


Rectifying the Image of Arabs in the World: The Necessity of Translation in *The Great Satirist* by AmjadTawfiq

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Abstract

This study delves into the profound impact of Iraqi novelist Amjad Tawfiq's groundbreaking work, *The Great Satirist*, on illuminating the intricate tapestry of Arab and Iraqi societies. Spanning historical epochs to contemporary times characterized by the ominous presence of extremist groups in Mosul and the broader Middle East, the novel serves as a poignant window into the heart and soul of these regions. Employing a meticulous stylistic-thematic analysis, this paper aspires to pave the way for an authentic translation of the novel, primarily into English, to broaden its reach to a Western audience. By preserving the rich tapestry of human experiences and nurturing a profound sense of national identity, this translation seeks to be a catalyst for peaceful coexistence and mutual comprehension among diverse ethnicities within the Arab world. As the study culminates, it underscores the pivotal role of Arabic literary works in the documentation of historical events and their unique capacity to advocate for a sense of belonging and unity within societies. In an increasingly interconnected world, the transcendent power of literature to bridge cultural divides and foster an appreciation of shared humanity becomes more pronounced, highlighting the importance of endeavors such as this in promoting global harmony and understanding.

Keywords: AmjadTawfiq's *The Great Satirist*, Arab and Muslim Representation, Mosul, translation, western readers

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Introduction

The image of Arabs and Muslims has been intentionally distorted by Western media, which holds an antagonistic stance towards Arab and Islamic nations. This deliberate distortion has ingrained false perceptions in the minds of European and American societies, perpetuating a misrepresented image through inhumane and fabricated narratives. Exploiting the rise of extremist terrorist groups like ISIS, these media outlets reinforced the negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims. By intentionally using the term "Islamic State" (ISIS) instead of "terrorists" or "ISIL," major Western channels aimed to marginalize and misrepresent Arab mentality, portraying Muslim-founded states as brutal and terror-driven.

Acknowledging that there are social and intellectual environments fostering such extremist groups, individuals were deceived by ideologies advocating Islamic unity, justice, and the magnification of Allah. Many have fallen prey to ignorance, following these ideologies blindly. Anti-Arab forces significantly contributed to nurturing and promoting these violent ideas.

Due to the lack of a genuine Arab media capable of accurately and humanely *The Snow* representing Arab individuals and their positive qualities, Western media effortlessly dominated the media landscape without competition. Arab media institutions, at both the individual and institutional levels, failed to effectively present the true image of Arabs to the West without manipulation or flattery.

To address this issue, this research proposes translating literary works that deal with the predicament of Arab youth caught between their religious and human identities. The focus is on the renowned Iraqi novelist Amjad Tawfiq, whose diverse narrative styles in works such as showcase captivating mountainous and geographic tales, but amid the volatile political events in our society, he dedicated several works to address social and political issues, notably his novel *The Long Shadows*. In a similar vein, the researcher obtained a printed copy of his new novel titled *The Great Satirist* which centers around the social impact of communities living under the reign of ISIS's terrorism.

Many writers and societal leaders refrained from delving into such subjects that touch on the essence of Iraqi and Arab life. Hence, this research aims to propose a fitting and appropriate translation for his novel *The Great Satirist* shedding light on specific passages that encapsulate the writer's humane message, providing an impartial and unfiltered depiction of Arab individuals. This study hopes to serve as a commendable model, inspiring others to translate similar works that correct distorted images through genuine evidence and historical and social facts.

The objective of this research is to conduct a stylistic-thematic analysis of the novel "The Great Satirist" by Amjad Tawfiq to achieve an authentic translation, particularly into English, to correct and bridge Arab-Muslim perspectives for a wider Western audience. The study seeks to highlight the true essence of Arab and Iraqi citizens portrayed in the novel, counteracting the intentional distortion and misrepresentation perpetuated by Western media. By providing an impartial and unfiltered depiction of Arab individuals, the research aims to contribute to a more accurate and humane representation of Arab and Muslim communities, fostering understanding, tolerance, and coexistence between diverse cultures.

Literature Review

The Contradiction Syndrome in the Arab Image

In his novel, Amjad Tawfiq presents multiple depictions of the Arab individual. The Arab is portrayed as a passionate person, enamored with women at times, and noble and brave, coming to the rescue at other times. Yet, this internal contradiction in human nature is not exclusive to Arabs and their fluctuating desires. Behavioral and psychological contradictions are natural human traits, applicable to every individual. (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990).

