Arabic, they show how they preserve their own identity as opposed to those who promote the colonizer's language. Francophone writers, on the other hand, have a propensity to narrate Algeria's past and justify their appropriation of French as though it were a sign of betrayal to one's identity. Often, it is not language itself that proves patriotism or betrayal but the way it is used. In other words, do these Francophone writers favour France and subvert the Algerian story? This is what matters. Rachid Boudjedra contends that he did not choose French but the other way round. Assia Djebar who calls French "the stepmother tongue" (214) is aware of the dilemma and its political and historical dimensions. Still, she writes in French to re-tell Algeria's story without any subversion. The texts in this case are not affected by language but by the writers' memory and past.

In *Dhākirat al-Jasad*, language is among the issues Mosteghanemi highlights deliberately. The main characters Khālid and Hayat are both writers. The two write in Arabic and are both passionate lovers of their mother tongue. Hayat like the author herself- accentuates the importance of writing in Arabic even though she masters French. In a conversation with Khālid, she says that the mother tongue is the language of her heart (Mosteghanemi 62). Paradoxically, when they met in Paris, they spoke to each other in French. Here, linguistic alienation is sensed. This paradox, however, is but a reflection of postcolonial, paradoxical reality. In Algeria, there is social hypocrisy but it is obscured. Many speak proudly of the grandeur of Algeria's ancient heroism and how the martyrs fought for the land, the language, the religion and the dignity of all Algerians. Nonetheless, shortly after independence, it was France that no longer wanted

Algerian citizens. This means that some Algerians pretend to be patriotic enough to abrogate the colonizer's language, but they use it for grounds such as prestige.

3.2.2. Male/Female

In addition to the Algeria/France, Arabic/French set of dualities; the male/female binary is present through the main characters Khālid and Hayat, Khālid and Catherine. Each binary functions differently and has different dimensions and purposes. Hayat, an Algerian woman who speaks French, is of a contradictory nature just like Algeria itself. For Khālid, she is just an idea, a passion, a nation, a city and a wound not just a woman. The love story he constantly talks about is but a haunting whim and a scent of Algeria of Si Taher. Words such as: "Constantine. Where everything is you" (Mosteghanemi 4) or "I sentenced you to be Constantine" (85) and "woman in the shape of homeland" (208) externalize Khālid's obsession with Hayat as the city of his dreams and deceptions not necessarily as a woman. She stimulates his memory, his past and his wounds. Through her, he eyes the old Algeria –Remembrance of Si Taher- and the new Algeria –Her marriage to the corrupt Si Cherif. Being a participant in the war of independence, Khālid is the most legitimate character who can be the narrator. Nevertheless, the author deliberately chose Khālid for this mission because he is a man and history must be told by a man. Even though he stayed for six months then left, he is still more legitimate than Hayat even if she were the daughter of an ex-militant. In comparison to Khālid, Hayat's duality defies comprehension. While he fails to reconciliate between his memory and his reality, this woman -who has lost her father in the Algerian war of independence- succeeds in coexistence with postcolonial disenchantment.

In a similar vein, Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* is a critique of the corruption of the Algerian system after France's departure. She daringly states that all men fight for one person to take the seat at the end. The entire narrative is a revelation of a corrupt country whose wounded past still haunts its people through collective memory. Khālid's love story with Hayat

is but a literary necessity to meet the specificities of literature and attract the readers. This thesis contends that the love story is lived and interpreted within Khālid's mind. His obsession with the city of Constantine and Algeria is projected upon Hayat who reminds him of Algeria and of his deceased mother. In reality, the scenes in which Khālid thinks of Hayat are moments for the readers to ease off after the depth of the scenes related to Algeria's past and postcolonial nightmare.

In sooth, not only is the protagonist's fascination with Hayat interrelated to Algeria and to his mother. Being the daughter of the revered, ex-militant Si Taher renders her desirable for him. In the context and the mood of the novel, it seems strange that an ex-militant in his fifties desires his friend's daughter who is way younger than him. In the first chapter of the novel, Khālid's interior monologue shows us how he mixes between his mother, his homeland and Hayat. The enchantment sensed in his words "Constantine. Where everything is you" (04) and the epiphany coupled with disenchantment when he asks himself: "How had I once found an echo of my mother in you?" (08). More, the way he describes her as "woman in the shape of homeland" (208) speaks volumes of her presence as a metaphor for Algeria. As mentioned previously, Hayat is not merely a woman for Khālid; she is the pictogram of his homeland and his mother. She is his delirium.

In reality, the male/female binary is not associated with Khālid and Hayat only. Given that canonical, Western narrations have been the only conveyance of stories, the East has been domineered and feminized. According to Western narrations, the West is masculine whereas the East is feminine and submissive. In his book *Flaubert in Egypt*, Flaubert reduces the Oriental woman to exoticism, ecstasy and sexuality. She is described as a submissive body not as an intellectual individual or at least a normal person. This instance manifests how important authorship is. Indeed, the telling and the re-telling of first-hand experiences connote power, dominance and repute. That is why the West dominated. It was the only narrator of stories of

the East and the West. In the postcolonial era of re-thinking and re-writing the East, however, the stories are narrated from an Eastern standpoint. Masculinity is reclaimed.

3.2.3. Colonial/Postcolonial

Algeria's colonial history and postcolonial reality are central to Algerian literature. As expounded throughout the thesis, Algerian novelists have been stuck between Arabic and French due to France's assimilation policy. Duality of language because of colonialism is not like duality prompted by migration, and this renders language a moot subject in postcolonial Algeria. In *the Bridges of Constantine a*nd *Sāq al-Bāmbū*, for instance, one cannot deny the impossibility of treating duality in the same way. The protagonists Khālid and José/Isa do not perceive duality and bilingualism in the same manner because the colonized is not similar to the migrant. Khālid's memory is inhabited by home wherein Algerian dialect is spoken but he dwells in exile wherein French –the colonizer's language- is spoken. As far as language in Kuwait is concerned, Modern Standard Arabic is the official language but Kuwaiti Arabic is the spoken one. For sixty-two years –from 1899 until 1961- Kuwait was a British protectorate, which made constant contact with the English language necessary. Language dilemma is not one of Kuwaiti novelists' concerns as the case of Algerian ones. For José/Isa, he speaks both Filipino and English. The Philippines has been colonized by Spain so English is neutral for the protagonist. Yet, he prefers to write his novel -being a fictional writer- in Tagalog not in another language. In Kuwait –which considers him a migrant other- he barely knows Arabic. Still, there is no anxiety or historical trauma, which is sensed by Khālid, as regards the use of language.

Unmistakably, Mosteghanemi is one of the Algerian authors who are staunchly committed to Algerian history. Her commitment is conspicuous throughout *the Bridges of Constantine* which is imbued with historical, political, social and cultural insights. The setting of this novel is captivating due to the oppositive, sophisticated nature of the milieu vis-à-vis the history being chronicled. Both periods -colonial and postcolonial- are presented as two spaces wherein

Algeria vacillates between foreign and local domination and inequality. The Algerian Revolution, which started on November 1, 1954, is central in narrative by reason of its indisputable weight in the course of the liberation of Algeria. In the first chapter of the narrative, the protagonist Khālid Ben Tobal decides to start writing his novel, the novel we are reading, on November 1. This displays the sacredness of the revolution for Khālid as well as the impossibility of forgetting whence he came.

The colonial period is narrated through flashback. Khālid recurrently takes the reader back to the days of colonialism. Ben Tobal, a traumatized painter who lost his arm in the Algerian Revolution, is the connotation of trauma and disenchantment. Both author and protagonist are disgruntled with the postcolonial condition. Members of the author's family passed away during the 1945 demonstrations. Similarly, Khālid lost his arm in the war of independence and lost his friends in the battlefield. On top of them was Si Taher, Hayat's father. In reality, Si Taher is reminiscent of the author's father Si Cherif who was an ex-militant himself. Both Hayat and the author feel proud to have a father like that. In the narrative, Hayat keeps talking about Si Taher and the author's love for her father is unmistakable as well. Being involved in one way or another further enrages Khālid and the author because after all the traumatic experience, it was time to build the nation and have integrity. What happened in Algeria, however, was total chaos.

3.3. Resistance, Prestige and Reception in the West

Writing back to the centre as a form of resistance is central in postcolonial studies. Re-defining the East and re-writing otherness are among the tasks of postcolonial writers. In the decolonization period of African countries, however, the language writers should embrace to "write back" created disagreement amongst them. The two well-known instances of language use in postcolonial countries are Ngugi Wa Thiong'o -pro abrogation- and Chinua Achebe -pro appropriation. The former contends that decolonization is not exclusive to the land only, but

the tongue as well. Whereas the latter concurs that the re-telling of the African experience in the colonizer's language makes it no less African. Inevitably, every newly independent nation finds itself in confrontation with the complexity of language dilemma, or the linguistic duality. On the way to nation-building, the decolonized country must resolve the controversy over which language to use, one's own or colonizer's language. This is not an African issue. In the preface of *Kanthapura*, the Indian writer rightly contends that "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (Rao). Like Achebe, Rao writes in the colonizer's language –English- and states that the writer's mission is to re-tell India's past in a language that is not, historically, neutral to condemn the colonizer in its own language.

Unquestionably, resistance is at the centre of postcolonial literature and it is often echoed in the controversy created by language use, not only themes. As mentioned previously, the two leading figures of postcolonial literary writing, Ngugi and Achebe, offer us an old example of the contradictory understandings of the postcolonial period by the former colonized. Those two authors have –among others- been split between resisting the colonizer's language and between embracing it to re-tell the African/Asian stories of colonialism, its legacies and its aftermaths. Postcolonial novelists from Anglophone and Francophone environments seem to have adopted a propensity to infuse their literature with traits from their native cultures in an attempt to differentiate the original culture from the colonial legacy. As mentioned in chapter two, Kanafani's work is the epitome of resistance against occupation. It is impossible to separate literature from resistance of colonialism or any other tyranny because, in Kanafani's words, "My political position springs from my being a novelist. Insofar as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case." (qtd. In Coffin 98).

It is noteworthy that Mosteghanemi's novel is not only understood within its historical context but in relation to its translations[16] and reception in the West as well. To do justice to the narrative, one has to admit that its mood takes the reader in a voyage to the past and it succeeds in the creation of imagery. The themes coupled with the Arabic language –even though critics have reservations on the author's use of Arabic- are the narrative's winning combination. Given the sociolinguistic situation of Algeria in the 1990s, Mosteghanemi is meritorious of being an Algerian ambassador of the Arabic language in a dual country suffering from linguistic trauma. Alongside the Arabic language, Mosteghanemi's re-writing of an important portion of Algerian history is a mechanism of resistance against a male-oriented society. Although she chose Khālid for the narration, she still is the creative author whose sense of responsibility towards her nation compelled her to enter the historical scene and enrich it through literary writing. This type of literature is witness of lived pasts, broken dreams and despotic systems. People who never heard of Algeria and its painful past with France, for instance, are probably to happen upon literary works that detail Algeria's past experience. In other words, authors such as Taher Ouettar, ʿAbd al-Hamid Ben Haddouga and Ahlem Mosteghanemi are ambassadors for their country in the world through literature and translation. Therefore, the authenticity of narration and the lack of subversion are what make these ambassadors genuine.

On a different note, there are writers for whom commerce matters more than nationalism and patriotism. The market and its exigencies compel some postcolonial novelists to conform to the Western marketplace. The irony is that in the past decades such writers have not had a chance to speak –to be heard- and when the chance is offered, they consider the market more than the native culture. The hysteria of prestige and recognition in the West coupled with self-worth and validation a postcolonial writer –African or Asian- gains from the circulation of

[16] The thesis is only concerned with Mohamed Mokaddem's translation *Mémoires de la Chair* and Raphael Cohen's *the Bridges of Constantine*.

his/her works make some writers more of sellers than authors. Throughout history, the clash of cultures has been triggered by several reasons and reflected in different literatures. Apropos clashing cultures by reason of historical conflicts, the translation to and from languages of those clashing cultures are likely to undergo a voyage of cultural loss. Mostly for hegemonic, political reasons, some writers and poets participate in the subversion of their works through unfaithful translation. In this case, the authenticity and credibility of the writer diminish. In *Colonial poetics: Rabindranath Tagore in two worlds*, Sengupta claims that the Indian Nobel Prize winner, Rabindranath, has translated his works from Bengali to English with consideration of the shared history.

The Anglophone audience is not aware of Bengali language and culture. Therefore, self-translator Rabindranath has seized the opportunity to embellish and *depoliticize* his translated poetry according to what suits the Anglophone reader and market. Likewise, Mosteghanemi's French translation of *The Bridges of Constantine* is aware of and written with consideration of the Algerian-French colonial context. Such consideration is reflected in the dedication itself. In the original, the author dedicates the novel to Malek Haddad and to her father. On Haddad, she writes:

> To Malek Haddad
>
> The son of Constantine who swore after Algeria's independence not to write in a language that was not his own. So, the white pages assassinated him and he died of the cancer of his silence to become the martyr of the Arabic language. (Trans. Mine, Mosteghanemi)[17]

[17] The original dedication reads:

إلى مالك حداد..

ابن قسنطينة الذي أقسم بعد استقلال الجزائر ألا يكتب بلغة ليست لغته..

فاغتالته الصفحة البيضاء.. ومات متأثرا بسوطان صمته ليصبح شهيد اللغة العربية

One is not compelled to have background on Algeria's history of Haddad's story in order to feel the depth and beauty of such words. The tone of Mosteghanemi's dedication speaks volumes of Haddad's resistance to the colonizer's language -French. This resistance coupled with his valiant decision to stop writing after Algeria's independence are telling of the anxiety of writing in the other's language. The words "after Algeria's dedication" and "martyr of the Arabic language" are the keystone of the entire dedication –in addition to the oath not to write in another language. Such emotive –yet history related- words are among the paratextual devices that influence consumption and reception of the work in its original culture.

In Cohen's English translation, Malek Haddad is not part of the dedication. Perhaps the English-speaking audience is not familiar with or not interested in the historical emotions of Algerian society. Yet, the inclusion of such dedication would have internationalized Haddad's heroic resistance. The Anglophone world has nothing to do with Algeria's past and the omission of Haddad is not fully understood. How would the inclusion of that part of the dedication affect –negatively- the reception of the English translation? It would have boosted it and increased readership instead. Geographical, cultural, linguistic and cultural distances between the Anglophone world and Algeria come in the way of exchange but literature is a medium of exchanges –at least through translation. In this respect, the representation of Algeria in the West through translation of its literature of Arabic and French expression is supposed to be considerate of the country's historical and cultural specificities.

Taking a moment back to the French translation *Mémoires de la Chair* which, according to this thesis, is a slightly subversive rendition of the original, the translator intentionally leaves out the most important words of the dedication. One cannot tell whether or not the exclusion of those connotative words is the translator's, editor's or author's decision. What matters is that a narrative as peculiar as *The Bridges of Constantine* is emphatically not translated haphazardly. In other words, the author cannot keep her distance and any modifications are, most probably,

done with her consent. Mosteghanemi who interfered in the cinematic adaptation of this novel would certainly be aware of such changes. Therefore, whether it is her decision to remove the context from the dedication or not, she is both aware and responsible for it and this conclusion is also based on the analysis of Mosteghanemi's interview with Baaqeel.

The French translation "mutes the linguistic drama being staged [by the author]" (Holt 125). The author's insistence on using Arabic in an environment which is, for her, in favour of Francophony corroborates her postcolonial awareness, identity and resistance. Indeed, Algeria is a francophone country par excellence and French is seen as a prestigious language of the elite in postcolonial Algeria. The author is mindful of the sensibility of the inevitable Arabic/French divide in Algeria. Thus, using Arabic is a political stance against a past hegemony, Francophony and its othering nature. Mosteghanemi, reminiscent of Ngugi, abrogates the colonizer's language to narrate the past wounds in her own language and from the other's perspective. Even the female protagonist Hayat is keen on Arabic and declares: "Arabic is the language of my heart" (Mosteghanemi 62). There is no particular hostility towards or hatred for French as a language in postcolonial Algeria but in a historical context, these two languages cannot coexist since the existence of one negates the existence of the other. From a postcolonial point of reference, Arabic, marginalized for over a century in colonial Algeria, cannot be further othered and exiled in its own homeland and French cannot rightfully condemn the French colonizer as Arabic does.

In reality, not only does the French translation put an end to the "linguistic drama" (Holt 125) but it also displays the commercial side as well as the temporality of staunch commitment. The author's feelings of belonging, resistance and advocating in her own language are not reflected with the same strength and tone in the French translation. On the choice of translator, the author herself contends:

> The main problem I find is that all translators bring their own mood and method of linguistic composition. That is why I really wanted the translator to be a poet [...] the beauty of a text gets lost in a word for word translation and as a result, it loses much of its meaning. Those who read in two languages grasp the difference between the original text and the translated. (Baaqeel 146-147)

The structure of the sentence in Arabic differs from that of English and French, which makes the author concerned about the preservation of the original's linguistic form. Mosteghanemi's statement is a disclosure of her concern with the details which surround the translation and her meticulous attention as regards the reception of her translated literary works since they are ascribed to her after all. For her, the bilingual readers are mindful of the original text's voyage through translation. Thus, they know whether the translation is faithful or not. For these reasons, it is evident that the writer is cautious when it comes to the translation of her novels and she does not choose translators haphazardly.

In view of this, transformation and omissions in Mosteghanemi's French translation *Mémoires de la Chair* are put under scrutiny. Given that the author is an ardent defender of the Arabic language in postcolonial Algeria, a faithful translation into French would have been eccentric due to the complexity of the novel and its tension with the French culture, let alone a subversive one. In this respect, it is relevant to refer, once more, to Barthes who contends that language imposes itself on the text, not the author (143). In reality, it is possible for language to present and impose itself upon a text, though not fully, through subjectivity. The thesis, however, argues that the author is the master of his words. It is not the flow of words that lead the writing but the writer's motives. This, however, does not contradict the fact that reading the original is not the same as reading the translation because of the tension between source and target languages in the case of *the Bridges of Constantine*. According to Mosteghanemi's above-mentioned statement, the translator cannot translate without her approbation, and this

stands as proof of her awareness of the subversion in the translation. It becomes abundantly clear that personal attachments are to be twisted in order to suit the target audience.

Engrossed in fame and lights, actors and actresses have designs on prestigious awards to come before the world as universally distinguished artists. In this regard, English states that:

> When Nicholas Cage, accepting the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1996, thanked the academy 'for helping me blur the line between art and commerce,' he pointed […] that Oscars have become a huge marketing lever. (07)

Cage's remark offers a straightforward, accurate understanding of the commercial aspect of art that many artists conceal. Almost no artist would publicly and unequivocally refer to the commercial side of the 'artistic' awards. Most artists consider –or so it seems- merely the humane, artistic and aesthetic features of works or prizes without the acknowledgment of the commerce involved. As valiantly and plainly shown in Cage's words, the infusion of art and market, at least in this case, accounts for a "business-like system of production and exchange" (07). This distasteful encounter between cultural value and commerce is suggestive of the precedence of profitable exchanges over the honorific ones. The humane portion behind the recognition of a deceased sponsor's effort and excellence through awards that are "presented in memoriam" (49) is hardly questionable. Nonetheless, one cannot deny or overlook the commercial aspect of such practices in the refinement of institutions' reputation as well as the accession of their clientele as a token of emotional involvement and appreciation on the newly affiliated clients' part.

Similarly, the epidemic of stardom is now a sign of grandeur in academic disciplines. It is emphatically not a metaphor, but rather hysteria of prestige spread amongst writers in most parts of the world -if not all. As mentioned previously, the encounter between cultural value and market is in itself, and by necessity, an undervaluation of the supposedly non-commercial practices. It is plausible to read the arbitrary rise and increase of similar "events as part of a

'sea-change in cultural… practices since around 1972,' involving a shift away from the consumption of goods and into the consumption of […] 'ephemeral' practices" (English 77). Reconciliation between the everlasting cultural value and the "ephemeral practices" might be attained in case of sincere recognition and appreciation of masterpieces through non-profit support.

The literary scene, or market, is now supersaturated with awards. For a –marginalized- writer to win an award, s/he must touch a variety of exotic topics that guarantee consumption. Literary merit is candidly not the first criterion upon which a certain writer wins awards and recognition. As put in *the Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*, marginality itself has been reduced to and transformed into a commodity, an intellectual one, in postcolonial studies (Huggan viii). Along similar lines, Appadurai speaks of the "diversion of commodities from their original nexus" (28). What Appadurai refers to is the making of an exotic object even more attractive mostly by the removal of original context. This context is, more often than not, historical or cultural. The whole removal process is oftentimes a political necessity which is beyond the capacity of the marginalized. Literary awards and titles are signs of prestige achieved by the success of certain narratives.

The prestige that surrounds the original *Dhakirat al-Jasad* (1993) is mostly due to winning the Naguib Mahfouz Prize in 1998. This award-winning novel enters a new phase of international success and prestige after its translation into English and French. In the Arab world, it is one of the most read works. Undeniably, the popularity this work has gained in Arab countries made producers eager for cinematic adaptations but the author has always refused the idea in the fear of loss of mood and tone. Lastly, Mosteghanemi has accepted to make a series for Ramadan 2010. This adaptation appears to be a *faux pas* in the author's career. Although the cast was fitting and talented, the mood of the narrative was not translated in a way that would attract spectators. Most probably, Mosteghanemi's interference and her fear of her

novel's statue resulted in the fiasco of the series. In other words, cinematic adaptation should not have been a literal translation of the narrative's words. In reality, the mood and the use of standard Arabic deserve appreciation but the tempo is too slow for a new generation that is accustomed to movements, actions, etc. One should give credit when credit is due, as the saying goes, the theme song -performed by an Algerian singer and actress Amel Bouchoucha who played the role of Hayat- is atmospheric.

Cultural commodification reduces postcolonial literary productions into products ready for sale, irrespective of cultural loss. In this case, writers who only seek recognition become, more or less, merchants. Accordingly, the reader is treated as a customer to please at all events. The library is, then, a marketplace. Merchants' mission, in this chaos, is to convince the costumer to purchase. For this end, the merchants are in need of exotic, sought-after materials that guarantee consumption abroad. Now that the whole terminology changes from author to merchant, from reader to customer and from library to marketplace, authenticity of narrations is in itself put into question. As mentioned above, it is the removal of objects from their original context, cultural or historical, that makes them saleable. From this perspective, the postcolonial literary scene –industry- is full of writers who are obsessed with awards and fame -the same as actors/actresses who are in constant pursuit of prizes and Oscars.

In the last few decades, the hysteria of recognition and reception is on the rise. The literary scene currently knows many awards that are meant to celebrate writers' merits. In the Arab world, literary prizes include the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, won by Mosteghanemi for *the Bridges of Constantine* in 1998, which is offered to a writer whose novel is not available in translation. After winning the Naguib Mahfouz prize, the novel is automatically selected for translation to English by American University in Cairo Press. Sheikh Zayed Book Award by the United Arab Emirates is designed for talented Arab writers who enrich Arab culture. IPAF is by far the most prestigious in the Arab world. Alsanousi won IPAF

for his novel *Sāq al-Bāmbū* in 2013 and its English translation *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) by Jonathan Wright won the Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation in 2016. On an international scale, Nobel Prize for Literature, the Pulitzer Prize, Frantz Kafka Prize, Paris Literary Prize and European Union Prize for Literature are high-status awards that appreciate writers' talent through offering different, valuable prizes.

The postcolonial other and its uncommonness in the West serve as a passport to success beyond the frontiers of one's country. In *the Economy of Prestige,* English contends that the increasing hysteria of awards reduces the world to one that "can conceive of artistic achievements only in terms of stardom and success, and that is fast replacing a rich and varied cultural world" (03). The terms *bestselling* and *award-winning* on the book cover affect reception and attract people -consumers- to purchase. English also argues that nearly everyone has a literary award in today's cultural universe (17). With this being said, there are so many prizes in the literary industry that a great number of writers are offered literary prizes whether out of merit or not. Surprisingly, there are even awards that celebrate poor quality. Among those poor-quality awards are "the worst book of the year (the Gordon Coogler Award), worst translation of the year (the Rach Award)" (117). Also, there are "intentionally bad writing, such as the Bulwer Lytton Grand Prize for Bad Writing […] and the Hemingway Bad Writing Prize" (117). The latter, however, are intended as parody.

The other is being commodified in postcolonial literature. Bell hooks, a feminist and a cultural critic, argues that there are two aspects enabling the commodification of otherness: difference and intensity (21). Accordingly, the unique experiences of the other are of import for the literary market. Hooks further explicates how the other "can be seduced by the emphasis on otherness, by its commodification, because it offers the promise of recognition and reconciliation" (26). As clearly put by hooks, some writers appropriate otherness and focus on it in their writings mainly –if not only- for its benefits. Recognition, awards and fame are the

new trend in the literary industry. As mentioned previously, it is not merely difference that is commodified, but resistance as well. To crown it all, the language in which some writers write about the other is in itself commodified.

Taking a moment back to the translational gap, monolingual readers are not likely to fully understand the exchange between original and translated texts. They are not -linguistically and culturally- qualified to detect subversion, if any. The reader in this case, is either reading the original without the translation or the translation without the original as s/he knows one language. A monolingual Arab reader is most likely to value *The Bridges of Constantine* without the slightest idea about its translations. On the other hand, a monolingual Western reader is likely to appreciate Baria's, Cohen's or Mokaddem's translation without knowing anything about the novel's journey through translation. Therefore, when reading commitment literature, it is preferably to have a look at the original in order to determine whether the truths are being narrated faithfully or being adjusted according to the market's need. For this end, the reader –like the translator- should be bilingual.

As mentioned previously, resistance might not be the motive behind re-writing otherness. There are instances where committed writers shed light on identity and otherness for different reasons. Some just ride on the wave of the other's exoticism to guarantee a wider readership because the other is an exotic product for consumption in the West. This unknown world is sought-after, which seduces some postcolonial writers to embrace it for commercial grounds. The circulation of works is undeniably important to all writers across the world. Yet, the overlap of value and commodity puts the authenticity of renditions and translations into question. As long as books/novels are written to be read by given audiences, they are distributed and sold. This is by far a normal process. When the market becomes the writer's priority, however, it becomes somewhat abnormal and, sometimes, less authentic. Commodifying the other for

recognition, fame, materiality or awards has become the new resistance. This resistance takes into account the market and the audience more than the cause itself.