Consequently, the reader of this novel notices various representations of the Arab and the Muslim, necessitating the connection of these diverse images with their corresponding translations into English. By doing so, one can seek assistance in rectifying these portrayals.

Collective Contradiction

The Russian novelist Dostoevsky describes the collective contradiction in the narrative characters in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov* as follows:

The nature of humans inclines towards an unusual mixture of good and evil. We love culture, yet we revel in taverns and take pleasure in enticing our drunken companions. It is true that we know how to be virtuous and generous on occasions, but that only happens when we are happy and content with ourselves. (Badgesh, 2016, p.9)

This definition was applied by the writer and employed in the opening of his novel when he wanted the reader to understand that life, in its entirety, is contradictory and ever-changing. It is a realm where constants fall away, and everything we once believed in, such as values and rigid boundaries, becomes blurred and uncertain. He states:

فجأة تغيب التعريفات ، وتسقط الحقائق المدرسية ، فيصبح التناقض تعريفاً أو وجهاً آخر ، فلو القبح ، أكان ممكناً أن نحس بالجمال؟

In an instant, all once-clear definitions fade away, and the established facts taught in schools crumble. Contradiction emerges as the sole defining characteristic, the flip side of the coin. Can we truly grasp the concept of 'Beauty' without its counterpart, 'Ugliness'? (Tawfiq 2018, p.5)

Here, the author's words align with what the Russian novelist mentioned earlier, implying that our Arab writers are not lacking in philosophy or wisdom when it comes to analyzing social changes and predicting future developments based on available data. The beauty of this paragraph lies in the author's ability to compare and associate beauty with ugliness. It signifies that the Arab individual will only comprehend their humanity and human connection when there are stages and periods marked by the absence of conscience. Translating this paragraph is of utmost importance to highlight the author's philosophy and mindset in defining the boundaries of social fluctuations and transformations.

Individual Contradiction

The writer did not content himself with defining the general social fluctuations; rather, he delved into introducing a new kind, which is the individual transformation and contradiction in behavior, appearance, and essence. He highlighted how the factor of time serves as the driving force behind all psychological, religious, and physical changes. Describing one of the lovers, he eloquently expresses:

قبل عودته إلى بغداد ، زار ليلى ثانية ، زيارة خلفت في نفسه الكثير من الألم، كانت ضعيفة ، ومجاملة ، غاب عنفوانها ، وغاب مكرها وصوتها المتحدي ، ولم يتبق من نظرتها النافذة سوى ظلال شاحبة

Before his return to Baghdad, he visited Layla once more, a visit that left him deeply pained. She appeared frail and polite, her usual vigor and defiant spirit absent. Her compelling charm and the forceful tone of her voice seemed to have disappeared, leaving behind only faint traces of her once-penetrating gaze. (Tawfiq 2018,p.226)

The beauty lies here in how, with time, the individual transforms, softening their once fervent nature. What's even more captivating is that the author intended to bestow upon the Arab individual the qualities of loyalty and nostalgia towards unfaithful friends. This suggests to the reader that the Arab is a forgiving soul, free from vindictiveness, and rather empathetic towards the plight of their companions. The character in this novel shows compassion for "Layla," who was not faithful in love or committed to their romantic relationship. Therefore, it is upon the translator to convey this inner monologue of the speaker as an honest dialogue with oneself, filled with empathy even towards the enemy.

Furthermore, the Arab reader should be made aware that personal relationships in our Arab societies are transient, subject to numerous transformations, and not inherently eternal. They are rather influenced by historical shifts and change according to the nature of social interactions. However, our societies seem to uphold humanitarian principles to the utmost extent. Despite this, these relationships are not everlasting (Marx, 1910).

Religious Contradictions

... تنتقل الوديعة من يهودي إلى مسيحي إلى يزدي ، ليستولي عليها ابنه الذي أصبح مسلما ، أي سر يجمع هذه الأحجية ؟

This treasure box had been passed down from a Jewish man to a Christian man, and then to the Christian's grandson, who later became Muslim. What kind of puzzle is this?(Tawfiq 2018, p. 236)

Here, the author presents another aspect concerning the societal transformations, specifically the religious shifts. It demonstrates that individuals can undergo religious transformations throughout different eras. Arabs, for example, were once pagans, idolaters, Phoenicians, and Zoroastrians, but over time, many of them embraced Christianity and Judaism before eventually embracing Islam. However, what the novel aims to address here, in depicting the image of the Arabs, is that despite their religious transformation from Christianity to Islam, they remain humane and inclined to exhibit virtuous behavior (Szpiech, 2012).

In the novel, a Jewish man entrusts his possessions to a priest in the monastery to safeguard them. This priest faces oppression and assault during the monarchical period in Iraq, and the trust passes to a Muslim man. This Muslim man, in all honesty, preserves the possessions and does not exploit the fact that their original owner belonged to a different faith as an excuse to steal them. Therefore, the translation here is crucial, as it portrays the image of the honest and faithful Arab who does not discriminate between religions and races.

Indeed, we do not live in an angelic society, nor do we always practice what we believe in our everyday lives. Instead, we live with numerous contradictions and diverse personalities. We may adopt customs we don't truly believe in or engage in discussions in our gatherings or media, where we appear with apparent purity. The unfortunate part is that some of us believe in our own authenticity and continue with these contradictions. However, human nature is characterized by

fluctuation, contradiction, and transformation, and this is precisely what the novel elaborates on in great detail (Friedman,2013). Nonetheless, the sole constant element is the unwavering belonging of every individual to their human essence, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or sect. Ultimately, as Arab citizens and Muslims, they return to their humanity because the essence of their faith calls for unity and righteousness without discrimination. As the Prophet of Islam said) . "لا فرق بين عربي ولا أعجمي ولا أبيض ولا أسود إلا بالتقوى) . (There is no distinction between an Arab and a non-Arab, nor between a white and a black person, except through piety."

Final Contradiction

This novel presents numerous controversial and existential questions, heavily influenced by the element of contradiction throughout all stages and concepts of life. The brilliant dramatic style of the writer surprises us when describing the agony of a kidnapped Yazidi girl. He portrays her dignity and pride in a noble and lofty manner, presenting death as a metaphor for salvation, and the ending becomes an escape from the clutches of the dead Daesh (ISIS) members.

جاء الفرج بقصف الطائرات ، كانوا خائفين ، هربوا من المكان ، فتمنيت أن تسقط القنابل على رأسي

The bombardment of the aircraft bestows a tranquil finale. They were terrified, fleeing from that very place. Oh, how I yearn to perish beneath the descent of a bomb, granting me a final embrace. (Tawfiq 2018,p.204)

In this passage, the writer describes the wish of the abducted Yazidi girl for death, as she loses all threads of hope in this bleak situation. Having witnessed the brutality of the terrorists, she comes to realize that the only escape from their clutches is death. However, in the novel, she encounters a noble Muslim man who rescues her and shields her from this savage organization.

Perhaps AmjadTawfiq here speaks through the voice of the captive, who enters a phase of awareness, a philosophical consciousness seeking an afterlife and redemption. In this, he aligns with the philosopher Martin Heidegger, who affirms that consciousness gives life its value and seriousness. When a person realizes that their intended purpose is no longer attainable, they may resort to death as an option, deepening the sense of human misery in life itself (Ibrahim 2009).

This novel goes beyond the ordinary and fleeting narrative; it takes on a philosophical aspect, introducing intricately complex themes. For instance, the duality of life and death occupies a significant space in this novel, an indivisible dichotomy in the Iraqi people's way of thinking (Georgescu, 2011). As Spinoza noted, "To think of death is also to think of life"(Bu Azza,2013, p. 307). This belief, inherited from their ancient Babylonian and Assyrian ancestors, leads the Iraqis to aspire to immortality, viewing death as a gateway to another world and life (Al-Hindawi,2009)

Love's Reflection on the Arab Image

The spirit of war and historical tragedies may overshadow the novel of *The Great Satirist*, but nestled within its folds lie some of the most beautiful tales of love and beauty. A father falls in love with a beautiful widow whom time has wounded, and treacherous men have betrayed. Another love story unfolds between an Ezidi woman and her savior, Sa'ad. Here, the image of the Arab in love comes to light—someone who loves a woman from a different faith and decides to save her.

Initially, the story was purely about humanity and a matter of compassion, but swiftly transformed into a beautiful romance, where the Arab sheds the constraints and societal boundaries, insisting on returning to his pure humanity.