Besides *difference* that is commodified by some postcolonial writers; the commodification of resistance and language *per se* is noteworthy. Ostensibly, not only is difference commodified, resistance and language are, too, subject to commodification in different ways and contexts. Given the sensibility and significance of language in postcolonial countries, some writers play on readers' heartstrings through their patriotic literary contributions. Such practices occur once some authors embrace the native tongue in times when others choose to write in the colonizer's language. Accusations of pro appropriation writers coupled with exaggerated acts of resistance –through language or otherwise- often connote writers' pursuit of popularity. It is emphatically not wrong to seek readership and popularity, but the issue is that the homeland is not a product for sale. In Algeria's case, readership and market should not be the authors' priority because this would necessarily put the sincerity of the narrative into question. An Arabophone writer is not supposed to pinpoint the fact that s/he writes in Arabic or tell the audience that others stick to Francophony because of its benefits. Language in this case is not a means of resistance, but rather prestige. It is a form of prestige disguised in resistance.

For writers who come from marginalized/less powerful nations –like Mosteghanemi- to be well-known and recognized, they must be rebellious. Resistance in postcolonial literature has more or less become a way to guarantee success. In the Algerian context, Mosteghanemi's intention to appeal to international audiences -at the expense of the native culture which is partly lost in translation- is applicable to the "programmed success" (Casanova 121) premise. It is possible both in theory and in practice to show resistance, speak for the other, call for justice and disclose systems. All this requires rebellion which is prerequisite for reaching the planned victory that Casanova spoke of. The sought-after stories of the postcolonial other are now sold in literary markets, being raw material for the curious, Western audiences. In this sense, the

three parties benefit: The author, the translator and the market. Perhaps the only loss is caused to the original text which is removed from its context to suit the market.

Ostensibly, postcolonial discourse is mired in ambiguity and contradiction. At the heart of postcolonial literature lies resistance, writing back and re-defining the East. At the other side, there lies recognition, fame, awards, prestige and commodity. The hysteria of recognition and reception in the West seduce some writers to please an international audience, blasé of the loss of values. The desire of the East to be recognized in and approved by the West creates ambivalence and contradiction. The former, allegedly weaker, aspires to the latter's acknowledgment and acceptance. The latter is ready to consume products of an unusual world but it is not necessarily an approval or acknowledgment. For Gustave Flaubert, for instance, the Oriental woman is but a space for sexual fantasy as put forward in *Flaubert in Egypt*:

> The Oriental woman is no more than a machine: she makes she makes no distinction between one man and another man. Smoking, going to the baths, painting her eyelids and drinking coffee. (220)

Such misconceptions were constantly circulated and consumed by wide audiences. Flaubert's experience with oriental women is emphatically not a cornerstone for assessment. Flaubert who belongs to a dominant structure of power –Male, Occident- silences the female voice. This Oriental woman is misrepresented and is not given a voice to speak for herself. Thus Flaubert others and excludes her in his one-sided rendition. Counter-discourse –The woman's perception- is a must in the understanding of the whole narration, but the dominant discourse possesses power of production, and thus, the female Oriental voice remains repressed.

The popularity of certain Arabic literary works in the Arab world does not necessarily prefigure their success in the West. In reality, Arab and Westerner readers do not have the same literary taste by reason of the disparate cultures and histories. For the West, Arabic literature is not established enough to be read. Therefore, reception of successful Arabic literature in the

West might not always be as positive as the original. In this context, Serageldin argues that "the successes of […] novels in English by authors of Middle Eastern heritage highlights, conversely, that their target audience is limited to the Western reader. (435). Roger Allen contends that there are three novels –Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine,* Rajaa Alsanea's *Banat al-Riyad* and Ala' al-Aswani's *'Imarat Ya'qubiyan*- that their "translated versions have also sold extremely well in Western markets" (qtd. In Nash 28). Indeed, Mosteghanemi's English translation –Cohen's version- is a bestseller. Mostly due to its statue in the Arab world, *the Bridges of Constantine* has been discussed and studied by many researchers. The parts on Algeria's history –portions that make the narrative singular- yet its reception in the Western world is not as the Arab world.

Alzghoul argues that "the new title was a paratextual attempt to improve the reception and circulation." (235). Indeed, after publishing the first English translation *Memory in the Flesh*, it was not as successful as the original. The reception of Mosteghanemi's Arabic works in the Arab world is phenomenal. Her works are popular amongst Arab teenagers who are fascinated by her mastery of poetic language and the love stories. In the West, however, there is no room for comparison between the reception of her Arabic works in the Arab world and the reception of the translated and re-translated novels into English. Although the mood of the original has been translated faithfully, the Anglophone world is less interested with her works. Her novels are discussed and analyzed in Arabic and French but the Anglophone world seems to, intentionally or not, ignore her works whether in Arabic translations. Only little research is conducted on her in English.

Writing, silence, choosing a particular language and translating into certain languages are not innocent practices in postcolonial context. For writing, it can be a therapeutic process, a self-liberating account and a mechanism of resistance. Silence is sometimes a political stance as the case of Assia Djebar whose literary silence upon Algeria's decolonization cannot be

dissociated from her state of confusion after the colonizer's departure. The blank page in such circumstances in particular is not a coincidence. As for language, it is among the most controversial matters of postcolonial arena. Linguistic dependence is an inevitable outcome of an ancient, violent and ongoing colonization. Honestly, writing back in Arabic appears to be more legitimate but the colonizer would not receive the message –unless in translation. If the writing is done in the colonizer's language, the message is received but is it still authentic or would it consider the French audience and market? A question as such is often answered patriotically by postcolonial writers -in theory- but reality is –oftentimes- different.

The terms 'prestige' and 'reception' are interrelated in a sense that reception, whether in the author's home country or abroad, influences the work's prestige. Put differently, once a book or a novel is published in a well-known, prestigious publishing house and praised or reviewed by considerable literary critics or novelists, the work gains prestige through positive reception. Given that Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) is the focus of this research, Nizar Qabbani's appraisal which is on the book cover certainly adds to the popularity, value and prestige of the novel. Reception is of import in the study of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* which is full of culture-bound traits and political insinuations, which might not be welcome in the receiving culture. Being a capacious narrative with serious issues such as trauma of the Algerian past, the aftermaths of French conquest, France's legacy in Algeria and identity crisis, *the Bridges of Constantine's* resistance against a whole system of Francophony renders it distinguishable. Arabic is the first tool of resistance for Mosteghanemi who staunchly and openly opposes French.

3.4. "Linguistic Drama"[18] in Postcolonial Algeria

Writers' bilingual nightmare as regards the appropriation of the other's language is mostly experienced by writers with immigration or colonization history. Given that postcolonialism is the focal point of the thesis; the issue of language is approached from a postcolonial point of reference. In light of this, language is regarded as a telling sign of belonging and identity. Speaking a certain language connotes, as Fanon proclaims, the consumption of the culture in question (08). In reality postcolonial writers in favour of the Fanonian thought propound that the appropriation of the colonizer's language at the expense of the local one is a contribution to the disempowerment of one's mother tongue. Ngugi WA Thiong'o, writer of Decolonizing the Mind, is among the staunch advocates of this stance.

Chinua Achebe, however, is open to the idea that a language is mastered by the writer and not the other way round. For him, it is not language that controls the author but the author is in control. Achebe's use of the English language in an African manner somewhat indicates linguistic revenge through the *Africanization* of the colonizer's language. This is reminiscent of Raja Rao's chutnification of English. In *Kanthapura*, his first book, Rao maintains that "one has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (Preface). Ostensibly, the bilingual dilemma is both discernible and unavoidable in India. In the preface, Rao overtly expresses his discomfort with English, being the colonizer's language. For him, the English language is "alien" not for being a foreign language but rather for not being a language of "emotional make-up" for Indians (Kanthapura preface). It is, then, vital to differentiate between intellect and emotion as long as the intellectual mode of expression, English in India's case, neither presents contradictions nor decreases the sensibility of the Indian story.

[18] 'Linguistic drama' is referred to in Holt's "In a Language That Was Not His Own": On Ahlam Mustaghanami's "Dhākirat al-Jasad and Its French Translation "Mémoires de la Chair"

Language is moot in Arab postcolonial countries in general and in Algeria in particular. Its complexity in Algeria is for the most part due to the longstanding French conquest which sought the extermination of Algeria's identity. According to the 2016 Algerian constitution, Arabic is the official language in Algeria. It also avers Tamazight as an official language. But, nowhere does it refer to French or its use in post-independence Algeria. The inclusion of Tamazight alongside Arabic connotes recognition of the Berber communities in Algeria. This deliberate exclusion of the colonizer's language from the constitution shows the country's willingness to overcome the past and embrace its own language(s). In reality, however, the linguistic dialecticism is ongoing and French still enjoys the lion's share in postcolonial Algeria. Its ubiquity in the politics, administration and the job market is undeniable. In quotidian life, it is probable that two Algerians meet somewhere in (postcolonial) Algeria and speak in French. Other Algerians have created a hybrid tongue, which is neither Arabic nor French. This hybrid tongue is rather a mix of Arabic and French words and expressions. In literature, writers who are in a mission to detail Algeria's past are also split between Arabic and French.

As far as the ubiquity of French in colonial time is concerned, Deming propounds that "the use of French is often mistakenly thought to have been widespread in colonial Algeria […] French did not become entrenched in the population" (184). In spite of France's rigid policies to ban Arabic and replace it with French, Algerian people were not fluent speakers of French. The elite, however, could write and speak the colonizer's language. As far as postcolonial Algeria is concerned, Maamri accurately maintains that "contact with the French culture […] resulted in a profound linguistic alienation" (86). It was, however, more than "contact" with the culture; it was rather a whole cultural assimilation policy clearly aiming at the extermination of the Algerian culture. In the same paper, Maamri propounds that "the language spoken at home and in the street remains a mixture of Algerian dialect and French words" (86). This is a form of othering Arabic by intentionally creating a hybrid tongue. Algerians' identity crisis manifests

itself once an Algerian person starts speaking and code-switching between two languages, unable to speak in one. In other Arab countries, those of the Mashriq in particular, are in better control of the language they speak. Even if people are bilingual or trilingual, they rarely mix two or three languages in one sentence. This is purely an Algerian trait revealing of identity crisis and linguistic trauma.

Taking a moment back to Ahlem Mosteghanemi and her appropriation of Arabic, Hamad argues that "By writing in Arabic, Mosteghanemi accomplishes another victory over the system of colonization […] This implies that the liberation of the land was only the first step in decolonizing the nation, not the end of it" (44). Indeed, choosing the language of her people, Mosteghanemi manifests engagement, patriotism and belonging. Unlike many other Algerian writers, she embraces her own language despite all obstructions that unfold before her. This anxiety of language in Algeria comes from the fear of betrayal accusations. Those who write in Arabic are seen as patriotic while the ones who write in French are accused of disloyalty. In reality, it is not as simple as this. It is all the result of one hundred and thirty-two years of occupation that sought the extermination of Algeria's identity. Therefore, no one is supposed to be the hero or the villain. What if the Algerian writings of French expression re-tell of Algeria better than those of Arabic expression? This is by no means a justification for French use, but rather an objective reading of it.

Another look into the issue from a different standpoint would better explicate the previous point. This is done by borrowing Edward Said's contrapuntal reading. It is important to put things in their contexts and circumstances to fathom them. To begin with, the entourage is of vital importance when it comes to language acquisition. Children, for instance, learn from their parents, being the first teachers, they are exposed to. In view of this, if the parents speak Arabic and enrol their children in Arabic-speaking schools, they are going to master it and speak it. If there is exposure to French, on the other hand, the children are going to acquire this language,

speak and master it. In other words, language is not really a choice in the early phases of one's life. Later, one is able to choose and learn but it takes much time. By the departure of France in 1962, some writers were over twenty. In other words, the environment in which they spent their first twenty –or more- years was French-speaking. Authors such as Mohammed Dib who was forty-four, Assia Djebar who was twenty-six and Rachid Boudjedra who was twenty-one all fit under this category. Mosteghanemi, however, was an exception. She was born in exile, Tunisia, and her French-speaking father insisted on Arabic education.

In *the Empire Writes Back*, appropriation and abrogation of the colonizer's language are proposed through alternative techniques such as glossing which "gives the translated word, and thus the 'receptor' culture, the higher status" (Ashcroft, et al. 65). Glossing is best exemplified in *things Fall Apart* wherein the author unapologetically incorporates Igbo words and phrases as in the scene in which Nwoye learnt from Ikemefuna that "the proper name for a corn cob with only a few scattered grains was eze-agadi-nwayai, or the teeth of an old woman" (Achebe 30). The author's incorporation of Ibo words is a technique of including and valuing his own culture. Readers are confronted with an impossibility of imagination in front of untranslated Ibo words. Achebe's incorporation of untranslated words such as "*iyi-uwa*" [19] (65) and "*egwugwu*"[20] (68) is a technique of valuing Ibo culture. Nonetheless, the readers are confronted with an impossibility of imagination, they might understand the connotations from the context but they do not fathom the accurate meaning of these words. The other devices proposed by Ashcroft et al are interlanguage, syntactic fusion and code-switching.

Glossing, untranslated words and code-switching are integrated in Mosteghanemi's novel. Glossing is a mechanism of resistance against extinction and dismemberment of Algerian cultural traits. The protagonist's introspection on his "Mother's *miqyas*, the bracelet that never

[19] An Ibo word which stands for "a special kind of stone which forms the link between an ogbanje and the spirit world." (Achebe, glossary)
[20] An Ibo word meaning "a masquerade who impersonates one of the ancestral spirits of the village." (ibid)

left her wrist, as if she had been born wearing it" (Mosteghanemi 185) demonstrates the importance of the *miqyas*, which is still present in Algerian culture. For Khālid, it exceeds being an object; it is rather part of his mother and part of her identity. Glossing can also be included simply to display one's identity as in "Mais comment allez-vous, mademoiselle?" [21] (Mosteghanemi 43) and "*Washik*?"[22] (44). Algerian dialect and French are part of Khālid's, and Algerians', identity.

Untranslated words are incorporated to offer the original culture the higher position as in "*Amma* Zahra came back with a tray of coffee and a plate of *tammina*" (Mosteghanemi 80). *Amma* is a customary Algerian way of saying Mommie or Grannie whereas *tammina* is a home-made sweet basically made of semolina, butter, honey, and date paste. Other words such as *fatiha*, the first Surah of the holy Quran, and *kandoura*, a woman's dress, *henna*, a traditional hair dye, are also left untranslated. Ostensibly, Mosteghanemi gives precedence to Algerian culture, irrespective of clarity for non-Algerians and non-Arabs. She also employs code-switching to reflect Algeria's linguistic duality and trauma.

In the wake of Algeria's independence, many a novelist has written on Algeria's turbulent history. In doing so, they have approached the Algerian question through the appropriation the French language, except for few writers such as ʿAbd al-Hamid Ben Haddouga. Ahlem Mosteghanemi -considered the first Algerian woman to write in Arabic- belongs to the "elite" who could have written in French. Nevertheless, she has chosen the mother tongue. Her three works *Dhākirat al Jasad*, *Fawdā al Hawās* (*the Chaos of the Senses*) and *al-aswad yaliku biki* (*Black Suits You*) have gone viral in the Arab world and she has become an icon.

Appellations such as Feminist or Marxist are both limitative and appalling for a number of writers. In spite of his disapproval, Albert Camus -author of *L'Étranger*- is widely considered

[21] How are you, young lady?
[22] Algerian dialect for "How are you doing?"

to be existentialist. Mary Ann Evans writes under the pseudonym George Eliot to circumvent categorization. In the Arab world, Ahlem Mosteghanemi, like other authors, dislikes the limitative nature of appellations that limit a writer. In this respect, she maintains "I chose a male narrator to avoid being accused of writing my autobiography or accused of being a feminist writer" (Baaqeel 08). The author's claim does not change the fact that there is many an autobiographical trait than she is willing to admit in *Dhākirat al-Jasad*. Her use of the word "accused" in this context takes the discussion to other directions. Feminists, Marxists and Existentialists are all writers whose thoughts are based upon a particular belief or ideology. Whether they acknowledge it or not, the implied connotations are conspicuous once critics and readers read between the lines. In this way, the appellations ascribed to authors stem from their writings, not from the critics' imagination. Accordingly, Mosteghanemi could have easily escaped autobiographical accusations in the novel, but the details appear to be chosen carefully, and perhaps intentionally.

Both author and character hold the same name, Ahlem although, in the narrative, Ahlem is referred to as Hayat by the main *persona* Khālid. Like the author whose father, Mohamed El Cherif, was a participant in the Algerian war of independence, the character is the daughter of a respectful militant Si Taher. Both writer and protagonist are born in exile (Tunisia) in 1953 and they both originate from Constantine, the city of bridges. Surprisingly, both author and character have the same profession, they are writers who prefer to express themselves in Arabic even if their first language is French. Once Khālid asks which language Ahlem writes in, she replies "I could have written in French, but Arabic is the language of my heart. I can write in nothing else. We write in the language we feel with" (Mosteghanemi 62). These features cannot be mere coincidences even if Mosteghanemi herself denies autobiography. Another aspect that substantiates autobiography is attachment to the father figure. Mosteghanemi's attachment to her father can be traced in her novels wherein she dedicates them to him. He is ever-present

within her works, interviews, etc. Similarly, Hayat's father is an ex-militant who passed away during the Algerian war of independence and he is always present in his daughter's memory or in her conversations with Khālid.

As far as Mosteghanemi's Arabic writing is concerned, many Arab critics consider it a show of linguistic muscles. Her exotic use of language and her audacity make her writings distinguishable. Readers who advocate Mosteghanemi's style of writing are –more often than not- teenagers. Probably they have not had the chance to read Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfalūtī and Kahlil Gibran. In reality, the lack of a decent literary reference compels them to consume what they consider extraordinary. It is noteworthy that literary tastes differ from one individual to another and from one generation to another. In his book *Zāhirat al-tathāquf WA Atharuha al Modamira 'ala al-sard*[23] the Palestinian critic and novelist Waleed Abou Bakr accuses Mosteghanemi of linguistic affectation as well as acculturation. In addition to Bakr's critical remark, circumlocution is the hallmark of her writings. She recurrently uses the exact same words and ideas without any need for that.

3.5. *Dhākirat al-Jasad* and (In) Authentic Translation

The colossal contribution of translation studies to the intellectual community is undeniable. Through different modes of expression, translators make the circulation of works possible in a number of languages. A translator is not only supposed to be bilingual to deliver a faithful translation, he/she is supposed to be bicultural as well. Translators who master source and target language and culture are the ones whose credibility and naturalness are cogent enough for readers. Whether in the Arab or the Western world, translation's substantiality lies in its introductory and familiarizing nature. The voyage of literary or non-literary works outside their original territory corroborates the existence of other cultures, literature and histories which are worth translating and reading. Thus, these cultural, literary and historical exchanges disclose

[23] The Phenomenon of acculturation and its destructive effects on narration

humans' capacity to embrace the other through translation. Notwithstanding, what guarantees the authenticity of the translations if the readers are monolingual, and thus, unable to detect what is lost in translation?

Writers and translators have a common ground when it comes to writing and translating. The writer is anxious about the originality of works and the translator is anxious about the faithfulness of the translation. When the former falls into intertextuality, it is still justifiable on the ground of contact or unconscious influence whereas the latter's *faux pas* may entail subversion, at least in postcolonial contexts. Consequently, the translator's slip-up results in "the loss of aboriginal culture" (Spivak 16). For monolingual readers, it is impossible to sense the loss of the original's cultural values. In this case, the translation is taken for granted and it becomes a point of reference to the source culture in the monolingual reader's mind. The trio (writer/translator/monolingual reader) might come from different backgrounds, which creates misconceptions through mistranslations. An Algerian monolingual reader, for example, may not grasp the mood of Shakespeare's works through translation due to manifold factors, one of which is the lack of equivalence in Algerian language and culture.

Bilingual readers are more likely to understand the relationship between original and translated texts. Whilst studying a literary work in juxtaposition with its translation, they immediately appreciate or depreciate the translator's work. Assessment, in this case, is based merely upon the readers' mastery of both source and target language. A bilingual Algerian reader is most likely to value Cohen's translation of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* or Blair's translation of Djebar's *Fantasia: an Algerian Cavalcade*. Again, the evaluation is correlated with language alone. On that note, even bilingual readers do not necessarily reach total sum conclusions of whether a translation is faithful to the original or not.

Similar to translators, readers should be bilingual and bicultural because reading is not a passive process wherein they absorb all available materials without questions. Readers are

supposed to read critically, criticize constructively and ask intelligently. Political, historical, religious and cultural manifestations, for instance, must be put under scrutiny to fully fathom the translator's position. Once the translator's position is clear, it becomes easier for readers to determine his/her orientation. Another question presents itself in this respect: Should the translator remain neutral in all cases and irrespective of his/her own position? Arab translators would leave their imprints on the target text if translating a work on a transnational cause. In a similar vein, Jewish translators would leave their mood which reflects their own frame of reference. It is, therefore, incumbent on readers to consume translated works with caution as long as the matter of neutrality is not guaranteed at any price.

The translation of the other's anxiety creates ambivalent renditions that can be in favour of those who tell the story. Writing the other differs from translating it. It is emphatically not merely a matter of subversion or writer/translator perceptions but language itself is, at times, a tool of disparagement and exclusion for marginalized minorities. There are challenges befalling the translation of the other's anxiety and attempts to reach reconciliation between profound, authentic anxieties and shallow, semi-authentic translations. From an Algerian postcolonial perspective, the English language is historically neutral -unlike French- yet fails in the translation of core passages from Ahlem Mosteghanemi's novel by reason of the deficiency of this cosmopolitan language in grasping the depth of the Algerian tumultuous trauma. Translating Algeria's trauma into words is no easy task and near-impossible when translating it to a cosmopolitan language.

The turbulent colonial history of Algeria by and large explicates the singularity of Algerian literature which sprouts from crisis and presents itself in form of resistance. Emblematic of ambivalence and duality, Algerian literature is irretrievably split between two cultures whose historical opposition still haunts Algerians in postcolonial period. This raises questions about the viability of the French translation *Mémoires de la Chair*. Writing is emphatically not the

same as translating into it, and thus, Mosteghanemi's accusations of Francophone writers and her consecration of Arabophone ones are ambivalent, not patriotic.

The French translation itself creates a perplexing atmosphere for readers. The convoluted nature of the original makes the French translation by Mokaddem somewhat untenable and futile. In other words, there are passages that cannot be translated properly. For instance, when the protagonists Khālid and Hayat speak in French and then he pauses in introspection, asking himself how and why they are both speaking in French. In translation, this passage –among others- is not to be translated faithfully. If translated faithfully, it does not make much sense to the French reader who is not familiar with the source language. Another example is when the two make an agreement to speak merely in Arabic. How would a reader enter the mood of the narrative while reading such a passage in French? These are just two simple instances. The protagonists' use of Arabic cannot be dissociated from Mosteghanemi's stance. They both write in Arabic and they are constantly thinking of or talking about the mother tongue as opposed to the language of the colonizer. Like Mosteghanemi who deviates from the Algerian francophone literary production, Hayat and Khālid abrogate French and embrace their language.

In literature, human exchanges and experiences, personal or otherwise, are oftentimes raw material for novelists' literary works. Their creative writings are, by and large, informed by first-hand or surroundings' experiences. Excellent novels throughout the history of literature mostly include historical narratives which chronicle the history of a certain nation. Telling or re-telling the struggle of the previously colonized countries, for instance, connotes sensibility, trauma, remembrance, resistance and combat. For these reasons, among others, the cultural value should not be deformed through mistranslation to please the target audience, nor should it be commodified. Commerce is by all means legitimate but trading with one's memory of past struggle is both inappropriate and unethical. The commodification of cultural values, which is

a literary betrayal to one's belonging if one is allowed to say, for the sake of prestige and a wider readership disappoints readers and diminishes writers' authenticity.

Translations into English and French guarantee the circulation of books across the world, being two hegemonic languages. From a peripheral standpoint, these two imperial languages are, for the most part, informed and shaped by the cosmopolitan. The centre cannot decentre itself. In the debate around appropriation of the colonizer's language, Chinua Achebe has it that English carries the burden of the African experience. This claim is cogent, but ambivalent at the same time. When writers from the margin appropriate the colonizer's language to inform him of his wrongdoings, does the latter apologize? Or do those writers seek recognition and readership across the world? In the case of Achebe, English happens to be an international language spoken worldwide. Thus, the clash might be met with understanding in comparison with Ngugi's abrogation of the English language.

3.6. Identity Crisis and Sexual Encounter with the Other

Identity is a complex concept which is not easily definitional, especially in a postcolonial framework. This thesis draws on Paul Ricœur's *Oneself as Another* when it comes to the identity of the subject. According to French philosopher Ricœur, the Self is supposed to answer the question: 'Who?' This way, it becomes a personal identity open to manifold portrayals and interpretations. For Ricœur identity is divided into three types: the ipse-identity (changeable), the idem-identity (constant) and the narrative identity. In the same book, the author interestingly propounds that "the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other" (Ricœur 03). Both Self and other do exist in close, though somewhat opposing, relation to one another. This manifests the necessity of alterity, *altérité,* in the identification of the Self as a discerned entity. De Beauvoir, who is influenced by Friedrich Hegel and Jean Paul Sartre, also emphasizes the role of the other in the perception

and distinction of the Self. The three concur that in order for the Self to be and exist, there has to be *another*.

In postcolonial literature and comparative literature, scholarly attention has been perceptibly directed towards vital contemporary concerns such as identity and otherness which are amongst the hallmarks of postcolonial studies. The conundrum of identity is, constantly and excessively, scrutinized by writers and scholars –mostly from the margin- by reason of re-writing, re-narrating the past subjugation, marginalization, othering, misrepresentation and misconception. The absence of this trait –permanence through time- ostensibly is indicative of a fragmented identity. Fragmentation occurs when someone ceases to identify, recognize and locate himself within a certain milieu. Identity crisis is present in Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and it is manifested through Khālid. The discernible distortions in post-independence Algeria coupled with the hypocrisy of those who seek positions torture him and invigorate his deception.

The turbulent history of Algeria cannot be left aside when identity crisis is at the heart of the subject. The protagonist Khālid belongs to the old Algeria that does not exist anymore. He no longer identifies himself in postcolonial times. In Paris resides his body but his soul is in search of remnants of the past. The arm he lost years ago in the war of independence was once a sign of dignity and heroism, but it is a sign of shame and disability now. Given that individuals' identity is often shaped by their societies, Khālid is "a homeland's orphan" (Mosteghanemi 214) with a fragmented identity. How countries perceive and treat citizens, disabled or not, is fundamental in the formation of self-perception. In wartime, for instance, men are most likely to have indissoluble injuries. Conspicuously, their countries and the citizens are supposed to show these heroes respect and reverence. Nonetheless, injured ex-militants are mostly seen as impotent people without the contextualization of this impotence. Physical impotence that occurs as a result of participation in wars should be considered as a medal of bravery.