انفجرت بهار باكياً ، حتى كادت أنفاسها تنقطع ، حاول سعد أن يخفف من ألمها ، كان يحتضنها ، ولم يكن قادراً على إخفاء دموعه.

Bahar rushed in, tears streaming down her face, her breaths labored as if on the verge of stopping. Sa'ad tried to soothe her pain, enveloping her in a tender embrace, but he could not conceal his own tears (Tawfiq, 2018, p. 203)

This passage signifies the inseparability of love in the lives of Arabs and how it has deeply rooted itself in the minds of Arabs and Muslims throughout history. The name "Bahar" in this passage holds significant meaning, as it is a Kurdish name, meaning "spring's bloom" (وهرزبهار), suggesting that this Ezidi girl is as beautiful and charming as the spring season itself. The Arab man, Sa'ad, depicted in a delicate light, demonstrates his empathy for the girl's tragedy, moved to tears by the intensity of his compassion. This portrayal of the Arab man as a savior and compassionate figure challenges the stereotypes of him being solely a killer, rapist, or kidnapper.

Amjad Tawfiq is not the sole writer among Arab authors who has depicted love in our literature; many have discussed pure love, which immortalizes the ideal Arab love in purity, passion, and beauty. Historians have provided numerous examples of infatuated lovers in both pre-Islamic and Islamic eras, from the legend of Qays and Layla to the present day (Sharara, 1984).

Yet, these examples and works have not been conveyed to the West and the world to offer them a true image. Their media are solely focused on depicting the brutality of individuals, wrongly attributing it to our societies (Anderson et al, 2003). Due to the abundance of negative portrayals of Arabs, some renowned writers have sought to explain the reasons behind this barbarity. For instance, John Hartung, in his article titled "Why Do Arabs Behave Barbarically and Savagely?" (Hartung, 2015) published in the Foreign Policy Journal in 2015, discussed how Arabs have endured significant historical injustice perpetrated by the West on their societies. However, the solution does not lie in waiting for others to defend us and justify our behaviors; it lies in directly conveying our ideas to them and engaging in linguistic communication and translation, which is the best means to achieve that. The Western world will not read any translated article by a politician, believing it to be rhetorical and ideological. They are inclined toward foreign literature belonging to other peoples because they realize that literary works serve as a true reflection of the society to which they belong (Bassnett, 2006).

ارتمت بهار على سعد تقبل يديه ووجهه وجسمه ، كانت في حالة تصعب على أشد القلوب فسوة وبعدا عن الرحمة.

Bahar knelt beside Sa'ad and tenderly embraced his hands, caressed his face, and gently held his frail body. Such a heart-wrenching scene that even the hardest of hearts, void of mercy, would find themselves moved. (Tawfiq, 2018, p. 199)

This paragraph reflects the example of the Arab man who becomes a shelter and a source of comfort and tenderness for others. The translation highlights the fact that our society comprises diverse individuals, including extremists who have harmed the Yazidi girl, as well as noble and honorable individuals who harbor love, tenderness, and compassion.

Love, a subject that has fascinated philosophers throughout history, is profoundly explored by Plato in his theory about love as "the search for the other self that completes us, making us whole again (Amir, 2001)." According to Plato, love serves as a remedy for ancient wounds

inflicted upon us as a punishment for our past misconduct. Since then, as Plato argues, each one of us is only half of ourselves, constantly striving for completion with our other self, the beloved (Al-'Anzi, 2016).

Amjad Tawfiq's philosophy of love finds its culmination in his narrative when his protagonist, Sa'ad, seeks to find his complementary other half in Bahar, the oppressed girl. Through these storytelling images, the novel presents the greatest scenes of human and aesthetic integration.

- تعالي أنا من يريد أن يقبلك ، عودي كما أنت بهار الجميلة الفاتنة ، ولا تمنحي المجرمين فرصة تدمير كل شيء

بعدها لاحظ سعد أنها تناولت عشاءها بشهية أكبر من الأيام السابقة ، فشعر بالرضى.....

Come, let me be the one to embrace you, dear Bahar, the beautiful and enchanting. Do not grant the criminals an opportunity to ruin it all.

Afterward, Sa'ad noticed that she enjoyed her dinner with a heartier appetite than the previous days, and a sense of contentment washed over him...

(Tawfiq, 2018, pp. 230-231)

In this portrayal, the image of the Arab character embodies a sense of care and concern for their significant other. The conversation reflects the delicacy of their emotions and their nobility, as they would not leave or be content until their beloved is safe and at ease. This translation rectifies the opportunistic and brutal attributes that some malignly try to portray of us, and it accurately depicts the genuine and spontaneous nature of Arab citizens in their affection towards their families and loved ones.

In the history of Islamic thought, we find various degrees of philosophical exploration of love, ranging from profound to superficial, and from reality to imagination. For instance, Ibn Dawud al-Zahiri, in his book "Al-Zuhra," had a literary vivacity, but his contemplation on love didn't delve to the depth that would qualify it as profound philosophical thought. As for Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, he took steps in this domain, but his beautiful work "Tawq al-Hamama" did not fully encapsulate the precise meaning of philosophical love. Nevertheless, he was more profound than his predecessors in writing about love, lovers, passion, and the enamored (Sharara, 1984)

Here, it seems that the Iraqi narrative, exemplified by authors like Amjad Tawfiq, has succeeded in adding another dimension to the philosophy of love. The Iraqi individual has become an emblematic reflection of refinement and tenderness, demonstrating a highly humane disposition, leaning towards coexistence, and diversity, and rejecting discrimination and rigidity. Perhaps the best example of this is their love for diverse life and their understanding of women as different flowers with vibrant and contrasting colors. They detest stagnation and the rigid mold imposed by superficial minds and extremists on people.

ليس ثمة امرأة تشبه امرأة اخرى ، فهن مختلفات كفاكهة أو زهور أو طيور أو شوارع أو مدن ، وكل من يتحدث عن التشابه لا يفكر بأبعد من حاجة يقضيها وينصرف ليؤكد أصله الحيواني.

There is no woman who resembles another, for they are as diverse as fruits, birds, streets, or cities. Anyone who speaks of their similarity only dwells on a mere desire, reducing them to his animal origins. (p.194)

In the eyes of the Arabs, love, and woman are regarded as beautiful and delicate beings (Thornton, 1994). The Arab sees her as a graceful fruit and a melodious bird, linking desire with nobility and progress, rather than backwardness (Stockton, 1994). The translation of these expressions would be among the strongest evidence for the West that the Arab mentality and

perception of women and love are founded on respect, admiration, and tenderness, rather than the misconceptions they may encounter, portraying women as captives, servants, or property. Our Arab social thinking is enriched with awareness, tolerance, and equality.

Religion in the Arab Human's Thought''

The writer AmjadTawfiq is well aware that religion plays a fundamental role in the Arab mentality, accompanying them in every step and movement they take (Ayubi, 2003). In a phone conversation with him, he affirms that religion is an essential element in Arab thinking, even among those who claim to be non-religious. However, in reality, they embody religious values in their behaviors unconsciously.

The writer's viewpoint here aligns with the opinions of many thinkers and philosophers. According to the Arab philosopher Ayoub Kush, religion is a universal phenomenon present in all societies on Earth, as evidenced by the statement of Ronny Geero, "There is no society without religion." Thus, the history of humanity is intertwined with the history of religion itself(Kush,2016).

سألت بهار :

- هل أنت مسلم حقا ؟
- ولماذا تشكين في ذلك ؟
- أنا لا أفهم في الأديان ، ولكني أظن أن لكل دين إلهها مختلفا .
- نعم هناك أديان ، ولكن ليس هناك سوى إله واحد .
- أظن أن إله داعش لا يشبه إلهك .

Bahar inquired, "Are you truly a Muslim?"

Sa'ad asked, "Why do you doubt that?"

Bahar replied, "I don't understand much about religions, but I believe each religion has its own unique God."

Sa'ad clarified, "Yes, there are various religions, but there is only one God."

Bahar remarked, "I suppose your God is different from the one worshipped by ISIS (Daesh)." (Tawfiq,2018,p.229)

The translation of this passage plays a crucial role for the Western reader. The question posed by Bahar resembles the kind of question that any non-Muslim person might ask about the connection between religion and extremist groups and whether their actions have any relation to the beliefs they adhere to. However, Sa'ad, representing the image of an ordinary Arab Muslim who lives his life naturally and behaves without pretense or embellishment, firmly denies this misconception. He responds to her and clarifies this misunderstanding as follows:

الصحيح يا بهار أنهم لا يمثلون الدين فهم محض مجرمين ، والله بريء من أفعالهم ، وسيدفعون الثمن .
متى ؟ بعد أن يقتلونا .