Surprisingly, societies are in favour of normality. Perhaps this is why shell-shocked ex-militants undergo depression and are prone to have suicidal thoughts.

Throughout history, subjugated people from the margin used to suffer in silence. Black people, women, refugees and migrants were and are still considered as others. The long-standing combat of these silenced voices against racism, gender discrimination, exclusion and marginality is still ongoing. They are, oftentimes, seen as second-class citizens and they are maltreated. The history of othering people is replete with ghastly stories. *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomone Northup is among the most emotive slave stories and memoirs in the history of slave narrative. It tells the story of Northup after being tricked and kidnapped into slavery.

As far as white women are concerned, the English writer Virginia Woolf is excluded from society and othered due to her gender. In *Outsiders Together Virginia and Leonard Woolf*, Natania Rosenfeld offers an account on Leonard's unremitting support to his wife, Virginia, and his constant assistance through her mental breakdowns which persistently trigger suicidal thoughts. Apropos their complementary relationship, Rosenfeld contends that "In opposed yet complementing ways, the Woolfs were outsiders together -she privileged by her background, but excluded from centres by her gender, he privileged by gender and marginalized through background" (19). Being a Jewish, Leonard vacillated between acceptance and repulsion of his Jewishness that render him an outsider. Virginia, homeschooled, was marginalized by society if compared to her brothers. No wonder that the estrangement of the Woolfs found relief in their togetherness and that was of immeasurable assistance to Virginia who, were it not for Leonard, would not be as prolific, strong and creative as she maintained in her diaries.

In the Arab world, the struggle of undocumented Syrian refugees in Lebanon is exquisitely represented in Capernaum by the Lebanese director Nadine Labaki. The film won the Grand Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. In the film, Labaki sheds light on the horrific situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Its authenticity comes from the non-professional actors who are

actual refugees and migrants. The protagonist is a Palestinian twelve years old boy named Zain. In real life, Zain is Syrian, but plays the role of a Palestinian. This boy represents the stolen childhood of thousands of Syrian and Palestinian children. War in the two countries compelled people to seek asylum, rendered others impotent and killed millions. In one of the court scenes, the referee asks Zain why he wanted to sue his parents and the latter replies: "*L'ennou khallafouni*"[24](Capernaum 07:57). Zain's abrasively vulnerable tone and excruciatingly acute gaze in this scene in particular demonstrate the child's innermost pent-up angst. The lived discrimination, injustice, maltreatment, and exclusion are omnipresent in refugees' daily life in the receiving countries.

Alongside the aforementioned afflictions, disability and physical difference considerably influence individuals' identity. One's identity can be constructed/deconstructed or fostered by external factors, one of which is physicality. Internal strength coupled with external normality result in a sense of belonging somewhere. Normality refers to what society considers normal as opposed to physical disability. To belong somewhere then entails sharing the same features, physical or not, as the citizens of a particular place. This is applicable to Mosteghanemi's protagonist Khālid who is portrayed as a man with a splintered identity. His trauma and ambivalence worsen his perception of life and postcolonial Algeria. During the first years of the revolution, he lost his arm and the incident shaped his identity thenceforth. This physical alienation -which results in trauma and identity crisis- tortures him because it is imposed on him by the country he fought for. Put differently, it is post-independence Algeria that made his injury seem more of a disability without memory, without history. The removal of the injury from its historical context leads Khālid to alienation.

In reality, the relationship between men and women from different cultural backgrounds depends mostly on their capacity to understand and contain difference. When these two cultures

[24] Because they brought me to life

are, or were, at clash, the relationship is mired in contradiction and mixed feelings. In case the man belongs to the colonized while the woman to the colonizer, sexual intercourse becomes a way of revenge, a metaphorical (sexual) conquest. In *Season of Migration to the North*, Tayeb Salih introduces us to Mustafa Saeed, a protagonist who avenges through sexuality. Upon arrival to England, Mustafa declares: "I have come to you as a conqueror" (Salih 51). Mustapha travels to England with a prefigured, oriental attitude and objectifies European women. Consciously or otherwise, he uses sex as a weapon to conquer European women's bodies to satisfy his masculinity and compensate for his inferiority complex. When the woman belongs to the colonized and the man to the colonizer, it is most likely the same scenario. Revenge takes many shapes when women are in confrontation with men who belong to the colonizer. The re-establishment of the masculinity of the East becomes ostensible and clear with the analysis of some passages from Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Salih's *Mawsim Al Hijra ilā al-Shamāl*. The Algerian man who dwells in Paris –Khālid- and the Sudanese who lives in London –Mustapha- represent the masculine East which colonizes the West through sexual encounter with the Western woman. Khālid's hegemony with Catherine -through sexual encounter- somewhat compensates for his impotence, inferiority and otherness. Both Mustapha and Khālid attempt to compensate for their otherness in a slightly similar manner. The difference lies in Mustapha's preconfigured, intentional revenge. Khālid, on the other hand, is not aware that his sexual intercourse with Catherine is, for the most part, a form of revenge for the past conquest.

In Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna Morgan avenges in her own way. Rhys who writes back to Conrad pictures England as a cold place. She deliberately employs the word *dark* in the title is a metaphor for the darkishness of whiteness. The omnipresence of female characters is done consciously to compensate for the absence of women in Conrad's novella. The protagonist is a hostage of her own nightmarish dream and she is constantly perplexed as she cannot accept

her own reality. Jean Rhys also re-wrote Jane Eyre to give voice to the marginalized. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys gives Bertha -Antoinette- voice to re-tell her story.

In reality, the divide is not merely between East and West but there is another dissension in the Arab world: The Maghreb/Mashriq dichotomy. Novelists from the Mashriq –such as Egypt, Syria and Lebanon- are deemed superior to their fellow Maghrebi novelists. Perhaps such Mashriqi sense of superiority is due to the fact that the language of *al-Maghreb al-Arabi* –the Arab West- is often contaminated by French and/or Spanish as in the case of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. It is true that these three countries were colonized and their language was *frenchified*. Nevertheless, Arabophone writers from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are in full mastery of Arabic. This Mashriq/Maghreb phenomenon is not only limited to the literary scene. Ostensibly, *al-Mashriq al-Arabi* –the Arab East- finds it difficult to understand North African vernacular Arabic. This presents itself over and over again with the spread of videos, reality TV shows, Arabs Got Talent and the like. The encounter of a Maghrebi –North African- with a Mashriqi –Middle Eastern- demonstrates two rich heritages which take roots in ancient times.

Undeniably, a Maghrebi person would code-switch more often. An Algerian, for instance, is most likely to use Arabic and French words in one sentence. If this Algerian happens to be Kabyle, s/he would most probably infuse Tamazight words as well. Individuals in the Mashriq are prone to maintaining an entire conversation in one language compared to people from North Africa. This, however, is purely historical. The Algerian language is still colonized and traumatized, and decolonization is not an easy task. Instead of making fun of North African language, which is contaminated by French, the Mashriq must have a historical look at the history of linguistic trauma. Only contextual understanding would facilitate cultural and literary exchange in friendly atmospheres between the Mashriq and the Maghreb.

To return for a moment to the relation between sexuality and colonialism, Alsanousi's female character Merla –José's cousin- who is a "mestiza" (Alsanousi 90) with a "sculpted

body" (91) is of import. Her mother is a Filipina maid and her father is some unknown European man. Merla's sentiment of identity fracture springs from the fact that her mother's body has been colonized by a European man. Although she belongs to both colonizer and colonized – even if she denies it- she considers herself fully Filipina and abhors the West. Like Mustafa who uses sexual intercourse to prove himself as a man and to overcome his oriental complex, Merla's beauty makes European men submit. In one of her emails to José, she plucks up her courage to confess, for the first time, that she feels satisfied when she tortures European men. She openly maintains: "It gives me pure pleasure when they bow down to kiss my feet […] I see them as just pathetic chickens" (Alsanousi 253). In the same email, she continues "I get dressed. I turn my back on them and take pleasure in their pleas, without letting them get anything out of me" (253). Her lesbianism is now understood but certainly not justified. She abhors men because of her mother's past, and thus, she enters a world where men have no presence whatsoever. Her relationship with Maria remains no more than an escape from her reality and disappointment.

Through Mosteghanemi's male character Khālid and Alsanousi's female *persona* Merla, the authors showcase that sexual encounter with the other speaks of colonial consciousness. The way the colonized see or have sexual intercourse with the colonizer is not detached from the colonizer/colonized binary internalized within the psyche. In *the Bridges of Constantine*, Khālid's relationship with the French woman –Catherine- is nothing like the aforementioned instances. Although there is no true love, their affair is, at times, unconditional. The two are straightforward in their demands, sexual or otherwise. Khālid and Catherine are both conscious about their shared history, cultural clash and untenable encounter. One feels that they do not even try to understand each other, but they still meet in his apartment. For him, Catherine sees his art not his arm. Apropos his relationship with her, he declares: "There was a certain physical complicity between us that made us happy together, a secret unrestrained happiness legitimized

by madness" (Mosteghanemi 51). Their 'physical complicity' connotes mutuality in their couple. Catherine satisfies her sexual needs and Khālid exercises his masculinity. Both Khālid and Catherine feel no impositions, obligations, responsibilities or conditions towards each other and the very use of the word 'physical' makes it clear that their relationship does not entail mutual love or understanding.

3.7. Nostalgia in *the Bridges of Constantine*

In *Reflections on Exile and other Essays*, Edward Said discusses lost identity and exile through emphasis on the contrapuntal approach of those who experience exile as opposed to those who hold one perspective and belong to one home. As shown in chapter two, nostalgia scholars contend that it started as a neurological affliction and that it had positive and negative connotations. In this context, it is not merely a feeling of longing or remembrance. It also entails mourning over a lost past or time. In this sense, nostalgia affects perception. For instance, those who are compelled to languish in exile for different reasons create imagined homes within their mind. Thinking of the homeland after leaving it, or being relegated, creates a sense of alienation and seclusion. What is more, one is subject to confound the reality of home with the new interpretations of it. Among the factors that affect the perception of the exiled/migrants are distance and nostalgia. In reality, nostalgia to everything that has to do with home deepens one's sense of belonging yet concomitantly fosters one's alienation.

In the case of Mosteghanemi's protagonist, Khālid, Algeria is the fragmented home which repeatedly disappoints him. Khālid cannot overcome it because he has never had a direct confrontation with it. The angst of marginalization sentences him to exile, nostalgia and in-betweenness. Unlike Si Cherif, Khālid -the nostalgic ex-militant- is not in pursuit of Algeria's money, but rather its recognition. It pains him that Algerians who fought for independence are forgotten while those who did not fight are now in government positions. For him, the feeling of abandonment is heavy. Throughout the narrative, his language is full of metaphors related to

the homeland. He is literally obsessed and inhabited by Algeria. Throughout the novel, he is nostalgic to Algeria, its past and his mother. Nonetheless, there is no earthly road that might lead him to Algeria (The one he remembers) or to his deceased mother. Upon his residence in France, his perception of the homeland is affected, and thus, he oscillates between memory and reality, Arabic and French, Hayat and his mother, Constantine and Paris, past and present. These contradictions exacerbate his being an orphan for the second time when he realizes that Algeria no longer sees him as a revered *Mujāhid* but rather as a disabled person.

On a similar vein, Khālid -who is aware of his nostalgia to a homeland that is neither recognizable nor repairable- asks himself in introspection: "Is nostalgia a medical condition? I was afflicted with you, Constantine." (Mosteghanemi 237). In this passage, the protagonist recognizes the neurological dimension of nostalgia. In reality, his nostalgia began with the death of his mother. The convergence of mother, homeland and Hayat –At least in his mind- creates vague images of Algeria. His mother is the safe side of his beloved Algeria and her death renders him doubly orphan. The homeland, for Khālid, is Algeria of Si Taher. As for Hayat, she is the postcolonial nightmare. An instance of nostalgia that dovetails his mother, Hayat and Algeria is when Khālid says: "How beautiful that my mother lived again in the bracelet around your wrist. Your appearance brought the homeland back to life." (44). Such words corroborate his irretrievable nostalgia that he constantly projects on Hayat.

As a matter of fact, the author's fusion of two generations through a male protagonist and a female antagonist is not persuasive. Khālid's part is cogent; it is Hayat's storyline that makes little sense. She is portrayed as an educated woman whose father fought for the country's independence. She lives in France and she is independent. She is a writer who prefers Arabic to French. This choice of language is in itself a sign of postcolonial awareness. Paradoxically, she –without any warnings or explanations- accepts to marry Si Cherif even though she knows he is corrupt.

> I use her as the symbol of Algeria that was, and still is, the cause of Khālid's torment. She is paramount in this novel as she represents an Algeria that betrayed him and got married to a corrupt military. (Baaqeel 08)

The author's words explicate -to some extent- the rationale behind her use of Hayat as a way to nurture Khālid's agony but they do not explain Hayat's conduct. In other words, any person – irrespective of gender- who is born in exile and has for years been deprived of their father who has fought for the liberation of the country is not likely to willingly marry Algeria's enemy, a corrupt military.

Taking a moment back to Khālid, in his exile –Tunisia- he paints his first painting entitled *nostalgia*. It is painted after losing his arm in the revolution. Apropos of *nostalgia,* Khālid thinks: "In truth, Nostalgia wasn't a painting. It was an *aide-memoire*, the draft of dreams that had been overtaken by fifteen years of nostalgia and bewilderment." (Mosteghanemi 93). Nostalgia to Algeria of Si Taher, the revolution, nationalism and his nostalgia is split between longing for and mourning a lost past. His obsession with and attachment to the past is stirred by abstract sensations such as Hayat's perfume which reminds him of Constantine. It is also stimulated by concrete objects such as *khalkhāl* and *henna*.

In *Nostalgia: Content, Triggers, Functions*, Wildschut et al maintain that "nostalgia refers to a personally experienced past" (976). Khālid's past experiences related to the revolution render him perpetually nostalgic to a period of time which is forever lost. In that period, Si Taher was the idol and the symbol of nationalism. Perhaps this is what makes Khālid unable to compartmentalize Hayat. For him, she is the woman, the mother, the homeland, Si Taher and the desire. This contradictory nomenclature which readers shape through his perception of her renders Hayat the impossible woman. Thus, for Khālid, the emotions for that past exceed its being a relationship with the motherland, but it is also about the father figure, Si Taher. Hayat is the memory. She is a mediator between him and Si Taher, between him and Constantine. The

incomplete aspects of Khālid -physical or psychological- are nurtured by Hayat's presence. For him, she is the whole and he is the partial, she is the homeland and he is the outsider. In her presence, Khālid is inhabited by a different version of himself, perhaps the person he wished to become.

Nostalgic people are displaced and exiled from time and space. In the narrative, Khālid maintains: "Nostalgically, I would recollect other words from another time and revolution." (Mosteghanemi 143). This shows the protagonist's nostalgia for a time which is irretrievably lost. Nostalgia in Khālid's case is associated with a painful experience, and thus, it is a mix of longing, deception and despair. It makes him feel alone and let down by an entire nation. For this reason, he takes refuge in art to express his feelings of angst and overcome them. Another trait of being nostalgic is that he cannot return to his homeland even though he goes back to Algeria. Put differently, his idea of the homeland is primarily associated with his mother, Si Taher and Hayat. Sadly, the three are no longer reachable. While his mother and Si Taher are deceased, Hayat is getting married.

Unwillingly splintered between two contradictory worlds, Khālid slowly sinks in despair. His constant oscillations between memory and reality, present and past, between his Algerian-ness and his stay in France, his mother and Hayat are all paradoxical thoughts which sentence him to alienation and in-betweenness. The sense of alienation and in-betweenness is not due to his disability; Algeria is his real torment and disability. Thus, there is an ongoing conflict between his memory and his reality. Moreover, not only is he at war with the inner and the outer worlds, but the Self/Other divide is present throughout his journey. This divide forcibly places him in a position of inferiority, being part of the colonized.

3.8. Towards Healing: Painting Pain and Leaving It Behind

The emergence of psychological trauma in postcolonial discourse is attributed to Franz Fanon who, through *Black Skin, White Masks,* externalizes individuals' interior complexities

sensed by the traumatic experiences such as genocide and war that remain entrenched within their minds and affect them psychologically and/or physically. At the heart of historical trauma are entire nations that experienced massacres. Case in point: The Holocaust genocide wherein roughly six million Jews have been callously murdered by Nazi Germany during WWII. Native Americans are another proof of historical trauma. The lack of acknowledgment of trauma causes anxiety, depression, suicide and psychological disorders.

Another example of historical trauma that has prompted intergenerational effects is the French conquest of Algeria. The 1945 massacres, the annihilation of whole tribes, the cultural assimilation policy, identity extermination, *frenchification* of Algeria are all manifestations of historical trauma that haunted and still haunts Algerians. As long as France still did not offer an official apology, as did Italy to Libya, Algeria's trauma is not likely to be overcome. What is more, the psychological damage of the invasion is enough reason to exacerbate Algerians' identity crisis, sense of alienation and fragmentation. The Algerian postcolonial literary scene is replete with stories of the past and the aftermaths of France's policy in Algeria. Splintered into two, novelists re-tell Algeria's traumatic experience in two languages and this is *per se* a sign of division caused by French assimilation policy. What matters, however, is the one in control of the narration as long as the Arabic tongue is still colonized.

Art is often associated with therapy. Individuals who are deeply wounded –for whichever reason- sometimes escape reality and embrace another world. It can be writing, and thus, processing one's feelings of distress, low-esteem, depression and anxiety. Productivity and creativity boost self-esteem. Therefore, art-making is a therapeutic apparatus that prevents the demise of individuals or nations. Writers from postcolonial countries are in constant search for new interpretations to obscured truths. Through re-writing what the Canon approved as the only rendition of past stories, they externalize ideas that have been lurking in their minds. In doing so, they also regain recognition amongst the entire world, including the colonizer. To speak in

response to all Western subjugations in Africa and Asia is in itself a triumph, let alone condemn colonialism and call for recognition, apology and repentance.

In Ghada Al Samman's *Beirut 75*, the protagonist Mustapha is a poet. Reminiscent of Ngugi's persona Matigari, Mustapha is in constant search of truth and justice. In *the Bamboo Stalk*, Ghassan who is a *bedoon* is a poet. In the same narrative, the Filipina young woman Merla is not a writer but she liberates herself from self-denial and angst through writing long emails. The main protagonist José/Isa is not a writer too, but he is the fictional author of the narrative itself. In order to overcome Kuwait, he chose to write its story from his perspective. In Alice Walker's *the Color Purple*, Cecilia recurrently writes letters that touch on her deepest feelings to God. Through writing to God, she found her way of self-liberation. These are few of many literary examples wherein writing emancipates and heals innermost wounds.

As mentioned all through the thesis, Mosteghanemi's protagonist is a one-armed painter. His first painting called *Nostalgia* is drawn in exile, which renders it special. Its weight and exceptionality are due to the conditions in which it was painted. *Nostalgia* is not just a random painting; it is rather Khālid's first therapeutic bridge in a journey of self-rediscovery. Having lost his arm in the War of Independence in 1955, he left to his first exile –Tunisia- where *nostalgia* came into being and became the witness of his exile and disability. The name of the painting reflects Khālid's state of being after being forced to leave the Front of Liberation to receive healthcare in Tunisia's hospital. In the wake of Algeria's independence, Khālid is not satisfied with the new government which goes against the principles of the revolution. Therefore, he heads towards his second exile –Paris.

Before his homecoming, Khālid and Catherine reach the farewell point. Strangely, he offers her all the paintings. She could not understand why he had to leave and he explained:

> Let's part hungry. For various reasons, history has condemned us never to be completely satisfied with one another, not to completely love one another. Now you

> have more than one copy of me. Hang my memory on your wall, even if it's an antidote to memory. (Mosteghanemi 301)

Khālid emphasizes the impossibility of wholeheartedly loving the other. Even though Catherine was beautiful, good and hungry for love, Khālid is mindful of the physicality of their relationship which is wrought with past afflictions. Catherine is the French bridge that is opposite to Constantine's Bridges. She accepts him the way he is and appreciates his art. Yet, he belongs to and afflicted with Constantine.

Pertaining to Catherine's ownership of Khālid's paintings by the end of the narrative, it remains somewhat perplexing. Is it Algeria's memory that the protagonist -willingly and wholeheartedly- offered to Catherine? Or are they real paintings which found appreciation in France? In this scene, the author's political stance and postcolonial awareness should not be dissociated from such a conduct. Baaqeel's interview with the Algerian author touches on the aforementioned questions. Baaqeel alludes to the thought that Algeria would remain safe in the hand of the colonizer more than of the Algerian government (151). Mosteghanemi agrees with the interviewer's analysis but explains that the protagonist Khālid leaves his paintings to Catherine because "France values his talent and his art while Algeria does not" (152). Indeed, Algeria is too selective in a sense that it favours allies who paint her beautifully and perfectly.

By the same token, Algeria's struggles make no room for the appreciation of art especially immediately after independence and especially by 1990's. Baaqeel's analysis sounds rational, close to reality and more reasonable than Mosteghanemi's. Even though Algeria does not appreciate his art, why not keep the paintings for himself? It is part of his memory that he gave away, not simple paintings. What would Catherine make of *Nostalgia* and all the other bridges? Admittedly, Algeria does not appreciate his art but does France understand his art and its depth? Khālid's perplexing practice is emphatically not a cultural exchange, but rather a political allusion. Khālid's memory was and will remain laden with the Algerian past even when giving

away his paintings. In other words, it is liberating to paint his painful past but not enough to heal from a past as heavy as Algeria's. This being said, Khālid is not fully healed.

Once asked about her presence in *the Bridges of Constantine*, Mosteghanemi proclaims that she is part of all her protagonists given that she writes from herself (Baaqeel 09). Indeed, the author's presence is instantly recognizable. Yet, such a statement is unfathomable. Like other writers, she denies autobiography and again fills the narrative with personal details. As though she is conveying a message to critics that she admits her omnipresence in order not to be accused of autobiography, which is unmistakable. After the departure of colonial forces, authors and intellectuals such as Gayatri Spivak (India), Ngugi WA Thiong'o (Kenya), Tayeb Salih (Sudan), and Assia Djebar (Algeria) have written back to the centre and proclaimed their voice to tell their own version of the story. The inseparability of language and culture, however, has constantly triggered a sense of ambiguity and contention in the postcolonial scene as regard to the appropriation and the abrogation of the colonizer's language. Franz Fanon presumes that "every colonized… finds himself face to face with the language of the colonizing nation" (9) and Ngugi propounds that "language carries culture" (16). Djebar, however, adopts the French language to narrate the happenings from an Algerian perspective.

3.9. Conclusion

The chapter has brought into focus the overlap between otherness and the market in postcolonial literature. Obviously, not all postcolonial writers appropriate otherness and postcolonial condition for the circulation of their works, but through Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* a sample is shown. The commodification of resistance, language and culture coupled with the transformed French translation reduce the narrative from being one of resistance to a product for sale, regardless of cultural loss. Taking its cue mostly from the works of Graham Huggan and English James, the chapter also shed light on the economy lying behind the composition/translation of some postcolonial narratives. Behind resistance and patriotism,

there are contradictions and ambiguities which put whole writings –literary or otherwise- into question. What is the main concern of postcolonial literature? Is it not writing back and re-defining the East from an Eastern frame of reference? Apparently, things have changed over the course of the years and with the advent of globalization. The world has become hysteric and many writers compete over awards, recognition and fame. As bell hooks suggests, otherness is commodified for fame. The next chapter underscores Alsanousi's writing of the other with(out) subversion *vis-à-vis* Jonathan's (in) authentic translation of *Sāq al-Bāmbū* in an attempt to determine whether or not reception and circulation of works in the West contribute to the subverting the narration to appeal to Western audiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

(IN) AUTHENTIC NARRATION: WRITING AND TRANSLATING THE OTHER WITH(OUT) TRANSFORMATION

> "If only my parents could have
> given me a single, clear identity,
> instead of making me grope my way
> alone through life in search of one"
> (Alsanousi 47)

Chapter Four (In) authentic Narration: Writing and Translating the Other with(out) Transformation

4.1. Introduction

The disproportion between the Self and the Other and the continuous quest for an identity discerned from others, irrespective of race, gender and class have noticeably encumbered the Kuwaiti writer Saud Alsanousi whose novel *the Bamboo Stalk* perfectly exemplifies double alienation, duality and identity crisis. Through the half-Kuwaiti half-Filipino protagonist José Mendoza/Isa El Tarouf, Alsanousi explicitly offers a critique of the inequitable social system. It also draws attention to class-consciousness and the situation of the other in Kuwait. Written from Isa/José's point of reference, the narrative reclaims of the other's voice and his right to re-tell his story and confront Kuwaiti people with their reality. The protagonist is othered in his mother's country, the Philippines, and his father's, Kuwait. Thus, he remains in-between.

Throughout his journey from the Philippines to Kuwait, Isa/José -who is in pursuance of identity- is shaken by the irrationality of Kuwait, its class-consciousness and its exclusionary nature. The dream of paradise his mother, Joséphine, instilled within him from an early age turns out to be a mere nightmare. This chapter juxtaposes Alsanousi's attempt of writing the other with(out) subversion with Jonathan's (in) authentic translation to determine whether the circulation of works and reception in the West compel the writer to subvert the narration to appeal to Western audiences or not. Unlike Mosteghanemi's subversion and linguistic drama, Alsanousi's narrative gives free play to the other in the original as well as the translation. This is mostly due to the difference of these works' nature. In other words, writing/translating the migrant other is emphatically not like writing/translating the trauma of the colonized other.

4.2. Voices from the Margin

Compulsory detachment from one's home/homeland triggers psychological alienation and societal inadaptability. The prospect of home is not easily definitional. In consideration of the foregoing, a throng of scholars hold disparate views as regards the nomenclature of home. In *Reading the House: A literary Perspective,* Mezei and Briganti claim that "Our consciousness

needs to locate itself in a particular space, to find a home, to articulate its homelessness, its longing for home" (839). In addition to being an emotional attachment, home can be "a physical or nonphysical place or situation with which one identifies and where one is and feels unconditionally accepted" (Etoroma 103). According to the definitions, home is a state of mind, inner peace and being accepted. For Blunt and Dowling, there is a distinction between house and home, the latter surpasses the physicality of place, and encompasses an emotional state of being and belonging. Mezei and Briganti argue that home is constructed within one's consciousness wherein one is placed or displaced. Etoroma maintains that whether physical or not, home is about unconditional acceptance. Consequently, the three concur that home is interlinked with a feeling of belonging, irrespective of its being physical or not.