إنها محنة نعاني منها جميعا ، ولست أنت فقط

Indeed, Bahar, they do not represent the true essence of our religion; they are nothing but criminals. God is innocent of their deeds, and they will face the consequences of their actions.

When will that happen? After they've killed all of us?

It is a tragedy we all endure, and you are not alone in this struggle. (Tawfiq,2018,p.229)

Sa'ad presented himself as an ordinary individual, embodying his understanding of the religion he adheres to. He firmly believes in the inevitability of divine punishment for those who deviate from

God's laws and the ideals ingrained in his mind since childhood—those attributes of the Creator associated with goodness, justice, and retribution against wrongdoers.

Most scholars justify the common understanding of religious affiliation as part of defending religious beliefs. It is considered complementary to natural theology, distinct from revealed theology, which differentiates between divine revelation and faith and obedience to that truth (McGuire, 2008). Thus, the ultimate purpose of religious affiliation was initially confined to defending religious beliefs themselves (Apologetics). However, later, this notion transformed to be seen as a field of knowledge that should not address religious viewpoints directly. This transformation can be classified under other fields of knowledge that some call "Philosophies of Necessity Production," which are human and unconscious methods of defending collective belonging, independent of logical principles (Abdul Wahhab, 2016).

The beauty of the translation lies in its impact on the foreign recipient. In this novel, the references are spontaneous and unadorned, not driven by the purpose of defending the right of belonging to a creed or society. Instead, they are seamlessly integrated into the daily context, justifying and rectifying the perception of the Arab individual as religious but unwilling to accept injustice or portray a distorted image of their beliefs. It shows that individuals who claim affiliation to a certain religion may behave differently. Some may be mistaken criminals who claim religiosity, while others are rational moderates, and still, others may be described as irreligious or non-religious. Hence, it is not fair to judge everyone under the same standard.

The Image of the Arab Muslim in Leisure and Luxury

Another essential aspect of the Arab individual, which the writer did not attempt to hide or obscure in this novel, is their inclination towards extravagance and indulgence. This portrayal adds a sense of credibility to the foreign reader after translation, as it shows the author's neutrality in describing both positive and negative aspects of the Arab character.

The image of the carefree Arab, engaging in frivolous entertainment and parties, is a prevalent perception in our societies, often observed by residents of Western countries when Arabs visit and spend lavishly on superficial matters (Stavrianos, 2015). This misconception might be attributed by some to the social restrictions imposed by their communities, especially on their youth.

حفلة بربع مليون دولار ، وسفرة للفنانة بطائرة خاصة ، وشراء مصارف وقنوات، وهدايا تكرر أسبوعيا، أهى عبقرية أم جنون ، من يكون هذا الرجل ؟ وماذا أفعل معه ؟

A quarter-dollar party, a flight to an artist on a private plane, buying of banks and TV channels, and gifts offered repeatedly every week. Is this smartness or a kind of madness?

Who is this man, and what can I do with him? (Tawfiq, 2018, p. 211)

This social behavior is a genuine image of the affluent Arab, a literary and intellectual school of thought debated extensively by scholars, critics, and journalists. It reflects the lost state of individuals, who no longer possess control over their lives, having lost direction and purpose. Consequently, they grasp at ideas without any lasting value due to their loss of the ability to see things in their natural proportions, a result of the social machinery dominating their lifestyle (Berqadar, 2010)

مع النبيذ الفاخر ، والوجبة اللذيذة ، والجو البيروتي الساحر ، كان سيف حائرا في غياب بوصلة حقيقية لتقويم ما حدث ، والبحث عن مفتاح لفهم شخصية فهد ، مفتاح لا يحتاج إلى تغييره كل لحظة ، شيء شبيه بالمفتاح المركزي الذي يفتح أبواب مئات الغرف في فندق بعينه .

With the fine wine, the delicious meal, and the charming atmosphere of Beirut, Saif was confused with no real compass to evaluate what had happened. He wanted a key to understand Fahd's personality, a key that does not need to be changed every moment; something similar to the central key which opens the doors of hundreds of rooms in a particular hotel.

(Tawfiq, 2018, p. 207)

In this passage, it becomes apparent that Saif's situation reflects that of other individuals in this society, all remaining lost and confused, lacking control over their affairs and unable to navigate the complexities of their social crises. The Arab society's inability to analyze what happened and the individual's incapacity to assess unfolding events leaves them in a state of bewilderment and bitterness.

This raises the question: Is a person's character a product of their social environment or genetic makeup? Most likely, both the environment and genetics play significant roles in shaping an individual's personality (Al-Jubouri, 2016). Thus, it can be deduced that the Arab individual's character is a result of both their genetic inheritance and their social surroundings.

Therefore, the behavior of Arab individuals reflects social crises in each historical period, whether contemporary or historical, with each stage having its psychological and behavioral determinants (Dekmejian, 1995). This phenomenon is not exclusive to Arabs or Muslims but is common in all human societies. However, it appears more prevalent in our societies due to the multitude of political and social crises we face. Religion has never been the cause of this fluctuation and inconsistency in the behavior of the Arab individual.

The Image of the Contemporary Arab

In addition to all the fundamental characteristics explored by the writer in his novel, he specifically focuses on the contemporary Arab, highlighting three main traits: forgiveness, living in the past, and suffering from the oppression of authority.

The Forgiving Contemporary Arab

Arabs have been known since ancient times for their tolerance and forgiveness when possible. They despise hatred, animosity, and enmity, often leaning towards coexistence and leaving disputes behind, seeking to start anew with a clean slate in their lives. An illustrative example from the novel is when one of the characters graciously honors a deceased elderly woman who had been causing him much annoyance and hindrance. Despite the obstacles she had posed to his love for a widow, at the moment of her passing, he showed nobility, generosity, and forgiveness:

في بيت الأرملة كان الخبر صحيحا ، قلت : سننقلها فجرأ إلى الجامع للصلاة عليها، وبعدها نودعها في قبرها بانتظار رحمه الله ، وطلبت إقامة مأتم كبير يقدم الطعام والشراب للفقراء والمحتاجين أريد أن تملئي (جاواناتهم) باللحم ، وسأتكفل بكل ما يقتضيه ذلك ، شكرتني الأرملة والنساء الحاضرات، فقلت سأذهب الآن ، وموعدنا سيكون صباح الغد في الجامع

In the widow's house, the news was confirmed. I said, 'We will take her to the mosque for the funeral prayer, then we will bury her, awaiting God's mercy.' I also requested a large funeral where food and drink would be provided to the poor and needy... I want to fill their plates with meat, and I will take care of all the necessary arrangements for that." The widow

and the present women expressed their gratitude, and I said, 'I will leave now, and our meeting will be tomorrow morning at the mosque. (Tawfiq, 2018, p. 196)

This scene emphasizes that forgiveness is a noble quality unique to Arabs (Hyun2023). The translator must convey these humanistic moments in our daily lives, as everyone in Arab society avoids speaking ill of the deceased, following the principle of "They have gone to their Lord, and God is their judge." Many instances attest to how Arabs, both in the past and present, are a forgiving and generous nation.

Likely, this noble trait has been inherited from their great Prophet, who said, "Go, you are free," in the greatest act of forgiveness when he entered Mecca after its conquest. Despite the injustices, slander, and false accusations he had endured, he did not seek revenge or retaliation against them.

The Contemporary Arab and Living in the Past

However, the contemporary Arab continues to grapple with a complex and problematic issue that has been analyzed and sought to find solutions for, albeit without success (Barakat,1993). We, as a nation, cling to the past. We take pride in our history, but it does not motivate us to actively contribute to modern life, contemporary civilization, and its achievements. Our mindset revolves around the belief that we were once the best nation that graced humanity and that we have inherited our greatness from the past. Consequently, we are not enticed by the competition with other nations in the present. This trait, according to researchers, is the most destructive behavior in Arab logic and thinking, as it represents intellectual and cognitive paralysis.

An example of this condition is evident in one of the novel's characters. Even when he experiences hope and optimism, he falls back into glorifying the past and revisits his grandfather's manuscripts and writings that he had forgotten for several days:

شعاع الأمل الذي استشعره سعد ، جعله يعود ليلا إلى مخطوط جده الذي تناسى أمره طيلة الأيام الماضية

Sa'ad sensed the light of hope which made him return at night to read his grandfather's manuscript, which he had forgotten for the past few days. (Tawfiq, 2018, p.192)

This translation is necessary to provide an authentic image of the Arab's psychological behavior and enlighten foreign readers about the mentality of our society, our thought process, and our understanding of things. This is affirmed by the Arab writer, (Al-Jaberi,1990) in his book *Problems of Contemporary Arab Thought*, where he emphasizes that the issue at hand is still prevalent in the Arab world today. Arabs tend to envision their primary identity within historical eras only. He adds that to overcome this problem, the intellectual elites must strive to live in a state of civilization, which means that Arabs should confront the challenges of the modern age. There is no harm in cherishing the past and being proud of it, but we must not be satisfied with it. Instead, we must build upon it and extend ourselves towards the forefront of modern civilization (Al-Jabri,1990).