As defined in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the marginalized is that who is "relegated to the marginal position within a society or group". Black people, oppressed women, ethnically different people are all –involuntarily- part of a systematic marginalization conspiracy that is ostensibly ongoing, and without any grounds, privileging a certain group over another. Social, cultural, geographical, political, and even physical, injustices perennially present themselves in acts of oppression, exclusion and superiority. The margin, which is presumably weak, is in need of a space that enables the externalization of its beingness, irrespective of the imposed vulnerability –which might, in reality, be an imagined weakness compelled by the oppressor to continue to govern and control. Women, black people or anyone who is *different* cannot, and should not, be disparaged for a reason better known to the oppressors- this reason is most likely an urgent need to feel one's strength through the other's weakness.

Validation and recognition of the margin, however, are at the hand of the centre. In other words, feelings of being marginalized by a bigger, more powerful -probably more attractive- centre create unfathomable contradictions and senses of subordination and inferiority. Then the margin is, consciously or otherwise, in pursuit of validation at the same place that negates its

existence or diminishes its importance to reassure and re-validate itself. In the absence of validation and recognition, the margin takes it upon itself to overcome the misrecognition and, hopefully, reach a state of self-recognition. For this end, the marginalized have to speak up and debunk the recurrent misconceptions around them.

However, voices from the margin might not be heard at first given the vulnerability of their positions –cultural, ethnic, economic, political, etc. In order for the world to hear any voice in times of globalization and advancement, power is necessary. But, how is it possible for a marginalized other to speak and be validated despite the inferior position ascribed to them? In this case, there is one possibility that enables the margin to decentre the centre: To control the narration. The real thing with marginalization is that it is more like a hierarchy. Each party silences the other. The East is marginalized by the West, women are disparaged by men, blacks are discriminated by whites and the Southeast is othered by the East that is *per se* marginalized by the West. This hierarchical scheme always finds a weaker party to silence and oppress. This is how the centre gains power, strength and dominance. To reach a tangible change that favours all parties, it is the mission of the oppressed to decolonize themselves from this psychological war and decentre the centre.

The Arab world, being the focus of the thesis, is emblematic of miscellaneous afflictions by reason of political corruption, cultural diversity, social injustice, and so forth. Part of these sufferings is reflected in literature. Prison Literature, Literature of Resistance, Literature of Crisis and Literature of the *Bedoon*, for instance, are among the literatures that are devoted to the embodiment of the excruciating experiences of prison, war, colonialism, and unbelonging. Literary and non-literary instances of prison and resistance writings include Nelson Mandela's *Conversations with Myself*, Aymen Al-'Atoum's *Yasma'una Hassissaha* (*They Hear the Sound of the Fire*) and *Ya Sahibay Al Sijn* (*O the Owners of the Prison*), Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *the*

House of the Dead, Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature* and Ghassan Kanafani's *Palestine's Children*.

Alongside the aforementioned works, Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* can be said to be a work of resistance. The novel deviates from the traditional literary works and raises questions that are pertinent in today's world. Its unconventional, daring nature rejects and resists a whole system of othering, prejudice, exclusion and class-consciousness. Alsanousi daringly shows the reader the other face of Kuwait, blasé of criticism. Other Kuwaiti novels, in reality, deal with otherness, but Alsanousi's narrative in particular is a detailed critique mirroring a fake side of Kuwaiti society. Alsanousi's hybrid characters Ghassan, Merla and José/Isa are the marginalized personas to be analyzed. The three are in search of recognition, validation and a sense of belonging within their communities. Through them, the author scrutinizes serious, societal unresolved issues in Kuwait. Male dominance and ethnic superiority are common in the world today but being a without –the case of Ghassan- is exclusive to some Gulf countries, among which is Kuwait.

4.2.1. The *Bedoon* (The Without)

Similar to the postcolonial authors who write back to the centre, Alsanousi's composition of *the Bamboo Stalk* conspicuously connotes a critique of a hierarchical society. This novel is a reaction to observed wrongdoings, maltreatment and exclusion of the other. Put accurately, it is the main character –José/Isa- who writes back to the exclusionary, class-conscious society. In this narrative, the other is not only the half-Kuwaiti half-Filipino young man. It is Ghassan who belongs to the *without* and Merla who abhors European men. While José/Isa wants to be included, Merla wishes to conquer the European man and Ghassan's wish is to be seen as a citizen. These voiceless people –among others- who represent real-life struggles and tangible realities regain their voices to speak for themselves in this literary work. Alsanousi introduces their stories of struggle to the world and offers them a space to be visible.

Chapter Four (In) authentic Narration: Writing and Translating the Other with(out) Transformation

More often than not, minority groups who are left outside the social stratum in many parts of the world. In the Arab world, some countries are more exclusionary than others, and thus, those who are different are deprecated and maltreated. As expounded in chapter three, the other is also someone who is compelled to be an outsider in his own homeland like Khālid Ben Tobal. Being different, or one-armed in his case, is no longer a sign of heroism after the decolonization of Algeria. Rather, losing his arm in the war of independence is a disability which calls for pity, exclusion and, sometimes, disapproval. Writing the protagonist's ongoing struggles within an exclusionary society demands commitment and authenticity because of the sensibility of such issues. In Arabic literature, this other is, often, a woman in pursuit of her own liberation from a man-ish society. However, in the literary works under scrutiny, the other is a traumatized ex-militant, an excluded, migrant other, a hybrid woman –Merla- and a *bedoon*.

Bedoon is an Arabic term which literally means without. In this context, the term is short for 'without nationality' or *bedoon Jinsiya*. The term should not be confounded with 'Bedouin' which translates to *Badawi* or *Badu* in its plural form. The latter means nomad whereas *bedoon* refers to a community of citizens without citizenship. Amongst the repressed voices the without –or the bedoon- appear to be the strangest and the least common of all oppressed communities. They are considered as a stateless community that, according to the concerned country, resides illegally. As far as the Arab world is concerned, the *bedoon* are mostly positioned in Gulf countries but they exist in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Morocco as well. Appellations such as *bedoon*, *bidoon*, *bidun*, and *bedun* all refer to this group which is denied citizenship and nationality. By reason of the inexplicably deplorable conditions of the *bedoon*, a whole new genre of literature rose. Literature of the Without –or *Adab Al Bedoon*- emerged as a soft power to introduce the *bedoon* community to the world. It gave voice to this oppressed community and made their fragmented voices heard inside and outside their countries. In reality, the rise of *Adab Al Bedoon* dates back to the Age of Ignorance. In that period, it was delivered in a form

of poetry. One prominent instance is that of ‘Antarah Ibn Shaddad Al ‘Absi, known as Antar, who was expelled from his tribe *Abs*.

Surprisingly, around twelve million *bedoon* exist in the world, with an approximate two-hundred twenty thousand resident in Kuwait. This phenomenon, however, is not exclusive to the Gulf region and the Arab world. In 1933, the German Thomas Mann –Nobel Prize Winner of 1929- was deprived of his citizenship. The famous poet Nazim Hikmet lost his Turkish nationality in 1951 and he regained it *in absentia* forty-six years after his death. In the Arab world, Naguib Sorour’s nationality was taken from him under the rule of Gamal Abd El Nasser in 1959. In Iraq, Mohamed Mahdi El Jawahry was stripped of his nationality in 1963, but he got it back five years later. It is noteworthy that the literary scene of the Gulf region not as it is today. In the 1950’s and 1960’s, not all people had the privilege of education in the. Therefore, in order for poetry of the *bedoon* to reach as many audiences as possible, it was delivered and transmitted orally. This genre of *bedoon* poetry was mostly manifested in the poems of the *bedoon* poet Suliman Al-Fulih who later obtained the Saudi Arabian nationality.

The emergence of literature of the *bedoon* underlines the sufferings of the *Bedoon* in contemporary times and it is oftentimes associated with Nasser Al-Dufairi, for his staunch commitment to the *bedoon* cause. A *bedoon* himself, Al-Dufairi writes to pinpoint the astringent situation of the without who are left outside the social stratum. They have no access to governmental education, free hospitals and public services. The inequalities and oppression against the *Bedoon* have become visible to more people across the world through literature. On the psychological scale, it is harsh not to be a citizen of a certain country. For this reason, a good number of *bedoon* have suicidal thoughts. In this sense, writers of the *bedoon* write to tell their countries and the entire world: *I breathe; therefore, I am* or *I write, therefore, I am*. This committed literature reclaims the identity and the citizenship of a whole community situated in many parts of the world.

The works of Al-Dufairi, who passed away in Canada in 2019, present themselves as a core companion to *Bedoon Literature.* After his death, Anwar Alsaad translated Al-Dufairi's literary works into English to make the world hear the untold stories of the without. In one of his well-known works *Caliska*, the prisoner claims: "My country is my eternal disability from which I will never heal"[25] (Trans. Mine, Al-Dufairi 11). This is the very first sentence of the narrative. Nasser Al-Dufairi's works are like a companion to this literature which is born from the bitterness of unbelonging to one's country. In spite of bitterness, exclusion and inequality, literature of the *bedoon* is aesthetic and creative like any other genre of literature.

Leading figures of *bedoon* literature in the Gulf region include the poet Suliman Al-Fulih who adapted the *Bedoon* cause in his poetry since the 1970's. Alongside Al-Fulih, Dakhil al-Khalifa and Ahmed al-Dusari were also prominent in the poetry scene. In the narrative scene, Ismail Fahd Ismail, Nasser Al-Dufairi, Saadia Mufarreh, Bouthayna Al-Essa and Saud Alsanousi. Other writers who are themselves *bedoon* include Khālid Turki, author of *thalathah Mina Shamal, three from the North* which was banned in Kuwait. Mona Kareem and Shahd Al-Fadli also belong to the *bedoons*. These authors and poets have –among others- drawn international attention to *Bedoons* through their literary writings. The circulation of such works through English translations enables international audiences to be aware of the *bedoons* who are languishing in exile in their homelands.

As for the deplorable situation of the *bedoon* in *the Bamboo Stalk,* it is represented through Ghassan. In the eyes of Kuwait, Ghassan is not a legal citizen, and thus, his foremost wish is to become a citizen. It is harsh to be born in a country –Kuwait in Ghassan's case- that does not approve one's existence. All it offers is a name, not an identity. As *bedoon*, people's sense of belonging is traumatized and splintered. Ghassan cannot travel abroad after Kuwait's

[25] The Arabic reads:

"وطني هو إعاقتي الأبدية التي لن أشفى منها أبدا" (الظفيري 11)

independence even though he was "a soldier in the army" (Alsanousi 19) and fought in the war against Iraq. Like Kuwaiti people, he was born in Kuwait to Kuwaiti parents. Strangely, his siblings and parents are Kuwaitis, but he is *bedoon*. One of his mishaps is that he loved Hind, Ghanima's daughter, but could not marry her because of his *without-ness*. The name –reputation- is important for El Tarouf family. Quite predictably, Ghanima would not allow intermarriage between Kuwaitis and *bedoons*.

José/Isa is shocked by the peculiarity of Ghassan's story and Kuwait's exclusionary nature. He cannot understand how one is born in a certain country, defends it as a soldier and still not be considered a citizen of that country. Such complications are all beyond his comprehension. In this regard, he reflects in introspection:

> If he had been a sardine born in the Atlantic, he would have been an Atlantic sardine. If he had been a bird in the forests of the Amazon basin, he would have been an Amazonian bird. But although Ghassan's parents were born in Kuwait, and he too was born in Kuwait, although he knew no other country, had served in the army and defended the country when it was under occupation, he was still a bidoon. (Alsanousi 165-166)

In this passage, the author's voice is discernible. Through the protagonist, Alsanousi offers a critique to Kuwait and to other countries that strip their citizens' nationalities and leave them in a state of anxiety, unbelonging and trauma. Ghassan seems reluctant to speak were it not for José/Isa's insistence. This shows the state of despair and the difficulty of change.

4.2.2. Women

Throughout history, women have been excluded and oppressed by men and society. This man/woman, superior/inferior debateful binary is constantly raised in most societies –if not all. Female representation in literature is still the preoccupation of many literary critics and researchers who are interested in female absence/presence vis-à-vis male (omni) presence.

White women have been othered by white men and society. Black women have been othered by white women, men and society. Amongst other writers and scholars, Simone De Beauvoir contributed colossally to the liberation and the empowerment of women. Her concept of alterity is of viability when it comes to the construal of the convoluted relation between Self and Other. Her magnum opus *the Second Sex* brings about gender issues and female disparagement. Women are in constant confrontations with a phallocentric society that favours masculinity at any price for purely biological grounds. This man/woman dichotomy, however, is not among the concerns of this study, and thus, emphasis is rather laid upon the hybridity of woman (through Merla) and the manner in which she overcomes her insecurities and regains her identity.

As shown in chapter three, Mosteghanemi's antagonist Hayat is seen and portrayed from the protagonist's perspective. This woman takes the shape of the nation and she is pictured as a past disappointment, not a woman. Through Khālid's introspection, readers get to know Hayat and realize that she is Khālid's projection of a different reality on her. In other words, she is representative of the generation of postcolonial era with its contradictions and ailments. In this respect, Khālid only sees himself in Hayat. He is Algeria's past and she is Algeria's postcolonial reality. In *the Bamboo Stalk,* women's anxiety stems from a variety of reasons. In the case of Joséphine, a Filipina ambitious woman with dreams, it is poverty that compels her to escape her motherland, the Philippines. Her inopportune east-to-east journey from the Philippines to Kuwait, however, marks the beginning of othering, exclusion and ill-treatment stories. There are also Ghanima, Khawla and Hind who can be examined here, but emphasis is rather laid upon José/Isa's cousin Merla.

Similar to her cousin, Merla is a hybrid young woman who is in constant search for herself. Like him, she struggles to find her location within society. For both characters to find themselves in the outside world, acceptance of themselves should come from within before

searching for identity and location within society. In both narratives –Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's- the body appears to be a source of anxiety for Merla, José/Isa and Khālid. Oddly, Merla's beauty –precisely her European-like features- is what pains her and reminds her of her unknown, European father. For José/Isa, it is his facial appearance that reveals his Asian –Filipino- identity in Kuwait. In Khālid's case, the missing arm is an empty space –physical and psychological- which constantly reminds him of the painful past and the present-day deception.

In order for these three characters to overcome their hybridity, trauma and anxiety, they take refuge in art. Khālid connects with the world around through painting. It is a therapeutic manner to console himself and keep going. José/Isa decides to write at the end of his journey. Through writing, he gets rid of Kuwait's negative side and attempts to overcome his cruel experience. Pertaining to Merla, she is not a person who expresses her feelings openly. Thus, it has taken her much time to decide to tell her cousin about her innermost feelings of angst and loss. Through writing long emails, Merla's psychological state of being is disclosed and José/Isa gets to understand her better. In her first email to him, she tells him he's the only man she has no hostility towards. In the same email, she contends: "In twenty-two years I still haven't found myself. I'm still looking." (Alsanousi 252). Unmistakably, It is her innermost hatred for her unknown European father that fosters her belligerence towards all other men. It is also this reason that compels her to abandon her femininity and embrace homosexuality.

Merla sent her cousin another long email, revealing her fears, deceptions and aspirations. She explicitly elucidates how she makes use of her beauty to take her revenge from European men. Her European-like traits are exploited against Europeans who are in pursuit of physical pleasure. For her, those features are a source of anxiety and distress as she maintains:

> In my beauty all I see is a sign that marks me out from those around me and reminds me of my mother's past and the fact that my father was some despicable European bastard. I find myself compensating for my own inadequacy by loving the

> Philippines and everything that is Filipino, as if with this love I can erase the traces left on my face by my European father. (Alsanousi 252)

The compensation for 'inadequacy' and injustice through nationalism becomes Merla's mechanism of self-defence and vengeance. For her, the European other is a loathsome intervenient who brought death and misery to the Philippines. Being different, she could understand her cousin and embrace his split. In reality, the email connotes self-liberation and manifests Merla's willingness to heal from her past.

In addition to loathing her unknown, European father, Merla has always been oppressed and cursed by her grandfather Mendoza who often calls her 'illegitimate'. The first man she gets to know in her life is her grandfather and his conduct -oppression, violence, spitefulness and ruthlessness- shocked her. In the same email, she finally confesses to José/Isa that the letters MM in her tattoo are the initials of her name and her grandfather's, not her boyish friend Maya. Although he always maltreated her, she still had hopes in him and wanted to be accepted, appreciated and loved by him. In her self-liberating email, she tells her cousin that her being illegitimate never devalues her because her charm is what attracts people the most (Alsanousi 252). Here, Merla is trying to compensate for her illegitimacy by her attractive looks which make her the centre of attention.

In reality, Alsanousi's female character –Merla- and Mosteghanemi's male protagonist –Khālid- have loads of attributes in common. The two treat the occident other with Oriental sensitivity towards their identities. For Khālid, the encounter with the other through sexual intercourse with Catherine satisfies his masculinity as a man and heals his wound as an Algerian ex-militant. Although Hayat is the sought-after woman –or the homeland as he calls her- Catherine is part of him. In this case, Khālid resembles wounded, colonial Algeria, Hayat represents the nightmarish, postcolonial reality and Catherine is France. Through her marriage to the corrupt Si Cherif, Hayat contaminates the venerated status of her father Si Taher but

Mosteghanemi succeeds in offering a realistic portrayal from a male's viewpoint. In doing so, the author deliberately detaches herself from femininity and embraces a purely male vision.

On a similar vein, Merla who seems perfunctory and shallow is, in reality, a hybrid woman in search of recognition, reassurance and, above all, in search of herself. She has blue eyes, brown hair and a pink complexion. Nonetheless, she knows much about her own reality and the history of the Filipinos' combat against the Spanish colonizer. This struggle shaped her personality and her harsh life rendered her indifferent to some extent. Thus, she has become a contradiction. Her European looks reminded her of the European father she loathed. Consequently, Merla's (sexual) relationships with European men are mired in revenge and abhorrence. Being a "mestiza" (90) with a "sculpted body" (91), she takes advantage of her physical beauty, which resembles that of Europeans, to emotionally torture men.

After self-revelation through email writing, Merla goes through self-doubt once more and decides to commit suicide. Her cousin who is in Kuwait freaks out but there is nothing he could do. He only emails her and waits for her replies, but to no avail. Afterwards, he recalls that he has her password because he is the one who created her email account. Once he signed in, he realized that his emails are being read. It was such a relief even though he was not certain Merla was the one reading them. Apparently, her old emails encouraged her cousin to make a confession and let her know about his feelings. Merla's absence continued until the end of the narrative wherein the protagonist described his son Rashid. The reader realizes that José/Isa married Merla at the end.

4.2.3. Migrants

Migration is the mobility from a socio-geographic area to another for a long or unlimited time. In the history of migration, reasons behind this change of place –perhaps culture too- range from socio-economic to political grounds. The home of origin is probably a place of anxiety and poverty, which forces many people to migrate irrespective of consequences. In the

Maghreb region, Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans tend to travel to Europe, especially France. By reason of the old, historical contact –conquest- the populations of these countries know France and they most probably have relatives there, which makes their movement to France tenable. Other less privileged citizens who come from deprived families in India, the Philippines and Pakistan seem to prefer the Gulf region, namely Kuwait and Qatar.

In *the Bamboo Stalk*, Migrants' struggles in Kuwait are portrayed through the characters Joséphine, José/Isa and Ghanima's workers. Escaping poverty in her home country and an authoritarian father, Joséphine ventures to take an east-to-east journey in search of a job to live with dignity. Her master –Ghanima- maltreats her from the beginning for superstitious reasons. As luck would have it, Joséphine's arrival to Kuwait is a bad omen for Ghanima. In that period, a bomb fell near the Emir's motorcade. Whenever she sees her, she remembers the incident of the Emir. And this is enough to be maltreated and seen as a bad omen by Ghanima. Rashid is the only member of El Tarouf family who speaks to Joséphine and treats her as a human being. As time goes by, Joséphine starts to have feelings for him then they become closer. One day, they both ride a boat and sail together. Shortly after that, Joséphine discovers her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse without marriage is considered adultery in Rashid's religion –Islam- and it is seen as a sign of disgrace in Kuwaiti society. Therefore, out of momentary enthusiasm, Joséphine and Rashid decide to get married after her pregnancy.

Ghanima's rejection of their marriage is because of society and the name of the family. Once Rashid confronts his mother, she blames him saying: "And your sisters, you selfish, despicable man. Who'll marry them after what you've done to the maid?" (Alsanousi 196). The gaze of others is more important to one's happiness according to the mother. She does not even think of religion and that what he has done in reality is adultery. Nonetheless, she only thinks of society, which is the attitude of many Arab countries. It is this mentality that contributes to prostitution, disobedience and sins. When what people say matters more than one's principles

of Islam, the demise of moral values is an inevitable outcome. Rashid's solution was to send both Joséphine and their son to the Philippines and bring them back to Kuwait afterwards.

Eighteen years later, history repeats itself. Upon José/Isa's arrival to Kuwait, the country was in mourning. It was the Emir's death. Who would convince, or dare to explain, to Ghanima that Joséphine and her son have nothing to do with the Emir's incident and death? Of course, it is not an easy task when she is a firm believer of superstitions. In this regard, her grandson himself maintains:

> What would she think about me arriving just as the Emir had died? Hadn't my mother and I caused enough trouble in the past? My mother had arrived at the time of the attack on the Emir's motorcade in the mid-1980s, I was born at the time of the plane hijacking, and we left Kuwait when the passengers were released. (Alsanousi 162)

Indeed, the grandmother does not accept Joséphine's son even though he is the only man alive to hold El Tarouf name after Rashid's death. Still, the idea of intermarriage –a Kuwaiti and a migrant- is not tenable for her. Alsanousi is not calling people to encourage intermarriage, but he writes to display that this migrant other is a human being. In connection with this, if two people agree to marry, according to the narrative, society should not stand in their way.

In addition to Joséphine and José/Isa, the other migrant workers at Ghanima's house are maltreated. Ostensibly, Indian and Filipino housemaids are, often, treated as objects in Kuwait. Some Kuwaiti masters, as shown in the narrative, treat the migrant workers as robots that meet all their demands without question. In El Tarouf house, there are two female maids: Lakshmi and Luzviminda. Ghanima did not like their names so she changed the former's name to Miri and the latter's to Luza. In addition to Lakshmi and Luzviminda, there are Miri's husband Babu who is a cook and Raju, the driver. Ghanima repeatedly calls Luzviminda *himara*[26]. Even the

[26] The Arabic word for 'donkey'

parrot shouts "*himara, himara"* at the very mention of the name Luza. Psychologically speaking, it is not easy for an individual to be constantly insulted in front of everyone else. Nonetheless, migrants have no feelings and they understand nothing (Alsanousi 211).

The least one can say about migrants' situation in Kuwait, through representation in *the Bamboo Stalk,* is that their condition is miserable. In the sending countries, they have a family but they are lacking in finance. In the receiving country –Kuwait- they gain money but they have neither a family nor dignity. Not only are Lakshmi and Luzviminda maltreated and deprecated, but José/Isa as well. Once Nouriya's husband visits El Tarouf family and sees the Asian-looking young man, Nouriya pretends he is a servant and orders him to put the bowls in their car. His grandmother ignores his existence, except when he massages her knees and feet. Being disowned by his family and treated as a migrant, José/Isa comes to realize that "tropical plants don't grow in the desert" (Alsanousi Indeed, it is difficult for him to accommodate to an Arab country which is conservative and class-conscious, a contradiction he cannot endure.

4.3. 'Reputation' in Kuwaiti Society

Gulf countries such as United Arab Emirate, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are known for their conservative nature compared to other Arab countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon. Given that millions of African and Asian people move to Gulf countries in search of jobs, the migrants, who are regarded as second-class citizens, are maltreated by class-conscious people. Despite Islamic teachings and principles of altruism, compassion and equality, the deplorable situation of migrants in many Arab countries suggests that social position determines how one is treated. This is not applicable to Gulf countries only. Syrian refugees, for instance, have been mistreated in some other receiving countries such as Lebanon and Turkey. Syrians work for low wages, lest they die of hunger.

In view of this, Ghanima's conduct towards José/Isa is somewhat understood, but it is by no means justified. The old lady herself has been raised in a house that dictates terms on her.

Therefore, what matters is not what pleases her but that which is publicly acceptable. She is programmed and systemized to be the way she is. The reputation of El Tarouf family will outlive her, and thus, she cannot venture her reputation for her grandson. Had she been raised in a different environment; she would be more accepting of the marginalized. She would have accepted Ghassan, knowing he is not responsible for him being a *Bedoon*. The grandmother and the aunts, however, do not allow anyone to damage their reputation among the bourgeois society.

Besides the grandmother's stance on her grandson's presence in Kuwait, the aunts' opinions -Hind, Nouriya and Awatif- are important in the understanding of the complexity of Kuwaiti society. Each of these women actually represents a category of women. The eldest aunt, Awatif, is not as strong and self-confident as her other two sisters. Yet, she has no problem with José/Isa's presence in their house. When the family discusses the matter, she states: "He's my brother's son. God wouldn't like it if we disowned him" (Alsanousi 195). Awatif represents a category that is peaceful and does not tend to complicate things for no cogent reasons. Even when Nouriya attempts to scare her saying that in case her husband knows, it would be a disaster, Awatif insists on her position saying that her husband fears God and would not react negatively in case he caught wind of José/Isa's existence (196).

Hind, the youngest aunt, is an activist who defends people's rights. Being an activist in her thirties, one thinks she is the perfect person to stand for José/Isa. Paradoxically, she maintains that both her name and credibility are endangered because of him (Alsanousi 197). It would be a scandal if people knew her brother married a Filipina maid and this is more than enough reason for her to lose the elections. The other aunt Nouriya staunchly opposes his presence. Through her, the author portrays the Kuwaitis who exclude and deprecate the less powerful. Nouriya overthinks what her husband's family -Adil family- would say if they knew. In this respect, she proclaims that she will "lose the respect of the Adil family" (196). Her husband's

family is what irks her the most. Unlike Awatif who thinks of God's rules, she only cares about her reputation in front of her family-in-law.