The Contemporary Arab and the Oppression of Authority

The Arab society and its individuals have long suffered from the injustice and oppression of tyrannical rulers. Throughout history, the primary concern of the Arabs has been to attain freedom from dictatorship and experience the dignity of living free from the control of oppressive rulers (Ardic,2012). This struggle against power's greed and limitless encroachments remains an

essential issue, which many have tried to analyze and find solutions for, to no avail. In the novel, one character speaks the following monologue that sheds light on this predicament:

ثمة من يتصور إمكانية رسم حدود للسلطة ، أو يمكن رسم خريطة محتملة لسعة تدخلاتها أو عمق هذه التدخلات ، زمنها ، مكانها ، وهو تصور آخر يستحق الازدراء فعلا ، لأنه يكشف جهلا وسذاجة في فهم الخلايا الحية التي تحرك نسغ الدم في منظومة السلطة ، فهي لا تعرف شيئا اسمه الشعب أو الاكتفاء أو الرضا.

Some might imagine that it is possible to set limits to power or draw a possible map of its interventions, depth of interference, time, and place. This is another imagination worthy of contempt, for it reveals ignorance and naivety in understanding the living cells that move in the blood vessels of power. Power knows nothing called satisfaction or contentment.

(Tawfiq, 2018, p. 631)

This inner dialogue illustrates how contemporary Arabs continue to fight against the tyranny of authority and its unbridled arrogance. Such authority manipulates their livelihoods and state policies, and all the wars and miseries they face are due to the tyranny of these rulers. Therefore, the translation of this passage will provide foreign readers with a clearer and more accurate understanding of the root causes behind the deviation of some members of Arab society towards extremism and terrorism, which is the social oppression they endure due to the mismanagement of their countries. This environment creates fertile ground for extremism and regressive ideologies that alienate others.

In essence, the translation will be beneficial in educating Western societies about the outdated systems plaguing some Arab countries, which are responsible for the ongoing turmoil. These systems insist on sectarian or national rule, marginalizing certain segments of society, and resorting only to traditional security and military solutions. Consequently, some Arab societies become vulnerable to extremism and extremists.

Conclusion

In this novel, the Arabs are portrayed with great skill as having two faces. One face exhibits antagonism and fanaticism, while another represents love and tolerance for other human beings. The author places particular emphasis on showing how the Arab has a life-affirming instinct and is not without humanitarian concern. It also highlights the power of human emotions, illustrating how this tycoon savior lets his inner feelings leads him to save a Yazidi girl--who is neither Arab nor Christian.

The Muslim Arab within the novel is in fact a very complex figure. On the other, it depicts a devout and spontaneous forgiver who has been drawn in by historical shackles of history but is very interested in seeking resolutions to problems for encounters still ahead. This depiction, which portrays an Arab with a rich inner life struggling between chains of history and light, highlights the complexities of their identity.

The impact upon Arab societies of authorities and governing systems is another major theme in the novel. The story argues that it is up to these groups to teach, reform people's habits and help others understand the error of extremism. This indicates that the text stresses just as much how a divided, sectarian social environment feeds extremism and terrorism--which is precisely why active work was needed.

But in his novel AmjadTawfiq protests vehemently that sectarian and ethnic divisions are all the offshoot of radical social, media and intellectual delusions. Nevertheless, he argues that the real character of an Arab lies in such values as nobility and chivalry. These will surely be reflected.

These elementary principles are constituted at their core by diversity, tolerance and coexistence apercived as being among the most fundamental aspects of nature.

Summing up, the study is definitely able to get into the complex war between animosity and extremism on one hand versus love, tolerance and humanity on other amidst today's Arab situation. This brings into relief the important position of ruling authorities in educating and policing Arab communities. It likewise points out that it can be possible for good values to prevail over illusions of division and radicalism, creating a life of coexistence with nature at peace.

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