José/Isa could not fathom such staunch rejection and could not see why his existence is linked to the family's reputation and name. When he is informed about Nouriya's position towards his presence in Kuwait, he thinks in introspection:

> I didn't understand what Ghassan said about Nouriya's attitude. Why was she so upset? What was it that threatened her reputation […] why did my presence complicate marriage for her son and her daughter? Those were the same words Grandmother had said to my father years earlier when she found out my mother was pregnant: 'And your sisters, you selfish, despicable man. Who'll marry them after what you've done to the maid? (Alsanousi 196)

Had José been raised in any Arab country, he would certainly understand what it means to fear people's words –rumours or truths. His astonishment is on point but it is by and large the outcome of cultural diversities and social differences.

It is noteworthy that the protagonist's half-sister, Khawla, is the only member of El Tarouf family to entirely accept him without any question or problem. She is the one who convinced her grandmother to receive him in the household. From the moment she met him, his sister welcomed him with a charming smile that made him forget the bitterness of rejection. Other than Khawla, Ghassan perfectly understands José/Isa because of his own situation. Khawla and Ghassan, however, are not in powerful positions in society to make any tangible change. Hind and Ghanima, on the other hand, would have been capable of bringing actual change.

In a nutshell, status and reputation are of vital importance in Kuwait and this is discernible throughout the narrative wherein the grandmother, Ghanima, rejects her grandson for societal grounds. Alongside José/Isa, Ghassan is born in Kuwait but is considered an illegal citizen. In other words, Ghassan belongs to the *bedoon* community, or *bidoun jinsiya,* that is, without

nationality or citizenship. For this reason, he has no rights in Kuwait and Ghanima objects his marriage to her daughter Hind. These details mirror the complexity of Kuwaiti society narrated from the protagonist's frame of reference. Surprisingly, the significance of reputation for Kuwaitis is reflected on Ghanima's ultimate decision as regards the acceptance/rejection of her grandson.

4.4. José/Isa: From Concealment to Self-Revelation

Now that the importance of reputation in Kuwait is discussed above, the family's efforts to conceal José's/Isa's existence become clear. The status of their family name is in the line and only his relegation to the Philippines would decrease their stress. On the financial level, they provide him with a monthly salary without having to work. Yet, he cannot act as one of the Taroufs. He eats his meals in the kitchen with Luzviminda, Lakshmi, Babu and Raju. Being downgraded, he constantly conceals his identity in the household. His grandmother's guests should not see him or know about his existence. This treatment and the absence of a loving family foster José/Isa's nostalgia to his mother's homeland. It is true that there is no money in the Philippine but the other side of the coin is that there is a loving mother, a brother, an aunt and the love of his life Merla.

Facial appearance in José/Isa's case is indicative of his Asian identity. Anyone who sees his eyes assumes that he is not Kuwaiti. His Filipino identity is sealed on his face, leaving no doubts to him being a Kuwaiti. Therefore, his presence in the Tarouf's family should not be suspicious as he resembles the Filipino workers. When he was in the Philippines, he never thought he would have to hide his true identity and be disallowed to mingle with the rest of the family members. Spending most of his time alone either in his room or with Ghassan, he realizes that Kuwait is "a sham reality, or a real sham." (Alsanousi 295) that soon became "a dark cell." (296). Throughout his stay in the grandmother's house, he feels lonely even though surrounded by many people. He only finds relief in his half-sister Khawla with whom he speaks when the

chance is offered. This situation saddens him and he cannot spend the rest of his life hidden from society. Nonetheless, his father's family would not allow him to reveal his Kuwaiti origin. For them, it is a disgrace.

Unexpectedly, José/Isa who has lived on the margin all through his stay in Kuwait reveals his true identity in an instance of enthusiasm wherein he informs Jabir, the son of Ghanima's neighbour, that Hind El Tarouf is his aunt. Besides enthusiasm, it is probably an accumulation resulted from exclusion that made him reveal his identity. In the scene of self-revelation, the half-Kuwaiti half-Filipino protagonist embraces wholeness through the disclosure of his other half. In doing so, he offers society proof of his existence, not only his origins. This revelation, or thoughtless conduct, has unsolicited consequences. Knowing Kuwaiti society now that he has lived in it, he seems to have regrets and asks Jabir to keep the secret. Sadly, his presence in his father's home country becomes a secret he has to keep in order not to upset the family. Revelation then turns out to be a *faux pas* which turns the family against him.

The chaotic situation of Alsanousi's protagonist is reminiscent of Nigerian playwright and poet Wole Soyinka's poem "Telephone Conversation". Soyinka stresses the individual's racial discrimination through a phone call between a black African man and a white landlady. This conversation reveals each of the speakers' inner thoughts, prejudice and beliefs. Being black, he knows he would be looked down upon. Thus, revealing his African identity is, for him, a confession. The black man and the white woman have an agreement on the place, the price but he only needs to reveal his identity. For this end, he says:

> Nothing remained
> But self-confession. "Madam," I warned,
> "I hate a wasted journey -I am African."
> Silence. Silenced transmission of
> Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,

Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled

Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was foully.

"HOW DARK?" . . . I had not misheard . . . "ARE YOU LIGHT

OR VERY DARK?" (Soyinka)

These lines show prejudice at its best on both sides. Both black and white speakers stereotype each other in this confrontational dialog. When the whole world favours whiteness and judges others based upon racial grounds, this woman is the decent type of white people. Her silence, which connotes astonishment and rejection, shows her attitude and discrimination. After her silence, she tries to properly ask whether he has a light or a dark skin. The question in itself entails racism.

In the above-mentioned instances, both British and Kuwaiti societies discriminate, exclude and other those who are different for racial reasons. Being othered, both José/Isa and the black man develop a defensive approach to confront society in their ways. The black man chooses direct confrontation but without total revelation. In other words, revealing his African-ness means that his identity is half-revealed. He does not refer to his country of origin, which makes the revelation incomplete in a sense that neither the white woman nor the reader would know his nationality. This being said, being black is what matters for him at this stage because he obviously had a bad experience in the past and he does not want to have another 'wasted journey' as he says. Had he been Italian, Spanish or from any other European country, he would not refer to his continent but rather to his home country in full admiration and pride of his identity.

In the case of Alsanousi's protagonist, the revelation is complete. José/Isa openly discloses his Kuwaiti identity. Yet, it is the result of temporary sense of belonging and pride. He soon changes his mind about the revelation –perhaps he comes to realize it would not pass without consequences- and asks Jabir not to tell anyone. The precluded shift from concealment to self-

revelation costs José/Isa peace of mind in Kuwait. Once the family is against him, he loses his job –Nouriya interferes to lay him off. The country becomes dark and small for him, and thus, he prefers to return to his mother's country. In the main, the self-revelation in Soyinka's poem and Alsanousi's narrative speak volumes of the manner in which society sees the other and vice versa. Although revealing one's identity appears to be a detail unworthy of mention, it is of vital importance to those who suffer from identity crisis, exclusion and othering.

4.5. Identity Crisis and Hybridity in *the Bamboo Stalk*

Belonging connotes having an identity and being placed within certain geography. This identity cannot, and should not, be compartmentalized. One either has an identity or is subject to identity crisis or hybridity. In light of this, the protagonist José/Isa is the epitome of identity crisis, otherness, duality and double alienation. He is torn between his mother's country –the Philippines- and his father's -Kuwait. As the title of the narrative connotes, the protagonist is like the bamboo plant that "does not belong anywhere in particular" (Alsanousi 78). What makes the constant search for identity -or home- worthwhile is the need to locate oneself within a particular home, be it physical or not. Being at home enhances one's sense of belonging. For Blunt and Dowling, home is "a series of feelings and attachments […] one can live in a house and yet not feel at home" (10). Accordingly, there is a distinction between house and home, the latter surpasses the physicality of place, and encompasses an emotional state of being and belonging.

The notion of home is not definitional. It is subject to the definer's experience, purpose and frame of reference. The question: What is home? can be the starting point for many a researcher but it does not necessarily result in the same answer. Consequently, the prospect of home is shaped and understood according to certain criteria such as who defines it, under which circumstances and for what purpose. In tandem with home, the notions of topophilia and topophobia are utilized to amalgamate both psychology and geography, and for their

interrelation with one's (dis)location. The two concepts are overlooked as a focus of scrutiny in the humanities and social sciences despite their relation to placement and displacement. Incontestably, topophilia and topophobia are gaining momentum in Geography Studies, but their connectedness with one's attachment and detachment requires their integration in postcolonial and intercultural studies. The term hybridity, for instance, is appropriated from Biology by Homi Bhabha and it is incorporated in postcolonial studies by reason of its applicability. This accounts for the import and the inevitability of interdisciplinarity. For this reason, the two terms are borrowed for their pertinence to intercultural studies and to *the Bamboo Stalk*. José's bond with place is unmistakable and his longing for a hospitable home mark his transformational journey as will be exemplified in detail.

Derived from the Greek words *topo* (place) and *philia* (love of), topophilia is intertwined with one's emotional attachment to a certain geography. The coinage of the term is often attributed to the British writer and poet John Betjeman. It is, however, the English-American poet Wystan Hugh Auden who first utilized it in the former's introduction of *Slick but Not Streamlined* in 1948. A decade later, topophilia was incorporated in a book by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. The Chinese-American leading figure in human geography Yi-Fu Tuan approached the prospect of Topophilia from an interactional perspective. The latter highlighted the interconnection between humans and place. For him, topophilia entails one's deep attachment to and positive perception of place. On that note, place contributes to and can be associated with the construction of individuals' identity and being placed within a fixed geography, as opposed to being displaced, means to have an identity.

Pertaining to the prospect of topophobia, not much has been written on it. Etymologically speaking, it is a portmanteau of *topo* (place) and phobia (fear of something). Fear or anxiety towards a place is contoured by individuals who happen to have negative experiences that frustrate them. There are many phobias associated with place such as claustrophobia and

gephyrophobia. Once put into practice in a postcolonial context, topophobia's physical detachment embroils psychological dislocation. Unlike topophilia, topophobia connotes negative responses to a certain place. The sense of place and the attitudes converge to shape individuals' topophilia or topophobia. Indeed, one's estimation of place is of direct relation to how one connects and disconnects with it. Consequently, it is often wrought by individuality and subjectivity. What is more, the fear of place can be caused by temporary cause-and-effect situations.

The notion of topophobia is somewhat vague mostly due to the scarcity of descriptive and experimental research on it. In *Topophobia: A Phenomenology of Anxiety,* Trigg maintains that "identity is inextricably bound with the fixed locality and familiarity of the home" (140). By this, he accounts for familiarity as an indispensable aspect contributing to the location of oneself within a specific home or place. Identity is constructed within a set place and any potential shift from what is familiar to that which is unfamiliar results in disequilibrium. In the same book, Trigg eloquently puts forward that being lost is "a radical departure from our everyday experience of being-in-the-world" (120). In view of this, being lost is not always a geographical occurrence; it is mostly a psychological state of being that entails temporary or permanent dislocation, as well as identity crisis. This crisis presents itself when one starts to ask existential questions such as: who am I? Where am I? Where do I belong?

The fear of place can be triggered by temporary cause-and-effect situations. For example, many people around the world have become more and more topophobic to China upon the abrupt outbreak of Coronavirus in 2020. Topophobia "remains ambiguous enough to include an entire spectrum of relations a person might have with place" (Trigg 22). Its ambiguity is rather due to the scarcity of descriptive and experimental research in this area. Trigg is agoraphobe, fearful of open, public places, which explains his interest in the phenomenon. Given that one's identity is strictly correlated to place, he maintains that: "Identity is

inextricably bound with the fixed locality and familiarity of the home. In the face of an unfamiliar world, the reality of the world decomposes." (140). In reality, Trigg accounts for familiarity and unfamiliarity as two factors contributing to the location of oneself within a specific home or geography. Identity is constructed within a "fixed locality" and any place other than that leads to disequilibrium. The tectonic shift from what is familiar to that which is unfamiliar results in a "topographical understanding". In the same book, Trigg eloquently puts forward that:

> To be lost, on the other hand, is not only an atypical experience; it is also a radical departure from our everyday experience of being-in-the-world. Where am I? Such is the question one typically asks when confronted with the prospect of being lost. (120)

Being lost is, for the most part, a geographical and a psychological state of being. It entails temporary or permanent detachment and displacement. This singular experience determines our standing in the world and introduces us to the feeling of "indistinction of space" (120).

The notions of Home, topophilia and topophobia are interconnected even though they offer different perceptions and attitudes of place. While home embroils attachment, physical or otherwise, topophilia entails the creation of home(s) based upon one's positive responses or imagination of settings. In the latter's case, one's relation with place and perception of it are related to that place's reception, attitude and the impression it gives. Topophobia, as its name denotes, is the outcome of a negative response to a place which boosts displacement and detachment. Therefore, it is based upon subjectivity. It is a natural reflex to be topophobic to a place which instigates alienation and gives the feelings of exile. As will be illustrated, Khālid and José/Isa are subjected to homesickness at home, topophilia and topophobia.

While trolling for a hospitable home and a fixed identity, José is split between two incongruent identities. Throughout the journey from the Philippines to Kuwait, he tries to locate

himself within one identity, but to no avail. The title of the narrative is indicative of identity crisis, ambivalence and rootlessness. Like the bamboo tree which is planted anywhere without roots, José does not have a sense of belonging to one identity. José's identity crisis starts with his polyonymy. In the same manner, the -figurative- crisis of the bamboo plant begins with the plurality of names. This plant is called khaizuran in Kuwait, kawayan in the Philippines and bamboo in many countries. Apart from the issue of his name, José finds himself in confrontation with two different languages, religions and nations.

Hybridity is not a new phenomenon in Arabic literature. In Algerian literature, it frequently presents itself due to Algeria's turbulent history. In Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine*, for instance, the protagonist Khālid is torn between Algeria and France. He belongs to Algeria, but it no longer belongs to him when he loses his arm during the war of independence. This is how his trauma and sense of unbelonging start. In the same way, Leila Sebbar's protagonist in *Shérazade Trilogy* is grappled with identity crisis. She is half-Algerian half-French, which means she belongs to the colonized and the colonizer. In Shérazade's case, the peaceful encounter between self and other is ruptured for deep-rooted, historical grounds. Although José struggle in Kuwait differs from that of Khālid's and Shérazade's, it remains as intense and frustrating as theirs.

The protagonist's journey from the Philippines to Kuwait puts him in confrontation with an unfamiliar world wherein he feels lost. Noticeably, it is the lack of familiarity and the dire environment that exacerbate his sense of unbelonging. The first information that presents itself about the protagonist is the dilemma related to his name which is pronounced differently. In his mother's country, his name is "pronounced the English way, with an *h* sound at the start. In Arabic, rather like in Spanish, it begins with a *kh* sound. In Portuguese, though it's written the same way, it opens with a *j*, as in Joséph" (Alsanousi 01). Seemingly, José words seem sardonic when stating all these different spellings for one named who, in spite of plurality, remains a half

in search of wholeness. In Kuwait, for instance, his name has nothing to do with all those names. He is Isa (Alsanousi 01). Ironically, the word Isa is equivalent to the number *one* in the Philippines. Needless to say, José/Isa is somewhat discomfited to be called a number instead of a name.

Having two identities that are poles apart is the culmination of estrangement. Sardonically, the protagonist is recognized in an excluding and alienating manner. In Kuwait, he is known as the Filipino. In the Philippines, they call him the Arab. In this regard, he maintains: "If only I could have been 'the Filipino' in the Philippines or 'the Arab' in Kuwait" (Alsanousi 04). His wish manifests how these two societies alienate and exclude him based upon superficial grounds. Physical appearance plays a vital role in the exacerbation of his situation. Due to his Filipino looks, he is othered in Kuwait. In the Philippines, they call him Arab because of the beard. In reality, his hybridity makes its first appearance at the airport upon his arrival to Kuwait. He was reluctant to stand in either of the queues to stamp his passport (Alsanousi 159).

Like José/Isa, Khālid suffers from physical alienation. The missing part of his body, his left arm, is a manifestation of the physical dimension of the Algerian revolution. Not only is Khālid traumatized by his physical disability, which is the perpetual witness of the atrocities of the past, but his memory is encumbered by colonial Algeria and by the postcolonial reality. Misplaced and disillusioned, Khālid is not merely an Algerian shell-shocked, but he becomes Algeria itself. The fact that he fits neither in post-independence Algeria nor in France exacerbates his alienation. He could not find consolation anywhere, nor could he disremember the days of war in which men have fought to liberate Algeria from the shackles of French colonialism. In retrospection, he maintains: "Today, a lifetime of shocks and hurts later, I know that a person can be the homeland's orphan as well. There is the humiliation of homelands, their oppression and viciousness, their tyranny and selfishness." (214). The tone is telling of disenchantment and discontent with the country's postcolonial reality.

In *the Bamboo Stalk,* José/Isa's indecision as regards the Kuwaiti and the Filipino lines underscores in-betweenness and alienation from both origins. He does not know to which line he should go. The football match between Kuwait and the Philippines is enough to determine to which nation José belongs. Nonetheless, he is held in-between and this situation has only reminded him of his identity crisis. In reality, being half-Kuwaiti, half-Filipino provokes anxiety and ambivalence in situations as such. When the Filipino team scores against Kuwait in the first half, José professes "Everyone clapped for joy, except for me, who felt like I'd scored an own goal" (Alsanousi 370). This is a disclosure of bicultural identity and hybridity and even when the Kuwaiti team scores in the second half, he feels like scoring against his team. Again, this statement shows the protagonist's oscillation between two identities. Although he is not fully recognized in both countries, he still displays maturity and concern. After Kuwait's goal, he proclaims: "I don't want one of my teams to defeat my other team" (370). This overtly manifests understanding of his fragmentation, as well as his willingness to accept his imposed duality.

Pertaining to José/Isa's decision not to watch the whole match, Jarrar refers to Lo's "happy hybridity" (15) to describe José state of being and justify his decision. For her, José has ultimately reached an identity armistice which entails "a positive side of hybridity" (Jarrar 15). Nonetheless, nowhere do readers sense happiness. The thesis challenges Jarrar's statement as the protagonist's decision betrays no positive emotion or happiness. Quite the contrary, it is a telling sign of his maturity and awareness of his own division into two opposite selves. That term is somewhat inappropriate in the accurate construal of the protagonist's final destination and ambivalent emotions. The latter's unwillingness to watch connotes incapacity to take sides, despite all dereliction and mistreatment. His decision to stop watching is an obligatory acceptance of two different beings, and a declaration of bilateral involvement.

José/Isa is not happy or satisfied, he only surrenders to reality and embraces the two

compelled identities. Conciliation with his opposing identities comes as a ceasefire in order for him to take a rest from the constant search of one identity. Although he feels more Filipino and is attached to Mendoza's land more than El Tarouf's house, he is not capable of denying or ignoring his Kuwaiti origins. Mature hybridity is proposed to justify José/Isa's behaviour as regards the football match. This alternative proposition is presented because of the abysmal experiences in both paternal and maternal countries. Those experiences contributed colossally to the protagonist's maturity. Mature hybridity connotes acceptance, voluntary or involuntary, of one's irreparable fragmentation and two identities.

Pertaining to religious identity, José/Isa is of mixed-faith. He even thinks that Joséphine overlooked his religious education in the Philippines because he will return to Kuwait and become Muslim (Alsanousi 47). The absence of religious teachings and spirituality at home during childhood perplexes José/Isa who does not know whether he is Muslim, Christian or Buddhist. His father, Rashid, recited prayer in his right ear upon birth as part of Muslim practices. Nevertheless, José/Isa remembers going to church with his mother to be baptized in holy water as a Catholic (47). In the thought of him being lost between two opposites, José/Isa maintains:

> If only my parents could have given me a single, clear identity, instead of making me grope my way alone through life in search of one. Then I would have just one name […] one native country… I could have one religion (47).

The unmistakable two-ness of the protagonist exacerbates his peace of mind. He even wishes that his parents' meeting never took place, and thus, he would not come to a world that rejects him for reasons beyond his control.

In denial of his splintered Self, José/Isa imagines being born to Kuwaiti parents, and thus, be a Muslim or born to two Filipinos, and thus, be a Christian. Had that been the case, there would be no perplexity, no identity crisis, no duality, no hybridity and no rejection. Reality,

however, compels him to always wander and wonder. Like Mosteghanemi's protagonist – Khālid- José/Isa is in a position to ask: "In reality, who am I?" (Fanon). The narrative's most expressive passage of the protagonist's alienation and identity crisis is when he maintains:

> I don't know why Mother would be upset that I was sitting under the trees. Perhaps she was worried I would strike roots so deep into the ground that I would never go back to my father's country. But even roots don't mean much sometimes. I was more like a bamboo plant, which doesn't belong anywhere in particular. You can cut off a piece of the stalk and plant it without roots in any piece of ground. Before long the stalk sprouts new roots and starts to grow again in the new ground, with no past, no memory. It doesn't notice that people have different names for it — kawayan in the Philippines, khaizuran in Kuwait, and bamboo in many places. (77-78)

This quote is the ultimate expression of the protagonist's estrangement, rootlessness, and doubleness. Introspection revealingly unclothes the inequitable, ostentatious Kuwaiti society and debunks the truths about its duplicity and discrimination. The writer also attempts to externalize, through the characters' thoughts, the oppressiveness which resides within and the injustices which are based on race, class and gender.

4.6. Change in Narration Control: José/Isa Writes Back

Discussions on narration control are reminiscent of Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that attempts to address the concerns of the voiceless. Over the course of history, the West controlled narrations through the Canon which excluded non-Western works. Canonical writings oftentimes promoted Western beliefs and ideas, irrespective of their legitimacy and authenticity. Those writings defended imperialism and justified the conquest of Africans. According to Western thought, the white men were superior and it was their duty to enlighten what they call the East, the Rest or the other. For the West, this East cannot speak for itself.

Therefore, the West narrates on behalf of it. The circulation of Western thoughts, for instance, misinformed the world about Arabs, Africans and Muslims. The total control of narration by the West, without any counter-discourse from the East, continued to instil misconceptions and spread propagandas until the emergence of postcolonialism.

Postcolonial discourse, whether through its appropriation or abrogation of the colonizer's language, emerged as a counter-discourse to challenge the omnipresent dominant discourse. The entire writing back project seemed fair enough to re-narrate the other's story without subjectivity and subversion. No matter how objective the West's renditions of the narration attempted to be, if they ever did, they were still not doing justice to the voiceless. This being said, the only solution was to re-tell the truths from the other's perspective. A coup d'état, metaphorically speaking, was a necessity in order for the dominant discourse to be toppled. In other words, the West continued to speak on behalf of the East by reason of the former's riches, means of production and power. But this would not sustain were it not for the conformity of the East.

When Alsanousi writes a narrative wherein the protagonist "writes back" to a whole society which excludes and marginalizes him, it means that the other is capable of re-telling. Once the East and the West hold a pen and blank papers, it is more rational and more legitimate to have two stories instead of one. In other words, discourse and counter-discourse are prerequisite for assessment. It is untenable to (mis) judge a whole nation or an entire community based upon one-sided narrations. For instance, one cannot read *Wide Sargasso Sea* without reading or relating to *Jane Eyre*. Withal, it is preferable to read both colonial and postcolonial writings to understand the West/Rest binary which is based on Western perspective.

The Bamboo Stalk introduces José/Isa as the other who is willing to assimilate and explore the society that marginalizes him. Being the fictional author and the narrator, he speaks of Kuwait overtly and fearlessly. In doing so, he "writes back" to Kuwaitis in order to show them

their reality. The paradoxes and complexities of Kuwait perplex José/Isa and further alienate him from society and family. Being unduly disowned by his paternal family, he is sentenced to nostalgia and alienation. Such feelings of alienation and nostalgia are aggravated mostly due to his grandmother's maltreatment. Throughout his stay in Kuwait, he remains nostalgic for home –the Philippines. This nostalgia is associated with the anguish feelings of unbelonging.

While writing back, José/Isa narrates his story without any exaggeration. He "writes back" to Kuwait which oppresses the other –women, bedoon and migrants- to confront society with its oppressive, exclusionary nature. His story is about Kuwait and the other, and the Philippines as well. In this respect, he maintains:

> I was proud when I talked about people in the Philippines, and I wished I could have talked about people in Kuwait with the same enthusiasm. But that would only happen if I became one of them, and they refused to let me become one of them. And if I did manage to become one of them, where would they place me in their complicated social hierarchy? If they put me on the bottom level, would I talk about them so enthusiastically? (Alsanousi 249)

Ostensibly, people in the Philippines are more humane with José/Isa and with others. In their simplicity, they have no luxurious houses but they would not deprecate those who are different. For Kuwait, the protagonist writes harshly not only because he writes about his own story, but he is also burdened by the struggles of other people like Ghassan and the migrants.

By dint of compelled otherness, the protagonist is embattled in his father's home country. Through him, Alsanousi himself writes back to Kuwait from the other's frame of reference. In light of this, both author and readers sympathize with José Mendoza/Isa El Tarouf. In this respect, Alsanousi concurs that he became José and started to vacillate between two languages, religions and cultures. This is how he decided to write about identity (Kassab). In the same interview, Alsanousi speaks of his stay in the Philippines before writing the novel. In this

regard, he proclaims that he saw his country: "through the eyes of a stranger" (Kassab). In reality, the author's *contrapuntal* analysis of Kuwait and the Philippines is reflected in the narrative and it contributes to its depth, accuracy and authenticity. For Kuwaitis' reactions, Alsanousi proclaims that older generations "thought the book was attacking our customs and traditions […] some fear I'm washing our dirty laundry outside" (Kassab). This very attitude is widespread in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular. First-class citizens (the locals who have all rights) oppress second-class citizens or others, but people are outraged by the circulation of these atrocious acts and not by the oppression itself.

Ultimately, the other's side of the story enriches the narration. Through José/Isa, Alsanousi speaks for all the marginalized who are oppressed for different reasons. Those who read the narrative –original or translation- are now aware of the other's condition, psychology, fears, struggles and hardships. Therefore, people like Joséphine, José/Isa, Luzviminda, Lakshmi, Babu and Raju need to be respected and treated as human beings. At the end of the day, they are the ones who do the work Kuwaitis cannot, or do not want to, do. The least society should show is positive reception and respect. Alsanousi offered the protagonist space to speak but Ghassan, the without, still could not fully speak for himself. Most probably, the themes are so capacious that it is not possible to focus on them all in one narrative.

4.7. Writing the Other: Commitment or Circulation?

Globalization is a double-edged sword; it facilitates and complicates life. Norms have changed and cultural diversity is in the line. It is the international taste that prevails nowadays. People all over the world are hysteric to international brands, food, music, literature, etc. In doing so, the national cultures are being slowly erased. This, erasure intentional or otherwise, causes damage to entire nations wherein identity is westernized. An Arab man who wears torn jeans, earrings, tattoos, listens to American rap, reads only non-Arabic literature –if he reads at all- is eventually an assimilated Arab. In the past, assimilation took different forms but in

today's world people themselves are transformed and stripped of their Arab-ness. In this sense, the literary scene is no exception. As expounded in chapter three, some authors' hysteria of reception in the West raises questions on reliability/unreliability. Appropriation of otherness in particular calls some texts into question. Undeniably, there are writers whose foremost purpose is the re-telling of the other's story and debunking the truths. Also, there are writers who only seek the circulation of their works through writing/translation the other.

In the early fifties, commitment literature, *Adab al Iltizām* or *littérature engagé*, came into being. It was introduced in the Arab world by Egyptian novelist Taha Husain. With the emergence of Al Adab magazine, Arab writers have taken it upon themselves to devote literature for the sake of liberating nations. Therefore, discussions on the relationship between literature and society started to arise and people's minds began to be enlightened by the ideas being circulated. Among the major notions of commitment in postcolonial Mashriq was Pan-Arabism (57). Arabic literature, then, has been employed to underline societal issues, national causes in the Arab world, colonialism and its aftermaths, etc. In contemporary Arabic literature, there is a number of committed literary works that tackle serious issues.

On the other hand, commitment might not be the real purpose behind writing otherness. As explained in detail in the previous chapter, the circulation of literary works has become an obsession for some writers. The latter are in constant pursuance of recognition, approval, awards and fame. Emotions of empathy, anger, love, friendship –among other valuable things- are not commercial practices and they are not supposed to turn into saleable products. Principles of honesty and integrity are of import in such subjects. It requires a committed, integrate person to preserve the valuable relations and emotions, and keep them away from the market. In the literary scene, committed writers shed light on serious topics such as migration, otherness, colonialism and women's subjugation. Nonetheless, not all of them offer the voiceless enough space to speak for themselves. Withal, not all writers remain as honest as they were in their

beginnings. Fame and recognition change writers at times, and thus, they start to consider the audience/the market at the expense of the marginalized.

Kuwaiti journalist and writer Saud Alsanousi is among the Arab committed writers who attempt to criticize his exclusionary society. The situation of migrants in Gulf countries is deplorable and class-consciousness is prevailing. *The Bamboo Stalk*, Booker Prize winner, is about Kuwait and the other. In the narrative, the other is the migrant, the bidoon and women. Society's attitude towards the other is filled with superiority, marginalization and exclusion. Through their attitude, Kuwaitis –figuratively- proclaim that there are two types of humans: Those who command and those who obey. Between commitment and prestige or circulation of works, writers from the margin start to lose their enthusiasm towards causes and begin to consider the materiality of the matter. This does not mean they cease to write about the other but they appropriate this other for costumers –readers- to purchase.

A literary critic or a meticulous reader would realize how sincere *the Bamboo Stalk* is. Its sincerity comes from the narrator José/Isa. The story he tells is painful but it shows the real face of Kuwait. Those details of everyday struggles in his father's country which vehemently rejects him are sensed and readers sympathize with him. The vacillation between two names, two languages, two religions and two countries is emphatically not easy, let alone being disowned by his paternal family on top of that. It is the complexity of Gulf conservative culture that makes José/Isa's presence in Kuwait untenable. His existence itself is both unacceptable and detrimental for his paternal family, except for his half-sister Khawla. Still, Alsanousi mutes the voice of rigid, traditional society and gives voice to the protagonist José/Isa, Ghassan and Merla to speak and control the narration. The narrative is heartrending and cathartic and the author's strategy of shocking the reader with Kuwaiti society as regards its treatment of the other is saddening, especially that Gulf countries follow the Islamic teachings of compassion and cooperation. Kuwaitis' reality, according to the novel, is away from Islamic teachings.

The original narrative (*Sāq al-Bāmbū*) is an authentic rendition of José/Isa's turbulent journey from the Philippines to Kuwait. The author's engagement is conspicuous in the way the subject is tackled. The other who is not familiar with superstitions and societal restrictions re-tells of Kuwait honestly. He has no reason to subvert his own story. As a matter of fact, Alsanousi's stay in the Philippines and his contact with the other in Kuwait are what makes the novel successful and believable. Additionally, the narrator has no intention to describe Kuwait badly. Quite the contrary, he just wants to be included and accepted as a Kuwaiti. It is the way Kuwait treats the other that compels him to portray it as fake. As far as the English translation is concerned, Jonathan Wright's rendition is emotive. For Arab readers, the English version is not as staunch and emotional as the original. Yet, it is merely a matter of mother tongue vs. foreign language. Reading in one's language creates deeper meanings, connotations and sense of attachment than reading in a foreign language.

4.8. Jonathan Wrights' (In) authentic Translation

Authenticity is of vital importance for Arab readers. An authentic translation that remains true and faithful to the story is undoubtedly better than a text which ventures to lose its value and credibility in translation. Speaking of Arabic-English translations, it is probable that the translation enriches the original through the preservation of both form and content. It is also enriched when the translator maintains the atmosphere of the source text in order for the translation to do justice to the original. On the other hand, the translation can be subversive at times. Once transformed into a new form in English, questions around (in) authenticity and the translator's intentions arise. Nowadays, the meticulous reader –figuratively- plays the role of a literary critic. In other words, readers are aware enough to distinguish works of high-quality from those of bad quality.

As mentioned previously, *Sāq al-Bāmbū* was translated in English as *the Bamboo Stalk* after winning the IPAF. Among other prominent literary writings by Arab novelists, Wright

translated "'Azazeel" by Youssef Ziedan and he won the Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation for it. Wright won the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize for the translation of Hassan Blassim's *the Iraqi Christ* in 2014. Two years later, his translation of *Sāq al-Bāmbū* won the Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation. Ostensibly, Wright's reputation in the arena of literary translation is deservedly high. The aforementioned authors' satisfaction with his translation and the accomplished awards are suggestive of distinction and merit.

When Wright is asked about his task as a translator and the way he approaches Arabic-English translations, he contends:

> My approach has always been to try to get inside the writer's head and then write the story the writer would have written if they had chosen to write it in English. So I always ask the writers a lot of questions. (An interview)

Ostensibly, Wright's approach manifests commitment to the source text and willingness to translate faithfully. Given that he plunges into the author's mind and writes from his/her point of reference, there is no, or little, chance for subversion, omission or personal interpretation that usually hinder the translation of the original. The fact that Wright does not interfere with the insides of the original, it means he does not leave his ideological imprints on the text. Perceptibly, this is the reason many well-known Arab writers work with him again and again.

It is worth mentioning that Alsanousi's original itself incorporates "translation to capitalize on difference, and to confront the troubled and unequal multiculturalism of the Arabic Gulf region." (Almajnooni). Indeed, Alsanousi's Arabic narrative uses translation which, at first, perplexes the reader who thinks the text at hand is translated from Tagalog to Arabic. José/Isa, being the narrator and the author, is not in full mastery of Arabic. Thus, the author utilizes "translation-as-performance narrative technique" (Almajnooni) to chart alterity and difference. This way, it is cogent that a half-Filipino half-Kuwaiti José/Isa writes in Tagalog not in Arabic because he lived in the Philippines and did not learn Arabic.

The English translation leaves out the first two pages wherein a fictional translator called Ibrahim Salam translates José/Isa's novel from Tagalog into Arabic and English. Wright's omission of the fictional translator (Ibrahim) and fictional editor (Khawla) is quite discernible. The English translation starts without introducing the fictional translator's notes which exist in the original (Arabic). In Fictional Translation in Sāq al-Bāmbū is erased in the Bamboo Stalk, emphasis is laid upon the erasure of fictional translation and how Wright's translation "does not pay great attention to the novel's performance of translation and how it manipulates translation to map alterity" (Almajnooni). In doing so, José/Isa appears merely as a character in the English not a fictional author as in the Arabic. It seems as if he is telling his story from a first-hand standpoint, not writing it in Tagalog and asking someone to translate it for him. In reality, José/Isa started writing his story in English then remembered José Rizal's quotation on mother tongue. For that reason, he decided to stick to his mother tongue –Tagalog- and write in it. Appropriation/abrogation of language is a key concern in postcolonial studies. The hybrid other is torn between two languages and suffers from linguistic trauma. On this basis, José/Isa unapologetically writes in Tagalog to feel attached to his nation through language.

Taking a moment back to Wright's disregard of fictional translator (Ibrahim Salam) and fictional editor (Khawla Rashid) in *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015), he offered an explanation -via email- to Multilingual, Locals & Significant Geographies. In his long email, he contends that the removal of Ibrahim Salam's role as a fictional translator was not his suggestion, but he only showed his consent. Wright also stresses that there was no fictional editor at all in the original and that nowhere did the Arabic text refer to a fictional editor. (Almajnooni). As expounded by the translator, the fictional translator is of no import as in the Arabic case. The work is treated as a translation in the Anglophone world and whether translated from Tagalog or any other language is not an issue for the English reader. The journey of translation and context, however, remains pertinent and significant for the Arab audience. Although the removal of contextual

footnotes and fictional translator did not affect the message of the text, their inclusion would have been more enriching. The English reader is supposed to know that the text has taken a voyage of transformation through translation.

In the original, the first pages are notes from the fictional translator. The first page, entitled the Translator, provides a resume of Ibrahim Salam and offers titles of his previous works. At first, the reader thinks this is the actual translator and these works are of his own. The second page, entitled the translator's word, explains how *Sāq al-Bāmbū* is translated from Tagalog and that the ideas belong to the author and do not express his own beliefs and convictions. As mentioned above, Wright states that there is no fictional editor, and that the Arabic novel does not allude to Khawla as a fictional editor of José/Isa's manuscript. The fictional translator, however, mentions in the translator's word that:

> All that will appear as side notes in the text, without pointing out to the translator or the author, is the explanation of the sister Khawla Rashid who did, thanks to her, the editing and the revision of this work. (Trans. Mine, Alsanousi 12)[27]

These words connote an agreement between Ibrahim and José/Isa upon the editing task. Indeed, they did not discuss the matter in the original as Wright mentioned. But, from the fictional translator's statement, readers come to realize that José/Isa informed him that his half-sister Khawla would assist them regarding the editing and the revision of the Arabic, being a native speaker and a defender of the other's rights.

In this regard, Khawla asks José/Isa to write for himself, for their father Rachid, for her, for Ghassan –being a without- for Hind and for everyone in Kuwait (Alsanousi 362). When her half-brother tells her that what he would write might hurt Kuwaitis, she still supports him to

[27] The Arabic reads:
"كل ما سيأتي في حواشي هذا النص من دون الإشارة إلى المترجم أو المؤلف هو من شرح الأخت خولة راشد التي تفضلت مشكورة بتدقيق ومراجعة هذا العمل" (السنعوسي 12)

write reassuring him that if she herself would take a pen and write honestly if she was not a member of El Tarouf family. (362). Her words overtly indicate her stance as regards societal injustice and familial restrictions. Editing and revising the Arabic manuscript, then, is her way of revolt against her society. This detail is emphatically not mentioned haphazardly in the original, but it connotes Khawla's engagement and desire to change. Thus, Wright's denial of any mention of the existence of a fictional editor is enigmatic. This information in particular is important in a sense that it suggests Kuwaiti younger generation's willingness to narrate or at least facilitate the success of the other's narration about Kuwait. Although she cannot write freely because of familial restrictions, she could help José/Isa in his writing back mission.

Sāq al-Bāmbū (2012) and *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) both introduce the other to different audiences. In their undeniable mastery of literary writings, Alsanousi and Wright offer authentic renditions of the other's sufferings in Kuwait. The story itself is about the other and Kuwait. This other is not only José/Isa; it is Ghassan, Hind, Merla and other minority groups. The situation of the Bedoon is equally important in the understanding of Kuwaiti society. Both original and translation succeed in the portrayal of the marginalized without exaggeration. Alsanousi knows Kuwait and it seems that he does not expect much from Kuwaitis. Through Khawla, however, he shows a younger generation that might be willing to leave irrational traditions behind and include the other. Writing overtly about the oppressed other is not without consequences. Some Kuwaiti people accuse him of showing internal matters to people outside their territory (Kassab). The Arab world is complicated mostly because of the despotic regimes, social hypocrisy and alleged conservatism.

It is noteworthy that *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) was adapted to a series of the same title in Ramadan 2016. There were some changes in the scenario for dramatic reasons but the overall theme and mood of the narrative are kept unchanged. In reality, the shooting of the series was banned in Kuwait, which shocked the scenarist who travelled to Kuwait to enter the mood of

the streets, towns and see the places mentioned in the novel. Eventually, the series was filmed in Dubai. In reality, drama that touches on sensitive issues as *bedoons,* migrants and the other is seen by many spectators in the Arab world. Thus, television is more effective than books because –unfortunately- people watch TV more than read novels. In this case, the banning of the series would prevent the spread of awareness.

One might ask: Does translation always entail cultural loss? This appears simple, but it is thought-provoking. The ongoing debate over the untranslatability of culture remains, at best, no more than a hypothesis awaiting approval or disapproval. Traditionally, culture is treated with caution when it comes to translation because of its intricacy and disparity. This suggests that cultural manifestations are not to be translated accurately even if the translator is bilingual and bicultural simply because there is no equivalence in the target culture. This viewpoint appears to be logical and convincing, but not enough to confirm the hypothesis. In the digital age, data is easily accessible and exchangeable. In other words, people are able to compare and contrast cultural traits. Thanks to technology, the entire world is able to juxtapose cultures and explore difference. In this sense, exposure to others' cultures and direct contact with them would facilitate the study, comprehension and translation of cultural manifestations. Cultural loss occurs when the translation is conducted with moderation for any reason. If the audience is the translator's biggest concern, then the translated text will undergo cultural loss and ambivalence to meet the expectations of the audience.

4.9. Literary Prizes: Syndromes of Prestige or Literary Merit?

In the past, poets and writers were often supported –financially and morally- by kings and presidents. In return, they would write under the wings of those supporters. In other words, those writers would not attempt to criticize or diminish their supporters. Quite the contrary, they would praise them meritoriously or not. One of the most prominent poets laureate -or *poeta laureatus*- of the Islamic Golden Age is Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī. He is well-known for

praise poetry at the court of Sayf al-Dawla al-Hamadāni. Abū Tammam, Abu Nuwās and Bashār Ibn Burd are also famous poets during the Abbasid Caliphate. Through their praise of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him), Caliphs and cities, poets laureate were able to guarantee a high-status position at the court. In the case of al-Mutanabbī, Sayf al-Dawla came from a rich family and was educated, and thus, he placed much emphasis and effort on poetry. Al-Mutanabbī's fame soon reached the surrounding cities. Today, his works are still taught at school and they still inspire other poets.

One cannot say poets laureate no longer exist. With the widespread of information on the Internet, one can see myriads of examples of poets laureate who support authoritarian systems for manifold reasons. Nonetheless, the focus here is laid upon literary prizes and the (dis) equilibrium they have brought along to the literary scene. As Squires puts forward, the literary prizes have the ability to "bring relatively unknown writers to public recognition, enhance the reputation of already established authors [and] turn the attention of the media to books" (97). Indeed, the role of literary awards in the visibility of known/unknown authors is undeniable. Yet, the nominated novels and the winning ones are not necessarily of more value or merit than the other narratives which, for one reason or another, cannot make it to the Nobel Prize longlist. Similar to the Western canon, the exclusionary nature of the Nobel Prize in Literature lies in its consideration of political affiliation and the prospect winner's nationality. As far as the 2021 Nobel Prize for Literature is concerned, it has been won by Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah for his "uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents" (Announcement 01:03-01:14). In the comments section of the video uploaded by the official account named 'Nobel Prize', commentators have shown willingness and enthusiasm to read some of Gurnah's writings –influenced by his winning of the award. Interestingly, one of the users contends that the Nobel Prize "is becoming more and more political" (Demiàn).

Well-known authors who have won the Nobel Prize in Literature throughout its history include George Bernard Shaw, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus, William Faulkner and Jean Paul Sartre –who declined it in 1964. In the recent years, there is a conspicuous inclusion of women compared to the early decades of the prize. The omnipresence of male authors in the list[28] of the Nobel Prize in Literature is unmistakable. Since the establishment of the prize in 1901, only sixteen[29] female authors have been Nobel prize-winners. Ostensibly –after having a close look at the entire list of prize-winners- one of the criteria of selection of winners is being a white, male writer regardless of literary merit. The prize seems to be commercial more than literary or cultural. The exclusion of women –deliberate or otherwise- only confirms that the longstanding male dominance is still ongoing in the 21st century.

Naguib Mahfouz –the father of Arabic literature- is the first and only Arab writer to have won a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1988. On winning, the Egyptian Nobel Prize laureate states that the award contributed to the translation of Arabic literary works (Naguib Mahfouz). Indeed, the prestigious, Swedish award -named after Alfred Nobel- is enough to make popular any author and it guarantees readership across the world. For an Arab author, the Nobel Prize must have been taken as an opportune occasion through which Arabic literature is introduced to the entire world. In the Arab world, Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature is a prestigious literary prize offered to a talented writer whose work is not translated into English. The controversy over such literary prizes makes the approach of the texts –*The Bridges of Constantine* and *Sāq al-Bāmbū*- without the consideration of the prizes, the paratextual devices, and the (in) authenticity of the translations untenable.

[28] Check the list of all Nobel Prizes in Literature on the official website: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-prizes-in-literature/

[29] The female authors who have won the Nobel Prize in literature are Selma Lagerlof (1909), Grazia Deledda (1926), Sigrid Undset (1928), Pearl Buck (1938), Gabriela Mistral (1945), Nelly Sachs (1966), Nadine Gordimer (1991), Toni Morrison (1993), Wislawa Szymborska (1996), Elfriede Jelinek (2004), Doris Lessing (2007), Herta Mueller (2009), Alice Munro (2013), Svetlana Alexeivich (2015), Olga Tokarczuk (2018) and Louise Glück (2020).

Interestingly, the Naguib Mahfouz Prize is more inclusive of women writers compared to IPAF and Nobel Prize. Since its inauguration in 1996, ten[30] female authors have won the prize. As far as the nationalities of the female prize-winners are concerned, four are Egyptian, one is Algerian, one is Lebanese, one is Iraqi, two are Palestinian and one is Saudi Arabian. It appears that Egypt –albeit *Easterness* and dominance of men in many fields- accredits and supports women writers the same as men. When the West fails to include women in the Nobel Prize, it is worthy to mention that Egypt honours female novelists without any disparagement by reason of gender. As regards male authors, however, eight out of fifteen Naguib Mahfouz prize-winners are from Egypt –the host country. The other seven prize-winners are from Syria, Sudan, Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon and Morocco. The opportunities offered by the Naguib Mahfouz Prize cannot be denied, it introduces Arab literature and Arab writers to an English-speaking audience.

In her award-winning speech, Mosteghanemi (1998) –the second woman to have won the Naguib Mahfouz Prize- propounds that:

> Instead of wealth, the Mahfouz prize offers creative writers the opportunity to reach thousands of readers all over the world in more than one language. This is a privilege to which no Arab writer can aspire without an extensive network of relations and dozens of recommendations.

These words show Mosteghanemi's awareness of the benefits of the Naguib Mahfouz Prize and its contribution to the circulation of her works in many languages. The presence of Mosteghanemi's novel in the West is a representation of Algerian literature. For this reason, the authenticity of the translation is of vital importance. Mosteghanemi's acknowledgment of

[30] Latifa al-Zayyat along with Ibrahim Abdel Meguid (1966), Ahlem Mosteghanemi (1988), Hoda Barakat (2000), Somaya Ramadan (2001), Alia Mamdouh (2004), Sahar Khalifeh (2006), Amina Zaydan (2007), Miral al-Tahawy (2010), Huzama Habayeb (2017) and Omaima Al-Khamis (2018).

the role of the prize in visibility in the West is plausible yet her declaration that having literary works which have not won a prize translated to other languages, by necessity, requires many "relations" and "recommendations" raises questions on merit and purpose.

Similar to the Booker Prize and the Nobel Prize for Literature, the IPAF –or the Arabic Booker- is controversial. Since its establishment in 2007, only two female authors have won the IPAF. The first woman to win the Arabic Booker Prize in 2011 is Saudi Arabian novelist Raja'a Alem for her *the Doves' Necklace*. Eight years later, Hoda Barakat has won the prize for her *the Night Mail.* Be it in the Arab world or the Western societies, women appear to be disparaged and depreciated compared to men. Had it been a matter of lack of creativity on women's part or dearth of proliferation, one would not be concerned. Women, however, are as creative and prolific as men. Aside from man/woman binary, not all commendable narratives get to be nominated for the prize. In reality, the exclusion of novels such as *Caliska* discloses the IPAF and other literary prizes (Alkhazim). Indeed, not all excellent literary works get the chance to be nominated for the Arabic Booker Prize.

Unsurprisingly, two of the three awards discussed above exclude women and consider the nationality of the winner. Surprisingly, the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature is more inclusive of women writers yet considers the nationalities as well. Twelve out of twenty-five winners are from Egypt. The issue is not only about gender or nationality of winners; it is rather the exclusion of masterpieces from nomination in the first place. Also, this opportunity of translating one's work into English and be read internationally can be a blessing as it can be a curse. Bilingual Arab readers expect authentic translations that serve the native culture not the receiving one. In other words, Western-friendly translations of important works which tell the history of Arab nations –as the case of Algeria in *the Bridges of Constantine*- are signs of betrayal to one's Self through literature. When resistance is conspicuous and intense in the original, deference in translations is inacceptable. Although Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's

novels are recognized abroad thanks to the English translations, their fame in the Arab world is unrivalled. Were it not for the few omissions –in both novels- which serve the market (omissions in the case of *Mémoires de la Chair,* and the fictional writer and translator in the case of *Sāq al-Bāmbū*) the two translations would have been faithful.

4.10. Conclusion

Writing and translating the other in a cogent, authentic manner is a daunting task for both writers and translators. This chapter attempted to address the issue of narration authenticity, the faithfulness of translation and the translator's exclusion of fictional writer and translator. It manifested how status and reputation are more important than family or feelings in Kuwaiti society. Through Ghanima's unrelenting rejection of José/Isa and Ghassan, she introduces us to an entire society of class-consciousness, exclusion and prejudice. The way Ghanima treats her grandson with distance reflects society's attitude towards the other. Without any show of emotions, she is the one who –figuratively- relegates José/Isa to the Philippines. This woman in the shape of a whole society favours the family name over her sole grandson. This is not haphazard, but the author wants to show to what extent Kuwait obliterates and marginalizes the other. Readers' condolence, however, is the fact that the protagonist "writes back" to Kuwaitis and speaks his mind overtly. It is Kuwait that maltreats him but he is the one who narrates, and thus, the narrative cannot be more authentic. The chapter also offered an account on Wright's authentic rendition of the original narrative and how the deliberate omissions do not affect the course of the narration at all.

General Conclusion

The initial aim of the thesis has been the appropriation of otherness in association with resistance and prestige as two –contradictory- motives that represent the other through literary writings from the margin in an authentic way. Being represented –or misrepresented- for long, people from the margin, or the East as opposed to the West, have not appropriately articulated their version of the story being circulated. A re-narration has become a necessity to reclaim the other's beingness and maintain balance. It is noteworthy that the thesis has initially been preoccupied with the study of the Arabic original. Then, the translations have presented themselves as necessity given the importance of representation through translation. The way the other –notably the postcolonial other, the Arab, the migrant, the Muslim and the Arab woman- is to be seen in the West depends for the most part on the writings this marginalized other offers through translation. Indeed, what is lost in translation can possibly come in the way of mutual understandings between the other and the *otherer*. However, what is unintentionally lost due to lack of equivalence or culture-bound barriers is somewhat understood and justified. What is unjustified for the postcolonial writer, translator, publisher or editor is the intentional subversion of any original text to gain a new readership in the receiving culture, irrespective of cultural loss. It is not a sheer coincidence to choose two Arabic-language narratives which have been translated into English but the fact that both turn out to be prize-winning novels is -at least in the case of *the Bridges of Constantine*. And that has gradually directed the focus of this research from appropriation of otherness as a mechanism of resistance towards the incredible value some postcolonial writers give to the market at the expense of cultural value.

The thesis has argued that otherness -a subject of focus in cultural and postcolonial studies- is appropriated in literary works for different reasons as exemplified in the third and the fourth chapters. In a writing back mission, writers' aspiration is to decentre the centre and *de-other* the other through debunking the myths. Yet, postcolonial literature proves to be supersaturated with writings on otherness and identity -an obsession which can be understood on account of

centuries of exclusion. Leading literary figures of postcolonial literature proffer narrations to challenge the accounts of dominant cultures. Through their literature, Ngugi, Achebe, Rhys and the like have depicted the West as other and different. Alongside identity crisis and otherness, the situation of the migrant other who suffers in the Gulf countries is tackled through the analysis of José/Isa's stay in his father's country, Kuwait. The socio-economic situation is what compels people like José/Isa, Luzviminda and Lakshmi to tolerate mistreatment and subjugation by households and/or citizens. This being said, these subjugated, silenced people have no voice to speak for themselves. One may ask: Does literature really give them voice or help them? Well, it is everyone's responsibility to make those people seen and heard. Once citizens' awareness is raised, they shall reflect on their own conduct.

However, exaggeration and exhaustion of the themes of the migrant or the postcolonial other by the same Arab novelists draw one's attention to the commodification of otherness and the project of building different readerships across the Arab world. One might ask: is it an issue if a writer aimed to build readership across the world, not only the Arab world? In reality, there is not a straightforward answer to this simple question because many factors have to be taken into account. Say that there is no issue if Arab writers gain wider readership, more visibility and popularity. What matters is the essence. In other words, the way this suppressed colonized or migrant is represented, not only in the native culture but in translation as well. Between the chauvinistic original and the humble translation lies much prestige, commodity and cultural loss. In the case of postcolonial writers, not writing at all is better than writing with deliberate omission, transformation and adjustment. Once the history of the colonized nations is involved, it seems untenable for postcolonial writers to control the tone and the mood of the text. In other words, what is written in the native language for an audience that belongs to the same history and culture is not always delivered or translated with the same intensity in the receiving culture, especially in case of any type of clash between the two.

Due to its importance in the preservation/transformation of translated postcolonial texts, translation has been one of the focal points of the current research. The original works in question undoubtedly serve the home culture. The translations, however, have transformed the original in one way or another. This act -or this cultural loss- puts the authenticity of the authors (not translators) into question. In order to faithfully translate a text, one is supposed to eliminate the rewards. As long as the original handles a particular issue staunchly, so should the translation. In case of softening the tone, considering the market and the reader's taste, the translation is no longer faithful. A translation as such is even disappointing.

In a similar vein, the translations (*Mémoires de la Chair* 2002, *the Bridges of Constantine* 2013 and *the Bamboo Stalk* 2015) have undergone a journey of commodification -for different reasons- to guarantee reception in the West. Indeed, the representation of the colonized/migrant other is done faithfully and effectively in the original narratives (*Dhākirat al-Jasad* 1993 and *Sāq al-Bāmbū* 2012). Nevertheless, some of the omissions and adjustments seen in the translations raise questions on authenticity. As regards Mosteghanemi, the proposed hypothesis that she could have written in French had she been writing for the sake of readership proves to be somewhat inaccurate. In other words, writing in Arabic and translating to the colonizer's language -although choosing Arabic to resist francophony- guarantee wider readership and two audiences. The historical clash between Algeria and France makes the omissions suspicious and suggests they are deliberate. In order for the French reader to accept the French translation of *Dhākirat al-Jasad,* the text must undergo adjustments to make it less hostile towards France. Pertaining to *Sāq al-Bāmbū,* the modifications that occur in Wright's translation do not de-contextualize the text. Although the protagonist -a fictional writer in the original- is presented merely as a character in the translation, there is no transformation in the story.

Throughout the thesis, Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad*, its French translation *Mémoires de la Chair* (2002), and Cohen's translation are read as three texts in three moods. The first one

offers a sensible representation in the mother tongue, the second is for the colonizer and the third is designed for an English-speaking audience i.e., historically neutral readers. These three realms are in the main boosted by their environments. An Algerian or an Arab reader from another country relates to the original text and is likely to admire its tone, its poetic language, its intensity and the story itself. A French reader identifies himself but as the Western other. In other words, s/he is the colonizer to whom this author "writes back". The thesis has argued that a translation for the colonizer supervised by –or even with the consent of- the author herself is inutile in this case because this author has to choose whether to loosen the tone and be read or to keep it intense and be left on the shelf. For Anglophone readers, the Algerian story is interesting but not relatable due to geographical distance, cultural and historical differences.

Drawing on postcolonial theory, Translation Studies and concepts such as commodification, *the postcolonial exotic, the economy of prestige* and hybridity, the thesis has brought into focus the contradictory nature of some writers who write as a manner of resistance and simultaneously commodify otherness. In reality, the close reading of the narratives –not in intensive detail mostly because of space-, pertinent interviews and paratextual elements have been of help in the process of looking into the motives behind the excessive appropriation of the notion of otherness and postcolonial issues by some postcolonial authors. The other –colonized or migrant- is oftentimes exploited by novelists who are in search of recognition, circulation of works and readership. Authors that seek recognition and prizes more than the empowerment and decolonization of the other have, in reality, reached more audiences but the other is still othered and oppressed. This leaves us with two options: It is either literary works are read on the spur of the moment –upon prize winning- or read with catharsis but without any tangible change.

As far as resistance and prestige are concerned, the two novels as well as their English translations have been studied in the light of cultural value and commodity. The other struggles

for recognition and the authors appropriate this subjugated other for the circulation of their works, literary prizes and wider readership. The employment of sensitive issues –otherness, marginalization and so forth- becomes the texts' passport towards planned success once the market is considered. As far as the English translations of Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's novels are concerned, if the Western audience is considered at the expense of the native culture, then the whole writing back and commitment are but fairytales to gain more attention and recognition in and outside their home countries. Put differently, one cannot write back to the centre while subverting the text to suit the Western market and reader. It is either resistance or commodity; the two cannot go together in this case. The appropriation of the marginalized other in postcolonial literature connotes resistance yet the paratext (Including cover, dedication, preface, footnotes and what is written on the cover) oftentimes influences the manner in which the narrative is read and consumed. Paratext raises the readers' curiosity and impacts the reception of works. For instance, the paratextual devices of *the Bridges of Constantine* –notably dedication, Nizar Qabbani's statement and the number of sales- interfere in the reception of the text and convince the reader to purchase it. Paratexts of *Sāq al-Bāmbū* too are influential.

On the whole, the research questions have been presented and addressed based upon relevant theories and concepts in order to guarantee accuracy. As the time and academic constraints must be respected, other issues related to the main theme of this thesis can be the subject of other researches, particularly on the reception of international prizes at home.

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Appendices

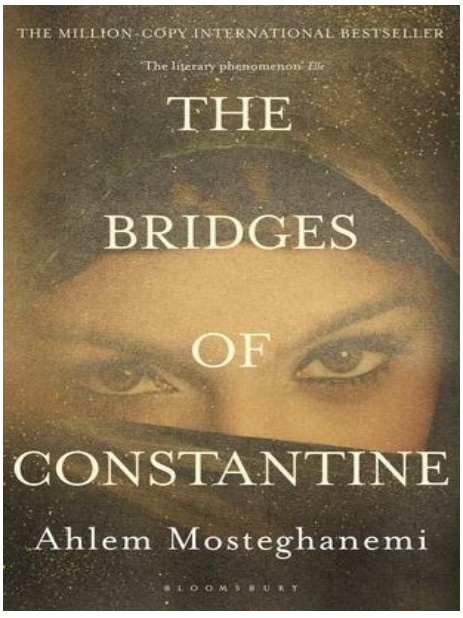
List of Appendices

A Short Biography of Ahlem Mosteghanemi

Ahlem Mosteghanemi is an Algerian novelist and poet born in exile in Tunisia in 1953. She studied at the university of Algiers where she obtained her BA in Literature but was denied enrolment for a Master's Degree there. In 1982, she obtained Doctorat in sociology from Sorbonne. Her father, Mohamed Cherif, was a French teacher and an Algerian *Mujahid*. Despite being raised by a French-speaking family, she chose to write in Arabic. Her trilogy *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (1993), *Fawdā El Hawās* (1997) and *'Ābir Sarīr* (2003) gained unprecedented success in the Arab world. In her novels, the author manifests preoccupation with the homeland, Arab causes and societal matters.

Summary of *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013)

The Bridges of Constantine is a bestseller translated from Arabic by Raphael Cohen in 2013.



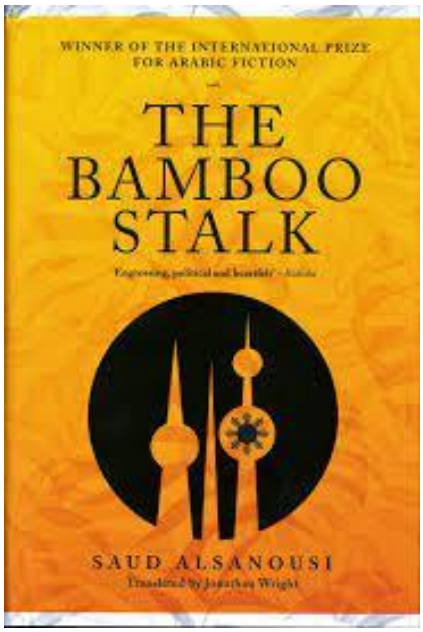
Originally written in Arabic as Dhākirat al-Jasad in 1993, it won the Naguib Mahfouz Prize 1998. This narrative, replete with historical insights, shows that Mosteghanemi is encumbered by both colonial and postcolonial Algeria. It narrates an important portion of Algeria's history from an Algerian frame of reference. Outraged by corruption in newly independent Algeria, Khālid, a former freedom fighter who lost his arm in the war of independence, chooses to live in Paris where he becomes a renowned painter. Hayat is the woman who constantly reminds him of Constantine, his mother and his

homeland. The novel raises many an issue in postcolonial Algeria and underscores the state of chaos in the wake of independence.

A Short Biography of Saud Alsanousi

Saud Alsanousi is a Kuwaiti novelist, journalist born in 1981. His first novel *Sajīn al-Marāyā* (*Prisoner of Mirrors* 2010) won the Leila Othman Prize, a biennially award for Young Creative Talent in Fiction. A year later, his short story *Al-Būnsai wa al-Rajul al-'Ajūz* (*The Bonsai and the Old Man*) won a competition held by the BBC Arabic and Al-Arabi magazine. Written from the other's perspective, *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) won the IPAF and its English translation *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) won the 2016 Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation.

Summary of *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015)



Sāq al-Bāmbū is a page-turner narrative published in 2012 and translated to English by Jonathan Wright as *the Bamboo Stalk* in 2015. Written from José/Isa's frame of reference, this novel is a spellbinding rendition of the other's situation in Kuwait. Being the fictional writer himself, José/Isa speaks of the dark side of Kuwait. In other words, he highlights the society's superstitions, exclusion and class-consciousness. Ghanima, the protagonist's paternal grandmother, embodies a class-conscious society. Through this persona, Alsanousi offers a wake-up call for Kuwaiti society wherein materiality surpasses humanity and tradition precedes all other considerations.

Algerians in Front of French Cultural Centre (CCF)

A photo of approximately seventy thousand Algerians waiting in front of CCF to apply for a visa on November 1st, 2017.

https://www.independentarabia.com/sites/default/files/styles/1368x911/public/article/mainimage/2020/07/14/223556-151982721.jpg?itok=0GTPqJXo

Glossary of Scientific Terms

Abrogation: In postcolonial context, the word abrogation is used to refer to the boycott of the colonizer's language. This technique is often linked with the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o who stopped using English and started using Gikuyu.

Alienation: The feeling that a person has no connection with the people around him. Being alienated means being lost, isolated and estranged.

Appropriation: In postcolonial context, the term appropriation refers to the adaptation of the colonizer's language in writing so that it bears the weight of the colonization. This is often associated with Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe.

Bamboo Stalk: The leg of the Bamboo plant. The Bamboo can be planted anywhere without origins.

Contrapuntal reading: A phrase coined by Edward Said to call for the consideration of both poles -colonizer and colonized- in order to understand the colonial/postcolonial renditions from bilateral standpoints. According to this concept, both sides must be considered.

Dialecticism: The philosophical concept that considers the world as two poles, not necessarily opposing, which, when put together, either negate each other or synthesize into a whole. Examples of this include: Self/Other dichotomy, colonizer/colonized, etc.

Diaspora: A large group of people with a similar heritage or homeland who are scattered all over the world for different reasons.

Ethnicity: The term refers to the state of belonging to a certain social group that shares cultural and national traditions.

Exoticism: A propensity to adopting that which is different. Artists and writers, for example, are fascinated with and inspired by ideas from distant regions and cultures. Thus, the Other stimulates much attention in postcolonial era due to difference.

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Interdisciplinarity: The combination of two or more academic disciplines into a single activity. It draws knowledge from a number of fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, etc.

Introspection: A method which involves reflective looking inward. In literature, this process externalizes the characters' examination of their innermost thoughts and feelings.

National identity: It connotes one's identity and sense of belonging to a particular nation. Acts of national identity include patriotism displayed in disastrous times, in struggle against terrorism, etc.

Ritual: The ceremonial acts and practices performed by the light of tradition.

Sect: A political or a religious group that belongs to a group. In Islam, there are two sects Sunni and Shi'a.

Social hypocrisy: The fact of publicly display or verbal declarations as the individual of the set of values that are perceived as the moral in accordance with general rules perceived as the righteous course of actions while following the contradictory relations performed in secrecy often without the perception of the stress caused by the duality of the actions or values.

Glossary of Cultural Terms

Bedoon: (Arabic: without) also spelled bidūn, is used in Kuwait to describe a minority group which is less privileged due to ethnic affiliation. The term bedoon is an abbreviation of bedoon Jinsiya (Without citizenship).

Diwaniya: A fundamental part of a man's social life in Kuwait. Diwaniya today refers to both the reception room and the gathering in it. It can be used for communication, entertainment and, possibly, business meetings. It is merely for men; a woman cannot take part in it.

Gikuyu: A local language used in Kenya. It is the language in which Ngugi writes after his abrogation of English.

Henna: It is a dye used in Arab countries occasionally. In weddings, it is applied in the bride's hands as well as the invitees'. Henna has also been used to dye hair and fingernails.

Khalkhal: An ankle bracelet made from gold or silver. It is traditionally worn at weddings.

Mujāhid: A transliteration of the Arabic word مجاهد which means militant.

Shahīd: The word *Shahīd,* transliteration of the Arabic word شهيد, which means martyr.

Abstract

This thesis attempts to analyse the appropriation of otherness by two Arab writers. Through a postcolonial reading of Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Saud Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk*, it underscores subversion and adjustment of these English translations for the circulation of works in the West. Literary prizes exponentially influence the assumption of literary and non-literary works. Thus, the literary field becomes a marketplace and the culpability for this is to be apportioned to all sides, including consumers (readers). It also argues that postcolonial literature is subject to commodity and it takes evidence from the analysis of the aforementioned narratives. It also underscores subversion/omission of translations to meet the needs of Western market at the expense of the original. It concludes that the representation of the other -colonized and migrant- has been efficaciously done in the original works. Nevertheless, the adjustments (in translation) coupled with omissions and paratexts have had substantial impact on readership and reception of the translations in the West.

Resumé

Cette thèse tente d'analyser l'appropriation de l'altérité par deux écrivains arabes. À travers une lecture postcoloniale des *the Bridges of Constantine* de Ahlem Mosteghanemi et *the Bamboo Stalk* de Saud Alsanousi, elle souligne la subversion et l'ajustement de ces traductions pour la circulation des œuvres en Occident. Les prix littéraires influencent de manière exponentielle la prise en charge des œuvres littéraires et non littéraires. Ainsi, le domaine littéraire devient un marché et la culpabilité de cette situation doit être attribuée à toutes les parties, y compris les consommateurs (lecteurs). Elle soutient également que la condition postcoloniale est soumise à la marchandise et elle prend des preuves de l'analyse des récits susmentionnés. La thèse souligne également la subversion/adaptation des traductions pour répondre aux besoins des marchés occidentaux au détriment de l'original. Elle conclut que la représentation de l'autre -colonisé et migrant- a été faite de manière efficace dans les œuvres originales. Néanmoins, les ajustements (dans la traduction) couplés aux omissions et aux paratextes ont eu un impact substantiel sur le lectorat et la réception des traductions en Occident.

ملخص

تعنى هذه الأطروحة بتمثلات الآخر الحاضر بقوة في أدب ما بعد الكولونيالية. من خلال تحليل وقراءة ما بعد كولونيالية لروايتي "ذاكرة الجسد" لأحلام مستغانمي و "ساق البامبو" لسعود السنعوسي، نرى أن تداول هذه الأعمال الأدبية في الغرب استدعى بعض التعديلات والحذف حتى تلائم الترجمة ذوق القارئ الغربي. بما أن الجوائز الأدبية تؤثر على استقبال وتداول الأعمال الأدبية وغير الأدبية، فإن المجال الأدبي يصبح سوقا، وتقع المسؤولية على عاتق كل الأطراف بما فيها المستهلك (القارئ). تناقش المذكرة أيضا سلعنة أدب ما بعد الكولونيالية وتستدل في ذلك بتحليل الروايات الآنفة الذكر. كما تسلط الضوء على فكرة حذف وتحريف الترجمة على حساب النص الأصلي ليتماشى مع السوق الغربي. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الروايتين الأصليتين مثلتا الآخر -مستعمرا كان أم مهاجرا- أحسن تمثيل، بينما كان للتعديل والحذف ولواحق النص (paratexts) تأثيرا كبيرا على انتشار ومقروئية واستقبال الترجمة في الغرب.

Algeria's Linguistic Trauma and the Subversion in Mosteghanemi's Translation of *Dhakirat al-Jassad*

صدمة اللغة بالجزائر والتحويل و التحفّظ في ترجمة رواية ذاكرة الجسد لمستغانمي

Le traumatisme linguistique de l'Algérie et la subversion dans la traduction du *Dhakirat al-Jassad* par Mosteghanemi

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Introduction

France's conquest of Algeria resulted in the inexorable disproportion of its identity. Indeed, the primordial aspiration of the French coloniser was the extermination of the Algerian identity through the *frenchification* of Arabic and the annexation of Algeria as part and parcel of France. Algeria's linguistic trauma after fifty eight years of independence manifests the long-term facade of French assimilation policy. Appropriation and abrogation of the Other's language in postcolonial Algeria are still polemical in quotidian life as well as in literature. The confrontation between Arabic and French in terms of periphery/cosmopolitan languages results in further sensibility and radicalism. In this regard, Thomas (1999) propounds that it is France's policy that "contributed to the extremist tendencies" (27). These tendencies led to discord among Arabophone and Francophone Algerians. From a postcolonial literary frame of reference, which is the focus of the paper, Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Dhakirat al-Jassad* can be read as a novel of resistance which is written in Arabic as a *conscious* abrogation of the Other's language. Yet, its French and English translations put the cultural values and the resistance discourse into question given the omissions and subversion.

1. Algeria's (Im) Possible Linguistic Unity

Under French rule, the teaching of Arabic was proscribed and Algerians were compelled to use French. On March 8, 1938 the then prime minister launched the Chautemps Decree under which Arabic was reckoned a foreign language in Algeria (Groisy 85). Accordingly, teaching Arabic was prohibited unless the French government offered permission. The French would not of-

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fer the stamp of approval and the decree unveils the long-term dimensions of France's assimilation policy. The foreignisation and the frenchification of the Arabic tongue have been pre-planned to frenchify Algerians. Furthermore, the supremacy of French has even been "part of the deal to end France's colonial presence in Algeria" (Benrabah 37). The covenant, which is part of Evian Accords, partly justifies the reason behind the supreme authority of French in politics wherein many politicians still represent Algeria in the Other's language.

In antiquity, the natives of Algeria used to communicate through Berber languages. However, the successive conquests by the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Vandals, the Turks and the French make their imprints clear upon Algeria's identity. Among other Tamazight dialects/languages, Kabyle, Chaouia, Mozabite and Tamahaq are spoken heretofore in Kabylie, Aures, Mzab and El Hoggar regions, respectively. What is more, the Algerian constitution of 2016 declares that Tamazight is an official and national language. Unlike the amendments of 1989 and 1996 that neglected both Tamazight and French, the new amendments included Tamazight, being part and parcel of Algerian identity. Pertaining to Arabic, the constitution avers that it is the official and national language of the country. Paradoxically, the CIA World Factbook (2019) concurs that French is the tangible lingua franca in Algeria. Indeed, the constitution makes no mention of French use in postcolonial Algeria, but people are aware of its omnipresence and predominance.

However, multilingualism in post-independence Algeria is not brought by France. It is rather an inevitable outcome of European colonial interventions. The distinctiveness of quotidian Algerian speech renders it indecipherable by non-Algerians. More often than not, the secret to understanding Algerians who communicate in a manner that is understood mainly -if not only- by them is to be in mastery of both *Darija* (Algerian dialect) and French given that the locals frequently frenchify Arabic and arabicise French. What is more, not all Algerians are able to maintain a conversation in one language, be it Standard Arabic, Darija or French. Thus, France's linguistic assimilation policy succeeded in the creation of a hybrid tongue which is neither Arabic nor French. Recurrent code-switching in conjunction with inaptitude in the job market due to their lack of fluency in Arabic and French raise questions whether Algerian people are bilingual, multilingual or what Maamri refers to as "trilingual illiterates" (85).

The linguistic trauma and collage in Algeria are conspicuously due to the historical interruptions but the diagnosis, knowing the reasons, is not enough to heal. Telling through writing or speaking, as opposed to silence, can be therapeutic. Yet, when language itself is tormented by trauma, the healing is near-im-

possible. Algerians' quotidian speech embodies a collective linguistic trauma which is, most likely, beyond repair. The anxiety of further encounter with the Other's language is becoming more and more a complex and an issue in postcolonial Algeria. Novelists, for example, are split between two languages whose encounter is politically and historically discarded. The attitude towards Francophone writers in particular exhibits Algerians' incapability of understanding diversity and unveils symptoms of schizophrenia because Algeria is "the second-largest French speaking country, after France itself" (Mokrane 45) and people still dart accusatory forefingers on Francophone writers as though none but writers promote the coloniser's language.

2. Algerian Postcolonial Literature: One Story, Two Languages

In postcolonial context, language is a mechanism of resistance, identity and belonging. Language and culture are intertwined (Ngugi, 1986) and the appropriation of a certain language connotes assumption of the culture (Fanon, 1967). Among other theorists and writers, Fanon and Ngugi have unequivocally expounded that the appropriation of the coloniser's language is *per se* an assumption of the culture in question and an approval of its ascendancy over the native one. Chinua Achebe, however, is for the appropriation of the English language in an African manner. Writers' anxiety as regards the use of the Other's language is oftentimes experienced by authors whose bilingualism is an unavoidable outcome of colonisation. The French language or "the step mother tongue"[1] to borrow Djebar's phrase is considered against Algeria's mode of expression, at least historically and politically. Accordingly, the Algerian story is preordained to be told in two irreconcilable languages.

Mohammed Dib, Salima Ghezali, author of *Les amants de Shahrazade*, Leila Sebbar and Assia Djebar are among Algerian Francophone novelists for whom the French language is an apparatus to make Algeria's voice heard inside and outside the Algerian territory. By reason of the country's turbulent history with France, Algerian Francophone writers are customarily criticised for using French and they are often accused of being culturally assimilated. Assia Djebar, born Fatima-Zohra Imalayen, is constantly criticised for writing in French even after Algeria's independence. In this regard, the author constantly explains that her soul and memory remain Algerian in spite of her French pen.. In *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, Djebar further explicates that her writing "looks for a

1. Djebar's phrase *the stepmother tongue* is telling of the conflict between mother and Other's language in postcolonial Algeria. It is mentioned in Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* wherein she maintains "French is my stepmother tongue" p. 214.

place where a linguistic armistice can be arranged" (215). Thus, rewriting Algeria's traumatic history in French is emphatically not affected by the language itself but rather by the author's memory and Algeria's past. For Djebar and the like, French is not appropriated to subvert Algerian identity, they "write back" to reclaim their own identity and condemn the colonialists in their own language.

Arabophone novelists such as Taher Ouettar, Abdelhamid Benhadouga, Waciny Laaredj and Ahlem Mosteghanemi maintain that only the Arabic language carries Algerian culture. Following Ngugi's pathway, the aforementioned writers are in favor of abrogation of the coloniser's language and culture to promote their own. Upon the Naguib Mahfouz award winning, Mosteghanemi, the first Algerian woman to write a novel in Arabic in spite of her mother tongue, French, proclaims that Arabophone Algerian writers fight patriotically as opposed to the Francophone ones. She is undeniably committed to Algerian history and her resistance through writing in Arabic reflects her postcolonial awareness as well as her mastery of the Arabic language. Yet, the Arabic language alone is emphatically not a cornerstone for assessment as regards writers' patriotism. In specie, French is not necessarily a sign of betrayal or lack of belonging. Assimilation can take place beyond the borders of native language/ Other's language; it can be traced in translations.

To sketch an objective construal of the Arabophone/Francophone writers' discord, we appropriate Edward Said's concept of Contrapuntal Analysis. The latter is originally used to fathom and assess accounts on colonisation from both coloniser/colonised standpoints. Therefore, a contrapuntal reading of Algerian writers' accounts facilitates the encounter with the Other without any hostility or accusations of perfidy. Authors born during, or briefly after, colonisation were unwillingly overexposed to the coloniser's language and are still haunted by it. Yet, Mosteghanemi, born in 1953, takes pride in writing in a language that is, completely and unapologetically, hers in spite of the omnipresence of French in all parts of Algeria. She also bears in mind the martyrs who fought for their land, religion and language. For her, writing in her language is a mechanism of resistance and patriotism. Djebar was twenty-six by 1962, which fairly explains her Francophony without any doubt of her Algerian identity. After independence, she stopped writing in French for twelve years. Her literary silence after Algeria's independence is *per se* a political stance. In order to understand the abstruse Arabophone/Francophone conflict in Algeria, one should be attuned to "the Algerian linguicide" (Mokrane 2002). In a nutshell, writing in

Arabic shall make no writer more Algerian than the Francophone and writing in French shall make no writer less Algerian than the Arabophone.

The situation of the Arabic language is among the present-day preoccupations in Algerian postcolonial discourse. Paradoxically, Algerians' attitude towards Standard Arabic is an axiomatic disclosure of their schizophrenic behaviour and the inferiority complex instilled within their psyche. Fanon dexterously maintains that:

Every colonized people- in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of his local cultural originality- finds himself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation. (1967)

Formerly colonised people embrace and consecrate the coloniser's language and culture as a compensation for their inferiority complex. What is more, their conduct is a contribution to the acknowledgement of the existence of superior languages. This connotes conformity and complicity with the ubiquity of colonial languages in the allegedly postcolonial countries. The second part of Fanon's quotation is perfectly applicable to Algeria's present-day linguistic trauma. Arabic, we daresay, was on its deathbed during colonisation and in the wake of France's departure. Yet, its ultimate slaughter and interment in Algeria have been executed by Algerians who have othered it through their negative, off-putting attitude towards it.

3. Overlapping of Value and Commodity

The commodification of language and culture in postcolonial texts is a subject of debate. The phenomenon of commodification reduces postcolonial works into products whose primary dwelling is the commercialised marketplace. The terminology itself compulsorily alters: The writer becomes a merchant, the reader a customer, and the library a marketplace. The customers demand to be pleased in order to consume, and the merchants are compelled to provide sought-after materials to guarantee consumption and circulation of their works. This contractual relationship which is based upon commodification for the sake of selling puts the authenticity and legibility of merchants and products into question. Reminiscent of actors and actresses who are in pursuit of Prizes and Oscars, awards have become an obsession for some writers.

In the last decades, there appeared a hysterical increase of awards in almost all industries. The Other, for instance, guarantees the circulation of literary works due to the sensibility and exoticism of postcolonial discourse. As expounded by English, this hysteria of multitudinous awards reduces any society

to one that "can conceive of artistic achievements only in terms of stardom and success, and that is fast replacing a rich and varied cultural world" (3). Terms such as "bestselling" and "award-winning" have an effect on the reception of novels and compel people -consumers- to purchase. Accordingly, not all popular contemporary writers and artists merit titles or awards because, as proposed by English, "the cultural universe has become supersaturated with prizes" (17). Most writers, irrespective of merit, have many prizes. In this case, awards are not the cornerstone for assessment with respect to works of art. Rather, it is important to perceive and assess works regardless of their writers or the titles ascribed to them.

Awards are not merely offered to stars, bestsellers, and accomplished writers. Noticeably, the exponential overproduction resulted in the foundation of prizes of absurdity, celebrating poor standards. In the field of literature, for example, English explains that there are prizes for:

Worst book of the year (the J. Gordon Coogler Award), worst translation of the year (the Rach Award) […] worst piece of academic writing (the Bad Writing Contest Gold Medal), and worst piece of nonfiction writing (the Silver Rhubarb Award). (117)

These are few examples of millions of absurd awards that manifest the prevailing nature of prestige and triviality in many aspects of life. Quality and aestheticism are no longer key elements of awards nomination and winning. The arbitrariness of the unnatural awards reduces the weight of prizes given that both qualified and underqualified are equally awarded. In addition to the aforementioned prizes, there are others for "intentionally bad writing, such as the Bulwer Lytton Grand Prize for Bad Writing […] and the Hemingway Bad Writing Prize" (English 117). These, however, belong to the category of best-of awards intended as parody.

Mostly due to globalisation, the world is supersaturated with commodities and people are predisposed to consume anything irrespective of the increasing loss of cultural values. This being said, postcolonial literary works can be unapologetically commodified by periphery writers who are in search of recognition, circulation of works and fame after many a decade of exclusion. Feminist and cultural critic bell hooks elucidates the way the marginalized Other "can be seduced by the emphasis on Otherness, by its commodification, because it offers the promise of recognition and reconciliation" (26). Some periphery writers are, as rightly suggested by hooks, in pursuance of stardom, and thus, appropriate the notion of Otherness and identity related issues for recognition and circulation of works.

4. Subversive Translation and Cultural Loss

In 1998, *Dhakirat al-Jassad* had won the Naguib Mahfouz Prize and was translated into English as *Memory in the Flesh* in 2000 and *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013. Through this novel, Mosteghanemi insistently, and deliberately, draws scholarly attention to the situation of the Arabic language in postcolonial Algeria. Ali El-Rai'i concurs that Mosteghanemi is "a writer who has banished the linguistic exile to which French colonialism pushed Algerian intellectuals" (qtd. in Holt 125). In the award acceptance speech, Mosteghanemi accentuates the importance of the Arabic language as a telling sign of patriotism and resistance. The Arabophone/Francophone hero/villain discord in conjunction with the author's appraisal of Arabophone writers show her tacit *accusation of* Francophone writers as though they have willingly chosen to embrace *the stepmother tongue* instead of their mother tongue. Rachid Boujedra who wrote in the French language from 1965 until 1981 then returned to it in 1992 maintains "I didn't choose the French language. It rather chose me. It has imposed itself" (qtd. in Maamri 87).

Prior to the dedication page in the original, Mosteghanemi (2013) avers the borrowing of Khaled Ben Toubal, Malek Haddad's protagonist in *Le Quai aux fleurs ne répond plus* (*The Flower Quay No Longer Answers*). The author proclaims that after half a century, Khaled Ben Tobal is back in another novel to write in the language he was deprived of. Then, Khaled is resuscitated to fulfil Haddad's aspiration. This corroborates the author's attachment to the Algerian cause as well as her commitment to the Arabic language. Indisputably, not only is the narrative atmospheric but it is also aesthetic. The writer's full mastery of the Arabic language is unmistakable and she can even be described as rebellious, linguistically speaking. *The Bridges of Constantine* is, without reservation, a tour-de-force novel detailing Algeria's struggle for liberation as well as the disenchantments of the postcolonial reality and corruption.

In the original, Mosteghanemi's word choice in the dedication, which is addressed to her father Si Cherif and to Algerian poet and writer Malek Haddad, substantiates the readers' sense of empathy. The first part is dedicated to Haddad wherein the author proclaims that he swore after Algeria's independence not to write in a language which was not his own and consequently died of the cancer of silence to become a martyr of the Arabic language. The oath and the author's metaphor are sufficient for the arousal of the readers' emotions and the resuscitation of their feelings of belonging. The second part of the dedication is addressed to her deceased father, hoping someone reads him the book given

that he does not read in Arabic. Any writer would pay undivided attention to the dedication because it is among the first elements upon which the readers base their decision to read the book or not. Accordingly, Mosteghanemi's words have been consciously chosen. In this case, her words allude to the fact that there would be no French translation and her father who does not master Arabic has to seek external assistance. Indeed, after the Naguib Mahfouz Prize, the novel was translated into English but there was no French translation even if "Algeria is the second-largest Francophone country, after France itself" (Mokrane 53).

In 2002, however, *Dhakirat al-Jassad* was translated into French as *Mémoires de la Chair* by Mohamed Mokaddem. This French version "significantly mutes the linguistic drama being staged" (Holt 123) and "the novel enters the world of francophonie through translation" (125). Both Algerian and French readers are concerned with this specific work due to the shared historical experience. When the protagonist Khaled is informed that Hayat writes in Arabic and she confirms "Je pourrais écrire en français, mais l'arabe est la langue de mon cœur"[2], the French readers in particular are undoubtedly perplexed in front of such contradictions and incongruities given that the passage itself is written in French. The readers are further alienated from the text when the two protagonists -figuratively- make a contract to speak merely in Arabic when Khaled proposes "On ne se parle plus qu'en arabe. Je vais changer vos habitudes à partir d'aujourd'hui."[3] Contradictorily again, the passage is written in French and the reader is further confused.

The first part of the dedication in the French translation reads "A Malek Haddad, l'enfant de Constantine qui fait le serment après l'indépendance de ne pas écrire dans une langue qui n'était pas la sienne il est mort de son silence"[4] The sensibility felt in the original dedication and obscured in the French translation proffers the market's needs. The word choice itself is not as steadfast as in the original. The phrases "a martyr of the Arabic language" and "independence of Algeria" are consciously left out of the French translation because the sensibility of these words would infuriate the French readers. *Mémoires de la Chair*

2. "I could have written in French, but Arabic is the language of my heart" The Bridges of Constantine, p. 62. The female protagonist, Hayat, has affinities with the author herself. Both writer and character write in Arabic despite the French milieu they are in.

3. "We're only going to speak Arabic. I'll change your habits as of today." The Bridges of Constantine, p. 63.

4. To Malek Haddad, the child of Constantine who swore after independence not to write in a language that was not his own… He died of silence. This translation is my own since the English translation does not mention Malek Haddad.

is in reality addressed to a Western audience, mainly French, blasé of Algerians' sensibility in this regard. Surprisingly, the author herself maintains that:

Writers are free to choose between pleasing the West and reforming the East through their ideas. Or they can choose to direct their words to the Western and Eastern reader at the same time. I choose to serve my nation and Arabism as the first priority. (Baaqueel 152)

Undeniably, Mosteghanemi's *Dhakirat al-jassad* is an authentic account of Algeria's history, written in Arabic for an Algerian and an Arab audience. Yet, the French language cannot remain objective in the translation of this historical text which involves its own history. Thus, the omissions in the dedication, deliberate or otherwise, and the contradictions -in the text- corroborate the futility of a French translation and demonstrate the author's eagerness for a wider readership in the West. Had the novel been written originally in French, it would not have been subversive as the translation of *Dhakirat al-Jassad* which fails in the reconciliation of the original and the translated due to the long-standing historical conflict.

The relation between author and translator, original and translated text is consequential. As expounded in *Translation, History, Culture*, which is a reference to grasp the nomenclature of translation, Susan Bassnett argues that translation "can penetrate the native culture, challenge it and even contribute to subverting it" (Introduction 2). This is pertinent when it comes to Mosteghanemi's *Mémoires de la Chair* given the external influences and omissions which primarily serve the target text and audience at the expense of the original. The author's sensed pride in the original dedication is nowhere to be found in the French translation. In reality, the sensibility of the Algerian history with France, Mosteghanemi's *conscious* commitment to the Arabic language and the perplexing French translation make it a product for sale irrespective of its cultural value. In the same manner, if not worse, the English translation by Raphael Cohen makes no mention of Malek Haddad or Algeria in the dedication. For Mosteghanemi, writing about Algeria in Arabic is a mechanism of resistance and belonging as she constantly states. That being said, the novel makes a new phase in prestige through the French and English translations. Therefore, the whole process of writing in Arabic and translating -with moderation- is a mélange of paradoxes.

Conclusion

To bring this paper to an end, the protracted linguistic trauma still haunts Algerians whose sense of belongingness is lost somewhere between colonialism and postcolonialism. Even if it appears to be a

trauma beyond repair by reason of its deep-rootedness, it is necessary to probe into Algeria's history to fathom today's identity crisis. Nonetheless, it is still partly incumbent on both people and government to preserve Algeria's language and dislodge the linguistic intermarriage between two languages and cultures whose convergence is historically and politically discarded. The paper showed how the postcolonial reality is commodified for marketable purposes through Mosteghanemi's translations of *Dhakirat al-Jassad.* We also argued that, like Algerian Arabophone writers, Francophone writers are in a mission to re-tell the Algerian story from an Algerian frame of reference without deformation or partiality.

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Abstract

Algeria's colonial history (1830-1962) instigated linguistic dislocation which was and still is to the core of identity crisis. This paper attempts to examine the unapologetic ubiquity of French and *frenchified* Arabic in postcolonial Algeria. It also highlights the ambivalence as regards staunch resistance to the colonizer's language and concurrent commodification of the postcolonial condition through translation into the Other's language. Mosteghanemi's translations of *Dhakirat al-Jassad*, blasé of Algerians' sensibility as regards national matters, are read in relation to cultural loss and prestige.

Keywords

postcolonial Algeria, linguistic trauma, commodity, cultural loss.

مستخلص

كان تاريخ الجزائر الاستعماري (0381-2691) سببا في التفكك اللغوي الذي كان و لازال في لبّ أزمة الهوية. يحاول هذا المقال دراسة الوجود المفرط والسادر للغة الفرنسية و العربية المتفرنسة في الجزائر ما بعد الاستعمار. كما يسلط الضوء على التناقض بخصوص مقاومة لغة المستعمر بثبات وسلعنة ظرف ما بعد الاستعمار من خلال الترجمة بتحفّظ إلى لغة الآخر. في هذا السياق، نعتبر ترجمة ذاكرة الجسد لمستغانمي، الغير مكترثة لحساسية الجزائريين فيما يخص المسائل الوطنية، نموذجا للبرستيج و الخسارة الثقافية و السلعنة الأدبية.

كلمات مفتاحيّة

الجزائر ما بعد الاستعما، صدمة لغوية، سلعة، خسارة ثقافية.

Résumé

L'histoire coloniale de l'Algérie (1830-1962) a provoqué un bouleversement linguistique qui a été et est toujours au cœur de la crise identitaire. Cet article tente d'examiner l'omniprésence sans excuse du français et de l'arabe francisé dans l'Algérie postcoloniale. Il souligne également l'ambivalence de la résistance acharnée à la langue du

colonisateur et la marchandisation concomitante de la condition postcoloniale par la traduction dans la langue de l'Autre. Les traductions de Mosteghanemi du Dhakirat al-Jassad, blaséés de la sensibilité des Algériens à l'égard des questions nationales, sont lues en relation avec la perte culturelle et le prestige

Mots-clés

Algérie postcoloniale, traumatisme linguistique, marchandise, perte culturelle.

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The Notion of Otherness between resistance and Prestige in Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk*

Doctoral Thesis (Summary)

Sara MEHADAR

Supervisor: Prof. Fewzia Bedjaoui

This doctoral thesis entitled "The Notion of Otherness between Resistance and Prestige in Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* and Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk*" is preoccupied with otherness, identity crisis, resistance and commodity, original works and their translations. In postcolonial literature, there is an overlap of value and commodity that needs to be addressed. This research is an attempt to take inventory of the literature dealing with otherness and identity crisis by juxtaposing the works of resistance (The Arabic original) with commodity and prestige (the translations). For this end, the thesis tries to determine whether postcolonial writers consider the market at the expense of the native culture or not, and if external influences which guarantee consumption and circulation of literary works are intentional portions of a marketing process or not. The thesis attempts to prove/disprove that Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* (2013) and Saud Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) have gone through a conscious, transformational journey from resistance to commodity and prestige.

Some postcolonial writers shed a spotlight on notions such as identity and otherness either as a manner of resistance or for the sake of commodification. This difference between the East and the West, colonizer and colonized is being commodified by some writers for the circulation of their literary works. The depiction of the exotic Other has become sought-after and some periphery writers to exploited this to meet the curiosity of the West. The unwarranted number of accounts on Otherness, identity and issues of the like is *per se* both exhausted and questionable. The language used, whether native or the colonizer's, the perspective and the purpose of writing are all fundamental

in such area of research. Language alone is a subject of debate open to manifold interpretations and analyses.

In cultural studies and postcolonial context, the relation between the original text and its translation necessitates the incorporation of Translation Studies. Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's narratives are originally written in Arabic as *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (1993) and *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) translated respectively by Raphael Cohen and Jonathan Wright as *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013 and *the Bamboo Stalk* in 2015. Translation Studies and Comparative Literature are interconnected due to their complementary and interdisciplinary natures that make them interdependent. Comparatists address material irrespective of culture, history and genre. They study that material either in the original language or through translation and the latter comes to the aid of comparatists and comparative literature students. Additionally, Translation Studies is deployed as a theoretical concept to investigate the manners in which faithfulness, transformation, resistance and commodity of translated postcolonial texts -which dovetail in the receiving culture and, most probably, devalue the native one- are of vital importance. It is plausible to mention that the French translation of Mosteghanemi's narrative titled *Mémoires de la Chair* (2002) by Mohamed Mokaddem serves part of the research. On the whole, the rationale for including Translation Studies in the first chapter is based on the discipline's colossal contribution in the making of internationally known literary and non-literary works, its inseparability from comparative literature and its *cross-ability*. For this end, it is necessary to have a close look at Translation Studies and its principles and then juxtapose the original works in question with their English translations -English and French in the case of Mosteghanemi's narrative.

In spite of the anticipation of the downfall of postcolonial discipline on account of its exhaustion and paucity of auspicious innovation, postcolonial issues continue to be contentious, critical concerns in contemporary times. In reality, the hysteric emergence of literary prizes makes writers by and large rivals in pursuit of awards, fame and recognition. What is more, the phenomenon of commodification in the literary scene reduces literary works to saleable products irrespective of what is lost in the process. Indeed, the writer becomes a producer and the reader becomes a consumer. Otherness, marginalization and difference that have been the precursor of the antediluvian are currently marketable and popularized. This commodification of otherness for commercial purposes, however, calls into question the authenticity of some periphery writers.

For a variety of reasons, the literary scene is saturated with contradictions. Since the advent of globalization, cultural values and diversity are in peril. The overlap of values and commodity makes the genuine purpose of certain acts hardly identifiable. For example, there are issues of paramount significance -like the notion of identity- that cannot, or at least should not, be used and appropriated merely for materialistic grounds. One's identity is not to be commodified or subverted to suit a given market. This being said, authenticity is often put into question once the circulation of works becomes a priority. This does not necessarily entail the total absence of cultural value within literary works; it just demonstrates the weight attributed to readership irrespective of subversion and adjustment. Some periphery novelists appropriate the other for the circulation of works and readership. As regards Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad*, staunch commitment -in the original- is transmuted into subliminal subversion.

Resistance discourse and postcolonial awareness in the original are obliterated and obscured in the French translation *Mémoires de la Chair.* On a similar note, Alsanousi's English translation of *Sāq al-Bāmbū* contains omissions and adjustments that meet the Western reader's taste.

To prove/disprove Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's *conscious* oscillation between resistance and commodity, primary and secondary sources have been exploited and closely examined to guarantee a solid grasp of the authors' initial intents and the transmutations that occur along the process of translation. Both authors, one must accentuate, account for the other's afflictions in an engaging, beguiling manner in an endeavour to empower and emancipate the other. Their aesthetic and linguistic merits are acknowledged as they both have the capacity to arouse readers' curiosity and imagination. What is more, the two works compel readers to re-think some notions such as migration, citizenship, colonialism and postcolonial challenges. In light of this, the research is primarily interested in the controversial appropriation of otherness in *the Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk* as well the unwarranted consideration of the Western market at the expense of the native culture.

Previous scholarship -Arabic and English- has prolifically and critically covered the issues of identity crisis and otherness in postcolonial context in African and Asian narratives. Ahlem Mosteghanemi's narrative *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (Translated by Baria Ahmar Sreih as *Memory in the Flesh* in 2000 and re-translated by Raphael Cohen as *the Bridges of Constantine* in 2013) and Saud Alsanousi's novel *Sāq al-Bāmbū* (2012) translated by Jonathan Wright as *the Bamboo Stalk* (2015) have been under scrutiny by a number of scholars, critics and researchers who are interested in the history of Algeria,

and otherness and hybridity in the Gulf countries. The two narratives have gained much attention and fame in the Arab world, especially after winning prestigious prizes. Although referring to the French translation of Mosteghanemi's *the Bridges of Constantine* in chapter three, the thesis is in the main interested in Cohen's English translation and the corpus written in English. In reality, the literature presented in this section has handled the novels –albeit separately- from different perspectives, including postcolonialism and feminism.

There is a litany of research conducted on identity crisis and otherness in Arabic literature in general and in Saud Alsanousi's *the Bamboo Stalk* in particular. Nonetheless, the other's east-to-east voyage suggests a deviation from the conventional novel in Gulf countries. Daringly, the author offers the protagonist, José/Isa, blank pages to be filled from his own standpoint. As readers, we are informed through the other's perception of Kuwait, even if it is based upon individual experience. The thesis also takes inventory of the protagonist's voyage from his maternal homeland, the Philippines, to his paternal country, Kuwait, with reference to the notions of home, topophilia and topophobia which shaped his self-perception and final destination. Irrespective of the main *persona's* legitimacy in Kuwait, we presume that 'hybridity'[1] is consciously exported to the Philippines by Alsanousi himself. In conclusion, the thesis proposes that by the end of the narrative, José/Isa reaches *mature hybridity* as an alternative of Jarrar's suggestion of Lo's concept "Happy hybridity"[2]. Being topophilic and topophobia is their relevance and viability when it comes to one's ambivalent identity vis-à-vis (dis)location.

[1] In Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*.
[2] Jacqueline Lo's concept in "beyond happy hybridity: performing Asian-Australian identities."

As far as *the Bridges of Constantine* is concerned, there is a plethora of critical works conducted in Arabic and French. There are very few works in English on Mosteghanemi's narrative, which is surprising once its popularity is considered. It appears that Mosteghanemi scholars are by and large Arabophone and Francophone researchers from the Maghreb region in addition to few non-Arab scholars who are not in mastery of Arabic and French. In this case, the non-Arab scholars are compelled to entirely rely on the English translation(s) of the novel. It is worth mentioning that complete dependence on the translation without reading the original may stand in the way of accurate construal and comprehension of the mood of the original because what is captured through the translated text is not necessarily as authentic as the original.

The current thesis innovates in the existing scholarship not only by analyzing Mosteghanemi's and Alsanousi's narratives together in a comparative study, but rather through the study of the effect of prizes on the reception of the narratives in question. The two literary works have never been studied together with reference to resistance, prestige and commodity. Resistance and prestige stand in opposite contrast yet they go hand in hand in the analysis of the works in question. Mosteghanemi and Alsanousi are both committed, periphery writers dealing with a condition and a cause, postcolonial reality and the other's situation, that drastically impact people's lives. Although the settings are quite different, Algeria and Kuwait are bound by their convoluted histories. Displacement, corruption and disillusionment are prevailing and the political scene incarnates the atrocities of the ruling systems, which imply different modes of internal colonialism (Algeria) and collective class-consciousness (Kuwait).

This comparative study also probes into the commodification of the postcolonial condition for the circulation of works and subversion which is traced in the translation. This makes the postcolonial other an exotic, sought-after product ready for sale, irrespective of cultural loss. Commodifying the other's story is not merely possible in original texts but in translation as well. Although much has been written on *Sāq al-Bāmbū,* there is no research that touches upon the role of the International Prize for Arabic Literature and the English translation in the reception of the novel in Kuwait and abroad. Intentionally or not, Alsanousi has not laid much emphasis on paratextual devices. In reality, the title itself can be part of paratextual apparatus.

As far as structure is concerned, the thesis is divided into four chapters, each of which is purported to delve into a different portion of postcolonial literature in a certain context. The first chapter "*Theoretical and Conceptual Framework*" introduces a number of the concepts utilized throughout the thesis. The second chapter "*Towards a Contextual Understanding of Mosteghanemi's the Bridges of Constantine (2013)* and *Alsanousi's the Bamboo Stalk (2015)"* is mostly dedicated to background and contextualization of the two narratives in question. It is an extension to the first chapter in a sense that it gives an account of the environments in which the novels have been written, mainly for a better understanding of the importance of identity in the Arab world in particular. The chapter also contextualizes the English translations of the two novels. The third chapter *"What Matters the Most: The Other or the Market?"* probes into complexities and realities of postcolonial Algeria through close reading of *the Bridges of Constantine*. The fourth chapter *"(In) Authentic Narration: Writing and Translating the Other With(Out) Subversion"* is dedicated to Saud Alsanousi's *Sāq al-Bāmbū.* It is purported to answer the question whether the other can speak for himself properly (In Kuwait) or he loses his voice in the way for materialistic and/or non-

materialistic grounds. It also attempts to scrutinize if translating the other is as authentic as writing the other. The chapter demonstrates how writing from the other's perspective of the otherer –Kuwait in this case- offers a more faithful rendition of the narration.

Given the eclectic nature of the research, it is both legitimate and pertinent to include, though briefly, Translation Studies. Both *The Bridges of Constantine* and *the Bamboo Stalk* are originally written in Arabic and have gone through the journey of translation. Translation Studies and Comparative Literature itself are interconnected due to their complementary and interdisciplinary natures which make one indispensable for the other. Comparatists deal with texts irrespective of language, culture, and history. They study the texts either in the original language or through translation and the latter facilitates the process for comparatists and for comparative literature students. It is also plausible to mention that Mosteghanemi's French translation in particular serves part of the research question of this thesis. On one hand, the rationale for including Translation Studies is based upon the discipline's colossal contribution in the making of internationally known literary and non-literary works (such as *Dhakirat al-Jassad* and *Sāq al-Bāmbū*). On the other hand, it is due to its inseparability from comparative literature and its *cross-ability*.

On the whole, the thesis has probed into the appropriation of otherness in relation to resistance and prestige as two –contradictory- motives that represent the other through literature from the margin in an authentic way. Being represented –or misrepresented- for long, people from the margin have not appropriately articulated their version of the story being circulated. A re-narration has become a necessity to reclaim the other's beingness and maintain balance. The way the other –notably the postcolonial other, the Arab, the migrant, the Muslim and the Arab woman- is to be seen in the West depends

for the most part on the writings this marginalized other offers through translation. Indeed, what is lost in translation can possibly come in the way of mutual understandings between the other and the *otherer*. However, what is unintentionally lost due to lack of equivalence or culture-bound barriers is somewhat understood and justified. What is unjustified for the periphery writer, translator, publisher or editor is the intentional subversion of any original text to gain a new readership in the receiving culture, irrespective of cultural loss. It is not a sheer coincidence to choose two Arabic-language narratives which have been translated into English but the fact that both turn out to be prize-winning novels is -at least in the case of *the Bridges of Constantine*. And that has gradually directed the focus of this research from appropriation of otherness as a mechanism of resistance towards the incredible value some periphery writers give to the market at the expense of cultural value.

In a similar vein, the thesis has argued that otherness -a subject of focus in cultural and postcolonial studies- is appropriated in literary works for different reasons as exemplified in the third and the fourth chapters. In a writing back mission, periphery writers' aspiration is to decentre the centre and *de-other* the other through debunking the myths. Yet, postcolonial literature proves to be supersaturated with writings on otherness and identity -an obsession which can be understood on account of centuries of exclusion. Leading literary figures of postcolonial literature proffer narrations to challenge the accounts of dominant cultures. Through their literature, Ngugi, Achebe, Rhys and the like have depicted the West as other and different. Alongside identity crisis and otherness, the situation of the migrant other who suffers in the Gulf countries is tackled through the analysis of José/Isa's stay in his father's country, Kuwait. The socio-

economic situation is what compels people like José/Isa, Luzviminda and Lakshmi to tolerate mistreatment and subjugation by households and/or citizens. This being said, these subjugated, silenced people have no voice to speak for themselves. One may ask: Does literature really give them voice or help them? Well, it is everyone's responsibility to make those people seen and heard. Once citizens' awareness is raised, they shall reflect on their own conduct.

However, exaggeration and exhaustion of the themes of the migrant or the postcolonial other by the same Arab novelists draw one's attention to the commodification of otherness and the project of building different readerships across the Arab world. One might ask: is it an issue if a writer aimed to build readership across the world, not only the Arab world? In reality, there is not a straightforward answer to this simple question because many factors have to be taken into account. Say that there is no issue if Arab writers gain wider readership, more visibility and popularity. What matters is the essence, that is, the way this suppressed colonized or migrant is represented, not only in the native culture but in translation as well. Between the chauvinistic original and the humble translation lies much prestige, commodity and cultural loss. In the case of postcolonial writers, not writing at all is better than writing with deliberate omission or subversion. Once the history of the colonized nations is involved, it seems untenable for periphery writers to control the tone and the mood of the text. In other words, what is written in the native language for an audience that belongs to the same history and culture is not always delivered or translated with the same intensity in the receiving culture, especially in case of any type of clash between the two.

In this respect, the thesis concludes that the translations (*Mémoires de la Chair* 2002, *the Bridges of Constantine* 2013 and *the Bamboo Stalk* 2015) have undergone a journey of commodification -for different reasons- to guarantee reception in the West. Indeed, the representation of the other is done faithfully and effectively in the original narratives (*Dhākirat al-Jasad* 1993 and *Sāq al-Bāmbū* 2012). Nevertheless, some of the omissions and adjustments seen in the translations raise questions on authenticity. As regards Mosteghanemi, our hypothesis that she could have written in French had she been writing for the sake of readership proves to be somewhat inaccurate. In other words, writing in Arabic and translating to the colonizer's language -although choosing Arabic to resist francophony- guarantee wider readership and two audiences. The historical clash between Algeria and France makes the omissions suspicious and suggests they are deliberate. In order for the French reader to accept the French translation of *Dhākirat al-Jasad,* the text must undergo adjustments to make it less hostile towards France. Pertaining to *Sāq al-Bāmbū,* the modifications that occur in Wright's translation do not de-contextualize the text. Although the protagonist -a fictional writer in the original- is presented merely as a character in the translation, there is no subversion in telling the story.

Due to a number of constraints, the thesis could not cover all aspects related to the theme of otherness in association with resistance and prestige. This being said, further research needs to be conducted on the reception of Arabic literature in the West, selection criteria for translating Arabic novels and the reception of international prizes at home.